

# eupabiz JAPAN



## **EBC roundtable**

On the Greek crisis  
and euro's future

## **Outbound slowdown**

Why more Japanese  
are staying home

## **Giving back to Japan**

NCCJ event for Tohoku,  
11 March 2015

*Driven to  
succeed*

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## 8 EBC roundtable

*On the Greek crisis and the euro's future*

By Mike de Jong

---

## 16 Outbound slowdown

*Why more Japanese are staying home*

By Gavin Blair

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## 24 Giving back to Japan

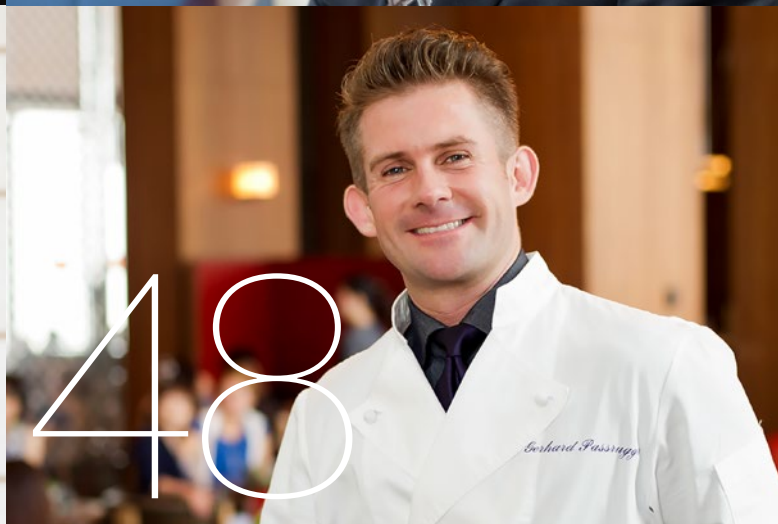
*NCCJ co-sponsors event for Tohoku, 11 March 2015*

By Robert P Cameron

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## COLUMNS

### 7 From the Editor

### 12 Q&A

Talking tough: Mike de Jong interviews FTA negotiator Naoki Ito, of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### 18 Business Spotlight

Driven to succeed: Trevor Webster, bobsleigh racer turned financial advisor. By Robert P Cameron

### 20 EBC Personality

Carl-Gustav Eklund: Rural roots in the big city. By Mike de Jong

### 22 Special Feature

European Business Council: Still strong after 43 years. By Robert P Cameron

### 26 Talking Eurobiz

Martin Fluck: director of operations for North Asia, Oakwood Asia Pacific. By Allison Bettin

### 29 Green Biz

Winds of change: Danish firm helps Yokohama go green. By Allison Bettin

### 31 Chamber Voice

Piotr R Suszycki of the Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan. By Mike de Jong

### 33 Executive Notes

Dan Slater on Modern Japan: Land of small government.

### 35 Event Report

Play ball: Japan takes on the EU. By Mike de Jong

### 45 Brand Aid

Strategic planning and the Olympics: How can your brand compete? By Jonathan Kushner

### 47 Upcoming Events

Events for the European business community in Japan.

### 48 Work Place

Gerhard Passruggger  
Director of Food & Beverage /  
Executive Chef, Andaz Tokyo

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European Business Council in Japan (EBC)  
The European (EU) Chamber of Commerce in Japan

The EBC is the trade policy arm of the seventeen European national chambers of commerce and business associations in Japan

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*EURObiZ Japan* welcomes story ideas from readers and proposals for changes of address and photographers. Letters to the editor may be edited for length and style.

*EURObiZ* is now available onboard Turkish Airlines business class, leaving Tokyo twice daily from Narita and once daily from Osaka.



## Contributors

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

"With all the headlines about the record numbers of foreign tourists coming to Japan and the spending power of newly rich Chinese visitors, it was interesting to look at the falling number of Japanese who go abroad. Unfortunately, fewer of them

**Gavin Blair** explains the factors keeping more Japanese from travelling abroad, page 16.



are going to Europe, and partly due to factors I had been completely unaware of."

**Robert P Cameron** tells us about a special Tohoku memorial event, co-sponsored by the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce, page 24.



Robert is a freelance writer, editor, photographer and translator based in Tokyo. He

contributes to numerous magazines and websites, and creates marketing materials for clients in Japan and abroad.

"The people of the Tohoku region are still recovering from the tragedy of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. This year's Giving Back to Japan event by the Netherlands and Canadian chambers celebrated their remarkable resilience, as well as some rather innovative efforts by Japan's foreign community to help."

Canadian photographer Benjamin Parks has been living and working in Tokyo for more than a decade, capturing portraits of some of the city's movers and shakers. He has become the go-to photographer for editorial, corporate and advertising projects.

"When photographing a roundtable discussion such as this, I try to show the personalities of the participants, and the range of emotions as they express their opinions: passionate, intrigued, surprised,



**Benjamin Parks** shot various photos for this issue, including the EBC Personality and Roundtable, pages 8 and 20.

etc. In addition, I try to show the group dynamic; the flow of energy between these people and, ultimately, the bonds between them."



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# Spring forward

No matter how long you've lived in Japan, you never get tired of spring. With winter winds waning and cherry blossoms blooming, it is not a cliché to say that spring offers a real sense of optimism and renewal.

As we know, April also means the start of a new fiscal year, with new business plans to execute and budgets to spend. Students at Japanese schools are settling in to a new year, while recent grads are getting their feet wet in new jobs.

Politically, in Europe, the storms of a possible "Grexit" have subsided – for the time being – giving both euro zone leaders and the Greek government some breathing space. But will that provide enough time for the issues to be resolved? Greece gained a four-month reprieve, but when the extended bailout period runs out in June, will the country be back in the same situation as in February?

What would that mean? Is there still a possibility of Greece leaving – or being asked to leave – the euro zone?


EBC leaders are watching the situation carefully. A fragile currency and a loss of investor confidence would impact global trade and investment.

Recently, we convened a roundtable of senior EBC leaders to discuss the ramifications of a possible Grexit. Chairman Danny Risberg and Vice-Chairman Michel Théoval were joined by Legal Services Committee Chairman James Lawden and Banking Committee member Philippe Avril in a lively discussion (page 8).

The ongoing EU-Japan free trade talks should also interest readers, who will no doubt find our discussion with Naoki Ito (page 12) engaging. Ito is a chief negotiator for the Japanese side, which is looking to further Japan's interests in global trade. He had some surprisingly forthright comments for us

on what Japan wants to see in a final agreement.

Finally, some readers might know that your editor is a big baseball fan. Recently, we actually got to cover a game involving European players. Yes, Europeans play baseball and are actually quite good; Team Europe not only split the two-game series against Samurai Japan – the world's top-ranked team – they actually outscored them! Bravo, boys (page 35)!

Enjoy reading this month's issue and have a great spring! 

**Mike de Jong**  
Editor-in-chief

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# EBC Roundtable

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## *On the Greek crisis and the euro's future*

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Text **MIKE DE JONG**  
Photo **BENJAMIN PARKS**

**The crisis over the Greece bailout recently reached a boiling point**, when the Tsipras government gained a four-month reprieve to try and appease its creditors. But the situation raised questions about the future of the European monetary union. What does this uncertainty mean for foreign firms, investment and global trade? *EURObiZ Japan* convened a panel of EBC leaders Danny Risberg, Michel Théoval, Philippe Avril and James Lawden to discuss the issue.





**James Lawden**  
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

**Philippe Avril**  
BNP Paribas

**Are you concerned about the future of the EU and euro partnership?**

**Philippe Avril:** No, I'm not. I think Europe is far more prepared than last time. A lot of [measures] have been put into place including the EMS [European Monetary System] ... The risk of contagion is much lower because of that, and also because the level of debt of the other countries has improved. Refinancing is also far cheaper than before. Greece, [if it leaves or is forced out of the euro], will probably be an isolated event. The European Union is well placed to deal with that. But, of course, it's in no one's interest to have it happen, neither for Greece nor for Europe.

**Danny Risberg:** I would agree. The situation is very different than it was a few years ago. And if we think about what would happen in the Greek situation today, within the EU – the situation is very different. The world is getting used to extremely difficult foreign currency trade. Companies are much better at hedging than they were. The banking positions are extremely different than they used to be, too.

**James Lawden:** I do struggle to see a solution for the Greek situation. And for Europe, going forward, I do struggle to see where growth is going to come from. And whether the recent steps taken by the European Central Bank are

enough, or stand a chance of working. What it all comes down to is: How is Europe going to grow in such a way that the social issues – which affect a number of countries in the EU – do not become too inflammatory? This is what I am concerned about.

**What effect does EU and euro uncertainty have on foreign firms and investment?**

**Lawden:** I would think not much, outside particular situations. I would imagine if you're looking to invest in Greece, you'd be thinking quite carefully about what would happen if the country left the euro. That would be difficult. But



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“I THINK YOU MUST **LIVE UP TO COMMITMENT**. IF YOU CANNOT, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY.”

**Danny Risberg**

in the next few years, if you're going to invest in Britain, then is that something you'd have to worry about – that the UK would leave the EU, or the access to the markets? But apart from that, in the context of the world as a whole ... there is always uncertainty. You never know what's going to happen tomorrow. But are things worse than they were 10 years ago? Probably yes. But are they really, really bad? I'd say probably not.

**Risberg:** I think from an investment perspective, clearly if you're going to invest in Greece right now, you must think about it. Outside of Europe, then I think they're more worried about the [foreign] exchange situation than anything. So, do I think there is impact? Of course. But is it manageable? Is it well managed? Most of the time, I think yes.

**Avril:** I think the currency issue is well managed, or manageable in any case. Now the key issues within Europe would be growth and deflation. It's always easy to invest in an area that is growing, or has no deflation. That's obvious. So we want to avoid that. And you've got to find an approach [regarding] what to invest into ... some sectors will be in good shape, some will not.

#### **Could this uncertainty have an effect on FTA/EPA negotiations?**

**Risberg:** Unless we ask the negotiators in Brussels, we don't know. But my personal opinion is that I don't think it impacts it at all, because Europe and

Japan need these types of agreements to get to growth. Both know it and that's why both are saying, let's negotiate. And the Japan FTA isn't with Greece. It's with Europe as a whole.

**Michel Théoval:** I think these two variables are quite independent. The FTA is not about finance, it's about the economy of exchanges ... barriers, tariffs and non-tariff barriers. It's about the circulation of goods and people. It's got nothing to do with exchange rates or money. The crux of the matter with the EPA is just trying to [apply] outside of Europe the recipes for growth – deregulating, or allowing more circulation. It's a regional application of globalisation, in a way.

#### **The Greek government has promised to repeal austerity measures. What would this mean for the EU and its governance structure?**


**Avril:** We have one issue, which is respecting agreements. A change of government shouldn't change the fact that the country has an agreement. I think that is the bottom line for anything you do, ultimately. It doesn't make any difference. It's about the enforcement of treaties and laws protecting treaties. That stays; and whatever happens [beyond this], has nothing to do with Europe. Now, if there is a compromise, will that have an impact on other countries? Probably yes. Because politically, other people will say, if Greece doesn't have to go through

austerity, why do we have to? That's the reason there are some very tough discussions going on at this stage.

**Théoval:** Naturally, respecting contracts, respecting agreements is the basis of our society and the respect of law – at least, theoretically. But the law itself recognises what we call, in French, 'the state of necessity'. If you really are hungry and you steal some bread, you can be pardoned because you're in a state of necessity. Is Greece in a state of necessity? This is the question. And does it mean that Europe should start thinking another way? [If so,] at what expense for a country not respecting contracts? Should they be punished for that? In Europe, we have to be aware that imposing the refunding of difficult-to-reimburse amounts of money can lead to catastrophes. We have seen this with Germany, when we imposed huge reparations after World War I. So we have to think about all of this ... We should draw on our experience to find new ways of considering things like this.

**Avril:** Certainly, but that could be in a new agreement, right? It doesn't mean that people can renege on an existing agreement. We have to negotiate a new one that is [agreeable] for [Greece and the rest of the EU].

