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



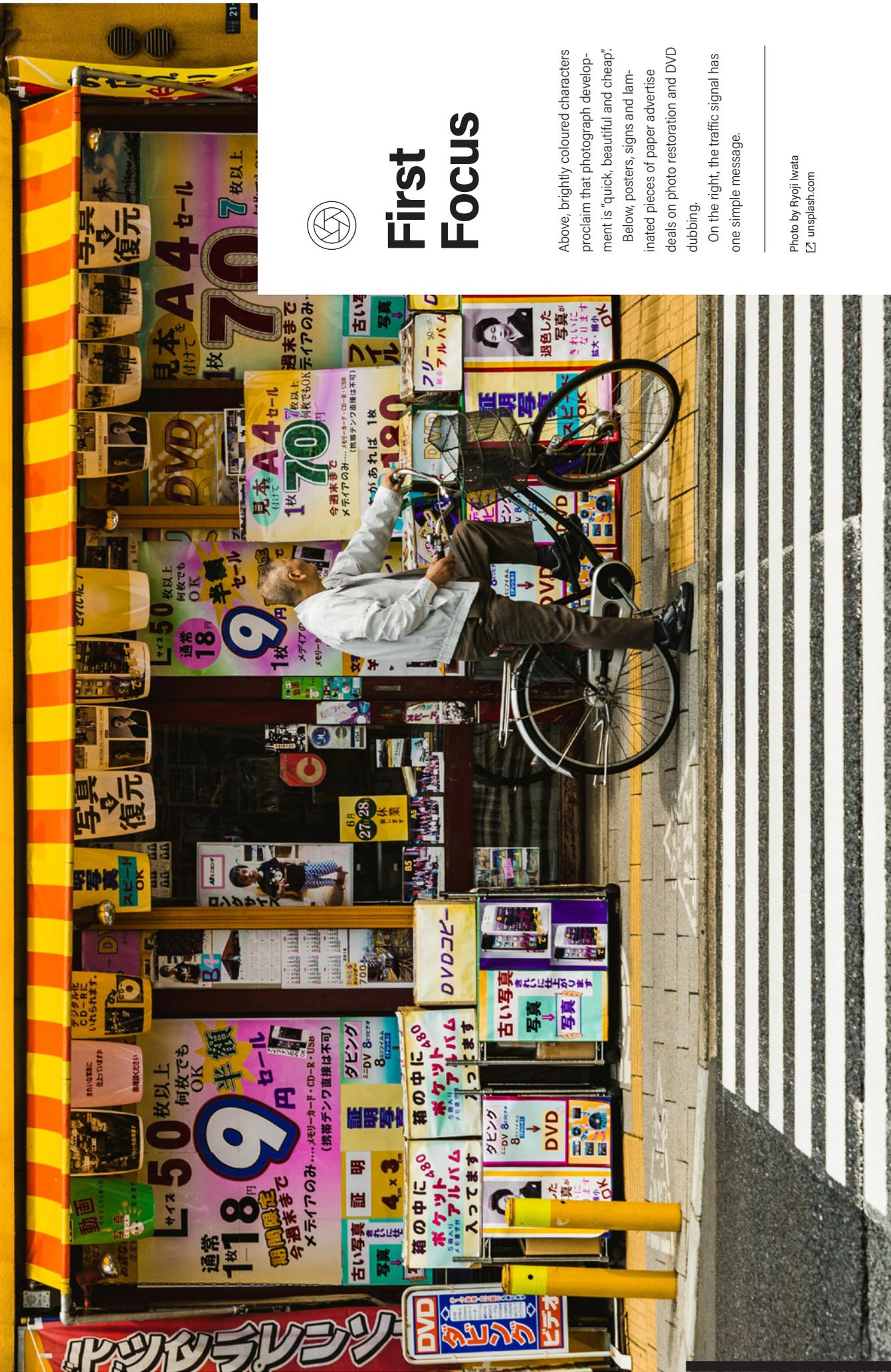
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Four decades of diplomacy

By Andrew Howitt



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First Focus

Above, brightly coloured characters proclaim that photograph development is "quick, beautiful and cheap".

Below, posters, signs and laminated pieces of paper advertise deals on photo restoration and DVD dubbing.

On the right, the traffic signal has one simple message.

Photo by Ryoji Iwata
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Justin McCurry is the Japan and Korea correspondent for *The Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers. He graduated from the London School of Economics and later gained a Master's degree in Japanese studies from London University.

➔ *“There are compelling reasons why Japan should be at the forefront of telemedicine, not least its large population of older people living in remote regions. But the message from experts is that remote consultations and treatment should be available to everyone, regardless of age and location. And, on occasion, a conventional visit to the doctor’s surgery is still the best medicine.”*



Julia Carvell is a student at the University of Tokyo and an editorial intern for *Eurobiz Japan*. She has written for *Toyo Keizai Shimbun* on the internationalisation of Japanese universities and the experiences of mixed-race Japanese children.

➔ *“Taxation is not known to be the world’s most exciting topic, but this year’s EBC tax seminar gave an interesting overview of several changes to Japan’s tax law that reflect an exciting future in which to do business — one where digitalisation is encouraged and employees from overseas aren’t discouraged from working in Japan long term.”*



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

➔ *“There is estimated to be around \$8.5 trillion in cash and bank deposits lying idle in Japanese banks and under futons. The government’s various NISA schemes have enticed around \$100 billion of that into investments; still some room for improvement. The latest NISA incarnation is a testament both to the willingness of the government to try new measures and to the power of bureaucrats to restrict their execution.”*



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.

➔ *“It was a great pleasure photographing Ambassador Viorel Isticioaia-Budura. He was a splendid raconteur and spoke eloquently on a wide range of subjects. He was also gracious and welcoming — and eager to pose. As a model, he was the perfect mix of erudition, charm, confidence and grace.”*

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

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Agreeing on the good

The year 1978 saw some important agreements reached that helped to strengthen international relations. One was the 1978 Trade Agreement between China and the then European Communities, the first intergovernmental agreement to be reached between the two entities. Another was the Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the People's Republic of China and Japan, an agreement formalising the two countries' normalised relations.

It was also the year that EU Ambassador to Japan Viorel Isticioaia-Budura — who had earned a bachelor's degree in Chinese language and literature — signed his contract to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Romania. His 40-year career has been defined by promoting friendship and trade between Europe and East Asia,

having served as an ambassador to China, South Korea and, currently, Japan. Now near the end of his four-year tenure, Isticioaia-Budura reflects on his time here and EU-Japan relations today in this month's cover story, *Four decades of diplomacy* (page 10).

Celebrating 40 years in the foreign services next year is Spanish Ambassador to Japan Gonzalo de Benito. In *Spain in his veins* (page 20), find out about the Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation, an agreement — set to be updated this year — that has propelled Spain-Japan relations forward

over the past five years, as well as events being held this year to commemorate the 150-year anniversary of bilateral ties.

Yung-Hsiang Kao's *Creating sustainable urban environments* (page 32) details the Tokyo Forum for Clean City & Clear Sky hosted by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike — who is also vice-chair of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. Leaders from 22 cities around the world adopted the Tokyo Declaration on Realization of Clean Cities & Clear Skies, pledging to reduce waste and pollution.

A very compelling issue, I'm sure you'll agree. ●

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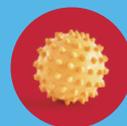


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FOUR DECADES

EU Ambassador to Japan
Viorel Isticioaia-Budura

OF DIPLOMACY

After serving for nearly four years as the European Union's Ambassador to Japan, Viorel Isticioaia-Budura will be returning to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, Romania, and will report for work on 1 September, 40 years to the day since he signed his contract to join the ministry. During his four decades of service to his country and the EU, he has been Ambassador of Romania to the Republic of Korea and People's Republic of China, and was head of the Asia-Pacific Department for the European External Action Service in Brussels before being posted to Japan. Ambassador Isticioaia-Budura spoke with *Eurobiz Japan* about the strengthening of EU-Japan relations, the historic agreements that are currently being finalised and the high points from his time in Japan.

How have you seen EU-Japan relations change while you have been here?

When I arrived in Japan at the end of 2014, I felt ambitious and said in my first interview that I would like to challenge the old, established pattern of EU-Japan relations, to change the way the Delegation works — responding better to the needs of the EU member states and the expectations of our Japanese partners — and, in the spirit of the times, to catch the chances that were out there. So, challenge, change, catch chances, and a fourth cha-cha-cha, to channel better our resources. That was four years ago. I'd like to say that I feel all this was, to a certain extent, fulfilled. This was joint work with

our Japanese partners, with my experienced team here, with the EU member states' diplomatic representatives in Tokyo— and, of course, with a good deal of collective wisdom.

Now, we are in a moment when EU-Japan relations are more mature, on a stable, more predictable course. We succeeded in achieving a good opening of bilateral relations — based on the previous decades of cooperation — with a wider spectrum of areas of mutual interest being identified and more realistic steps being taken to explore possible areas of cooperation. We are now equipped with the agreements that are going to frame the relations for the coming decades: the Economic Partnership Agreement







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(EPA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which are finally going to be signed at an EU–Japan summit in the summer and then given to the parliaments for ratification.

What do you believe are the most significant achievements that came out of the EPA negotiations?

It was a mutual learning process, and it was very meaningful. The agreement is so wide in scope and ambitious in the number of issues, and it deals with so many stakeholders and constituencies.

To pick one example, during one of the G7 ministerial meetings, Japan's then-minister of agriculture was with other ministers from the G7 forum and he put on the table a number of genuine Japanese food products, declaring in front of everybody these products are GIs [covered by geographical indication] in the newly adopted legislation. I felt proud to have had this kind of recognition from the Japanese side that there is value in our experience with GIs. The EPA, which covers GIs on both sides, has proven it.

Why is the Strategic Partnership Agreement important?

This ambitious and comprehensive political framework agreement was negotiated in parallel with the EPA. In response to the common challenges we are facing, there are provisions on climate change, energy supply, threats to security. We'll have new tools under this framework to promote peace, stability and prosperity globally, including in international organisations such as the G7, G20, OECD and the United Nations. But I would not forget

areas that now are qualified as critical for both the EU and Japan: space, cyber, maritime security, counterterrorism and disaster-risk management.

The EU and Japan have resources, have potential, have the right understanding of the complexity of the brave new world we are facing to go out together and do something for the public good, for international cooperation, to defend the rules-based international order. The strategic partnership shows that it's "bilateral plus" between us, that we go beyond bilateral relations, widening and generating something new through this partnership.

How important has the European Business Council (EBC) been in relating the needs of European businesses in Japan?

The EBC continues to be a must, an absolutely necessary partner for the EU Delegation — and for the member states, because not all of them have national chambers here. The EBC's expertise, which is summed up in the recommendations from sectoral working groups in its annual white papers, is very valuable. As an umbrella organisation, it is a powerful and comprehensive representative of European business interests and complements the role of the national chambers.

