

THE WONDERS OF JAPAN AWAIT YOU

CONTENT BY THE WORLDFOLIO

DISCOVER JAPAN'S UNIQUE BLEND OF TRADITION, INNOVATION & HIDDEN TREASURES WITH OUR CURATED GUIDE – ENSURING YOUR STAY IS AS EXTRAORDINARY AS THE COUNTRY ITSELF. *By Bernard Thompson, Daniel de Bomford and Megah Bitang*

Japan is a land where contrasts don't compete. From neon-lit cities to silent shrines, the future hums beside the past. Every detail, from a calligraphy scroll to a sushi blade, tells a story. With nearly 37 million visitors last year, Japan continues to captivate with iconic sights and quiet moments: ramen in a lantern-lit alley, a snow-covered shrine, a countryside festival. In an age of rushed travel, Japan invites you to slow down and connect. Whether you seek cherry blossoms, hot springs, or culture, this guide is your compass to a country that transforms every traveler, one unforgettable moment at a time.

TIMELESS STAYS & FIVE-STAR STORIES

Japan's finest hotels channel both legacy and modernity, from sipping sake where royalty dined to a scientifically sound sleep, each stay draws upon Japan's cultural heritage and famed futurism.

A Modern Tribute to Japanese Elegance: Hotel The Celestine Kyoto Gion

For those seeking Japanese culture and omotenashi (hospitality), The Celestine Hotel Kyoto Gion delivers both. Located between the Kamo River and Higashiyama, it holds a Michelin Key and offers concierge-led tours to exclusive Kyoto sites and in-house tea ceremonies. Guests in the Yasaka Room enjoy authentic tea service by staff. "To provide guests with a genuine taste of Japan, we partner with renowned restaurants to offer high-quality, authentic dining experiences," says Mitsui Fudosan Hotel Manage-

ment Chairman Masaru Sasabe, which operates The Celestine Hotels. One example is the collaboration with Yasaka Endo, a 140-year-old Kyoto tempura restaurant, to serve fresh tempura even at breakfast.

A Royal Retreat Through Time: FUJIYA HOTEL

Nestled in the serene mountain town of Hakone, long revered as a retreat for travelers, FUJIYA HOTEL offers more than luxury: it offers legacy. Blending classic Meiji-era architecture with refined Japanese craftsmanship, the hotel has stood since 1878 as one of Japan's oldest and most beautifully preserved Western-style resorts. Surrounded by forested slopes, mineral-rich hot springs and the quiet hush of history, it evokes a rare calm. "The longer a building's history, the more stories it holds," says President Akira Ando. From dining in a Meiji-era imperial villa to golfing on grounds once reserved for royalty, every moment feels like a timeless escape.

Skytree Family Stays, Asakusa Days

For families seeking both luxury and location, MIMARU SUITES Tokyo Asakusa offers an unforgettable base to explore Tokyo. These spacious, high-end suites overlook the charming rooftops and alleyways of Tokyo's traditional *shitamachi* neighborhoods, offering a glimpse into daily life in old Edo. Just steps from the historic Senso-ji Temple and vibrant local markets, the hotel places guests in the heart of Asakusa's cultural tapestry. Guests seeking panoramic rooftop views of Tokyo Skytree and the Sumida River skyline can also explore the nearby MIMARU Tokyo Asakusa Station, another thoughtfully located property. Where

ever they stay, engaging with locals adds depth to every stroll and souvenir. "These interactions not only leave a lasting impression," explains President Hideki Fujioka, "but also foster mutual understanding and help guests appreciate the unique charm of each neighborhood a MIMARU hotel is in."

Sleep Smarter, Stay Greener

Looking for a stay that restores both body and planet? Super Hotel blends comfort with conscience, offering natural hot spring baths, deep sleep pajamas and organic breakfasts—all backed by science. Their pioneering "good sleep guarantee" even promises, "If a guest doesn't sleep well, we will refund their accommodation," says President Kensaku Yamamoto. With a philosophy rooted in "Natural, Organic and Smart," this award-winning chain proves that a restful night and responsible travel can go hand in hand.

Where Kobe's Future Checks In: Portopia Hotel

What does it mean to stay at the heart of a city that's always looked outward? Kobe is the city that introduced jazz to Japan, launched the nation's love for cinema and opened its port to the world. The Portopia Hotel is more than just a place to sleep. Built in the year of the Portopia '81 Expo, it stands on man-made Port Island as a symbol of progress and possibility. "It allows us to focus all our efforts on delivering an exceptional experience," says President Hitoshi Nakauchi. With panoramic views of land, sea and skyline, and a legacy of hosting emperors and global leaders, the hotel continues to shape Kobe's role



A Celestine Hotel staff member bows in welcome, embodying Japanese omotenashi.



Fuji Shibazakura Festival.



APPI Resort's snow-covered slopes frame the IHG hotels, offering ski-in/ski-out luxury in Japan's winter paradise.



Nachikatsuura Onsen Open Air Bath at Sunset.



Shigira Seven Miles Resort.



Teppanyaki KUSUNOKI.



The Fujiya Hotel French Course.



Wildcat Room, Hotel Grand Ciel Hanamaki.



Yomiruland.

as a key hub for the continued development of culture, business and international exchange.

INTO THE WILD: JAPAN'S NATURE & ONSEN ESCAPES

From mountain top onsens coated in volcanic mists to coastal sails and alpine sunrises, these journeys lose track of time, recharge and reconnect with nature, the Japan way.

Volcanic Views & Onsen Bliss: SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima

SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima offers

fers a luxurious gateway to southern Japan, where volcanoes, hot springs and samurai history converge. Overlooking the iconic Mount Sakurajima and Kinko Bay, the hotel blends traditional hospitality with modern comforts—boasting natural onsen baths, 13 restaurants and stunning panoramic views. "We hope that foreign tourists will come to experience the exceptional beauty and offerings that Kagoshima and our hotel have to offer," says President Ryuichi Yano. It's a hidden gem for travelers seeking authentic Kyushu charm.

Sail into Japan's Soul with SNK Ferry

Trade speed for serenity aboard Shin Nihonkai Ferry, where slow travel meets spectacular scenery. Cruise past rugged coastlines and tranquil seas while enjoying open-air baths, local cuisine and the rhythm of the waves. "Passengers can enjoy breathtaking sunrises and sunsets over the Sea of Japan, a truly special experience," says President Yasuo Iritani. With routes connecting Honshu, Hokkaido and beyond, it's a refreshing way to explore Japan's lesser-known regions, peacefully, beautifully and at your own pace.

Fall in Love with Nagano

Escape the crowds and discover Nagano’s hidden gem: Ikenotaira Hotel & Resort. Set on the shores of Lake Shirakaba, this year-round retreat blends adventure with authentic local charm: think powdery slopes, open-air hot springs, vibrant nightlife and soul-soothing wellness. It’s a gateway to Japan’s healthiest region, where long life meets deep relaxation. “Whether it’s for detox, stress relief, or simply to feel happy again, we want to provide an environment that supports their well-being,” says President Yoshihiro Yajima.

“Japan is a miraculous country—full of surprises, strangeness, and charm. From affordable sushi to Michelin-starred meals, quality is consistent. Our rich cultural heritage, heartfelt hospitality, and seamless blend of tradition and innovation create unforgettable experiences. Visitors feel safe, inspired, and immersed—whether in shrines, anime, or seasonal landscapes.”

Kimi Takura

President, HEISEI ENTERPRISE Inc.

Sleep Where Legends Walk:

KAMENOI HOTEL NACHI KATSUURA

Nestled along the sacred Kumano Kodo, wake up to sea-swept views and walk in the footsteps of pilgrims at KAMENOI HOTEL NACHI KATSUURA. This onsen retreat fuses tradition with indulgence: think open-air baths, tatami rooms and kaiseki dinners starring Nachi Katsuura Tuna and Wakayama Beef. “It’s real strength lies in its rich culture, deep history and exceptional local cuisine,” says Shunsuke Yamamoto, Chairman of ICONIA HOSPITALITY. Formerly Mystays Hotel Management. Iconia is rebranding to reflect its mission of creating iconic travel experiences and spotlighting destinations offering both heritage and heart. Whether seeking spiritual renewal or authenticity, this hidden gem invites you to slow down, savor and truly connect.