**Risberg:** I think you must live up to commitment. If you cannot, you need to be able to explain why – and, hopefully, your partners on the other side of the table understand and say, "Okay, let's fix it together."

**Lawden:** I believe Philippe is absolutely right. If there's going to be a change, then there's going to have to be a renegotiated agreement. However, I'm not an economist; but it seems Greece has got a level of debt that it will never repay, so how do we deal with that? It would seem to me that something is going to have to happen. So what is the right answer? I don't know. But it seems to me, it must involve steering through this somehow ... but you say to people, "Okay, if we are going to forgive your debts, or write them down, or make them perpetual, then you really have to clean up your act." 



# Talking tough

*FTA negotiator Naoki Ito of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

Photos **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**

**Talks surrounding the Japan-European Union free trade agreement (FTA) and economic partnership agreement (EPA) will be accelerated this spring. Negotiators have until the end of the year to finalise the deal, as per a deadline set by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.**

At stake are various issues pertaining to market access, tariffs and non-tariff measures, and other issues affecting the two sides that, combined, represent 36% of global economic trade. Naoki Ito, Deputy Director-General, Economic Affairs, of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is one of Japan's lead negotiators. He spoke with *EURObiz Japan* about what Japan would like to see in the agreement.

**Could you give us an update on where FTA/EPA negotiations currently stand from your perspective?**

We started negotiations in April 2013, and, so far, we have had eight rounds of negotiations. [Ed note: this interview was conducted prior to the 9th round of talks] We have been discussing wide-ranging issues – such as trade in goods, services; investment; intellectual property rights; non-tariff measures; and government procurement. And, last year, there was a process of review established and conducted by the European side. Following that process, in which I think Japanese efforts got a good mark by European officials and governments, we entered into the second stage of negotiations. I think there was a notable difference in terms of atmosphere, perception and the environment surrounding the negotiations before and after the review.

Apparently, each capital in Europe believes this Japan-EU EPA is a truly positive free trade agreement, and most of the government officials in Europe are now behind it, as are business organisations in Europe. The fact that we have gone through the review process has created confidence and trust in the negotiating process. Also, it has built a high level of confidence and trust between negotiators. When we deal with difficult issues ahead, this would surely count in providing a good and positive outcome for negotiations.

**What are the key things that Japan would like to see in an agreement?**

I would say this is of shared importance between Japan and Europe. We share fundamental values. We are members of the G7, G20, WTO ... we have been, in a way, champions of rules-based systems, rules-based economies, and rules-based trade. I think with the realisation of the Japan-EU EPA, we would actually be able to set new standards and rules on trade and investment, not only between Japan and the EU, but beyond – for the betterment of the global economy. I think that's the first point I'd like to stress.

If we are able to achieve a comprehensive and high-level EPA between Japan and the EU, we think it should provide further growth for the Japanese

economy, because under the current government ... we have been embarking upon the revitalisation of the Japanese economy.

At the same time, some Japanese companies are showing concerns in areas such as non-tariff measures, intellectual property rights and cross-border flows of personal information. Through the negotiations, the Japanese government works with our EU colleagues and Japanese companies to see some progress in each one of them.

Also, we are promoting the idea "Cool Japan". This is a kind of export of our culture. With this agreement, it is hoped "Cool Japan" will be enjoyed by citizens of Europe.

In a nutshell, the Japan-EU EPA is very important, in that we would be able to expand foreign investment overseas, we would be able to expand trade and, in return, we would be able to encourage European investment into Japan.

**Does progress so far fit with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's agenda to reduce trade barriers?**

Addressing regulatory issues is part of a very important agenda that the government has embarked upon. Japan has addressed some of the regulatory issues which were raised by the European side in the early part

of negotiations. We have an aim to adopt 47 of the UN-ECE [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe] regulations on passenger vehicles; and, so far, 37 have been adopted. If you talk about internationally commonly used food additives – out of 45, we have designated 39 already. And, also last year, we revised the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act, which will provide an environment where measures will be taken for safe and prompt supply of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Many of these issues have been within the scope of very strong interest shown by European governments, as well as European companies. Already, this Japan-EU negotiation framework has borne fruit, in terms of regulatory reform and regulatory cooperation in Japan and with the EU.

**You have said that so-called non-tariff “barriers” should be considered non-tariff “measures”. Why do you characterise the issue in these terms?**

Regulatory measures are in place in any country. Those measures are taken for the purpose of ensuring the safety of society, consumer protection, even for environmental protection – in light of historical needs, market needs and so on. Also, consumers’ tastes differ from one country to the next. So, rather than using the particular word “barrier”, which is associated with the [perceived] difficulty of access to the Japanese market, we use “non-tariff measures”. When Japanese companies started making investments into the European market, particularly in the late 1960s, early 70s ... I’m sure there were issues of

regulations faced as well. But they strenuously addressed those issues squarely – and somehow avoided problems – to do good business. This is why we would prefer using the term non-tariff “measures” rather than “barriers”.

**EU negotiators have mentioned government procurement [the opening up of public projects in Japan] as a key goal. What is the view of this from the Japanese side?**

Before going into government procurement, perhaps I need to refer to specific elements which we want to achieve through negotiations. There are four or five areas; one is the market access, or tariff issue. This is very high on our agenda. The European side still maintains relatively high tariffs – 10%

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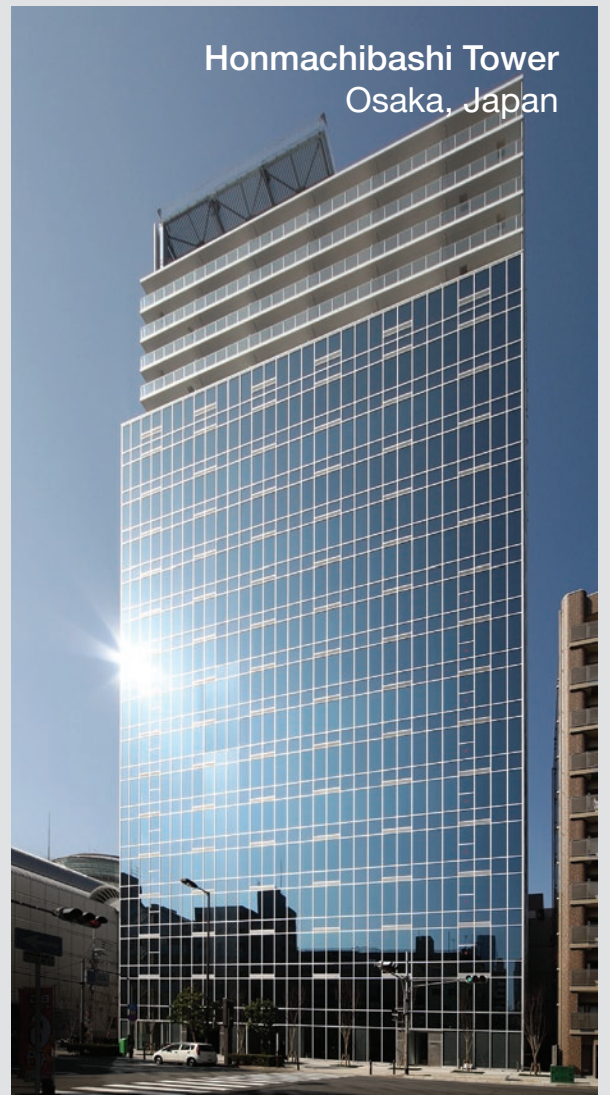




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for automobiles, 14% for electronics. So we would really hope that the European side would be able to eliminate tariffs on those industrial goods, so that Japanese exports to Europe would be further accelerated. And also, rule-making in services, investment and e-commerce – these areas, including regulatory cooperation, would provide predictability of the market situation. That could ensure a better business environment for Japanese companies in the EU region as well. That should also provide opportunities for EU companies to be more active in the Japanese market. Also, areas like intellectual property rights, corporate governance, investment ... these would provide further opportunities for both sides to be more active in each other's market. In particular, geographical indications are a very important area not only for European companies, but also for the Japanese side, since Japan is trying to increase exports of agricultural products all over the world. I hope that GI rules, to be established between Japan and the EU, will provide better opportunities for the Japanese food industry to expand its market share in the EU region.

About government procurement ... earlier in the negotiations, the discussions focused more on railway procurement. Back in October, the EU side decided to delist JR companies from the WTO government procurement agreement. Again, this was a result of the review by the EU side. So we have seen very good progress through the process of negotiations. This would provide a really good possibility for industrial cooperation and collaboration in the railway sector. So, we do hope that this will be showing the actual outcome on the ground. Now, Japanese companies like Hitachi are

really active in the European market, and in the Japanese market I believe that the JR companies remain willing to enhance a market-access opportunity for European vendors. We do hope that some of the European providers – such as Alstom, Siemens and PESA – will try to seize this momentum to play a good part in the Japanese market.

As for government procurement, in general, we have been discussing this



over the negotiating table as one of the very important elements. I think there is a meeting of the minds on where we should go, through the negotiations ... but, still, there is a bit of a difference of opinion on where we could land, as well as in GP systems between Japan and Europe. But we hope we can find a mutually satisfactory outcome through the negotiations.

**The protection of Japanese agricultural products is a sensitive issue.**

**Are you confident that an FTA-EPA would maintain protections for this sector?**

The market access negotiations are one of the key, indispensable elements of this EPA agreement. And that is an area where the respective sides ... tend to negotiate in a concrete but unsophisticated way. This is an area where we really need to work harder to achieve an agreement. And I'm sure that there is going to be a rather difficult road ahead of us. But since this is a very, very important area, where each side wants to gain for the benefit of their respective economies and exporters,

I'm confident that we'll be able to achieve a good win-win outcome through negotiations. And I'm sure that, down the road, the EU side will show consideration to those sensitivities in the Japanese economy, in particular the agricultural sector.

**Are you confident that Prime Minister Abe's deadline to conclude an FTA/EPA this year will be met?**

I think it's really important to maintain this timeline – which is ambitious but achievable – in order to accelerate negotiations, as well as to aim at a high level of ambition. Some people might say that, rather than talking about the timeline for negotiations, we should focus on the quality of an agreement. But our view is that by trying to abide by the timeline, we'd be able to achieve an even higher level of agreement, in a more accelerated manner. In January, in Brussels, [Foreign Affairs] Minister [Fumio] Kishida and Commissioner [Cecilia] Malmström shared the view that reaching an agreement in principle this year is an ambitious but achievable goal. With the level of confidence in the negotiations and the level of trust between negotiators, we will certainly be able to achieve it. 

# Outbound slowdown

*Why more Japanese are staying home*

Text **GAVIN BLAIR**

**After long having** flocked to the airport in record numbers for trips to destinations like London, Paris and Rome, Japanese travellers are now staying close to home.

A lower yen, competition from other Asian destinations and onerous demands from the domestic travel industry are mainly to blame. But also, many Japanese have been scared away from European travel due to concerns over terrorism in France and the Middle East.

While Japan has been touting its success in attracting record numbers of overseas visitors – 13.41 million in 2014 – the number of Japanese travelling in the other direction has fallen dramatically over the past two years. After setting record highs for outbound travel with more than 18.4 million visits in 2012, the numbers fell to around 17.4 million visits in 2013 and to 16.9 million in 2014. This year, the number is expected to be even lower.

Specifically, outbound travel to the UK dropped to an average of 232,000 annual trips from Japan, following a high of 556,000 trips in 2000. Similarly, while Switzerland once hosted nearly a million overnight stays by Japanese visitors in 2000, it has seen less than half that number in recent years, according to Fabien Clerc, Japan director for Switzerland Tourism.

Although many in the European travel industry cite the weakening yen against either the euro or British pound as an issue, there are other factors at play. One is that other parts of Asia simply offer cheaper – and geographically closer – alternative destinations. Japanese travellers have simply shifted their interest from Europe to short-haul Asian destinations, such as Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia and Vietnam. The increasing number of travellers to

“IN 2015, EUROPE IS **NO LONGER**  
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# Outbound travel from Japan

Source: Japan Tourism Marketing Co.



