

EURO BIZ J

OCTOBER 2018

JOHN MOK,
HEAD OF LIFE AND
HEALTH CLIENT
MARKETS JAPAN

➔ A third way

*Europe-Japan
collaborations in third
markets*

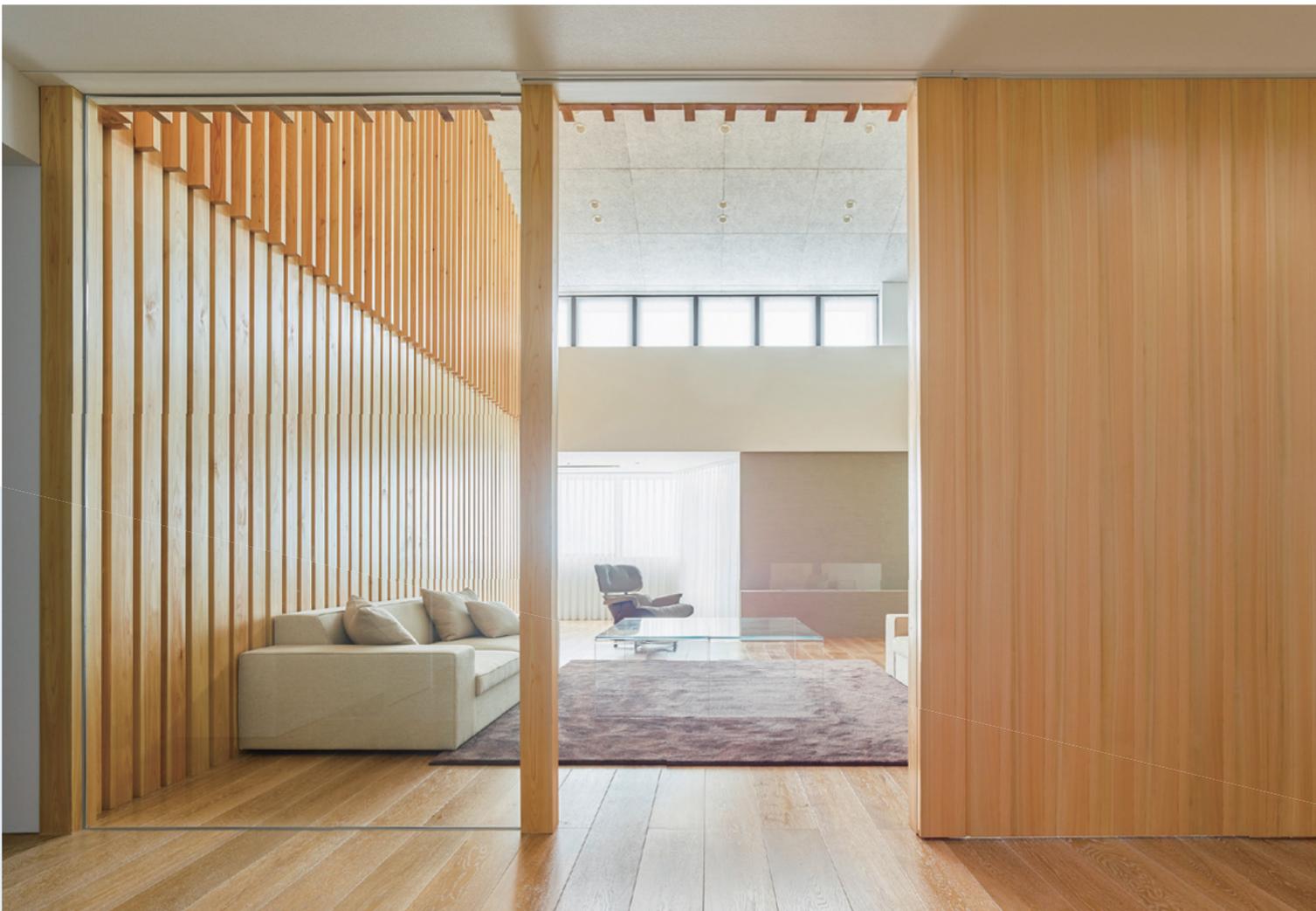
➔ Turning good feelings into good business

*Pekka Laitinen, commercial
counsellor at the Embassy
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*Reinsurer Swiss Re
aims to see Asia
become healthier*

CLOSING THE GAP

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The Mission of the European Business Council
To promote an impediment-free environment for European business in Japan.

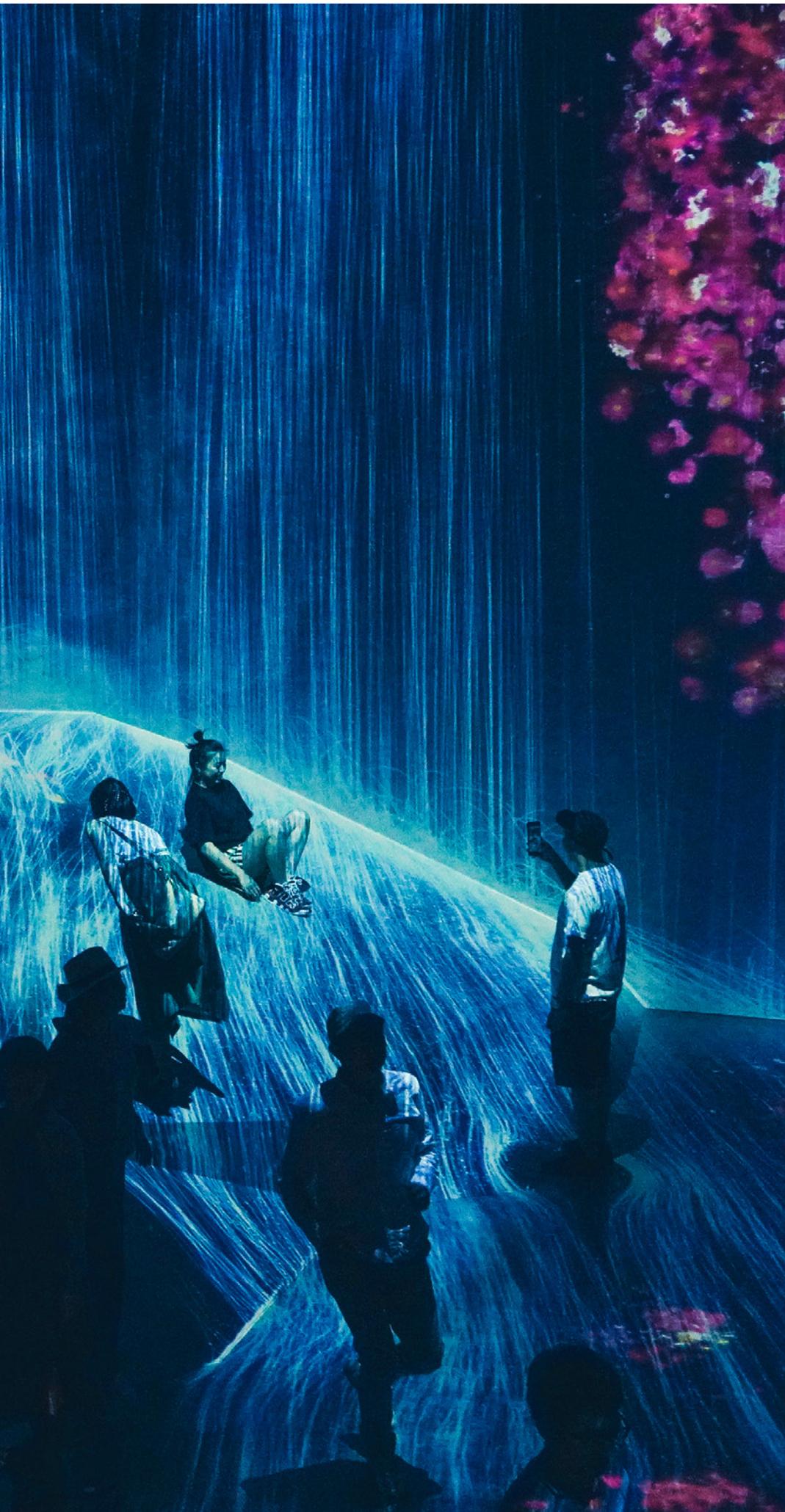


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Closing the gap

By Toby Waters





First Focus

Ever wanted to be part of an artwork?

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The popular permanent exhibit at Mori Building Digital Art Museum — created by teamLab Borderless — is a three-dimensional, 10,000m² space over two floors in Odaiba.

Enjoy being caught in the “rain,” but you can leave your boots at home — and probably your heels, too.

Photo by mujiri
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Writing in and about Japan since 2000, **Gavin Blair** contributes articles to magazines, websites and newspapers in Asia, Europe and the US on a wide range of topics, many of them business related.

➔ *“Researching this article on the business of knowledge, two phrases came up: ‘Knowledge is power’ and ‘Data is the new oil’. Both of these expressions were older than I thought. The former was first recorded in Arabic in the 10th century, but attributed to an imam in the 7th; the latter I’d heard recently, but was apparently coined in 2006. My knowledge was lacking.”*



Toby Waters is an editor at *Eurobiz Japan*. He has more than five years’ experience editing for a major legal publisher in the UK where he specialised in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region.

➔ *“While it’s true that more of us are health conscious these days than ever before, there are still major gaps in both health awareness and healthcare provisions, which threaten people’s health and finances. Swiss Re has been researching the health protection gap, and ways to narrow it – but any resolution may come down to our individual actions. Are we up to the task?”*



A former newspaper and wire service reporter, **Geoff Botting** has called Japan home for over a quarter of a century. He now works as a freelance journalist and translator, writing mostly about business, economics and travel.

➔ *“All companies need to regularly explain their finances to their stakeholders and to the government. The EBC believes the best ‘language’ for such financial reporting is IFRS, an accounting standard that can be clearly understood by people no matter where they are in the world.”*



A lesbian activist, **Hiroko Masuhara** is president of *Trois Couleurs*, an organisation promoting LGBT rights in Japan. She is also deputy executive director of the Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation.

➔ *“At Trois Couleurs, I am working to help companies create psychologically safe environments for all employees. Since Shibuya ward announced that it would be issuing civil partnership certificates to same-sex couples, we have seen businesses in Japan, and society at large, become more accepting of people in the LGBT community, but much more needs to be done – especially outside Japan’s big cities.”*

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Eurobiz Japan welcomes story ideas from readers and proposals from writers and photographers. Letters to the editor may be edited for length and style.

Teppanyaki Grill Opens at Hyatt Regency Tokyo in Shinjuku

Teppanyaki Grill, a teppanyaki restaurant at Hyatt Regency Tokyo, opened on October 1, 2018.

Kobe Beef and Bushu Wagyu — a type of Japanese Black Beef produced in Saitama Prefecture — are grilled right before your eyes, together with a variety of seafood and vegetables. With ingredients of the highest quality and carefully selected Japanese and French wines, sake and *shochu*, enjoy an unforgettable Japanese gastronomic experience. Have a luxurious time at the teppanyaki counter.



