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short film fest in niseko

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how to spin like a pro

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what to do off the ski hill

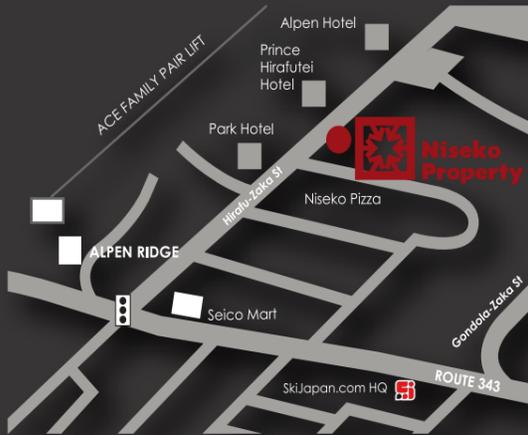
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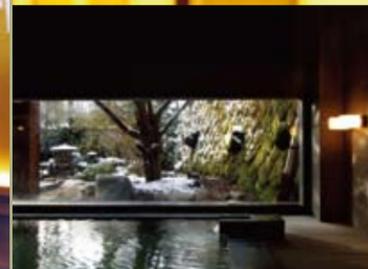
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cover Domu Narita, Kissmark Cup photo Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography

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editor's note...

JANUARY and February in Niseko are generally the biggest snowfall months, characterised by days and often weeks on end where it will snow every day. It's an adrenalin-seeking powder hound's dream come true, and for the beginners, it keeps the runs beautiful and soft for those inevitable tumbles. But you'll often hear visitors in these beautiful snowy months wishing for a blue sky day (!?). Well, this year we've had a fantastic mix of both powder and blue sky days, which has ensured everyone has been catered for. The ultimate in Niseko is when a storm comes through and dumps a thick blanket of powder before clearing up for a bluebird the following day. It's happened several times this year, which has been a treat for both locals and visitors.

While on the subject of beginners, this issue in our news section we take a look at Hanazono's new kids-friendly infrastructure, catering for the growing number of families flocking to Niseko, particularly from Asia. Until now, Niseko had minimal facilities dedicated to providing more than just basic day care facilities for kids, but that's all changing in a big way as Niseko matures into a world-class international ski resort, with Hanazono leading the way.

In this issue we also take a look at all the non-ski hill activities on offer in Niseko, and you'll be surprised by the breadth of experiences on offer. While building an igloo is one activities kids can try, in our Niseko Survival Guide this issue we teach you how to build a snow cave for those unlucky enough to get lost in the backcountry and need to spend a night. We've interviewed a great local character Tachibana-san, who many of you will meet at the Welcome Centre on your arrival or departure. There's plenty more, plus all our regulars, so we hope you enjoy reading.

Whether it be blue skies or deep powder, we hope you enjoy whatever Niseko has to offer over the next two weeks!

Kristian Lund, *Powderlife* Managing Editor kris@powderlife.com

編集者の言葉...

ニセコの1月と2月は、何日も時には何週間も毎日雪が降り続けるくらい1年で最も積雪量が多い月です。この時期は、熱狂的なパウダーファン、またゲレンデ初心者も、皆が華麗に雪上を舞ったり、ふかふかのパウダーに転倒したりと思う存分楽しめませす。しかしながら、この豪雪期間中に青空を願う観光客がいるのは驚くべき事実です。今年は、皆さんが素晴らしいパウダーと青空を楽しんだ事でしょう。ニセコを格別な場所とするのに、嵐の後の豪雪と翌日の青空があります。今年何度か起こったこの様な天候は、地元の人々、観光客にとってこの上ないプレゼントとなりました。

ゲレンデの初心者の話と関連するようですが、この号では、特にアジアから目立つ多くの家族連れ観光客を対象にした花園スキー場の新しいキッズ向け施設を紹介しています。ニセコはデイケア以外にこれといった子供用施設を持ち合わせていなかったため、この花園スキー場の新しい試みは、世界レベルの国際スキー場としてニセコを成長させるでしょう。

その他にも、皆さんが「こんな事もニセコでできるの?」と驚くくらい、スキー場以外でできるアクティビティ情報を掲載しています。かまくら作りは子供も挑戦できるアクティビティです。幣紙の「ニセコサバイバルガイド」では、バックカントリー中に不幸にも道を外した時にために、外で一晩過ごせる雪の洞窟作りを紹介しています。また、ウェルカムセンターで毎日、多くの観光客を出迎え、見送る橋さんをインタビューした記事も掲載しています。前号に引き続き、様々な情報を満載していますので、どうぞお楽しみください。

次号が出る2週間の間、晴天の日もパウダーの日も皆様が思い思いに素晴らしいニセコを満喫されることを願っています。

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Niseko season total among highest

IT hasn't been a huge snowfall season for Niseko but taking a look around the northern hemisphere this winter and we've still got one of the biggest base depths of all the world's premier resorts, with Annapuri recording 350cm at the time of going to press. While Europe is enjoying a bumper season, across the other side of the Atlantic, the West Coast of America and Canada haven't fared so well.

Currently Canada's premier resort Whistler has a base of just 137cm, well below average for this time of year. California and Nevada received barely any snowfall at all throughout January before receiving solid falls through the end of the month and start of February. Mammoth Mountain has been doing well with a 330cm base, currently the deepest base in the US. Colorado has been having a good season, with Vail enjoying an above-average 170cm base.

Back to Europe and it's been dumping all season, with all countries enjoying one of the best seasons in years. Most major resorts in Austria, France and Switzerland have base depths between 2m and 3m, while Italy is leading the way with resorts reporting upwards of 4m base depths.



Smoking manners

KEEP your eye out for these green and white signs during your travels in Japan. As part of its obligation to be socially responsible, Japan Tobacco has created dozens of these quirky advertisements urging smokers to consider the damage their smoking can have on others. They all come with a diagram and a short phrase, such as: "I threw my cigarette butt into the drain. That is to say, I hid it in the drain," and: "A person was waving at me. He was waving away my smoke."

Niseko's first short film festival

IT'LL be lights, camera, action when the Flake Film Festival comes to Niseko on February 24. The short film festival, which has screened at major Australian ski resorts, is in its sixth year, set to bring a compilation of mini-films to Hirafu's Après Bar. While obviously screening snow films, other genres will be a 'mixed bag' of comedy, drama and documentaries, says festival founder and director, Anthony 'Chook' Trovatiello (pictured right). "People think it's all snow films, but that gets a bit boring after a while," he says. "So we have all sorts of stuff, even high-class animation and Lego animation."

Anthony started the festival in memoriam of his friend, who passed away in a tragic snow accident years ago. He adds that the festival would 'certainly be a positive for Niseko'. The young filmmaker came to Niseko four years ago on a ski holiday, also making a 10-part movie series on 'Hokkaido's snow experience', and in that time he 'fell in love with Niseko'. "This festival is something different and a great off-snow event," says Anthony. "I've been watching Niseko for quite a few years and there is nothing like this festival in the area at all. We are also really keen to make this bigger in the future."

Doors open 7pm, films begin 7.30pm. Entry ¥700 (locals), ¥1000 (non-locals). Proceeds go to filmmakers. This festival is a repeat of this year's Australian festival, but organisers are looking for short film entries from Hokkaido and around the world for next season's event. For more, check www.flakefilmfestival.com.



Used snow gear gets 'second run'

LEAVING at the end of the season and want to sell your gear? Maybe you're hanging around until next year and are keen to pick up a bargain?

Either way, Niseko Life Plan has just opened Niseko's first consignment store – Second Run – a place to buy and sell snowboards and skis, backpacks and books, jackets and goggles, and a whole lot more.

Located just up from the Lawson in Izumikyō 1, between NAC and The Niseko Company, Second Run sells 'pre-loved' gear for a 15 per cent commission of the selling price.

"Most major ski resorts around the world have them, and now Niseko does, too," says NLP sales agent and consignment store manager, Andrew Caldwell.

He says there are plenty of positives for both buyers and sellers using the store.

"People that come here to Niseko usually know their stuff and are pretty good riders, so they have pretty good-quality equipment, so you can pick up some good gear for a good price," he says.

NLP began in Niseko with its roots in real estate, but also likes getting more involved with the community, says Andrew.

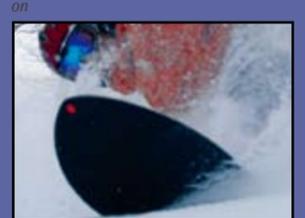
"We want to be seen as a company that creates many needed services for the community," he says.

If you are interesting in selling, email information.nlp@gmail.com detailing your product's make/model/year/size/asking price.

Once approved, all you need to do is drop the item off and sign an agreement. Buyers simply need to turn up to the store and browse around.



TAKE YOUR PICK... Andrew Caldwell.



The comps keep on coming

THE 7th Gentemstick Natural Pipe Masters competition, a time trial event held in Niseko Village on February 22, will reward the fastest to the bottom of the hill.

About 100 people will participate for a chance to win ¥100,000, a season pass and much more.

If you're one of the 80 or so snowboarders competing, strap in tight and do your best 'one' to the bottom. For the minority of skiers out there, make sure you don't get embarrassed by losing to a boarder. But, if you're not up to the riding challenge, why not cast your vote for the winner for a mere ¥300 with a chance to win a locally made, highly sought after Gentemstick, which has re-popularized the oh-so-fast surf-style nose.

Meanwhile, the Namara Ippatsu Jump competition is back on March 9. If you would like to find fame in an instant, this is the event for you. 'Namara' in Hokkaido dialect means 'great', and 'Ippatsu' a 'one time action'. Give everything great that you've got to give one time only through the Hirafu jump park, and you might just find yourself the talk of the town. Well, at least for a day.

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Beginners flying high on magic carpet Hanazono comps

IN what is a first for Japan, Hanazono ski resort this season opened its covered magic carpet lifts in a bid to cater for families and beginner skiers and boarders.

With three belt lifts in total, ranging from 60m to 125m in length, the magic carpets are pretty hard to miss – long, tunnel-like conveyor belt lifts that link the lower ski runs with '308', Hanazono's centre and heart with a restaurant, shops, media systems, entertainment and more.

Niseko mostly caters to intermediate and advanced riders with deep powder cravings – and does so very well indeed. However, Hanazono saw an opportunity to provide 'the perfect learning environment for beginners', said the resort's marketing director, Nigel Abbott. He said the magic carpets also serviced the snow tube and toboggan tracks at Hanazono, to create the 'perfect snow play environment'. "Whether you're a snowboarder or skier, child or adult, our learner basin with these magic carpets, combined with obstacle courses to develop skills, and good-quality groomed snow, provides the perfect environment for anyone who is starting out in the snow," Mr Abbott said. "This makes the whole experience around learning very enjoyable."

Hanazono also caters for kids, offering a fun full-day, indoor-outdoor package with an instructor, offering 'pint-sized good times'. "We also have an indoor facility for kids, with kids-size tables, toilets, toys and activities," Mr Abbott said. "Kids can go in and get some shelter from the snow and basically just have fun. Parents can drop their kids off, hand them over to a qualified instructor and pick them up at the end of the day, knowing they are safe and having a great time."



MAGIC... Hanazono's magic carpet. Photo: Niseko Photography.

Mr Abbott said that while the magic carpets were designed with novices, families and children in mind, they still helped out more experienced skiers and boarders who were simply exhausted. "If you just can't be bothered, and are burned out after a big day up the mountain, you can hop on the magic carpet and jump out at the top and relax at 308, sit around, and have something to eat or drink," he said.

JAPAN'S hottest snowboarders converged on Niseko earlier this month for two world-class competitions at Hanazono.

The Kissmark Cup (Feb 7) and Hokkaido Half-Pipe Championships (Feb 8) – both Federation of International Snowboarding events – took over the Stomping Ground for a weekend of eye-popping trickery. "There were Olympic competitors and Japanese national teams of a very high standard," said Nigel Abbott, Hanazono's marketing director. "There was also a junior division from ages seven and up, and the talent of those kids was amazing. We were seeing what is at the foray of technique and tricks in the world at the moment."

The Kissmark Cup, a national event, went off without a hitch. However, the weather did play a bit of havoc with the Hokkaido Half-Pipe Championships – a qualifier for the Nissan X-Trail Asian Open – where a result was reached from the qualifying rounds.

Abbott said officials were impressed with the high standard of Hanazono's half-pipe and terrain park.

He added that Hanazono looked forward to running the competitions next year.

Meanwhile, Hanazono will again run the Hano Four Slopestyle on March 14, where ¥200,000 is up for grabs in the skiing and boarding event.



Photo: Niseko Photography

Avalanche strikes Niseko backcountry, man injured

A TOUR group was caught in an avalanche recently, with one person seriously injured, at one of Niseko's most popular backcountry mountains.

The slide on Sunday, February 8 at the nearby Nitonupuri (southwest of Mt Annupuri) resulted in several people on a NOASC guided tour being caught in the avalanche and swept into a tree line. A Japanese man on the tour broke his femur and was taken to hospital. He was trapped 70cm beneath the slide, and was found by the guides via beacon after about five

minutes trapped under the snow. The owner of NOASC, Ross Carty, said he did not know the cause of the avalanche for sure, and said it 'came out of nowhere'. Carty said the group was following normal tracks (about 15 degrees slope angle) when the avalanche struck. "It's strange because the area we were in is normally stable and is a very popular and safe spot for tours, hiking and riding," he said. "We think it may have been caused by snow or ice falling from a tree, a skier above the fall line, or by the wind. We can't be sure of the cause,

though, and an investigation is under-way."

The avalanche was 10m-wide at the top and 30m-wide once it came to rest 200m down the hill in some trees. The night before the slide, about 30cm of snow fell in the area overnight, blown in by high winds.

The slide is the first serious avalanche in the Niseko region in some time to cause serious injury.

NOASC has decided to suspend backcountry tours for all of February, until investigations are completed and the area has once again been deemed safe.

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You can't make this stuff up

In an effort to get people to use less toilet paper, a "research center" called Japan Toilet Labo has been **placing poems in public restrooms**. The asinine verses include "Fold the paper over and over and over and over again" and "That paper will meet you for but a moment."

After seven diners in Yamagata were **sickened by improperly prepared fugu**, the restaurant's owner told police that he has "never eaten blowfish before, but I heard it was good, so I served it."

Cops say a homeless man broke into an apartment in Chiyoda-ku and **installed a "keylogger" virus** on the resident's computer, allowing him to steal some ¥9 million from the victim's bank account.

Signs of the times

Chiba's Shukutoku University said it will **set aside ¥100 million per year** to provide tuition relief to students whose families are struggling financially.

The Japan Communist Party announced that, for the **first time in 21 years**, its official Akahata Shimbun is enjoying an increase in circulation.

Two 60-something taxi drivers in Nara were busted for **driving members of a Chinese burglary gang** to residential areas to commit crimes. The cabbies said they acted because it is "difficult to make ends meet in the current recession."

It was reported that someone has been **taking illegal goods confiscated from delinquent taxpayers** and auctioning them on government-sanctioned auction websites. Among the items up for sale "stuffed rare animals and massage chairs."

The education ministry asked the nation's schools to consider **banning the use of cellphones** as a way to prevent students "from being bullied or encountering crime via the internet."



A bribe by any other name

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society said it would **stop harassing Japan's whaling fleet** if the Australian government promised to sue Japan over the issue.

It was reported that the Japan Fair Trade Commission is investigating nine senbei manufacturers of **using foreign shrimp in crackers** advertised as containing only domestic prawns.

Cops arrested three yakuza members for **threatening a Filipino actress** who worked at a mob-connected hostess bar in Ueno after the woman said she wanted to quit.

The National Police Agency sent warnings to 50 internet dating-site operators who failed to institute **mandatory age-verification measures** for their users.

English in the news

The Japan Transport Safety Board concluded that a **near collision of passenger planes** at New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido last February was due to an air traffic controller using the word "takeoff" instead of "departure."

It was reported that a Buddhist monk in Aichi has been **playing a CD of Barack Obama's speeches** during temple services.

Researchers on Awaji Island in Hyogo Prefecture say they've unearthed a site of **"high-level ironware production technology"** dating from the 3rd century AD.

Emergency!

The Central Disaster Management Council announced that if 550 millimeters of rain fell on Tokyo during a three-day period, **97 train stations would be "more or less submerged."**

Downpours of that magnitude are said to occur once every 200 years. The science ministry announced that it will install **specialized underground seismometers** near 110 major active faults in an effort to provide better early detection of major earthquakes.

A newspaper survey found that 65 percent of Japanese people **disapprove of Prime Minister Tarō Aso's Cabinet**. The only worse rating was recorded in 2001, when 75 percent of the public gave a thumb's down to then PM Yoshiro Mori.

Cops in Nagasaki arrested a man who made **150 false emergency calls** over the course of four hours last month.