Europe from the rest of Asia also has had an effect.

"Growing tourism from China and South Korea to Europe means that, when Japanese tour operators try to renegotiate deals on local services [because of the weaker yen], the hotels and bus companies can just accept more bookings from those other Asian countries," says Otto Benz, Lufthansa German Airlines' general manager for Japan.

Ashley Harvey, Japan country manager at the national tourism agency VisitBritain, says it is not only on price that Japan's tour operators are falling foul of the European travel industry. "In 2015, Europe is no longer a buyer's market, and hoteliers are no longer keen to accept the Japanese travel trade's terms and conditions," suggests Harvey. "These are completely out of sync with the standards from the rest of the world."

Rules that were designed to provide Japanese travellers with consumer protection are one problem, such as the ability to reserve space on package tours without putting down a deposit until 30 days before departure (45 days during the peak season). There are also penalty provisions that trigger refunds to Japanese travellers for failure to deliver any part of a specified tour package.

"Hoteliers know that Japanese tour 'bookings' come with up to 90%

cancellation rates," explains Harvey, who says that the risk of cancellations and punitive compensation payouts are "something hoteliers in Europe no longer need to accept".

A solution to this would require government-level reform. But Lufthansa's Benz points out that it is not only European airlines and destinations that would benefit from a boost in Japanese tourist numbers, but also Japanese domestic travel agencies, which earn higher margins on long-haul trips.

"The Japanese government has been very focused on boosting inbound travel in recent years – with considerable success, thanks in large measure to the depreciation of the yen. But it should also focus on travel in the other direction," suggests Benz.

"In my opinion, it definitely would help if the Japanese government, at this very critical moment, would articulate that Japanese people should not refrain from travelling abroad."

Japanese travellers also appear more sensitive than most to headline-grabbing bits of bad news, says Hiroaki Nagahara, Japan sales director at Finnair and a 30-year airline industry veteran.


"Bookings to everywhere in Europe have been affected by the Paris attacks and the ISIS [Islamic State] killing of

Japanese hostages," says Nagahara, who estimates it may take months to get back to normal.

Finnair has been benefiting from growing interest in Scandinavia, as well as in emerging European destinations such as Slovenia and Croatia, which it serves. In this light, Nagahara believes that European airlines should reposition their advertising to promote destinations rather than their modern fleets and in-flight services.

Also, the global travel industry has shifted its focus somewhat away from Japan to China and South Korea; and Nagahara points out that some countries and regions have outsourced – or even shut down – their tourist promotion operations in Tokyo. (A number of the tourist boards approached for this article were surprisingly difficult to locate, while the phone number listed for one simply went unanswered.)

More global travel by young Japanese people would bring long-term benefits to the domestic economy as well, suggests Benz.

"Young people should be encouraged to travel abroad," he says. "In the future, when the Japanese economy becomes more globalised, they will need people who understand what is happening in the rest of the world." 





# *Driven to Succeed*

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*Trevor Webster,  
bobsleigh racer  
turned financial  
advisor*

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Text **ROBERT P CAMERON**  
Photo **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**



revor Webster knows a thing or two about asset management – he’s area manager, Japan, for the deVere Group, the world’s largest independent wealth management firm. He also knows a thing or two about sport, having spent seven years as a professional bobsleigh racer on the British bobsleigh team. Perhaps not surprisingly, he’s found that the lessons of professional sport, especially at the highest level, hold true in business.

“There are plenty of overlapping concepts – the need to have a clear vision of the goal in mind; continual tweaking of the product to get you there; and, of course, teamwork – managing your team and getting as much high-quality output as possible out of them,” he says.

“I think the metaphor is that when you start, it’s the same in any business – you start with an end in mind, and hopefully you have a longer vision than just a quarterly profit.”

With bobsleigh racing, that end is the Olympic Games. Athletes in Olympic sports work in four-year cycles; they participate in the Games, maybe two if they’re really good, then move on to something else. In Webster’s case, it meant returning to the Royal Air Force (his employer at the time) before eventually arriving in Japan.

In asset management, timeframes are considerably longer. “In this business, we’re dealing with clients’ retirement plans, or savings to put their children through university, or managing their estates for inheritance taxes and other things, which are obviously long term. We consider the client’s best interests in the long term, as opposed to, say, next week or next month or next quarter.”

As Webster notes, teamwork is a crucial factor in both pursuits.

Bobsleigh racing is “one of those sports where you find out very quickly whether an individual person will be on the team

or not. In business, you look at what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it; you’ve got to have the right people on board.

“On the bobsleigh team, I was the driver, so I was reliant on the three guys behind me to actually propel me down the track, to ensure that they’ve lowered themselves into the sled properly, so they don’t create any unnecessary disturbance to slow us down.”

With such a tight-knit team, if the members aren’t performing well or working collectively as a team, then changes have to be made. “An individual might be a tremendous athlete, but he

## “BOBSLEIGH RACING HAS GIVEN ME THE ABILITY TO QUICKLY JUDGE AND UNDERSTAND PEOPLE, AND ASSESS WHETHER THEY’LL FIT INTO THE TEAM”

has to fit into the team; and if he does not, then he’s in the wrong place. There are plenty of examples in all sports.”

The analogy holds true for business. “Any business unit has a group of people employed to perform a task to allow the team to achieve their goal.”

Individuals have their own various strengths, some of which contribute to the team, and others that might better apply somewhere else. “My experience in the harsh – though enjoyable – environment of bobsleigh racing has given me the ability to quickly judge and understand people, and assess whether they’ll fit into the team. This does two things: First, it saves me time in recruiting people; secondly, you don’t want to waste their time. Part of management is recognising these issues at an early stage and making the necessary adjustments.”

Temperament is crucial – a certain amount of aggression is needed in any sport, and in business. Webster prefers to call it a “can-do attitude”. “You’ve got

to get up and go, and that is true not just in wealth management, but in life.”


A bobsleigh run is pretty fast, as little as 60 seconds. Nevertheless, a lot of long-term planning and training go into the run. “In bobsleigh racing, you’re basically on auto-pilot; there’s no time to think – you just react. But you’re able to do that because of all the training you’ve done, all the planning, all the visualisation. So you know every track intimately, every twist and turn, and the state of the surface. And you know what to expect; and react appropriately if something unexpected happens.

You’re thinking of the track long before you ride it. I can still see every inch of every track I’ve driven, even all these years later.

“It’s like mind-mapping, something that many successful people do, both in sports and in business. They visualise what they want in five, 10 years [and] keep that vision in mind – and then go about making it a reality. My business, wealth management, is all

about the client’s vision – what does their future look like?”

This vision, this plan, is ultimately the roadmap to their future – it can save you time, and indeed your sanity. Because, “if you react to everything, to the daily news – the Greek debt crisis, the ISIS attacks, the stock markets up and down, crude oil crashing, and on and on – you’ll go mad. Our job is to reassure our clients that we’re looking at the long term. And that the asset you buy today, you would want to hold through good times and bad – to ride out the bumps.”

Again, the bobsleigh racing analogy holds true – you have to have the best possible combination of people on your sled, and have a feel for the track. “If you’re not performing as well as you’d like, you have to recognise if there’s a shortfall somewhere and make adjustments,” says Webster. “By the same token, I advise clients to make changes to their portfolios if they are underperforming. In either case, you have to focus on the big picture and do what you have to, to get to your goal.” 

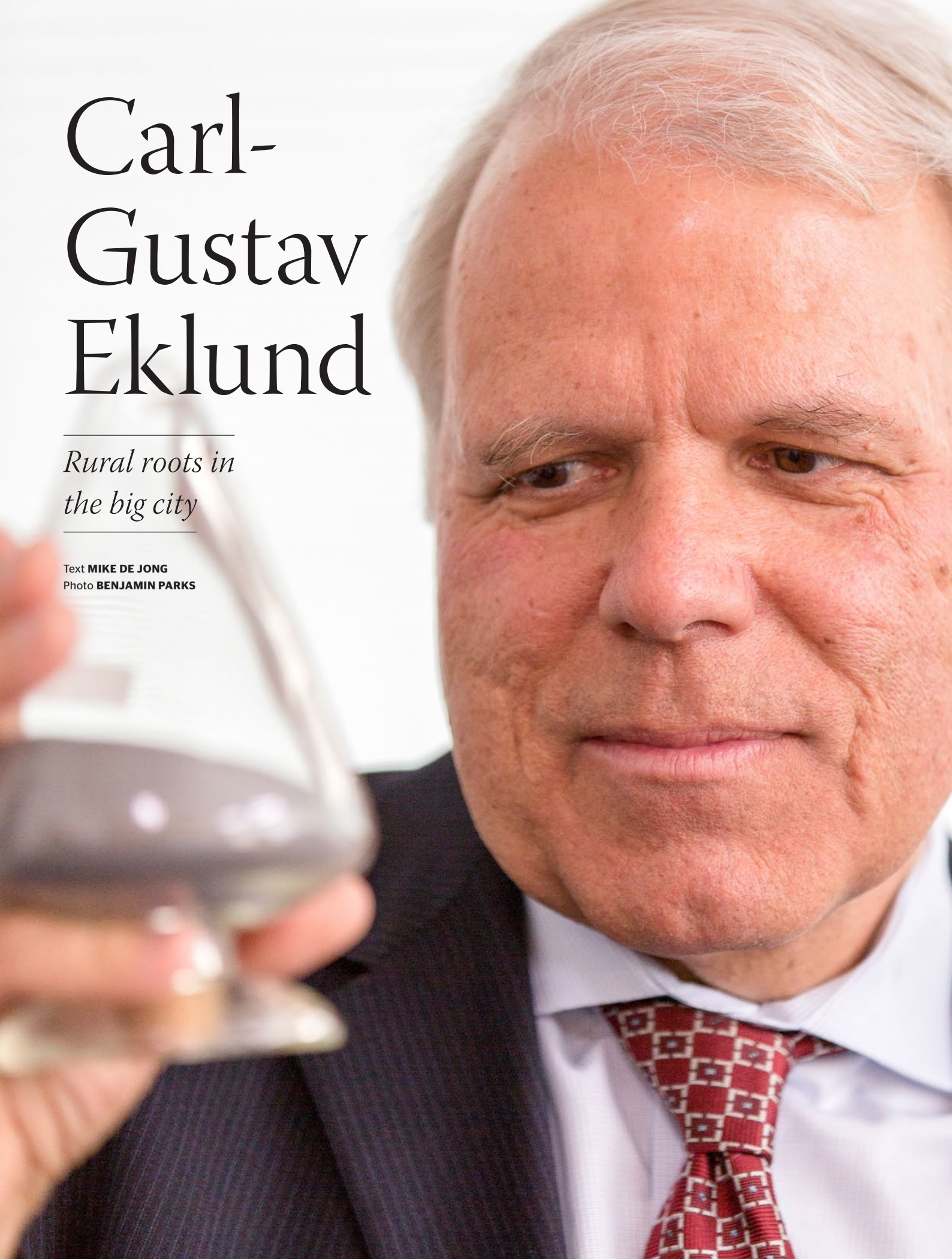
# Carl- Gustav Eklund

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*Rural roots in  
the big city*

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Text **MIKE DE JONG**  
Photo **BENJAMIN PARKS**





It's a long way from a farm in Sweden to the bright lights of Tokyo, but Carl-Gustav Eklund has made a successful transition. Born in a town just outside Gothenburg, Eklund has spent more than 34 years thriving in the world's largest metropolis. Still, he credits his farm background for values that have guided him throughout his career.

"On a farm, you put in 'man hours' or 'boy hours,'" he says. "All kids work there. So even in my teens, I worked 3-4 hours a day at the farm. Because that was what was needed and I was used to it. Chopping wood, milk machines, driving tractors [and] milking cows.

"By working with animals, seeing them born, growing up, etcetera, it helps you work with people. Because with animals, you also see personalities," he adds. "It also helps you respect and better understand life and death. I think you take responsibility and are less shocked over dramatic events."