The Rhythm of Nature: KYUKAMURA IWATE-AMIHARIONSEN

Nestled in Towada-Hachimantai National Park near the base of Mt. Iwate, KYUKAMURA IWATE-AMIHARIONSEN is a gateway to the natural beauty of northern Tohoku. Wake up to crisp mountain air and panoramic views of Hachimantai’s highlands, then unwind in a serene onsen fed by natural hot springs. With each season painting the landscape anew—from fresh spring greenery to vibrant autumn leaves and snowy winter scenes—this tranquil retreat invites you to experience the changing rhythm of Japan’s natural wonders. This is the rhythm of nature at a KYUKAMURA Hotel: untamed, timeless, unforgettable. “One of our greatest strengths lies in offering comfortable accommodations amidst Japan’s beautiful natural environments,” says President Akira Onodera. At KYUKAMURA IWATE-AMIHARIONSEN, you don’t just visit nature, you live inside its breath.

CULTURE THAT STAYS WITH YOU

In Japan, culture lives and breathes in alleyways, poems, flavors and festivals. These moments become the memories that stay with you long after the journey ends.

A Literary Escape into Miyazawa’s Imagination in Hanamaki

Hotel Grand Ciel Hanamaki is a portal into the poetic universe of Kenji Miyazawa. In the heart of Iwate’s Hanamaki, guests can sleep beneath starry ceilings in the Galaxy Room or dine alongside the whimsy of the Wildcat Room, each suite inspired by Miyazawa’s beloved tales. A mineral cave-style bath and a breakfast brimming with local flavors awaken all the senses. “It’s about storytelling that’s grounded in what already exists—the local history, culture, people and natural landscape,” says RIO HOTELS President Saki Usuki. A must for dreamers and literary explorers—especially those who find wonder in stories where forests breathe, stars whisper and the boundary between nature and magic quietly dissolves.



View from Mimaru Asakusa Station of Tokyo Skytree and Asahi Flame rising above the Sumida River.



HEISEI ENTERPRISE bus tour.



Ikenotaira Hotel Hot Spring.



Sorafune Kobe Observation Deck.



KYUKAMURA IWATE-AMIHARIONSEN.



Relax in a Super Hotel Onsen.



Shin Nihonkai Ferry.

Taste, Travel and True Discovery

Skip the crowds and dive into the soul of Japan with HEISEI ENTERPRISE. From local feasts to hands-on cultural encounters, this tour operator turns ordinary travel into something unforgettable. Their secret? Going beyond the expected to reveal the heart of Japan’s regions. “We want Heisei Enterprise to be known globally as the company that makes Japan’s local treasures truly accessible,” says President Kimi Takura. If seeing is believing, this is where your real Japan journey begins.

THRILL, WONDER & ICONIC VIEWS

Whether chasing thrills under cherry blossoms or cruising past Mount Fuji, Japan’s landscapes blend nature, adventure and wonder. Hold on tight—or pause to take it all in.

Miyako Island: Designed for Discovery

Crystal waters, endless stars and white-sand beaches: Miyako Island is a dream manifested. Long untouched, Miyako now shines as a model of mindful tourism thanks to UNIMAT’s pioneering spirit. Pristine beaches meet purpose-built luxury in resorts like Shigira, where architecture enhances rather than disturbs the view. Visitors can choose from oceanfront suites to family-friendly retreats, all-natural beauty immersed. With every stay, UNIMAT offers comfort, stories and glimpses of a paradise refund. “We’re creating a place where people live, visit and fall in love with Miyako,” says President Yoji Takahashi. The Island is ready. The only thing missing is you.

Yomiuriland: Where Tokyo’s Thrills Meet Timeless Wonder

Yomiuriland isn’t just a theme park. It’s where childhood wonder comes to life. Set in the scenic hills of Tama, Tokyo, it blends heart-racing coasters, cherry blossoms and seasonal fun. Next door, visitors can relax in a tranquil onsen at Hana-Biyori, a botanical garden adjacent to the park. Soon, it will welcome PokéPark KANTO, bringing Pokémon magic to

the area. And just nearby, the state-of-the-art sports village Tokyo Giants Town opened this spring, offering fans a new way to experience baseball. Visitors can also explore local gems with a smart digital map. “Yomiuriland is a place that aspires to deliver the world’s best hospitality,” says President Mizoguchi—something that shows in every detail.

Fuji Kyuko: Your Gateway to the Magic of Mount Fuji

With Mount Fuji as its backdrop, Fuji Kyuko brings Japan’s most iconic landmark to life. From Guinness World Record-class thrill rides at Fuji-Q Highland to serene boat rides across the Fuji Five Lakes, every moment is designed to awe. Stay at Hotel Mount Fuji or Highland Resort for front-row views, “a place where the grandeur of Mount Fuji’s nature is felt firsthand,” says President Koichiro Horiuchi. Trains, buses, even glamping: all connect visitors to Fuji’s magic while protecting its natural beauty for generations to come.

APPI Resort: World-Class Slopes Off the Beaten Path

Japan ranks among the snowiest places in the world and is home to the exceptional ski slopes of APPI Resort, operated by Iwate Hotel and Resort. Nestled in the scenic mountains of Hachimantai, Iwate Prefecture, this hidden gem is blessed with high-quality, dry powder snow that falls consistently throughout the season. “Japan is globally recognized for its powder snow and some of the best can be found in the north — particularly in places like Niseko and APPI,” says President Susanna Wong.

From shimmering cityscapes to tranquil mountain paths, Japan unfolds as a place of endless layers, where stillness carries meaning and every detail speaks volumes. Whether soaking in a hot spring, strolling along a temple path or savoring local flavors, each experience invites presence over pace. This is travel that lingers in the heart and stirs the imagination. The only question left is: What will Japan awaken in you?

FUJI KYUKO OPENS THE DOOR TO MOUNT FUJI EXPERIENCES

FUJI KYUKO IS THE GATEWAY TO THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN, PROVIDING TRANSPORT, ACCOMMODATION AND EXPERIENCES. *By Daniel de Bomford, Arthur Menkes and Cian O'Neill*

Time eternal has the sacred Mount Fuji stand watch over the country like a silent sentinel. Few sights are as iconic and draw as much a sense of awe and wonder as the mountain's symmetrical silhouette. Etched into the global imagination, it is instantly recognizable, endlessly photographed—Japan's soul etched in stone.

For nearly a century, Fuji Kyuko has made it its mission to share the mountain's magic with the world. President

Koichiro Horiuchi describes the UNESCO Cultural Heritage site as one of the most captivating and enchanting tourist destinations. "It's difficult to put the experience into words, but standing before Mount Fuji allows you to feel the awe and grandeur of nature firsthand," he says.

BENEATH MOUNT FUJI: DISCOVERING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RICHNESS

While Mount Fuji attracts many visi-

tors, the Fuji Five Lakes—named by Fuji Kyuko's founder and located at the foot of the mountain are also a major draw. The area includes Yamanaka, Kawaguchi, Saiko, Shōji and Motosu lakes and has evolved into a tourism hub for the region. "The allure of Mount Fuji remains timeless, offering a view that captivates from every angle," Horiuchi says. The mountain presents different faces over the course of the day, providing a fresh experience with each visit.

CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES AND EXPERIENCES

When the company was founded in 1926, it began developing railway infrastructure to connect the region and support its growth. This was complemented by rapid buses, following the construction of highways. To this day, Horiuchi says the company has two core missions: provide daily transportation within the locale and ensure accessibility between the areas for both domestic and foreign tourists. To this end, Fuji Kyuko's transportation services include buses, trains, taxis and even boats—all of which enhance the experience and ease of travel for both residents and visitors. However, the company has expanded beyond transportation. It operates leisure facilities,



including amusement parks and shopping centers, connecting the different aspects of the region into an experience greater than the sum of its parts. "Through collaboration and information sharing, we continuously create new value, making the area an even more attractive destination," Horiuchi explains. He emphasizes the need to balance and strengthen both transportation and tourism capabilities. "I aim to make the journey itself an attraction, ensuring that traveling within the Mount Fuji region is as enjoyable and memorable as the destination itself," he says. Most recently, the company has been exploring introducing a luxury line, diversifying and elevating its offerings.