Twenty construction workers were **trapped underground for 30 minutes** when a fire hit a building site in Akihabara, resulting in nine injuries.

Foreign Conquests

Twenty-six-year-old Jun Ichikawa became the **first Japanese actress to star in an Italian TV show** when she made her debut in the catchily named forensic drama RIS Delitti Imperfetti 5. Ichikawa, who grew up in Rome, plays a specialist in bugs.

STATS

25.4 minutes
Average ambulance response time in Toyama—the quickest in Japan—according to the internal affairs ministry

47.2 minutes
Average ambulance response time in Tokyo, the slowest

382,000
Elderly Japanese who are on waiting lists to enter nursing homes, according to a news company survey

14
Consecutive months that membership in the Japanese Communist Party has increased, according to a JCP executive

Compiled from reports by Japan Today, The Japan Times, The International Herald Tribune/Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Daily News, Time, AP, AFP and Kyodo

Sales continuing in 2009 – strong buyers' market.



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Where have you been this week?

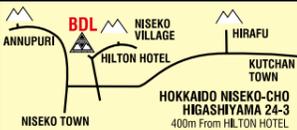
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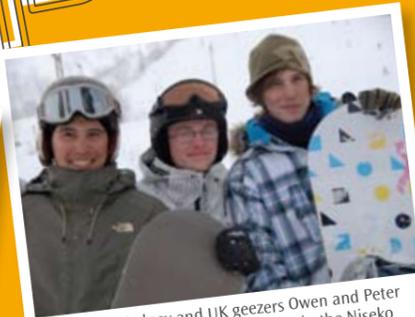
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宅地建物取引業免許 北海道知事 後志(1) 第332号 株式会社Hokkaido Real Estate

SNAP

Powderlife caught up with skiers and snowboarders on the hill, and asked them what other activities they got up to in Niseko...besides riding on the mountain.



Linda and Yi from Sydney have just arrived in Niseko from Tokyo, so they've 'had enough of doing touristy things'. "We're just going snowboarding all day, every day!"



Simon from Sydney and UK geezers Owen and Peter have been to 'just about every onsen in the Niseko area'. They also undertook an informative local avalanche course, and went snowshoeing, which the Englishmen say were both 'well-good'.



INSKI

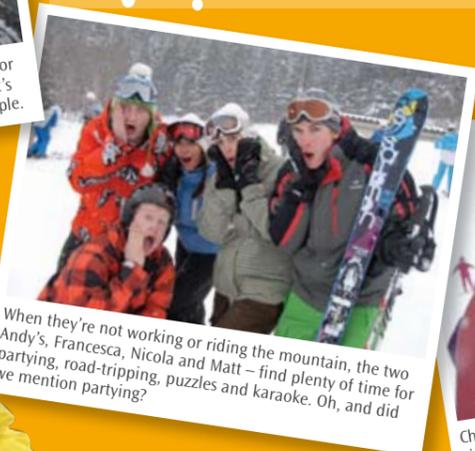
Inski's Stack of the Week

CAMERA courage can be a dangerous thing. Shane from Sydney is a testament to this. Recently, Shane and his mates did a photo tour with Niseko Photography – all doing the Aussie thing, egging each other on for the lens.

After a few runs through Miharashi on a clear, powdery Niseko day, the boys decided to hit the park. Shane, in his infinite wisdom, chose to straight-line it past the first jump in Hirafu's terrain park, and hit the second at top-speed. He ended up catching an edge and launching himself head-first almost into Mt Yotei. Apparently he played his stack down by saying he was 'a little dizzy'. But his mates tell us he didn't make it up the mountain the next day! Shano, you've won yourself a Salomon Ranger helmet courtesy of Inski Skis, Boards and Snow Wear for your troubles. 'Stack of the Week' will continue throughout the season, so if you have any embarrassing, painful, funny, unfortunate or otherwise photos of wipeouts, send them to us and we'll publish the winner, for all the world to see. The best photo at the end of the season will take home a major prize. Email hi-res photos with a short blurb to ed@powderlife.com. Happy stacking!



Dorothy and Doug from Hong Kong have been in Niseko for two weeks, and apart from drinking sake and onsening, it's just been 'hardcore snowboarding every day' for this couple.



When they're not working or riding the mountain, the two partying, road-tripping, puzzles and karaoke. Oh, and did we mention partying?



Chiho and Haruna from Muroran, just south of Niseko, were just visiting for the weekend, so they say they didn't have much time for anything else apart from snowboarding, of course.



Mountain style

CHECK out Kentaro's 'monster' of a jacket! With the monster design came a monstrous price tag of ¥30,000 for this 686 jacket, because it's rare – apparently one of only 15 ever made. The Hiroshima boarder thought it was a good deal, though – a small price to pay for stylin' it up when he and his monster roar down the mountain together. Kentaro's 686 pants match up with his jacket, and he says this is the first season he has worn the brand. "Over the past year or so, I think 686 has gotten really cool, so I will definitely buy it again next time," he says. Kentaro is not just all about the style. He backs up his looks with the right tools for riding: a Twelve-branded snowboard, and Flux bindings.



Shou, Naoki, Kenichi and Wataru were up from Osaka, Japan's second-biggest city. They were just in Niseko for three days, and they managed to squeeze in eating at many great restaurants, drinking, onsening and then sleeping...so they could do it all again the next day!

Powderlife hit the town to check out the mid-February nightlife and found plenty of party people.

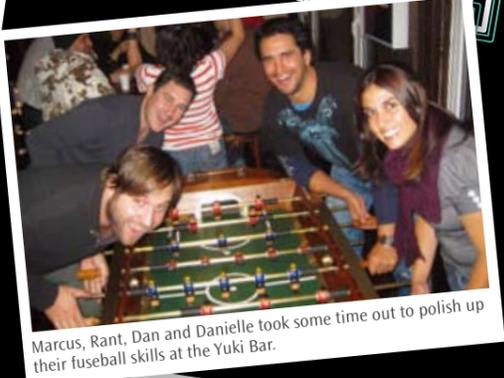
FLASH



Shinobu, Yuki and Emi were flashing their pearly whites for Powderlife's roving party paparazzi.



Tatsuro, Kumiko and Michiko were having a ball with a game of eight ball at Yuki.



Marcus, Rant, Dan and Danielle took some time out to polish up their fuseball skills at the Yuki Bar.



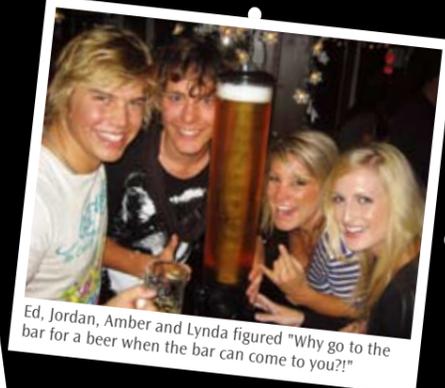
Derek, Tyson and Chris may be big, burly blokes, but were getting in touch with their inner child with their T-shirts



Sebastian, Lisa and Gareth were all peace and smiles for Bob's Rastafarian reggae birthday bash.



Gloria, Karen, Chris (again!?) and Alex made the most of the opportunity to party.



Ed, Jordan, Amber and Lynda figured "Why go to the bar for a beer when the bar can come to you?!"

Bob Marley's B'day Bash @ Yuki Bar



Chris, Ariane, Mike and Ruskin were a picture of class at Sekka's cocktail soiree.

Sekka Cocktail Party



Rob, Jonny H and Rett were left wondering how outlaw Roland got past security to Sekka's upmarket shindig.



Lisa and Casper took time out from cocktails and conversation to pose for Powderlife.

Saturday, February 21

* **Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Mikio Egawa (Trumpet)
Cover charge ¥ 1000

* **Red bar, 10:30pm**

Six live dj's massive drum and bass beats and plenty of house music as well.

* **Java Bar, 10pm "now is the time"**

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Electro, minimal, fidget-house, tech-house and more
Cover charge ¥ 1000

Sunday, February 22

* **Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Esmie (vocal)
Cover charge ¥ 1000

Wednesday, February 25

* **Loaf Lounge, 6pm Ping Pong Night**
Tournament registration fee ¥ 500
Play for the prize.

Thursday, February 26

* **Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Yasuhiro Kono (Piano) from Tokyo
Cover charge ¥ 1500

Friday, February 27

* **Live, 8pm SNOWLOVERS**
meet with Tomohiro Higashida
Cover charge ¥ 1500 with one drink

* **Après bar Nomihodai, 7pm - 9pm**

¥ 2000
Happy hour, everyday from 3pm

Saturday, February 28

* **Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Toshi Arimoto Trio (Piano)
Cover charge ¥ 1000

Sunday, March 1

* **Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Toshi Arimoto Trio (Piano)
Cover charge ¥ 1000

Friday, March 6

* **Après bar Nomihodai, 7pm - 9pm**
¥ 2000
Happy hour, everyday from 3pm



Got an event on between March 7 and March 20? Get it on this page in the next edition of *Powderlife* - input it in to the events page on our website by February 20.
3月7日から3月20日の間にイベントを企画している方はいますか?パウダーライフの次刊に掲載を希望される場合には、ニカ国語(英語・日本語)で2月20日までに私たちのホームページの"イベントページ"にご入力ください。

More events at www.powderlife.com/niseko/events/

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ヒラフ・カイルムセンター Hirafu Welcome Center	19:30	21:00	22:00	23:30	0:30	2:10
ヒラフ交差点 Hirafu Crossing	19:35	21:05	22:05	23:35	0:35	2:15
ホテル着 Hotel Arr	19:50	21:20	22:20	23:50	0:50	2:30

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Saturday, February 21

* **Gentemstick 7th Natural Half-Pipe Masters orientation** Open practice and draw for race position at Niseko Village (meet at the old gondola), 12pm. For more information, please call 0136 22 5581 or visit www.gentemstick.com. 2月21日(土) 第七回玄天スティックナチュラルハーフパイプマスターにおける説明会・出走順抽選・公開練習 時間: 12pm 場所: ニセコビレッジ(旧 Gondola) 詳細は0136-22-5581 または、www.gentemstick.comまで。

Sunday, February 22

* **Gentemstick 7th Natural Half-Pipe Masters, from 9am** Race down the Niseko Village (Higashiyama) natural half-pipe in an off-piste, GS style event for cash and prizes. Ski/board, male/female welcome. ¥3,000 for one race or ¥5,000 for two races. For more information, please contact 0136 22 5581 or visit www.gentemstick.com. 2月22日(日) 第七回玄天スティックナチュラルハーフパイプマスター 誰でも参加自由のノーボード、スキー、スノーボード・スキー複合によるタイムレース。時間: 9am 場所: ニセコビレッジ(特設会場) 詳細は0136-22-5581 または、www.gentemstick.comまで。

* **Taiko Drum Performance, 3.30-4pm**

Experience tradition with a Taiko beat. Free traditional Japanese drum performances every Sunday outside of Hokkaido Tracks office (next to Seicomart). 2月22日(日) 太鼓演奏会地元太鼓グループによる生演奏を温かい甘酒と一緒にどうぞ! 時間: 3:30pm 場所: 北海道トラックスオフィス前(セイコーマート横)

Sunday, February 22

* **Free Skiing at Asahigaoka Ski Slope in Kutchan, 9am - 4pm** Enjoy skiing with the locals. For more information, please contact Kutchan Town Gym on 0136 22 2288 or Asahigaoka Ski Slope on 0136 23 2743. 2月22日(日) 旭が丘スキー場町民無料デー 倶知安駅近くのスキー場でも飛ばそう! 時間: 9am - 4pm 場所: 旭が丘スキー場 詳細は倶知安町総合体育館(0136-22-2288) または、旭が丘スキー場(0136-23-2743) まで

Saturday, February 28

* **Hanazono Snow Monster and Snow Sculpture Competition, 12pm-3pm** Build a big snow creature for your chance to win some great prizes! Children, students and adults can join in. For more information, please contact 0136 21 6655 or visit www.skihanazono.com. 2月28日(土) スノーモンスター&雪の彫刻大会@花園イマジネーションを雪で表現しよう! 勝者には賞品有り。時

in the loop

間: 12pm - 3pm 詳細は0136216655またはwww.skihanazono.comまで

Saturday, February 28

* **Hanazono Snow Tube & Toboggan Championships, 1pm** Join a team of four and race around the snow course. Prizes include Roxy/Quiksilver goggles, beanies, T-shirts and fleece jackets. For more information, please contact 0136-21-6655 or visit www.skihanazono.com. 2月28日(土) 花園スノーチューブ&そり大会@花園4人1組のチームを組んでチューブ&そりのレースに参加しよう! 勝者にはロキシー、クイックシルバーの洋服などの賞品有り時間: 1pm. 詳細は 0136 216655 またはwww.skihanazono.comまで

Sunday, March 1

* **Taiko Drum Performance, 3.30-4pm** Free traditional Japanese drum performances every Sunday outside of Hokkaido Tracks office (next to

Seicomart).

Tuesday, March 3

* **Japanese Cultural Tours in Kutchan, 3pm-6pm** Indulge yourself in a bit of history over a cup of tea...or sake. Last of the season.Tea ceremony, natural history museum, Niseko Sake Brewery. Bus leaves in front of Seicomart.Cost : ¥1000. For more information, please contact 0136-23-0222. Reservation required.

Saturday, March 7

* **Hirafu March Fireworks, 9.30pm** Fireworks every Saturday in March on the slopes outside the Alpen Hotel. 3月7日(土) ウィークエンド花火3月の毎週土曜日は花火の日。ナイターの後は夜景に広がる花火を堪能しよう。時間: 9:30pm 場所: アルペンホテル外のスキースロープ 詳細は0136-1104またはwww.grand-hirafu.jpまで

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www.powderlife.com/niseko/events

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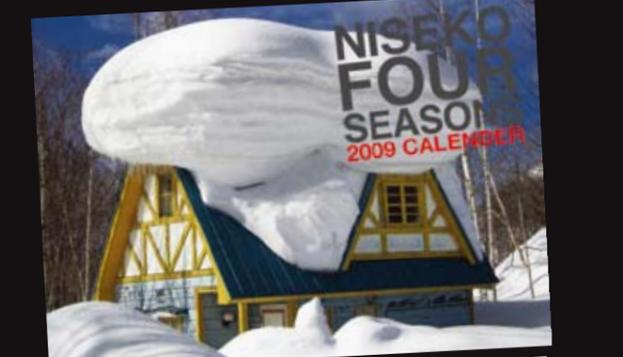
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IF you're gearing up for a big late winter and March in the backcountry you should be putting some serious thought into a touring binding. You've probably narrowed it down to the Marker Duke, or these babies. The Diamirs have a knockout win in the weight department, and in the ease of switching from touring mode to downhill mode (they don't need to be taken off). Some skiers are happy to forsake the convenience of leaving the bindings on for the reassurance that you know you're not going to switch into touring mode while you're hitting a 40-foot huck. You decide which one works for you. Available from Toyru for ¥ 51,975.

Flow Team Bindings

IF you're a keen backcountry rider you'll be aware that trips out the gates and treks out the back often require a fair share of clicking in and out of your bindings. If you're still riding the two-strap system, chances are you're holding everybody up. Do you want to be 'that guy'? If not, you'll be wanting to invest in either a K2 Cinch, Shimano Accublade or the perennial favourite – Flows. If you've decided to go for Flows, then why not plump for the best – the 'Team', as ridden by my favourite rider, Anti Autti. Critics of Flow reckon that they are not tight enough, but this model allows you to easily click an extra couple of notches if you feel you need it. Available from Good Sports for ¥73,000.



Head Skis USA Supermojo 105
Twin-Tip Alpine Ski

IF you're looking to do something special for the cameras it's hard to imagine a better ski than these. They're a bit heavy to tour with but perfect for exploring the steepest and deepest lines the Niseko backcountry has to offer. This fatty twin-tip surfs the pow regular or switch with gravity-defying float and laser precision. The heavy duty construction charges big lines without the shakes and shivers of floppy park-and-pipe planks. Despite its thick waist, the Supermojo Alpine Ski's ample sidecut and titanium-reinforced sandwich construction cuts with ease on the hard pack. Thanks to a wide twin-tip tail and optional centre mount, this free-ride monster rides switch lines with ease. Available from Victoria Sports in Tokyo for about ¥57,220.

Burton No Fish

WE all know that Niseko is the place to be if you're a snow surfer. No Boards eschews bindings to bring snowboarding right back to its surfing roots. The No Board can transform any snowboarder into a snow surfer, but the Burton No Fish is the first to be sold as a bindingless board from the factory. The narrow tail, set-back stance and wide nose of the Fish lends itself perfectly to No Board philosophy. Indeed, the Fish-style surfboard was the initial inspiration behind the Burton Fish design that has proved so popular with powder lovers. The No Fish is a natural progression. If you're the kind of rider who is happy to forego quantity of turns for quality (and you should be) pack a No Fish onto your backpack, hike up a hill in the middle of nowhere and jump on your No Fish for 10 of the best turns of your life. Then do it again. Available from Burton in Japan for ¥78,750.



