

# EURO BIZ

JAPAN

MARCH 2019

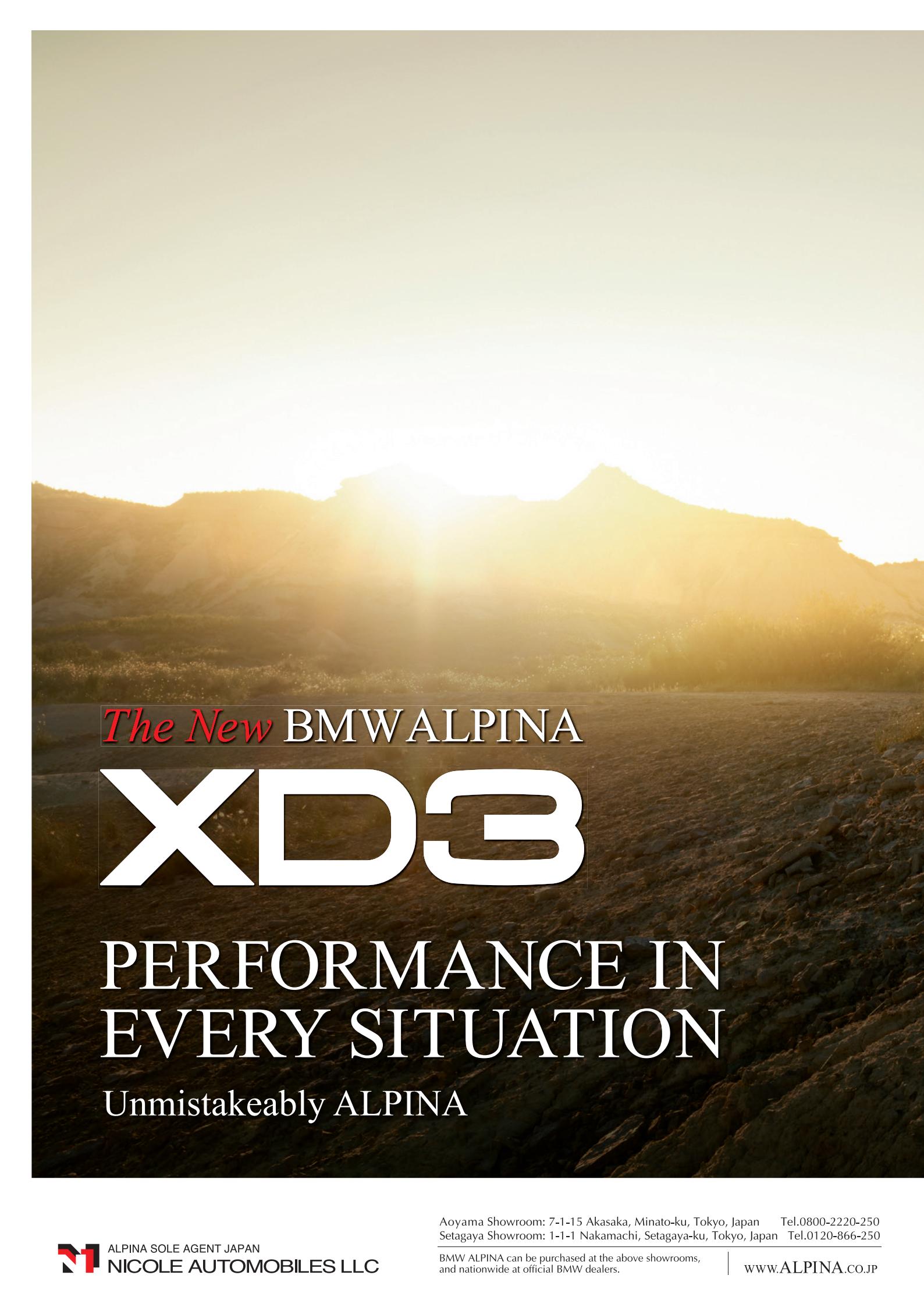
CHRISTOPH GRAINGER-HERR,  
IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

## TIME FLIES

*Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen  
taking off in Japan and beyond*



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ALPINA  
in JAPAN  
1979 - 2019

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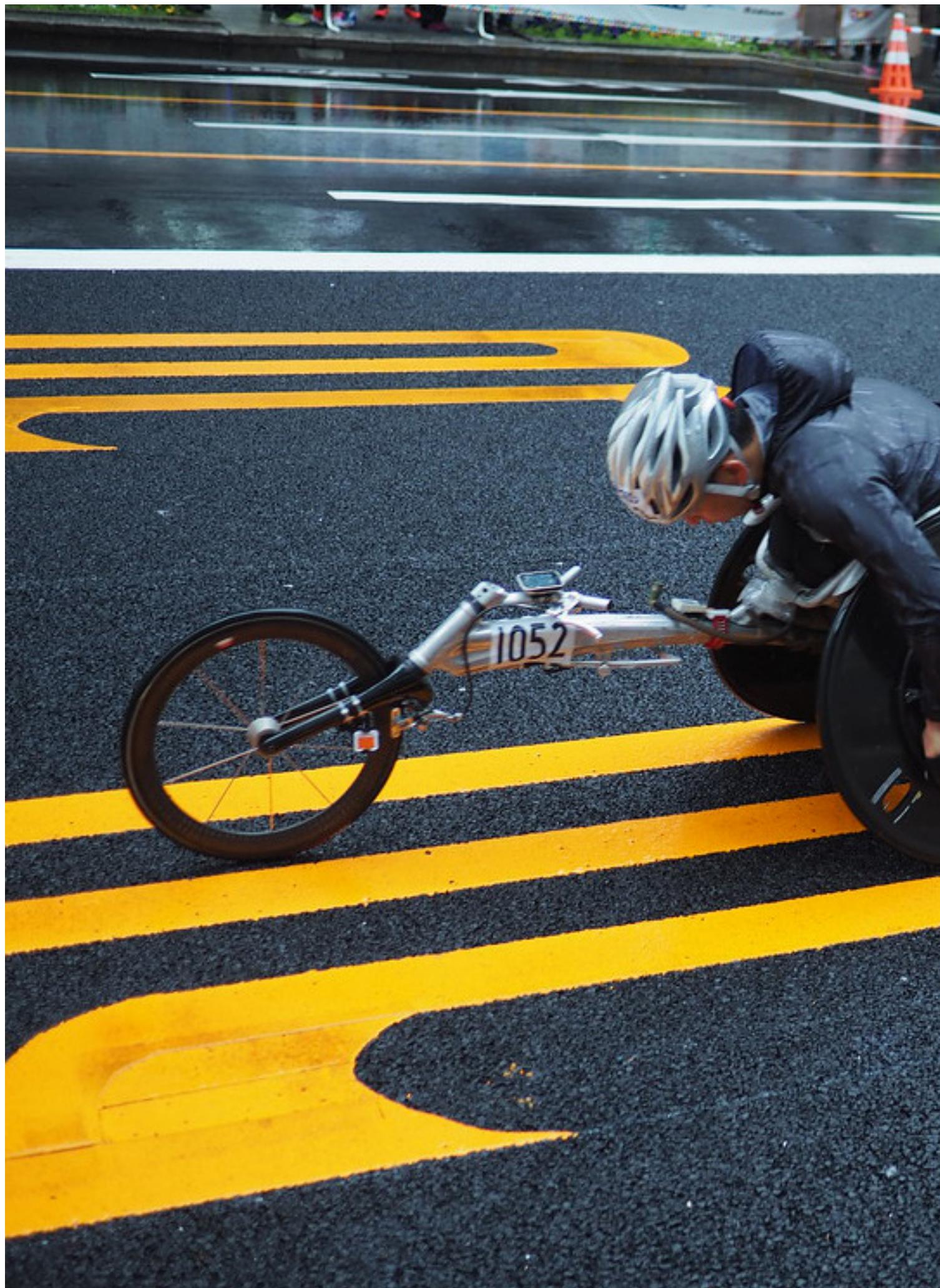
**The Mission of the European Business Council**  
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10

Time flies

By Tim Hornyak





## First Focus



The odds are not exactly in your favour if you want to take part in the annual Tokyo Marathon. Last year, a total of 330,271 people applied for one of the 27,370 spots to compete in the 2019 race, which was held on Sunday, 3 March.

In addition to the marathon and a 10km run was the wheelchair race. In a tweet, second-place finisher Tatyana McFadden commented on the challenges faced by participants this year: "This race was so tough because ... it was raining heavily and the temperatures dropped significantly."

In spite of the adverse conditions, Yamanashi Prefecture's Seiji Tanaka kept his head down and gave it his all.

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Photo by Naoki Nakashima  
[www.flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com)



**Daniel Hurst** is a freelance journalist based in Tokyo. He writes news and feature articles about Japan and East Asia for numerous international publications. He is a former political correspondent for *The Guardian's* Australian edition.

➲ “*Amid uncertainty over the final shape of Brexit, businesses in Japan and the United Kingdom are preparing for new trading arrangements. More than that, though, it’s important to look beyond the current political brinkmanship and gauge their hopes for the long-term economic partnership between the two countries.”*



**Jeremie Bodin** is general director of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Japan. He has over 20 years' experience working in the humanitarian and development sector, mainly in Central and East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

➲ “*It’s encouraging to see how positively the Japanese public respond when called upon to contribute to our life-saving work. But we’re facing a situation where the donor base in Japan isn’t growing. There’s still more that can be done by different sectors in society – from government to corporations to NGOs – to have a greater impact on international humanitarian crises.”*



**Tom Elliott** is deVere Group's international investment strategist. He produces videos, blogs on a wide range of topical investment issues, and regularly speaks at seminars for clients at deVere offices around the world.