Studying mechanical engineering and adding an MBA, Eklund prefers a hands-on rather than strategic approach to management. It was as a student that his urge to work overseas was sparked, when he took summer internship sojourns to Italy, Germany, the US and Brazil. Fluent in five languages, Eklund arrived in Japan in 1978, on a business trip for a major shipping equipment company.

"I had ideas that I would work abroad but I never, ever expected Japan," he says. "I'd been in America but Japan was off the radar.

"I was thrown out and I stayed alone, representing the firm here for two weeks, visiting a number of companies. And I had lot of interesting experiences. And I think I learned that if you get surprised, then you just have to try to solve the issue and do as [well] as you can."

Eklund eventually settled in Japan in his twenties, working his way through several industrial companies including the Swedish auto giant Volvo before arriving at his current employer in 2004. These days, as president and representative director of Höganäs Japan, a Swedish metal powder firm, Eklund oversees a staff of 30 in two locations in Japan.

"We are the world leader, by far, in our niche [which is] iron and metal powder,"

he says, going on to describe how his company's products are converted into core components for cars, bicycles and heavy machinery. "The technology is called powder metallurgy and it's compacted under high pressure ... and then heated up to 1,100-1,150 degrees Celsius and the atoms start moving. It doesn't melt; it goes through a sintering phase. It strengthens; and when it comes out, it has the strength of normal steel."


For automobiles, Höganäs metal powders are used to make components such as sprockets, small gears, oil pumps and shock absorbers. Eklund proudly points out that his firm's products are used by all the automakers in Japan, and can be found in some 98% of all cars built in Japan.

"Instead of machining complicated shapes, you have a mould for pressing," he continues. "You press and you get the right shape from the beginning. It saves materials and saves energy. It's a very efficient process to manufacture metal components for certain sizes and shapes."

In a career that's taken him across Asia – visiting South Korea more than 100 times and China on 40 to 50 occasions, also Taiwan and SE Asia – Eklund believes he's gained an understanding of the region's fragile politics. And he believes being a "neutral Swede" acts as a buffer that softens misunderstandings.

"It is helpful because Sweden has always been neutral. We've always tried to assist. I think we have a history of good diplomacy. I'm not a diplomat, but I'm pretty good at understanding and explaining the past and present," he says.

Eklund, the EBC vice-chair, also finds time to contribute to the organisation and various chamber activities. He served as president of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Japan, showing off his golf skills by winning long-drive competitions at joint-chamber tournaments. Eklund hits the links twice a month and holds a 16 handicap – saying in particular that he enjoys the social aspects of the sport.

"Golf has another dimension that few other sports have," he says. "You have so much time to talk, and it is unique that you can play together even with very different ages and different skills. It's fantastic, because you do not have to be really athletic, but you can combine your mental strength with the physical." 

## Do you like natto?

### **Time spent working in Japan:**

All but two years of my career have been in Japan and Asia (34 years).

**Career regret (if any):** None, even though I have faced real challenges and higher management positions since a young age.

**Favourite saying:** "Nothing is impossible, just more difficult". You can always find a solution to most problems by trying harder and working smart.

**Favourite book:** Historical books and biographies of great leaders.

**Cannot live without:** My wife and friends; people connections are your most important asset.

**Lesson learned in Japan:** Be patient, listen well and be honest; then you can build trust and develop loyal customer relations.

**Secret of success in business:** Building trust, showing you are in for the long haul and understanding your customer.

**Favourite place to dine out:** Several –one is BIMBI in Daikanyama and at home, there is a Master Chef.

**Do you like natto?** Not unless it is mixed with spicy Kimchi.



# European Business Council

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*Still strong after 43 years*

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Text **ROBERT P CAMERON**

In its 43 years, the European Business Council (EBC) has provided an invaluable platform for effecting change in a wide range of businesses in Japan. Committee members have worked hard to push issues that affect businesses here. All this work has resulted in changes to the business environment that have benefited the entire business community in Japan.

So why bother becoming a part of the EBC? After all, you get the benefits of all that lobbying whether you join or not. It turns out there are lots of reasons, according to Executive Director Alison Murray of the EBC Secretariat. "Of course, the EBC's lobbying efforts extend to entire industries, so you don't have to actually join to reap the benefits. But being a part of proactive change can get your company's issues on the table."

Japanese government officials rarely meet with single firms to hear

complaints and suggestions. But a united front made up of multiple companies under the EBC banner provides both credibility and access at a level that would be otherwise impossible.

Serving on an EBC committee also offers a direct line to European Commission officials when they come here, for the EU-Japan Summit, the EU-Japan Business Roundtable and other meetings. "The EBC brings issues to the table. When officials come from the European Commission, we always meet with them, and the relevant committee members brief them directly about the problems their companies are facing. If you're not on an EBC committee, you don't get that opportunity," notes Bjorn Kongstad, EBC Policy Director.

Committee chairs talk to government ministries and agencies at all levels, including ministers. They also meet regularly with the Japanese business lobby group Keidanren and other Japanese industry organisations.

Doing business in Japan can be a complex, convoluted process, so sharing stories and networking with others in your field is a good way to help iron out problems. The committees often deal with issues that are not so much problems with bilateral trade, but practices within an industry. EBC vice-chairman Carl-Gustav Eklund, who also chairs the Materials Committee, says: "We do not have significant regulatory or trade issues in our business here. We mainly exchange information on best practices for operating a company in Japan, and follow up in a white paper regarding tariffs that should be removed, which we hope will happen with the upcoming [EU-Japan] FTA. We also highlight issues that are common for our industry and for all foreign companies in Japan."

Though changes come slowly and incrementally, the EBC's advocacy has resulted in some notable successes over the past few years. For



## “THE EBC BRINGS ISSUES TO THE TABLE”

Alison Murray

example, the Airlines Committee had a substantial impact on the Japanese government’s decision to change the legal framework surrounding the air travel market – by demonstrating the effects of EU market liberalisation on air transport. “Our proposals to liberalise air transport tariffs were taken into consideration some years ago,” says committee chairman Otto Benz. “Today, price-setting is practically free in the Japanese market, and consumers are strongly benefitting from it.”

In addition, at Tokyo’s Haneda International Airport, the allocation of take-off and landing slots has improved significantly for European airlines. When Haneda was expanded into a full-fledged international airport, most of the slots for European airlines were extremely inconvenient, with some morning flights requiring passengers to arrive at 3 or 4 o’clock. But, thanks, in part, to persistent lobbying by the EBC Airlines Committee, the situation


improved considerably. Daytime slots have now been allocated to European airlines, including Lufthansa, Air France, KLM and British Airways.

Standards are another area in which persistent lobbying has led to an accumulation of small, incremental tweaks that together add up to significant changes. Food additives are an example – the EC identified 46 food additives that it thought should be deregulated; more than 90% of them have now been approved, and plans are afoot for the rest. Medical devices is another area – previously, anything that went into the body was treated as a pharmaceutical. But, thanks to patient lobbying by the EBC – in conjunction with US and Japanese groups – a new Pharmaceutical Law was introduced that separated pharmaceuticals from medical devices.

Perhaps the EBC’s greatest achievement has been its leading role in expediting a free trade agreement between

the EU and Japan. Officials from the EC were initially very cautious, but after steady pushing by EBC members, they finally took it up. Now the trade pact is into the final rounds of negotiations, with the Japanese government wanting talks resolved and an agreement in place by the end of this year.

Council members are justifiably proud of this progress. “We initiated discussions on the FTA and provided a massive amount of input for the negotiations,” says Murray. “And, as a result, our members were able to include in a document, which we prepared, what they wanted discussed in the negotiations.”

Active membership in the EBC – such as serving on committees – does require time, which is not always easy for busy businesspeople. Nevertheless, Murray notes, it is time well spent. “We have a core of about 400 enthusiastic members,” she says, “who think it’s a good investment of their time”. 





# Giving Back to Japan

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*NCCJ co-sponsors  
event for Tohoku  
relief, 11 March 2015*

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Text **ROBERT P CAMERON**





“WE ALSO  
WANTED TO USE  
**LOCALLY  
SOURCED**  
MATERIALS AND  
MANPOWER  
WHENEVER  
POSSIBLE”

**Martin van der Linden**



We all remember the horrific images from four years ago, when the Great East

Japan Earthquake struck the Tohoku region, followed by a massive tsunami and subsequent nuclear disaster. The triple tragedy took thousands of lives and devastated communities all along the northeastern coast. The people of the region have shown remarkable resilience in the face of this disaster, but the suffering continues, with the region's economy recovering slowly and thousands of people still living in temporary housing. To publicise their plight – and celebrate the region's strength and perseverance – the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Japan (NCCJ) held a “Giving Back to Japan” event, in partnership with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ).

At this year's event, on 11 March at the Tokyo American Club, Dutch Ambassador Radinck van Vollenhoven gave a special welcome address, speaking about the Netherlands' long history with Japan, as well as its efforts to help the Tohoku region recover from the disaster.

Martin van der Linden, founder of van der Architects and a board member of the Oranda Jima Foundation, gave a presentation on Oranda Jima House, the beautiful after-school facility and community centre that he designed for Yamada-machi, one of the towns in Iwate prefecture that was devastated by the tsunami.


“Architecture can have a real impact on the well-being of children,” he said. “We wanted to build a place with plenty of daylight, which would feel welcoming and warm, and encourage play. We also wanted to use locally sourced materials and manpower whenever possible.” The result is a beautiful, carefully laid out facility that is popular with the children and serves as an important centre for the community.

The town was chosen for this project because of its long relationship with the Netherlands. Its ties date back to 1643, when local people rescued crew members of a Dutch ship that had foundered in Yamada Bay, near what is now known as Oranda Jima (Holland Island).

Shawn Lawlor, Japan Operations director for Canada Wood Tokyo, outlined his organisation's efforts to help rebuild the region. The Canada Wood Group, a nonprofit association representing Canada's forest industry, led a \$4.5 million joint government and industry reconstruction project in Tohoku. The Canada Tohoku Reconstruction Project has built a library and the popular Yuriage Public Market in Natori, Miyagi prefecture, and a support centre for the disabled in Iwaki, Fukushima prefecture. The project also donated wood for Oranda Jima House.

“We thought it was such a small thing in this devastated place, and we wondered if anyone would actually come and use it,” Lawlor remembered, thinking back to before the opening of the new market. So he and his group were relieved and delighted when the facility was mobbed with shoppers on opening day; it has been a crowded and popular place ever since.

Lawlor's group was surprised by one of the first requests from government officials of Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture, who wanted large logs that could be processed into masts for the *San Juan Batista*, a replica of a Spanish galleon, the first Western-style ship ever built in Japan. The ship, the centrepiece of a museum on the waterfront, had been severely damaged by the tsunami, and trees of the requisite size for the masts are no longer available in Japan. The ship, now fully repaired, serves as an important symbol of the recovery of the town, and the region.

CCCJ governor Neil van Wouw wrapped up the event by talking about his chamber's participation in Gambatte 365, a website where Tohoku residents and others can share stories of recovery from the disaster. 

A professional portrait of Martin Fluck, a middle-aged man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue pinstriped suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. He is standing with his arms crossed, smiling slightly. The background is a warm, orange-toned wall with a textured, paneled appearance. To the right, a blurred dining table and chairs are visible, suggesting an indoor setting like a restaurant or office lounge.

# Martin Fluck

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*Director of Operations,  
North Asia, at  
Oakwood Asia Pacific*

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Text **ALLISON BETTIN**

Photo **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**



In Japan's capital, the name Oakwood Premier Tokyo Midtown is synonymous with a level of luxury that most people will never experience. At this elite serviced apartment tower, there is no door greeter, no café bustling with chatty housewives. To access the building, you must have either a password or a confirmed appointment. And once you make it through the massive wooden doors, there is coolness about the marble floors, the velvet-lined chairs, the chandeliers that can only mean business.

Martin Fluck's business, to be exact.