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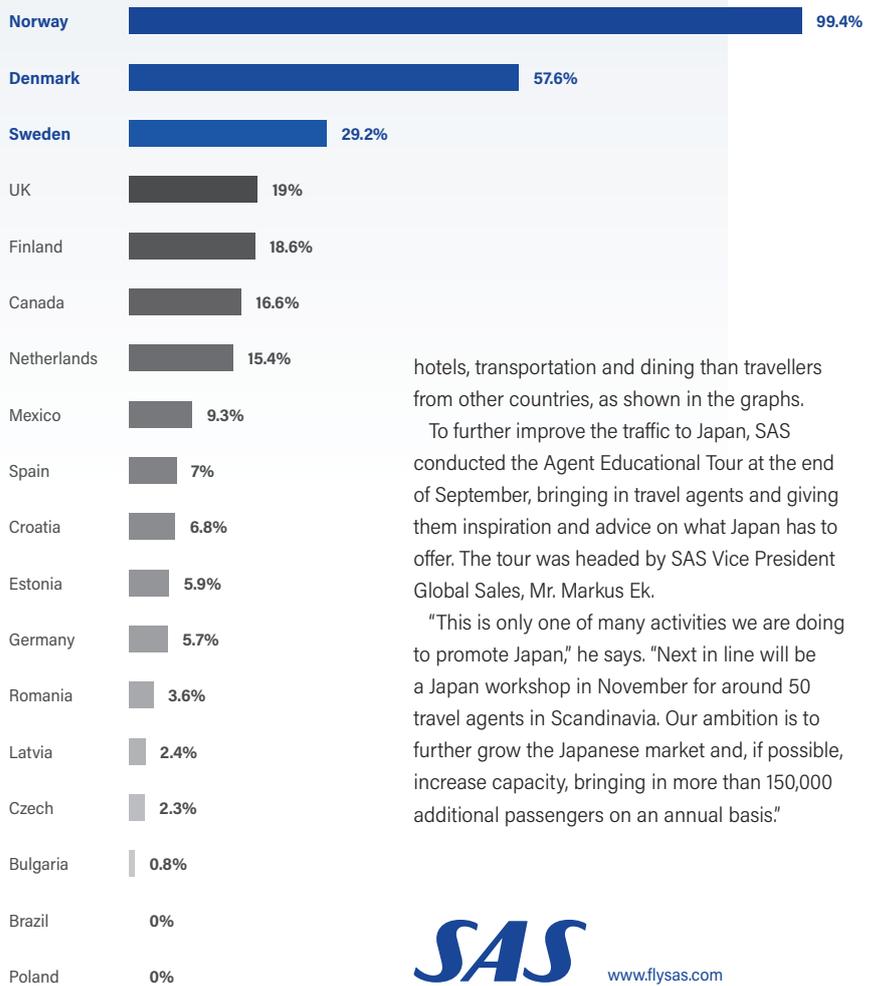
The years 2017 and 2018 have been celebratory ones for Denmark and Sweden respectively, together with Japan. Diplomatic relations between Japan and Denmark began in 1867, and between Japan and Sweden one year later. Over the past two years, many events have been held highlighting 150 years of close diplomatic relations.

One company has been a driving force for increased travel between Japan and Northern Europe: Scandinavian Airlines. It was one of the first European airlines that operated air services between Copenhagen and Haneda, starting in 1951. Another milestone in SAS's history with Japan was the opening of the North Pole route in 1957 – SAS was the first airline to fly over the North Pole, significantly reducing travel time.

For many years, the route between Tokyo and Scandinavia was mainly for Japanese tourists wanting to explore Northern Europe. Since 2014, SAS's strategy has been to bring more Scandinavians, and Europeans in general, to Japan to explore this unique country.

The mix between Japanese and European travellers has been changing thanks to this strategy, increasing from 35% Europeans on SAS flights to more than 50% this year alone. Bringing more Scandinavian tourists to Japan will help strengthen its economy, as they generally spend more on

Who would be willing to pay more than 100 euros a night for a hotel?



hotels, transportation and dining than travellers from other countries, as shown in the graphs.

To further improve the traffic to Japan, SAS conducted the Agent Educational Tour at the end of September, bringing in travel agents and giving them inspiration and advice on what Japan has to offer. The tour was headed by SAS Vice President Global Sales, Mr. Markus Ek.

"This is only one of many activities we are doing to promote Japan," he says. "Next in line will be a Japan workshop in November for around 50 travel agents in Scandinavia. Our ambition is to further grow the Japanese market and, if possible, increase capacity, bringing in more than 150,000 additional passengers on an annual basis."





The dividends of knowledge

The Knowledge Doubling Curve, created in 1982 by American architect and author Buckminster Fuller, shows the accelerating rate at which human knowledge is doubling: every hundred years as of 1900, every 25 years as of 1945 and, today, every 13 months. IBM predicts it will be doubling every 12 hours by 2020. Data in the digital world is no different, doubling every two years. A report by the International Data Corporation says that by 2020, the digital space will contain 44 trillion gigabytes, or “nearly as many digital bits as there are stars in the universe”.

There are experts who know how to find, analyse and interpret relevant knowledge from this unwieldy wealth of data to help businesses with decision-making. Read Gavin Blair’s “The business of knowledge”

(page 18) to find out more about these brokers of knowledge, and the plan that threatens to disrupt their companies’ current business model.

Firms in the EU and Japan have learned that sharing their knowledge and expertise can help make important contributions to other countries around the world. Learn about some of the large-scale infrastructure and renewable energy projects that Europe and Japan are collaborating on in “A third way” by Gavin Blair (page 14).

On the cover is John Mok of Swiss Re. The reinsurer’s *Asia*

Health Protection Gap Report gives valuable insights into the financial stress of health costs on Asian households. The knowledge gleaned from this study will help the firm more effectively promote healthier lifestyles and improve services. Read more about Swiss Re and the findings of this report in Toby Waters’ “Closing the gap” (page 10).

As Benjamin Franklin said, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” ●

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As part of its community outreach, Lakeland University, Japan Campus also offers non-degree bearing courses in evening and Saturday Open College classes. Among the courses being offered are: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Translation, Film Appreciation, Ageing, and PowerPoint.



CLOSING

Reinsurer Swiss Re aims to see Asia become healthier

THE GAP

While we know we could probably eat better, drink less and exercise more, many of us go on happily believing that we're actually quite healthy. Or, perhaps, we look at the cost of health food or gym memberships and think that they're too expensive — and, anyway, can't that wait until New Year? We all know these attitudes can be bad for us in the long run, but what could compel us to live healthier? John Mok of reinsurance firm Swiss Re believes that now, more than ever, not only is it possible to change our attitudes towards health — it's necessary.

After beginning his career as a pricing actuary at a life insurance firm in Australia, Hong Kong-born Mok has gone on to become the head of Life and Health Client Markets Japan for Swiss Re, where he and his team focus on the life and health reinsurance business, partnering with clients — namely insurers — to bridge what is called the health protection gap.

“Asia's health protection gap is defined as the amount of financial stress arising from unforeseen out-of-pocket medical expenses and the decision to forgo unaffordable treatment,” Mok explains. “The gap includes medical expenses not covered by insurers, social security or government.”

As a result of their inability to pay for health coverage upfront, many people have to dip into their savings, cut back on ordinary household spending or, in the worst cases, do without treatment altogether. This leads to not only poorer long-term health but also more expensive treatment when problems become so bad that they are otherwise unmanageable.

Despite its wealth, Japan is greatly affected by the health protection gap. Figures from Swiss Re's *Asia Health Protection Gap Report*, which surveyed more than 16,000 consumers across 12 Asian markets, concluded that Japan's health protection gap amounts to \$218 billion, placing it third after China and India. The study also found that the level of financial stress for households in Japan can amount to 7.3% of the average annual household income.

“While large populations and the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions are the main reasons for the gaps in emerging markets, such as China and India, the gap in Japan can be

“With technological advancements in recent years, we are finding more engaging ways to connect with our end-customers”





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attributed to both its ageing population and the relatively higher costs of healthcare,” Mok suggests. “And across all Asian markets, medical inflation rates are climbing much faster than the consumer purchasing index.”

In addition to healthcare issues, which inevitably are on the rise because of Japan’s ageing society, Mok identifies two other major problems in Japan that contribute to its health protection gap. First, more than half of the people surveyed (58%) reported that they consider themselves to be healthy, in spite of the fact that many were smokers or did less than 20 minutes of physical exercise a week. Secondly, partly due to more Westernised diets and improved disease screening, more people today are being diagnosed with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol. Some 53% of households across Asia are currently dealing with chronic conditions.

These worrisome trends pose problems for insurers. But Mok is confident that – while his industry has a reputation for being “conservative and traditional” – Swiss Re is working with its clients to find solutions and is also exploring innovations.

Founded in Switzerland in 1863, Swiss Re is a reinsurance company that provides insurers with wholesale risk management and reinsurance solutions. It has a long history in Japan, having launched its first reinsurance business here in 1913 and opened a representative office in Tokyo in 1972. Today, Swiss Re Japan has the third-largest portfolio in the global Swiss Re Group.

To help ease the financial burden that many people are

facing, Swiss Re has suggested an industry-wide provision of simpler insurance products for low- to middle-income earners. This would give them access to “a baseline of resilience”.

“We are also developing more comprehensive, targeted solutions for medium- to high-income segments,” states Mok.

But an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. One means of stemming health problems before they begin is through wearable devices and fitness apps, already used by one in five survey respondents. These can track calories, count steps, and otherwise motivate users to pursue healthier lives.

“With technological advancements in recent years, we are finding more engaging ways to connect with our end-customers, playing a more active role in positively influencing their health and wellbeing,” says Mok. “A tech-enabled, integrated health and wellness programme – including an app, monitoring devices, coaching and a whole ecosystem of health-support services – would create the bridge between health and insurance outcomes.”

The majority of app-users (83%) also said that they’d be happy to share their information with their insurers, something that can benefit them hugely, according to Mok.

“Premium discounts provided by some Japanese insurers can be up to 30% for individuals who attain specified health goals,” he reveals.

“Swiss Re has been working with a number of insurers to develop innovative health insurance solutions for Asian markets in this region.”

He also highlights Swiss Re’s launch, in April, of a diabetes management programme, which can monitor health and submit blood test results online through an app.

“At Swiss Re, we believe objective assessment of health conditions empowers and enables people to improve their health awareness and step up prevention measures,” Mok says. “Cross-industry, multi-lateral collaboration amongst insurers, healthcare and medical service providers and technology partners will continue to be a leading trend as the industry develops solutions to broaden and deepen coverage for more customers.”