➲ “*The UK government is now struggling with the House of Commons to retain control of the Brexit process. It seems likely that Prime Minister Theresa May’s withdrawal agreement bill will, eventually, be passed. If it is, and the Irish backstop remains in place indefinitely, we may see a very soft Brexit emerging, which would lift confidence for businesses, consumers and investors.”*



**Allison Bettin** received her degree in journalism at the University of Hong Kong before relocating to Tokyo. She has written for Eurobiz Japan for more than three years on topics such as environmental technology, international economics and wine.

➲ “*The wine cellar is not only a place of intrigue and mystery, but also a vital part of a wine’s lifespan. It is here that a wine undergoes its often-overlooked bottle-aging process, allowing the harsher elements to dissipate and a more integrated palate to emerge.”*

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Subscription is free for members of the EBC and national European chambers of commerce.

Subscription rates are: one year ¥9,000; two years ¥15,000; three years ¥22,000; ¥800 per copy. Rates include domestic postage or surface postage for overseas subscribers. Add ¥7,500 per year if overseas airmail is preferred. Please allow two weeks for changes of address to take effect. Subscription requests should be sent to [eurobiz@paradigm.co.jp](mailto:eurobiz@paradigm.co.jp)

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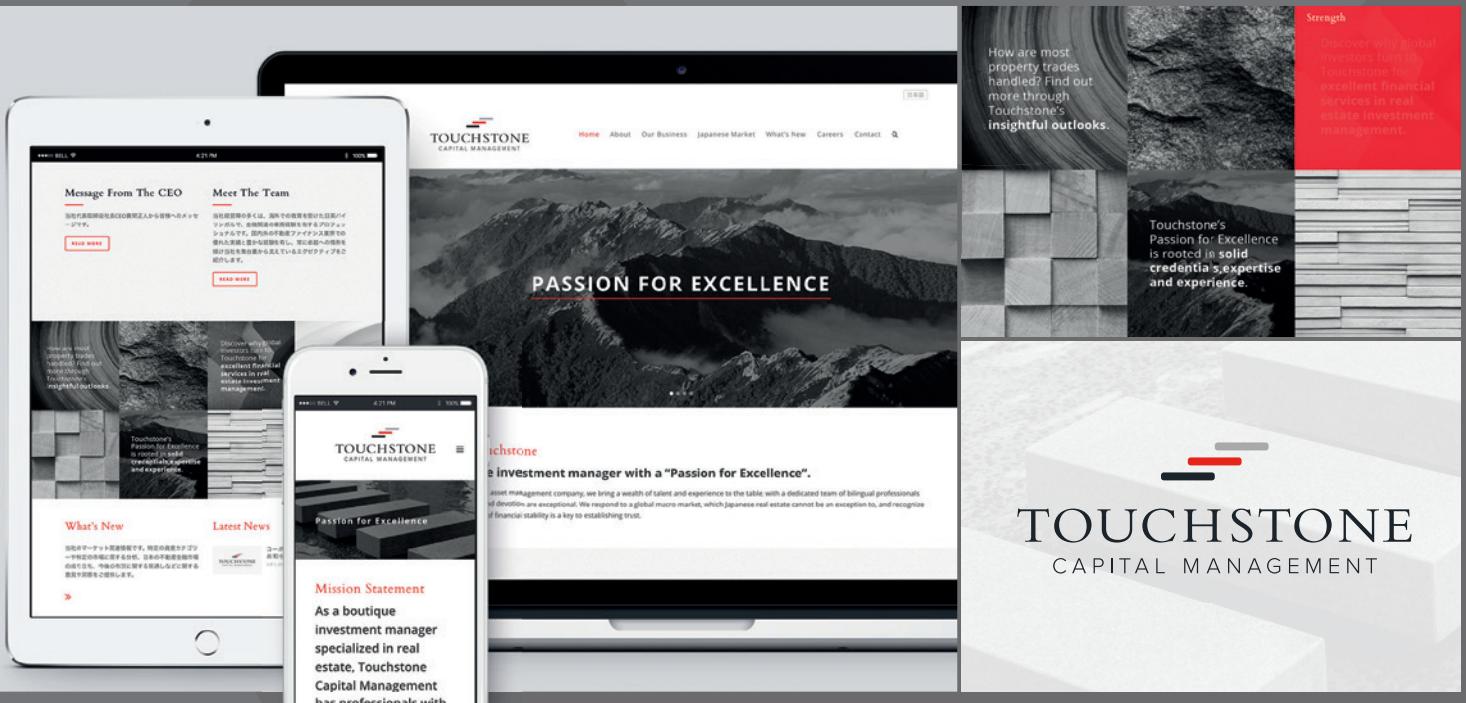
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FROM EUROBIZ JAPAN

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT

# Take stock of the good

Since 23 June 2016, when the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, the nature of the country's future relationship with the EU has been uncertain, and once Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union was invoked, the 48.1% of Britons who had voted to remain had a day to dread: 29 March 2019.

While Brexit will undoubtedly transform the UK, it's important to remember that not everything is going to change – and that there is much to look forward to after Brexit. Something that is sure to remain the same is the UK's enduring friendship with Japan. In "Looking beyond Brexit" (page 14), Daniel Hurst shows that Japanese and British firms here are hoping business will carry on as usual, with the UK continuing to

be a location that allows them to compete well on the global stage.

Many now-iconic British firms have weathered the storms of adversity and come out stronger. Read about the resilience of some of these in Toby Waters' Country Spotlight on the UK (page 22).

It was an honour to sit down with British Ambassador to Japan Paul Madden, who spoke about the importance to the UK of the two major sporting spectacles coming up in the next 18 months: the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the Tokyo

2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Read "Off and running" (page 18) to find out how these events will benefit the UK, and how the country has been supporting Japan in its preparations to host the world.

As the end of the long and sometimes acrimonious Brexit process draws closer, it's a time for everyone to take stock of all the good things we have, and everything we still have to look forward to. ●

Editor-in-Chief  
andrew@paradigm.co.jp



A collage of three images: a baby crawling, a woman blowing bubbles, and a child playing with a red cloth. Overlaid on the left side is a green circular badge with the text "Limited Time" at the top, "¥0" in the center, and "MEMBERSHIP FEE" at the bottom.

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INVESTING IN JAPAN

TEXT BY TIM HORNYAK

# TIME FLIES

Swiss watchmaker IWC  
Schaffhausen taking off in Japan  
and beyond



At the latest Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in January in Geneva, Switzerland, an unusual attraction grabbed the spotlight: a 1943 Spitfire fighter plane with a chrome finish dazzled visitors, who flocked to the fuselage to snap selfies. The restored aircraft will embark on a round-the-world flight this summer, showing off the livery of IWC Schaffhausen, a maverick Swiss watchmaker whose passion for aviation has reached new heights.

**S**porting IWC time-pieces at the annual tradeshow were celebrities such as Bradley Cooper, Rosamund Pike, Dev Patel, James Marsden and Ryohei Suzuki. They were there to promote a new line of 14 IWC Pilot's Watches, including seven revamped Spitfire watches that are meant to evoke the overall aesthetics, as well as the cockpit design, of the storied British aircraft. The watches have stainless steel or bronze alloy cases, movements built in-house at IWC, and options including chronograph and multiple time zone versions. The new aviation offerings also included three Pilot's Watches in IWC's Le Petit Prince line, and four branded with the TOP GUN logo, a series produced since 2007. The latter showcases IWC's materials engineering prowess.

"The Pilot's Watch Double Chronograph TOP GUN Ceratanium is our first Pilot's Watch made of Ceratanium," says IWC CEO Christoph Grainger-Herr. "This new material, which was developed by IWC, combines the advantages of titanium and ceramic. It is as light and robust as titanium, and as hard and scratch-resistant as ceramic. For the first time, it enables us to manufacture components of the watch — including the push-buttons and the pin buckle — in a jet-black finish that is much more durable than any coating solution available."

**"This new material ... is as light and robust as titanium, and as hard and scratch-resistant as ceramic"**

#### BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

IWC Schaffhausen — which marked its 150th anniversary last year — is an unconventional player in the Swiss watch industry. Florentine Ariosto Jones, a watchmaker from Boston, founded the International Watch Company in 1868 in the hopes of marrying modern American production methods to Swiss craftsmanship. He chose the town of Schaffhausen to set up shop because of its highly-regarded craftspeople, its factory space and a hydroelectric plant by the River Rhine. The company's first movement was the eponymous Jones calibre, and in 1884 IWC debuted its iconic Pallweber pocket watches, which displayed hours and minutes as numerals on rotating discs. It began producing wristwatches at the end of the 19th century.

IWC is the only major Swiss watchmaker located in eastern,



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German-speaking Switzerland. Grainger-Herr is himself a Frankfurt-born German and brings a unique background to the job. He studied interior design at Bournemouth University in the UK and the University of the Arts in Basel, Switzerland. He worked as an architect at Smolenicky & Partner Architektur in Zurich before joining IWC's Trade Marketing Department in 2006.