ADORNING MOUNT FUJI WITH NECKLACES

Fuji Kyuko aims to make each destination a standalone experience without relying solely on the beauty of the mountain; instead, that view elevates the experience from exceptional to unparalleled. Horiuchi explains, "This reflects the company's founding spirit: to share Mount Fuji with the world by creating unique, one-of-a-kind experiences that leave people with lasting memories and a personal connection

to the mountain." From the first drop of its Fuji-Q Highland roller coaster to a relaxing day on the golf green, the stunning view of Mount Fuji enhances the experience. Even the train windows are designed with the view in mind, ensuring that each journey is memorable. The company also operates accommodation facilities to facilitate a variety of experiences and ensure that guests can fully immerse themselves in the area's charm. These facilities include Hotel Mount Fuji and the Highland Resort, which offer incredible mountain views, while its glamping facilities offer comfortable exploration experiences. Like jewels on a necklace, Fuji Kyuko seamlessly links the experiences—particularly with its transport network—surrounding Mount Fuji in harmony with nature and offering a refined journey.

PRESERVING A NATIONAL TREASURE THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Looking back on our 99-year history, we have always faced the challenge of balancing environmental protection with environmental utilization," Horiuchi says. Striking a balance between developing the area to facilitate tourism and economic growth while also protecting the

environment has been at the center of Fuji Kyuko's efforts since its inception. Fuji-Q Highland initially sat on a barren lava field with no trees before the company constructed the park, transporting soil to the area and planting trees. "We see it as our responsibility to protect and care for Mount Fuji's natural surroundings," he states. The company is an early adopter of electrified buses and is dedicated to tree planting and preservation efforts.

As Mount Fuji continues to watch over Japan in its silent vigil, Fuji Kyuko continues to support the surrounding region environmentally and economically. The interconnection of its services offers visitors an experience that can't be replicated at the feet of the giant, living up to its mission of opening up the iconic site to the world. "This mission has guided us from the very beginning and will continue to do so for the next 100 years."

Koichiro Horiuchi,
President,
FUJI KYUKO CO., LTD.
www.fujikyuko.co.jp/en



DISCOVER THE CELESTINE HOTELS: WHERE TRADITION MEETS LUXURY

THE CELESTINE HOTELS EMBODY THE TRUE ESSENCE OF JAPANESE HOSPITALITY BY SEAMLESSLY BLENDING TRADITIONAL ELEGANCE WITH MODERN LUXURY. FROM THE HISTORIC GION DISTRICT OF KYOTO TO THE VIBRANT HEART OF TOKYO, EACH PROPERTY OFFERS A UNIQUE AND IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE TAILORED TO THE SOPHISTICATED TRAVELER.
By Daniel de Bomford and Antoine Azoulay



Finding cultural authenticity while travelling in luxury is the ultimate privilege. Elegance and comfort don't shield you from culture; instead, they draw you in, and Japan is the paragon of this blend of authenticity and refinement. Its spirit of hospitality, known as *omotenashi*, is defined by attention to detail, from the perfectly placed slippers to the artfully curated decor.

The Celestine Hotels epitomize this refined spirit by harmoniously integrating deep cultural roots with contemporary luxury. With hotels in Kyoto's historic Gion, Tokyo's renowned Ginza district, and near the Tokyo Tower in Shiba, Celestine Hotels is on the doorstep of Japan's storied history and contemporary soul. The architecture reflects this blend, uniting sleek luxury with traditional Japanese aesthetics. Guests can enjoy a home-like sense of comfort while indulging in local traditions and flavors, all delivered with personalized hospitality.

Chairman of Mitsui Fudosan Hotel Management Masaru Sasabe explains: "This level of meticulous service reflects the heart of Japanese *omotenashi*, and resonates deeply with both international and domestic guests."

Hotel The Celestine Gion was awarded the Michelin Key in 2024, recognized for its unique blend of luxury and traditional ryokan-style hospitality. Seasonal flowers greet guests with warmth, creating a soothing and elegant atmosphere for an unforgettable stay. The concierge service can arrange guided tours of historical sites and local ceremonies. "At Hotel The Celestine Kyoto Gion, we offer exclusive guided tours, including hidden alleyway explorations that reveal a different side of Kyoto," says Sasabe. Within walking distance of many cultural landmarks, guests can fully experience Kyoto's rich heritage. The hotel also hosts traditional Japanese tea ceremonies in the lobby, offering a cultural immersion right on-site.

Its restaurant, Yasaka Endo, boasts a 140-year history and can be enjoyed at breakfast and dinner. Guests can enjoy freshly made tempura, a signature of Kyoto's culinary tradition, cooked before their eyes. Complimentary drinks and light snacks are available in the lounge, and facilities like the garden and public bath reflect the hotel's dedication to thoughtful, tailored service.

In Tokyo, Hotel The Celestine Ginza sits in a prime location, in the heart of luxury fashion and contemporary culture. The interiors, with their sophisticated earth tones and golden accents, offer a peaceful retreat amidst the city buzz. The rooftop restaurant and bar provide a romantic setting with panoramic views of Tokyo Tower. It's a favored destination for discerning guests seeking one-of-a-kind experiences.

Meanwhile, Hotel The Celestine Tokyo Shiba invites visitors to enjoy both the natural and historical surroundings. Guests can take a stroll through the nearby Shiba Park, visit the historic Zojoji Temple dating back to the Edo period, or ascend Tokyo Tower for a stunning view of the skyline. The hotel offers a 24-hour guest lounge and patio where visitors can enjoy complimentary sparkling wine and refreshments at certain times of the day. Aromatherapy treatments in the salon provide deep relaxation for body and mind.

At The Celestine Hotels, luxury is deeply entwined with respect for authentic culture, elevating every aspect of the guest experience. Comfort deepens the connection between traveler and host, and every refined detail invites guests into the timeless soul of Japanese culture.

MITSUI FUDOSAN GROUP
THE CELESTINE HOTELS
www.celestinehotels.jp/en/kyoto-gion



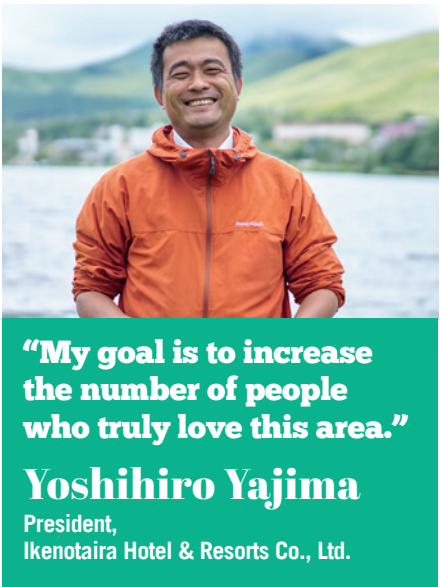
EXPERIENCE NAGANO CULTURE AT IKENOTAIRA

SHOWCASING THE ENCHANTING BEAUTY OF LAKE SHIRAKABA. *By Daniel de Bomford, Cian O'Neill and Paul Mannion*

Culture and community are inseparable. When tourists can integrate into the local community and experience authentic culture, their journeys are elevated. For Ikenotaira Hotel & Resort President Yoshihiro Yajima, nourishing the local community goes hand in hand with enriching visitors' experiences. The resort is based on the picturesque Lake Shirakaba in the Nagano Prefecture and offers year-round entertainment for travelers from around the world.

Yajima emphasizes the attractiveness of regional tourism in Japan and says promotion remains a challenge. "Many people still associate Japanese culture exclusively with places like Tokyo and Kyoto, but in reality, Japan's regional areas offer rich diversity and unique characteristics that go far beyond what those cities represent," he says. To attract tourists, he explains that there needs to be a balance between culture and "content", and the resort has developed experiences around skiing, hot springs, and a lively nightlife.

The resort is currently enjoying positive word-of-mouth endorsements from its customers, who tend to recommend the resort to families with young children, aligning with its offerings. Yajima says that Ikenotaira has developed experiences around skiing, hot springs, and a lively nightlife; its slopes are designed to be easier than average, leaving a positive impression on young skiers. "Combined with the large number of sunny days we enjoy, this creates an environment where children feel safe and unafraid to try



"My goal is to increase the number of people who truly love this area."