When we think of advances in medical technology, we can no longer just think of improved operating or diagnosis machines. Devices like your phone or your smartwatch can – in conjunction with an invested third party such as Swiss Re – help to improve your health, reduce your costs, and close the health protection gap. ●



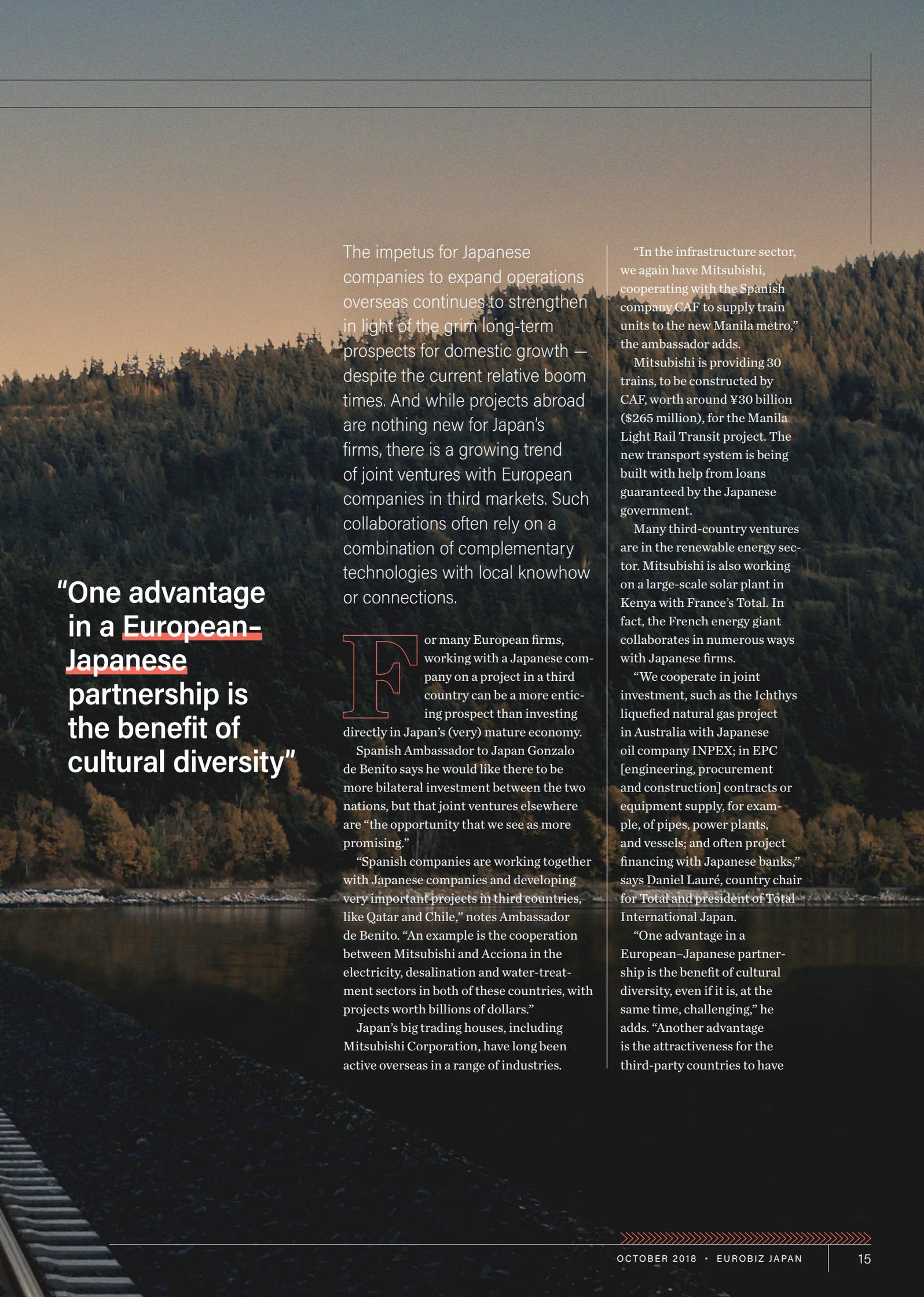


FEATURE

TEXT BY GAVIN BLAIR

A THIRD WAY

Europe–Japan collaborations
in third markets



**“One advantage
in a European-
Japanese
partnership is
the benefit of
cultural diversity”**

The impetus for Japanese companies to expand operations overseas continues to strengthen in light of the grim long-term prospects for domestic growth — despite the current relative boom times. And while projects abroad are nothing new for Japan's firms, there is a growing trend of joint ventures with European companies in third markets. Such collaborations often rely on a combination of complementary technologies with local knowhow or connections.

For many European firms, working with a Japanese company on a project in a third country can be a more enticing prospect than investing directly in Japan's (very) mature economy.

Spanish Ambassador to Japan Gonzalo de Benito says he would like there to be more bilateral investment between the two nations, but that joint ventures elsewhere are “the opportunity that we see as more promising.”

“Spanish companies are working together with Japanese companies and developing very important projects in third countries, like Qatar and Chile,” notes Ambassador de Benito. “An example is the cooperation between Mitsubishi and Acciona in the electricity, desalination and water-treatment sectors in both of these countries, with projects worth billions of dollars.”

Japan's big trading houses, including Mitsubishi Corporation, have long been active overseas in a range of industries.

“In the infrastructure sector, we again have Mitsubishi, cooperating with the Spanish company CAF to supply train units to the new Manila metro,” the ambassador adds.

Mitsubishi is providing 30 trains, to be constructed by CAF, worth around ¥30 billion (\$265 million), for the Manila Light Rail Transit project. The new transport system is being built with help from loans guaranteed by the Japanese government.

Many third-country ventures are in the renewable energy sector. Mitsubishi is also working on a large-scale solar plant in Kenya with France's Total. In fact, the French energy giant collaborates in numerous ways with Japanese firms.

“We cooperate in joint investment, such as the Ichthys liquefied natural gas project in Australia with Japanese oil company INPEX; in EPC [engineering, procurement and construction] contracts or equipment supply, for example, of pipes, power plants, and vessels; and often project financing with Japanese banks,” says Daniel Lauré, country chair for Total and president of Total International Japan.

“One advantage in a European-Japanese partnership is the benefit of cultural diversity, even if it is, at the same time, challenging,” he adds. “Another advantage is the attractiveness for the third-party countries to have



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the support of both Europe and Japan behind their industrial champions.”

Earlier this year, Japan’s JERA (a joint venture between Tokyo Electric Power Company and Chubu Electric Power) announced it was linking with Fluence Energy (a collaboration between Germany’s Siemens and the US’s AES Corporation) and Australian renewable-energy developer Lyon Group on three solar power plants that will generate 550MW. The \$1.1 billion project in Australia is due to come online next year and will have storage batteries with 100MW output – some of the strongest in the world.

“Fluence has a wealth of experience using grid-connected energy storage and a track record of improving quality over time,” explains Hajime Hiyoshi, general manager of JERA’s globalisation section. “We expect Fluence to further improve the quality of its batteries as it adds Siemens technology.”

According to Hiyoshi, JERA is aiming to broaden its operations from thermal power, “which has been our primary source of generation until now ... to renewable energy sources as we build an optimal power-generation portfolio.”

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region, major offshore wind-generation projects are being realised by multiple partnerships between Japanese and European firms. Copenhagen

Infrastructure Partners (CIP), a fund which invests in renewable energy globally, is currently involved in two major offshore wind projects in Taiwan.

“One is set to generate 600MW, the other 300MW, with local partner China Steel Corporation and DGA, a Mitsubishi Corporation subsidiary,” explains Mads Skovgaard-Andersen, associate partner at CIP.

CIP is in the process of finalising agreements with MHI Vestas Offshore Wind to supply turbines for the projects, according to Skovgaard-Andersen. MHI Vestas was formed in 2014 as a joint venture between Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Vestas, a Danish global leader in wind-power technology.

MHI Vestas combines decades of experience in wind power from Vestas with MHI’s “world-class manufacturing expertise and knowhow,” says Masato Yamada, the joint venture’s chief strategy officer. “[This has been] developed [as we have] delivered innovative and integrated solutions across a wide range of industries: commercial aviation, transportation, power plants, gas turbines, machinery, infrastructure, integrated defence and space systems.”

The difficulty in repairing turbines, which can be between 15km and 100km from shore to catch the best winds, is fairly self-evident.



The \$1.1 billion project in Australia will see three solar power plants built, which will generate 550MW

“To put it very simply: we want them to produce maximum output and not break down,” explains Skovgaard-Andersen, who adds that the involvement of Mitsubishi is also an advantage due to its track record in Taiwan.

Offshore wind turbines are one of the fastest growing technologies in energy generation, according to Skovgaard-Andersen, who says CIP is also currently developing the first offshore wind project in the US.

As the dangers of climate change caused by the burning of fossil fuels become ever more apparent, the importance of renewable energy grows.

Danish Ambassador to Japan Freddy Svane sees the combination of Japan’s “strong tradition of engineering and high-quality manufacturing” and Denmark’s “creativity and innovation” as one way to create solutions for “major global challenges”.

The ambassador points to MHI Vestas as a prime example of such cooperation: “Danish and Japanese companies can jointly bring us into the future by combining all their talent, money and technologies.”

On 22 October, Japan and the EU will hold the first round of industrial, trade and economic talks, to be attended by Japanese ministers Taro Kono and Hiroshige Seko, along with the European Commission’s vice president for investment Jyrki Katainen. The aim is to foster cooperation on funding infrastructure projects in the Middle East and Africa. ●

“Spanish companies are working together with Japanese companies and developing very important projects in third countries, like Qatar and Chile”



The business of knowledge

Publishers extract and refine the "oil" of the 21st century

If there was any doubt about the ongoing seismic shift to a knowledge-based economy, the \$9 billion that Google is reportedly paying Apple to remain the default search engine on the iPhone should put that to rest. So valuable is the data generated by more than a trillion Google searches carried out annually that the company will pay vast sums to preserve its access to the large proportion that comes via the iOS.

The adage "knowledge is power" has been around for centuries; now data is also being called "the new oil". Academic research findings are more in demand than ever, though the very lucrative business of publishing them may be facing disruption.

Academic journal publishing is dominated by five companies: Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis and Sage. Their business model is surely the envy of many: content is essentially

supplied free by scientists submitting papers, which are reviewed by other scientists on a voluntary basis, while publishers pay editors and production costs. For subscription journals, most are then bought by universities, libraries and hospitals, often from the same government coffers that paid the wages of the scientists who carried out the initial research and the peer reviews.

The subscriptions are sold in bundles to institutions, which help the global journal publishing industry to pull in more than €20 billion annually, putting it on a par with the music and film industries. However, an initiative known

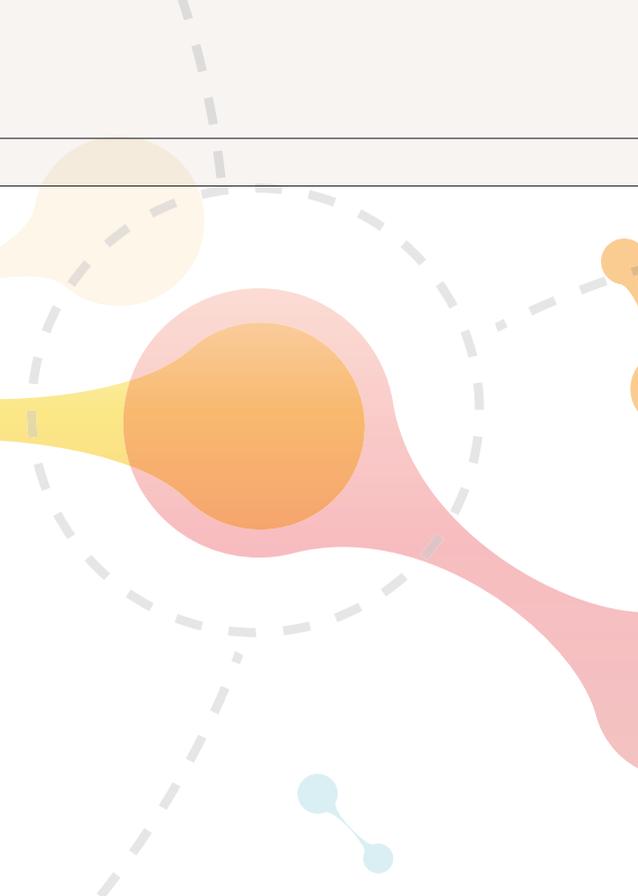
"it is vital that researchers have the freedom to publish in the publication outlet of their choice"

as Plan S, announced in July by Science Europe (an umbrella group of national funding organisations) has potentially major implications.

The plan calls for all publicly funded research to be available by 2020 in open access journals – which would exclude 85% of current publications. The exclusions would also apply to hybrid journals: those that can be accessed free online if authors pay publication fees. Plan S also proposes a cap on publication fees.

"Highly selective subscription journals, such as *Nature*, are presently only sustainable by spreading the cost across [their] many readers, as opposed to the small number of authors," according to a statement by Springer Nature.

Like all the major journal groups, Elsevier – which published 430,000 peer-reviewed articles in over 2,500 journals last year – has concerns about Plan S. The firm supports the position of the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers, which issued a



statement saying it “welcomes the efforts by funders to work towards our shared goals of expanding access to peer-reviewed scientific works to maximise their value and reuse, but urges caution that the next steps in this transition avoid any unintended limitations on academic freedoms ... Above all, it is vital that researchers have the freedom to publish in the publication outlet of their choice.”