It is here that Fluck, Oakwood's director of operations, North Asia, is based. He drifts about Tokyo Premier Midtown with the ease of a seasoned industry professional, having worked with Oakwood in Japan since 2001. His roots in the hospitality business go back much further, though.

"Both of my grandparents were involved in the restaurant business, so I probably got the genes from there," he says. In fact, Fluck was born and raised in Kobe; and when his family relocated back to Switzerland, they made a stop in Hong Kong – at the legendary Peninsula Hong Kong. "The lobby, the atmosphere of the hotel really impressed me with its international flair," Fluck recalls. "So I wanted to become a hotel business-related person because I was so impressed with that international atmosphere."

And that he did.

Fluck received his education at the exclusive Swiss hospitality school *École hôtelière de Lausanne*, and had the opportunity to return to Japan for a short period as an intern at the old Hilton in Akasaka. "I did the front office internship there, and I was so impressed. I felt I belonged in Japan, and I wanted to go back," he says.

Fluck was offered a job at the new Hilton Tokyo in Shinjuku even before he graduated, and has been based in Asia

ever since. Although he has worked for periods in Australia, Bali and Vietnam, he returned in 2001.

"Thanks to Oakwood, I'm back again in Japan," he says.

During his time in this country, Fluck has seen many fluctuations in the Japanese economy. But unlike hotels, he says the serviced apartment industry is more stable. "We're not affected by seasons, by cherry blossoms," he grins, noting that around 70% of Oakwood's clients in Japan are here for business. "We're very steady."

This consistency is, perhaps, one of the most attractive features of the serviced apartment industry, which specialises in longer stays than at

he says. "Japan at that time was the second-largest economy in the world ... you can't just run away."

Today, the falling yen is helping Japan's in-bound tourism industry, although Fluck says the serviced apartment industry isn't benefiting as much as hotels. What will really help, he believes, is the upcoming Olympic Games in 2020.

"The period before the Olympics is going to be strong for us, because, again, we work with long-term business," he says. "The Olympics are more like a leisure business – unless you work with people who are officially involved with the Olympics. That's our bread and butter. Like IT people, the watch

## “PEOPLE REALISED, COMPANIES REALISED, YOU **STILL** NEED A PRESENCE HERE”

hotels, and is mostly focused on the international businessperson in need of temporary housing.

"For us, we have long-term guests, and have a base because we have a minimum stay of 30 days," says Fluck. "Guests pre-pay for apartments, so that means, even if the people left Japan for a short while, they [have a place] already."


Fluck says that Oakwood managed to retain about 65% of its occupancy in the aftermath of the March 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Many hotels saw occupancy levels fall by as much as 80%. Oakwood's occupancy also bounced back to 90% in a few months.

"People realised, companies realised, you still need a presence here,"

guys, the media people or the Olympic Committee – these kinds of long-term people who are physically here and are involved ... that's a positive thing."

In the short term, Oakwood should benefit most from its 2014 joint venture with Singapore-headquartered Mapletree Group, an Asia-focused real estate company. Mapletree is hoping to acquire and develop some US\$4 billion in properties worldwide – all of which Oakwood would be managing.

On its own, Oakwood will also try to more fully develop the serviced apartment industry in Asia.

"[The industry] is not clearly defined, and I think that's what the service apartment industry has to work on," Fluck concludes. 

## Specialist Profile

# Nathaniel Pemberton

by Miyuki Seguchi,  
Senior PR & Communications Executive



Fourteen years ago when Nathaniel Pemberton first came to Japan, he had never thought about being a recruiter based in Osaka. Now he loves living and working in the city as much as other “Kansai-jin” do.

“Here, there is a community spirit and togetherness, which is not found in Tokyo,” says Pemberton, who is now in his 10th year with Robert Walters. “Soon after arriving, I noticed that people are genuinely proud of the fact that they’re living in the Kansai region.”

In 2007, professional recruitment firm Robert Walters opened its second Japanese office, in Osaka. The geographical coverage ranges from Aichi prefecture and the wider Chubu region to the Kyushu region of Western Japan. Since then, the business has been growing — thanks to the leadership of Pemberton, who has served as the Osaka Branch Manager since 2010.

“The market has been picking up, as many companies are looking to invest more in the Kansai region,” he says, explaining how manufacturers in the electronic, mechanical and chemical fields, as well as in the healthcare sectors, are among the main industries driving Robert Walters’ Osaka business.

great job of developing the market,” points out Pemberton.

“Companies here are generally doing well, and they’re excited about the future growth of the Kansai region,” he continues.

Responding to the rise in needs, the Osaka office expanded its office size by a third last year, and there are plans afoot to expand even further.

Similar to the Tokyo office, the majority of clients still are foreign companies; however, in Osaka, there is a larger amount of Japanese clients in comparison. As a result, the majority of consultants at the Osaka office are native Japanese speakers who are able to serve the specific needs of various enterprises, from newly established start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to well-established firms.

For those firms that have, perhaps, not considered the Kansai region to develop their business, or for those candidates determining their next career move, Pemberton encourages them to consider Kansai. “There are lots of good companies, lots of good career opportunities, and lots of enthusiasm here,” he emphasizes. “Give it a try. You will be pleasantly surprised. I was.”

*“Looking to  
invest more  
in the Kansai  
region”*



# Winds of change

## Danish firm helps Yokohama go green

Text and photo **ALLISON BETTIN**

“Sugoi!” shout members of Yokohama City’s Environmental Planning Bureau below the giant tower of the city’s prized wind turbine. Its wings have started to move, and even on a rather stagnant winter day, the turbine is producing clean energy for Japan’s second-largest city.

The idea of constructing the “Hama Wing”, as it is affectionately known, originally came from a staff suggestion at the bureau, says Go Kimura, assistant manager of the Environmental Energy Division. “We believe that the shape symbolises the ‘environmental action city, Yokohama,’” he says. “It becomes a part of environmental education and public awareness.”

Although the Hama Wing is meant to serve more as an environmental ideal for the city, rather than a vital part of its electricity grid, related energy statistics speak to its success. With adjustable wings that position automatically based on wind direction, the wind turbine produces

enough electricity to power about 500 houses a year, and its clean energy represents a saving of 560 kilolitres of oil annually. That’s equal to approximately 830 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

These impressive numbers come from decades of trial and error in Denmark where Vestas, supplier of the Hama Wing, is based. “Economy, performance, reliability, system guarantee ... these are the reasons we chose [Vestas],” says Kimura.

A global firm dedicated exclusively to wind energy, Vestas has taken over a century to become the world’s leading wind turbine manufacturer. It all began in 1898, when 22-year-old Hand Smith Hansen purchased a small-town blacksmith shop. An inherently astute businessman, Hansen and his son Peder – who officially founded Vestas in 1945 – produced an array of goods, from steel window frames to domestic appliances and agricultural vehicles.

But it wasn’t until the 1970s, after the global oil crisis, that Vestas got serious about the promising technology of wind

turbines. Birger T Madsen, Vestas’ first engineer, recalls that the ‘70s was a time when “if you were out and about and started talking about wind turbines, people thought you were a tree hugger. It wasn’t something for a well established machine manufacturer.”

So Peder Hansen and his son Finn did what they thought best. “We didn’t want our suppliers to laugh at us, [or] our customers ... so we pulled a curtain and built them [turbines] behind it,” says Finn.

And that was a good thing. Early trials did not go well for the company; some prototypes went spinning out of control in poor weather. The saving grace was found in Henrik Stiesdal, a young student who was successfully building wind turbines nearby. Vestas hired the young man who would become the chief engineer behind the wind turbines that can be found all over the world today.

In Yokohama, positioned strategically across from the swanky Minato Mirai 21 waterfront district, the turbine is more than an environmental statement. To pay for construction, the Environmental Planning Bureau issued “Hama Windmill Bonds” to those

who invested over ¥500,000 in construction. In return, their names can be seen on the electricity display below the turbine. For the cost of maintenance and support for a 10-year period, the bureau also enticed 45 corporate donors with the ceremonial “Green Power Certificate”. This can be used as a green symbol in company profiles as did Kirin and Nissan, who also then report to the Japanese government about their investment in clean technology.

Though Kimura says that staff entrepreneurship in the bureau is no longer encouraged due to a change in city government, Yokohama is still dedicated to becoming greener.

“The city of Yokohama aggressively takes renewable energy technologies into public facilities like schools and in the subway,” he says. “We have some power-generation systems such as solar, wind, water and biomass as well.”

And it’s with the cooperation of international companies like Vestas that this has become a reality. 🌱

“IT BECOMES A PART OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS”

Go Kimura



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# Piotr R Suszycki

*Chairman, Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan (PCCIJ)*

[www.pccij.or.jp](http://www.pccij.or.jp)

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

**Please tell us how your chamber has grown over the past decade.**

After its establishment in 2007, the PCCIJ grew to more than 50 members in 2011. The situation changed dramatically, however, after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, when we had to temporarily postpone most of our activities (including our Annual General Meeting). At that time, our membership dropped to a little over 30. But we have managed to rebuild our base to some 40 members now. Strengthening of our member base is currently one of our top-priority tasks in order to become a stronger organisation.

By the way, the 2011 Tohoku disaster was very important for our chamber's history in another way. In response to the tragedy, the PCCIJ Board collected ¥1.2 million in emergency contributions just days after the disaster. The money was collected here in Japan and through our international network in Poland and other countries. We also worked closely with the [NGO] Polish Humanitarian Action, eventually contributing some ¥35 million to Ashinome Kindergarten. Located in Kesenuma city, Miyagi prefecture, the facility had been destroyed in the disaster.

**Can you tell us some success stories – about Polish firms that have benefited from their work with the PCCIJ?**

Currently, we have an unbalanced situation where there are some 300 Japanese corporations with established, local operations in Poland versus just a few Polish firms with businesses in Japan. The reason is historic and structural. Although the economy of Poland

has been steadily growing over the past two-and-half decades, since democratisation in 1989, Polish companies are still focused on closer markets such as the EU, eastern Europe and America. In a sense, Japan is still a far-away country. Polish companies that are here are mostly active in the B2B sector, in such fields as chemicals, raw materials, food, furniture, electronics and IT (games, software). There are just a few famous brands well known in Japan, for example the Chopin brand.

We have facilitated introduction of some domestically well-established Polish manufacturers into Japan in several fields such as food and fashion. But, again, this is a process that will take time.

**What areas do you feel Polish firms lead in Japan and worldwide?**

Polish companies are strong in the food sector since Poland traditionally is famous for high-quality agricultural products, along with raw materials and furniture. But there is also IT, innovation, machinery and science, just to mention a few. Polish scientists and engineers are well known around the world for their cutting-edge level, and quite a few IT engineers also contribute to Japan.

**Do Polish companies still consider Japan the top of Asian markets, or are they now looking more to China and other centres?**


Japan became a symbol of prosperity and success for all the Poles back in the early 1980s when the Nobel Peace Prize winner and then-President Lech Wałęsa said: "We [the Poles] will build



“WE STILL NEED TO WORK THE BASICS”

the second Japan in Poland.” This was a turning point, and Japan became very famous among the Polish people.

The reality, however, is that for many Polish companies, Japan still is the very far-away destination with a different culture. It is considered a difficult yet very attractive partner. Every year, more and more business people visit Japan in order to learn about this country. *Kaizen* [continuous improvement] is also well known among Polish managers, who try to introduce it back home. Many of them build new and constructive relations with their Japanese counterparts. Our Chamber, in many instances, becomes very instrumental in this process.

There is still a lot of work to be done, however. Although everybody in Japan knows about Poland, the country is still not well recognised here. We still need to work the basics, such as promoting “Poland” among Japanese thoughts, at various events. 

# Hiring Professionals

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“If you think it’s expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur” is a great quote by innovator Red Adair that sums up both sides of the argument, for or against using recruitment services.

Although Adair worked in the oil-well fire-fighting industry, the qualities he looked for when hiring are the same as those desired in any office: skilled, experienced, loyal, and hardworking individuals with strong communication skills.

Even with the requirements most companies consider commonplace, finding the proverbial needle in the haystack proves to be an amazingly challenging task.