"When I was at university in Bournemouth, there was a watch retailer on my way to lectures, which happened to be an IWC dealer," says Grainger-Herr. "I fell in love with the look of the Portugieser Chronographs of that time. I was impressed by the extreme clarity in the design — the clean black and white dials, the sort of crispness that this watch expressed. This was something that spoke to me."

#### GROWTH IN JAPAN AND BEYOND

**S**ince becoming CEO in 2017, Grainger-Herr has overseen the design and construction of IWC's large manufacturing centre outside Schaffhausen that opened last year. With 238 technicians, it is the first IWC factory to bring together movement parts-making and case-making under a single roof. The production and management functions are also grouped closely together to make processes more efficient.

The plant is evidence of long-term growth at IWC, and the expansion has also been seen in East Asia. IWC is adding to its 75 boutiques in China and, in 2018, it opened a second boutique in Japan, in Osaka, which follows its first in Tokyo's Ginza district. The shops offer watch



IWC marked its 150th anniversary last year

**"Japanese watch lovers ... have a strong appreciation for the crisp and pure design that is embodied by our Portugieser models"**

enthusiasts the chance to see the company's six product families: the Portugieser, Portofino, Aquatimer, Ingenieur, Pilot's Watches and Da Vinci lines. Grainger-Herr says Japanese customers are very knowledgeable about mechanical watches.

"Japanese watch lovers have similar tastes to our customers in Europe and North America," he observes. "They have a strong appreciation for the crisp and pure design that is embodied by our Portugieser models with their railway-track chapter ring, the applied Arabic numerals, and the elegant *feuille* hands. There is also a strong appreciation for the sporty, tool-watch product lines, like our Pilot's Watches. Their now-iconic design in the style of an easy-to-read cockpit instrument was the result of purely functional engineering to meet specific requirements in military aviation."

#### EVERYDAY LUXURY FOR EVERYONE

**A**lthough there's a masculine look to many IWC watches, the company has been offering more ladies' watches in recent years. One is the stainless-steel Portofino Automatic 37, which features a cobalt-blue dial, ringed by 66 diamonds on the bezel. Another is the Da Vinci Automatic 36, which has a case and bracelet made of 18-carat red gold set with

54 pure white diamonds.

IWC timepieces can represent significant investments, with the entry-level Spitfire priced at ¥572,000. But Grainger-Herr says that they are luxury products for everyday use.

"Our clients are men and women who are on the move in their lives," says Grainger-Herr. "A watch from IWC is not a lifetime achievement award, but a gift you make to yourself for celebrating a milestone in your career journey, or another important event. Our clients are not just looking for status; they are confident and free-spirited people who appreciate precision engineering and genuinely timeless design." ●



FEATURE

TEXT BY DANIEL HURST

# LOOKING BEYOND BREXIT

Businesses in the UK and Japan hope for an ambitious new partnership





**M**any business operators in Japan have a stake in the continuation of a smooth trading relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, but as the UK draws closer to its scheduled departure from the EU at the end of this month, firms are still struggling to assess the potential impact of Brexit on trading conditions and their supply chains. With a drawn-out political debate in Westminster over the withdrawal agreement, the ultimate nature of that trading relationship remains shrouded in uncertainty.

While Japan-based entrepreneur David Croll – co-founder of two businesses, Whisk-e Limited and Number One Drinks – is hopeful that trade will continue unimpeded, he is considering a change to his distribution arrangements to help him effectively reach his customers in the EU in the event that there is a disruption in trading between the UK and the rest of Europe.

Whisk-e distributes premium whiskies, craft beers, gins and other spirits in Japan; the majority of its suppliers are based in the UK. Meanwhile, Number One Drinks – the producer of KI NO BI Kyoto Dry Gin – values the UK as one of its larger export markets. It also has customers in mainland Europe whose orders have always been routed through the UK.

“There’s been a lot of talk – mostly speculation – but I would say very little real

effect on our business to date,” Croll says. “On the importing side we haven’t heard of any significant preparations by our suppliers, most of whom seem to be assuming that exports to non-EU countries will be largely unaffected. In terms of exporting our gin to Europe, we’re actively looking at setting up a distribution centre in somewhere like Rotterdam.”

Likewise, some big-name Japanese companies with operations in the UK seem keen to project a sense of business as usual and emphasise the importance of the relationship.

For example, Toyota Motor Corporation cites its invest-

**“We would hope that the close cultural and economic ties between the UK and Japan remain, and even strengthen, post-Brexit”**



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ment of £2.75 billion in its UK operations since 1992, which includes its recent announcement of a £240 million upgrade to its plant in the village of Burnaston, Derbyshire, to build the new Corolla. Production started in January.

“This was a sign of confidence in the capabilities of our UK workforce and in Toyota Manufacturing UK as a centre for world-class manufacturing,” a company spokesperson says. “It demonstrates that we are doing everything we can to be competitive.”

The company intends to “continue making every effort to uphold and improve our productivity at our current production sites,” but adds that it needs “a business environment that allows us to compete internationally so we can continue to attract new investments”.

Asked about any contingency plans Toyota has put in place for the possibility of the UK leaving the EU without a deal, the spokesperson says: “We do not regard a no-deal Brexit as an acceptable option.”

Such a scenario would have “an immediate and severe effect” on Toyota’s just-in-time logistics, with lengthy delays at the border leading to line stoppages at its plants within days or even hours, resulting in increased costs and reducing its competitiveness.

Japanese and British officials have sought to help businesses prepare for Brexit. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono says a task force in the prime minister’s office is looking at how to assist Japanese businesses during the Brexit process, while Japan’s embassy in the UK is planning workshops for affected firms.

“We really do hope that British people and the British government have some sense not to leave the EU without any deal,” Kono told *Eurobiz Japan* at a press conference.

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), an iconic British automotive brand with operations in many countries including Japan, is also wrestling with Brexit alongside other challenges. In January, it announced it would shed 4,500 jobs from its global workforce, many of them management roles in the UK, citing “multiple geopolitical and regulatory disruptions, as well as technology challenges”.

Magnus Hansson, CEO of JLR Japan Ltd, says the company is a strong advocate of free trade and hopes solutions will be in place to enable the benefits of trade between the UK and all countries.

“We do not anticipate major issues in the relationship between the UK and Japan with respect to our business,” he says. “But as part of a fully global and highly complex industrial enterprise based in the UK, we need viable and effective trading conditions between the EU and our design/engineering and manufacturing centres in the UK. Similarly, we also need access to talent from all countries – not only the UK – to be able to compete globally.”

Whatever the outcome of the Brexit uncertainty, businesses that operate in Japan and the UK hope that the two countries can act quickly to put a trade deal in place.

British Prime Minister Theresa May and her Japanese counterpart, Shinzo Abe, have indicated they will use the recently finalised Japan–EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as the basis for the future economic partnership between Japan and the UK. At a London summit meeting in January, they signalled they wanted such a deal to come into force as soon as possible, although they would also seek “to make this new partnership more ambitious and enhanced in areas of shared interests”.

Hansson says that while he won’t speculate on how quickly such a trade deal can be reached, he hopes it will be among the highest priorities, noting there appears to be strong will on both sides to prioritise the Japan–UK relationship and trade.

**“as part of a fully global and highly complex industrial enterprise based in the UK, we need viable and effective trading conditions between the EU and ... the UK”**

“Any UK enterprise trying to win customers in Japan will be competing against other European choices, so the benchmark must be to emulate the FTA [free trade agreement] conditions [set out in the Japan–EU EPA],” Hansson says.

Croll, too, sees cause for optimism about the long-term trading relationship between Japan and the UK.

“We would hope that the close cultural and economic ties between the UK and Japan remain, and even strengthen, post-Brexit,” he says. “As *shima-guni* [island countries], there’s a natural bond between our countries and also a real respect and desire for each other’s goods and services. ●



THE INTERVIEW

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT

PHOTOS BY KAGEAKI SMITH

# OFF AND RUNNING

British Ambassador to Japan Paul Madden





Sports fans around the world are getting excited about the major sporting events set to take place in Japan this year and next: the Rugby World Cup will be held this autumn and the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics next July, August and September. British Ambassador to Japan Paul Madden spoke with *Eurobiz Japan* about the importance of these events to the UK and the new opportunities they will bring.

#### **Why are these sporting events important to the UK?**

They're interesting for us in a lot of ways. Rugby is a game where the rules were set in the United Kingdom, in the 19th century, based on a sport that came out of a famous school in Britain, called Rugby School. And Britain was the last country to host the Rugby World Cup, in 2015. As the British ambassador, I'll have four teams to support this year. We'll have Scotland, Wales and England, and, with the Irish ambassador, I share Ireland, because it's an all-Ireland team. We're expecting a lot of British rugby fans to come, possibly as many as 40,000.

Next year, we have the Olympics and Paralympics. The very first Paralympics was an event organised at Stoke Mandeville – one of the hospitals in the UK that does rehabilitation for injuries – in parallel with the 1948 Summer Olympics in London. We hosted the Olympics and Paralympics very recently, in 2012, which I think was seen by many as highly successful, both in terms of our team's performance, but also in the way we put the event together. So, there are lots of opportunities for us to work with Japan and support it in making sure it's a really successful event.