Yoshihiro Yajima

President,
Ikenotaira Hotel & Resorts Co., Ltd.



Ikenotaira Hotel & Resorts



www.shirakabaresort.jp/english

skiing," he explains. The resort is also targeting Western families,

Yajima's life mission is to develop Nagano and Lake Shirakaba, increase the number of people who truly love the area and grow the area into a thriving community. With student numbers increasing in schools and his observations of employee families settling in the area, Yajima sees how closely the regional revitalization efforts are entwined with tourism. The resort is providing experiences for those who are drawn to culturally richer, community-oriented lifestyles.



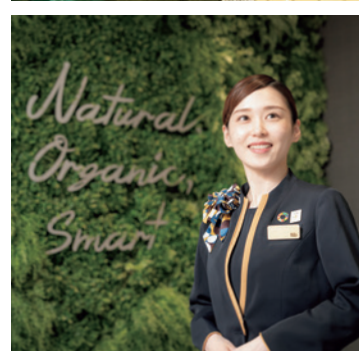
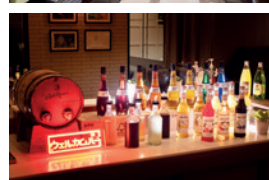
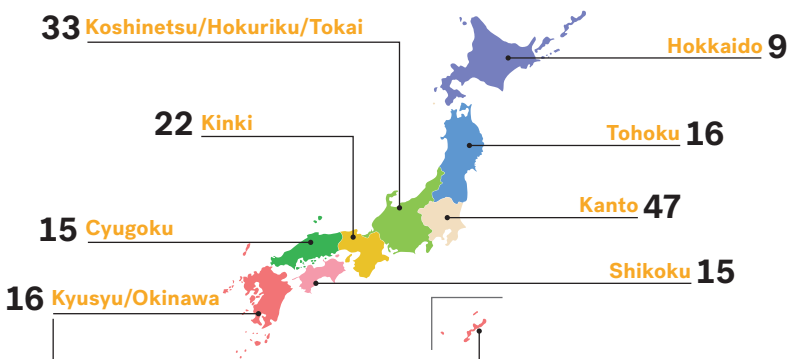
"Ultimately, I want to invite people from all corners of the globe to experience our hotel and resort, and to fall in love with this special place, just as we have."

Branch Hotels (As of January 1st, 2025)

Domestic : 173 Overseas : 1

★1 Overseas (Yangon, Myanmar)

★★Hanoi, Vietnam Hotel scheduled to open in spring 2026



SUPER HOTEL JAPAN REDEFINES 21ST CENTURY COMFORT WITH SMART, SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE STAYS

CONSCIENTIOUS TRAVELERS WHO PRIZE COMFORT AND SUSTAINABILITY ARE CHOOSING SUPER HOTEL FOR ITS CO₂ NET-ZERO STAY, RESEARCH-BACKED SMART STAYS ACROSS OVER 170 LOCATIONS.

By Daniel de Bomford, Cian O'Neill and Paul Mannion



"Our vision is to build a 21st-century hotel—one that minimizes environmental impact and requires fewer resources."

Kensaku Yamamoto
President, Super Hotel Co., Ltd.

SUPERHOTEL



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In an increasingly mobile world, accommodation competition is fiercer and hospitality operators must identify what makes a 21st-century hotel. Everything from the fragrance of the ingredients at breakfast, teasing the senses, to the softness and texture of the linens that bring a superior night's sleep must be considered to elevate an experience. For Japan's Super Hotel, what started as business lodgings has evolved into a sustainability-conscious lifestyle experience, with a focus on scientifically backed comfort and customer satisfaction.

The chain of hotels has held the number one position on JD Power's customer satisfaction in the economy hotel category for ten consecutive years, and has been recently recognized by the JSCI for two years running. President Kensaku Yamamoto describes the brand concept as "Natural, Organic and Smart," which reflects the company's values and resonates with guests. It leverages research-backed amenities such as ionized water, deep sleep pajamas and natural hot spring baths and its own Sound Sleep Laboratory research center in collaboration with Osaka Metropolitan University. Yamamoto explains the hotel's 'good sleep guarantee system, "Even after the room exchange, a guest doesn't sleep well, we will refund their accommodation—something we believe is a first and unique initiative in the hotel industry." Furthermore, it empha-

sizes organic ingredients in its complimentary breakfasts and implemented an industry first "No-Key, No-Checkout" system.

A 21st-century hotel isn't just about smart amenities; customers value Super Hotel's sustainability initiatives, and its carbon offsetting, CO₂ Zero Stay, applies to all guests. Programs like its *ecohiiki* initiative reward guests for bringing their own toothbrush and the guests who decline daily housekeeping during their consecutive stays, thereby helping to reduce water consumption. Furthermore, all electricity is sourced from renewables or offset by non-fossil fuel certificates, and it has smashed through the Japanese government's net-zero by 2050 target 26 years early. "These initiatives have been acknowledged, and we were honored to be the first hotel recognized as an Eco First Company by Japan's Ministry of the Environment in 2011, and we are currently the sole hotel with Eco First certification," the President says.

In the wake of the pandemic, Super Hotel has successfully pivoted from a business to a lifestyle-oriented brand, reaching new customers and increasing occupancy. The company has found the answer for the 21st-century hotel: it is an environmentally conscious, people-centric experience. Super Hotel is proving to be the model for modern accommodation, incorporating comfort and conscientiousness to provide an unbeatable experience.

KAGOSHIMA HOSPITALITY BY SHIROYAMA HOTEL KAGOSHIMA

WITH PICTURESQUE NATURAL BEAUTY AND A CITY STEEPED IN HISTORY, SHIROYAMA HOTEL KAGOSHIMA SEEKS TO ELEVATE KAGOSHIMA AS A PREMIER DESTINATION. By Daniel de Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Arthur Menkes



"Our hotel's key strength lies in the stunning natural scenery surrounding us."

Ryuichi Yano
President,
SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima



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SHIROYAMA HOTEL
kagoshima



Club Executive Twin



Breakfast Buffet



Original Craft Beer



Open-air Hot spring

The most unforgettable discoveries often lie off the beaten path. Once overlooked by international travelers, Kagoshima, nestled at the foot of the active Sakurajima volcano, is a city where natural spectacle meets rich history. It's a place where the spirit of Saigo Takamori, the legendary 'last samurai,' still lingers; where imo shochu, a distilled sweet potato spirit, is cherished and served in the warm, lively atmosphere of *izakaya* that dot this vibrant Kyushu city.

It is because of this backdrop SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima President Ryuichi Yano says he has "high expectations" for inbound tourism. The company owns and operates SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima, situated atop Shiroyama Hill, which offers breathtaking panoramic views overlooking the city, the picturesque Sakurajima Island and the stunning Kinko Bay. The hotel boasts more than a dozen restaurants and an array of facilities such as gift shops, banquet halls and meeting rooms.

Natural attractions are a significant draw. SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima has natural hot springs, with waters drawn from more than 1000 meters beneath the earth. Yano describes Sakurajima Island and Ibusuki City, famous for its *sunamushi* warm sand baths,

as must-see, easily accessible destinations. Furthermore, the hotel's team of 150 chefs carefully sources local ingredients, allowing guests to enjoy a truly authentic experience.

As demographic challenges escalate, Yano is looking to grow the number of stays from inbound tourists. "Raising international awareness of our hotel is quite a challenge, so forming partnerships is essential," he explains. While the current goal is for foreign guests to be 30 percent of the hotel's visitors, Yano seeks to maximize the hotel's utilization and increase the proportion to 40 percent. To achieve this, the company employs increasingly diverse staff to assist foreign customers in their native languages, including English and Chinese. It also looks to integrate and revamp the AI Concierge on its website to improve usability for foreigners.

With government ambitions to increase inbound tourism numbers to 60 million by 2030, hotels like SHIROYAMA HOTEL kagoshima will play a vital role in attracting tourists into the regions and supporting their stays. "We hope that foreign tourists will come to experience the exceptional beauty and offerings that Kagoshima and our hotel have to offer," the President says.