And when recruiting on your own, how can you be sure you are hiring a professional? Short answer: you can’t.

Even after intensive CV screenings and in-depth interviews, the amateur can still easily, and often does, slip through the cracks; companies often incorrectly interpret strong interviewing skills as being good on the job. Thus, should you have the opportunity to consult with a recruitment industry specialist, there is no reason to do otherwise in order to minimise the risk (and avoid the expense) of an incorrect hire.

Also, there are several internal obstacles that a company encounters when handling their own recruitment, including an overall lack of resources, not knowing where to search for candidates; an unbiased perspective of their company and its standing in the market; no marketing budget for recruitment advertising; and allocating significant time away from their other tasks to conduct recruitment.



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**Naeem Iqbal, Managing Director,  
Intelligence Global Search (IGS)**

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Recruitment, simply put, is a specialty. When you outsource your accounting duties to one of the Big Four, for example, you are trusting professionals. Or when you outsource your IT helpdesk, you are looking for proven specialists to handle the responsibility. Recruitment is no different; we are the professionals, the specialists, the experts on how to hire.

After all, we invest our time, energy, resources — and professional lives — into meeting candidates, building networks, learning everything about our specialisations. As a company, we meet hundreds of professionals every week and are constantly networking. We invest all our resources into attracting the best talent to our firm, so we can provide the best service to our clients.

We understand your industry, your competitors, your challenges, and your

goals. We know which candidates have moved companies recently and who are looking to move now. In addition, our recruiters have experience working within the industry they cover and understand first-hand what companies look for and what candidates want.

The best recruiters in the industry, furthermore, are consultants. We work with our clients to explain what talent is available in the market and what is a reasonable goal for a particular position or search. We help clients understand and differentiate among the plausible, the reality, and the impossible.

On the other side, we work very closely with candidates to understand their real personality, desires and goals. And then we consult with our clients and make a recommendation.

We also understand the candidates’ real situation. Where else are they interviewing? What are their concerns about the company? What are they excited about? Is the approved salary budget within their expectations? What are the working hours? Paid holidays? This all is important information to a candidate, but can’t be talked about during an interview for fear that the job would be lost (and, in most cases, it would).

We help bridge that gap — and make sure all essential information is provided, so everyone can make informed decisions.

Recruitment agencies save companies time and energy, and enable resources to be allocated properly. We help locate the best professionals in the market; and, as specialists, we ensure you hire the professional, not the amateur.



# Modern Japan



## Land of small government



**In the 19th century, it was accepted** that the role of the state should be tiny. The role was based on a state's monopoly on violence. Internal policing and external defence were its great functions. Everything else (schooling, health, social security, business activity) could be left to the private sector. Taxation was light, because spending was light.

After World War II, it was recognised by the victorious Allies that their people deserved more. The UK and the US rolled out fantastically generous programmes, in particular free schooling and free medical services for life in the UK. Not surprisingly, the role and size of government mushroomed.

But not in Japan. The remarkable thing about this country is the tiny size of its state. The Japanese state achieves one of the best outcomes in the world in health, education and personal security, while being one of, if not the, smallest in terms of spending and personnel.

While the UK and the US puff themselves up as lean and mean proponents of neo-liberal governments, Japan is frequently castigated by foreign visitors as "socialist". Yet socialism, with its vast government programmes and central control mentality, implies a huge government apparatus. This is manifestly absent in Japan, as the statistics show.

Apart from the US, Japan has the lowest total tax burden in the developed world, yet achieves superb results in life expectancy, child mortality, crime and education. In other words, the Japanese state is giving unbelievably good value for money. With one of the lowest levels of resources in the world, this country produces gold or silver medal podium-spots in all the key areas which developed nations are supposed to provide their citizens.

That combination of low inputs and high outputs is unique. Some countries boast lower tax rates (the US), and a very small group of countries boast better health and education (mainly in northern Europe); but no country manages such a great combination.

There are many ways to slice the data, but the most dramatic way is to count the total number of civil servants per 1,000 of the population. France, unsurprisingly, leads the way with 90. The UK, despite its fierce capitalist rhetoric, is close behind with 75; the US 65; decentralised and, hence, relatively efficient Germany has 60; and Japan has – wait

Japanese politicians, supposedly weak and emasculated, have achieved Thatcherite and Reaganesque goals of small government and tight budgets long abandoned in other countries as being too extreme.

All this confirms that Japan's national debt has nothing to do with government inefficiency and everything to do with a demographic problem, which is the unavoidable consequence of the post-war baby boom. Baby booms, like all booms, end in a bust. The government is now trying to finance the retirement and health needs of a huge elderly population with a much smaller younger

population and an economy which is inevitably not as risk-taking or as fast-growing as a few decades ago.

Put it another way: Looking at Japan's government debt of 230% of GDP should not fill you with contempt and horror. Rather, you should be amazed and impressed that it is not much higher. No other country has managed to maintain

its key human and physical infrastructure at such a high level, while simultaneously financing such a catastrophic demographic transformation. Germany, for example, has collapsed from boasting one of the most over-engineered and richly equipped infrastructures in the world to something approaching the UK. Cities are grimy and dirty, and the trains are chaotic. And Germany is supposedly richer and better managed than most.

Countries – and there are many – looking at how to maintain a civilised framework when money is tight know where to look. ☺

## “THE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT THIS COUNTRY IS THE TINY SIZE OF ITS STATE”

for it! – 35. (These figures include central and local staff, as well as the military.) It is thus most amusing when visitors complain that Japan is socialist, when it has half the number of government bureaucrats as the US.

In addition, Japanese levels now are almost half what they were in 2000 – in other words, the Japanese bureaucracy has been ruthlessly downsized in less than 20 years.

Here is another stunning figure. The UK (population 60 million, GDP \$2.7 trillion) in 2014 featured a government spending budget of ¥117 trillion (at 2015 FX rates, where the weak yen admittedly inflates the UK figure ... but still). Japan's budget (population 127 million, GDP \$5 trillion) spent less than ¥100 trillion. Now that is what one might term true austerity and belt-tightening.



**DAN SLATER**  
is director of the  
Delphi Network



# Comfort and Community in the Heart of Tokyo

**One day the Brennan boys, Thomas, 13, and Andrew, 11, will be playing soccer at Tokyo American Club's outdoor play area. Another day they might be in the full-size gymnasium, shooting hoops with friends, or in a karate class practicing their *kata* moves. Since moving to Japan last year, the whole Brennan family has embraced Club life.**

"We joined the Club because it felt familiar to us, being very similar to our club back home, and we knew it would make the transition to Japan easier for us and our children," says mom Shannon Brennan. "Thomas and Andrew began playing squash several years ago and thankfully are able to continue taking lessons at the Club. My husband is also an avid squash player and uses the courts regularly with our sons. He has also recently joined the Golf Group and is looking forward to playing golf when the weather gets warmer."

The Brennans are among dozens of families that have joined the Club in the last year or so, as international membership has rebounded from the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis and 2011 Tohoku disaster. Reduced entrance fee campaigns, which end this June 30, have helped to



boost member numbers to the current level of almost 3,800.

Like the Brennans, many members have been drawn to the Club's world-class facilities that include a rooftop pool, bowling alley, golf simulators, library, childcare center and spa, as well as a host of fitness, cultural and educational programs. Members enjoy access to five high-quality restaurants, a sports bar, along with finely tuned business, event and meeting functions, all located at the Club in downtown Tokyo.

But membership is also about being part of a vibrant community for families like the Brennans. Joining the Women's Group, for example, has enabled Shannon to make new friends and better settle into life in Tokyo.

"I have done various tours with the group, both on my own and with my family, as well as volunteered for things like Tokyo: Here & Now to help others who are just arriving in Tokyo," she says. "I just started taking classes to learn various Japanese techniques, such as ikebana. It not only gives me something interesting to do, but it gives me the chance to learn about Japanese culture."

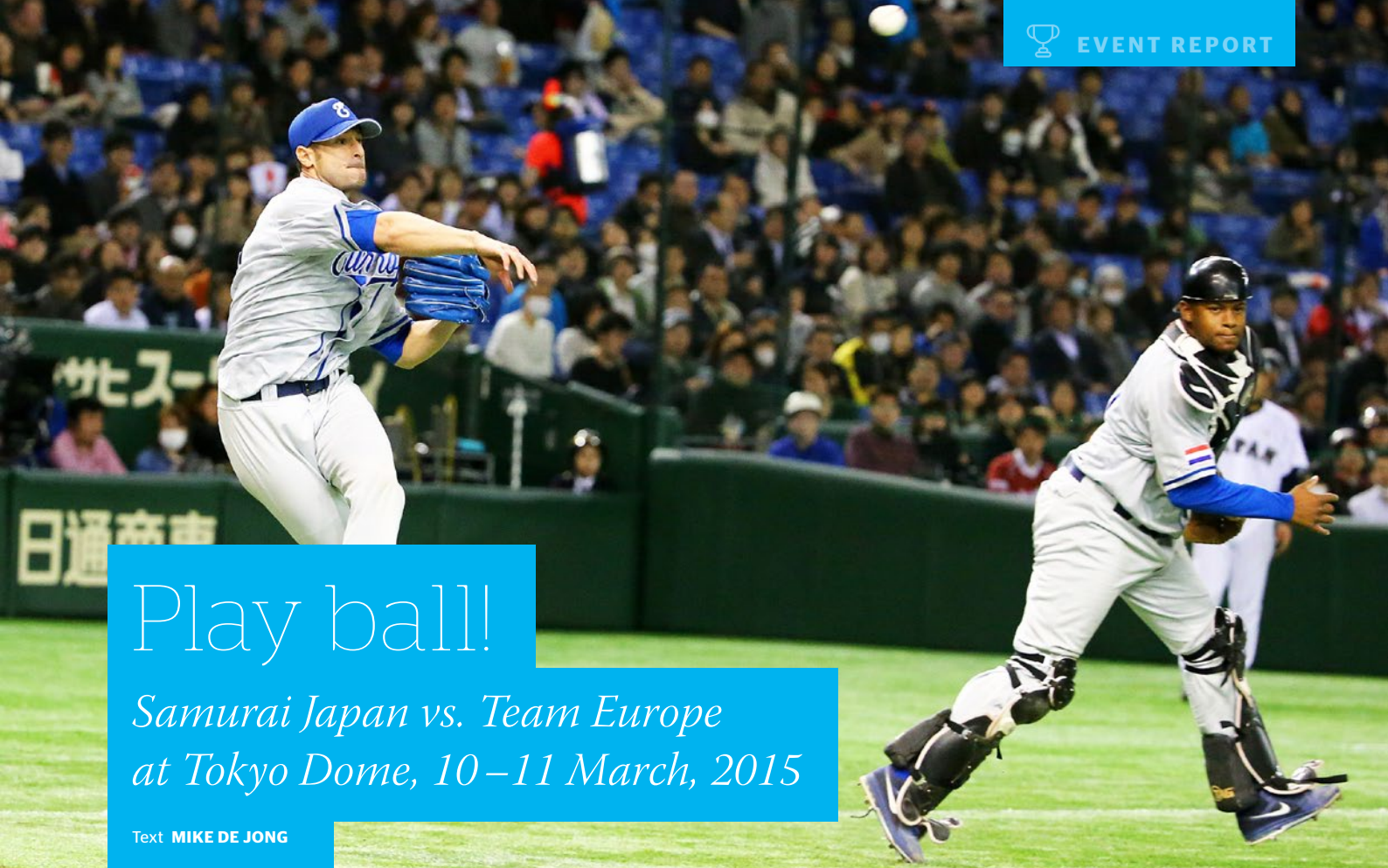


TOKYO AMERICAN CLUB

For more information about joining the Club and the changes in entrance fees from July 1, contact the Membership Office at 03-4588-0687 or [membership@tac-club.org](mailto:membership@tac-club.org)

[www.tokyoamericanclub.org](http://www.tokyoamericanclub.org)





# Play ball!

## *Samurai Japan vs. Team Europe at Tokyo Dome, 10–11 March, 2015*

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

**T**he crack of the bat. The umpire's call. It all sounds so ... European. Perhaps not. Yet. But judging from the spirited effort put on

by the new Team Europe in a two-game "friendly" with Japan last month, baseball could be catching on in the Old World.