#### **How has the UK been giving support to Japan as it gets ready to host the Rugby World Cup?**

We have a number of memoranda of understanding with Japan across a range of areas, from sports to security to tourism, and a number of UK companies are involved in working with Japan in these areas. Japan is particularly interested in the security aspects of hosting a major international sporting event.

When Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe was in London in January, Prime Minister [Theresa] May took him to Twickenham, the home of English Rugby, where they watched some children playing on the pitch. Then they had a briefing from those responsible for security for major sporting events: the heads of Scotland Yard, the police service, the fire service, the ambulance service, the National Cyber Security Centre. I was at the meeting and one thing they talked about was the importance of all the different elements being well joined up, knowing how to communicate and coordinate effectively.

40,000

We're expecting as many as 40,000 British rugby fans to come to Japan



# ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN

## PERMANENT & TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT



Companies staffing for the constantly changing marketplace demand adaptable business partners like Robert Walters. Since 1985, the group has offered permanent and temporary recruitment options across all industries and levels of seniority. For a recruitment firm that caters to your company's unique bilingual hiring needs, speak to one of our consultants specialising in your industry sector or visit our webpage at [www.robertwalters.co.jp](http://www.robertwalters.co.jp)



**How is the rugby tournament helping to build UK–Japan relations outside Tokyo?**

Matches will take place at 10 venues across the country, from Hokkaido to Kyushu, so it's a chance for us to engage with parts of Japan that we don't so often have a chance to. To give some examples, Scotland will be in Nagasaki, England will be in Miyazaki, and Wales in Kita-Kyushu for their training camps. Before the actual games start, they've each started developing relationships with the places they'll be holding training camps.

**How has the UK been giving support to Japan as it gets ready to host the Olympics and Paralympics?**

I think Japan has been very interested to hear from the UK on issues relating to the Paralympics specifically because – I think most people would acknowledge – Britain really gave a boost to the whole concept of the Paralympics at the London Games, in terms of the level of engagement and interest that was generated. Some of that was because one of our major TV networks gave it full comprehensive coverage. The

public really got behind it and the stadia were always full.

One area where we have been supporting the British Paralympic Association is around accessibility at some of the private hotels their members want to stay at in Japan. Rooms in Japanese hotels tend to be smaller than in the West and access for people in wheelchairs to bathrooms, for example, can be quite complicated. Clearly, it is quite expensive for a hotel to invest in making the necessary changes, so there's been some reluctance. But I think part of the messaging for doing this shouldn't just



be about preparing for the Paralympics, it should be because, as a society that is embracing disability, we should have improved accessibility all the time. In Japan, and in many other countries, as we get older, more and more people are going to have mobility issues, so what you do for disability is actually quite important for the general population.

**Could you tell me about the UK in Japan 2019–20 campaign?**

It will consist of a series of elements. The first will be receptions and showcase events around the Games, which will involve the teams. Secondly, there will be five

**“This is a time when the world is going to be focused on Japan”**

GREAT Weeks covering different business sectors: on health, life science and healthy ageing; the future of energy; mobility; finance, fintech and cyber; and creative industries. Another element of this is the British Council-led cultural programme. There will be some world-renowned British cultural institutions here: the London Symphony Orchestra and the National Gallery, for example.

We're also going to operate what we call pop-up activities in four of the cities where rugby teams will be playing:

Sapporo, Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe. Primarily, they will be focused on promoting UK food and drink. It was announced in January that Japan has brought to an end its longstanding ban on British beef and lamb, which goes back to the 1990s, so now we can bring these great British flavours to the appreciative Japanese consumer.

We're looking for companies to join as sponsors, either of the whole campaign or for smaller parts of the event. We see this as a real opportunity for British companies to engage and associate themselves with these great events.

This is a time when the world is going to be focused on Japan. The UK–Japan relationship is getting closer year by year, and this is an opportunity to showcase some of the strengths of our relationship. ●

**“I think Japan has been very interested to hear from the UK on issues relating to the Paralympics specifically”**



# The United Kingdom

## Keeping calm and carrying on

Determinedly facing down adversity — colloquially known in the UK as having a “stiff upper lip” — has long been a quality aspired to and demonstrated by Brits and their businesses. Thanks to this spirit, many British companies have persevered through hardships across decades — and even centuries — to become some of the most revered and enduring brands in history.

One of the oldest printing presses in the world, Cambridge University Press was created with the blessing of King Henry VIII in 1534. The length of its operations means that the firm has successfully continued through the Great Plague, the English Civil War, and the turbulence of the Industrial Revolution to become one of the most trusted and reliable sources of knowledge anywhere on Earth. Its global reach

includes an office in Chiyoda ward, Tokyo, while its multi-volume Cambridge History of Japan was the first work in English to present a complete contemporary understanding of Japanese history — from ancient civilisation to the twentieth century. The first volume was published in 1988.

Burberry, founded in Hampshire in 1856, is one of fashion’s most recognisable labels today. The clothier is no stranger to achieving triumphs through adversity.



# Even during times of great upheaval ... British firms have proven to be resilient

After designing a long, warm, waterproof garment for soldiers, which insulated them from the trying conditions of trench warfare in World War I, Burberry saw the popularity of its now-iconic trench coat soar as celebrities and civilians alike recognised their practicality and stylishness. Japan is a prized market for the company. This was reflected in the prestige of the opening of its flagship store in Shinjuku in 2015, which was attended by a number of VIPs and influential people, including then-mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

Since it was established in Manchester in 1904, Rolls-Royce has been a byword for quality. Despite problems with its RB211 jet engine, which ultimately led to the firm's bankruptcy and nationalisation in 1971, it has grown from its origins as a luxury car brand into one of the world's largest designers and manufacturers in the aerospace, defence and power sectors. Its history in Japan is no less illustrious: it built the Japanese battleship Mikasa, is a supplier for ANA and still works closely with the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

The auction house Sotheby's is one of the UK's most venerable institutions. With a history stretching back all the way to 1744, it is one of the oldest extant auction houses in the world. In the centuries since its founding, its purview has expanded beyond books to include real estate, jewellery and art. It has even established its own Institute of Art for the study of fine art and its markets, which last year offered a course in Tokyo dedicated to Japanese art. It has overcome such challenges as a 25% drop in revenue shortly after going public in the 1980s to secure its reputation as the top auction house in the world.

Even during times of great upheaval, both in the course of business and the life of the nation, British firms have proven to be resilient, steadfast partners who can be counted on to stick it out and create something that lasts. ●

## Trade with Japan

Exports to Japan: **¥710 billion**  
Imports from Japan: **¥1.48 trillion**

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF  
JAPAN (2016)



**Area**  
243,610km<sup>2</sup>. Coastline: 12,429km.



**Comprises**

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.



**Climate**

Temperate, moderated by prevailing southwest winds over the North Atlantic Current

**Major cities**

London (capital), Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff.

**Population**

65,105,246 (July 2018 estimate). Urban population: 83.4% (2018). 40.29% 25-54 years of age (2018 estimate).

**Main exports to Japan**

Machinery, non-railway vehicles, pharmaceutical products, optical and medical apparatus, electronic equipment.





EBC PERSONALITY

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

PHOTO BY KAGEAKI SMITH



# Keeping up the momentum

Paul Gilsenan

For many of us, our bicycles just take us to work and home again. Paul Gilsenan's took him around the world. Along the way, he competed in five world mountain bike championships and featured in the global rankings of mountain bike racing. His passion for biking started simply but picked up incredible momentum.

**W**hen I was seven or eight, I'd come home from school and my mates and I would jump on our bikes and go for a ride," Gilsenan recalls. "That progressed to, 'Let's go to the local BMX track' after school, then Sundays, too. Then I started to bump into people who had cooler bikes, or better skills, and it started to snowball."

It wasn't long until his fervour had grown to the point where he was cycling competitively and winning podium positions in Ireland. As he adjusted his lifestyle and training regimen, he began to focus solely on one form of racing: downhill.

"The psychological warfare you play with yourself in downhill is fabulous," Gilsenan says. "You're going against a clock. It's you, your bike, the track and that's it. Nothing else in the world comes close to that feeling of having full control."

Some of the most memorable events for Gilsenan during his career as a professional cyclist weren't the ones where he made it onto the podium, but when he "took a big step". Among these are his first major race in the UK in 1994; his first race in continental Europe in 1995; and helping to organise the inaugu-

ral downhill mountain bike championships in Ireland that same year.

"The most memorable of all was the first international road trip, packing the bikes and jumping in the car with a buddy to travel Europe where we did eight races in eight weeks," Gilsenan recalls. "It was a maturing moment, where we went from being aspiring young athletes to people trying to break into the elite."

His time as a cyclist has significantly shaped who he is today.

"I carry that perseverance with me; you push through hard times," says Gilsenan. "On the global stage, even with all your training, you have to accept you're not going to win sometimes. That builds grit and personality."

Mountain biking isn't the only one of Gilsenan's passions that has snowballed to life-sized proportions. His boyhood curiosity, which manifested itself through taking apart old TVs and electronics, led him to an engineering degree and a graduate programme that placed him in a Japanese manufacturing company. Now, nearly two decades later, he is property leader for Japan and Korea at General Electric (GE).

"What really drew me to GE is that it is inventive, creative and has a mindset in line with my own," explains Gilsenan. "There are multiple businesses, from digital all the way to jet engines, a whole host of stuff always pushing the boundaries."