For the implementation of the EPA, we'll need to do the monitoring together, to watch how things go and prevent unpleasant surprises from popping up in terms of barriers, issues generated by inertia, or conservatism in certain parts of the Japanese system. We need the same excellent contribution from the EBC that was provided during the negotiations: intelligence on major developments in various sectors.

Can you share a few highlights from your time here as ambassador?

There were so many moments in which I was happy and proud to be here in Japan. The big G7 summit, along with the string of ministerial meetings, hosted here in Japan in 2016 was very important because it

“The EU and Japan ... have the right understanding of the complexity of the brave new world we are facing to go out together and do something for the public good”

happened, from the European perspective, at the right time during our bilateral negotiations on the two agreements. It brought a good number of important people here: we had not only the two presidents, of the European Council and the European Commission, but also almost a dozen commissioners, which allowed for a number of bilateral meetings. It made the EU more visible to Japanese partners, institutions and stakeholders. And it was quite useful in advancing their understanding that the EU is a partner on major issues, on geopolitics and geo-economics. I was happy to be there with my team, in supporting, in encouraging, in assisting.

Another important thing I recall, is the way in which travelling across Japan, engaging with governors and mayors, helped me to see the agenda of concerns, hopes and challenges at the local level. Being aware that a greater, more dynamic agenda of exchanges with the local administrations, with the prefectures and cities across Japan, is something that may generate additional potential, resources and energy for EU–Japan relations. ●



Toward a clinical utopia

The potential of telemedicine in Japan

There must be many urban residents of Japan who have arrived at a clinic or hospital and — recalling the crowded waiting areas, treatment rooms lacking privacy and consultations that seem to be over before they have even begun — thought twice about stepping through the doors.

Rural areas of the country face a more serious problem. Ageing communities are placing greater demands on already overstretched clinics, and this has prompted a rethink of medical practice provision and the role technology can play in delivering healthcare services remotely.

Part of the answer lies in telemedicine — the use of communications and information technology in medical diagnoses and treatments. The “tele-” prefix now accompanies a host of clinical fields, from cardiology and pathology to dentistry and psychiatry.

In August 2015, Japan’s government approved the use of telemedicine through-

out the country, and not just on outlying islands and remote locations, as had been the case since 1997.

Now, hundreds of medical institutions routinely use online consultation. Yano Research Institute, a market research company, says Japan’s telemedicine market is expected to be worth ¥19.9 billion in fiscal year 2019, compared with ¥12.2 billion in fiscal 2015.

The benefits of telemedicine to both patients and doctors are self-evident. It allows health professionals to collaborate regardless of their location and gives patients a direct line to doctors regardless of where they are based, noted Jun Ito, a professor in the faculty of nursing at Hyogo University and the co-author of an October 2017 paper on the subject for the *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*.

While remote diagnosis and health monitoring are not new, technological advances are expected to further bridge the communication gap between patient and doctor, according to Ito.

“I expect to see improvements in wearable, remote devices to monitor things such as blood pressure, blood glucose, and oxygen saturation,” he said.

In Japan, cardiology and hypertension are major areas of clinical interest, according



“digital pathology products enable professional consultation at many hospitals and clinics where there are no pathologists”

to Dr Sisira Edirippulige of the Centre for Online Health at the University of Queensland in Australia. But there are many others.

“Diabetes, heart failure, stroke and mental health are diseases that feature in telemedicine around the world and those are also the focus of Japanese telemedicine,” he said. “Geriatrics has also been featured for obvious reasons.”

Telemedicine is spreading to urban areas as well, where patients use smartphone apps that allow them to make appointments and enable them to talk with doctors in real time.

Experts believe telemedicine will help prevent lifestyle-related conditions and diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes, increase efficiency and reduce the burden on family members who act as primary caregivers.

“The impact of telemedicine will not be limited to the ageing



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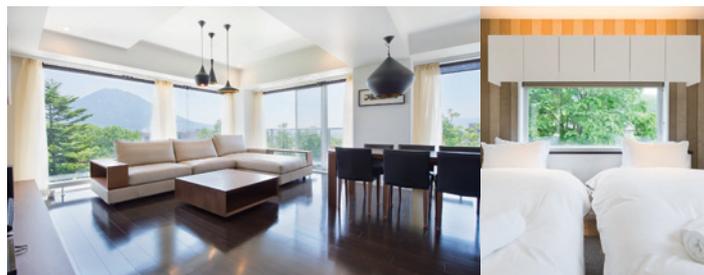
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population, but to a whole spectrum of demographics and disease groups,” Edirippulige said.

In addition to more effective prognoses for patients, the nation-wide use of telemedicine in Japan has presented opportunities for Japanese and European companies with proven track records in telemedicine products and services.

Medtronic, one of the world’s largest medical technology, service and solutions firms, with headquarters in Ireland and the US, has developed a range of telemedicine products, including insertable cardiac monitoring systems.

“For people with chronic diseases like diabetes and heart conditions, managing their condition is a lifelong collaboration with healthcare teams,” said Ayako Ichimaru, a Tokyo-based spokesperson for Medtronic Japan. “We have made the process easier with our remote monitoring systems, which allow patients with certain insulin pumps and heart devices to download information captured by their device and transfer that data via a secure server to a website. This creates a seamless link so everyone has the information they need to make smart, timely healthcare decisions.”

The Swiss company Roche Diagnostics makes digital pathology products such as iScan HT, a whole image scanner; and Virtuoso, an image management system.

“There are not enough pathology specialists in Japan,” said Chiaki Kawasaki, senior manager of Marketing Tissue Diagnostics and Sequencing at Roche’s Japan unit. “Our digital pathology products enable professional consultation at many hospitals and clinics where there are no pathologists.”

Makoto Ogasawara, president and CEO of Roche Diagnostics in Japan, said the firm would invest heavily in the use of big data, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things over the next decade to create a “clinical utopia”.

“I hope that Japan will become one of the leading countries in telemedicine, including teleconsultation, telepathology and telecare,” Ogasawara stated. “We need agility in government systems, regulatory systems; and to swiftly put these new changes into the system.”

The German medical technology firm Dräger has its expertise in the field of acute care.

“Telemedicine is helping in the monitoring of clinical outcomes and the success of rehabilitation after acute care treatment,” says Holger Klein, president and representative director of Dräger Medical

Japan. “Dräger is not currently involved in the development of telemedicine, but we prepare our products to be part of a networked environment and are developing remote monitoring solutions, including tools for mobile devices in a hospital network.”

Data collected from acute care and from post-clinical observation helps clinicians improve operational processes and, in turn, the long-term outcome of clinical interventions.

“The combination of hospital monitoring and IT systems with remote medical technology via telemedicine will improve patient safety, medical outcomes and efficiency,” adds Klein.

However, there are some downsides to telemedicine. The cost of telecommunication and data management equipment, along with technical training for medical personnel, can be high. There is also evidence that some consultations carried out virtually can take significantly longer than face-to-face interactions. And the absence of a direct link between patient and doctor has prompted doctors in Japan to stress that telemedicine should complement conventional medical practice, not replace it.

Given its clear potential to improve efficiency, reduce costs and deliver better and safer health care, the response to telemedicine among Japan’s clinical sector has been largely positive, while patients are beginning to value the independence that technology can give them, according to Edirippulige.

“The use of mobile devices for providing care,” he said, “has great potential for empowering patients to take more control over their health.” ●

“The impact of telemedicine will not be limited to the ageing population, but to a whole spectrum of demographics and disease groups”



Getting the general public to invest

NISA schemes struggle to bolster asset management in Japan

Japanese households are sitting on a huge pool of savings. How this money can be put to more productive use is a challenge that continues to stump policymakers and the asset management industry here. Total household assets topped ¥1.88 quadrillion (\$17 trillion) at the end of last year, with more than half of that in cash or deposits. In January, the government launched another version of its Nippon Individual Savings Account (NISA) savings scheme, designed to attract younger, first-time investors. Six months in, the results are somewhat underwhelming.

The original NISA, based on the UK's ISA, debuted in 2014 and now allows up to ¥1.2 million to be invested in shares and funds tax-free for up to five years. A total of ¥12.53 trillion (\$113.8 billion) from 11 million accounts is estimated to have been invested in total, though no official figures have been published by the government. However, data from securities companies suggests 43% of that has already been redeemed, likely driven in part by investors wanting to lock in profits before their five-year limit was up.

In 2016, the Junior NISA scheme — also fashioned after its UK equivalent — for those under 20 was introduced, allowing investment in stocks and funds of up to ¥800,000 annually, tax-free for five years. Like NISA, the junior version has been criticised for being overly complex in both its rules and application procedure. According to the Japan Securities Dealers Association, only 250,000 Junior NISA accounts had



been opened and some ¥66 billion (\$600 million) invested by the end of 2017.

The government's latest attempt to boost participation in the stock market by ordinary citizens is the installment-type Tsumitate NISA, launched in January to encourage regular monthly investment. The rules both improve on the other schemes and have more restrictions — widely seen as the result of a compromise between the government, the Financial Services Agency (FSA) and the Ministry of Finance. The five-year tax holiday has been extended to 20 years, though was not made indefinite, as had been called for and is how the UK's ISA works. Furthermore, the annual limit is only ¥400,000, and investments can only be made in funds approved by the FSA.

A survey by the *Nikkei* suggests a few hundred thousand Tsumitate NISA accounts have so far been created, with total investments of more than ¥400 billion (\$3.6 billion).

¥1,880,000,000,000,000

Total household assets topped ¥1.88 quadrillion at the end of last year

“The biggest reason for the lack of success is the restrictions of the funds that qualify by the FSA. Only passive funds containing equities, bonds and REITs [real estate investment trusts] are approved, so balanced or actively managed, multi-asset funds are excluded,” says Jun Mizutani, head of sales and marketing at Munich-headquartered financial services firm Allianz in Japan. “The concept of having low-fee and relatively low-risk funds is okay-ish, but they shouldn't have excluded other funds; it should be up to investors to choose.”

Allianz's flagship fund was rejected because it contained commodities investments and the company has no plans to create a fund that would meet the FSA's requirements because it “doesn't expect much from the Tsumitate NISA,” according to Mizutani.

James Malcolm, chief economist at UBS in Tokyo, says nobody in the industry “is very surprised that it's not generating fresh traction,” and that all the NISA schemes would benefit from higher annual limits and permanent tax breaks.

However, Malcom believes the government deserves kudos for its ‘give it a go’ approach.

“Abenomics is a catch-all for gathering all kinds of measures, throwing them at the wall and seeing what works; this adminis-

tration has been amazing at trying a lot of things,” Malcom says. “They wanted to make this for everyone and you have to give credit to them for not making it big tax breaks for the very well off, but specifically designed for the masses.”

Nicolas Sauvage, representative director at Amundi Japan and chairman of the EBC Asset Management Committee, also gives the government the benefit of the doubt, saying, “it is much too early to judge if the new Tsumitate NISA will be a success or not.”

Sauvage calls NISA “quite an effective measure [to communicate] to the general public the merits of long-term investing through funds,” though he believes having three schemes muddies the waters. He sees improving the level of “financial literacy” as a priority, and says NISA is having “a positive impact” in that direction.