"Absolutely," says European manager Steve Janssen, of Belgium. "I think that the top [players] in Europe are getting better. That's for sure. It's growing.

"There's a lot of publicity going around," he added.

Made up of players from Italy, Holland, Spain, Germany, France and the Czech Republic, Team Europe presented a strong challenge to Japan's national side, holding a late lead in the first game (eventually losing 4-3) and winning the second game 6-2. It was an impressive showing considering Samurai Japan had been the world's top-ranked side.

"It's been a while since I pitched in a game. But I pitched pretty well," said Netherlands-born Rob Cordemans, a four-time Olympian who started game one. "It is very good to be able to pitch in Japan."

"It's fun," added Loek van Mil, another Dutchman who pitched professionally

in Japan with the Rakuten Golden Eagles. "I've been trying to train my teammates, to prepare them for what they're going to do. It might be their first game in a big stadium like this. It's definitely a plus that I've played here before ..."

The friendly series was broadcast by a major European television network to a potential audience of 73 million households in 51 countries. And a large media horde followed Team Europe throughout its training programme.

"We are here because there is one Czech slugger [Jakub Sladek] on the squad," said Czech Television reporter Jakub Starik. "And because baseball and softball, in recent years, have been growing in the Czech Republic.

"We have really good development programmes for youth players," he added. "Many of them play in the United States. We don't have a Major Leaguer yet, but there are many minor leaguers and college players."

Most of the Europeans play professionally in countries like the Netherlands and Italy. Others, like Curacao's Curt Smith, who had three hits in the opening game, hail from European territories. The Dutch, in fact, have been the strongest European side in recent years, and are currently

ranked 5th in the world, thanks to their 2011 World Championship.

"In the Netherlands, we have 23,000 members," said Gijs Selderijk, technical director for the Royal Dutch Baseball and Softball Federation. "About the same as Italy and Germany. Those three countries are the biggest in numbers.

"We're very excited about this event for European baseball," he added. "There's worldwide exposure, and I think that's important for the development of our game in Europe."

Italian Alessandro Maestri pitched three impressive innings in the opening game, allowing only one run. As a member of Japan's Orix Buffaloes, Maestri had the advantage of experience facing the tough Japanese hitters. He told *EURObiZ Japan* that he's thrilled with the growth of his sport back home.

"We do have a good level of players and abilities," he said. "And we also opened a baseball academy about 10 years ago. We have young players growing and practicing every day. We have more and more guys signing and going to the States. So that's definitely a plus."

"It's a great honour to be here," added European coach Sidney de Jong, of the Netherlands. "It's a good way to show that baseball in Europe is growing and we're strong." 



# Real value

## *The best in property, products and services*

Text **DAVID UMEDA**

There are a number of factors impacting the real estate market. In an ever-globalising economy, the various property sectors in Japan are pursuing ways to stay competitive and offer true value.

"Real estate is no different from other industries, in that adaptation to change in the marketplace is critical to long-term survival," points out Christian Mancini, Chief Executive Officer - North East Asia; and Representative Director, Chief Executive Officer - Japan, at Savills Japan. "In that sense, we try to create services that are bespoke to client needs."

This year, CBRE Japan says we are likely to see continued pickup across the retail, office, and industrial real estate sectors.

"Demand is likely to be driven by further expansion in corporate earnings, an anticipated recovery in consumption, and continued growth in the world of e-commerce," adds Hiroshi Okubo, Executive Director of Research.

### **Logistics**

Globalisation of the economy is creating greater reliance on real estate that addresses complex logistics needs with simple, affordable solutions.

"Demand for modern logistics facilities in Japan continues to be driven by opportunities to improve operational efficiency and the continuing growth of e-commerce," points out Yoshiyuki Chosa, President of GLP Japan. "We own and operate over 90 warehouses with a total floor area of 480 million square metres all across Japan."

Being the market leader with local experts in-house has enabled GLP to provide flexible support and services in not only hardware, but also software. "Our track record of over 80% repeat-customers reflects our loyalty and dedication," adds Chosa.

While Asian Tigers is, at its core, a traditional international household goods mover, the company has found that its corporate clients require much more.

"Our customers wanted us to manage the entire relocation process for their transferees, through to eventual departure," says Andrew Olea, Country Manager - Mobility, Japan, at Asian Tigers Mobility.

Professionally assisted housing search and real estate services were found to be key considerations not only





as big cost factors, but also as factors in the success of the whole programme. "And, ultimately, the success of the expatriate assignment," continues Olea, "at an average cost of around \$250,000 if a failure."

### Residences

"So, basically, service apartments are more in their infancy than hotels are; and, especially in Japan, it takes us longer to explain what service apartments are within this market rather than outside of Japan," points out Martin Fluck, Director of Operations, North Asia, at Oakwood Asia Pacific.

He talks about their resident profile. "In Japan, we have like 70% corporates and, out of that, most are foreigners; but here at Midtown, specifically, 50% are Japanese, 50% foreigners.

"So the Japanese are getting to appreciate more and more what service apartments are," he adds.

Masayo Namiki, Manager at SAKURA HOUSE, SAKURA HOTEL & HOSTEL, talks about the firm's range of residences and residents. "We provide a variety of accommodations in Tokyo for anyone from overseas, whether short or long term, and keep move-in procedures

easy and simple for them. Our reliable, personalised hospitality support services enable newcomers to feel right at home."

Her company arranges for residents to meet and socialise with the other guests from around the world. "This makes any stay in Tokyo pleasant and productive," Namiki adds. "Also, our staff are never short of a good tip or two, and are ready to help guests find their way around Tokyo."

The high-end Japan market requires real estate-related products responsive to very exacting demands and requests. Vorwerk, founded in Germany in 1883 as a carpet manufacturer, has stood for high-quality, convenient cleaning solutions over the past 85 years.

"Vorwerk's legendary vacuum cleaner, Kobold, is closing in on worldwide sales of 60 million units," explains Anton Jatsch, Representative Director of Kobold Japan. "For clean living, Kobold VK150 delivers extraordinary suction power and dust retention."

R&D continues to drive the business, including the intelligent robot cleaner Kobold VR200, unique window cleaner Kobold VG100, and stylish handy cleaner Kobold VC100S.

### Taking the lead

Leadership in the real estate industry requires a delicate balance between meeting demand and creating new opportunities.

"The industry is extremely competitive, both for investors and service providers," points out Mancini of Savills. "Some clients are content with the traditional service model associated with brokerage, for example, while others require a much deeper level of coverage and analysis, which becomes less brokerage, more advisory.

"It is our house view that the latter will play a much greater role in the Japanese real estate market in the coming years," adds Mancini. "We are reshaping parts of our business to capture this opportunity."

Okubo of CBRE Japan is also upbeat about the country's future prospects. "Japan remains one of Asia's brightest spots," he says. "And we expect that sentiment to continue for the foreseeable future." 





# LUXURY RESIDENTIAL MASTER PLAN COMPLETES IN MAY 2015

*Exclusive family living in the city*

Come this spring, an extension to the exclusive Azabu Gardens property is opening, completing the master plan by Pembroke Real Estate in the most desirable international neighbourhood of Moto-Azabu. The property maintains its warm, natural, limestone exterior and now covers a range of sizes and floor plans, most four-bedroom. Common areas include a large landscaped roof terrace with manicured “garden walk” and cityscape views like Tokyo Tower. Azabu Gardens will be available for lease from May 2015.

Located in a quiet tree-lined neighbourhood at the heart of Tokyo, luxurious Azabu Gardens offers thoughtfully designed residences looking out over extraordinary views, and complemented by generous green spaces and a host of exceptional amenities. The popular retail-and-entertainment destinations of Roppongi Hills and Tokyo Midtown are also minutes away.





## ENHANCING DAILY LIFE

Step inside one of the suites at Azabu Gardens, and you can see how they are the perfect “home away from home” for family-oriented ex-pats and local residents alike. Spacious kitchens designed for gourmet cooking come with appliances from Viking, Miele to Whirlpool and Asko. Bright master bedrooms are more like hotel suites, with wide walk-in closets. Each residence has full-height windows and a private patio. Each suite also has full sized, front-loading washers and dryers.

“This is one of the most attractive residences in the area,” says a resident. “The interior as well as exterior landscaping [is exceptional]. Management is also very quick to respond to any issue.”

Bamboo flooring and sliding screen doors add Japanese aesthetics to the interior design, while original works of art create ambience in the hallways and common areas.

## EXTENDED AMENITIES AND EXCEPTIONAL VIEWS

Family time in the city is extended in the Azabu Gardens modern club lounge. In a private, multi-functional entertainment space, residents can cook together in the gourmet open-kitchen, arrange for children’s playgroup activities like birthday parties — or watch movies and sporting events in the fully equipped media room.

Tokyo’s mild weather and abundant sunshine encourage nearly year-round use of the spacious rooftop terrace with its hilltop southern exposure. Sweeping views over the city can accompany relaxation time, dining al fresco-style, or hosting fun outdoor activities.

Stay fit with two 24-hour gyms offering top-of-the-line equipment. Azabu Gardens provides a dedicated pet cleaning area for pet-friendly patrons.

A friendly, bilingual concierge is also on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## EXPANSIVE GREEN SPACE AND ECO-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

With lush green balconies and rooftop terrace, Azabu Gardens was qualified as Japan’s first LEED-certified in New Construction category. More than 80 varieties of native flowers and plants populate the landscape. Other energy conservation features include LED lighting, sun-control overhangs and insulated double-glazed windows. Low-VOC emitting materials such as adhesives and paints were employed. Unsightly power lines are tucked underground, maintaining the look of a tree-lined oasis.

A resident couple summarises Azabu Gardens’ appeal: “quietness, location, and green surroundings are very hard to find in a big city like Tokyo.”

“We love how it’s private, yet everyone feels like family,” says another resident. “The staff is extremely pleasant and helpful too. And the building is beautifully maintained.”



AZABU GARDENS  
PEMBROKE

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In February 2015, GLP established immediate scale in the United States with the acquisition of an US\$8.1 billion portfolio.

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# Olympian opportunity

*Strategic planning and the Games: how can your brand compete?*



**A busy executive walks on a treadmill** in the hotel gym, looking down at his phone, scrolling the feeds on social media. Overhead, a stock ticker and headlines revolve. On the television, a news presenter drones on about a company that missed its earnings forecast.

With the accelerated pace of the news cycle, the growth of digital and social media, and our thirst for news and information on demand – anytime, anywhere and on any device – it is no wonder that we are managing our companies as if we were on a treadmill.

If we focus only on what is directly in front of us, it is easy to miss what is happening all around. This leads to the risk of blindsiding – from regulatory action, disruptive technology, a new start-up competitor, or long-term political, economic and social trends that are going to change the market.

Many organisations are now embracing strategic planning as a way to break free from that perpetual short-term focus. In Japan, with numerous changes posed to take place in the next five years leading up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, now is an opportune time to be planning for those challenges and opportunities.

Let's focus on the Olympics for a moment. Many businesses and organisations have already set up project teams to plan for Tokyo 2020. One effort underway across the foreign chambers of commerce in Japan is a collaborative approach to share information and leverage the event as an opportunity to bring about change in Japan – in a way that will make it easier for businesses to succeed and grow here. The Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics Foreign Chambers Leadership Committee is composed of 10 chambers in Japan.

Although still five years out, the committee has already begun engaging with the Japanese government

and Olympics stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned from our members, many of whom have been involved in supporting previous Games and World Championship sporting events.

The committee is also coordinating activities to support preparations for Tokyo 2020, including across regional economies and in our respective home countries – sharing relevant information; ensuring best practices in design, preparation and implementation; offering business and investment opportunities to members; and providing an opportunity for volunteers to get involved.