STAY WHERE THE STORIES LIVE: RIO HOTELS BRINGS THE CHARM AND CULTURE OF JAPAN'S REGIONS TO LIFE

FROM DINOSAUR-THEMED HOTELS TO LOCAL GOURMET EXPERIENCES AND ROOMS INSPIRED BY THE ENCHANTING WORLD OF KENJI MIYAZAWA, RIO HOTELS HAS MADE “CONTENT TOURISM” A PILLAR OF ITS REGIONAL STRATEGY—THE RESULT? JAPANESE REGIONS HAVE NEVER SHONE BRIGHTER. *By Daniel de Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Antoine Azoulay*

Travelling overseas is an unforgettable, edifying experience, rich with new cultures, fresh perspectives and a human connection. It is this energy that Japan has tapped into. It is a hunger which led to nearly 37 million tourists in 2024 arriving onshore, seeking travel experiences where the ultra-modern and unique meets the deeply traditional. RIO HOTELS President Saki Usuki speaks to this, saying Japan's allure lies in its seamless blend of futuristic cities, breathtaking nature and timeless traditions. As Japan earmarks 60 million visitors by 2030, she speaks to how the company seeks to bridge the gap between regional locales and inbound visitors through novel, themed experiences.

Dino Dreams in Katsuyama

RIO HOTELS is rewriting the tourism playbook—one fossil-fueled adventure at a time—with the Dinosaur Hotel in Katsuyama, Fukui, home to the Fukui Prefectural Dinosaur Museum. Regarded as one of the top 3 dinosaur museums in the world, the hotel's immersive offerings are a perfect pairing, turning each stay into a

thrilling prehistoric adventure. “It's a one-of-a-kind opportunity for guests to stay connected to the excitement and imagination sparked by the museum visit,” Usuki says. Beyond dinosaurs, guests can enjoy the picturesque location, with panoramic views of lush green paddies in summer and soft snow-covered fields in winter. “The serene natural setting offers a perfect atmosphere for rest and relaxation, allowing guests to experience both wonder and tranquility in one stay,” she states.

A Poetic Escape in Hanamaki

With a public bath designed like a mineral cave and a breakfast buffet showcasing regional flavors, Iwate's Grand Ciel Hanamaki is a sensory retreat. But the true allure of this hotel lies in how it seamlessly blends comfort with culture and literary enchantment. In the heart of the hometown of famed Japanese poet Kenji Miyazawa, it invites Japanese literature fans to immerse themselves in one of the country's most iconic authors. Usuki describes the importance of this storytelling. “It's grounded in what already exists—the local history, culture, people and natural landscape.”

A Taste of Mie

With the rise of gastronomy tourism, RIO HOTELS is catering to food lovers and culinary professionals, offering immersive experiences centered on Japanese cuisine at gastronomy-themed locations like Hotel Tsu Center Palace. Local ingredients and recipes created in the prefecture are showcased, prepared using traditional fermentation methods. Usuki explains, “These content-rich experiences allow us to connect with a broader audience, attracting culturally curious guests and enthusiasts seeking more meaningful, niche-oriented stays.”

Bridging Worlds: Community, Culture, and the Future of Travel

With RIO HOTELS' focus on interfacing with local communities, Usuki sees the company playing a broader, more strategic role in the future as a trusted bridge between communities and visitors through stories and genuinely local experiences. “Storytelling is central to who we are—it's how we communicate the essence of each local area.”

RIOHOTELS

www.rio-hotels.co.jp/en



Rooms at Hotel Grand Ciel Hanamaki are inspired by poet Kenji Miyazawa's works



Katsuyama New Hotels brings dinosaurs to life



RIO HOTELS' menus are sourced from local ingredients

ICONIA HOSPITALITY: THE PERFECT TRAVEL PARTNER FOR A TRIP THROUGHOUT JAPAN

WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF HOTELS CATERING TO DIFFERENT PRICE POINTS AND A NATIONAL COVERAGE SPANNING FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF HOKKAIDO TO THE BEACHES OF OKINAWA, ICONIA HOSPITALITY IS QUICKLY BECOMING THE GO-TO BRAND FOR THOSE SEEKING TO DISCOVER THE WONDERS OF JAPAN. *By Daniel de Bomford, Cian O'Neill and Antoine Azoulay*

To truly experience Japan's storied hospitality, one must step into a *ryokan*—a world where every gesture is deliberate, every detail considered, and guests are treated like honored family. ICONIA HOSPITALITY blends timeless tradition with modern comfort to offer travelers and channels this essence of *omotenashi* across its hotel portfolio, creating a deeply memorable experience.

Formerly MYSTAYS, ICONIA HOSPITALITY has rebranded to better reflect its goals, creating facilities that become regional “icons” and provide “iconic” experiences that leave lasting memories for visitors. The company's strategy of acquiring properties across Japan, bringing them to modern standards and finding operational efficiencies has helped create a remarkably diverse portfolio of 179 properties. Chairman Shunsuke Yamamoto says ICONIA HOSPITALITY encourages longer stays in its locations while enhancing front desk reception services and promoting tourism-friendly local experiences. “By staying more than one night per destination, guests can travel more comfortably without constantly moving luggage, while having more time to explore the local area, engage with the culture and dine at local restaurants, contributing more to regional economies,” he says.

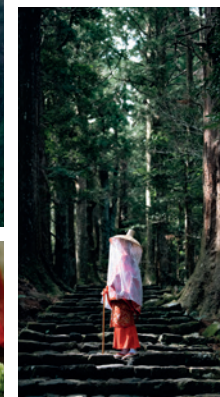
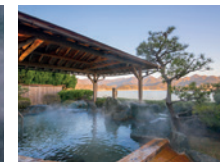
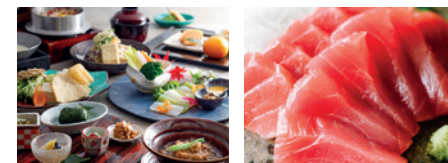
One of its recent acquisitions, Kamenoi Hotels, started with

a single location in Beppu, Kyushu, and has since expanded to include over 40 locations, from *ryokan* to modern lodges. Kamenoi acquired 30 properties from Japan Post, primarily onsen

identity not only establishes a consistent level of quality but also encourages repeat stays, allowing guests to explore Japan more deeply through the Kamenoi network,” he says.

ated with modern luxuries and featuring picturesque views of the Kumano Nada Sea stretching over the horizon. Guests can enjoy kaiseki made from local ingredients like the famous Nachi Katsuura Tuna—peerless in taste and freshness, the globally renowned Wakayama Beef or the traditional cuisine of Buddhist monks. The hotel connects its guests with local activities such as Kumano Kodo guided walks and Zazen experiences—where guests can learn basic Zen techniques, allowing them to experience the deep regional culture authentically. Before it was acquired and brought into the Kamenoi Hotel brand, KAMENOI HOTEL NACHI KATSUURA focused primarily on domestic visitors. “This kind of exclusive local experience is exactly what we are working to introduce to international travelers, helping them connect with authentic regional flavors and traditions,” Yamamoto says.

ICONIA HOSPITALITY bridges the traditional spirit of Japanese hospitality with contemporary comfort, curating thoughtful, memorable guest experiences across its diverse properties. By thoughtfully renovating and managing regional hotels such as Kamenoi, the company preserves Japan's cultural authenticity, offers deeper connections with local traditions and makes the rich heritage and hospitality of Japan accessible to travelers from around the world.



EXPLORE THE SCENIC ROUTE ACROSS JAPAN WITH SHIN NIHONKAI FERRY

SEE JAPAN FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE—CRUISE PAST RUGGED COASTLINES, SERENE SEAS AND BREATHTAKING SUNSETS ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THE COUNTRY’S NATURAL BEAUTY. *By Daniel de Bomford, Cian O'Neill and Paul Mannion*

“Nature is an essential part of our travel experience—something that resonates with travelers worldwide. From our vessels, passengers can enjoy breathtaking sunrises and sunsets over the Sea of Japan, a truly special experience.”