However, there is still work to be done: a survey by the Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group found less than a quarter of Japanese people were even aware of the existence of NISA.

In March, Goldman Sachs issued a report suggesting regular NISA investments were creating a “turn of the month” (TOM) effect, with the ¥12.5 billion inflows helping to push the market higher on the first trading day of each month. The report adds that Tsumitate NISA could bolster the phenomenon, providing a potential trading play. Unfortunately, TOM failed to materialise on two of the three monthly first trading days since — the Nikkei 225 fell on 2 April and 1 June.

According to Allianz's Mizutani, “NISA has had no impact we've seen on markets.”

The conundrum of how to encourage the public to move more of the approximately \$8.5 trillion it has in cash and near-zero interest-bearing deposits into investments persists.

“We've had several years of excellent performance in the market, but that has still not done much in terms of household asset allocation,” notes UBS's Malcolm, who sees inflation as the key.

The value of savings being eroded by inflation should be the spur to action, notes Malcom. “Two percent is probably the kind of level that will have an impact.” ●



“We want to make Spain and Spanish culture better known in Japan”

Spanish
Ambassador to
Japan Gonzalo
de Benito

Spain in his veins

There is a tradition of public service in Spanish Ambassador to Japan Gonzalo de Benito's family. His father and grandfather were in the military, and his three daughters are all public servants. Ambassador de Benito has served his country, promoting Spanish interests and values abroad, as ambassador to Peru, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. He was Spain's secretary of state for foreign affairs for three years before being posted to Japan as ambassador in November 2014. Next year, he celebrates 40 years in the foreign services.

Can you tell me about your time as Spain's secretary of state for foreign affairs?

I was secretary of state from 2012 to 2014. It was a difficult time because we were going through a deep economic crisis. When our government assumed office at the end of 2011, we had a public deficit of around 10% and 27% unemployment. While I was there, some very strong economic reforms were made, including structural reforms and fiscal consolidation. Now the economy is much better; we have been growing annually at about 3% for three years in a row. It is the fastest-growing economy among the larger European countries.

At the same time, I was responsible for the campaign to obtain a non-permanent member seat at the UN Security Council for Spain. I had to travel all over the world to explain our candidacy and promote support for Spain, and we obtained our seat on 16 October 2014. It was a great satisfaction for us.

What were some of the highlights from the visit of King Felipe and Queen Letizia to Japan last April?

A state visit to Japan is always very well organised and very impressive from all points of view. During the three-day trip, they met with the Emperor [Akihito] and Empress [Michiko], and Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe. We had a big business meeting with 450 people attending from a couple hundred companies, and then there was a science and research meeting at the Miraikan museum.

On the last day they visited Shizuoka, where there is a symbol of the special relationship between Spain and Japan. It's a table clock, which was offered by King Felipe III to Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1611, as a gesture of thanks for having saved Spanish sailors shipwrecked off the coast of Chiba. The original of this clock is at Kunozan Shrine, and Their Majesties visited Shizuoka with the Emperor and Empress in recognition of the friendship between the two nations that began in the early 17th century. It's still working, and they wind it up for special occasions. It's the oldest European clock in Japan.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Spain and Japan. How is this being celebrated?

The embassy has composed a programme of 44 cultural and institutional events in 14 cities across the country. This started here in Tokyo in January with the Prado exhibition, called *Velázquez and the Celebration of Painting*. It's a wonderful exhibition, which is now in Kobe until October. There will also be the exhibition





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Women & Women, featuring works by five Spanish female photographers, which starts in Nagasaki on 28 July. We have organised 11 flamenco guitar concerts in September by the great guitarist, Cañizares, who is the most popular in Spain right now. We want to make Spain and Spanish culture better known in Japan and give the public more opportunities to attend events like these.

This year, we will also update the agreement that is the framework of the bilateral relations between Japan and Spain, called the Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation.

What is this agreement and why does it need to be updated?

This was the first time the prime ministers of both our countries adopted a declaration designed to strengthen our relationship: to exchange more information between our governments and to cooperate more in international institutions and on foreign policy as two like-minded countries. It is also to promote more trade, investment and tourism, as well as to increase scientific and research cooperation. This five-year programme, adopted in October 2013, comes to an end this year. We expect to do something more ambitious for the next five years.

Several agreements were signed in different sectors last year, on the occasion of the state visit of Their Majesties, in a ceremony at Akasaka Palace. One was between both ministries of economy to have a regular economic dialogue. Another was on tourism to promote reciprocal travel. There were also other agreements on sports, to exchange trainers and expertise in this sector; on science and research; and

a working holiday agreement to promote visits of students to both countries.

How are you cooperating with Japan in sports?

An example of this is our High Performance Centres. Spain, 30 years ago, was very poor in sports. Now we are good at tennis, soccer, swimming and others. These High Performance Centres were created after the [1992] Olympic Games in Barcelona. This is where our athletes train from a young age. It is an area of expertise we want to share with the Japanese authorities.

We have also signed several agreements looking forward to 2020. There were several proposals from Japanese cities to host Spanish teams to train ahead of the Olympic Games. The Spanish swimming team is already training in Yamaguchi, the table tennis team has been assigned to Shizuoka, and the sailing team will be in Kanagawa.

How have bilateral relations been changing over the past few years?

In just a few years, we have significantly increased our exports to Japan. Because of the structural reforms in Spain, Spanish companies have had to become more com-

petitive and adjust their structures to be more international. The three sectors that have benefitted most in the last few years are the automobile sector, foodstuffs and fashion — almost everyone here knows the Zara brand, for example.

There has been, as well, major growth in tourism over the last four years. Last year, Spain saw 601,000 visitors from Japan. And nearly 100,000 tourists from Spain came to Japan. It is partly a result of Iberia's new direct flights between Tokyo and Madrid. I think there's real interest for Spanish culture here, and in Spain, everyone wants to come to Japan and visit. We are pleased. But more can be done.

From now on, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement is going to take Japan and EU relations to a higher level. I think this agreement is going to bring our boundaries and economies closer. ●





Spain

Greater sales, greater reach, greater prestige

Over the past three years, Spain has seen its economy grow at more than 3% per year — twice as fast as the Eurozone average — and its unemployment rate consistently fall. Many of the nation's businesses, including those with offices in Japan, are also seeing significant growth — in sales, in reach and in prestige.

One Spanish firm that has shown impressive year-on-year fiscal growth is the international wine producer and distributor Félix Solís Avantis, which had a turnover of €300 million in 2017, a 6% increase on the previous year. Félix Solís Avantis has a presence in each of Spain's major wine producing regions and was recently named Best Spanish Winery 2018, receiving the Berliner Wein Trophy. It has been steadily expanding its global presence, having opened a new office or winery almost every year since 1998. Last year marked the 10th anniversary of its Tokyo office.



Valencia-based ceramics business Lladró has had its office in Tokyo for over thirty years. The firm is renowned for its distinctive porcelain figurines produced by world-class designers, including Japanese creators Yasumichi Morita and Hisakazu Shimizu. For the past few years, Lladró has focused on diversifying its business – now offering customers jewellery, furniture and lighting – and moving into new markets around the globe.

Inditex – the owner of brands such as Zara, Bershka and Massimo Dutti – is another company that experienced a superb 2017, with net sales of €25.3 billion, a nearly €10 billion increase over 2012 figures. Since opening its



first store in Japan in 1998, Inditex now has nearly 150 locations across the country, including 47 Zara outlets in Tokyo alone. Inditex COO Jesús Echevarría told the Japan External Trade Organization: “No one related to the fashion movement can develop their business without being in contact [with] the Japanese market.”

Spanish airline Iberia resurrected its Madrid–Tokyo route a year ago and has already announced that it will increase the number of trips along the route to five flights a week in October. In 2011, Iberia merged with British Airways to form International Airlines Group and, since its founding, this new company

has doubled the number of passengers it flies – from nearly 52 million in 2011 to 105 million in 2017.

Another example of growth through partnerships is the signing of a memorandum of understanding last year between Spain’s professional soccer organisation La Liga and Japan’s J. League. This cross-border cooperation will allow the two bodies to jointly develop and improve marketing, administration and management, as well as strengthen measures to prevent piracy. This agreement comes as La Liga continues to expand its international partnerships in South America and Africa and sees record financial growth at home.

This year, Spain and Japan celebrate 150 years of diplomatic ties. As Spanish businesses in Japan continue to advance and expand, these ties will surely only become deeper. ●



Trade with Japan

Imports from Japan: €3 billion
Exports to Japan: €4.2 billion

SOURCE:
SPANISH MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY,
TRADE AND TOURISM, 2017



This year, Spain and Japan celebrate 150 years of diplomatic ties

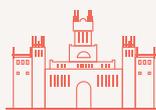


Area

505,370 km². Coastline: 4,964km.

Climate

Temperate, clear, hot summers in interior and more moderate and cloudy along coast; cloudy, cold winters in interior and partly cloudy and cool along coast.



Major cities

Madrid (capital), Barcelona, Valencia, Seville and Zaragoza.

Population

48,958,159 (July 2017, estimate). Urban population: 80% of total population (2017). 44.91% are 25–54 years of age.

80%

Urban population

Natural resources

Coal, lignite, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, tungsten, mercury, hydropower, and arable land.



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Catering

Elio Catering recreates the same uncompromising quality offered at Elio Locanda Italiana. All dishes are prepared at Elio Catering headquarters using organic and tested radiation-free ingredients, and are delivered fresh to your event location. Should you prefer to dine at home or elsewhere, the taste and

genuine atmosphere of Elio Locanda can come to you! Elio's offers you many solutions, and the menu is chosen together with you to match your dietary or culinary requirements. Several options, such as chef detachment and food delivery, are available to take care of your guests in the best way possible.





Alison Murray

At the beginning of a new chapter

"Despite his growing misgivings, Kan followed his client up the gangway and into the stateroom ... There, his host waited with her arm outstretched, offering him a long-stemmed glass of champagne. He froze for an awkward moment, and not because of her flawless beauty. This was not their first encounter, and after they'd met just a few days ago, Kan felt sure he'd been the last person to see her alive."

So begins *Clear Skies*, the first novel by Alison Murray, executive director of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC), published last month by Koehler Books. FBI agent Dan Slade is called in to solve a murder — of the flawlessly beautiful woman — in Tokyo, which takes him around the world as he works to unravel an elaborate scheme involving intelligence agencies, aerospace firms and governments.

Since discovering Ian Fleming's James Bond novels in high school, Murray has been addicted to crime fiction.

"I read three or four thrillers every week," says Murray. "I'm just obsessed with them."

However, it has been one of her long-standing goals to write a novel of her own, and several years ago she finally decided to get serious about it.

"But I could only write by hand," she says. "At night, I would type up what I'd written. Then I'd get on to the next 500 words. I did it daily like that

and, finally, one day it was finished. The characters just took over — what I'd planned to do is not how the story went."