Taking a step back to see the bigger picture, we note that the Japanese government has its own strategic planning initiative, in which the Olympics play an

“IF WE **FOCUS ONLY ON** WHAT IS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF US, IT IS EASY TO MISS WHAT IS HAPPENING ALL AROUND”


important part. The Japan Revitalization Strategy – the national growth strategy – discusses how the government plans to promote growth through inclusion, innovation, openness and structural reform. Japan's corporations are already taking notice and have been planning strategies and activities to position their efforts within the growth strategy.

Another trend is that Japanese firms are increasingly using overseas acquisitions as a tool to increase their international presence. M&As can help firms develop technologies and business partners to meet the needs of fast-growing populations and economies in Asia and other parts of the developing world. However, once an acquisition has been decided on, communicating this clearly to multiple stakeholders is essential.

While investors and customers are an important audience, communicating the rationale for an acquisition – and its future plans – with a clear and consistent message are important; and certain audiences like governments and employees need to be considered carefully and treated with care. When firms under-communicate with these audiences, they risk adverse political or regulatory action; and employee engagement may suffer – many might

become “disengaged” and find employment elsewhere. Effective communication with these audiences needs to be coordinated, frequent, and two-way.

For management, once the strategy is set and agreed on, communication becomes an essential tool for change. Again, a regular plan of communication targeting each stakeholder is important, as is listening to feedback and adapting the strategy as necessary on the fly.

Tokyo 2020 presents a great opportunity to take a five-year view of the market and develop your organisation's growth strategy. And once you have developed a plan that you are happy with, share it widely within your organisation and outside with key stakeholders, and use it as a way to deepen the conversation about your brand. 



**JONATHAN KUSHNER**  
is Managing Partner Japan,  
Head of Asia at Kreab.



# for your dining pleasure



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Tokyo. Tel: 03-3556-0672  
[www.elio.co.jp/anticaforneria](http://www.elio.co.jp/anticaforneria)



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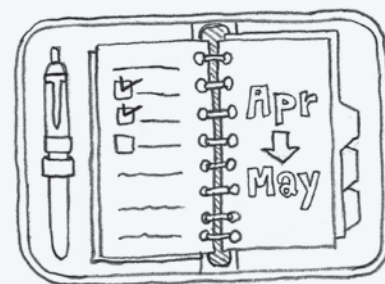
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# Upcoming events

Compiled by **DAVID UMEDA**

► **Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

[www.blccj.or.jp](http://www.blccj.or.jp)

## Monthly Beer Gathering

20 April, 18 May, 15 June, Mondays, 19:00-23:00

**Venue:** Belgian beer café in Tokyo

**Fee:** Pay for what you drink

**Contact:** [info@blccj.or.jp](mailto:info@blccj.or.jp)

## Belgian Beer and Food Academy III

21 April, Tuesday, 18:30-21:30

**Venue:** Hilton Tokyo, Yamato Room

**Fee:** ¥15,000 (members), ¥17,000 (non-members)

**Contact:** [info@blccj.or.jp](mailto:info@blccj.or.jp)

## Belgian shop at Belgian Weekend Yokohama

21-24 May, Thursday-Sunday, times to be confirmed

**Venue:** Yamashita Park, Motomachi-Chukagai

**Fee:** Pay for what you buy

**Contact:** [info@blccj.or.jp](mailto:info@blccj.or.jp)

► **British Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

[www.bccjapan.com](http://www.bccjapan.com)

## Luncheon – Medical devices to modern art: inside the Japanese boardroom

15 April, Wednesday, 12:00-14:00

**Speaker:** Koji Nakao, Chairman & Representative Director, Terumo Corporation

**Venue:** ANA InterContinental Tokyo, B1F, Glory Room, Tameikesannno Station

**Fee:** ¥6,000 (members) ¥8,000 (non-members)

**Contact:** [info@bccjapan.com](mailto:info@bccjapan.com)

► **Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

[www.fcc.or.jp](http://www.fcc.or.jp)

## FCCJ Luncheon Meeting “The Moomin Story in Japan: A lot of hard work, but also some good luck”

1 June, Monday, 12:00-14:00

**Speaker:** Roleff Kråkström, Managing Director, Moomin Characters Ltd.

**Venue:** Hotel Okura Tokyo, Kensington Terrace

**Fee:** ¥6,000 (members), ¥8,000 (non-members)

**Contact:** [fccj@gol.com](mailto:fccj@gol.com)

► **French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan**

[www.ccifj.or.jp](http://www.ccifj.or.jp)

## 1st CCIFJ Women in Business Committee Event

14 April, Tuesday, 12:30-14:00

**Speaker:** Georges Desvaux, Managing Partner, McKinsey Japan

**Venue:** CCIFJ

**Fee:** ¥3,000

**Contact:** [a.calvet@ccifj.or.jp](mailto:a.calvet@ccifj.or.jp)

## Symposium Fukuoka: Smart Cities

23 April, Thursday, 14:00-17:00

**Venue:** Denki Bldg. 3F, Kyosokan Conference Room A, Fukuoka

**Fee:** free

**Contact:** [n.yoshida@ccifj.or.jp](mailto:n.yoshida@ccifj.or.jp)

## Fukuoka CCIFJ Gala

23 April, Thursday, 19:00-21:30

**Venue:** New Otani Hakata, Kyushu

**Fee:** ¥25,000

**Contact:** [n.yoshida@ccifj.or.jp](mailto:n.yoshida@ccifj.or.jp)

## Bonjour France - French Week at Isetan Shinjuku\*

20 to 26 May, Wednesday-Tuesday, 10:30-20:00

**Contact:** [d.devitton@ccifj.or.jp](mailto:d.devitton@ccifj.or.jp)

\* 60 French brands available for first time in Japan

► **Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce**

[www.ijcc.jp](http://www.ijcc.jp)

## IJCC 3rd Thursday Networking Event

16 April, Thursday, 19:00-21:00

**Venue:** An Solas, Yoyogi

**Fee:** Free (members and non-members)

**Contact:** [secretariat@ijcc.jp](mailto:secretariat@ijcc.jp)

## APRIL

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► **Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

[www.iccj.or.jp](http://www.iccj.or.jp)

## Aperitivo della Camera

16 April, Thursday, 19:00-21:00

**Venue:** Bar del Sole, Roppongi

**Fee:** ¥1,500 (members), ¥2,500 (non-members)

**Contact:** [promo@iccj.or.jp](mailto:promo@iccj.or.jp)

## Italian Olive Oil Day

30 May, Saturday, 11:00-19:00

**Venue:** TV Asahi "umu", Roppongi Hills

**Fee:** Free entrance

**Contact:** [support@iccj.or.jp](mailto:support@iccj.or.jp)

► **Multi-chamber Event (through FCCJ)**

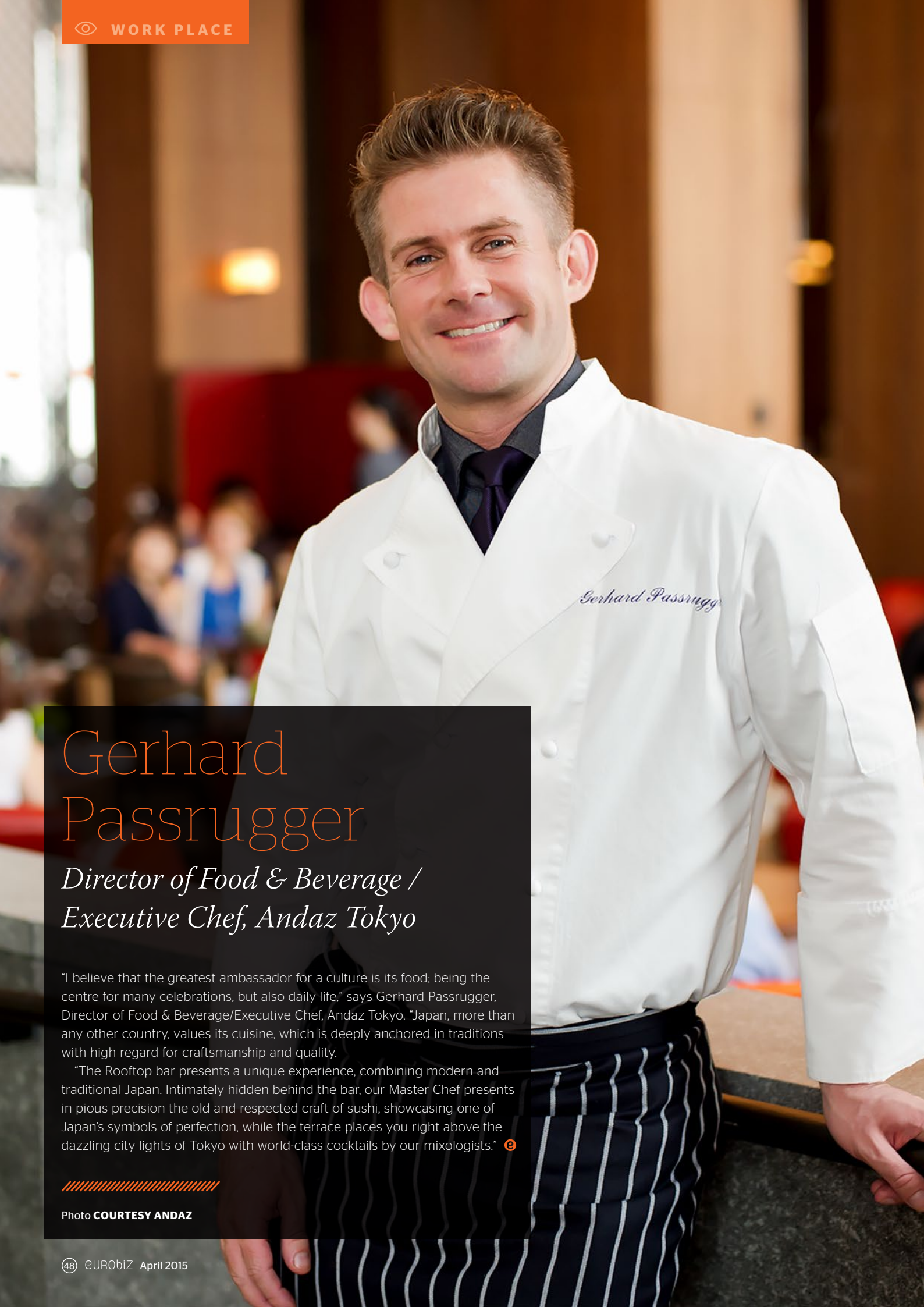
## Stora Enso Cup: Sweden-Finland Golf Challenge in Japan

17 April, Friday, 08:00-17:00

**Venue:** Narita Hightree, Chiba prefecture

**Fee:** ¥16,500

**Contact:** [fccj@gol.com](mailto:fccj@gol.com)



# Gerhard Passrugg

*Director of Food & Beverage / Executive Chef, Andaz Tokyo*

"I believe that the greatest ambassador for a culture is its food; being the centre for many celebrations, but also daily life," says Gerhard Passrugg, Director of Food & Beverage/Executive Chef, Andaz Tokyo. "Japan, more than any other country, values its cuisine, which is deeply anchored in traditions with high regard for craftsmanship and quality."


"The Rooftop bar presents a unique experience, combining modern and traditional Japan. Intimately hidden behind the bar, our Master Chef presents in pious precision the old and respected craft of sushi, showcasing one of Japan's symbols of perfection, while the terrace places you right above the dazzling city lights of Tokyo with world-class cocktails by our mixologists." 

Photo COURTESY ANDAZ



# The refreshed ROOFTOP BAR and the opening of 「the SUSHI」 on 52<sup>nd</sup> floor

Stepping into the Rooftop bar from its new entrance and take in the dazzling view of the Tokyo skyline. The terrace space is divided into stylized sections including a private open-air bar with relaxed sofa seating.

Our newest destination, the SUSHI, an exclusive eight-seat sushi counter. Using only the freshest seasonal ingredients, master Sushi chefs skillfully prepare “omakase-style” offering in this intimate setting, creating an authentic sushi experience.

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