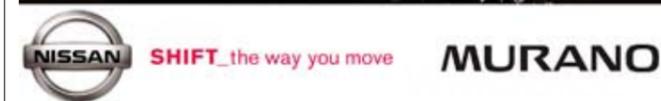
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PATROL Futa



TICKET COUNTER Ne-san



LIFTIE Kon-chan

name Futa Takeda
age 26 **hometown** Kutchan
time in niseko My parents came here 30 years ago
ski/snowboard? Ski
how long skiing? 23 years
do you like powder? Of course!
what do you do in summer? Hiking, climbing, drinking
what languages do you speak? Hokkaido dialect with Hiroshima and Kyushu accent
trips overseas? Not yet...
where do you want to go? India and Nepal
favourite... colour Green
brand Gentaro **food** Croquet, candies **restaurant** Cafeteria at work **bar** Sakana (Sapporo)
onsen Koikawa or wherever you can have sake
ski run Superstition, Next Stage
which foreign ski resort do you want to go to? Chamoniix
how long will you be in niseko? Until I'm tired of the snow... **what does niseko need?** Delicious locally brewed sake... and, I want a house!
niseko secret? Local people may not be interested in skiing? Not sure though...
what is your life motto? Use adrenaline as much as I can!

名前 タケダフタ
年齢 26
出身地 倶知安町
ニセコに来てどのくらい? 30年前に両親が来てからずっと
スキーヤー?スノーボーダー? スキーヤー
スキー歴 23年
パウダースノーは好き? 象さんより好き
夏は何をしていた? 居酒屋でバイト、登山、飲んでた
話す言葉は? 九州弁と広島弁が混ざった北海道弁
海外へは行ったことある? まだどこへ行きたい? インド、ネパール
好きな...
色は? 緑
ブランドは? 源太郎
食べ物 コロッケ、飴
レストランは? 社員食堂
バーは? 魚菜(札幌)
温泉は? 鯉川温泉、お酒飲めるところ
コースは? スーパーステーション、ネクストステージ
海外のスキー場ではどこに行きたい? ジャモニー
ニセコにはいつまで居る? 雪が嫌になるまで
ニセコの秘密は? 地元の人をそれ程スキーが好きじゃない
人生観は? アドレナリンを使いきりたい!

name Kana Konno
age 25 **hometown** Kanagawa
time in niseko Two weeks
ski/snowboard? Snowboard
how long have you been snowboarding? Eight years
why did you come to niseko? Powder snow!
do you like powder? Love it!
what do you do in summer? Worked in Furano as a part-time farmer **what languages do you speak?** Japanese... studying English at the moment
trips to overseas? Yep, Hawaii **where do you want to go next?** Canada, India
favourite... colour Turquoise blue, deep blue **brand** 686, Burton and Salomon **food** Zangi (fried chicken) **restaurant** Melt in Niseko Village **bar** Black Diamond **onsen** Niseko Higashiyama Onsen
which foreign ski resort do you want to go to? Whistler
how long will you be in niseko? Until the end of March
what does niseko need? Japanese spirit
what is your life motto? Go to many places, meet lots of people and find out who I really am.

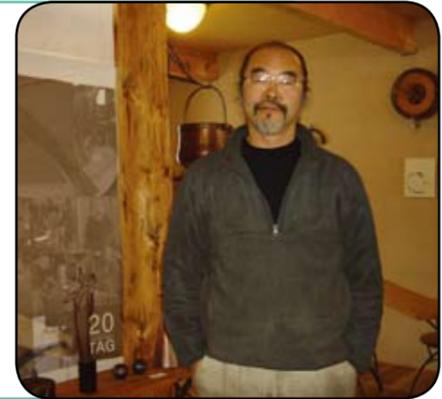
名前 コノカナ
年齢 25
出身地 神奈川県
ニセコに来てどのくらい? 2週間
なぜニセコへ来たの? パウダーを楽しむため
スキーヤー?スノーボーダー? スノーボーダー
スキー歴 8年
パウダースノーは好き? 大好き
夏は何をしていた? 富良野で野作業のヘルパー
話す言葉は? 日本語、英語は勉強中
海外へは行ったことある? ハワイ
次はどこへ行きたい? カナダ、インド
好きな色は? ターコイズブルー、濃いブルー
ブランドは? 686、バートン、サロモン
食べ物 ザンギ
レストランは? ニセコビレッジにある Melt
バーは? ブラックダイヤモンド
温泉は? ニセコ東山温泉
海外のスキー場ではどこに行きたい? ウィスラー
ニセコにはいつまで居る? 3月末まで
人生観は? 多くの場所に行き、人と出会い、自分を見つけた!

Ram kobo

FOR those after unique local furniture and souvenirs, Niseko Town's Ram Kobo is a must see. Masafumi Sawada moved from crowded Tokyo to Sapporo 35 years ago to start an art studio. When he decided Sapporo was becoming too busy he looked further afield, and like many like-minded artisans, chose Niseko. He started working with iron because there was no one doing it in Hokkaido. He moved in to an old farmer's warehouse under the big yellow Niseko Town Bridge where his workshop and gallery remains today. For an idea of what Sawada-san has to offer go to www.niseko-ram.com. In winter, get a Japanese speaker to call before going.

RAM工房

ユニークで個性的な家具や、お土産を探しているならニセコ町にあるラム工房に足を運んでみましょう。澤田正文さんは35年前に東京から札幌に移り、工房を作りました。札幌も手狭になり、以前からよく遊びに来て気に入っていたニセコにやってきました。当時の北海道では鉄をつかった作品を作る人はいなかったそうです。現在の工房とギャラリーは黄色いニセコ大橋の下にあり、以前は農協の倉庫がありました。澤田さんの作品はインターネットでもご覧いただけます。RAM工 www.niseko-ram.com



Restaurant Maru

ONE of Niseko's most under-rated restaurants is Maru in Izumikyō (East Hirafu). It was started eight years ago by three chefs from the old Nikko Hotel in Annupuri. Hiramatsu Joutaro came to Niseko from Saitama, near Tokyo, 18 years ago to work as a chef at Nikko. He wanted to start a restaurant that wasn't as expensive as a lot of the restaurants and hotels in the area – something that everyday members of the public could afford. He had good connections from his Nikko Hotel days and was able to get good deals on local produce, which he was able to pass on in the prices offered on the menu. Perhaps it's because his meals are too affordable, but Maru will close at the end of March this year. Be sure to try the Maru experience before it disappears! Maru is on the free Hirafu shuttle bus route.

れすとらん まる

安くておいしいと評判の店、れすとらんまるは泉郷(ヒラフの東)にあります。8年前に前日航ホテルで働いていた3人のシェフによって作られました。オーナーの平松鋭太郎さんは埼玉県からニセコに18年前に来ました。以前のニセコはレストランも少なく、ホテルよりも安い値段でみんなにおいしい料理を提供したいと思っていました。れすとらんまるの料理は、値段も安く、味、ボリュームは保証付です。店の看板メニュー、豚天丼と、パウダーライフー押しAセットをぜひ一度お試しください!ヒラフシャトルバスをご利用の際は、泉郷2が停留所です。



Splash

IF there's a good party on in Niseko, there's a good chance NOASC's Shuujiro Ogata will be behind it... but if not, he'll probably be there in the crowd anyway. A former pro-snowboarder and sushi chef, Shu-kun grew up in Tokyo and moved to Niseko 13 years ago, and worked at the old Big Cliff restaurant for eight years before starting reggae bar Mash Up in 2006/07. Last year he created Splash which has quickly become one of Hirafu's coolest bars (check out the rabbit head with antler ears behind the bar!). Shuu-kun loves creating a great party atmosphere and often organised concerts and events and also DJs for local reggae outfit Sonic Wall.

スプラッシュ

ニセコのパーティーシーンを盛り上げているのはスプラッシュオーナーを務めるNOASC 緒方秀二郎さんです。以前はプロスノーボーダーとして活躍し、板前も勤めるしゅうくんは、東京で育ち、13年前にニセコに来ました。先シーズンにスプラッシュを立ち上げ、その前にはレゲエバーマッシュアップ、また、前ビッグクリフでも8年間勤務していました。スプラッシュはすぐに、ヒラフで一番盛り上がりつつあるバーになりました。(バーにあるウサギの頭に注目してみてください。)パーティーの空間を演出するのが好きなオーナーは、コンサートやイベントを企画し、自らDJとして活躍し、また、ローカルレゲエクルー、Sonic Wallの活動もしています。



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 Complimentary shuttle buses operate daily.

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Takanori Tachibana

By Yuri Hamada

WELL-GROOMED long hair, his trademark beret and a big, welcoming smile. Almost all of Niseko's tourists know who he is, or have seen him at least once. The face of Hirafu Village, Takanori Tachibana, is a famous concierge at the Welcome Centre. Powderlife talked with him about tourism and the future for the new Niseko.



WELCOME...Tachibana-san with snowmen he built for tourists arriving in Niseko.

How long have you been in Niseko?

I was born in the Mashu Lake area, and moved to Kutchan when I was one-year-old. I left Kutchan for a few years in the middle, but I could never forget how fun skiing was and how great it was to live right next to the ski slopes. I followed my dream back to this area and started working at the Welcome Centre when I was 23 years old. I can say that my incredible passion for skiing has led to the job I have now.

What do you see as the main function of the Welcome Centre?

Interestingly, at the Welcome Centre, we don't really see any decrease in the number of tourists. Even though the media has said the world financial crisis would deter people from coming to Niseko, people continue to need the Welcome Centre. Our motto is welcoming people and giving any information they desire. Many tourism companies in town have a lot of information, but sometimes it can be geared towards their own business relationships. Because we would like to see all the companies do well, we elect to provide everything that is available for the guest in search of having a great time in Niseko.

Having worked at the Welcome Centre for nearly 32 years, what do you see as a major change in the village?

I can say the number of the foreign tourists has risen rapidly. I started noticing a very small number of foreigners 10 years ago. I remember visiting my friend at his pension during that time, and he had his very first guests from overseas. Although we had to primarily use our hands to communicate with them, it was really fun having somebody from a different country and culture. Having foreign guests made Niseko into the international ski resort we see today. Being a fan of Niseko myself, it is great to know that so many people choose this area for their holiday destination.

Can you tell me about some of the Niseko activities in summer?

In the summertime, we operate the gondola for hiking, and we also have lots of onsens in this area for guests to enjoy. People are becoming more aware that Niseko is a very nice place throughout the year. At the same time, Niseko was built mainly as a winter resort. I'm not 100 per cent sure if my personal work leads to

an increase in the number of summer visitors, but I do put a lot of effort and spend many hours doing community service activities. Last summer we did a clean up of the town, which involved overseas visitors, local Japanese and Japanese from every part of Japan. To see people who love this town take care of the place they live was amazing. After the town cleanup, we had another 50 people join us in re-creating the hiking trail from Hirafu to Niseko Village. I think if you show enough love for where you live it inspires local people to be motivated about tourism as well. This year we will have an even bigger cycling event, and have many other plans to attract visitors in summer and to involve locals. It can be a slow process but I see more tourists coming each year during the summertime.

What future plans do you have for this area?

My main goal is to have a peaceful coexistence with people from overseas, local Japanese and Japanese from different areas. Niseko is not only a place to get amazing powder, but to experience an atmosphere and community where everyone helps each other. Our main goal is to encourage people to come back again and again. I would like to see more people smiling not only because of the great skiing, but also because of the surrounding community. As a concierge at the Welcome Centre, hearing from the guests "I am back!" is the best reward.

What are your top three tips for visitors?

1. Challenge yourself to climb the peak
2. Explore 15 different styles of onsens in Niseko
3. Taste the mouth-watering seafood from two bodies of water (The Japan Sea and the Pacific Ocean)



Dinner at Alpen Hotel

Restaurant Slalom (Dinner Buffet ¥4,300)

Restaurant Supur (Chinese Dinner ¥4,300)

Edelweiss (Stake Dinner ¥5,000)

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There's **more** to Niseko...

IF it wasn't for skiing or snowboarding, there is no doubt Niseko would be just another little town in the middle of rural Hokkaido, little known outside of Japan. The amazing snowfall Niseko receives attracts thousands of international tourists to the area, but when they arrive, they realise Niseko is so much more than just a ski hill. There's a rich culture, warm hospitality, amazing cuisine, vibrant nightlife and an endless range of unique activities to experience.

A majority of visitors to Niseko these days don't come from snowy climes, so just the fact that they are in the snow is unique. But with the snow comes a range of opportunities to try out completely new activities. Where else in the world can you experience dog sledding? Apart from places like Alaska – and other remote, snowbound outposts where motor vehicles simply won't cut it – not many. Similarly, many people from around the world will have watched on television people traipsing through deep snow with tennis racquets tied to their feet. Until you've tried walking through deep powder without snowshoes, it's hard to imagine how necessary they are as the small surface area of a shoe will generally sink straight to the hip. A snowshoe tour is an experience a kid from the city won't forget in a hurry. For the more adventurous, a snowmobiling tour will take you deep in to the Niseko backcountry allowing you to experience a world few people ever get to see.

Other activities on offer in Niseko include 'regular' summer activities, albeit in a snowy environment. Niseko is famous for rafting in spring and summer, but for something completely different, don a wetsuit and peacefully drift down one of the local rivers enjoying the landscape from a completely unique perspective. Rock climbing is a thrill wherever you are, but ever scaled an icy cliff? Abseiling and bridge swinging should be on any adrenaline junkie's 'to do' list when they come to Niseko. For the boys (and maybe some girls), strap on some snowshoes and grab a gun and try paintball in the snow.

There's also plenty of cultural activities on offer. The Kutchan Tourist Association runs cultural tours where guests can partake in traditional green tea ceremonies, try their hand at iaido (Japanese swordsmanship), and Japanese taiko drums. For those who want to try and recreate the magnificent food they've tasted in Niseko for themselves back at home, there are Japanese cooking classes. And in order to completely immerse yourself into Japanese culture, why not take a Japanese language class? We're even going to go out on a limb here and suggest that karaoke is a modern Japanese tradition that should not be missed – when in Rome!!

There's also plenty of activities for the little ones including snowman making and any number of snow activities and adventures.

We've rounded up a comprehensive list of activities on offer for those days, and nights, when you want to take off the skis or board and experience something else Niseko has to offer. You won't be short of options!



HANGING OUT... NAC rock climbing instructor Kanomaa-san

Indoor rock climbing

Niseko Adventure Centre (NAC), in Izumikyo 1, offers a rocking good time for kids and adults with its unique rock climbing wall and 'bouldering'. With four different walls of varying difficulty, and a bouldering rock, the kids' wall sits at 3m, while the adults' wall towers at 10m. The wall takes up one entire side of the centre, offering the unique experience of climbing while diners in the upstairs Jo Jo's look on.

Open every day 8.30am-10pm. No booking required. Climbers must be at least 1m tall. Costs: ¥800 per climb, per person (safety equipment and staff assistance included). Day climbing pass ¥1050 (safety equipment and staff assistance not included).

For more information call NAC on 0136-23-2092.

Dog sledding

Situated on the golf course at the base of the Niseko Village Hilton, dog sledding is something that everyone should try once in their life time. Upon arrival, you will be shown to the course from the office, passing about six out of eleven (on a rotation system) excited Alaskan huskies outside their own snow cave home. Firstly, the sledding guides will get you on the back of a snowmobile to show you the course – a simple loop, somewhat similar to a small racetrack. Once you get your bearings, you'll stand on the small, wooden-framed sled and learn to get around the one tight corner. There's a small seat at the front of the sled for the little ones, to get everyone involved. Before you know it, two friendly, pumped up dogs are clipped on and you're off. Around the 400m track, around the corners and up and down the mini-hills, the dogs run the last leg with enthusiasm for the prize of vegetable soup waiting at the finish line. Dog sledding runs from 10am-3pm, but *Powderlife's* tip is to get the earliest booking you can, when the dogs are full of energy and the snow is fresh. For ¥3,675 for adults and ¥2,675 for children, dog sledding is a great experience that people of all ages can try. For more information, follow the links at www.niseko-village.com.



A DOG'S LIFE... two Alaskan huskies take Vanessa for a ride.