Japan is central to her thriller, which allowed Murray to demonstrate her extensive knowledge of the country's history, culture and language. Her interest in Japan was sparked in her teens on a holiday to Asia and persisted throughout her schooling.

After earning a Master's in science and a postgraduate diploma in education, Murray — who is from Melbourne, Australia — began teaching genetics. But when she heard of evening classes being offered for Japanese language, she made room in her schedule. At the end of five years, she had a Bachelor of Humanities in Japanese language and a post-graduate diploma in Japanese studies.

"The interest in Japanese language took over the interest in science," she says. "And that's what led me here. I wanted more of Japan."

Murray first worked in Tokyo for a firm doing medical translations, and then did freelance translation work before becoming the Canadian embassy's senior science and technology officer.

On 1 July 1998, she joined the EBC, an organisation advocating for European business interests in Japan, established in 1972. She has worked under

Do you like natto?

Time spent working overseas?
34 years.

Career regret (if any):
None.

Favourite saying:
"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation." – Robert Kennedy

Favourite book:
The Republic by Plato. I read it at school and it changed my life. That's one of the reasons why I want to write.

Cannot live without:
Books, coffee, dogs and family, but not in that order.

Lesson learned in

Japan:
Dealing with the loss of valuable time waiting in queues and filling in forms.

Secret of success in business:

I'm not a businessperson, but from what I've observed, steering a course in the best direction, despite the efforts of defensive parties.

Favourite place to dine:

Home if I'm not cooking. My husband's a good cook.

Do you like natto?:

An emphatic no. I don't like the texture of natto. I like Vegemite, though.

the chairpersons Peter Woods, Isabelle Huppert, Richard Collasse, Tommy Kullberg, Duco Delgorge and, currently, Danny Risberg.

"The EBC has open-door access to Japanese government officials — even ministers and the prime minister," explains Murray. "And companies can be anonymous in delivering their comments to the government. I think that's its greatest strength. By joining the EBC,



“The characters just took over”

you can have a voice in shaping policy in Japan.”

According to Murray, the EBC is at a pivotal point in its history. The EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement – something Murray herself fought to get off the ground from 2006 – will come into force next year and the EBC will have to make sure

that it is implemented in line with how it has been negotiated, “a very important and a massive task,” she says.

“We need to do more than we’re doing now,” states Murray. “What I would hope for is that the EBC committee members step up and play a much greater role in the running of the EBC, become better informed and much more involved.”

In 2005, Murray was recognised for her efforts on behalf of European businesses in Japan.

“I was awarded the Knighthood of the French National Order of Merit by President

Jacques Chirac, and presented with a medal,” she says. “That really made it all worthwhile.”

After exactly 20 years at the EBC, Murray has chosen to retire. What does she plan to do after she returns to Australia?

“I’m working on novel number two,” she says. “I’ve already done the first chapter.” ●

Alison Murray is the executive director of the EBC.



Banking

All for one, and one for all

The Banking Committee is in reboot mode. The EBC decided to get the group up and running again earlier this year, after it had been dormant for about seven years.

“There was a desire to get something going, because Tokyo as a financial centre will, I think, occupy a position of increasing importance in this part of the Asia-Pacific region,” explains the new committee chairman, Christopher Dark.

An inaugural meeting took place in mid-March, bringing together committee members of past years, plus prospective new ones. The members elected Dark, managing director at Morgan Stanley Japan Holdings Co., Ltd., as the new chairman.

Former committee chair Philippe Avril says, “Banking is a very important component of what foreigners are doing in Japan, and [the EBC] wanted to have something more active.”

The EBC 2017 white paper contains advocacy issues left over from the committee’s previous life, several of which will either be cut or revised.

Dark expects that many efforts going forward will be done jointly, rather than independently. The goal would

be to work in coordination with the other industry groups in Japan that represent foreign financial institutions, including the International Bankers Association and the various business chambers, such as the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

“I see the EBC as one element in a coordinated and synchronised platform, where the power of advocacy can be ‘all for one, and one for all,’” he explains.

One issue that will remain on the agenda is the Japanese government’s initiative of promoting Tokyo as a global financial centre, alongside New York and London. The EBC believes it and its partner organisations can offer Japanese officials invaluable advice and knowledge.

“If Tokyo is to become a global centre, non-Japanese institutions in Japan should coordinate a platform where they can advance a significant vision and manifesto,” the committee chairman says.

Under the heading “Tokyo as a financial centre” in the white paper, the committee calls for more flexible labour laws and regulatory reforms to make Japan a more attractive place for talented people from around the world to come and live.

“I think Japan has looked at people who come and work here as tourists,” Dark says. “They don’t look at them as long-term career people who may want to integrate with the native culture and spend their entire professional life here.”

In other key areas, Japan’s regulators have done a good job

of improving the environment for overseas banks, according to Avril, chairman of BNP Paribas Securities (Japan) Ltd.

“We have few issues,” he says. “There have been a lot of changes from the regulators over the years, in a good sense.”

A prime example is a shift away from a rules-based approach to regulation towards one based on principles. With the former, detailed rules spell out exactly what institutions are allowed and not allowed to do. A principles-based approach, by contrast, uses broad principles that allow greater flexibility in how institutions perform to meet regulators’ requirements.

The committee’s resurrection comes as Japan’s banking industry is embarking on an era of innovation and change. The mega-banks are responding to the country’s severe labour shortage and greying population with plans to shut branches, reduce staff, promote internet banking and launch unmanned branches, where customers speak and listen to video monitors rather than to humans.

Millennials are a lot more open to the idea of seeking returns in securities, rather than sticking their savings in cash deposits, compared to their notoriously conservative elders, Dark believes.

Against this backdrop, the chair says, non-Japanese firms can “bring something unique” throughout the industry, given their global links and sophistication in credit and structuring.

“Foreign banks’ participation,” he says, “has become increasingly important.” ●

Christopher Dark is chairperson of the EBC Banking Committee and managing director at Morgan Stanley Japan Holdings Co., Ltd.

Advocacy issues

➔ Tokyo as a financial centre

Japan should create incentives to attract talented people to Japan.

➔ Information sharing

Remove the firewalls that block information-sharing within financial groups.

➔ Fair disclosure

Existing legislation aimed at preventing the improper distribution of company-specific information should be rigorously implemented.



For foreigners and foreign companies, tax in Japan can cause a headache, not least because of the yearly changes that are introduced by the Japanese government. On 18 June 2018, the EBC Tax Committee held their annual seminar at the EU Delegation to help relieve any migraines and explain the latest tax reforms for the year ahead.



Some relief for the headaches

EBC tax seminar 2018

“We want to make transparent to the membership of the EBC ... what we think is important about Japanese taxation issues for European investors,” Hans-Peter Musahl of Ernst & Young Tax Co and chairperson of the EBC Tax Committee said in his introductory remarks.

KPMG’s Duncan Adrain gave an overview of the latest changes to domestic corporate tax in the form of new tax credits introduced to increase salaries, promote personnel training and stimulate investment. Additionally, in a significant recognition of the importance of a future data-based economy, a tax credit, nicknamed the “Internet of Things credit”, has been introduced to encourage companies “to gather data and share data and collaborate through data more efficiently,” said Adrain.

“What it is really focusing on is devices, software ... things like sensors, which potentially automatically gather data,” he added. “If you are involved in this area ... there could be some attractive measures here.”

In other welcome news, electronic tax filing is slowly being rolled out, first among the largest companies, and is expected to be used more over the coming years.

David Bickle from Deloitte Tohmatsu brought some sobering news about Japan’s

situation on international taxation. The OECD’s initiatives to resolve base erosion and profit shifting – the artificial reduction of taxable income and artificial shifting of profits around within group companies – came into force this year, so more will need to be done by businesses to show their compliance with these new regulations. A Principal Purpose Test will also be implemented to make sure that transactions are done for genuine commercial non-tax purposes and that there is no abuse of tax treaties by multinational corporations.

“Life is going to get more complicated in the world of international tax,” said Bickle. “There are more and more compliance-type tasks which you will be responsible for delivering.”

Marcus Wong of PwC shared some news that cured one major headache about individual tax in Japan concerning the “five year tail”. Under this clause, foreign nationals who

had lived in Japan long term were subject to Japanese gift and inheritance tax regulations on worldwide assets for up to five years after their permanent departure from the country. Payment could even be required from beneficiaries who had never been to Japan.

“I’m very proud and happy to say that – through the efforts from organisations such as the EBC, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and the International Bankers Association – we’ve had a lot of very constructive and fruitful dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and other governmental bodies,” he said. “The five year tail for foreign nationals – that’s gone away now.”

As of 1 April 2018, even if a foreign national who has been a long-term resident of Japan dies one day after leaving the country, they are no longer subject to Japanese gift and inheritance tax law.

This change to Japanese individual tax policy in 2018 demonstrates that positive outcomes can be reached when constructive dialogue takes place between the private and public sectors.

However, some reforms may still be wishful thinking. Will Japan ever have a tax filing system in English?

“Probably not in our lifetime,” joked Wong. ●



Creating sustainable urban environments

Tokyo Forum for Clean City & Clean Sky

Less than 50 years ago, Tokyo faced serious issues with waste management, polluted waterways and unclear air as Japan pushed forward with growth at all cost. Today, the city is pristine, the tap water is drinkable and the air cleaner. This success meant the capital was a fitting host for the Tokyo Forum for Clean City & Clear Sky, organised by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, on 22 and 23 May at the Hilton Tokyo.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike



Representatives from 22 cities around the world, including Paris, Copenhagen and Milan, discussed sustainable urban environments; clean air and healthy cities; and waste management.

“Today, some cities under rapid economic growth face waste problems and air pollution;

these are serious issues that threaten the safety and health of people residing in cities,” said Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike — who is also a vice-chair of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group — during her opening remarks. “Clean City and Clear Sky, the title of this conference, embodies my wish to work together to make [these two goals] a reality.”

Helen Clark, a former prime minister of New Zealand and a former administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, delivered the keynote speech, titled *The Importance of Cities’ Leadership on Sustainable Development*.

“I think our cities can be models for how citizens and authorities work together,” she said. “Achieving sustainability requires a capacity for whole-of-city government planning and coordination ... We now need inclusive and sustainable development, which advances human well-being and doesn’t widen the inequalities in our societies and ruin our environments any further.”

On the second day of the conference, the forum participants adopted the Tokyo Declaration on Realization of Clean Cities & Clear Skies, which

includes a vision statement on reduced waste and pollution and outlines initiatives such as improving resource efficiency, creating effective systems and policies, and sharing best practices.

At a press conference to conclude the event, Patrick Klugman, deputy mayor of Paris, noted that sustainable consumption and production was a key takeaway from the forum.

“We will all go back to our cities with this amazing motto, *mottainai*, which means, ‘too precious to waste’,” he said.

In an interview with *Eurobiz Japan*, Klugman spoke about the practical ways Paris has been fighting air pollution.

“Measures reducing car circulation in the city, including the banning of car circulation along the Seine River,” have been effective, he said. “We’ve been measuring this for the past 10 years: the CO₂ emissions have dropped 30%.”