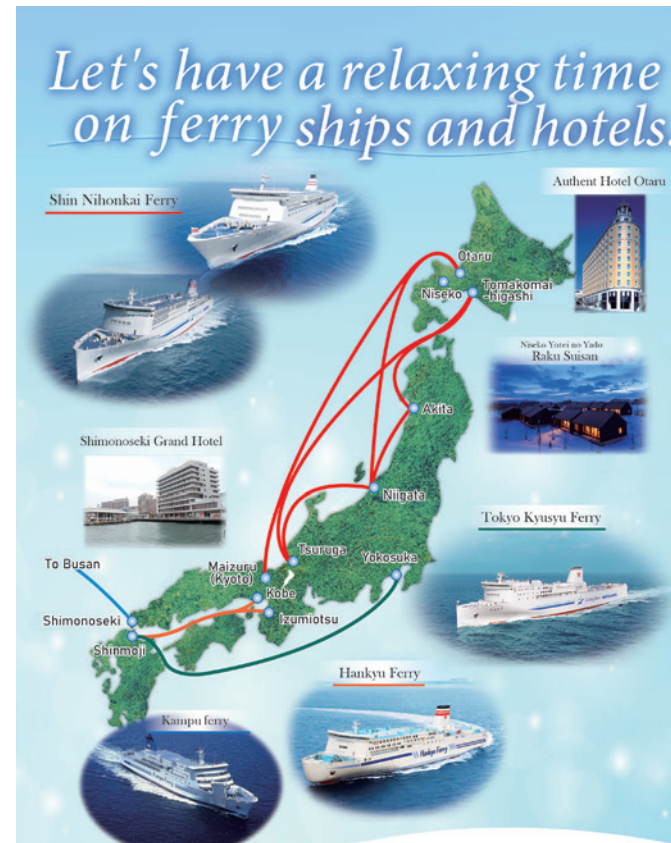
Yasuo Iritani,
President & CEO,
Shin Nihonkai Ferry Co., Ltd.



The beautiful blue ocean stretches across the horizon, and the fresh sea breeze carries a pleasing salty scent. There are many ways to travel Japan, but nothing compares to ferries and the feeling of relaxation in the rich embrace of nature. Shin Nihonkai (SNK) offers travelers the opportunity to experience the tranquility of Japan as they travel the country. President and CEO Yasuo Iritani says that nature is an essential part of the travel experience. “The sea is vast and quiet, with few other vessels in sight, making for a peaceful and immersive journey. If you’re lucky, you might even spot dolphins along the way,” he suggests.

Historical Routes and Beautiful Scenery

Founded in 1969, the company was established to connect Japan’s central island of Honshu to Hokkaido from the ports on the Sea of Japan side. SNK’s network services Japan from Hokkaido to Kyushu and even has a service to South Korea. Iritani said government efforts to promote nationwide tourism outside the Golden Route, beyond the Kanto and Kansai areas, to revitalize the region are in line with the company’s mission to connect ports along the Sea of Japan. The ferries offer a variety of cabin types, on-board facilities and an open-air bath. “One key focus is our seasonal cuisine, with menus that highlight locally sourced ingredients and dishes that reflect the flavors of each season,” Iritani says. The company also offers a variety of entertainment and local cultural experience programs on board



SHKライン

The SHK Line Group is a corporate group that provides ferry ships and comprehensive logistics consisting of: Hankyu Ferry Co., Ltd., Shin Nihonkai Ferry Co., Ltd., Tokyo Kyusyu Ferry Co., Ltd., Kampu Ferry Co., Ltd., Kanko Kisen Co., Ltd., Marinex Co., Ltd., Venus Travel Inc., Authentic Hotel Inc., Shimonoeki Grand Hotel Co., Ltd., Raku Suisan (Resort Hotel).

to keep guests entertained throughout their journey. For example, it has held a Japanese paper craft experience on the Maizuru route and a medal and accessory making workshop on the Niigata route. The company’s routes connect significant regions, such as Kansai’s Maizuru and Tsuruga and Hokkaido, linking the regions via Niigata. Historically, the company’s routes follow the historical Kitamaebune logistics network, which connected the economic hub of Kansai to the rest of Japan throughout the Edo Period.

In a time when economic activity is centered on large metropolitan areas such as Osaka, the company is evoking a time when regional exchange and logistics were more active. “We believe it is time to reverse this trend by strengthening regional connec-

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tions and promoting the movement of people and goods throughout Japan. At the same time, there is the joy of visiting regional ports, experiencing unique customs and cultures, and making new discoveries,” Iritani explains. He says ports on the Sea of Japan side have more regional character than those on the Pacific coast. The company believes these domestic sea routes will encourage more travelers to take short trips, such as going from Kanto to Niigata for sightseeing and then returning by ferry.

A New Tourism Experience

Iritani says the company is tapping into the sightseeing and luxury travel markets for people with and without vehicles. However, it doesn’t neglect budget-conscious travelers either. “More travelers are paying attention to the journey, and the method of travel itself is gaining interest,” he says. SNK also offers tours and trips for groups, which include luxury hotel stays, including stays at its own hotels in Otaru and Niseko, Hokkaido. “On our website and onboard the ferry, we provide brochures with information on various destinations, and currently, we are focusing particularly on small-group travel,” he



explains. For travelers on a budget, it maintains competitive prices to entice higher volumes of passengers. “People now want to appreciate both the travel process and their time at the destination,” he says. In the past, he explained people traveled to reach their destinations as quickly as possible. But recently, travelers have rejected that mindset, embracing “slow-travel,” supporting the age-old adage where the journey is as important as the destination.

A New Side of Japan for Inbound Visitors

Inbound visitors continue to climb, and a weak yen attracts record tourist numbers. “We are seeing a growing number of European visitors staying in Japan for extended periods, and many of them are choosing to travel by ferry to explore different regions of the country,” Iritani says. Japan’s transport sector is renowned for its punctuality and reliability, where even slight delays are considered regrettable. Iritani says SNK is looking to capitalize on these standards and the increased interest in Japan, while expand-



ing travel options away from the centralized hubs of Tokyo and Osaka. “We believe it’s time to reverse this trend by strengthening regional connections and encouraging the movement of both people and goods across Japan.”

SNK is proving the truth of that wisdom, allowing travelers to experience the beauty of Japan’s natural environment and emphasizing a leisurely, luxurious experience. With the government supporting regional revitalization and tourism efforts, SNK has positioned itself as an essential element of diverting tourists from the Golden Route to regional areas. Travelling by ferry gives travelers the opportunity to appreciate Japan from a new angle and enjoy being immersed in the country’s natural beauty, instead of watching it fly by from inside a Shinkansen.



A GLOBAL WELCOME, A LOCAL TOUCH

COSMOS HOTEL MANAGEMENT OFFERS FAMILIES A HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME, PROVIDING COMFORTABLE ABODES AND FACILITATING CULTURAL EXPERIENCES. *By Daniel de Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Paul Mannion*

Whether it's a first-time visit or the tenth, the excitement of arriving in Japan never fades. From centuries-old cultural traditions to pop culture icons and from expansive concrete jungles to quiet alleyways serving ramen and yakitori, Japan is a rare blend of contrasting worlds that coexist harmoniously. Rich in experiences and renowned for its safety, Japan is an ideal destination to share with family—especially for those new to international travel.

A common refrain among international visitors is that the clean, walkable streets make exploring with a stroller worry-free or that no matter where you go, it's easy to find great food and enjoyable sightseeing.

"Many people describe Japan as a kind of wonderland," says Hideki Fujioka, President of Cosmos Hotel Management, which operates 27 MIMARU apartment hotels across Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.

"That sense of wonder is exactly what we want to nurture at MIMARU," Fujioka says. "But we also recognize that for families—especially those with young children—traveling overseas can bring real challenges, both physical and emotional."

He explains that MIMARU aims to ease this anxiety by addressing both practical and emotional concerns. "Hotels in Japan's cities are often compact, which may not be ideal for larger families or those with young children. That's why we provide spacious, comfortable accommodations. At MIMARU, each unit features a kitchen and living area, and some even include multiple bedrooms—comfortably accommodating four to ten guests, allowing families and groups to relax and spend time together in comfort, just like at home."