Activities with a difference

It sometimes come as a surprise to foreigners that **karaoke** originated in Japan. Here it's usually done in private booths, which is a great way for those who are a little shy to have a go and will find that it really does give you a great feeling. In Hirafu, try karaoke Bar Angel in the Park Hotel. At Niseko Village there are private karaoke booths adjoining the Ezo pub. In Anupuri and Moiwa try the Kanronomori Hotel and Ikoi No Mura Hotels. For a list of karaoke bars in Kutchan go to www.powderlife.com/magazine/kutchan/kutchan-karaoke-okey-dokey/



Niseko Village Pure Action

Inside the Niseko Village Hilton they have imported a huge inflated adventure park. You can jump from a platform onto an inflated landing pad, bounce on a trampoline and launch yourself off a ledge or joust with your friend on an elevated cylinder. A great indoor active afternoon for kids and adults. Open every afternoon ¥1,350.



Jump from a bridge swing with a harness and enjoy the winter scenery of Niseko or enjoy the thrills and adventure of **winter abseiling** as you drop down some of Niseko's picturesque and challenging cliffs. Both cost ¥5250. Minimum four people, and minimum age is 13 years. For more information call NOASC on 0136-23-1688, or check www.noasc.com.

Shoot your friends and family...with paintballs. Snowshoe Paintball is on the outskirts of Hirafu. Costs are ¥6300 per person for 150 paintballs. Minimum of six persons to play. Open from 1.30pm-3.30pm. For more information call 0136-23-2111 or check their website at www.nisekoresortservice.com.

Kutchan's Loaf Lounge bar and restaurant has a **skateboarding bowl, pool and ping pong**. There is a ping pong night every second and fourth Wednesday from 7pm (¥500).

Experience the delights of Niseko's winter wonderland with a **NOASC river cruise**. See the winter colours, snow and ice formations along the river banks while quietly making your way down the river. Unlike summer, one has the time to take in the sights, pull up alongside the riverbank get out, explore, and sip on a hot cup of tea and enjoy some snacks. The 3.5-hour tour costs ¥7500. Minimum four people. For more info 0136 231688 or www.noasc.com.



Hokkaido Lion Adventure takes visitors on roaring outdoor adventures in Niseko. They do 1.5-hour **Snowshoe Eco-Trekking** tours from 9am-3pm. Minimum two persons, and over six years. Costs ¥3200 (adult), ¥1600 (6-12). Lion Adventures also do winter **river cruises** on the Shiribeshi River. The 1.5-hour tours operate from 9am-2pm, minimum two persons, and cost ¥4200 (adult), ¥3500 (6-12) and ¥1000 (3-6). For more call 0136-43-2882 or check www.hokkaido.lion-adventure.com.



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Snowshoeing

One of the special attractions in Niseko is to walk on a lake of solid ice. Especially if you have swum happily in that same lake before in summer. Scott Adventure Sports (SAS) runs snow shoeing tours to Hangetsu-ko (Half-Moon Lake), that people of any age can enjoy. They will pick you up from your accommodation and take you on the short 10-minute drive to the lake at the foot of Mt Yotei before you strap into the snowshoes and you're off. The walk into the lake is beautiful and peaceful, and once you're on the lake your guide might fill a saucepan with snow and boil you a cup of tea and supply you with some snacks. If you're really lucky he might sing you a Nepali lullaby while you rest. You can traipse out on the lake for as long as you like before you decide to return to the van. A great day out that everyone can enjoy, Call SAS for bookings on 0136 21 3333.



SNOWSHOEING... SAS guide Binod with Yasmin on frozen Half Moon Lake

Staying in the snow

Boukenkazoku offers snow activities for those who want to make the most of Niseko's powder. It does **snowshoeing** (¥4000 per person, two hours, minimum two persons), and **igloo camping** (¥7350 per person, includes two meals, minimum two persons). For more information call 0136-22-3759, or visit www.bouken-kazoku.com.



Photo: Glen Claydon.

Niseko Snowmobile Adventures (NSA) runs **fully-guided, hands-on tours in Niseko's backcountry**. With terrain suited for all levels from beginner to expert, NSA takes customers into the far reaches of the backcountry to places that are unattainable by foot, ski or board. Tours are available everyday and last for about six hours. Costs ¥30,000 per person for standard group tour, ¥45,000 for one-on-one private tour. For bookings call 090-9757-4083, or check www.go-nsa.com.

Tours

Tired of touristy Niseko? Want an authentic Japanese experience? Try **Kutchan's Cultural Tours**, a hit throughout the season. These tours of 'K-Town' offer a taste of the orient with an insight into a Japanese tea ceremony, a natural history museum and a Niseko sake brewery. There is one more tour this season on Tuesday, March 3, from 3pm-6pm. Tours depart from the Niseko Safety Information Centre (next to Seicomart). For more information, call 0136-23-0222.

Kutchan and Otaru tour packages are provided by JR Hokkaido. Ticket includes a round trip from Kutchan to Otaru and a day pass for Chuo bus. Costs are ¥3120 (adult) and ¥1550 (6-12yrs). One adult can bring two kids (under 6) for free. Call JR Kutchan Station on 0136-22-1310.



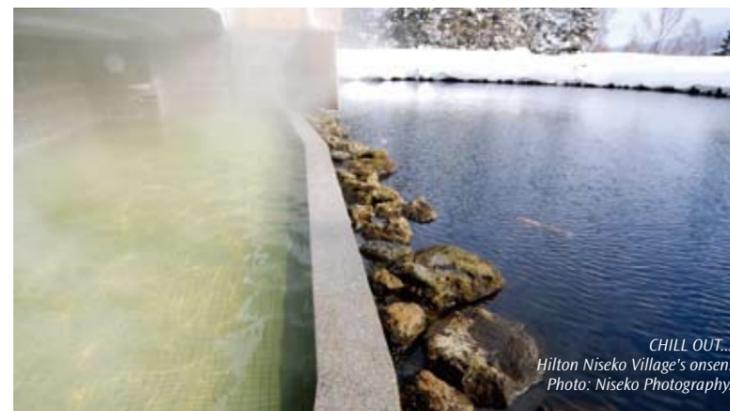
CANDLE-LIT CANAL... Otaru's popular annual snow festival.

Hanazono Adventure Park has loads of activities for both big and small kids to enjoy daily, from 9am to 4pm. Drive your own **snowmobile** on a summertime golf course for ¥1100 yen, drive for 8km on the Rabbit Course for ¥6400. **Covered magic carpets** offer lift access for snow play fun on **sleds and snow-tubes**. Tubes are ¥1800 per hour, or use the **premium sled**, complete with brakes and steering mechanism, for ¥1500. **Snow-rafting** whisks you around a specially designed course of berms for ¥1500 for adults and ¥1000 for children. And enjoy a guided tour and **strap on some snowshoes**. An hour for ¥3000 for adults and ¥2500 for kids. More info at www.skihanazono.com

Learn the skill of **making your very own snowman**. Another great activity for young and old, where you can take home a great photo of you, the family and Frosty the Snowman. Costs ¥1800. Minimum two people, and minimum age is four years. For more information call 0136-23-1688, or check www.noasc.com.

Ever wanted to learn how to **make a snow cave**? NOASC will show you how. It's just like playing in the sand pit and is a lot of fun for not only the kids, but also the rest of the family. Have a photo taken with your snow cave at the end. Snow caving costs ¥4000. Minimum two people, and minimum age is four. For more information call 0136-23-1688, or check www.noasc.com.

Relaxation



CHILL OUT... Hilton Niseko Village's onsen. Photo: Niseko Photography.

Niseko is home to many great **onsens (thermal baths)** – a Japanese tradition and the perfect relaxing answer to a long day up the mountain. Some of Niseko's best onsens are: Hotel Ikoimura in the Northern Resort Annupuri Hotel; Niseko Grand Hotel; Kira no Yu in Niseko Town; Hotel Kanronomori near the base of Moiwara resort; Alpen Hotel in Upper Hirafu Village; Hirafu Tei Prince Hotel on the main road to Grand Hirafu; Yugokoro Tei in Annupuri; Niseko Village (Higashiyama) Prince Hotel; Koikawa Onsen; Goshiki Onsen around the back of Mt Annupuri; and Yuki Chichibu behind Mt Annupuri. Onsens vary in price, but average around ¥600 per person.

What better way to relax on your day off and rub out the aches and pains from a day on the mountain than enjoying a **massage**? Niseko Massage and Java Massage are two of the best in Hirafu. For a full spa treatment; the Niseko Village's Wakka Spa has a great range of full body treatments. See the advertisement on page 23 for *Powderlife* specials.

For those who crave more exercise than skiing or boarding can provide, the Alpen Hotel, located by the Ace Pair Lift #1, houses the only 25m swimming pool in town. Also in the pool area are dry and wet saunas, spas and an onsen upstairs. Access to the pool costs ¥600, and pool/onsen passes are also available for ¥1000.

Fun for the young ones

Kids Land Annupuri offers **tobogganing and tubing** for the little ones between 9.30am and 4pm. Rental fee: Tobogganing is ¥300, and tubing is ¥500 per hour. For more information call 0136-58-2080, or check www.cks.chuo-bus.co.jp/annupuri.



Alpen Kids Park has **tobogganing and tubing** all day for free from 11am and 5pm. There is also a **zoo with penguins rabbits and llamas**, open from 10.30am until 5pm. Cost is ¥500. For more information call the Alpen on 0136-22-1105, or check www.grand-hirafu.jp/summer/hotels/alpen.

Niseko Kids at Niseko Village has **tobogganing and tubing** for free from 8.30am to 4.30pm. Call 0136-44-2211.

NOASC's **Kids's Snow Adventures** program is specifically designed for the little ones aged four to 12 years. Experienced instructors ensure children enjoy themselves with a variety of snow activities on these half and full-day programs. Prices are ¥5000 (half-day) and ¥11,000 (full-day, including lunch). For more information call 0136-23-1688, or check www.noasc.com.

Classes

One of the great things about visiting a foreign country is communicating with the locals in their own language. **Learn basic Japanese** in the Samuuri Bar in Niseko's Yurt Village on Shirakaba-Zaka Street (Middle Village, across the road from Seicomart). Local bi-lingual 'tdes', who writes *Powderlife's* 'Japanese for Powder People' column and broadcasts the popular *The Daily English Show*, takes the classes, teaching useful words and phrases for English-speaking tourists. Held Sundays, 4pm-5pm. Cost: ¥1000 (includes one drink). For more information visit www.thedailyenglishshow.com/nisekojapanese.



For an experience you can take home with you there is **leather making** at FanFun. For 20 minutes each, you can make a bracelet (¥1575), a dog collar (¥2625), or a cell phone charm (¥1575). Open between 10am-5pm. Reservation required. For more information, call 050-7551-2688, email fan-funniseko@cpost.plala.or.jp, or visit <http://www.17.plala.or.jp/fan-fun/top.html>.

Niseko Gourmet offers **Japanese cooking workshops** on held in winter on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11am-2pm. www.niseko-gourmet.com.

Niseko's Saison Club has a wide variety of **indoor activities** available. These include cooking classes: ice cream, jam and sausage. There are also silver, glass and hemp accessory classes. Durations, costs and availability vary, so for more information call 0136-44-3380, or check www.nisekolodge.saison-club.com.

Hokkaido Lion Adventure does **Nature Craft** (making photo frames, chopsticks, flutes, pencils and name plates with material from the woods). Costs ¥2000 per person for two hours, minimum age six years. For more call 0136-43-2882, or check www.hokkaido.lion-adventure.com.



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POWDER POSTER

rider Domu Narita, Kissmark Cup photo Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography

A THOUSAND WORDS...

IN THE CLOUDS... All that can be seen of Jahl Marshall is a board base under a puff of peak powder. Photo: Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography.



TAKING OFF... Cam McKay launches himself into Niseko's backcountry. Photo: Glen Claydon.



Joel Graham buries his rail in an East Ridge powder stash. Photo: Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography.



POW... Lachy Keevers doing some snow clearing of his own at Kiroro. Photo: Ben Gillespie.



WHITE WALL... Griff (aka JPEG) draws an 'S' for 'shredding' in Niseko's Goshiki backcountry. Photo: Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography.



ROOSTER TAIL... Greg Bradbury finds a bit of shade from the sun at Annupuri. Photo: Jahl Marshall.



CLIFF HANGER... Jahl Marshall suspended in time on the East Ridge. Photo: Rory Gardiner, Niseko Photography.



Taiki Nakamura



Name Taiki Nakamura
Job Hanazono terrain park crew
Born 11/2/1982
Stance regular – front 18°/back 9°
Setup Burton Shaun White 158cm; Burton Cartel bindings; Shaun White boots?
Favourite terrain All the terrain in Hanazono is No. 1!
Favourite trick I like to do some different spins on each of Hanazono's three kickers. I also like to front-side tail slide on the bus, and to lay back into the pow pow wall.
Time in Niseko Six years

Top 10 Powder tracks

1. Kumomi / Nujabes
2. Stimulation / Nomak
3. Fresh In My Mind / A Forest Mighty Black
4. Hanazono / Jazzanova Feat. Hajime Yoshizawa
5. Good Sleep / I Am Robot and Proud
6. Shine / The Album Leaf
7. Light Night Dance (Shinichi Osawa Remix) / De De Mouse
8. The Sky Was Pink (Holden remix) / Nathan Fake
9. Soopertrack / EXTRAWELT
10. Bolo Hari / Prem Joshua



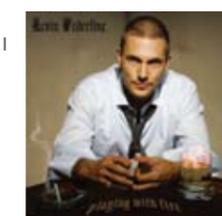
Empire of the Sun, Walking on a Dream, 2008
EMPIRE of the Sun is a band formed from two bands that has become one band through a process of becoming one band. Just like that sentence, this album is a whole bunch of what the #*&@. Don't get me wrong, I really like it, but guys, come on, tone down on the whole weirdo thing. Oddballs Nick Littlemore (Pnau) and Luke Steele (The Sleepy Jackson) have put together the perfect combination of alt-pop-dance to make *Walking on a Dream*, which featured highly on Triple J radio's recent Hottest 100 countdown. Eighties-infused and gloriously happy, it will put a smile on your face, but damn, they are tripped out. 4 These Brownies Are Making Me More Hungry out of 5.
Songs to listen for: *Walking on a Dream, Half Mast, Swordfish Hotkiss Night.*



The Von Bondies, Love, Hate, Then There Was You, 2009
FINALLY there is a follow up album from 'The Bondies'. Due out later this month, four years after their boom to fame with *Pawn Shoppe Heart*, they release an album that is so consistent with the last, you would think it was recorded a month after release. They have not lost touch with what made them garage superstars in the first place. It's just super-bluesy punk with a bit of a melody, and that's how the punters like it. Good follow up and an awesome album for the slopes. 3.5 Wow There's An Asian Dude In The Band out of 5. **Songs to listen for:** *Pale Bride, This Is Our Perfect Crime, Earthquake.*



Kevin Federline, Playing with Fire, 2006
I UNDERSTAND it might seem a little behind the times, but I thought I would listen, just to listen some of Kevin's 'music'. To all real music listeners, I'm sorry. This album is not an album. It's not music. It's not anything. He has found that mysterious grey area that everything disappears into and becomes nothingness. He alone has shifted time and space, and global warming is directly related to him. Synth beats and really bad vocals. I can't honestly review this. It is like picking on a 'special' kid. Poor guy, but still it's worth a listen if you are interested. 1 It's Still Better Than Nickelback out of 5; **Song to listen for:** *PopoZao.*



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How to build a snow cave

By Matthew Thomas



IT'S a skier, boarder or hiker's worst nightmare – the cold, harsh reality that you unwillingly have to spend a night out in the backcountry.

You simply have no idea where you are, have exhausted all your options, and night is drawing in very fast. With darkness comes cruel weather, temperatures of minus 15°C and much lower – not factoring in wind-chill. In these conditions, hypothermia can hijack your body in a matter of minutes. In light of all this, you need to hunker down and wait out the night in the warmest, safest location possible until the sun rises. Then, you can reassess your options, or wait until someone finds you. In many cases, the best place to spend the night is in a snow cave...

READERS may recall that in the last edition *Powderlife* we brought you tips from Black Diamond Lodge tour guide and certified Canadian Avalanche Association guide, Andrew Spragg, on how to survive being lost in the backcountry. This edition, Andrew takes you step-by-step through how to build something that may just save your life – a snow cave.

Step 1: In order to dig a snow cave, you need to find a sufficiently deep pocket of snow. Use your avalanche probe to find a suitably deep location, hopefully with at least three metres of snow pack depth. Adequate snow depth, free of rocks and ice, is needed. Look around trees and on leeward slopes if the snow pack is shallow. In Hokkaido, this will generally not be a problem much past mid-December, thanks to heavy snowfalls.

Step 2: Once you have found a suitably deep location, dig a hole straight down at least three meters deep. Try to avoid sweating while working by shedding layers of clothes. Use a shovel to dig the snow cave – something that you should always carry with you out in the backcountry (an ice axe may also come in handy). Digging by hand should be for emergencies only. Following this, dig an entrance into the side of your hole. If you are on a slope, the entrance would go on the uphill side. Keep the entrance at the very bottom of the hole and as small as possible, then tunnel into the slope.