Merete Kristoffersen, head of unit of Copenhagen’s Technical and Environmental Administration, City Development, Resources and Waste Planning, told *Eurobiz Japan* that changes to create a cleaner city will take time. Copenhagen, like Tokyo, once had problems with garbage.

“You don’t do it in one day,” she said. “You communicate a lot and you try to work together with the citizens. You try to explain what you want to do and why you want to do it. And then you have to make it easy for the citizens ... They don’t think about waste every day.”

Tokyo has come a long way in making its waste management systems effective and in reducing pollution. The government is now making further improvements to ensure the city is sustainable over the long term, but it is also eager to give advice and guidance to bring other cities around the world closer to sustainability.

“From here on, we will be building legacies for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond, upgrading our environmental initiatives and sharing these with other cities around the world,” Governor Koike said at the press conference. “The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is convinced that sustainable cities will save our planet.” ●



The Agenda

JULY
17BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE IN JAPAN

BLCCJ Monthly Beer Gathering

TIME: 19:00-22:00**VENUE:** Belgian beer café in Tokyo**FEE:** No entrance fee. Buy your own
food and drinks.**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpJULY
24IRELAND JAPAN CHAMBER OF COM-
MERCE AND ACCJ

Energy Sector Summer Bash

TIME: 18:30-20:30**VENUE:** Mercedes-Benz Connection, 2F**FEE:** ¥4,500 (members), ¥7,900
(non-members)**CONTACT:** secretariat@ijcc.jpJULY
18

EBC, GRCCJ, SCCJ, NCCJ, OTHERS

International Arbitration and Mediation Panel Discussion

TIME: Reception at 18:30, panel
discussion from 19:20-21:20**VENUE:** Thomson Reuters, Akasaka**FEE:** No charge**CONTACT:** events@rbalaw.orgJULY
27ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN

Biritalia: The Italian Beer Garden

TIME: 19:30-22:00**VENUE:** Panino Giusto, Kojimachi**FEE:** ¥3,000 + 8% VAT (ICJ members),
¥4,000 + 8% VAT (non-members)**CONTACT:** events@iccj.or.jpJULY
18BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN

The 7 Deadly Sins of Selling in Japan

TIME: 12:00-14:00**VENUE:** ANA InterContinental Tokyo,
BIF, Aurora Room, Tameike-sanno
station**FEE:** ¥6,000 (members), ¥8,000
(non-members)**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.comJULY
31FRENCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

2018 Summer Young Professionals Networking Party

TIME: 19:00-21:00**VENUE:** Villa Tokyo, Roppongi**FEE:** ¥5,000 + 8% VAT (for ICCJ members),
¥7,000 + 8% VAT (for non-members)**CONTACT:** projects@iccj.or.jpJULY
19BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN

Great British Beer Garden

TIME: 18:00-20:00**VENUE:** Hilton Tokyo, 7F Beer Garden,
Shinjuku station**FEE:** ¥7,000 (members), ¥9,000
(non-members)**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.comAUG.
23SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

Luncheon — Urs Kessler, CEO, Jungfrau Railways

TIME: 12:00-14:00**VENUE:** Grand Hyatt Tokyo, Residence
Anise, 2F**FEE:** ¥6,500 (members), ¥7,000
(non-members)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpJULY
19SPANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN

TTT - Third Thursday Tapas Night

TIME: 19:00-21:00**VENUE:** Marisqueria SOL,
Roppongi Itchome**FEE:** No entrance fee. Buy your own
food and drinks.**CONTACT:** info@spanishchamber.or.jpAUG.
25BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE IN JAPAN

BLCCJ Summer BBQ Party

TIME: 18:00-21:00**VENUE:** Garden of the Belgian Embassy,
Kojimachi**FEE:** ¥7,000 (members), ¥9,000
(non-members)**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jp



Honouring curiosity and action

The German
Innovation
Award 2018 —
and innovative
German firms



Deaf-blind author Helen Keller made the pithy observation that, “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Whether it’s researchers discussing an idea in the lab or a joint venture working on an international project, it is universally true that so much more can be accomplished when we put our heads together.

This year marked the tenth anniversary of the German Innovation Award — the Gottfried Wagener Prize. Established in 2008 by the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan, together with technology-focused German companies, the award provides support for researchers in Japan — winners receive ¥2,500,000 — and encourages collaboration between German and Japanese industry and academia.

The 2018 German Innovation Award (GIA) ceremony was held on 26 June at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo. Partner companies supporting this year’s event were BASF, Bayer, Bosch, Continental, Daimler, Evonik, Merck, Schaeffler and Siemens.



“In science, technology and innovation, we consider cooperation with Germany to be especially important”

“Ten years might not seem a long time, but the German Innovation Award is already firmly established as a major instrument in German–Japanese relations, both in science and in industry,” said Anja Karliczek, Germany’s federal minister of Education and Research, in a video message.

“Our aim is to make use of the enormous potential of research to enhance the lives of all our people,” added Karliczek, who is also patron of the GIA. “It is also about translating research results into industrial applications, in order to increase the economic strength of our two countries.”

Japan holds collaboration with Germany in equally high regard. In attendance at the ceremony was Japanese State Minister

for Internal Affairs and Communications Jiro Akama.

“In science, technology and innovation, we consider cooperation with Germany to be especially important as Germany and Japan share common challenges arising from the rapidly declining birth rate and the ageing population,” he said in his address. “This award — named after Professor Wagener, who devoted himself to the scientific development of Japan in the Meiji era — contributes greatly to the furthering of the relationship between our two countries.”

Over the past decade, a total of 60 researchers, all affiliated with a Japanese university or research institute, have been honoured at GIA ceremonies. This year, out of 84 entries, four awards were given in the fields of digitalisation and mobility; materials; life sciences; and energy.

“The four topics of today’s prizes are essential for both Germany and Japan to shape societal structures and steer economic development,” said German Ambassador to Japan Dr Hans Carl von Werthern. “Both our countries honour scientific curiosity, interdisciplinary thinking, and entrepreneurial action, and the award winners of recent years have created important links between the two countries.”

The four award winners’ projects are at the cutting edge of research and innovation. Professor Dr Naofumi Homma received the digitalisation and mobility prize for his methodology for lightweight tamper-resistant cryptographic hardware. His platform could better protect computers from the new threats that are continually emerging as technology develops.

“My research aims to connect cryptography with the real world,” Homma said in his acceptance speech. “Having received this award, I’m strongly encouraged to apply this research in new cryptographic hardware to build a society where everyone can enjoy new technology safely and securely.”





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Award winners, organisers, jurists and representatives from partner companies at the German Innovation Award 2018

Homma is currently working with universities, government organisations and companies to implement his methodology.

“I hope this award will continue to encourage more and more young scientists in Japan and in Germany,” he said.

The recipient for the prize in materials was Professor Dr Takashi Kimura from the Department of Physics at Kyushu University, while the life sciences award went to Professor Dr Makoto Ikeya of the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application at Kyoto University.

The energy award was presented to Professor Dr Masahiro Nomura, an associate professor at the Institute of Industrial Science at The University of Tokyo, for his work in thermal conduction control and thermoelectric energy harvesting.

“We strongly believe that our research activities and our energy harvesting device will help contribute to energy sustainability and smart communities that are safer and more convenient,” said Nomura in his speech.

The collaboration between research and industry — and Germany and Japan — is sure to yield significant and meaningful applications for society in the decades to come.

German businesses active in Japan rely on innovation and collaboration to thrive in a competitive and ever-evolving marketplace.

Headquartered in Nuremberg, SEMIKRON is a world leader in power electronics, used for energy management and conservation in sectors such as renewable energy, power supply, motor drive technology and robotics. Innovation is a pillar of the firm, and it has pioneered solutions such as high voltage isolation housings, extreme high-density packaging and long lifetime modules for use in harsh environments.

“For nearly 70 years, we have invented solutions for technical challenges around semiconductor packaging,” says Erwin Ysewijn, managing director of SEMIKRON K.K. Japan. “Our products have increased reliability, reduced mechanical complexity and enhanced cost-performance.”

The firm has signed a partnership agreement with ROHM Co., Ltd. in Kyoto to promote ROHM’s silicon carbide semiconductor technologies inside SEMIKRON’s most advanced housings. Combinations of high-quality chips in the right package have enabled SEMIKRON to enter new fields, such as energy storage and electric vehicle chargers.

At regular workshops, employees have the opportunity to make creative proposals about how the company can further refine its products.

“No innovation, no future,” says Ysewijn.

The medical and safety products manufacturer Dräger, headquartered in Lübeck, has emphasised inventiveness since its founding in 1889. Using oxygen compression technology, Dräger released the Roth-Dräger anaesthesia machine in 1902. This device was an industry first, allowing medical profes-

sionals to reliably control the mix of oxygen and anaesthetics administered to a patient.

“An ongoing spirit of innovation has enabled the family-owned business to evolve from an inventor’s workshop to an international leader in the fields of medical and safety technology,” says Holger Klein, president and representative director of Dräger Medical Japan.

One of the firm’s most recent innovations in medical technology is the IncuWarmer Babyleo TN500, an incubator that provides a quiet and stable environment, with optimal thermoregulation, for babies born prematurely.

Dräger’s company culture encourages its employees to come together to innovate. The firm opened “The Garage” — a repurposed factory — in 2016, where employees from different departments can meet to discuss and, together, try out their ideas.

“Innovation is the driver for our greatest goal: positioning Dräger at the top of our market,” says Klein. “Our openness to new and innovative approaches constantly spurs us to apply the latest technology creatively and leverage our knowledge of our customers’ needs.”

German firms continue to innovate for the success of their businesses and the betterment of society. ●



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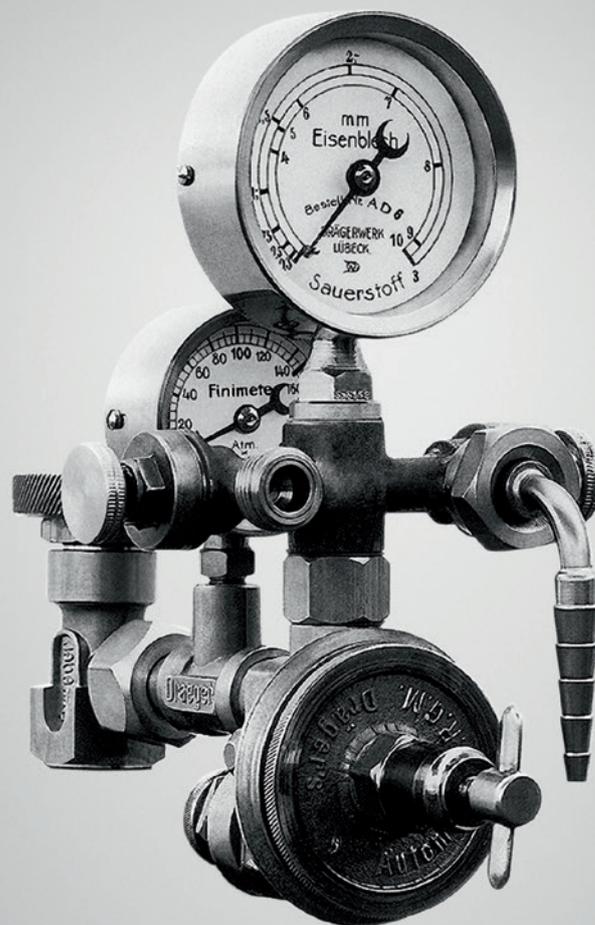
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Last year, researchers at Canada's Laval University developed a special T-shirt. Made of cotton and metal-glass-polymer fibres arranged like a spiral antenna, the shirt can act as a sensor to monitor breathing and heart rate. Without any electrodes or wires, it has the feel of a normal T-shirt and could be worn by the most sensitive of users: babies. The ability to non-invasively track newborns' vital signs in the first 24 hours of life could reduce nurses' workloads and help catch important health problems.