In Japan, Elsevier’s customer base consists of those in the academic, corporate and health sectors, according to Dr Anders Karlsson, vice president of the Dutch firm’s global strategic networks for Asia-Pacific.

“As key stakeholders in the knowledge economy, universities are increasingly seen as contributors to economic growth, and with that comes a need for them to show a return on investment. However, Japan has seen a decline in its academic output,” says Karlsson, who notes research institutions in Japan have also been slow to embrace global collaboration.

“Universities are increasingly looking for data to support

decision-making so they can become more competitive,” adds Karlsson.

In the corporate sector, rapid digitisation of the landscape and the need for innovation are increasing demand from companies, some of which are already using Elsevier’s suites of journals and databases.

“More and more often we also see an interest from Japanese companies to use our analytics solutions to find key opinion leaders in academia, or to be able to spot early research trends,” explains Karlsson.

Elsevier publishes around 18% of the world’s peer-reviewed research and has the world’s largest database of academic abstracts and citations. Using AI, it is now mining that treasure trove of data to measure research performance and to find new insights that can aid researchers.

However, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Karlsson says that the focus on attention to detail in Japan has research institutions “very often asking for very rich and in-depth benchmarking and performance data” on how they are doing compared to their peers.

“This can be incredibly insightful, as well as time-consuming, and could – from a European perspective – there-

fore be seen as a bit inefficient,” he adds.

Indeed, with ever-greater quantities of information and data being created all the time, interpreting it into actionable knowledge is of growing importance. This shift is having an impact on the work of London-based The Economist Corporate Network (ECN) and The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), notes Dr Florian Kohlbacher, ECN director for Japan and South Korea.

“For senior executives from the private sector and senior officials from the public sector, they will look at macro trends and say, ‘interesting, but what does that mean for my decision-making?’ You need to help them translate from the macro to the micro level,” he explains.

When serving senior clients who often “don’t have time to sit down and read reports”, it’s crucial to put the information in context, according to Kohlbacher.

“The fact that GDP growth will be 1.5% this year is not really the point for someone at that level. They want to know what the trends are, what the story is, what the business confidence and atmosphere are like on the ground,” he adds. “A combination of the quantitative and the qualitative is becoming more important.”

Clive Humby, the British mathematician credited with coining the phrase “Data is the new oil” in 2006, elaborated that, “It’s valuable but, if unrefined, it cannot really be used.” It’s a view echoed by Kohlbacher.

“When you put that information and data into context and interpret it, then it becomes knowledge for the first time,” he says. “We’re becoming knowledge brokers.” ●

430,000

Elsevier published 430,000 peer-reviewed articles in over 2,500 journals last year



Turning good feelings into good business

Pekka Laitinen, commercial counsellor at the Embassy of Finland

For the past year, Pekka Laitinen has served as commercial counsellor at the Embassy of Finland. He first came to Japan in 1987 as a representative of a Finnish bank and has lived here for a total of 20 years. His career in banking has also taken him to the Netherlands and Russia. As a former chairman of the board of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Laitinen was involved in promoting both trade and investment opportunities in Finland — and now this is his full-time job.



Can you tell me about the Trade Section at the Embassy of Finland?

Finland is viewed very favourably, and it has a strong country brand in Japan. Our mission is to make sure this leads to business transactions, not just good feelings.

We do everything here: advise companies on internationalisation, promote tourism and investment, offer funding services and innovation support, as well as provide the usual export advice, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises [SMEs]. There's definitely a much stronger interest in Japan now than a few years ago.

We also organise a lot of seminars, events and exhibitions. For example, we recently held an event highlighting Finland from a digital healthcare point of view, showing that our digital healthcare offerings are a good fit for Japanese companies.

What is the current state of trade between Finland and Japan?

Trade between our countries is increasing. There was a total of €1.3 billion in trade last year. It's no surprise that wood, in its various forms — sawn wood, lumber, paper, cardboard — was the largest piece of the pie at 37.5%. A lot of the wood we export to Japan is used for construction, especially in houses.

Foodstuffs is currently only 1.1%, but the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement could increase this threefold. It wouldn't make this a huge piece of the pie, but it could amount to an additional €50

million in exports annually from Finland. There's a lot of potential for food from the Arctic, such as Arctic berries — not only for consumers, but as raw material for various industries, starting with cosmetics.

What are some Finnish products that are popular in Japan, and why do you think they have succeeded here?

We have some SMEs that are very successful in Japan. One Finnish company called VividWorks, for example, has created a product with a new retail service function: 3D visualisation. They are now the market leader in Japan in this segment.

But Moomin is number one. Japan is the biggest market for Moomin goods, bigger than Finland. It just clicked here — in an optimal way. It's not that we promoted Moomin, but the Japanese found it. The animations were done here because the Japanese were interested in doing them. There's something in the philosophy behind the books that resonates here, as it does in Finland.

Some Finnish design firms are also very visible here: Marimekko and Iittala. We have high hopes for Metsä, which will give us a permanent facility to promote our design products.

What is Metsä?

It's a park in Hanno, Saitama Prefecture, that's divided into two parts. Metsä is the area around Lake Miyazawa, with shops and restaurants. It will be open to everyone. There will also be boats, and workshops where you can do woodworking and even learn to make canoes. It opens on 9 November. Then, in March, the Moominvalley Theme Park will open. You'll have Moominhouse. There'll be

a big museum, which tells the life of the artist, Tove Jansson, and an AR/VR experience that will allow you to be part of the story. There'll also be a theatre, and a pancake restaurant where you can try Moominmamma's pancakes.

Most of the Finnish brands will be in Metsä in one way or another, either with their own stores or as part of a bigger collection. An interesting company called TRE will be opening a shop. It distributes the work of between 200 and 300 Finnish designers, often very small companies. It will be an excellent channel for small Finnish design companies to test the waters in Japan.

What is Slush, and how is it helping to promote Finland?

It's a startup and tech event that began in Finland less than 10 years ago, with 60 people, as a game developers' meeting. Now 20,000 people attend every year. They've started side events around the world and Tokyo was one of the first of these.

Slush organisers don't emphasise too much that it's from Finland, but obviously it creates a lot of goodwill for us. We get a lot of investors and companies looking for new technologies and partners because of it. It's an excellent way to show what we can do, and it's a key tool for getting SMEs into the Japanese market.

One of the challenges of the job I'm doing is that we need to have an impact — not just have small campaigns here and there showing some Finnish cups and saucers in one place and then in another — but have a real effect on society and the economy, on both sides. Slush is one very important part of that. ●

Roppongi Hills

WEST WALK 5th Floor brings together an array of special restaurants that showcase the excellence of chefs in Japan

Our Premier Dining Floor is a unique space that allows you to experience the best of Tokyo's culinary culture – where renowned chefs prepare dishes you can't taste anywhere else.



Yakitori Torioka

In 2011, the restaurant Torishiki secured a Michelin star for its high-quality *yakitori*. Torioka was born from Torishiki, opening in Roppongi Hills to much acclaim. With Mr. Noriyuki Kurosaki at the grill and offering the best in hospitality, you will be sure to impress your guests from all over the world.

i Tel.: 03-6447-2933 | Dinner: 17:00 to 23:00 | Closed Wednesdays

Tempura Ten Soso

Mr. Keita Sato, who has extensive experience working at a famous *tempura* restaurant, has been welcomed as chef at Ten Soso. He uses only the most carefully selected ingredients from all over Japan, and for his batter, uses only wheat flour, and not eggs. Come and enjoy the relaxed, traditional Japanese atmosphere built in the style of a tea house – a place of genuine refinement.

i Tel.: 03-3478-5525 | Lunch: 11:00 to 15:00 (last order 14:00) |
Dinner: 17:00 to 23:00 (last order 21:30)



Eel Restaurant Unagidokoro Kurochodo

Mr. Hisashi Nakamura, who has worked at eel restaurants for 38 years, serves as the chef of Unagidokoro Kurochodo. Eel is prepared in the Kansai style, grilled but not steamed, so that you can taste both the umami and fat, and relish its slightly chewy texture. Only the highest quality domestic eels and other Japanese ingredients are used.

i Tel.: 03-3478-5445 | Lunch: 11:00 to 15:00 (last order 14:00) |
Dinner: 17:00 to 23:00 (last order 22:00) | Open weekends and holidays
from 11:00 to 23:00 (last order 22:00)





Mr. Yoshizawa believes in serving dishes where the essential flavours of each ingredient are drawn out to their fullest

Japanese Cuisine Yoshizawa

Mr. Sadahisa Yoshizawa, an acclaimed chef who learned his craft at Japanese restaurants in Kyoto and Tokyo, continues to earn Michelin stars for his restaurants. He believes in serving dishes where the essential flavours of each ingredient are drawn out to their fullest by not doing more than is absolutely necessary.

Ginza Yoshizawa — so popular that it is difficult to secure a reservation — will open in Roppongi Hills with Sadahisa Yoshizawa himself as the head chef.

📞 Tel.: 03-6812-9799 | Lunch: 11:30 to 14:30 (last order 12:30) | Dinner: 18:00 to 22:30 (last order 20:00) | Closed on Mondays, every third Sunday, and for lunch on Tuesdays



roppongi hills

6-10-1 Roppongi,
Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-6108
Roppongi Hills West Walk 5th Floor





Finland

Holding on to its roots

Finland, like Japan, enjoys a strong reputation globally for its accomplishments in high-tech and its ambitious startups. The annual Slush startup and technology event in Helsinki sees 20,000 participants from around the world, and its Tokyo chapter has been equally as popular. But Finland, also like Japan, continues to value its traditional industries. Time-tested products make up a major part of the nation's trade with Japan.

With forests covering nearly 75% of Finland, it's not surprising that one of the largest sectors for Finnish exports is forestry.

“The quality of Finnish forestry products and wood materials is very high, and this is a well-known fact within Japanese industries,” explains Finnish Ambassador-Designate to Japan Pekka Orpana. “Forestry and timber production in Finland are managed in an environmentally and ethically sustainable way, which is another positive asset in this market.”

A major player in the Finnish forestry sector is Stora Enso. In addition to selling rough sawn and planed timber, as well as many other wood products, the firm has a long history of using Finland's trees to create numerous consumer and industrial products, including paper and packaging



“The quality of Finnish forestry products and wood materials is very high, and this is a well-known fact within Japanese industries”

—Finnish Ambassador-Designate to Japan Pekka Orpana



board. For the past 20 years, Stora Enso has been steadily expanding into new markets, which includes an office in Tokyo.

Perhaps one of the most enduring images of Finland for people around the world is that of the Finnish log cabin, built with trees from the surrounding woods to make a comfortable, natural home. The basic principles of Finland’s traditional architecture are still used today. The Finnish firm Honka uses native wood and Nordic house-building techniques to create beautiful buildings that can withstand the elements. Among Honka’s many projects in Japan are a luxury lodging resort in Karuizawa and a children’s hospital in Matsumoto.

In addition to its top-notch forestry sector, Finland has a major market presence in providing fibre-based products for businesses in a wide range of industries. Particularly notable in this area is Ahlstrom-Munksjö, which can trace its roots back more than 150 years to a Finnish timber trading and sawmill operation. It produces everyday items, such as food packaging and décor paper, as well as more complex and esoteric materials, including electrotechnical paper and glass-fibre materials. Ahlstrom-Munksjö serves clients around the world, including Japan.

According to Ambassador-Designate Orpana, it is the combination of Finnish dedication to what works and an eye to the future that guarantee the success of these ventures.