Step 3: Once you have dug inwards about 50cm, you can begin to dig upwards and sideways, opening up an area to sleep in. Make sure it is big enough to accommodate everyone, but not so big that it is harder to stay warm. The roof should be in a dome shape to prevent dripping on the occupants. The idea is that you will actually sit/sleep above the height of the entrance, so that your body heat will be trapped inside the cave and not get sucked out the door. Remember that over the course of the night your cave will settle and sag lower, so make sure that the roof is sufficiently high to allow for this.

Step 4: Once you have cleared a sufficient sleeping area above the height of the door, you need to prepare a bed or sitting area for yourself. You need to try to get yourself off of the snow so you don't lose valuable body heat, or get wet. If there are trees nearby, you can use tree boughs or branches to form a sleeping surface. Otherwise, use your pack and anything else that you can think of to sit/lay down on that keeps you off of the snow.

Step 5: Next, light candles (if you have some, they are a good idea) inside the cave. This will help the inside of the cave to develop an ice layer to become



Photos: Ross Monaghan.

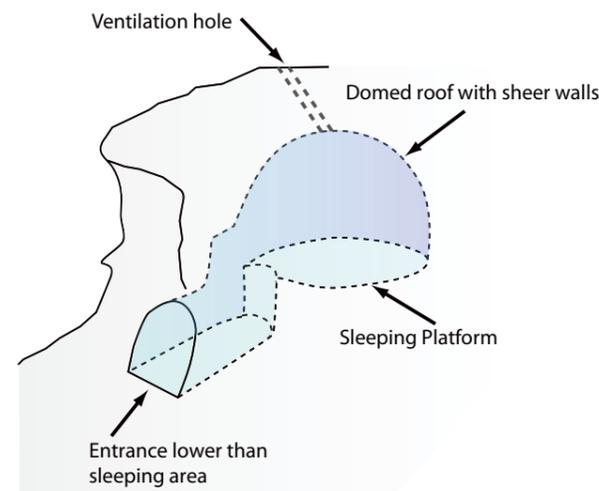
stronger, as well as providing valuable heat that should remain trapped inside the cave.

Step 6: After this, head back outside and poke a few air holes through the roof of the cave with your probe before going back inside.

Step 7: Use the remainder of your gear to plug the entrance hole of the cave to trap all possible heat inside. The entrance may be partially blocked with chunks of snow to block wind and retain heat, although it is vital to prevent drifting snow from completely plugging the rest of the entrance in order to maintain a constant air supply.

Step 8: While waiting out the night in your snow cave, here are a few tips on how to stay safe and warm:

- * **Stay dry** – avoid sweating and keep yourself off of the snow as much as possible. Always stay one step ahead of your body temperature. If you're about to work hard, take a layer off to avoid sweating. Conversely, as soon as you stop working hard, re-layer again. It's much easier to stay warm than get warm.
- * **Insulate yourself** with anything and everything you can: backpacks, tree branches, space blankets, all available clothing. If things are really bad, focus on keeping your core warm and ignore your extremities.
- * **Keep moving.** Swing your arms, jump up and down, hit yourself... whatever it takes to keep the blood flowing.
- * **Urinate frequently.** Your body expends a surprising amount of heat energy keeping the fluids in your bladder warm. Since this is waste product, and no longer much use to you, there's no point wasting heat energy keeping it warm.
- * **Keep yourself well-fed and hydrated if possible.** Staying warm requires your body to burn energy, so the more available energy you have, the warmer you will stay.



Why are snow caves warm?

ALTHOUGH it is made entirely of snow and ice, a snow cave has thermal properties similar to an igloo (as used by Eskimos), and is particularly effective at providing protection from wind and low temperatures. This is due to snow's excellent insulation properties. A properly made snow cave can be 0°C or warmer inside, even when outside temperatures are -40°C.

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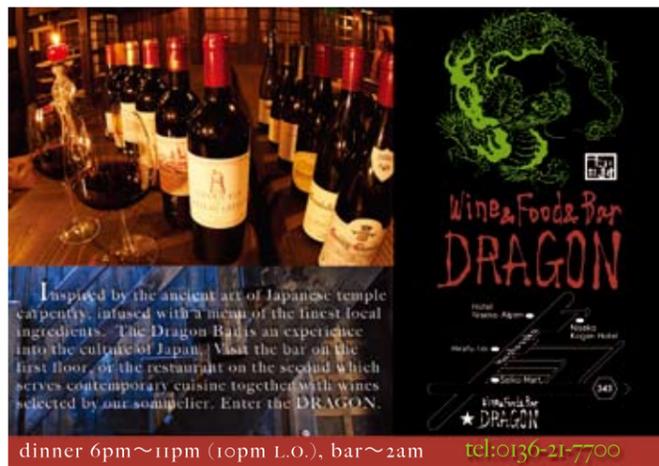
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Like eating art Niseko's Freedom Inn

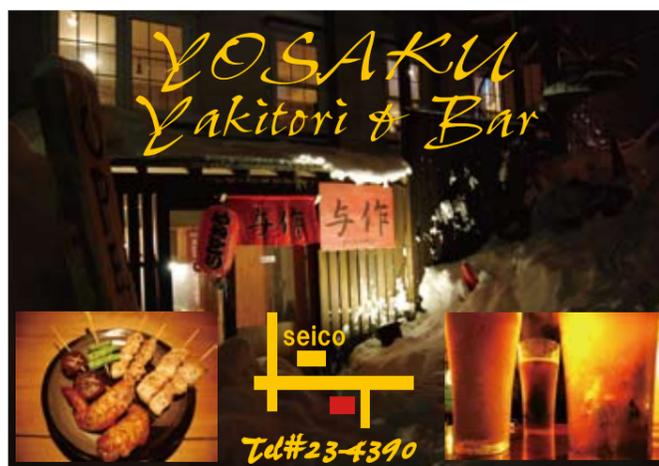
By Matthew Thomas




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FREEDOM Inn's artistic French and Italian-inspired cuisine simply looks too good to eat – like a painting on a plate.

Not eating this exquisite food is simply an impossible task, though, courtesy of the meals tasting even better than they look. Quite the predicament: to eat, or to sit there and just stare?

"My first introduction to Japan was through the food," Freedom Inn's proprietor, Cliff Bernstein, tells *Powderlife*. "What the Japanese teach you about cooking is you eat with your eyes, then with your mouth."

Pulling up outside the modest Freedom Inn – a close five minutes from the Hanazono ski slopes, on the outskirts of Niseko – my dining partner and I had not an idea of the treats that lay within. Very unassuming, most would not predict that inside this beautifully simplistic red-brick boutique hotel (a former pension) would be such high-quality, gourmet fare. A more pleasant surprise I can't remember. "I think it's better than the other way around – having high expectations and not being satisfied," philosophises the genial New Yorker.

Stepping inside the inn's doors, the antique-style décor gives off that feeling of walking back into your grandparent's home (a very well-appointed home, that is). It's a very homely, welcoming and warming experience. Cliff has retained the 'ma and pop' vibe since converting from a pension to a boutique hotel – thankfully not over-formalising anything. Just think raging wood fireplace, old stained timber furniture, antique lamps and paisley lounges, among other charms.

Cliff visited Freedom Inn as a guest just a few years ago, when it was still a pension and, with the charming feel of this place, thought it to be 'the perfect spot to plant his feet'. Fortunately, the owners – a Japanese couple in their sixties – we ready to sell. The rest is history.

But let's move away from the décor and into the important bit: the food. Cliff, who has lived in Japan for many years, has noticed that 'the Japanese travel to eat'. "I did the same, came here on a mission following a great Japanese meal I ate in New York once," he says. "The former owners of the inn cooked occasionally, but there was never a real restaurant. I just can't imagine doing a lodging here without great food."

The Freedom Inn's culinary team, led by Chef Fukushima, all hail from the local Niseko area. "Our humble chef Fukushima has been an institution in the area for years, and has a touch with spices and a passion for cooking that only the great artists have," says Cliff. We thought we would be the judge of that. Turns out Cliff was right.

For starters, we ordered the unique and flavoursome sliced cod and salad with anchovies on a bed of rucola (¥800). This was accompanied by another entrée, Cliff's personal favourite, a brochette of skewered Rusutsu pork served on a hot plate with fresh local vegetables. We were forewarned that this pork was one of the most famous meats in the area, so how could we resist? Our suspicions were confirmed: tender and tasty would be an understatement.

The pasta dish for the night was the tagliatelli, a creamy mix of shrimp and scallops in a tomato and gorgonzola



sauce (¥1300). This, too, was an excellent choice, due to Chef Fukushima having a particular fondness for cooking with gorgonzola, combined with the fact that Hokkaido seafood, especially the scallops, are among the juiciest and best quality in the world. It must be said that Freedom Inn really capitalises on its access to quality fruits de mer.

We then went for a set course, the 'Shiribeshi' (¥5000), which Cliff says really allows the chefs to show off their culinary prowess. This course alone is more than enough for even the most famished of diners. Value for money and simply divine, it is designed to mix the best seafood and meat produce that is the freshest of each particular day – all book-ended by soup, appetisers, dessert du jour and tea or coffee. That particular night we enjoyed creamy pumpkin soup; an antipasto mix of bruschetta, olives, fresh cold cuts and sun-dried tomatoes; a tender, rare main in a Japanese-style beef capriccioso with fresh vegetables, dripping in flavoursome sauce; and an equally saucy seafood main meal featuring more scallops, shrimps, white fish and escargot.

Freshly baked focaccia breads (¥400) soaked up the plentiful soups and sauces.

For dessert we made room for a selection of beautifully decorated pastries. Regretfully, it wasn't until after our meal that we were told of the chef's hand-made ice cream, which emphasises the 'cream' aspect. Ah well, next time...

Complementing the meal was a breathtaking, quaffable bottle of A. Rafanelli Zinfandel red (¥8800). Cliff's recommendation, and 'one of, if not the last, bottle in Japan', this 2005 gem was pulled from Freedom Inn's nothing

short of impressive cellar of carefully selected Californian wines.

Cliff's cousin, the friendly and professional Jenna, also from the Big Apple, was waitress for the evening, enchanting us with her conversation, an artistic eye and infallible service.

Tasting and looking at this perfect food, one would expect a hefty bill, considering many have apparently left this inn dubbing the Freedom Inn's restaurant 'the best in Niseko'. Where I am from, this sort of food would cost a lot more. A lot more! Thankfully, prices stayed very reasonable. "In addition to creating great-tasting food, we believe in keeping the prices accessible," says Cliff. "Our basic concept is if people are staying at the hotel, we want them to come down and spend at least half their meals here. If they're in Hirafu, we'd like to see them at least twice."

Topping off a perfect night, Freedom Inn has started running a pick-up and drop-off driving service for dining guests from Hirafu.

But if you are looking at more than just an evening at Freedom Inn, the 16-room hotel offers rooms in various configurations – mostly western doubles, but also offering traditional Japanese-style rooms.

While Freedom Inn was built back in 1999, its restaurant is open for business for the first time this winter season after swinging open the doors officially in early December. Cliff, chefs, Jenna and co. should all be proud that they have pulled everything off perfectly the first time around.

For more information on Freedom Inn, including directions and contact details, check www.powderlife.com/restaurants.



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Shake no foil mushi

Tess Stomski and Sachiko Kageyama share their Shake no foil mushi recipe.

SHAKE no foil mushi, or Salmon en papillote, is a modern Japanese dish created from Sachiko's inspiration of the traditional Hokkaido dish Shake no chanchan yaki, meaning salmon cooked on a grill with vegetables. The highlight of this dish is definitely the fresh Hokkaido salmon, which remains tender and moist during the cooking process. The Hokkaido salmon season is during autumn in the months of October and November, at which time the salmon is particularly tasty and fatty due to the cold waters and cold climate in Hokkaido.

It is said that every fisherman's family in Hokkaido has a secret recipe for the sauce which is added after cooking. Usually a miso sauce is added to finish the dish, however, Sachiko's version is cooked with soy and sake, which results in a delicate flavour to complement the fresh salmon and vegetables.



Ingredients:

- 4 Salmon steaks
- 100g each maitake, shimeji, enoki mushrooms
- 1 leek cut thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 2cm piece ginger, julienned ginger
- 1 medium onion
- 40g butter
- 4 teaspoons soy sauce
- 4 teaspoons sake
- salt and pepper
- 2.5g sea kelp stock

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200C.
2. Pat the salmon steaks dry with paper towel, then season with salt and pepper. Set the salmon aside until the surface of the fish starts to shine.
3. Thinly slice the onion and soak in cold water to reduce the sharpness. Soak for 10 minutes, changing the water two or three times. Drain and squeeze any excess water from the onions.
4. Separate the mushrooms from each other and cut off the bottom of the stems.
5. Cut aluminium foil into four pieces, large enough to hold the salmon and vegetables.
6. Divide the onion between each piece of foil and then put a piece of salmon on each.
7. On top of the salmon add some more onion, ginger, leek and finally the mushrooms.
8. Drizzle on the sake, soy sauce, and sea kelp stock and finally place a knob of butter in the centre before closing the foil pouches.
9. Place the foil pouches in the pre heated oven and bake for 15-20minutes.
10. Serve with steamed rice.

Bon Appetit!



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BACKSIDE 180... Greg Bradbury.
Photo: Jahl Marshall.

Shredding School

By Matthew Thomas

Snowboard

POWDERLIFE has launched its 'how to' column, 'Shredding School'. Each issue, you can check out a copy of the mag for a ski and snowboard trick, which will get more difficult as your season and skill level progresses.

So, take the front seat in the class and pay attention as 'Shredding School' provides you with all the trick technicalities from some of Niseko's hottest riders. All you have to worry about it getting up there and stomping it for yourself!

AUSSIE shredder Greg Bradbury has a lucky 13 years of experience on a snowboard, spending seasons in America, Canada, France, Austria and Japan. While he's in Niseko for the winter, *Powderlife* thought it wise to ask him to help us out with a few handy trick tips. This

week, Greg walks us through a Backside 180...

1. Test the jump several times before hitting it at top speed. Then, approach the jump squatted and low with knees bent. Check you have sufficient speed to clear the knuckle. Stay centred and relaxed as you approach the jump, riding slightly on your toe edge.

2. As you leave the jump, pop equally over both feet. Use your shoulders, head and hip (your core) to turn, and your body will follow (basically, where you look is where you're going!).

3. After you've left the jump, stay low and compact in the air by sucking your knees into your chest. For stability, grab the board (in this shot, Greg's holding a Melon Grab). Oh, and while you're up there, enjoy the air time!

4. Because the backside jump is 'blind' (your back

faces down the mountain for the majority of the time), make sure you are looking over your shoulder – or even between your legs – to see the approaching landing. Hold the grab as long as you can, until you spot your landing pad.

5. Land slightly on your toe edge to stop the spin, so you don't 'wash out', but try to land equally on both feet. Don't land straight-legged, absorb the impact with bent knees. Land straight and make sure you can ride switch before trying the trick, otherwise you could be in for a rude shock when landing.

6. Ride over to you mates, slap them a 'high-five', then get back up there and prove you can do it again. Or, better still, try a new and more challenging grab next time.



ONE-EIGHTY... Nicolas Cruz.
Photo: Jahl Marshall.

Ski

FRENCH pro Nicolas Cruz has skied for 24 of his 26 years on this Earth – so he may just be an authority on skiing. His home village resort is Châtel in the French Alps, close to the Swiss border, but he has skied throughout the world in Switzerland, Austria, Canada, Argentina, New Zealand and Japan. Nicolas breaks down one of the first tricks skiers should try – the 180.

1. Always do a speed check to make sure you don't land on the flat or overshoot the jump altogether. Approaching the jump, be tucked in with legs bent to absorb the compression of the kicker, then leap to catch some air. The split moment you are first in the air you need to catch your balance and spot your landing. Remember, the closer your skis are upon jumping, the more chance there is of catching and edge, or tapping your skis into each other. Have a good, comfortable balance between what's too wide

and too close together for you.

2. Lift your legs and tuck yourself in the air for balance, then twist your core (head, shoulders and hips) in the direction you want to spin. Try a Safety Grab under the boot to keep yourself in the trick and focussed, and a grab also helps with balance and control. Extend other arm out for balance and style.

3. Always know where your landing is – never let it leave your sight. The main thing here is to hold your grab and spot where you're going to land.

4. Position your skis parallel to each other, and make sure they are in a comfortable position for landing. The position you land in switch is paramount because it's easier when you're facing backwards to lose balance and 'kook it'.

5. Extend yourself to absorb the landing – if you land with your legs still tucked in you will not be able

to absorb the landing. But also remember not to land with your legs too straight either; bend your legs like springs to absorb the shock.