Gilsenan's passion for mountain biking has pushed through generational lines. His three pre-teen children have all been caught up in it.

"They know more about the latest stuff than me," Gilsenan notes. "They've joined a cycling club. Once a month they go to Makuhari in Chiba for a few hours on the bike with a group of people — and they love it. They've also started to race in Japanese national events alongside me, which is interesting: 'Daddy, change my tires'."

As the president of the Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce, Gilsenan is also proud to have the chance to promote his

team in the upcoming Rugby World Cup. He hopes that the building momentum around this event will translate into greater interest by Japan in Ireland.

## Do you like natto?

### Time spent working in Japan:

It'll be 18 years this year.

### Career regret:

Not being aggressive enough in my early career. I was very conservative and risk averse when given opportunities.

### Favourite saying:

"To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to have changed often" — Winston Churchill.

### Favourite book:

*Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman

### Cannot live without:

Tea. It's the only thing mummy still sends from home: Lyons brand teabags.

### Lesson learned in Japan:

Quality is not a commodity. In Japan, it's a context.

### Secret of success in business:

Accept you will be wrong and that you're going to fail.

### Favourite place to dine:

Anywhere selling *sansai soba* in Nozawaonsen in Nagano. Nothing in Tokyo compares to Nagano vegetables picked in the back garden.

### Do you like natto?

My kids love it, so it's always in the fridge — but never in my mouth!

"We're ranked number two in the world for rugby, so, hopefully, we can get brand Ireland out there," Gilsenan says. "You'll have people running around a field in a green jersey and it'll be hard to not ask the question 'Who are they?', and not connect the dots to products, holiday opportunities and other sports."

An avalanche of opportunity awaits Gilsenan, his family and his country. ●

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Paul Gilsenan is property leader for Japan and Korea at General Electric and represents Ireland on the EBC's Board of Governors.



# Medical Equipment

## Well equipped for the future

The "device lag" used to be a major problem for manufacturers of medical equipment in Japan. For many years, the EBC and other industry groups complained that Japanese regulators spent excessive periods of time testing and approving new products, which raised costs and created uncertainty for the devicemakers.

**Nowadays, the lag** is a lot shorter, to the point where it no longer poses much of a problem, according to many people in the industry.

"Now, a typical period is six or seven months," says Shoji Toyofuku, executive director of the EBC Medical Equipment Committee.

That's about half as long as before, an improvement the EBC can claim at least some credit for, thanks to its years of unflagging advocacy.

But that doesn't mean Toyofuku and his colleagues have closed the book on the issue.

Their next stage of advocacy will focus on a five-year plan recently established by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). The goal is not simply to speed up current processes, but to create new ones that will be inherently quicker.

"We have agreed to consider how to change the system itself and the frameworks," Toyofuku says, adding that a draft plan is expected to be drawn up by the end of March.

He and another committee member, Hiroshi Ariizumi, are in the ministry's ad-hoc working group.

Approval/certification is a major area of the committee's advocacy. Another is reimbursements — the prices paid by the medical system for equipment and services.

A longstanding issue is that the ministry fails to recognise the proper value of the innovation behind the latest medical devices, according to the committee. Members are now pinning their hopes on the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices (PMD) Act, which came into force in 2014 and is recognised as being a big step forward in resolving a host of outstanding issues.

"The MHLW understands the characteristics of medical devices well and plans

to implement a future revision of the PMD Act with these characteristics in mind," says Ryoichi Tanaka, director of the committee's Reimbursement Subcommittee.

Another bright spot is the ministry's C1 Challenge initiative introduced last year. This allows the industry a kind of second chance when applying for reimbursements.

"Maybe one or two years after a product's launch, a physician might recognise that it has additional innovations or functions, and then we can

apply for extra reimbursement points," Tanaka explains.

The usage records of the devices can be used as evidence when the applications are made.

A few of the committee's other advocacy issues involve bringing the health ministry more in line with 21st century norms.

Packaging inserts is a case in point. Under current regulations, the inserts must be placed in the packages of all devices, and they must be in paper form, unless certain conditions are met.

The EBC wants to provide the material electronically, Ariizumi says, pointing out that producing and distributing all that paper is costly and time-consuming.

"That documentation is difficult to revise, then there are the printing costs and, of course, having to keep the information up to date," he says.

Currently, the only way for the device companies to get around the requirement is to gain the consent of every single customer.

"Meeting that condition is very complicated," he says.

As their technologies continue to make rapid advances, medical devices are destined to play an ever more important role in healthcare. That's especially the case in Japan, where the government wants to raise efficiency in a bid to contain costs and cope with a labour shortage in its medical system.

The EBC has already played an active part in moving forward with those goals and expects many more busy years ahead. ●

### Advocacy issues

#### ⌚ Quality Management System (QMS)

Japan should remove any remaining differences in the effort to align its QMS with international standards.

#### ⌚ Good Clinical Practice (GCP)

Japan's operation of GCP should be approved by accepting clinical trial results from Europe that comply with ISO14115.

#### ⌚ Reimbursements

The Japanese government should improve reimbursements to better reflect the innovation of new products.

Shoji Toyofuku is executive director of the EBC Medical Equipment Committee.

# Opening to the world

## The EBC joins the European Business Organisation Worldwide Network

After hiring a new executive director last autumn and electing a new chairman at the end of January — just a few days before the monumental EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) came into force — the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) is undergoing yet another change. At the end of 2018, the EBC submitted an application to become a member of the European Business Organisation Worldwide Network (EBO WWN), the sole organisation representing European business interests in markets outside the European Union. Our application was accepted last month, and we are now officially members.

**EBO WWN's members** are active in more than 35 key markets — serving European firms of every size, from micro to multi-national — and work daily with European Union delegations across the globe in the shared interest of supporting European companies.

Asia has the largest concentration of EBO members, reflecting the region's importance to Europe for trade. While the organisation has its largest presence in China, with eight offices, it also has members in countries such as India, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

A few weeks after we submitted our application, the EBC was visited by the executive director of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, Adam Dunnett. It was our first opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss possible future cooperation with an EBO member in Asia.

In addition to advocating for European businesses in overseas markets, the EBO aims to provide a platform for EBC-like

organisations to share best practices and to facilitate access to European institutions, both centrally in Europe and locally in non-European markets.

In addition to gaining a point of contact for learning more about best practices, the EBC is sure to benefit from the chance to have regular meetings with several departments at the EU Commission in Brussels. Also, as a member of the EBO, our stakeholders will be able to access business support from more than 250 experts on trade, investment and policy based in over 35 countries outside the European Union.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remain the backbone of every economy. The internationalisation of SMEs has become increasingly important for growth, enhanced competitiveness and long-term stability. In the EU alone, 99% of European businesses are classified as SMEs. As the EBC, starting this year, has moved towards a more SME-friendly membership structure, the EBO's network has similarly been focusing on supporting European SMEs as they enter and retain business in overseas markets, as well as on

facilitating the representation of EU member states with limited or no direct representation in overseas markets and, whenever needed, setting up country-specific helpdesks.

"EBO WWN is currently further working on furthering economic diplomacy, the internationalisation of SMEs, EU trade and industry 4.0, and the digital economy out of Europe in key markets," explains Renato Pacheco Neto, chairman of EBO WWN. "On the fifth and sixth of February, EBO WWN joined the EU Industry Days High Level Conference panel on industry and trade, and our 40 EBO members will meet again with DG Grow [the EU's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs] in June in Brussels, now also with our newest but very important member, the EBC in Japan. [The EU-Japan EPA has] just started and we are eager to exchange our ... multilateral and complementary experiences and best practises among our members. Welcome, EBC Japan." ●

**"our 40 EBO members will meet again with DG Grow ... in June in Brussels, now also with our newest but very important member, the EBC in Japan"**

Francesco Formiconi is the executive director at the EBC.





# A historic day

## The EU-Japan EPA enters into force

“Today is a historic day,” said Ambassador of the European Union to Japan Patricia Flor about 1 February, the day the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) entered into force. “It’s a day for celebration.”

With the EPA now in force, a marketplace of 635 million people has been created, representing one third of global GDP.

EU ambassadors posed for the media around a table of products that displayed just a small sample of the extensive list of European goods that can now be brought to Japan tariff-free. These included a bottle of Champagne from France, a Marinella necktie from Italy, honey from Lithuania, a VAX-ID medical device from Belgium, Tyrolean Speck bacon from Austria, and More Joy textiles from Finland.



EU Ambassador to Japan Patricia Flor with ambassadors of EU member states

Ambassadors and representatives of all 28 EU member states, along with several ministers from the Japanese government, gathered at the EU Delegation to Japan to commemorate the occasion.

“While elsewhere tariffs are raised, Japan and the EU bring down 90% of all of their tariffs in one day and eliminate non-tariff barriers,” Flor continued. “If you’re a farmer or a company producing chainsaws or cyber software, or [if you’re] a small business, then there are new, big opportunities opening for you today.”

The EU market can also more freely access Japanese goods and services.

“Tea and beef are now ready to be exported without tariffs,” noted Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Takamori Yoshikawa through an interpreter. “Eggs, egg products and dairy products will also [soon be eligible for export] ... I hope the EU will enjoy Japanese agricultural, forestry and fishery products.”

Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Toshimitsu Motegi made it clear in his speech that the agreement was about far more than trade.