“The Finnish forest industry is a prime example of an industrial branch reinventing itself successfully,” he says. “New materials, bioenergy production and combining electronics with forest-based products are some of the fruits of their recent innovation work. I think that high investments in R&D and the well-educated workforce are behind these successes.”

Finnish industry will continue to give people in Japan the tried and true stability of yesterday, combined with the unlimited potential of tomorrow. ●



Trade with Japan

Exports to Japan: €1.3 billion
Imports from Japan: €716 million

SOURCE:
BUSINESS FINLAND (2017)



Area

338,145 km².
Coastline: 1,250km. More than 60,000 lakes.

Climate

Cold temperate, potentially subarctic, but comparatively mild.

Major cities

Helsinki (capital), Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Turku, Oulu and Lahti.

Population

5,518,371 (July 2017, estimate).
Urban population: 85.4% (2018). 37.78% are 25–54 years of age.

Natural resources

Timber, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, chromite, nickel, gold, silver and limestone.



85.4%

Urban population





BUSINESSES FROM ...

FINLAND

A look at some companies from the region



GUEST HOUSE

Guest House is a registered architectural office. It is the builder of Rantasalmi homes, with their excellent free-floor plans designed to enrich your life. We can develop high-quality Finnish log houses, and original wooden houses that deliver comfort through next-generation design and performance. We're building houses today for a lifetime of comfort.

.....
gh-archi.com
rantasalmi.jp



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For more information please contact the EBC Secretariat.
Alison Murray, EBC Executive Director. Tel: 03-3263-6222. E-mail: ebc@gol.com



EUROPEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL IN JAPAN
THE EUROPEAN (EU) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



EBC PERSONALITY

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT

PHOTO BY KAGEAKI SMITH



Hiroaki Nagahara

The recipe for a dream

Less than an hour's drive from the busy cities of Kobe, Osaka and Kyoto is one of the oldest hot spring towns in Japan, Arima Onsen, with a history going back more than 1,200 years. A peaceful getaway frequented by many in the Kansai region, it has more than 25 hotels and inns, hiking trails in the surrounding mountains, as well as excellent places to eat.

“One day, I'd really like to run a restaurant in Arima Onsen,” says Hiroaki

Nagahara, general manager of Finnair Japan. “Of course, it'll be difficult to make this a reality, but dreams are dreams.”

Growing up in Kobe, Nagahara took great pleasure in watching his mother cook and being shown how to make different dishes. With his wife's help, he has refined his ability to use *dashi* (Japanese soup stock) and condiments such as *mirin* (a type of rice wine), soy sauce and sake. But it is under the informal tutelage of his mentor chef that he has truly developed his skills in the kitchen.

“We've known each other for years, and whenever I visit his restaurant, I always ask how he cooks different dishes; I try to copy them — and then make them my own,”

Nagahara explains. “He runs four Italian restaurants in Osaka; my favourite is called Il Piatto.”

When their friendship began, the restaurant owner would write out some of his recipes for Nagahara. Now, the master gives the apprentice detailed advice regarding techniques and ingredients.

“Probably my best dish is spaghetti carbonara — the traditional Italian way using both the yolks and whites of eggs, but not cream, which is common in Japan,” says Nagahara. “And people say my quiche is good. I use spinach and eel — that's something I learned from my mentor chef.”

Since being posted to Tokyo nearly 15 years ago as a *tanshin-funin* (business bachelor), living apart from his family in Kobe, he has been able to devote more time to improving his cooking skills, occasionally making meals for guests.

“What I really like is making people happy,” says Nagahara. “And what makes people happier than food?”

This desire to make people happy is also an essential part of his work life. It extends across his 33-year career in the airline industry — five years at Air India, 19 years at Air New Zealand and now nine years at Finnair — in which he has done “everything except fixing and flying the airplanes”.

“Providing services is all about looking after people,” Nagahara says. “Regardless of whether we're talking about a passenger or a travel agent, building a good relationship and taking care of your customers are the most important things.”

Finnair is celebrating its 35th anniversary in Japan this year and, in that time, it has gone

from one flight from Helsinki a week to 31 during the summer months, today flying into Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Fukuoka.

“Finnair uses the geographical location of Helsinki — the closest European destination to Asia — and its European network to appeal to people in Japan; so we're not only selling Finland, but lots of places throughout Europe,” Nagahara explains. “Between Japan and Europe, Helsinki is the number two gateway to Europe, after Paris. And we want to become the number one choice among European airlines for Japanese passengers.”

Nagahara has had a lifelong interest in languages — having taken ESL classes in the US, and then majoring in foreign languages at West Virginia University, where he studied German and Spanish. He learned early on that “nothing is as powerful as language to bridge people and cultures”. Working for Finnair has encouraged Nagahara to further pursue this interest.

“For a long time, I was just teaching myself Finnish by reading books and listening to CDs,” he says. “But recently, I've started Skype lessons. I really hope I can start to understand more of what people at head office are talking about. I don't know how good I'll get, but I'm trying.”

A familiarity with different languages will certainly be an asset in the future — it will help Nagahara communicate effectively with the many international customers who are sure to flock to his dream restaurant in Arima Onsen. ●

Hiroaki Nagahara is general manager of Finnair Japan and a member of the EBC Airlines Committee.

Do you like natto?

Time spent working overseas:

I've only worked in Japan.

Career regret:

None.

Favourite saying:

Ichigo-ichie, which means that we should value each occasion we get together with people since it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Favourite book:

Ryoma Goes His Way by Ryotaro Shiba.

Cannot live without:

Good friends, good food and good wine.

Lesson learned working for a European company:

The importance of understanding different cultures.

Secret of success in business:

Trust people — customers, bosses and your team — and build trust.

Favourite place to dine:

Il Piatto in Osaka.

Do you like natto?:

No, I can't stand it. We don't have a culture of eating natto in Kobe.

Financial Reporting

Doing away with the double standard

The EBC Financial Reporting Committee is continuing to press ahead with its single mission: to promote the adoption in Japan of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

A set of rules that originated in the European Union, IFRS is seen by its backers as the best global language for reporting a firm's financial condition. The standard was conceived to give accountants in many different countries a crystal-clear picture of a company's consolidated financial statements.

And it could give those in corporate Japan who adopt it a big advantage. Many firms here are striving to align themselves with global standards as the government pledges to become an active player in multilateral trade agreements.

"IFRS can make Japan more international," says committee chair Dirk Hermans. "The Japanese can participate in global markets more easily and become more interesting to foreign investors and other market participants in other countries."

According to Hermans, 126 Japanese companies were on board with IFRS as of March 2018. He says there is "steady progress" with the transition.

"I think that in a couple of years, we'll see around 160 companies on IFRS, including a majority of companies of significant size," Hermans notes.

The committee expects that as IFRS becomes prevalent among the corporate heavyweights, many of the smaller companies with overseas business connections will follow suit.

Japan's Financial Services Agency (FSA), the country's powerful financial regulator, has not made adoption mandatory. Rather, companies are signing on voluntarily — which makes the committee's efforts to raise awareness all the more important.

The ongoing adoption process tends to involve converging the rules of J-GAAP, Japan's predominant accounting standard, with those of IFRS. The challenges that need to be dealt with include a lack of clarity in the interpretation of certain rules, how to resolve differences between the two standards, and the training of accountants.

As for the committee itself, the chairman says participation has unfortunately tapered somewhat this year. Increasingly, members only come to meetings that cover topics they are interested in learning more about. For example, one relatively popular session featured use-cases at companies that were in the process of adopting a new revenue recognition standard.

"Now, we want to give the option for members to attend just the meetings they're interested in, rather than having

them attend an entire series," says Hermans, who is also a director in the Accounting & Finance Group at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. He adds that he would like to see a more flexible membership system at the EBC so people can attend several different meetings without having to pay additional membership fees.

One idea is to contact other committees to ask whether any of their members are interested in sending delegates from their accounting and finance departments to attend meetings of their financial reporting counterpart.

Hermans has also been considering direct advocacy efforts, such as holding a meeting or event attended by officials of the FSA.

"But I think that committee participation is just not strong enough to do that yet," he says.

Given that the transition to IFRS is proceeding steadily, Hermans, who has headed the committee since it was founded in 2013, is thinking about some new areas to explore.

"Within financial reporting, automation is a big topic," he explains. "You can automate processes that are repetitive, which reduces risk because there are fewer errors."

"Other new technologies are coming, like blockchain," the chairman adds. "Right now, it's not used in financial reporting, but maybe in a few years."

The incorporation of those fields in the committee's advocacy areas would come after the achievement of the committee's original goal — but members may not have to wait too much longer for that to happen. ●

Advocacy issues

➤ Revenue recognition

The Accounting Standards Board of Japan should minimise any deviations between a new standard for revenue recognition under J-GAAP and the approach under IFRS.

➤ Financial instruments

All investments in equity securities should be measured at fair value, as opposed to historical cost.

➤ Property, plant and equipment

Japan should align accounting for PPE under J-GAAP with IFRS, while considering the tax implications.

Dirk Hermans is chairperson of the EBC Financial Reporting Committee and a director in the Accounting & Finance Group at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.



The last word

Reception with the European Parliament's INTA committee

Before it can come into force, the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) — covering 600 million people and a third of global trade — must first be ratified by the Japanese Diet and the European Parliament. And the vote to ratify the EPA at a plenary session of the European Parliament in December will, by no means, be a rubber stamp.



Bernd Lange,
chairman of INTA

On 18 September, at the Capitol Hotel Tokyu, a delegation from the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) held a reception with members of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC). INTA, a cross-national group with various party affiliations, is responsible for analysing trade agreements the EU has negotiated and giving recommendations to the European Parliament on whether it should ratify them.

"Because there is no investment dispute settlement mechanism [in the EPA], this is an EU-only trade agreement. That means that after [the European Parliament's] vote, this process is concluded — we have the last word over the whole exercise," explained Bernd Lange, chairman of INTA, during his welcome address.

"Normally, plenary follows the recommendations of INTA," he later told *Eurobiz Japan*. "In the last legislative term, we adopted a lot of trade agreements, but we also rejected two."

The committee organised this reception to hear EBC members' thoughts about the EPA, the business climate in Japan and remaining obstacles; to find out if there is "a new wind blowing in our relations between the EU and Japan", said Lange. On hand to give their input were representatives from several EBC committees, including the automobiles, liquor and banking committees.

"We take seriously the opinions of the relevant stakeholders, including the European Business Council," said Pedro Silva Perreira, the committee's standing rapporteur on the negotiations between the EU and Japan, in his opening remarks.

He added: "We have learned from previous discussions that we shouldn't take anything for granted until the very last minute. So, let's take this final stage seriously."

As part of INTA's three-day "fact-finding mission" to Japan, the 13-member delegation also met with Japanese ministers, including Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Hiroshige Seko and Minister

"we shouldn't take anything for granted until the very last minute"

of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono; RENGO (the Japanese Trade Union Confederation); and the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation). This gave the committee members several opportunities to hear what stakeholders are saying about the EPA.

INTA's aim during some of these meetings was to get assurances from Japanese authorities on issues yet to be resolved.

"Japan has not ratified two of the eight labour standards of the ILO [International Labour Organization] — one on forced labour, one on anti-discrimination in the workplace," stated Lange. "And we want to motivate the government to give a commitment. Otherwise, it might be a problem in the European Parliament to have a majority for the agreement."

Another outstanding issue involves data-flow and concerns around Japan's treatment of personal data, data ownership and the question of unjustified localisation requirements.

"We want to get from the Japanese further reassurance that the political commitments in this agreement are to be taken seriously," said Silva Perreira. "That goes for the cooperation in relevant environmental conventions — the Paris Agreement, of course — but also the fight against illegal logging and illegal fishing."