Humans have clothed themselves for tens of thousands of years for warmth and protection, but novel technologies and low-cost sensors are giving our threads an entirely new range of functionalities. San Francisco-based health startup Siren Care sells smart

socks with temperature sensors woven into the fabric. These can link with a smartphone and can help detect foot inflammation in users with diabetes. A smartphone alert appears when the temperature goes up, which could help to prevent injury and, in more extreme cases, amputation.

In 2015, Google entered the smart fabric space with Project Jacquard, a platform aimed at developing smart clothes. It first rolled out the Levi's Commuter Trucker, a connected denim jacket woven from conductive metal alloy yarn that lets users control their music, maps,

phone and other apps by gesturing or touching a sleeve — a recent update enables the jacket to let you know when your Uber or Lyft ride is getting close.

Smart T-shirts that measure heart rate, respiration and other variables already dominate the market for smart clothing, which saw shipments of about 800,000 units in 2016. According to a Global Market Insights report, the industry was worth over \$150 million in 2016 and is expected to reach \$4 billion by 2024. That might be a conservative estimate if more tech giants smell money in connected clothing. Samsung is already active in the smart fabric space, and, judging by a recent patent filing, Apple is interested in jumping in as well.

In the next few years, though, smart clothing could be doing a lot more. In a paper presented last October at the Association for Computing Machinery's User Interface Software and Technology Symposium, researchers from the University of Wisconsin described how they have developed fabrics that can store information. The researchers exploited the magnetic properties of off-the-shelf conductive thread so that it could store digital information that can be read by magnetometers, which are standard in many smartphones. To demonstrate the tech, they created smart patches that can store passcodes to open electronic door locks, as well as prototype gloves, neckties and belts that can encode smartphone-readable data. Since they require no power source, sensors or electronics, the duds can be laundered and ironed and still retain data. The researchers are now trying to create smart fabrics with stronger magnetic fields and higher data storage capacities. ●

Off the cuff

Smart fabrics are set to revolutionise everything we wear



PHOTO: GOOGLE



Information

Size Range of Units

Standard Studios (20–22m²), Large Studios (25m²)
 1 Bedroom Suites (33–52m²), 2 Bedroom Suite (71m²)

Bedrooms: 60 Units

Parking Facilities: 2 Spaces

Room Rates

Daily	JPY8,200	to	JPY28,000	per night
Weekly	JPY7,050	to	JPY23,800	per night
Monthly	JPY5,700	to	JPY19,100	per night
Fitness tickets	JPY1,400	per time		

Overview

A Touch of Resort Within the City. The nearby Arisugawa Park makes you forget you are in the big city. Ideally located in the Hiroo-Roppongi residential area (4 min. from Hiroo Sta.), close to the business heart of Tokyo, convenient to shopping and cafes, we have 60 units of extended-stay studios and suites at daily, weekly and monthly rates.

English-speaking professionals are on duty seven days a week, from 8:00am to 8:00pm on weekdays and 8:00am to 6:00pm on weekends and national holidays.

Our services include concierge, general information, mail/courier, free broadband internet access, and 24-hour building security. We have a nighttime superintendent who assists during the evenings.

We are members of the Fitness Club Hiroo for exercise and fitness studio programs, and tickets are for sale at the reception for JPY1,400/one-time.

Inquiries

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For your convenience

Japan's *konbini* evolving to survive

"Location, location, location" may be the mantra for real estate value, but for Japan's 55,000 convenience stores it takes more than a prominent place for twenty-first century success.

Konbini, the ubiquitous Japanese chains with a store for every 2,300 residents and over ¥10.8 trillion in sales, are going global, high-tech — and healthy? For a guy whose Body Mass Index has a 7-Eleven sub-category, that's a life-affirming development that may mildly offset the effects of untold *onigiri*, *bento* and adult beverage consumption over decades.

Facing competition from drugstores and e-businesses, as well as rising labour costs amid population decline, convenience chains — now in their 44th year in Japan — eye off-the-shelf solutions. They have already launched non-traditional business activities such as banking, ticketing and delivery services.

As the utility of *konbini* has improved, the number of domestic stores has grown 38% over the past decade, with an average of four new ones opening daily last year. What began as slightly expensive hubs for frequent and odd-hour shopping have morphed into low-priced societal pillars, serving ageing and service-hungry communities.

"The Japanese market was already here and [had been] established for several hundred years," says Mike Allen, senior vice president for Japanese retail research at financial services firm Jefferies. "When modern convenience stores entered the market, they merely took over an existing market and made it more efficient."

In Europe, the *konbini* business was estimated at €165.7 billion in 2016, less than 13% of the entire retail market. The greatest concentration is in the UK, home of Tesco Express, while the biggest home player is

Dutch retailer SPAR Express — which introduced self-check-out and mobile payment apps, among other tech moves — with over 12,100 stores. Although the number of stores is rising across the continent, in France and Germany, for example, there's only minimal penetration, as small neighbourhood markets still dominate, helped by laws and cultural preferences.

Not losing face, Japan's No. 2 FamilyMart, fresh from integrating Sunkus and Circle K stores, is using robot guides, IoT networking, VR and AI at concept outlets. The chain is also getting physical with the introduction of Fit & Go gyms at select Tokyo stores. Over the next five years, 300 two-storey *konbini* have been planned that will offer 24-hour workout spaces with treadmills, bikes and showers.

In third place is Lawson, with 14,000 domestic stores and limited international expansion, mainly in China. The chain is adopting new technologies to offset rising labour outlays at home, which have hit the bottom line, as profit fell nearly 11% to ¥65.8 billion last year.

Lawson has added real-time tablet tracking of stock and



Meanwhile, Japan's industry leader 7-Eleven has more than 20,000 domestic stores and over 44,000 overseas. The chain saw record profits last year, with US growth alone at 17%, compared with nearly flat growth at home.

In Thailand, 7-Eleven has 11,000 stores, where facial and gesture recognition data can now be collected for customer behavioural analysis, while in Taiwan the chain has introduced the X-Store, which uses biometric visual recognition technology, called Face In, to allow entry into an unmanned store, complemented by the applications Face Pay and Face Go to complete sales.

staff, as well as unmanned registers. Next on its tech to-do list is a shopping basket capable of bagging items automatically.

Known for its Natural Lawson outlets, Lawson Fresh Pick offers vegetable selections of items not stocked on the shelves, with patrons able to order via a smartphone app and pick up goods at about 200 Tokyo-area shops.

Jefferies' Allen says more is on the menu for all *konbini* outlets: "They can ... reduce the amount of labour it takes to stock the store by as much as 30% per day. You will eventually see these stores stocking themselves." ●

INSIDE AND OUT

Interior and exterior designers, architects and suppliers meet a growing demand

TEXT BY DAVID UMEDA

Companies and brands successful in Japan's highly competitive markets know a good thing when they see it. That's why specialists are in high demand to deliver interior and exterior designs, appointments, products and services for offices, and commercial and residential properties.

Based in Tokyo, **One Designs Co., Ltd.** (<http://www.koyou-onesd.co.jp/en/>) offers a wide range of services, from interior design and construction to the complete renovation of a building, as well as assistance for rental properties. The firm delivers the highest quality workmanship and service to its clients, including buyers, developers and real estate agencies. Capable of understanding and meeting requests for specific room layouts or special interior design, One Designs also welcomes enquiries about office design and hotel renovation.

Insight, vision, skill, know-how, experience and creativity unite function with aesthetics, and engineering ingenuity with artistry.

Anonimo Design Corporation (<http://www.ad-collection.com/>) is an import-export company that offers a large selection of curtain and upholstery fabrics from numerous countries, including Germany, France, Italy, England and the United States. The firm also stocks genuine leathers for

wallcoverings, flooring and upholstery, made by Italian tanners who work for top European brands.

The products the firm brings into Japan have been approved by an industry expert: Tetsu Kurosawa, president of Anonimo Design, is an architect who lived in Italy for more than five years and speaks English and Italian. Clients can be assured of a high level of excellence.

The furniture and lifestyle business **Rigna Terrace Tokyo** (<http://www.rigna.com/>) has its own original furniture brand, REMBASSY.

REMBASSY furniture is made entirely in Japan. Each piece is simple and visually arresting thanks to the high-quality materials used. REMBASSY products meet exacting standards, as well as stand the test of time.

Bestselling items include a range of bookshelves, tables and cabinets, made from walnut or white oak. REMBASSY also makes attractive beds and sofas, which can be upholstered with leather or fabric.

Interior Collection (<http://interiorcollection.net/>), based in Tokyo, specialises in Chinese antique furniture, and also carries Western furniture, fabrics and decorative pieces — such as jars, bowls and vases — for your home or office décor. They help to create spaces with an authentic feeling of the East, combining old-world beauty with exceptional functionality.

The company caters to many international clients and counts numerous foreign embassies among its customers.

Interior Collection invites you to see their wares for yourself in their Motoabazu showroom.

Their insight, vision, skill, know-how and creativity unite function with aesthetics



Rigna

www.rigna.com

RIGNA TERRACE TOKYO is one of Tokyo's biggest furniture and lifestyle stores, with a furniture and interior shop, florist and café-restaurant all in one building.

It sells sturdy made-to-order wood furniture and other high-quality products from around the world.

Its furniture brand REMBASSY produces many top-selling items and has partnered with well-known domestic studios to design and create furniture with uncompromising quality and durability.

For more information, please contact us at info@rigna.com.



I believe in the saying, "A life lived for others is the only life worth living". I want to do everything I can to help those around me, to see that many people are happy, and so I've worked. To me, work is a means of meeting many people and it allows you to direct your energy to achieve these goals. As we work, we develop and grow, and live more fulfilling lives.

A role model

Mayor of Yokohama Fumiko Hayashi helps bring more women into the workforce

Over the years, I've seen a large number of talented women forced to leave their jobs because they got married or had children. However, through my 53-year career, having worked in car sales and retail management, I've realised that you get better results when men and women combine their strengths and work together. I thought that if a woman were to become mayor she could deepen people's understanding of the value of this cooperation and encourage women to get more involved in society – which would lead to revitalising Yokohama's economy – so I decided to get into politics.