But it's not just the space that makes a difference—what truly defines the MIMARU experience is the human touch. "It's the heartfelt, human-centered service provided by our staff that sets us apart—especially in an age where hospitality is increasingly driven by technology," the president says. MIMARU's team, composed of staff from 38 countries and regions, offers thoughtful, empathetic support based on each guest's situation. This style of communication—attentive, multilingual, and



always from the guest's point of view—resonates strongly with today's international travelers, particularly families.

When families feel both physically comfortable and emotionally supported, they naturally become more receptive to deeper, more meaningful travel experiences. MIMARU properties directs guests to authentic local experiences, such as sushi-making workshops and neighborhood tours led by locals. "We believe that meaningful connections between guests and the community add value to their stay," Fujioka says. "These connections also play a vital role in our sustainability initiatives."

These values have been recognized by travelers around the world. In Tripadvisor's 2019 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Hotels, three MIMARU properties ranked among the Top 20 Hotels in Japan chosen by international travelers. In the latest 2025 edition, MIMARU Tokyo Ginza EAST was awarded second place in the Japan Hotels – Popular Category in Tripadvisor's 2025 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Hotels.

To further meet the needs of families, MIMARU has also introduced services that expand the possibilities of family travel—such as same-day luggage delivery, allowing for hands-free sightseeing, and childcare facilities equipped with play areas where children can have fun while their parents enjoy a fine dining experience.

"We aim to make MIMARU the first apartment hotel that comes to mind for families planning a trip to Japan," Fujioka concludes.



Hideki Fujioka,
President,
Cosmos Hotel
Management Co., Ltd.



APARTMENT HOTEL
MIMARU

<https://mimaruhotels.com>



NEW YOMIURI LAND FACILITIES BOOST VISITOR EXPERIENCE

THE COMPANY IS PARTNERING WITH INAGI TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCES, BOTH AT ITS FACILITIES AND IN THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY. *By Bernard Thompson, Daniel de Bomford and Cian O'Neill*

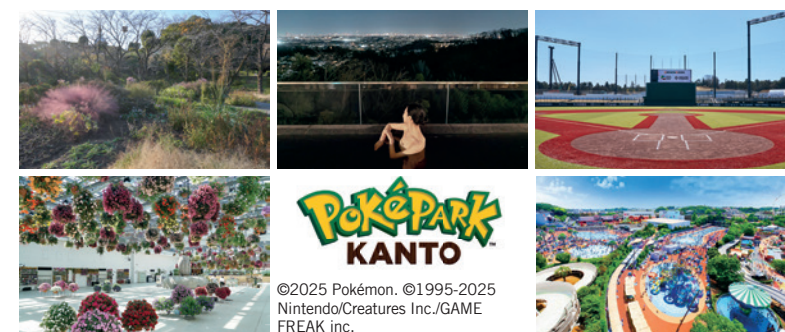
There's nothing quite like the magic of going to an amusement park for the first time. The cheerful melodies drift through the air, blending in with the distant rush of roller coaster screams and the smells of a park's often delectable treats. It's a sensory symphony stirring something childlike: an invitation to wonder, to adventure.

Yomiuriland amusement park is such a place. Nestled in the lush hills of the Tama area in Tokyo, the beloved institution has welcomed over 70 million visitors since 1964—the same year Japan hosted its first Olympics. Legendary coasters thrill global visitors, while surrounding facilities like tranquil onsen and cherry blossom gardens offer seasonal escapes. Immersive worlds, built on iconic Japanese IPs, merge cutting-edge design with nostalgia. At Yomiuriland, each visit is an unforgettable adventure.

Now, Yomiuri Land Co. is preparing its next chapter. Slated to fully open in 2027, Tokyo Giants Town will rise around the Giants Town Stadium, which opened in March 2025, offering an aquarium, dining, and more. President Takeshi Mizoguchi envisions a space where Tokyo's dynamic energy meets natural serenity. Hosting 60 professional baseball games a year alongside university, high school, and community matches, the stadium anchors a one-of-a-kind sports and entertainment hub.

In parallel, the company is teaming up with The Pokémon Company and the Yomiuri Shimbun to create PokéPark KANTO, a project which, in Mizoguchi's words, "fully embraces Pokémon's core philosophy of fostering global connection."

Yomiuri Land Co. is also investing in digital innovation. A new multilingual map, linked with the Inagi tourism bureau, offers real-time updates, route



planning, and local exploration through digital stamp rallies. The platform not only reduces paper waste but also strengthens ties with the surrounding community by guiding visitors to nearby attractions.

As it continues to evolve with surrounding facilities, Yomiuriland remains rooted in its mission: to spark the same wonder as a child's first amusement park visit. With every attraction and initiative, it invites guests to rediscover joy—and deepen their connection to the local community. As Mizoguchi puts it, "Yomiuriland is a place that aspires to deliver the world's best hospitality."

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www.yomiuriland.com/en



"Our goal is to continue evolving and offering a comprehensive leisure destination that appeals to a wide range of visitors."

Takeshi Mizoguchi
President, Yomiuri Land Co., LTD.





“One of our greatest strengths lies in offering comfortable accommodations amidst Japan’s beautiful natural environments”

Akira Onodera

President, General Incorporated Foundation KYUKAMURA HOTELS

休暇村 National Park Resorts of Japan
KYUKAMURA HOTELS



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KYUKAMURA FUJI (Shizuoka Prefecture)
Western Style Room



KYUKAMURA SANUKI-GOSHIKIDAI
(Kagawa Prefecture)

KYUKAMURA HOTELS BRIDGES NATURE AND TOURISM

NESTLED IN NATURE-RICH LOCATIONS SUCH AS JAPAN’S NATIONAL PARKS, KYUKAMURA HOTELS INVITES ITS GUESTS TO ENJOY NATURE AND EXPERIENCE LOCAL ATMOSPHERE IN COMFORT.

By Daniel de Bomford, Arthur Menkes and Paul Mannion

While Japan is famous for its immense urban centers such as Tokyo, it has incredible natural beauty that is not far off the beaten path. Verdant forests sit by crystal clear oceans, the scent of ocean salt and calls of birds are carried by the air, creating a natural serenity often overlooked by inbound tourists.

KYUKAMURA HOTEL’s lodgings are situated in locations enriched by Japan’s extraordinary natural beauty, from beachside resorts to open-air onsens in the mountains. With 35 unique facilities across Japan, President Akira Onodera says the company’s greatest strength lies in its comfortable lodging amid the country’s most beautiful natural environments. He explains that from the beginning, the core of the company’s management philosophy has been coexistence with the local community. “Guests can enjoy onsen and local cuisine, while also participating in programs incorporating the region’s nature, history, culture and industries,” the President states.

The vast proportion of KYUKAMURA HOTELS guests are domestic visitors, but Onodera says the company is looking to increase the number of foreigners who visit. “We expect demand for travel to these off-the-beaten-path destinations to continue rising,” he states. To meet that demand, the company launched its multilingual website tailored to foreign travelers, while its facilities are signed in both Japanese and English. Furthermore, it is participating in international tourism expos and trade events held domestically as well as in countries like South Korea and Taiwan. It is working to ensure that it has staff who can speak foreign languages and multilingual guides—such as instructions on how to use an onsen—and restaurant menus.

To enhance its operations’ overall quality and sustainability, KYUKAMURA HOTELS is focusing on renovating existing facilities and rebuilding its brand. In Nagano Prefecture, it opened KYUKAMURA RETREAT-AZUMINO-HOTEL in 2020, which the company positions as a premium experience, with more luxurious lodging facilities. Likewise, in 2025, it opened two new premium rooms at KYUKAMURA SANUKI-GOSHIKIDAI in Kagawa Prefecture following the facility’s renewal and reopening in March. Onodera says initial concerns around the demand for higher-priced rooms were quickly assuaged, and the response exceeded the company’s expectations, particularly among existing customers.

With inbound tourism set to continue increasing, Onodera hopes that KYUKAMURA HOTELS will become more than just a hotel but a place that creates beautiful memories. The company is actively working to protect the environs around its hotels to create unforgettable experiences for this generation and the next.