“Japan and the EU are global partners, sharing fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law and basic human rights,” he said, adding that they had a responsibility



Japan's Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Toshimitsu Motegi

to promote “free and fair common rules — that are suitable for the 21st century — around the world.”

Representatives of the Japanese government and Ambassador Flor broke open a barrel of sake, a traditional Japanese practice called *kagami-biraki*, to toast this new beginning.

In a video message shown to the attendees, the EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström looked to the future.

“It is definitely time to celebrate today, but now starts the hard work,” she said. “We need to focus on implementation, and to reach out to companies — especially small ones — in Japan and the EU so that they dare to take that step and to benefit from the possibilities of this trade agreement.”

The first EU–Japan committee meeting is scheduled to take place next month to review how the implementation of the agreement is progressing. ●



# The Agenda

<p><b>MAR 26</b></p> <p><u>BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>Diversity in Rugby</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 12:00 to 14:30 <b>VENUE:</b> Conrad Hotel Tokyo, 2F Ballroom <b>FEE:</b> ¥7,200 (for members), ¥9,200 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> info@bccjapan.com</p>	<p><u>IRELAND JAPAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</u></p> <p><b>IJCC Spring Golf Cup 2019</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 9:00 start <b>VENUE:</b> Tsutsujigaoka Country Club <b>FEE:</b> ¥21,000 (for members), ¥23,000 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> secretariat@ijcc.jp</p>
<p><b>APR 3</b></p> <p><u>SWEDISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>Sakura Party</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 19:00 to 21:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Togo Kinenkan, Harajuku <b>FEE:</b> ¥8,000 (for members and guests), ¥9,500 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> Register through the chamber's website.</p>	<p><u>EMBASSY OF FINLAND AND FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</u></p> <p><b>Feel Finland – Open Day at the Embassy</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 10:30 to 17:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Embassy of Finland in Tokyo <b>FEE:</b> Free of charge <b>CONTACT:</b> office@fcc.or.jp</p>
<p><b>APR 9</b></p> <p><u>ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>Olive Oil on The Road</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 18:30 to 20:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan <b>FEE:</b> ¥1,000 (for members), ¥3,000 (for non-members), free for members of the media <b>CONTACT:</b> projects@iccj.or.jp</p>	<p><u>BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</u></p> <p><b>Monthly Beer Gathering</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 19:00 to 22:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Belgian beer café in Tokyo <b>FEE:</b> Pay as you go <b>CONTACT:</b> info@blccj.or.jp</p>
<p><b>APR 10</b></p> <p><u>FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>Nordic Breakfast Meeting</b> with new Finnair CEO Topi Manner</p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 09:00 to 10:30 <b>VENUE:</b> Imperial Hotel, Mai Room, Main Bldg. 3F <b>FEE:</b> ¥5,000 (for members), ¥7,000 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> office@fcc.or.jp</p>	<p><u>DANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN AND SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>DCCJ &amp; SCCIJ Lunch-eon</b> with Mie Miwa, Executive Officer, East Japan Railway Co.</p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 12:00 to 14:00 <b>VENUE:</b> TBC <b>FEE:</b> ¥6,500 (for members), ¥8,000 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> info@sccij.jp</p>
<p><b>APR 12</b></p> <p><u>ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN</u></p> <p><b>Japan Olive Oil Prize 2019 Award Ceremony</b></p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 13:00 to 15:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Tanto Tanto, Gotanda <b>FEE:</b> ¥5,000 (for members), ¥10,000 (for non-members), free for members of the media <b>CONTACT:</b> projects@iccj.or.jp</p>	<p><u>CLIC CHAMBERS</u></p> <p><b>First edition CLIC 2019</b> with Ken Moroi, CEO, Vranken Pommery Japan</p> <p><b>TIME:</b> 19:00 to 21:00 <b>VENUE:</b> Embassy of Belgium, Kojimachi <b>FEE:</b> ¥5,000 (for members), ¥7,000 (for non-members) <b>CONTACT:</b> info@blccj.or.jp</p>



# Elio

Latering

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.





# For rent: smart machines

The robots-as-a-service model is transforming industries

Along with the spread of cloud computing, software as a service has become the norm for operating programmes. In this model, users access programmes through the cloud instead of installing software on their own computers. The market has grown steadily over the past few years, and research firm Gartner predicts revenues will reach \$85 billion this year. It has also inspired a rethink of business models across many industries, not the least of which is robotics.

Industrial robots have transformed manufacturing, but the machines are expensive to buy and maintain. Robots as a service (RaaS), also known as robotics as a service, is a model in which robot manufacturers or related companies rent out or lease their products to customers as part of a wider cloud-based solution. The providers could maintain the robots and manage the databases storing information they collect. For the customer, this can mean lower costs, more flexibility to implement automation and greater responsiveness to industry changes.

RaaS platforms have been deployed in industries from manufacturing and logistics to agriculture and healthcare. One example of an RaaS provider is Fetch Robotics, a San Jose, California-based firm that provides what it calls “on-demand automation” in hours. Its turnkey platform consists of mobile robots that can move merchandise around or collect data autonomously. The units can be used to make warehouses more efficient. For instance, US logistics firm Ryder System recently worked with Fetch to

automate parts of its warehouses. With less worker time spent walking around retrieving inventory, Ryder reported a 25% increase in productivity and a 20% saving on operating costs.

No wonder, then, that market intelligence firm IDC has predicted that some 30% of commercial robotic applications will take the form of RaaS, which spares users some of the massive capital expenditures needed to buy robot systems, only to have to update them in the future.

“Services are recurrent revenue and are looked on favourably by both technology providers and the investment

**“Instead of buying a robot and having to deal with the initial setup, you will be able to just pay for a service”**

community,” said Dan Kara, practice director for robotics at research firm ABI Research, in an interview with ZDNet. “Like the technology sector at large, suppliers of robotics technologies have adopted robotics-as-a-service business models, and this trend is accelerating.”



The idea has the potential to effect massive change. In the UK, Small Robot Company is an agri-tech startup consisting of farmers who are developing small robots to replace tractors. Its “farming-as-a-service” model prompts robots to attend only to plants that require feeding and spraying. The company says it can simultaneously offer better yields and use less chemicals, promising farmers up to 40% more revenues while lowering costs by up to 60%.

In France, meanwhile, a robotics startup called Niryo developed a 3D printed, 6-axis robot arm for researchers and schools. It’s now building a robot aimed at optimising workloads for small business owners.

“Instead of buying a robot and having to deal with the initial setup, you will be able to just pay for a service as you go without worrying too much,” Niryo CTO Edouard Renard was quoted as saying in a blog by Dell Technologies. “This will remove a huge barrier, and once some businesses start to get massive results, well, you can expect everyone else to want to get a RaaS solution.” ●



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# BINO beckons

An overview of the potential outcomes for Brexit

We are in the end game of Brexit, but no one knows what the UK's departure from the EU will actually look like.

Business leaders fear that a no-deal Brexit on 29 March will severely disrupt their supply and distribution chains, and they are stockpiling. Newspaper editorials mutter darkly about the risk of civil disorder. Confidence in the UK by overseas investors, such as Japanese carmakers, has been severely shaken.

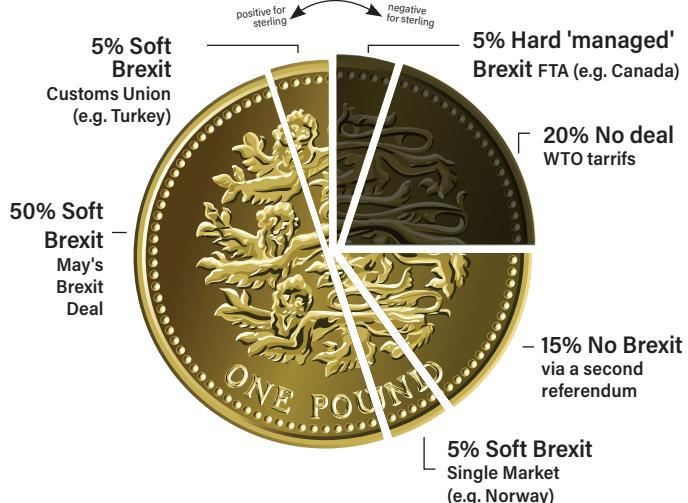
But what are the potential outcomes for Brexit? I favour a scenario best described as BINO.

First, a second referendum is unlikely. I estimate only a 15% chance of it happening. It would be seen by many as the liberal elite refusing to accept a democratic decision and is likely to be even more socially and politically divisive than the first vote.

What of a no-deal scenario? A 20% chance. Theresa May will not want to go down in history as the prime minister who allowed the country to fall into economic and political chaos, but accidents can happen. Remember, a no-deal is the default option in the event of no agreement being reached between the UK and the EU.

A problem with May using the no-deal as a threat has been that hard-line Brexit MPs relish the idea of a no-deal, as it offers a clean break from the EU (in their analysis). They have found it easy to vote against her withdrawal agreement bill precisely because a no-deal is the alternative.

Few in Brussels believe that May will allow a no-deal, particularly given the lack of preparation in the UK for such an outcome.



So it is likely that the government will seek an extension to Article 50 to avoid a no-deal in late March. This would allow for continued negotiations with Parliament and the EU on the Irish backstop – an insurance policy that maintains an open border in Ireland.