The committee members did not dispute that the EPA is of major strategic importance and has huge economic potential. Lange himself was hopeful for a positive outcome.

"We are like-minded countries ... and we're working really closely together on an international level," he told *Eurobiz Japan*. "I'm convinced that the outstanding issues can be solved easily." ●



Only nudging the envelope

A look at fintech's future in Japan

When one of the fastest-growing financial technology startups in the UK entered Japan in September, it was another sign that the country's finance landscape is changing. Backed by online commerce giant Rakuten, Revolut enables users to transfer and spend money in various currencies, free of charge. Japan granted Revolut approval ahead of Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia.

In 2017, Japan was one of the hottest markets for cryptocurrency deals, even as the country has continued to grapple with the effects of large-scale hacks of exchanges, such as Mt. Gox and Coincheck. And last month, Japan became the first major economy to launch a payments system based on blockchain technology with the release of MoneyTap, an app backed by midsized banks.

A panel of fintech experts convened on 2 October, at the offices of law firm Nishimura & Asahi, to discuss the current state of fintech and its future in Japan. The Roppongi Bar Association and the Greek Chamber of Commerce in Japan sponsored the event along with the European Business Council in Japan, as well as chambers of commerce representing a number of countries, including France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

Paul Chapman, CEO and founder of the startup behind finance tracking app Moneytree, noted that Japan is still saddled with legacy banking, such as the prevalence of cash and ATMs. But he said it is also the third country to embrace open banking, which allows third parties access to secure banking information. Under the open regime, apps such as Moneytree can initiate bank transfer payments and perform other time-saving functions.

"Most countries have gutted bank branch networks to save money, and this is happening now in Japan — the megabanks



will need to replace staff with digital banking," said Chapman. "Japan is advanced in terms of top-down innovation but behind in bottom-up, which is what fintech is — with small companies pushing the envelope."

Anri Okamoto, head of the Legal Department at online flea market Mercari, said that, while fintech policy is progressing, the situation on the ground is very different. The ratio of non-cash payments in Japan is about 18%, compared with 50% in the US, 60% in China and 80% in South Korea, she noted.

"One consumer survey in Japan found that some people are afraid of mobile or credit card payments because they don't want to spend too much," said Okamoto. "So, there's a challenge for us to expand the mobile payment business in Japan."

Spyridon Mentzas, a former head of equities at Mizuho Securities who launched his own fintech startup, agreed that there's a significant gap between officials in Japan's Financial Services Agency, which sets fintech rules, and everyday users of the system. He added that this is one reason it's challenging to establish new business models related to finance in Japan.



Spyridon Mentzas (left) and Anri Okamoto

Jeff Wentworth, co-founder of Tokyo blockchain startup Curvegrid, noted that Japan's financial watchdog is considering treating cryptocurrencies like assets rather than currencies. This follows last year's surge in the value of bitcoin and the volume of investment into virtual currencies. He suggested the change could promote the adoption of security-type instruments backed by blockchain.

"Japan is probably one of the best countries in the world to be involved in blockchain," said Wentworth. "We can have conversations here that are not possible in other parts of the world." ●



The Agenda

NOV
1

FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

FCCJ Luncheon Meeting – Kjell Forsén, Vaisala Oyj

TIME: 12:00 to 14:00**VENUE:** Hotel Okura, South Wing, Kensington Terrace**FEE:** ¥7,000 (for members), ¥9,000 (for non-members)**CONTACT:** fccj@gol.comNOV
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SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

November Luncheon – Daniel Küng

TIME: 12:00 to 14:00**VENUE:** Grand Hyatt Tokyo**FEE:** ¥6,500 (for members), ¥8,000 (for non-members)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpNOV
2

BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

BLCCJ Gala Ball 2018 – “Back to 1978!”

TIME: 18:30 to 23:00**VENUE:** Conrad Tokyo, Kazanami Room, 2F, Shiodome station**FEE:** ¥22,500 (for members), ¥26,500 (for non-members)**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpNOV
22

SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

SCCIJ & Swiss Club Tokyo – Year End Party 2018

TIME: 18:00 to 23:00**VENUE:** Hilton Tokyo, Kiku Ballroom**FEE:** ¥15,000 (for members and guests), ¥8,000 (for students under 18, with valid student ID)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpNOV
2

BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

2018 British Business Awards

TIME: 18:30 to 22:30**VENUE:** Grand Hyatt Tokyo, 3F**FEE:** ¥28,000 (for members and non-members)**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.comNOV
22

IRELAND JAPAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ireland Japan Business Awards 2018

TIME: 19:00 to 22:00**VENUE:** Conrad Tokyo**DRESS CODE:** Business**FEE:** ¥22,000 (for members), ¥24,000 (for non-members); table: ¥21,000 per person**CONTACT:** secretariat@ijcc.jpNOV
12

ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Italy, Land of Wine

TIME: 11:00 to 17:30**VENUE:** Happa-en**FEE:** ¥6,000 (for members), ¥8,000 (for non-members)**CONTACT:** sg@iccj.or.jpDEC
13

CZECH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

10th Czech Business & Culture Networking Christmas Event

TIME: 18:00 to 20:30 (doors open at 17:30)**VENUE:** Czech Embassy in Tokyo, Reception Hall, near Hiroo Station**FEE:** ¥5,000 (for members), ¥7,000 (for non-members)**CONTACT:** event@cccij.comNOV
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SPANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Spain Japan Business Contribution Awards 2018

TIME: 18:00 to 21:30**VENUE:** ENEKO Tokyo**FEE:** ¥15,000 (for members), ¥20,000 (for non-members); table for eight: ¥112,000 (¥14,000 per person)**CONTACT:** info@spanishchamber.or.jp



The camera in your smartphone can do a lot more than just take selfies. Not only can it be used with augmented reality (AR) apps, which overlay data or graphics on your camera feed, but you can use it to search for information on the internet. This visual search feature — similar to Shazam, but for objects — opens up a host of potential uses.

Eye spy

No need to type — just search with your camera

First announced in 2017, Google Lens is a visual search app, powered by deep learning, that can recognise objects, media, text and anything else you point your camera at — either in real time, with its AR function, or by analysing a photo you've taken. For instance, you could pan over a shopfront and Lens can recognise the establishment, immediately displaying its name, opening hours, address and customer reviews.

When Google updated Google Lens earlier this year, it introduced some visual search features that will appeal to businesspeople. Its smart text selection feature lets you quickly call up the definition of a word; copy and paste text in the camera's view, such as reservation numbers or Wi-Fi passwords; and find out the name of an unfamiliar dish using a photo in a restaurant's menu. The

app — available on Google's Pixel smartphones and other Android devices — can also do translations in near real-time, which can come in handy if you're on a business trip in a foreign country. And if you see an item of clothing or another product that you'd like to buy, put it in the camera's view and Lens' style match function is supposed to be able to call up similar items for sale.

Needless to say, it doesn't work perfectly. I tried Lens on an iPhone via the Google Photos app and snapped a pic of a *manekineko* porcelain cat. The app called up photos of real cats, starting with American Wirehair. Then I tried photos

of Japanese text. With the word フライパン (*furaipan*, or frying pan), Lens successfully pointed me to the results of a Google search for frying pans. With the more complex 電気代 (*denkidai*, or electricity bill), it pointed me to a book in Japanese about Tokyo Electric Power Company and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Not quite what I was looking for, but points for reading part of the word correctly.

Google Lens isn't the only visual search app in town — a host of others have been released over the past couple of years. Samsung Electronics' Bixby is a voice-directed virtual assistant that also has AR visual search functions. Microsoft's Bing now supports image searches, but they're based on photos. Pinterest Lens is another AR feature that links to similar images on the photo hosting platform as well as related info on the web. eBay's apps Find It On eBay and Image Search allow users to use photos to search the site's 1.1 billion listings for similar items. Other apps, from smaller developers, include CamFind, which analyses an image and suggests keywords associated with it.

The technology is relatively new and, like speech recognition, will invariably become much more accurate. By then we'll be bombarded with even more information — and ads — about everything in our field of view. ●

you could pan over a shopfront and [the app] can recognise the establishment, immediately displaying its name, opening hours, address and customer reviews



Success is on the cards

Japan bets big on casinos

Japan — home to horse, boat, motorcycle and bicycle gambling; as well as lotteries, and nearly 10,000 pachinko parlours — is now betting big on casinos, with licence bidding scheduled to start as early as next year.

After the Integrated Resorts

Implementation Bill was passed in July, potential suitors for the expected three initial Japanese concessions include Melco Resorts & Entertainment, Las Vegas Sands, Wynn Resorts, MGM Resorts, Caesars Entertainment and Genting Singapore.

Winning bids may require investment of over \$10 billion, but Morgan Stanley estimates industry returns as high as twice that annually once operations begin, likely by 2025. Other profit estimates, based on earnings at existing Singapore and Macau casinos, are even higher.

The casinos will face a 30% revenue tax — less than Macau's 39% but more than in Singapore — and are certain to boost weak national and local coffers with related business. Some 28.7 million people visited Japan last year and spent an average of ¥150,000; these numbers are certain to rise if games of chance are part of tourists' itineraries.

The boon for local firms in construction, real estate, transit, hospitality and retail will be dramatic, and different locations around the country are now vying to be chosen.

David Bonnet, managing partner at Delta State Holdings, has noted that the integrated resorts businesses will be consortiums with a strong Japanese presence.

"A lot of companies will start looking at the [integrated resorts] business much more holistically. Who's going to control the retail? Who's going to control the hotel? Who's going to be the landlord?" he said at

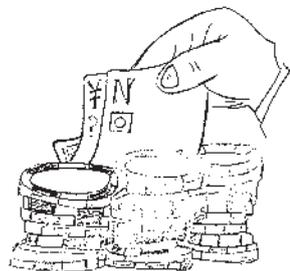
a press conference in Tokyo. "It's very much a Japanese-led enterprise, which functions better because that enterprise will deal with Japanese authorities."

Among potential locations for the first integrated resort-retail-gaming-MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions) site are the prefectures of Hokkaido, Nagasaki and

Minister Shinzo Abe has tried to address such concerns through usage regulations. For example, Japanese patrons must pay a ¥6,000 daily entry fee with no more than three weekly or 10 monthly visits, while foreigners have unlimited access. However, critics say Japanese casino rules are less stringent than Singapore's on its local gamblers.

The number of gambling addicts in Japan is estimated to be as high as five million, so the fear is that both minnows and the gaming whales that casinos target may end deeply in debt and exposed to organised crime elements who, not surprisingly, have also expressed interest in opportunities.

Other losers may include Japan's pachinko industry, which earns ¥1.6 trillion annu-



Wakayama; Osaka's man-made island of Yumeshima; and the city of Yokohama. Only 3% of the property can be used for gambling, but with no limits on concession area, the actual size of the casino may exceed those of Macau and Singapore resorts.

Japan has come a long way since playing cards were introduced in the 16th century. Card gambling was legalised 300 years later, giving birth to Nintendo's first business venture in 1889 — namely playing cards — as well as the word *yakuza*. That association with crime is the reason more than 60% of Japanese still oppose casinos, although Prime

ally — more than all Las Vegas casinos combined.

But which player is all in on Japan's casino bet?

Osaka, host to 11 million visitors last year, could see as many as 80,000 jobs added if it wins a bid. And Governor Ichiro Matsui says Yumeshima could be ready by 2023, ahead of competitors.