KYUKAMURA RETREAT-AZUMINO HOTEL (Nagano Prefecture)
Open-air Hot Spring Bath (Rotenburo)

DISCOVER FUJIYA HOTEL’S HISTORIC CHARM AND TIMELESS JAPANESE HOSPITALITY

ELEVATED HOTEL STAYS WITH ARCHITECTURE AND GOLF COURSES BUILT FOR ROYALTY OVER A CENTURY AGO.

By Daniel de Bomford, Cian O’Neill and Sasha Lauture

A touch of comfort in a new and unfamiliar world, hotels are a home away from home. The little gestures in hospitality make the most significant difference, and Japan is renowned for its generous hospitality, explains Akira Ando, President of Fujiya Hotels. “Japan is known for its spirit of omotenashi, a deeply rooted concept of hospitality characterized by attentiveness, kindness and consideration toward guests,” he says. Fujiya Hotels is renowned for its commitment to this spirit of hospitality and tradition.

Ando says one of the company’s core differences is its historic architecture. The company’s history dates back to 1878; its oldest structure was completed in 1891. It is the oldest hotel structure still in operation and registered as a Tangible Cultural Property by the Japanese government. “The longer a building’s history, the more stories it holds,” he states. The company has carefully maintained and restored its buildings and preserved the building’s design elements, carvings and artworks, hoping guests can stay for another 200 years and beyond. Guest baths and the indoor pool are fed with natural hot spring water, bringing a touch of authenticity and luxury found nowhere else in the world. Another significant building is Kikka-so, completed in 1895 as a villa for the Imperial Family, now a dining venue with stunning traditional garden views.

With a goal of 60 million inbound tourists by 2030, the allure of Japan is its stunning natural beauty and deep-rooted culture. “Japan is a country blessed with four distinct seasons, which influence not only its natural landscapes, but also its lifestyle, culture, and cuisine,” Ando says. The hotel business in Japan is a highly competitive market, and Ando says that Fujiya is well known amongst Japanese guests. However, the company is not affiliated with a global chain and remains relatively unknown overseas and to inbound visitors. The company is actively visiting overseas travel agencies across Asia and Europe to build partnerships and encourage agencies to introduce visitors to its properties.

Japan is home to the world’s second-largest number of golf courses, and Fujiya Hotels is actively targeting the growing golf tourism market. It hosts its own golf course with a storied history, built over 100 years ago for the Crown Prince—later Emperor—Showa, who frequently stayed at Kikka-so. Ando explains that South Korea has a similar number of golfers, but half the number of golf courses, making Japan an appealing place for golf enthusiasts.

Fujiya Hotel’s goal is to transform the hotel into Japan’s leading resort—both in name and substance—by the year 2030. “Over the next four years, I aim to have our initiatives firmly on track toward achieving that goal,” Ando says.



“The longer a building’s history, the more stories it holds.”

Akira Ando

President, Fujiya Hotel Co., Ltd.



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“One of our biggest competitive advantages is our location.”

Hitoshi Nakauchi

President,
Kobe Portopia Hotel Co., Ltd.
www.portopia.co.jp/en



 **KOBE PORTOPIA HOTEL**



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VISIT KOBE'S ICONIC HOTEL

DISCOVER KOBE PORTOPIA HOTEL: CULTURE, CONFERENCES AND GLOBAL REACH.

By Daniel de Bomford and Arthur Menkes

From being Japan's gateway to the West to being the birthplace of Japanese Jazz and movie culture, Kobe has long been a hub of cultural and economic exchange. The iconic Kobe Portopia Hotel, situated in the middle of Kobe Port Island, is as much a cultural landmark as it is luxury accommodation. The hotel was opened in conjunction with the Portopia '81 expo, which celebrated the opening of the artificial island. Since its opening, it has hosted an impressive array of guests, such as the Showa Emperor and Empress and the Princess of Monaco.

As a single property, President Hitoshi Nakauchi says that the hotel needs to be constantly creative and add value. However, he also says that it's a strength: "It allows us to focus all our efforts on delivering an exceptional experience." The hotel's central position within the city and association with the area are two of its competitive advantages. "Our goal is for Portopia Hotel to become the definitive hotel experience for anyone visiting Kobe," Nakauchi explains. The hotel offers panoramic views of Kobe and Osaka on one side and views of Osaka Bay and Wakayama prefecture on the other.

The hotel has a particular focus on MICE—meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions—and is proud to be among the leaders in Asia. "This is especially important as populations in many Asian countries continue to grow, offering promising opportunities for international engagement," Nakauchi explains. The hotel regularly hosts large-scale international conventions and academic exhibitions. The hotel has invested in providing the necessary infrastructure for these events, including multiple banquet halls and convention spaces capable of hosting between 1,000 and 3,000 attendees. "This capability, combined with our rich history and unique offerings, truly sets us apart in Japan's hospitality landscape," Nakauchi explains.

With Kobe airport having launched international flights in April, Nakauchi hopes to increase international guests beyond pre-pandemic numbers. The hotel has launched an AI concierge on its website to assist foreign guests and automated check-in and check-out for a smoother experience. Nakauchi describes the hotel's membership programs as a crucial strategy in the hotel's operation despite the relatively modest member numbers. "These members account for about 15 percent of our individual consumer sales, so increasing repeat visits through our membership program is a key strategic focus," he says. In addition to its loyalty scheme and app, it runs Salon de Portopia, which provides access to cultural events and discounts on services.

Nakauchi describes the hotel as Kobe's Iconic Landmark and a hub for international exchange and economic growth, much like the city of Kobe. The hotel has a legacy intrinsically tied to the region and continues to be a local icon, the perfect representation of the city.



“At Heisei Enterprise, our philosophy is simple: seeing is believing.”

Kimi Takura

President, HEISEI ENTERPRISE Inc.

1. Kobe beef is one of the top three Wagyu beefs in Japan. It is characterized by its sweet fat and fine texture.
2. Sushi chefs prepare sushi using fresh ingredients procured in Toyosu.
3. Experience Kobe beef shabu-shabu.
4. Grilled sushi.
5. A unique sightseeing trip on an open-top bus.
6. Staff of the strawberry farm Berry Berry Berry.
7. Enjoy authentic Edomae sushi on a bus tour.



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LOCAL EXPERIENCES BY HEISEI ENTERPRISE

THE TRANSPORTATION AND TOUR COMPANY CREATES AND CURATES AUTHENTIC LOCAL EXPERIENCES THAT REVEAL THE TRUE ESSENCE OF JAPAN.

By Daniel de Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Arthur Menkes

Sitting with chopsticks hovering over a lacquered bento box, the unfamiliar tastes, smells and sounds nourish the soul. Genuinely engaging with local culture is like dancing to an unfamiliar beat—it's exciting and feels like a natural part of the human experience. HEISEI ENTERPRISE seeks to facilitate local tourism and integrate local culture into its experiences. President Kimi Takura explains that inbound tourists are seeking experiences beyond the Golden Route, fueling growth in regional tourism that is essential for Japan's sustainable development and cultural presentation. "Once you bring travelers into these local communities, you help generate meaningful economic activity," he says.

HEISEI ENTERPRISE's role as a tour operator and transportation provider is to bridge the gap between convenience and authenticity. As Takura explains, tourism can feel superficial without real, hands-on engagement, but when they are able to make the journey and immerse themselves in the culture, they return with unforgettable memories. "That's the kind of story we want to help create: connecting people to something uniquely Japanese, supporting local businesses, and promoting sustainable tourism that celebrates the country's regional richness," he says.

The company provides "plus alpha" experiences, which are experiences only available in Japan. Central to this strategy is food tourism, facilitating the exploration of local culinary scenes and regional and seasonal specialties. It aims to highlight these lesser-known dishes and food cultures and tailor them to visitors who are ready to go deeper. It has established a strawberry farm and plans to open a restaurant in metro areas that showcases and celebrates local ingredients. "It will serve as both a destination and a cultural bridge, offering travelers a direct and delicious connection to Japan's regional heritage," Takura says.

Takura wants HEISEI ENTERPRISE to facilitate that connection between visitors and the rhythms of Japan's regions. As he puts it, "Ultimately, we want Heisei Enterprise to be known globally as the company that makes Japan's local treasures truly accessible—offering unique, genuine experiences that stay with people long after their journey ends."