The most likely Brexit outcome by far is that May's current withdrawal agreement bill is eventually passed by Parliament, probably after an Article 50 extension has been obtained, but with very modest face-saving tweaks to the Irish backstop. I estimate a 50% chance for this scenario.

Hard-line Brexiteers could fall into line because they fear that a further extension to Article 50 will reduce the country's appetite for Brexit, and so help create the atmosphere for a second referendum.

Even without the Irish backstop, May's deal looks like a soft Brexit and so should lead to a rally in sterling.

After all, while expressing a desire to leave the EU's customs union and the single market, there is a commitment to the EU to maintain similar regulatory standards. This paves the way for hassle-free exports, not just to the EU, but

to all countries that have a trade agreement with the EU, such as South Korea, Canada, Singapore and Japan.

Meanwhile, the Irish backstop commits the whole of the UK to remaining in the customs union, and Northern Ireland to staying in large sections of the single market. The backstop will be lifted only when a technological solution is found – to secure an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, while ensuring customs checks can be done.

Brexit has destabilised the UK economy and its politics. However, the good news is that its outcome may well lead to a loose but valuable association with the EU. Not as beneficial, though, as full membership.

This relatively benign outcome is being referred to as the BINO scenario, a term that Brexit supporters use – scathingly – to describe 'Brexit in name only'. ●

Tom Elliott is an international investment strategist with the deVere Group in London



# Building stability

Japan's reliable real estate market

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

After almost a decade of continuous growth, the real estate market across Asia is beginning to show signs of slowing, according to some analysts.

However, even as more developing markets are looking ahead cautiously, the same analysts point to Japan as a potentially safer bet. What is it about Japanese real estate that has earned the confidence of the market, and who is it attracting?

## COMING TO JAPAN

Japan appeals to a broad range of people and companies, and there are numerous businesses that cater to entrants of all levels. One example is **Clestra**, which focuses on serving larger businesses.

"Our typical customers are global companies willing to invest in setting up or expanding in Japan," explains Fernando Iglesias, representative director of Clestra. "We help them navigate their expectations and requirements by providing them with our extensive experience and multilingual and multicultural support. We decrease the burden on management and decision-makers while maintaining their global corporate standards."

**Asian Tigers Mobility** offers similar assistance to high-level employees and their families who have moved to Japan.

"Our typical client is an executive-level couple with two children, on assignment for three to five years, working for a Fortune 1000 company," says Andrew Olea, deputy managing director. "Everyone has different requirements, and our con-

sultants conduct an in-depth analysis to shortlist suitable properties. Living environment and area are key to a successful assignment, so it is important to choose the right home."

But owners of smaller businesses need not fret that there is no help for them, as businesses like **Servecorp** are here to help.

"Our 10,000-strong client base in Japan is made up mostly of SMEs, including many start-ups, as well as larger corporations that are setting up branch offices," says Olga Vlietstra, general manager. "We spent \$60 million in one year across our network to create dedicated and hot desk environments that complement our offices. And no-one else offers more secretarial, receptionist and IT support."

Securing a comfortable living space is essential to attracting top-level talent for your business.

"We assist anyone looking for residential properties in Japan, especially in Tokyo and its surrounds," says Shigeru Aoki, representative director of **Arkios**. "We do everything we can to deliver satisfaction



# "we ... deliver satisfaction through our extensive experience dealing with foreign clients"

through our extensive experience dealing with foreign clients and our ability to help navigate them through the complexities and differences of processes in Japan."

And, of course, moving can be a struggle for anyone — especially when you're coming from overseas — and so people often need assistance. Luckily, **Santa Fe Relocation** is one such relocation service provider.

"We primarily provide services for Fortune 500 companies, whose assignees are becoming increasingly exacting in the relocation process," says Jeremy Laughlin, business development manager. "Our experts work hard to maintain fruitful partnerships with our housing and serviced apartment partners to deliver the best possible properties in a highly competitive market."

## SAFETY AND STABILITY

Japan also enjoys a number of significant advantages compared to other Asian countries when it comes to desirability as a place to live. Arkios' Aoki cites the nation's stability as a key reason for its popularity: "Japan is a very safe country (with Tokyo as its remarkably clean capital), the quality of real estate is relatively high, and the market is stable, with no bubbles," he says. "This means it's easy to predict shifts in the market for property investment for the short- to mid-term."

Iglesias of Clestra agrees, and also notes the consistent levels of redevelopment.

"Japan has upscale facilities of a very high quality, and the real estate market still shows signs of stability," he says. "Furthermore, there is clear interest in the renovation and expansion of facilities such as those built on A-grade class buildings, principally in Tokyo. There's also interest from both government and the private sector in improving hubs like Shibuya."

Santa Fe Relocation's clients benefit from its diverse network of contacts.

"We work with several trusted housing partners and are wide-ranging in our approach to choosing appropriate housing for our clients," Laughlin explains. "We provide each client with a diverse number of options to give them the best possible results."

## ROOM TO GROW

Looking to the future, many expect Japan's good fortune in the real estate sphere to continue.

Citing the changing demands of employers, Vlietstra foresees opportunities for growth: "There is great demand for those who want both flexibility of space and a professional service offering," she states. "The flexible workspace revolution is truly underway in Japan and this has created a massive surge in demand for Servcorp's coworking spaces. We have expanded more in Japan than in any year over the past five years."

As businesses build on the success of Japan's real estate market, more and more will benefit from the care and dedication of those who work to make an office a workplace and a house a home.





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# Generous growth

Médecins Sans Frontières expands in Japan

At the core of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), often referred to in English as Doctors Without Borders, is "neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance", as stated in its charter. Our global NGO sends health professionals and support staff around the world to assist victims of disasters, armed conflict and other health emergencies, wherever and whoever they may be. And we have seen dramatic growth in Japan, particularly over the last five years.

**When we began** work here in 1992, we had just two full-time staff members and a few volunteers. Today we employ more than 70 people from diverse backgrounds and, last year, sent over 100 Japanese nationals on urgent medical humanitarian missions. For example, our surgeons helped patients injured in conflict zones in Iraq, our project coordinators in Yemen ensured all medical and non-medical staff were supported and organised, and our medical team leaders shaped our response to the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

We have also reacted to major disasters here in Japan. Japanese staff have provided professional psychological support for the survivors of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Last year, two mobile medical teams travelled to the flood-affected regions of western Japan to assess needs and provide on-the-spot medical consultations and care.

MSF has been able to engage with the government of Japan at increasingly high levels, always with the aim of improving our access to and level of care for patients. This includes requests to support our operations in Gaza where, last year, we treated and

assisted with rehabilitation for thousands of patients who had suffered gunshot wounds to their legs. We have also asked for assistance in our efforts to contain the ongoing Ebola virus outbreak and to treat infected patients in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For that emergency, we have directly engaged with Japanese pharmaceutical firms, as well as the government, to quickly send essential urgently-needed drugs.

The Japanese public has contributed significantly to MSF's international life-saving work. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of donors to MSF Japan more than trebled and our income grew from around ¥3 billion to ¥8.9 billion over the same period. This is a clear demonstration of the values that Japan shares with our organisation.

Yet there remains much more that we want to do together with Japanese society, including deepening an active humanitarian spirit, elevating the status of NGOs in Japan, and finding ways to surmount the ongoing challenges that we and other NPOs and NGOs face.

One challenge those of us in

this sector face is that, while we have grown as an organisation and are generating more income, we have seen that the expansion of our donor base in Japan begin to stall. However, we are encouraged by the fact that the public is ready to increase their support when meaningful humanitarian action is required.

Building trust is vital to establishing MSF in Japan as a principled NGO driven by humanitarian values and medical ethics. So, being transparent and accountable to our donors as to how and where their money is used is key to building that trust and to further grow the organisation.

All our activities in Japan are ultimately centred on improving the health of our patients

**All our activities in Japan are ultimately centred on improving the health of our patients across the world**

across the world. We firmly believe that, by fostering a deeper understanding of humanitarian principles in the general public in Japan, we will not only energise existing supporters, attract new ones and engage key stakeholders, but also raise the attention paid to, and professionalism of, the NGO sector here. This will encourage Japanese society to contribute even more to international humanitarian missions. ●

Jeremie Bodin is general director of Médecins Sans Frontières.



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**"I found raising a family is like a real estate business. If you maintain and manage it well, it gives you joy and good returns."**

*Shigeru Aoki, Representative Director of Arkios*

# Join & Support

*EBC members can not only learn about important changes taking place in Japan, but also play a critical role in influencing change themselves.*

To join the EBC visit [www.ebc-jp.com](http://www.ebc-jp.com)

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ON THE GREEN

TEXT BY FRED VARCOE

# Bubbling over

## Remnants of the bubble years remain for golfers

You don't have to travel far around the golf courses of Japan to find evidence that developers once spent insane amounts of money on projects with opulent designs. Many of these haven't survived, but there are still plenty of monuments to the bubble years (1986–1991) to put a smile on long-time golfers' faces. And it wasn't only extravagant clubhouses they built. Hotels on and near great golf courses were also subject to the affluent golfer's dreams. Here are just a few places worth staying and playing.

### BELLE SELVA RESORT, CHIBA

In the lobby of the, frankly, over-the-top clubhouse, you will find not one but two glass-fronted elevators to whisk you up to the third- and fourth-floor hotel rooms, which range from large to palatial. It hosts an excellent course with three nines and a men's outdoor bath that overlooks the course.