An Osaka property alone could earn \$4 billion annually, according to Morgan Stanley estimates. Doubling down, Osaka will learn in November whether it will be home to the 2025 World Expo — a potentially unbeatable revenue pair when the first cards fall. ●

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

The wide variety of things to experience can sometimes feel overwhelming for newcomers to Tokyo. Even for those who have lived in Japan's capital for many years, there's so much choice that you can easily miss much of what the city has to offer. To help both the new arrival and the seasoned veteran, we've composed a list of some of the best places in the city — for accommodation, education, food, relaxation and other offerings — for you to take advantage of while you're here.

WHERE TO STAY

Tokyo has a multitude of superb hotels for when you first arrive. The **Hyatt Regency Tokyo**, adjacent to Shinjuku Central Park, provides a wide range of services guaranteed to satisfy the needs of any guest. You can take advantage of its comfortable rooms, the very best in cuisine at its excellent restaurants and elegant bar, or visit the urban day spa. The hotel is in a convenient location that makes it easy to access other areas in and around Tokyo.

LONGER STAYS

Many expats may be looking for long-term lodgings, with all the necessary modern conveniences. **Serviced Apartments Azabu Court** (www.azabucourt.com) is an extended-stay hotel where all you need to enjoy a comfortable life is to bring your suitcase. Each of its rooms are equipped with a bathroom and kitchen; basic furniture; a TV set; WiFi; a refrigerator, microwave oven, cooking utensils, dishes, pots and pans. There is also a concierge at reception, and linen and room-cleaning services. It is in the exclusive neighbourhood of Azabu, just a four-minute walk from Hiroo Station.

A HOME OF YOUR OWN

For those staying in Tokyo permanently, **Arkios** (<http://www.arkios.co.jp/>) has been helping expatriates to Tokyo settle into their new homes, giving reliable service and assistance at every stage of the process for nearly 20 years. It manages

hundreds of properties, including apartments, detached houses and townhouses, all of which are easily searchable on its state-of-the-art database. Arkios' bilingual agents are happy to assist you in any way you need.

DESIGN YOUR HOME

Once you have your own house or apartment, you'll be eager to turn it into a home. Based in Tokyo, **One Designs Co., Ltd.** (www.koyou-onesd.co.jp/en/) offers a wide range of services, from interior design and construction to the complete renovation of a building, as well as assistance for

rental properties. The firm delivers the highest quality workmanship and service to its clients, including buyers, developers and real estate agencies. Capable of understanding and meeting requests for specific room layouts or special interior design, One Designs also welcomes enquiries about office design and hotel renovation.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Headquartered in Tokyo, **Argentum** is Japan's premier financial planning and wealth management firm serving both the foreign and Japanese communities. With offices in Seoul and Hong Kong, it advises clients throughout Asia, and the rest of the world. Advisors seek to build a personalised and long-lasting relationship with you, and once you become a client, they will continue to help and support you with advice and solutions as your needs change — wherever you are in the world.

PLAY AND LEARN

Those with young families will be eager to find places for their little ones to start their schooling. The keyword at **St. Alban's Nursery** (www.saintalbans.jp) is "personalised". Despite being one of the longest-established English-speaking nurseries in Tokyo (since 1972), there is a limit of 25 pupils. Each child is able to develop his or her individuality in an atmosphere of personalised care, according to the Montessori method. Although the nursery sits on the leafy grounds of St. Alban's church, it remains non-denominational, welcoming children of all nationalities and backgrounds.

Gymboree Play & Music (www.gymboglobal.jp) has been fostering creativity and confidence in children aged 0 to 6 since 1976. Today, it operates in over 700 locations in 50+ countries, making it a global leader in early childhood development programmes. Whether you choose to participate





there's so much choice that you can easily miss much of what the city has to offer

TWO ROOMS GRILL|BAR

in its Mommy & Me classes or the preschool or afterschool programmes, their age-appropriate activities will help your child develop cognitive, physical and social skills as they play.

Saint Maur International School (www.stmaur.ac.jp), established in 1872 as innovators of international education in Japan, meets the needs of children — co-educational, 2½ years to Grade 12 — from the multi-cultural, multi-faith, international community. Ecole française de Saint Maur, on the same campus, caters to children from CP to CM2. All faculty and staff develop learning experiences that recognise each student as an individual with unique abilities, strengths and talents — preparing students for life, in a caring, family environment.

RELAX AND UNWIND

And it's important to make time for yourself. **Boudoir Day Spa International** (www.boudoirtokyo.com), a trendsetter in Tokyo with over 19 years of experience, offers treatments by aestheticians that include full-body waxing, facials, nail treatments and eyebrow care. Boudoir is a pioneer, having introduced the Brazilian wax to Tokyo in 1999, something that remains its top seller. Considered

to be Tokyo's favourite spa, Boudoir takes pride in offering state-of-the-art services. Experience the ultimate in hand-pampering today, with OPI manicures or Brazilian wax at 30% off every Monday and Tuesday.

A SYMPATHETIC EAR

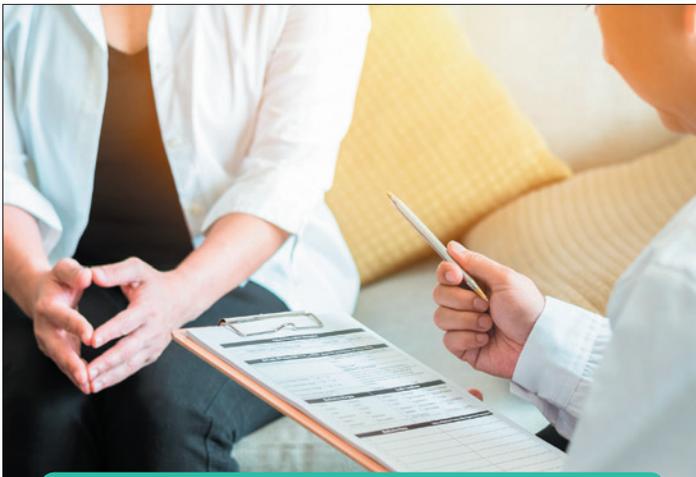
Moving to a new city can be stressful. If you or your family need some support, **Tokyo Mental Health** (TMH) is a premier mental health counselling centre that specialises in working with the foreign and returnee Japanese communities in the Kanto region. With specialised psychological and therapy services for children, adults, couples, families, and corporations, TMH (<https://www.tokyomenalhealth.com/>) is here for all your mental health and

coaching needs. Its staff offers services in native English, Spanish and Japanese.

WHERE TO EAT

Tokyo is often considered the world's food capital and offers plenty of places for an excellent meal out. **ECN Hospitality** (<https://ecnhospitality.jp/>) is a Japan-based hospitality company, established in 2009 by Eddie Baffoe, Matthew Crabbe and Nathan Smith. Since then, they have created and operated venues in Tokyo such as TWO ROOMS GRILL|BAR, Ruby Jack's Steakhouse & Bar and SEPTIÈME Brasserie & Bar and have been providing customers with high-standard food and beverages, warm hospitality and sophisticated surroundings.

With all these and more to choose from, Japan's capital is one of the world's greatest cities to live, work, play and grow. Welcome to Tokyo! ●



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Tokyo Mental Health specialises in serving members of the expat community and Japanese residents returning from overseas. We offer therapy and other psychological services in native English, Spanish and Japanese for children, adults, couples and families.

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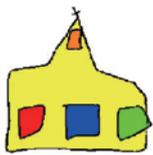
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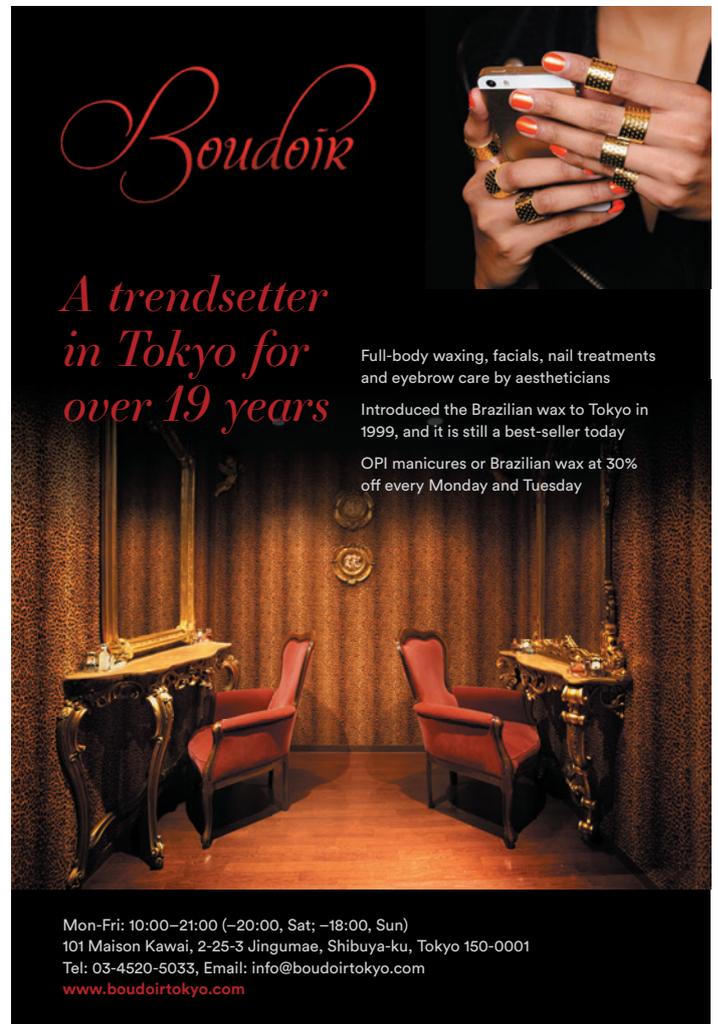
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Time to act

The work of a lesbian activist

In December 2010, then-governor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara told the press that he felt lesbians and gay men were "deficient." Hearing such a prominent leader make this incredibly discriminatory comment was a defining moment in my life — it was the moment I decided to act.

I had studied in Paris and worked at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in Geneva; I had seen first-hand how open and accepting those cities were. After I returned to Japan, I wanted to support the LGBT community here and see my own country become more accepting, but I didn't know how to accomplish this. I had even privately given myself the title of lesbian activist after seeing the film *Milk* — in which the American politician Harvey Milk, played by Sean Penn, calls himself a gay activist — although I hadn't, at that point, done anything.

So, my first act as a lesbian activist was to help arrange a protest at city hall to demand that Ishihara retract his comments. I took to Twitter to encourage people in the LGBT community, who were angry about what he had said, to join me.

That protest changed my life in another way — it was there that I met my former partner, Koyuki Higashi, with whom I started our business, Trois Couleurs. In 2013, we had the

first same-sex wedding at Tokyo Disney Resort and later wrote a book together about our experience trying to arrange this.

At Trois Couleurs we promote LGBT and human rights. We give seminars, speak at conferences and provide consulting services on diversity and inclusion for businesses. Koyuki — who I still work with — gives talks at local governments and for the public. I'm mainly focused on the corporate side: training HR personnel and

companies need to create psychologically safe environments for every employee

upper management. These days, there is a lot of interest in our work from IT and finance firms.

My main message is that companies need to create psychologically safe environments for every employee, including LGBT employees. And the way to achieve this is with more allies. Many Japanese people still don't know exactly what LGBT issues are, so I share some basic facts, such as how 8% of the population identifies as LGBT. I also talk about some of the difficulties they encounter in the workplace and suggest ways these can be tackled. It

has been rewarding to hear from some participants that my talks have changed their worldview.

For nearly two years, I juggled a job at an IT company and my work at Trois Couleurs. But when Shibuya ward first announced that it would begin issuing civil partnership certificates in 2015, Trois Couleurs was approached with requests for interviews by many media outlets. We could already see that this was a milestone in the LGBT movement in Japan, so I decided to quit my IT job and become an activist full time.