After becoming mayor of Yokohama in 2009, I launched the Childcare Waiting List Reduction Project to help create an environment where couples could raise their children without difficulties. We arranged for a greater variety of childcare services, such as longer operating hours for daycares; worked with companies and NPOs to encourage them to diversify management styles; and our Childcare and Education Concierge service helps guide parents to

appropriate service providers. In just three years, we reduced what was Japan's longest waiting list of 1,552 children to zero. The approach, called "the Yokohama way", has been taken up by the government, used as a model for other cities, and is a prime example of reform, which is being increasingly applied.

As a result of our initiatives to support women, the first of which was the Childcare Waiting List Reduction Project, the rate of working women in their late 30s in Yokohama has gone up 6.6%. It has pleased me greatly to see that women who had given up on their career after having children are now deciding to get back into the workforce.

As Japan's population declines and ages, economic growth will not continue without a diverse workforce. In Yokohama, we are awarding SMEs with fewer than 300 employees the Yokohama Good Balance Award for promoting the role of women in their company, encouraging a better work-life balance, and fostering an environment where men and women can work together effectively. We offer incentives such as preferential treatment in public procurement and advertising opportunities for companies at events for university students. As of last year, 11 years after its launch, 99 companies have been given this award. We have been told that, among other positive outcomes, the number of women applying for jobs at these firms has increased.

In Japan, the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement

in the Workplace was established in 2015, and both the public and private sectors are working to see this fully implemented. However, Japan currently ranks 114th out of 144 on the Global Gender Gap Index and there are still very few women in leadership positions.

One way we are trying to get women to become more active in the workforce is through the Women's Networking Conference in Yokohama: Women's Business Festa, an annual event where like-minded working women can network and meet role models. There is also a programme to help women develop a career plan and enable them to reach leadership positions.

you get better results when men and women combine their strengths

Although there are still many barriers for women in Japanese society – including traditional ideas of divisions of labour based on gender and a corporate culture of working long hours – by persevering in our efforts and involving companies across all industries, we are determined to lead Japan in creating a society of equality. ●

Mayor Fumiko Hayashi has been mayor of the City of Yokohama since 2009.





A-list estates

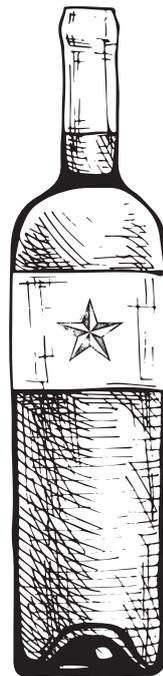
A glimpse into the world of celebrity wineries

It's easy to enjoy fine wine when you have pockets as deep as the world's A-list celebrities. Now it seems like every star — from David and Victoria Beckham, with their private Napa Valley winery, to Gérard Depardieu, who has vines in the Loire Valley — is having a go at producing the best bottles themselves. Here are two of the most successful celebrity wineries.

STING'S TENUTA IL PALAGIO

In 1999, British singer Sting and his wife Trudie purchased Il Palagio, a 900-acre agricultural estate in Tuscany, Italy, that had fallen into disrepair. After years of restoration, the estate now produces a range of organic food and drink, including wine, honey, salami, vegetables and olive oil. For a British chap who didn't have his first glass of wine until he was in his late twenties, Sting produces a mean bottle. His 2011 Super Tuscan blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon — called Sister Moon after one of his songs — has been named one of Italy's finest 100 wines by *Wine Spectator* magazine. Preeminent Italian wine critic James Suckling rated the wine a staggering 96 points. All of Sting's wines, which share names with his most famous songs, have consistently been awarded nearly 90 points, or higher.

Not only are the wines fabulous, but the estate itself is stunning. The sprawling property houses bucolic vineyards, olive



it seems like every star ... is having a go at producing the best bottles

groves, lakes, grain fields, a 15th century villa, and wooded hills, in addition to luxurious modern amenities, including a recording studio and swimming pool. If you wish to get close and personal to the world of celebrity vineyards, you can even rent out one of Il Palagio's six guest cottages or its main villa — just not in the month of August, when Sting and Trudie have the place to themselves.

BRAD PITT AND ANGELINA JOLIE'S CHÂTEAU MIRAVAL

When Hollywood power couple Brangelina announced their separation in 2016, wine lovers were distressed — not over the fate of the kids nor the reason for the split, but over the future of their beloved rosé Miraval. Since the Hollywood duo purchased Château Miraval and its vineyards in Provence, France, in 2008 — with 2012 as their first vintage — their estate's rosé, Miraval, has been a smash hit in markets globally. Their first 6,000 bottles released in 2013 sold out in five hours.

Fans love Miraval for its beautifully bulbous bottle, pale salmon hue, and minimal labelling. Critics have consistently rated it 90 points or more for its lean acidity, bright watermelon aromas, and slight savoury edge. Luckily for dry rosé lovers, the divorcees have announced that they're keeping the château as an investment for their children, and winemaker Marc Perrin says that the 2017 vintage is their best yet. ●



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Stay and Play

Some of Japan's golf courses with great accommodation

While Japan may not have much of a reputation for golfing resorts, there are quite a number of courses with hotels or lodging attached, and some of these can be surprisingly reasonable. Having accommodation on site or nearby makes golfing weekends or just golfing parties easier. And if you're walking to your hotel, you won't have to worry about those post-game beers. Here's a selection of what's out there.

1 KAWANA HOTEL, SHIZUOKA

The Kawana Hotel is the granddaddy of Japan's resort hotels. Not only does the hotel have plenty of history — Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe are among the famous people who have stayed there — it has two tremendous golf courses, including the revered Fuji Course, which is only accessible to hotel guests. But an ocean setting and views of Mt. Fuji don't come cheap.

2 KANUCHA BAY HOTEL, OKINAWA

With more sea and plenty of sun, the Kanucha resort has a picture-perfect setting overlooking a deep blue sea and it's everything a tropical resort should be with a lovely golf course, great food, big guest rooms, bars and a private beach.

3 PHOENIX SEAGAIA RESORT, MIYAZAKI

Famous as the venue for the Dunlop Phoenix tournament, which has attracted some of the best golfers in the world, the resort boasts seaside golf — only you can't see the sea. The golf course is dominated by trees, but it's a fantastic course and the Sheraton Grande Ocean Resort offers some stunning, high-end accommodation.

4 KARUIZAWA 72 GOLF, NAGANO

One of the most popular golf destinations is Karuizawa in Nagano prefecture. The Prince Hotel chain has several properties right next to a number of golf courses, some of which you can walk to from Karuizawa Station. While it may be snowed under for half the year, Karuizawa offers excellent golf in the summer.

5 GRANDEE NARUTO G.C. 36, TOKUSHIMA

Tokushima may not be the first name off your lips when you think of grand golf courses in Japan, but, near

the border with Kagawa prefecture, the Grandee Naruto G.C. 36 has three beautiful hotels to complement the 36-hole golf club on a mountain overlooking the sea.

6 WINDSOR PARK GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, TOCHIGI

Closer to Tokyo, Windsor Park has long been a favourite of the expat community in the capital. An excellent 18-hole course is well-matched by a sumptuous clubhouse, with some great food and classy accommodation.

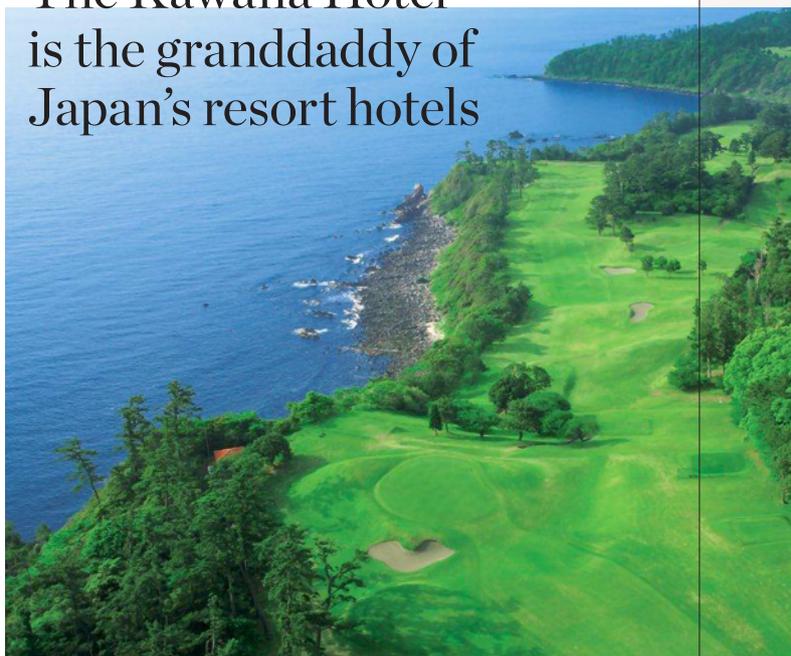
7 COCOPA RESORT, MIE

This resort area near Ise Bay in Mie prefecture has a choice of good hotels and golf courses. Mie has been very active in trying to attract inbound golfers from overseas, so resorts like Cocopa are an attractive option for foreigners living in Japan who want a weekend away.

8 OSHIMA GOLF CLUB, IZU OSHIMA ISLAND

For something a little different, you could try Izu Oshima island's only golf course. It doesn't have accommodation attached to it, but the nearest available rooms are just a few hundred meters away. It's only a nine-hole course but overlooks the sea and has good views of Mt. Fuji. It can get windy, though. ●

The Kawana Hotel is the granddaddy of Japan's resort hotels



Kawana Hotel Golf Course, Shizuoka

WARM WELCOME

All aspects of Japan's hospitality industry are seeing success

TEXT BY DAVID UMEDA

Hospitality is at the core of Japan's economic success, and excellent customer service is a major selling point of any Japan experience. Examine the different methods of delivering top-notch hospitality closely and you'll see why Japan is a global destination like no other in the world.

STANDING OUT

There are companies that excel even within Japan's competitive hospitality industry.

John Rolfs, general manager of **The Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo** and multi-property vice president for Ritz-Carlton Japan and Korea explains that the group aims to exceed the expectations of its customers.

"Our legendary customer service is what makes us stand out from other hotel brands; we go above and beyond," he says. "I believe that our staff's experience and genuine care sticks in our customers' memories."

Only a three-minute walk to Ikebukuro station, the **Hotel Metropolitan Tokyo Ikebukuro** is in a dynamic midtown setting with an extensive variety of stores, boutiques, restaurants and cinemas.

"From our hotel, you can easily reach major tourist attractions and business districts throughout central Tokyo. We offer direct access to and from Narita and Haneda airports by Airport

Limousine Bus," points out Susumu Sato, general manager. "We ensure all of our guests have a magnificent stay."

Independent hotels also recognise the need to distinguish themselves, says General Manager Hisao Koga of **TRUNK (HOTEL)**.

"We are a new boutique hotel, the first of its kind in Japan," he says. "While the majority of new hotels are corporate enterprises funded with foreign capital, independent hotels are rare, which makes us all the more special."