6. Lean forward, because when you land switch, you need to make sure your balance is on your nose to compensate for landing downhill backwards. But make sure you are not leaning so far forward that you need to balance with your hands – not a good look! Now, if you're feeling like you have this jump down-pat, try a Mute Grab (cross skis and put hand in front of your boot), a tail grab, or a cork (getting head at same height as your knees – like a corkscrew).

Stay tuned class, because next week, *Powderlife's* 'Stomping School' will walk you through a Rail Slide. Until then, good luck with your 180, and happy riding! Class dismissed!

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Lesson 6: Travel

EVERYTHING was going so well. Then, you somehow got separated from your mate on the mountain, inexplicably forgot how to get to the meeting place, and now you've just realized that the bus you're sitting on doesn't seem to be going in the direction of your hotel. Crikey. The night's superb line-up of an onsen and a few nama beers looks dangerously as if it's about to crumble. If only you knew how to ask the bus driver where the bus was headed! Well, you've turned to the right page – in today's lesson you'll learn some useful Japanese for when you're trying to get somewhere.

1. このバス、ひらふ行きですか? Kono basu Hirafu iki desu ka? Is this bus going to Hirafu?

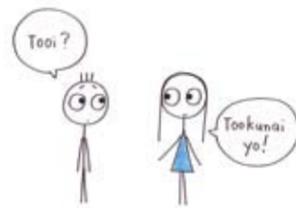
One of the things that seems to confuse tourists in Niseko is the fact that the village at the bottom of the Grand Hirafu ski field is called **Hirafu**, not **Niseko**. Niseko is the name of the whole area – which includes several ski fields and villages. So, if you're in Annupuri, heading to Hirafu, asking the bus driver if they're headed to Niseko is like getting on a bus in the middle of Sydney and asking if the bus is going to Australia. There is actually a town called Niseko – a very nice little town indeed – but there's no ski field there and it's possibly not where your hotel is. If you want to check if the bus is going to Hirafu, ask: **Kono basu Hirafu iki desu ka?** (Is this bus going to Hirafu?)

2. どこ Doko? Where?

This is probably the most important word to remember in order to find something. Then you can at least point to the name of the thing you're looking for and ask **doko?** These phrases may be useful too: **Naito Go basu tei wa doko desu ka?** (Where is the Night Go bus stop?) **Banana Hotel wa doko desu ka?** (Where is the Banana Hotel?)

3. 遠い? Tooi? Is it far?

Before you decide how you're going to get from your lodge to the restaurant, you might want to find out how far it is. **Tooi?** (Is it far?) **Chikai?** (Is it close?) You might get an answer like this: **Sonna ni tookunai** (It's not that far). Or: **Totemo chikai** (It's really close). Maybe you'd like to try a more specific question: **Aruite dore gurai kakaru?** (How long does it take to walk?) Or: **Aruite ikeru?** (Can we walk there?)



4. 10分かかる Jyuppun kakaru It takes ten minutes.

Kakaru means to take, as in how long it takes to do something or get somewhere. Numbers for time in Japanese aren't too tricky. Try starting by remembering the ones you're most likely to use, such as: **go hun** (five minutes), **jyuppun** (ten minutes), **san jyuppun** (thirty minutes), **ichi ji kan** (one hour), **ni ji kan** (two hours).

5. 次の便は何時ですか? Tsugi no bin wa nanji desu ka? When are you next leaving?

There's a shuttle bus sitting outside your lodge with a driver inside. You know this bus will take you to the gondola, but you're not sure when. Ask the driver: **Tsugi no bin wa nanji desu ka?** (When are you next leaving?) They might go just for you, in which case they'll answer: **Itsu demo ii desu yo** (I can go when you're ready). Or they might tell you when they're leaving: **Sugu demasu yo** (I'm leaving now), **Mou sugu demasu yo** (I'm leaving soon), **Ato jyuppun gurai** (In about ten minutes).



6. 出発 Shuppatsu departure

Sadly, you're leaving Niseko tomorrow morning, so you have to take the bus back to the **kuukou** (airport) to catch the **hikouki** (plane). You'd better double check times of **shuppatsu** (departure) and **touchaku** (arrival). **Ashita no asa no basu wa hachi ji ni shuppatsu desu ne?** (The bus leaves at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning, doesn't it?) These words may come in handy: **asa** (morning), **gozenchu** (late morning), **gogo** (afternoon), **yuugata** (evening), **yoru** (night).

7. もう一人来ます! Mou hitori kimasu! There's one more person coming!

You're getting on the bus and the driver looks like he's about to leave – but your husband's still in the waiting room getting his boots on. He was being a pain in the arse when you were packing this morning, but still, you can't leave him in Japan! Tell the driver there's one more person coming: **Mou hitori kimasu!** Then apologise profusely for keeping the driver waiting by repeating: **sumimasen**.



8. 二人 Futari two people

If you've already had the shock of discovering that the three Japanese numbers you know – **ichi**, **ni**, **san** – don't actually cover all the bases in Japan, you won't be surprised to hear that you need special words when counting people. If you're travelling in a couple, try to remember this word: **futari** (two people). If you want to pay for your girlfriend's bus ticket too, when you're handing the money over, say: **Futari desu** (This is for two people).

9. お願いします Onegaishimasu please

What do you say to the driver when you get on the bus? You can say **ohayou gozaimasu** (good morning), **konnichi wa** (hello), **konban wa** (good evening). Or you can try this: **onegaishimasu**. It literally means please – but it's a very natural thing to say to a bus driver in Japanese.



10. 降ります! Orimasu! I'm getting off!

You're sitting half way back on a crowded bus and seem to be the only person who wants to get off at this stop – how do you make the driver wait without stammering something in English and looking like another clueless tourist? Shouting one word will do the trick: **Orimasu!** (I'm getting off!). The other tourists will be impressed with your Japanese and the bus driver will patiently wait while you get off. As you're pushing past people to get off, say: **sumimasen** (excuse me/sorry/get out of my way). Then choose between many ways of thanking the driver, such as: **doumo**, **arigatou**, **arigatou gozaimasu**.

Pronunciation guide: Since this magazine can't talk, your best bet is to find a Japanese person and ask them to say the words and repeat after them. Then buy them a beer

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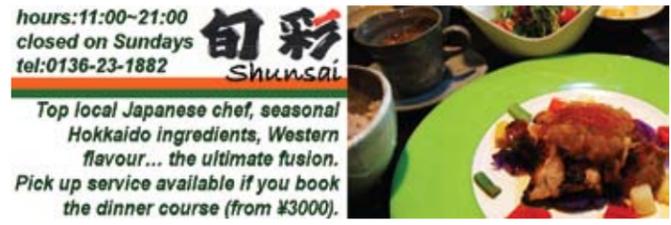
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Introducing Kutchan

WHILE Niseko becomes a thriving, modern international ski resort in winter, just a 10-minute bus ride away is an authentic little rural Japanese town, Kutchan – affectionately known by foreigners as 'K-town'. It's the closest 'big' town to Niseko with a population of about 15,000 people. Kutchan is the service town for surrounding rural villages in the region, including Niseko, but in years gone by it has been quite a thriving little entertainment district on the back of past ski booms. Kutchan's nightlife these days is pretty tame compared to what most foreigner visitors would be used to, but therein lies its charm. For the younger crowd at least one night exploring the back alleys of Kutchan for a quirky little bar or karaoke joint is a must – it could well be one of the best experiences of your trip. For those not after a party, there are countless – possibly a hundred or more – unique little restaurants to choose from. For ideas about where to head check out www.powderlife.com/magazine/kutchan

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9	11	5	1
Welcome Center	Seicomart Hirafu intersection	MaxValue	Kutchan JR Train Station
17:00	17:03	17:14	17:20
18:30	18:33	18:44	18:50
09:30	09:33	09:44	09:50
20:15	20:18	20:29	20:35
21:15	21:18	21:29	21:35
22:20	22:23	22:34	22:40
23:20	23:23	23:34	23:40

1	5	9
Kutchan JR Train Station	Lerch Memorial Park	Welcome Center
18:10	18:16	18:26
19:00	19:06	19:18
19:55	20:01	20:13
20:55	21:01	21:13
22:00	22:06	22:18
23:00	23:06	23:18




Kutchan Downtown

Restaurant and Bar District

Free Bus Information

は、倶知安町市街とひらふ地区を結ぶ「倶知安ナイト号」のバス停です。
is bus stop of Kutchan Night Bus which connects Kutchan downtown and Hirafu village.

Snack bars of K-town

By Shukin Moderski



MANY of you have come to the area for just a ski holiday, and to experience a bit of Japanese culture.

If you have made your way down to Kutchan and wandered around the restaurant district, you have probably noticed places resembling bars without any windows, and somewhere on their signs; “スナック” or ‘Snack’ and have wondered what the story is there. ‘Snacks’ are the younger sister of the ‘kyabakura’ or ‘hostess’ clubs you will see in the bigger cities, where young women are hired for their looks, their ability to hold a conversation, and their tolerance for alcohol. These are not houses of prostitution, rather they are places where you can go and talk to a woman, have her make your drinks, massage your ego, and charge you dearly in the end.

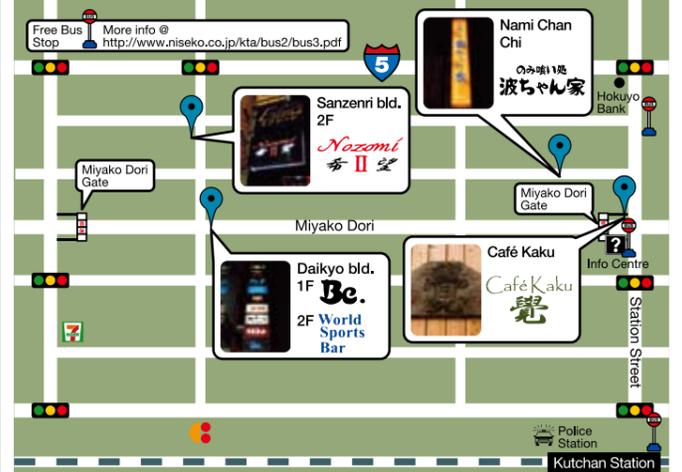
‘Snacks’, on the other hand, are a bit different. There are usually just a few women behind a long bar with proper seats for the customers, like a normal bar. But, the main difference is the women will strike up the conversation. More often than not these ladies have spent many hours making sure they look stunning under the dim lights of the bar, and have a rather successful technique for encouraging you to have ‘just one more drink’ and come back the same time next week.

Although most of the customers are men, women are welcome. Due to the establishment of a large Japan Self Defence Forces (Jieitai) base on the outskirts of Kutchan in 1956, Kutchan has a plethora of snack bars. If you are looking to give it a go, we suggest getting cashed up and wandering around the restaurant district after 8pm and look for the place that you want to try.

Most places will add a ¥500-plus charge o your bill at the end, but it is okay to ask about the system before ordering. If one of the lovely ladies asks if it is alright to drink with you, you are footing the bill. Often places which have hourly charges post a menu outside. Give it a go!



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Men Who Ride Mountains

Interview by Matthew Thomas

PEOPLE all around town are continually asking me and the Powderlife crew about Stirling Goldman. Who is he deep down? What makes him tick? And, of course, the female readers are forever asking 'how can I meet him'? So, we have decided to give the people of Niseko what they want. A more in-depth look into Stirling Goldman – what is behind the man who rides mountains? So I sat down and decided to get off-piste and go deep with Stirling in a one-on-one interview, conducted in the Powderlife office.

Powderlife: Hi Stirling, thanks for giving up your time and talking to us here at Powderlife.

Stirling Goldman: Ok, Matt, stop brown-nosing and get on with it. I've got powder to slice and a few ladies downstairs waiting for me in the Powderlife Cafe.

PL: Well, Stirls, your column has been running in Powderlife for about a year now. It is certainly a favourite amongst many. How are you finding it?

SG: Favourite amongst many? Amongst many? I'd say amongst all, Matt, amongst all. I mean, it carries your magazine. I must admit when your bosses, that has been Colless and wannabe Lund approached me about an article in the magazine, I was a little skeptical. But it turns out the mag is slightly above average, the article is a little ripper, and besides, Stirls likes to give something back to the people of Niseko. And the people love Stirls. For he is a deity – The Messiah of Mount Annupuri, Niseko.

PL: Stirls, how has the season been for you so far, with regards to skiing?

SG: Well, Matt, pretty good. The snow has been steady, and I have required the snorkel on at least 25 days. I have only needed the scuba gear on two occasions, which has been a little disappointing, but there are still a few good weeks left. As for the 210 Blizzards and rear entry Nordica boots, those babies are the gift that keep on giving. They are timeless and ageless, much like Stirling's body.

PL: And the ladies and nightlife Stirls? How have they been treating you?

SG: Matt, they are a given. (Stirling quickly sticks his head downstairs to the Powderlife cafe), actually, a few more have just walked in since the interview started. I thought you said you were keeping this on the down-low? They must be groupies, so I'll stay clear or maybe just give them one run only. Matt, to cut to the chase, the harem is healthy. Yes, Matt, the harem is very healthy. As for the beers, well 48 amber nectars per night is still par for the course. No more, no less.

PL: Stirling, you really are a machine, I can't believe you got through customs.

SG: Thanks. I'm sometimes a bit concerned going through customs, especially as I'm always packing these concealed weapons. (Stirling points to his biceps).

PL: Yes, people are often amazed as to how you do stay in such good shape.

SG: Matt, are you attracted to me? You wouldn't be the first to have a man-crush on me. I mean, I don't roll that way, big fella. But don't worry, I'm used to it. It usually comes from snowboarders, actually. Don't fight it. Matt, when you ski as hard as I do, on virtually perpendicular mountains with neck-deep snow, staying in shape is child's play. The ladies love it. The men marvel. By the way, Matt, do you know any good accountants (Stirling lifts his shirt and points to his ridiculously chiseled abs at this point)? I need some help counting to eight.



PL: Stirls, has there ever been a Mrs. Goldman?

SG: (Stirls becomes unusually quiet) Once, Matt, once. She was the female equivalent of me... a true woman who rides mountains. She was attractive (that is a given), kind-hearted and could rip it on a pair of skis better than anyone I knew... except me, of course.

PL: So what happened?

SG: Well, Matt, it was the perfect day that turned into the worst day of my life. We had just jogged up K2 and I proposed at the summit. The rock was almost as big as the mountain. She had said 'yes', and despite the fact I knew she knew she was the luckiest woman in the world, I was still ecstatic. But unfortunately, Matt, upon the descent we were cutting some lines and tragedy struck. She took this 80-foot cliff and set off a slide. By the time I found her, she had passed on. Not ever the sixth sense helped me that day (Stirling appears to shed a tear). Anyway, Matt, that is about as deep as I get on-piste. Next question please.

PL: Yes, mate, I understand. So, Stirls, do you ever allow anyone to ski with you in Niseko?

SG: Matt, I usually prefer to ride alone. Partly after that day, yet more so because no one on the hill is as good as me or goes as hard. But Stirling does have time for a few people to come and cut some easier lines from time to time. Tom 'Triple 20' Rourke and Kuni Hosoi go OK. I mean, they are no Goldman, but who is?

PL: Goldman, many people feel you are a little full of yourself at times? Arrogant perhaps?

SG: The difference between arrogance and confidence is a fine line, Matt. The ladies love the confidence, Matt, they love it. In fact, many of them even love arrogance. They just don't admit it. As for the men, jealousy is a curse. Matt, I don't talk it up. I don't need to. Results speak for themselves. A bit like Microsoft during the glory years... the annual report doesn't lie. The only thing different is that Stirling is still producing quality results on his hard drive.

PL: Well Stirling, thanks for the interview. You truly are a man who rides mountains. Stirling? Stirling?

SG: (Silence. Matt sees Stirling walking out of the Powderlife cafe with a lady on each arm, stopping for an autograph in the street).

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Utopian village near Hirafu

NISEKO Kogen Kanko Co. Ltd., the company managing Grand Hirafu, the largest mountain resort in Niseko, is working on a new development named Irenka Village.

Irenka is an Ainu word meaning Utopia and within their 25 hectare site on the outskirts of Hirafu, Tokyu is planning to develop two hotels and at least 20 condominiums. Plans also include shopping facilities and a farm area where people can rent land to grow and eat their own organic vegetables.

Tokyu is planning to offer a private shuttle bus from Irenka Village to the ski fields, as well as a lounge exclusively for Irenka guests located at the base of the ski fields.

"This development will bring not only a new level of design and quality to Hirafu, but also a sense of community," said Kensaku Kuno, executive officer of Niseko Mt. Resort Grand Hirafu and Tokyu Resort Service Co.

"The hope of this development is to create a unique area, surrounded by the natural beauty and tranquility of Niseko, a place that embodies the essence of Irenka."



Hirafu master plan Property trading

RICCARDO Tossani Architecture has been commissioned to initiate a Master Plan study with a focus on the main street in Hirafu.