### A-BRAND HOTEL, HOKKAIDO

Maybe as near as you'll get to finding a Gleneagles-style hotel in Japan, the curiously named A-Brand Hotel is built like a castle, and the golf course's bunkers "will make

you think you're in Scotland", according to its website. If you'd like an alternative to the hotel, try staying in one of their attractive log cabins running down one of the fairways.

### NIPPONDAIRA HOTEL, SHIZUOKA

Designed according to the concept of "a museum of scenic beauty", this monumental hotel – with stone artwork by sculptor Masatoshi Izumi – is beautifully placed high in a park overlooking Nihondaira Golf Club, the sea and Mt. Fuji. The larger rooms have marble-topped bar counters, balconies and a lounge area next to broad windows.

### KATSURAGI GOLF CLUB AND KATSURAGI KITANOMARU, SHIZUOKA

If the 36-hole Katsuragi Golf Club, designed by master architect Seiichi Inoue, doesn't win you over, the stunning neo-classical beauty of the Katsuragi Kitanomaru hotel in the hills north of the city of Kakegawa certainly will. The hotel is built like a samurai's mansion, with its huge, old beams, polished floors and large wooden doors and gateways – and it even has a moat.

### NEMU RESORT, MIE

The Nemu Resort and Golf Course comes close to rivalling Izu's Kawana Resort for a spectacular setting, built on 740 acres in scenic Ago Bay and surrounded by Ise-shima



© A-BRAND HOTEL, HOKKAIDO

National Park. The hotel offers stunning rooms, each with a bed set on a raised platform that allows guests to look out through bay windows over the countryside, while the onsen are made of marble-topped stone. There's even a marina where you can park your boat.

### INTERNATIONAL GOLF RESORT KYOCERA, KAGOSHIMA

With a pool complex that looks like an alien spaceship, the hilltop hotel offers breathtaking views of the surrounding hills and the golf course, which has hosted the Kyocera Ladies Open. The resort has indoor and outdoor hot springs and even a full-size soccer pitch in case you need a change from golf.

### THE RITZ-CARLTON, OKINAWA

It's hard to top Okinawa for golf resorts, and the curiously designed Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Nago, with its rooftop pool and resort trappings, is among the best. It's situated at Kise Country Club in the beautiful Yanbaru Forest, and the course hosts nine woodland and nine ocean holes.

### THE SHIGIRA, OKINAWA

The Shigira Resort on Miyako Island does have hotel accommodation, but if you're looking to really pamper yourself, you should opt for the private villas – sandwiched between Shigira Bay Country Club and the sea – with a pool, sauna, hot tub and even a butler.

It's reassuring to know that the glory days of golf in the bubble era are still alive. ●



© THE RITZ-CARLTON, OKINAWA

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Minimum legal drinking age: 20 years



CELLAR NOTES

TEXT BY ALLISON BETTIN

# Buried treasure

## A look at Europe's grand wine cellars

Not all wine cellars are created equal. Europe's rich history of culture, cuisine, and architecture has created the perfect setting for some of the world's most stunning wine cellars — from the iconic, to the innovative.

### THE WORLD'S LARGEST

One might imagine that the world's largest wine cellar would be some catacomb in Italy, with crumbling stone walls, dating back to the Roman Empire. But according to the Guinness Book of World Records, the wine-obsessed country of Moldova, sandwiched between the Ukraine and Romania, is home to the reigning champion. The converted limestone mine, called Mileștii Mici — and which shares its name with a commune and winery aboveground — is made up of 200 kilometres of underground tunnels that house nearly two million bottles of wine. Visitors are led by guides, often by car, through the subterranean vaults, past its picturesque waterfall, into a tasting room where guests can try the winery's own vintages.

### FOR THE GOURMET

An old convent may be the last place one would look for a world-class meal and a quality glass of wine. But in the UNESCO World Heritage city of Evora — part of Portugal's famed Alentejo wine region — sits the five-starred Convento do Espinheiro



Historic Hotel & Spa and its famed wine-cellar restaurant Divinus. Founded in the 15th century, the convent was once favoured by the devout kings of Portugal, who often stayed overnight in the building's modest rooms during their travels. The ancient subterranean cellars, once used by monks, are now home to Divinus, which cooks up creative dishes such as roasted stingray with caramelised cauliflower, morel mushrooms, onion and chard.

### ELEGANT AND INNOVATIVE

It's only natural that one of the world's premier wineries would team up with one of its finest architects. In 2010, that's exactly what hap-

pened with Château Margaux and Sir Norman Foster — arguably Britain's most well-known architect — when he visited the Bordeaux winery one autumn day for lunch. The estate's owner, Corinne Mentzelopoulos, was looking to incorporate an R&D facility onsite, as well as additional fermenting tanks, an expanded cellar and reception room for guests.

Five years later, the Château introduced Nouveau Chai, an extension of the 19th century structure,

with a pitched, tiled roof (which blends with the existing structures), tree-like columns, and a flexible structure with walls that can be removed for future expansion. Beneath the nearby vines lies the Vinothèque, the estate's sleek 70-metre-long wine cellar, made of concrete that naturally regulates bottle temperatures. It's a cellar that houses some of Château Margaux's most precious bottles, and therefore some of the finest in the world. ●

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DOWN TIME

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT



## Yuichi Yano

**Company:** Ottobock Japan K.K.**Title:** Prosthetics Business Manager, Chairman of the Japan Assistive Products Association Prosthetics & Orthotics Committee**Originally from:** Tokyo, Japan**Length of time spent overseas:** I lived in New York for two years.

**"I used to play for the United States Tennis Association in New York"**



## Neil Slater

**Company:** Aberdeen Standard Investments (Japan) Limited**Title:** CEO & Representative Director**Originally from:** Edinburgh, United Kingdom**Time in Japan:** Three and a half years

**"Cats or dogs? Neither. I prefer robots."**

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

Hashimoto in Edogawabashi for their grilled eel on rice and eel liver soup.

**What do you do to stay in shape?**

I play tennis and swim.

**Name a favourite movie:**

*Extraordinary Measures*. It's based on the true story of John and Aileen Crowley, whose children have Pompe disease.

**Favourite musician:** Stanislav Bunin, the Russian pianist.**Favourite album:** *11th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition* by Stanislav Bunin.**Favourite TV show:** Anything on the National Geographic channel.**Favourite book:** *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.**What's something a lot of people don't know about you?**

I used to play for the United States Tennis Association in New York, with a verified 4.5 rating (advanced).

**Cats or dogs?**

Dogs.

**Summer or winter?**

Summer.

**What's your ideal weekend?**

A game of tennis, then relaxing with my family.

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

I prefer to go home, take a quick hot bath, then have a cold beer with my wife.

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

I lived in Switzerland for more than six years during which time I got married (to a fellow Scot) and my children were born.

**Cats or dogs?**

Neither. I prefer robots.

**Summer or winter?**

Japan in the winter, Switzerland in the summer.

**What's your ideal weekend?**

Rise early, exercise and have a strong (freshly ground) espresso with a great breakfast. Then some family time, cooking, wine and the *FT Weekend*.

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

Home. I like to open a nice bottle of wine and share it with family and friends.



WORK PLACE

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT

PHOTO BY KAGEAKI SMITH



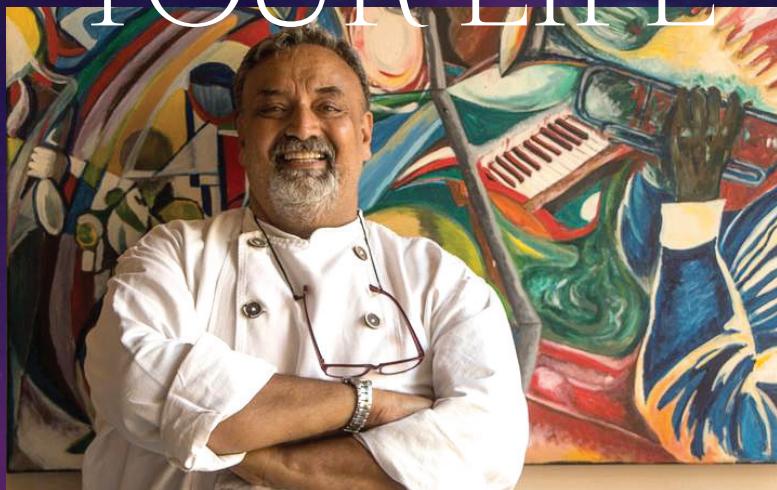
# MEES International School

## **EUFT VAN DEN BERG, PRINCIPAL**

Euft van den Berg, from the Netherlands, founded MEES International School as a place where children can be children.

“With new technology constantly being developed, the world is changing, and it is necessary to prepare children for the challenges ahead; different skills will be demanded from them than are demanded from us today,” says van den Berg. “At MEES, we encourage children to think independently in a creative, lively and flexible environment filled with music, art and technology. We strive to build children’s confidence and plant the seed for the enjoyment of learning.” ●

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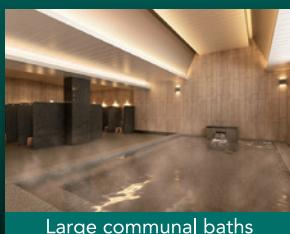


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