Since then, we've seen significant change. Large companies have become more supportive of the LGBT community, most visibly during the annual Tokyo Rainbow Parade. And more services have been made available to same-sex couples, such as life insurance and joint home loans.

Our overarching goal at

Trois Couleurs is to increase the acceptance of diversity and inclusion in Japanese society. I would like the kinds of seminars and training sessions we give to become standard at all work places around the country so people's thinking on a national level begins to change.

The established social norms are still very rigid in Japan, especially concerning traditional gender roles. But several respected figures in society have come out recently. They include University of Tokyo professor Robert Campbell and my current partner, businessperson and author Kazuyo Katsuma. I think this is a very important step for the country. It may be gradual, but things are definitely changing. ●

Hiroko Masuhara is president of Trois Couleurs and deputy executive director of the Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation.





Golf and ramen in the UK

Essendon Country Club

For Japanese tourists going to the UK, it's not such a big problem finding a golf course near London, but finding a course that caters to Japanese tastes and expectations is not so easy. What club serves *katsu-curry* or a bowl of ramen? And do British golf courses even have baths? Some very good courses in Britain don't have a clubhouse, or even a toilet.

The answer to these questions lies in the beautiful Hertfordshire countryside a few kilometres north of London. Essendon Country Club — along with quite a few other golf clubs in the UK — used to be owned by a Japanese company.

Under its Japanese owners, when it was called the London Hatfield Golf Club, the club's two courses — the Old and the New — were split into public and private, respectively, with separate clubhouses. The Old Course used the old mansion house as its clubhouse. It had a menu that included Japanese food and even had showers, not always a feature of British clubs.

The New Course opened in 1993 and was aimed specifically at Japanese golfers. The clubhouse was all new, with stylish changing rooms and a bath. And the course itself is easier both to walk and to play. It also has dual greens on most holes, a common feature in Japan but almost unheard of in the UK.

Other formerly Japanese-owned golf courses in the UK include The Rolls of Monmouth Golf Club, built around the old

home of Henry Rolls of Rolls-Royce fame; the Oxfordshire Golf Club; Buckinghamshire Golf Club, which still has a Japanese website; Old Thorns Manor Hotel Golf and Country Estate in Hampshire; Moatlands Golf Club and London Golf Club in Kent; and Turnberry in Scotland.

Most of these clubs opened in the early 1990s when Japanese companies were flush with cash and golf was booming. With the exception of Moatlands, which closed in 2009, all have now been sold. British Open venue Turnberry is owned by Donald Trump.

The London Hatfield Golf Club was bought by local brothers Kieran and Liam Griffin in December 2011 from the firm Tokyo Leisure and rechristened Essendon, the name of the nearest village. While the Griffins' stated goal was to make the club accessible to all, they were keen to retain the positive Japanese elements that the previous owners had introduced. So, the dual greens remain and the clubhouse menu features ramen, *katsu-curry*, *gyoza* and *edamame*. More importantly, they decided to use the clubhouse on the New Course rather than the old mansion house, which means fabulous changing rooms, showers and a Japanese-style bath. They even have four Japanese club staff, including the chef, who has been there for 35 years.

The Griffins' decision has paid off. Membership has increased from 250 to around 1,000, and *katsu-curry* is one of the most popular items on the menu. You're not expected to eat lunch after nine holes, as you are in Japan, but if you want to feel a little more like you're on a Japanese course — even though you're 10,000km away — it may just be possible. ●

the clubhouse menu features ramen, *katsu-curry*, *gyoza* and *edamame*





Odd couples

A crash course in traditional and unusual wine pairings

There are few things that cause more anxiety when hosting a dinner party than figuring out which wines to serve with a meal. Take the guesswork out of your next get-together with these pairing suggestions.

CHAMPAGNE is traditionally paired with oysters. But for those looking for more laid-back fare, Champagne tops the list of wines that partner with salty, fried and oily foods, such as fried chicken, calamari, popcorn and french fries. Champagne's high acidity draws away all the greasiness, leaving your tastebuds refreshed and ready for more.

SAUVIGNON BLANC goes fabulously with fish, salads and anything citrusy. Its strong fruit flavours, high acidity and light mouth-feel mean that it also pairs beautifully with Asian cuisine. Off-dry Rieslings are the more classic pairing for curries and other Asian staples, but Sauvignon Blanc offers a similar showcase of these bolder flavours without any of the residual sweetness. It's also one of the only wines that pairs properly with sushi.

CHARDONNAY can be tough to pair with food because of the wide variety of styles the grape offers. The rule of thumb is to pair oaky Chardonnays with white meat or fish dishes in creamy, smoky sauces. The toastiness of



the oak barrels meld seamlessly with these entrées. Unoaked Chardonnays should be treated like a Sauvignon Blanc, and they pair best with seafood.

PINOT NOIR, the most delicate and nuanced of the reds, is classically paired with earthy flavours, such as mushrooms, truffles and gamey meats. With its complex body, Pinot tends to go with anything rustic, including charcuteries, truffled cheese and herbed pasta. It also goes well with chocolate. Pinot's velvety berry flavours are incredibly expressive next to the cacao seed.

SYRAH is characterised by flavours of spice, dry earth and

pepper, and it goes well with a similar spread of food. Old World Syrahs from the Rhone Valley are the perfect match for a fatty lambchop. Though these wines are lighter than their Australian counterparts, their delicate herbaceousness adds to lamb's rich texture, rather than detract from it. For the heavy New World Syrahs, with a higher level of alcohol, try experimenting with spicy and smoky barbecued meats. You need a tough red to stand next to these types of cuisine, and Syrah is the perfect choice.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND MERLOT, often blended together, are beef's best friends. Go to any high-quality steak restaurant and the selection of Cabernet Sauvignons can seem endless. It's not just a traditional pairing, but a proven one, too. Cabernet's naturally high tannin structure forms bonds in the mouth with the proteins of the steak, leaving the wine tasting fruitier and less astringent thanks to simple chemistry. ●



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STUDYING FOR SUCCESS

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

When choosing a university, students naturally have one eye on the future, looking ahead to how their degree will help them break into the workforce and advance in their careers. But in today's rapidly changing world of work, how are universities preparing themselves and their students for tomorrow's job market?

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Today, it's important for students to know what skills they will leave with to make them more employable, and **Doshisha Business School** in Kyoto has a clear vision for potential applicants, according to Professor Yong Yin.

"Our programme is uniquely focused on sustainability and the responsible management of a company. It provides our students with the skills to lead any type of organisation with conscience," he says. "While the tools of management and technology influence how our institutions will change, an MBA degree from the Doshisha University Global MBA programme will provide students with the skills to stay ahead of these changes, as well as the mindset needed to lead responsibly. This will have a larger benefit not only for companies and their customers, but also for employees, partners, society and the planet."

Lakeland University works to make its students into independent thinkers, as well as helping them leave with a broad range of experiences, attractive to many employers.

"Since our students are young adults, we attempt to expand their views, broaden their cultural experiences and deepen their thinking, instead of trying to 'mold' them," according to Dr Alan Brender, dean of the university. "Student and volunteer activities — involving individuals from diverse backgrounds, countries and cultures

"we attempt to expand [our students'] views, broaden their cultural experiences and deepen their thinking"

— together with classroom discussions and academic research, help us reach these goals."

VALUES AND PHILOSOPHIES

It's also important to know what the university's values and philosophies are, and, therefore, what you will learn beyond the information in your textbooks. Lakeland University's driving philosophy is to ensure all its students become conscious of their world and society around them.

"We try to instil in our students the need for time management, self-discipline, and introspection by offering many volunteer opportunities as well as social events," Brender says. "We hope to create well-rounded individuals able to leverage their social and humanitarian skills to become profound thinkers and socially aware actors."

According to Yin, Doshisha Business School has a strong emphasis on internationalisation.

"Our Global MBA programme hosts students from more than 30 countries across our first and second years, enabling our students to enhance their global network while simultaneously reaping the benefits of leading and working within a vibrant, diverse and global community," he states.

THE FUTURE OF WORK

With the job market of tomorrow looking more and more uncertain, as, for example, elements such as automation become more widespread, many universities are focused on preparing their students to enter this brave new world confidently and capably.

Yin of Doshisha says that, "Through the required and elective courses that I teach on operations management, we introduce students to the important aspects of running a world-class manufacturing organisation. From our Strategic Management and eMarketing courses to newly created courses related to technology and creativity, our Global MBA programme is designed to equip tomorrow's leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to not only work with cutting-edge technologies, but also guide their future development."

Lakeland's focus is on critical thinking skills, which never go out of fashion.

"We strive to create classroom environments in which students actively discuss and debate knowledge gained from their instructors, their textbooks and their own original research," Brender explains. "We hope students learn from their classroom experience how to think critically and question dogma, preconceptions and popular beliefs."

Entering the workforce can be daunting, but if you look carefully, you're sure to find a path that's right for you — both at university and beyond. ●





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Norimichi Kasai

Company: Noble Styling Inc.

Official title: President

Originally from: Tokyo, Japan

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

I often go to restaurants in and around Yebisu Garden Place in Ebisu. One of my favourites is Kushiyaki Dining Jubei.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I try to go for a walk in the mornings.

Name a favourite movie:

Life is Beautiful.

Favourite band: The Beatles.

Favourite album: The Beatles' *Let it Be.*

Favourite TV show: *LIFE*, a comedy programme on NHK.

Favourite book: *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

When I was a student, I held the Japan record for the 1,500m race at the junior high level.

Cats or dogs?

I like both.

Summer or winter?

Summer.

What's your ideal weekend?

A round of golf.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Kushiyaki Dining Jubei.

"Ideal weekend? A round of golf."



Peter Massion

Company: Deutsche Bank AG Tokyo Branch

Official title: Representative in Japan and General Manager

Originally from: Brussels, Belgium

Length of time in Japan: This time, since 2012 — it's my fifth time in Japan and I've been here for a total of 17 years

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

Dhaba India in Yaesu. They have excellent dosas.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I walk from home to the office and back every day, whether it's sunny, snowing or raining.

Name a favourite movie:

The Usual Suspects. It's incredible how it maintains the suspense until the very end.

Favourite musician: Otis Redding.

Favourite album: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's *Mustt Mustt.* And I also love Buena Vista Social Club.

Favourite TV show: *Saturday Night Live* (especially when Melissa McCarthy is on).

Favourite book: Anything on history.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

I collect original cartoons from newspapers and magazines.

Cats or dogs?

Neither. The kids would definitely end up making me take care of either.

Summer or winter?

Summer in Italy, winter in Japan. But if I had to choose, I'd say summer.

What's your ideal weekend?

Lots of time with the family.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Piccolo Grande, an Italian restaurant, for wine or the Japanese restaurant Matsukan for *sake* or *umeshu*. Both are in Azabu-juban.

"Cats or dogs? Neither. The kids would definitely end up making me take care of either."

MATTHEW CRABBE,
CEO / CHEF DIRECTOR

NATHAN SMITH,
CEO

EDWARD BAFFOE,
CEO

ECN Hospitality

ECN Hospitality – which has had success in Tokyo with TWO ROOMS GRILL|BAR and Ruby Jack’s Steakhouse & Bar – recently opened SEPTIÈME Brasserie & Bar in Nihombashi.

“Focusing on the flavour of seasonal ingredients, the fare at SEPTIÈME is simple yet delicious, with a contemporary Paris brasserie feel,” notes Matthew Crabbe.

“SEPTIÈME has both a distinctly Parisian aesthetic and the comfort of a local Nihombashi establishment,” says Nathan Smith.

“We would like to create a venue that our guests feel is a home away from home,” says Edward Baffoe, “a warm and sophisticated place for everybody.” ●

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