Hirafu-Zaka Street, from the Welcome Center to the Downtown Café, is Hirafu's principal gateway to the mountain and to many people the first impression of the resort.

"We have been commissioned by the NPB (Niseko Promotions Board), as part of their long range vision to enhance the character and substance of the entire Niseko mountain resort area, but we are also performing a lot of our work pro-bono," master architect Riccardo Tossani said.

"The plan will initially focus on the signage and image issues with respect to the main street, and we will make a preliminary presentation in March.

"For the moment I can say that we will propose underground power lines, cables and hide unsightly infrastructure, as well as make sense of the cacophony of signs and visual clutter dominating the streetscape."

LOCAL real estate agents and vendors are working to help Australian buyers acquire property in Niseko in light of the current unfavourable currency situation.

Trading international property as well as vendor financing are a couple of methods being explored.

RidgeRunner Real Estate sales agent Derek Kennewell has had some interest in international property trades.

"Many buyers are developers and vendors themselves in their own countries, and recently I have been working to co-ordinate property trades between Australia and Niseko," he said.

"Niseko is such a global market, that we need to look out for global ways to structure win-win solutions for both buyer and vendor," he said.

Local vendor and developer Rod Hoy is proposing vendor financing on his properties.

"We are looking at offering 50 per cent down and the rest over three years at 5 per cent per annum. This allows cost price averaging over the time of the repayments due to currency fluctuations."

New designer in town

NISEKO Designer Homes, a new specialist home design company, has joined the local residential construction market.

Founded by Chris Chan – formerly head of sales and marketing for NISADE, and an award-winning building designer from south-east Queensland with a successful consultancy in Australia – Niseko Designer Homes will soon begin contributing to design and building in Niseko.

"I believe our portfolio of completed works ranks with any builder in the area, and having run a successful consultancy in a very competitive market should hold us in good stead," Chan said. "I bring experience and a genuine love of the design and building process, but most of all I think I offer a different mindset to most of the builders operating here at present."

Chan said the design and build process was different to buying a pre-existing home, or off-the-plan. "To sit down and talk to someone about their ideas, then handing the final product over to them completed... I find it personally very rewarding," he said.

Japanese baby boomers come to the rescue

By Matthew Roy, Hokkaido real estate journalist

WITH the global economic crisis throttling overseas sales of Niseko real estate, Japan's cashed up generation of baby boomers could be poised to make a comeback.

A look at local property registers today reveals plenty of Williams, McDonalds, Chans and Chus among the owners of recently built rental properties in Niseko, but almost no Tanakas or Nakamuras. Almost all new stock in the village has been marketed and sold to Australians, local expats and Asians living in the Asian continent.

But now two of Niseko's most recently announced projects, the 124-unit ABOVE+BEYOND hotel and residential complex and Niseko Village's 1,000 unit development of condominiums and free-standing villas, will devote significant chunks of their marketing towards Japanese buyers.

Their timing is impeccable. Most Japanese savers have been spared the financial pummeling of their overseas counterparts as a greater proportion of their wealth is held in bank deposits and cash than shares and properties. Further, Japan's richest-ever generation is now retiring and pensioners want to switch cramped apartments in stifling gray cities for temperate climes and green spaces.

There are around seven million dankai no sedai – baby boomers officially born in 1947, 1948 or 1949 – and they hold total financial assets worth ¥130 trillion according to Dai-ichi Life Research Institute. The total amount of severance pay and retirement benefits the boomers are entitled to over 2007-09 may reach ¥45 trillion.

With an eye on this purchasing power, Japanese companies and the prefectural government are already busily encouraging them to spend their golden years in Hokkaido. Now it's Niseko's turn.

Beckett Tucker, sales director at Above+Beyond, says his company has identified baby boomers as an important market for its development. A key sales point to attract them will be a 4 per cent guaranteed rental return.

"We see Japanese buyers and baby boomers as an important market. One key factor is that they're most interested in visiting Niseko in the summer, which would help developments boost occupancy outside the ski-season."



THE NEXT BOOM... Savvy developers are targeting cashed-up Japanese baby boomers. Photo: Niseko Photography.

Luke Hurford, general manager of Niseko Village, the company best known as the operator of the Niseko Village Higashiyama ski area, says a major reason its planned development will be medium-to-low density is to attract city-based baby boomers looking for open spaces. His group has been conducting market research to look at their needs.

"From a tourism perspective, the baby boomer market is phenomenal," says Hurford. "They have longer to stay and more to spend. The high rental returns Niseko offers in winter will be important in attracting their investment. We also need to ensure that there are enough facilities, such as high quality restaurants, that they require during their summer holidays."

Tokyo-based development economist, Yasunori Homma, who also operates a farm in Niseko, thinks that a more rural lifestyle might be the best way to market the area to baby boomers. "Many retirees want to do something completely different from their city lives once they finish work. It's an immature movement but the idea of retiring to farming is becoming more and more popular among baby boomers and could become a significant trend."

The Japanese government is extremely interested in this possibility, says Homma, as baby boomer farmers could help stem the depopulation of the Japan's small

towns and villages as young people move to the cities.

One irony that hasn't escaped the developers is that this will not be the first time that baby boomers have come into town. Many of the buyers who first bought resort real estate in Niseko in the bubble era of the late 1980s and early 1990s were baby boomers. The McDonalds and Chans settling down to enjoy their new houses in Niseko are living in subdivisions planned and originally sold to the Nakamuras and Tanakas.



AMAZING BEAUTY... Niseko's other drawcard.

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Q&A

with Paul Nikel

By Lorne Calhoun



CANADIAN STYLE... Inside a West Canada home.

HE moved to Japan from Canada in the 90s and has been bringing pieces of his home land here ever since. Powderlife chats with West Canada Homes president, Paul Nikel.

How did the decision to start building Canadian-style homes in Niseko come about?

I came to Japan in 1991, and after a couple of weeks in Tokyo and Osaka I realised the concrete jungle is not for me and ventured up to Hokkaido, which is a similar lifestyle to my home province, Alberta. West Canada Homes was started in 1997, and is owned and operated by me and my business partner Russell Lefko. We began as a material importing company and to date have imported over 80 containers from seven countries. As foreign building products are very different to Japanese products, we found ourselves also importing the knowledge and manpower to educate our customers on installation of products. This led to our customers requesting complete construction services utilising many of the advanced Canadian building codes.

What do you think about the current Niseko market and the future of the area?

I am a great believer in everything Niseko and Hokkaido have to offer. It's a beautiful place with great people. More than simple pure economic gains, all of our West Canada Homes customers genuinely believe in the area. In addition to skiing, they love the culture, the people, the food, the onsens, the freedom, the heated toilet seats and the clean air. As everyone knows this year has seen a slowdown in the market in terms of property sales and general activity, Whistler and other well known winter and summer

recreation areas have taken 20, 30 and 40 years to evolve. The changes in Hirafu in the past five years have been staggering and in some cases a bit overzealous. I believe the slowdown is a great thing for Niseko, and gives the market a chance to correct itself at the same time the world is doing the same.

Have you thought about building West Canada Homes in other parts of Japan or other countries?

Before beginning work in Niseko, we completed several construction projects in Sapporo and the Hidaka areas of Hokkaido. We also regularly supply several companies in Sapporo and Asahikawa with building products. At this point in time our focus will remain in Hokkaido.

What has been your highlight since starting West Canada Homes?

Since starting West Canada Homes, the highlight for me has been the ability to work with an incredible cast of great people. All of our staff at West Canada Homes, The Niseko Company and West Canada Properties are professional, diligent and dedicated to producing a product we all believe in. Another highlight is the chance to be able to work with an amazingly diverse customer base and interact with so many divergent cultures. A successful project involves aligning expectations of everyone involved so that everyone knows the starting point, the end goal and every point in between. We have conducted over 50 projects in the Niseko area alone, and I am proud to say that we have great relationships with all of our past customers. This is very rare in the custom building business.



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Upper Hirafu ¥Price on Application

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Yotei Tracks 108 2

Upper Hirafu ¥38,000,000

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Yama Shizen West 201 2

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Q&A with Shigeru Uehara



WHEN entering one of Niseko Home Design's (NHD) houses, you can feel the warmth of Japanese culture. *Powderlife* speaks with the managing director of NHD, Mr. Shigeru Uehara, an architect with carpentry experience.

Having two business degrees from both Japanese and American universities, why did you start your career as a carpenter?

It all started when I helped the son of the family who I stayed with in New Zealand. I went to New Zealand after university like so many young Japanese full of hopes, dreams and a one-year working holiday visa. My plan was to work for six months and spend another six months to travel around the country. At that time, my landlord's son asked me to help him. Although I didn't know much about carpentry, I was thinking this could be a quick way to save money to travel. In the end, I worked for one year and continued working as a carpenter in Japan after that. In Japan, I worked under an American oyakata (chief carpenter) for five years, where I learned construction the North American 2x4 way.

When did you come to Niseko, and why did you start your business here?

I came to Niseko eight years ago to ski and two years after that trip I moved to Niseko to work as a carpenter. After having been involved in many of Niseko's early condominium projects, in 2006 I started NHD. I shifted to an architect role with a desire to see my inspiration materialise into a house. Having spent two years in the US and one year in New Zealand, some inspirations come from my time spent outside of Japan. One example of this foreign influence is my focus on the kitchen, living room, and bathroom areas of the house, which, in Japanese society, find themselves stuck in the dead-end corner with very little natural light. At the end of the day, my main goal is satisfying the needs of the house owner.

What separates you from other designers in Niseko?

I spend one year designing and building each house. This year is my third year for NHD. I am currently in the middle of designing my third house, so you can see how much effort goes into every one of my projects. On average, it takes three months to finish the whole blueprint, and another six or seven months to build. I also support the community by hiring local workers. Most of the big projects in Niseko tend to use big-name companies, however, I have been more than impressed with the local talent. By hiring people from surrounding areas I am also able to contribute to the community and cut down on maintenance costs.

There has been a lot of western-style construction in Niseko over the past few years. After seeing the inside of some of your houses, you seem to do a lot of traditional Japanese interiors. What do you like most about Japanese architecture?

Because I only build custom designed projects, the Japanese influenced houses that you've seen were designed with clients' requests in mind. All of my clients are from overseas and tend to have a terrific knowledge of Japanese culture and architecture. I am also personally a huge fan of the warmth seen in Japanese architecture, but I could never build such wonderful houses with only my thoughts alone. My clients' own creativeness inspires me to design something that incorporates traditional Japanese culture with the creative mind of everyone I meet.

I personally think Japanese architecture has a great balance of nature and human interest. Using naked wood pieces adds curves and warmth that can be found in nature instead of the industry-standard straight lines.

Do you think the boom in Niseko over the past few years was a bubble, or do you think Niseko still has a bright future?

Seeing the speed of how business has gone, I would say it was a bubble. At the same time, I think there will still be a very bright future ahead in Niseko. Other than the high-quality powder snow and beautiful nature, I think Niseko's biggest charm is its people. When I came to Niseko, I was so surprised by the number of young Japanese with such an incredibly intense passion for life. All welcomed newcomers and became friends with each other through skiing and a variety of other outdoor sports. The core structure of the Niseko community is the young people and locals who put endless amounts of effort into making a comfortable place for everybody to live.

What do you want to see in Niseko's future?

Currently, Niseko is becoming affordable only for the wealthiest of tourists. As development continues, the value of all sorts of things will rise. I sincerely hope Niseko won't get too expensive in the future, as I would like all the skiers, snowboarders and people who are really passionate about this area to be able to come back and enjoy the same Niseko that they first came to love.




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Mt. Niseko An'nupuri Altitude 1,308m
The peak area is uncontrolled

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Regardless of how you enjoy your snow sport, always show courtesy to others and be aware that THERE ARE INHERENT RISKS in all snow recreation activities. These risks include rapid changes in weather and surface conditions, collisions with other people as well as natural and artificial hazards such as rocks, trees, stumps, bare spots, life towers and snowmaking equipment. Common sense and personal awareness can reduce such risks. Observe the code below and share with others the responsibility for a great experience.

ALPINE RESPONSIBILITY CODE

1. Know your ability and always stay in control.
2. Take lessons from qualified professional instructors to learn and progress.
3. As you proceed downhill or overtake another person, you must avoid people below and beside you.
4. Do not stop where you could obstruct a trail, a run or are not visible from above.
5. When entering a trail, a run or starting downhill, look uphill and give way to others.
6. Always use chairlift restraining devices where provided and always use proper devices to prevent runaway equipment. Ensure equipment is in good condition.
7. Observe and obey all signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails or runs and keep out of closed areas.
8. Before using any lift you must have the knowledge and ability of how to load and unload safely.
9. Do not ski, snowboard, ride a lift or undertake any other alpine activity if your ability is impaired by drugs and alcohol.
10. If you are involved in, or witness an accident, alert the Ski Patrol, remain at the scene and identify yourself to them.

KNOW THE CODE: IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY



ATTENTION

Those who wish to ski outside of the controlled areas must follow the Niseko Rules.
Those who wish to employ a ski guide are advised to employ a member of the Niseko Winter Guide Association.

*Office of Niseko Winter Guide Association
Phone:(0136)21-4055
www.nisekoguide.jp/



Ski area shuttle bus
Niseko Free Passport Bus

The 'Niseko Free Passport Bus' conveniently linking each of the ski slopes is free to holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass.

*The bus timetable is on 'Niseko Resort Map' at lift ticket counters etc.
*Holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass must present pass on boarding the bus. (12-point ticket holders forfeit 1 point).
*Those without the All Mountain Pass can ride the bus for the regular fare.

- Lift ticket counter
- Rest room
- Phone
- Kid's room
- Restaurants
- Café
- Shop
- Information
- Rentals
- Ski school
- Onsen(Hot Spring)
- Shuttle bus stop
- Parking lot
- Ski patrol
- AED
- Light
- Gate to uncontrolled area
- Slalom run
- Mogul run
- Wave
- Half Pipe
- Park(Kicker, jib, etc.)
- Un-groomed Slope
- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Most Difficult
- Name of Slope**
Maximum Gradient / Average Gradient / Run Length
- Number of seats**
- Name of Lift**
Length · Time required · Number of lift ticket points

Strictly off limits

◆Entry into areas marked "Strictly Off Limits" is prohibited even to experts with special equipment (e.g., avalanche beacon, shovel, radio).

◆Those who wish to enter an uncontrolled area are required to comply with Niseko An'nupuri rules posted at designated gates and lift bases.

Niseko Rules

The Niseko Rules are Niseko's official regulations created for the safety and freedom of everyone using the ski resort and riding beyond the ski area boundary.

- 1. CERTAIN CLOSED AREAS WITHIN NISEKO ARE STRICTLY OFF LIMIT AND ARE NOT TO BE ENTERED AT ANY TIME**
Yu no Sawa(Gully between An'nupuri and Niseko Village area), Mizuno no Sawa (underneath Niseko Gondola) and Haru no Taki (cliff area west of Hirafu) are "STRICTLY off limits areas" as stated by the Niseko Rules. Those riding these areas WILL have their lift pass confiscated.
- 2. DUCKING ROPES IS PROHIBITED**
Ducking the boundary ropes is prohibited. If you do, your lift pass will be confiscated. Use designated gates to access out of bound areas. These gates access the dangerous back country.

- 3. NO SAFETY CONTROL BEYOND RESORT BOUNDARY**
The area outside the mountain resort boundaries (back country, including the peak) are National forests and parks, and are not controlled or supervised by the resort or the Ski Patrol. Niseko Rules proclaims that hiking and riding these areas is dangerous and if you choose to, you do it AT YOUR OWN RISK.
- 4. BACK COUNTRY SKIING/RIDING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED WHEN GATES ARE CLOSED**
During extremely hazardous conditions, the gates will be closed and out of bound riding will be strictly prohibited.
- 5. AVALANCHE CONDITION INFORMATION**
The "Niseko Avalanche Information" is the official information posted by "Niseko Avalanche Institute". This information can be found at lift stations, access gates and on the Internet.

- 6. BACK COUNTRY RESCUE FEE**
YOU are responsible for the cost of your rescue from back country areas.
- 7. SKI AND MOUNTAIN PATROL INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE OBEYED**
Niseko Rules insists that all resort users respect and obey the instructions of the Ski Patrol and the Shiribeshi Mountain Patrol.
- 8. RESPECT EACH OTHER**
Niseko's ski resorts and the locals respect the freedom of the visitors, but are concerned about their safety, and expect visitors to respect the Niseko Rules.

Niseko Rules are official regulations, established by the Niseko An'nupuri Avalanche Prevention Committee, the Niseko Mountain Resort Safety committee, the Niseko Free Passport Committee and the Hokkaido Shiribeshi Alpine Accident Prevention Committee.