Vacation Niseko in Hokkaido specialises in the accommodation for ski travellers.

"Being based in Niseko, where all our managed properties are located, allows us a laser-like focus on an ever-changing international and domestic market," states Scott Mountford, group sales and marketing manager for Vacation Niseko/ Niseko Hanazono Resorts. "We pride ourselves on the intimate local knowledge we have for our customers' needs."

Another Niseko-based resort, **MnK Niseko**, emphasises its family-friendly atmosphere. President and CEO Eddie Guillemette says that, "We are known for our family-focused, community-oriented hospitality. MnK provides accommodation ranging from six-bedroom homes to studio apartments with on-site concierge services and transportation to and from the Niseko Hirafu mountain. Our kids camp, events, and personalised service bring people together to enjoy the beautiful natural environment."

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Japan's hospitality industry is in a period of dynamic change.

"Our hotel is adapting to the rapid digital evolution in the hospitality industry by implementing the latest digital and mobile services and devices to meet our guests' modern requirements," explains Yohei Chishaki, general manager at the **Yokohama Bay Sheraton Hotel & Towers**.

"We are adapting to the digitalisation of the

market without overlooking our emphasis on the unique Japanese hospitality style of *omotenashi*."

"Over 60% of our guests are from overseas, so we are working to improve our staff's foreign language abilities and are making our international guests' stays more convenient by providing free multi-language smartphones in guest rooms," says Sato. "Also, to give you an enjoyable and authentic stay in Japan, we offer opportunities to learn about Japanese culture through events and activities."

TRUNK (HOTEL) sees the uptick in tourism as an opportunity to cater to new audiences. According to Koga, "as the number of Japan's foreign tourists and residents increases, a wider diversity of needs and expectations must be met. We act creatively so that we are constantly improving our design and service."

The new diversity of guests is also an opportunity for the **Hotel Granvia Kyoto**, according to JR West Hotels Marketing and Sales Strategy Director Shiho Ikeuchi.

"We are a world-class deluxe hotel serving the needs of discerning visitors from around the world," she says. "We focus on diversity and inclusion, and welcome LGBTQ and Muslim travellers. We're proud to be a leading hotel for these two markets."

The Ritz-Carlton Japan is focusing on the high-end leisure and domestic traveller.

"We have properties in both Tokyo and Kyoto and offer a package called 'One Journey Two Capitals,' an exclusive combination that enables our distinguished guests to explore both the pulsating energy of Tokyo and the ancient yet timeless beauty of Kyoto," Rolfs says.

As demand in Osaka continues to rise, hotels such as **Swissôtel Nankai Osaka** need to be both agile and innovative to keep up with the changes in the industry.

"The market is changing rapidly," explains Jordi Pedro, director of sales and marketing. "Therefore, hotels need to have all the tools available in order to understand the market and take advantage of daily opportunities."

As interest in Japanese skiing grows, Vacation Niseko is receiving more visitors from mature markets, as well as from developing economies, including China and Southeast Asia.

"Vacation Niseko is proactive in providing information for and catering to both of these new markets, in multiple languages, to ensure a unique and convenient experience," adds Mountford.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

As Japan's service sector grows, hospitality takes on an increasingly important role in the country's global economy, according to Yokohama Bay Sheraton Hotel & Towers.

"The travel industry is said to be in 'gold rush' mode, while the hospitality industry is experiencing rapid growth," Chishaki observes. "A high level of hospitality is expected as Japan remains very competitive in the global market."

MnK Niseko believes that such growth would be impossible anywhere but Japan.

"The unique culture and geography attracts global travellers, and Japanese companies who cater to the needs of international guests are creating new business opportunities across industries, including real estate, construction, food and beverage, transportation and hospitality," Guillemette says.

Hotel Granvia Kyoto agrees that Japan is ideally suited for memorable vacations.

"The Japanese hospitality mindset is definitely world class," Ikeuchi remarks. "Whether it is a

five-star hotel or a budget inn, a Michelin-starred restaurant or fast-food, you'll find guest-oriented service everywhere. It's very rare to find this elsewhere in the world, and is key to expanding the hospitality industry, one of the fastest growing sectors in Japan."

Swissôtel Nankai Osaka notes the rate of growth in Japan's inbound tourism as among the fastest in the world over the last few years.

"The Japanese tourism industry is becoming a major engine for economic growth," says Pedro. "Japan has the potential to double its annual GDP growth to 3% through increased performance in several industries, including hospitality."

The temptation to stay for a while is undeniable. Welcome to Japan.





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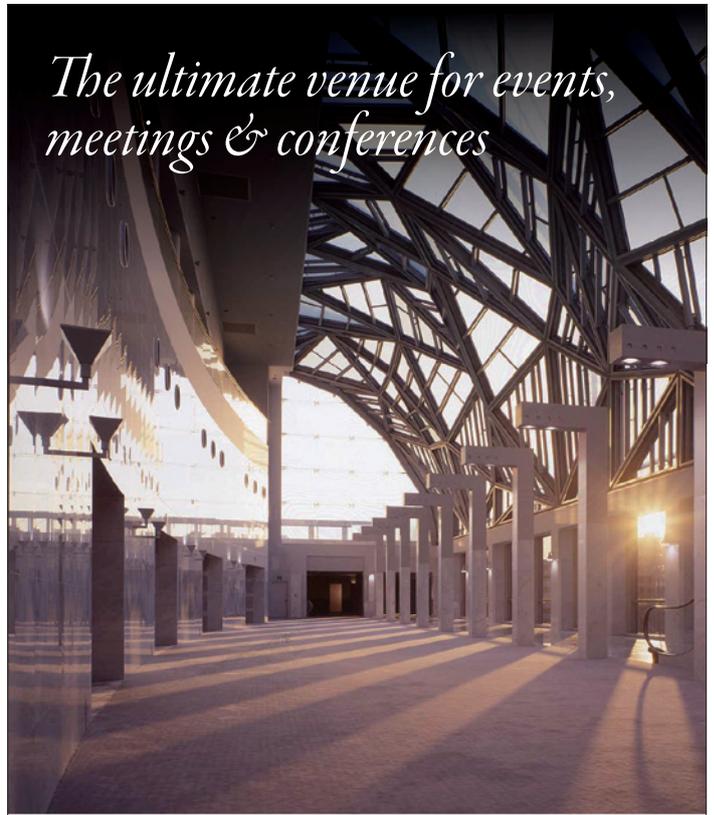
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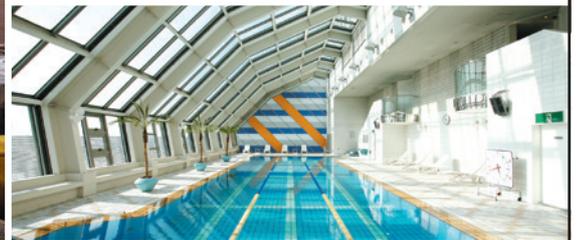
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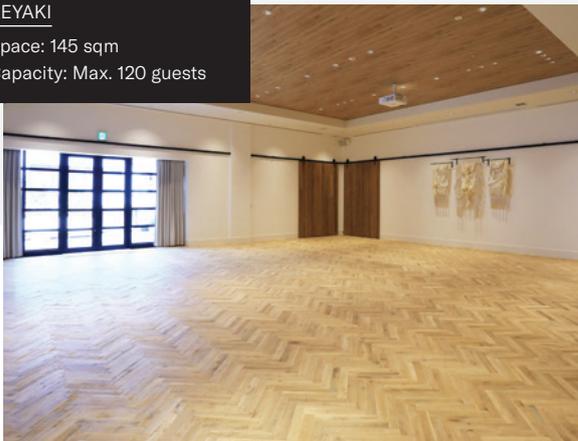
MORI

Space: 170 sqm
Capacity Max. 150 guests



KEYAKI

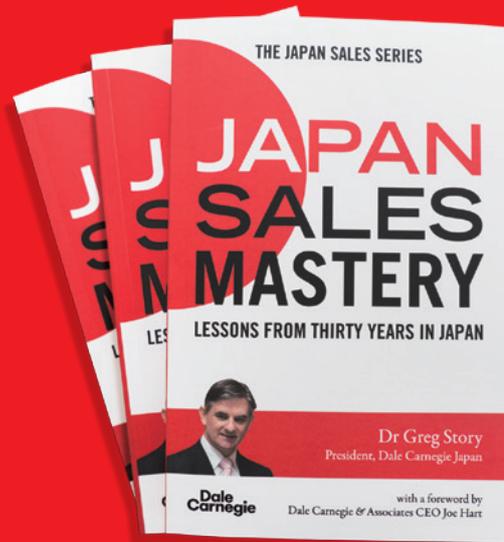
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Capacity: Max. 120 guests



SORANIWA

Space: 140 sqm
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Alessandro Borelli

Company: Arper Japan

Official title: Managing Director

Originally from: Treviso, Italy

Length of time in Japan: 22 years

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

I love Mamma Luisa's Table in Shibuya. And Pizzeria da Peppe NAPOLI STACA in Komazawa has the best pizza in Tokyo.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I bike to the office and go to the gym at least three times a week.

Name a favourite movie:

The Big Lebowski.

Favourite band: It's impossible to answer. There are too many: Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Foo Fighters, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, The Doors and on and on.

Favourite album: My top three are Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon*, Keith Jarrett's *The Köln Concert* and Pearl Jam's *Ten*.

Favourite TV show: *Breaking Bad*.

Favourite book: *A Shadow You Soon Will Be* by Osvaldo Soriano, the late great Argentinian writer.

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

I was on a TV commercial for a Japanese olive oil brand with my son.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

Summer or winter?

Summer.

What's your ideal weekend?

Relaxing with my family.

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

I don't drink. I prefer eating.

"I was on a TV commercial for a Japanese olive oil brand with my son."



Kazunori Kurose

Company: R&M Japan K.K.

Official title: Managing Director

Originally from: Tokyo, Japan

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

Trattoria Dal Birbante Giocondo in Shirokanedai. I'm glad there's such a good pasta place so close to the office.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I prefer watching movies and listening to music in my AV room to exercising.

Name a favourite movie:

The Great Escape.

Favourite musicians: Les McCann and Wanda de Sah.

Favourite albums: Les McCann's *Stormy Mandy* and Wanda de Sah's *Softly*.

Favourite TV show: Nothing in particular.

Favourite book: *The Effective Executive* by Peter Drucker.

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

That I'm quite the cook.

Cats or dogs?

Definitely dogs.

Summer or winter?

Summer.

What's your ideal weekend?

Play tennis with my son and go for a drive.

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

A jazz bar close to home.

"I prefer watching movies and listening to music ... to exercising."



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JAPHETH WORTHY,
MEDICAL DEVICE TEAM MANAGER

KYOHEI KATO,
CONSULTANT

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Apex consultant Kyohei Kato, adds: “Our team’s deep understanding of the market and strong relationships in our areas of coverage allow us to continuously be strategic partners to our clients and candidates.” ●



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