Services

- Boot Solutions
フートソリューションズ
221-025 [MAP D2]
- Niseko Photography
ニセコフォトグラフィー
22 5764 [MAP D2]



Niseko Physio
ニセコフィジオ
22 0399 [MAP B2]
Your English speaking sports injury centre in Hirafu. Australian trained winter sports physiotherapists.

- Skybus スカイバス
22 2108 [MAP D2]
Sapporo office 011 788 4994

Delis, food outlets

- Lawson Hirafu
ローソン
23-1230 [MAP C2]
- M-Pocket Kutchan
M-ポケット
22-1070 [MAP Kutchan F7]
- Niseko Wine Supply
ニセコワインサプライ090
6875 5931 [MAP XX]
- Seicomart Hirafu
セイコマート
23-3271 [MAP C2]
- Sekka Deli
セッカデリ
21 3088 [MAP B2]
- Sekka Landmark Deli
セッカランドマーク
23 4285 [MAP E2]
- Sekka Teca Wine Shop
セッカテカワインショップ
21 3088 [MAP B2]

Hotels

- Hotel J-First Niseko
ホテルJファーストニセコ
22 2350 [MAP E1]
- Hotel Niseko Alpen
ホテルニセコアルペン
22 1105 [MAP D1]
- Hotel Niseko Scot
ホテルニセコスコット
23 2311 [MAP E1]
- J-Sekka
ジェイセッカ
21 6133 [MAP B2]
- Niseko Kogen Hotel
ニセコ高原ホテル
22 0117 [MAP E1]
- Niseko Park Hotel
ニセコパークホテル
22 2122 [MAP C2]
- Niseko Prince Hotel Hirafu-tei
ニセコプリンスホテルひらふ亭
23 2239 [MAP C1]
- Yamada Onsen Hotel
山田温泉ホテル
22 0476 [MAP E1]

Rosso Rosso
ロッソロッソ
21 7100 [MAP B3]
Casual steak house with a contemporary flavour. Juicy, tender wagyu and Kobe beef, variety of imported wines.

Sekka Deli Cafe
セッカデリカフェ
21 3088 [MAP B2]
House-made produce using local ingredients, cheeses, meats, wines. Breakfast to dinner, dine in or take away.

Sekka Dining
セッカダイニング
21 5022 [MAP B2]
Experience the taste of Hokkaido in style at Sekka Dining. International fusion cuisine using Hokkaido ingredients.

Shokusai Hirafu
食彩 比羅夫
22 1105 [MAP C1]

Shunsai
旬彩
23 1882 [Kutchan]

Slalom
スラローム
22 1105 [MAP C1]

Spur Chinese Restaurant
シュアール(中華レストラン)
22 1105 [MAP C1]

Tsubara Tsubara
つばらつばら
23 1116 [MAP E4]

Wild Bill's
ワイルドビルズ
22 5652 [MAP D2]
Come for dinner, stay for drinks. Hirafu's most popular bar and Tex-Mex cuisine restaurant. See you there!

- Yawaraya
やわらや
23 3810 [MAP C3]
- Youtei Yakiniku
焼肉ようてい
22 0109 [MAP E1]
- Yuki Bar and Café
雪場カフェ
22 0234 [MAP D2]
- Yummy's
ヤミーズ
21 2239 [MAP C3]

- Kumagoro
くまごろう
23 3381 [MAP B3]
- Landmark Deli
くまごろう
23 4285 [MAP E2]
- Loaf Lounge
ローフラウンジ
22 1022 [Kutchan]

Maru
まる
22 5020 [MAP E3]
Traditional Japanese 'donburi' restaurant. 11:30am-2pm/5-11pm. Pick up available. Reservation required

- Mina Mina
ミナミナ
23 4471 [MAP D2]

- Mokoraya
もこらや
090 8279 0598 [MAP F3]
- Mozart
モーツァルト
090 2699 6387 [MAP E4]

- Nami Chan Chi
波ちゃん家
21 2258 [Kutchan]
- Nathan's Hotdogs
ネイサンズ ホットドッグ
21 3121 [MAP E3]

- Niseko Gourmet
ニセコグルメ
080 5584 1313

- Niseko Pizza
ニセコ ピザ
21 6888 [MAP D2]
- Paddy McGintys
パディーマギンティーズ
55 8020 [MAP C2]

Paul's Cafe and Bar
ポールズカフェアンドバー
090 9083 6764 [MAP C3]
Specialising in Belgian beer and rotisserie chicken. More than 30 beers on tap or in bottles. Belgian Waffles.

- Payoka
パヨカ
22 0117 [MAP E1]
- Piccolo House
ピッコロハウス(カフェ&バー)
23 0311 [MAP E2]

- Raku Izakaya
楽 居酒屋
22 6638 [MAP C3]
- Rin Izakaya
りん 居酒屋
22 1444 [MAP B3]
- Senchou 1 Izakaya
船長(居酒屋)
22 2001 [MAP B3]
- Senchou 2 Seafood Izakaya
海山屋(海鮮居酒屋)
22 5454 [MAP C2]

- Kila 姫羅
070 6646 4715 [MAP C2]
- Komkichi Onigiri Café
米吉(おにぎりカフェ)
22 1105 [MAP F1]

Six-digit (local numbers) need the prefix 0136 if dialing from mobile phones, pay phones, or outside Niseko.

Restaurants, cafes and eateries

- A-Bu-Cha
阿武茶
22 5620 [MAP C2]
- B's Café and Bar
ビーズ カフェ&バー
22 1480 [MAP D1]

Bang Bang
バンバン
22 4292 [MAP C1]
Owner Masanobu Saito chooses the best ingredients in Japan. One of Hirafu's most popular izakayas.

- Barunba
バルンバ
090 8907 9399 [MAP B2]

Black Diamond Lodge Restaurant
ブラックダイヤモンドロッジレストラン
0136 44 1144 [Higashiyama]
Just 300m ski or bus from the Hilton Niseko Villlage. Check out or great Western and Japanese menu.

- Blo Blo Bar
ブロー ブロー バー
22-12-69 [MAP D1]
- Bouken Kazoku
冒険家族
22 3759
- Chidori
千鳥
23 2831 [MAP F4]
- Curry Goya
カレー小舎
23 3688 [MAP F4]
- Downtown
ダウントウン
23 3354 [MAP B3]
- Dragon Wine and Food Bar
ドラゴン ワイン&バー
21 7700 [MAP B2]

- Blo Blo Bar
ブロー ブロー バー
22-12-69 [MAP D1]

- Bouken Kazoku
冒険家族
22 3759
- Chidori
千鳥
23 2831 [MAP F4]
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23 3688 [MAP F4]
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23 3354 [MAP B3]
- Dragon Wine and Food Bar
ドラゴン ワイン&バー
21 7700 [MAP B2]

EN in-house fine dining
宴 イノウエ ファイン ダイニング
55 8100 [MAP D3]
Relax while our in-house chef does all the work. Your fine dining solutions."

- Fujizushi Sushi
ふじ鮨
23 2661 [MAP B3]
- Gentem Café
ゲンテム
23 3154 [MAP B1]

Hana Jizoh Bakery
花地蔵
23 0331 [MAP F4]
Amazing sweet and savoury breads and pastries. Must try! Get the free village shuttle to bus stop 27.

- Hirafu Fleur
創作料理ヒラフル
23 3306 [MAP E1]

- Ichimura Soba
蕎麦屋 いちむら
23 0603 [MAP F3]
- if... Café
カフェ イフ
22 4770 [MAP B3]

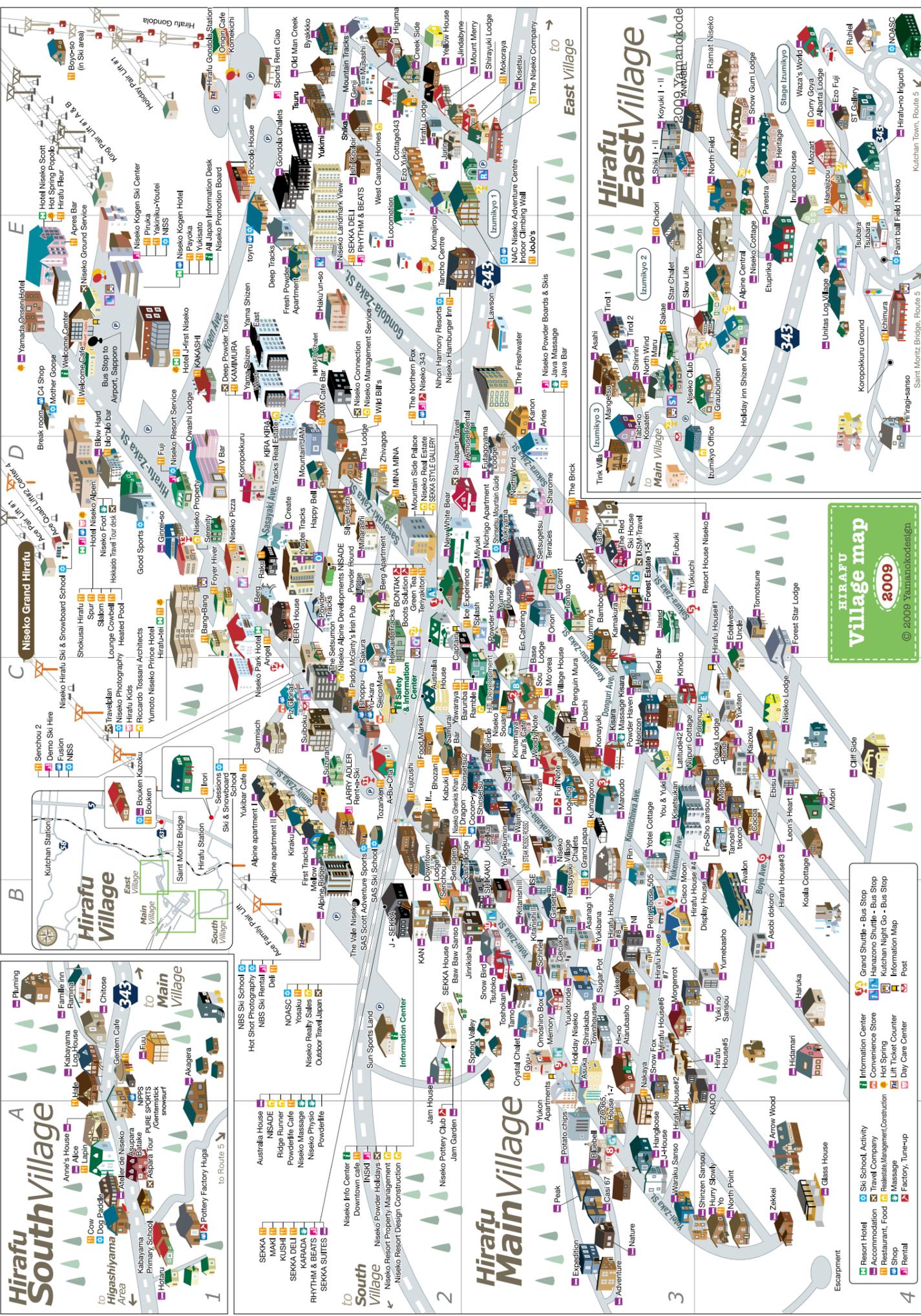
- Jam Café Bar
ジャム(カフェバー)
23 0700 [MAP D2]
- Japanese Kitchen Bouken
冒険家族
22 3759
- Java Bar and Café
ジャバ バー&カフェ
090 2871 6781 [MAP D3]

JoJo's Cafe and Bar
ジョジョズ(カフェ&バー)
23 2093 [MAP E3]
A 13 cm Original Burger, potato gnocchi and fries from local potatoes. Generous portions of food

- Jyuu Okonomiyaki
じゅう
44 2336 [Higashiyama]
- Kakashi
かかし
23 2622 [MAP D2]
- Kame
亀
22 0339 [MAP E3]

Kamimura
ガミムラ
21 2288 [MAP D2]
Niseko's premier dining experience. A mix of Japanese seasonal cuisine, blended with classic French technique.

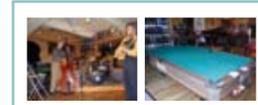
- Kila 姫羅
070 6646 4715 [MAP C2]
- Komkichi Onigiri Café
米吉(おにぎりカフェ)
22 1105 [MAP F1]



Six-digit (local numbers) need the prefix 0136 if dialing from mobile phones, pay phones, or outside Niseko.

Bars

- Angel Karaoke Bar エンジェルカラオケバー 23 1281 [MAP D2]
- Après Bar アプレバー 23 2311 [MAP E1]
- Bar Lair バー・レイアー 22 0588 [MAP D1]
- Barunba バルンバ 090 8907 9399 [MAP C3]
- Be. ビー 556 905
- Blo Blo Bar プロプロ・バー 22 1269 [MAP D1]
- Dragon Wine and Food Bar ドラゴン ワイン&フードバー 21 7700 [MAP B2]
- Fridge Door Bar (Gyu+) ギョウタスバー 23 1432 [MAP B3]



Half Note
ハーフトート
090-1307-3792 [MAP C3]
Only Jazz bar in Hirafu, check out their jazz events. Billiards, table tennis, wireless internet available.

- Jam Café Bar ジャムカフェバー 23 0700 [MAP D2]
- Java Bar and Café ジャババー&カフェ 090 2871 6781 [MAP D3]
- Maki Lounge Bar @ J-SEKKA マキラウンジバー@ジェイセッカ 21 3080 [MAP C2]
- Masukotto マスコット 23 1101 [MAP C2]
- Paddy McGintys パディーマッキンティーズ 55 8020 [MAP C2]
- Paul's Cafe and Bar ポールズカフェ&アンドバー 090 9083 6764 [MAP C3]



Red Bar
レッドバー
22 6687 [MAP B3]
Nepalese style curry restaurant and bar open everyday of the season. Every Friday is party night with DJs from 10.30pm.

- Splash スプラッシュ 23 1688 [MAP C3]
- The Brickブリック 22 3444 [MAP D3]

- Yuki Bar and Café 雪場カフェ 22 0234 [MAP B2]
- Wild Bill's ワイルドビルズ 22 5652 [MAP D2]

Tours, activities



Black Diamond Tours
ブラックダイヤモンド ツアー
090-2054-8687
Let us privately guide you through Hokkaido's best powder stashes and out of the way places.

- Deep Powder Tours ディープパウダー ツアー 0136 21 5827 [MAP D2]
- Good Sports グッドスポーツ 23 4560 [MAP C1]
- Fuga Pottery Factory 陶工房風雅 22 1731
- IXSM Travel イクスム トラベル 21 5855 [MAP D4]
- Karada Massage @ J-SEKKA 体マサージ@ジェイセッカ 21 3088 [MAP B2]



NAC Niseko Adventure Centre
NACニセコ アドベンチャーセンター
23 2093 [MAP E3]
Lessons and winter mountain tours, year round activities, indoor climbing wall, shop, and café.



Niseko Massage
ニセコマサージ
22 0399 [MAP B2]
Professional Sports and Relaxation Massage in Five Star Luxury. Highly qualified massage therapists

- Niseko Pottery Club ニセコ陶芸クラブ 23 4844 [MAP A3]
- Niseko Snowmobile Adventures ニセコスノーモービルアドベンチャー 21 5001
- NOASC ノアスク 23 1688 [MAP C3]
- Paint Ball Field Niseko ペイントボールフィールドニセコ 23 2111 [MAP E4]
- SAS Scott Adventure Sports SASスコットアドベンチャースポーツ 21 3333 [MAP B2]

Real estate

- Hokkaido Tracks Development 北海道トラックス 開発 21 7202 [MAP C2]
- Hokkaido Real Estate 北海道リアルエステート 080 5587 5052 [MAP C2]
- NISADE ニセード 22 0038 [MAP C2]
- Niseko Life Plan ニセコ ライフ プラン 44 3584 [Higashiyama]
- Niseko Property ニセコ プロパティ 21 5060 [MAP D2]
- NRE Niseko Real Estate ニセコ リアルエステート 21 7722 [MAP D2]
- Niseko Realty Sales ニセコ リアルティ 23 2221 [MAP C2]
- Niseko RDC ニセコ RDC 23 4844 [MAP B2]
- Ridgerunner リッジランナー 21 6220 [MAP C2]
- Sekka Style Gallery セッカ スタイル ギャラリー 21 7755 [MAP E2]
- Tracks Real Estate トラックスリアルエステート 226 977 [MAP E2]
- West Canada Homes ウェストカナダホームズ 21 7500 [MAP E2]

Ski schools

- NAC Niseko Adventure Centre NAC アドベンチャー センター 23 2093 [MAP E3]
- Niseko Hirafu Ski and Snowboard School ニセコヒラフスキー&スノーボードスクール 22 0921 [MAP D1]
- NISS Niseko International Snowsports School ニセコインタナショナルスノースポーツスクール 21 6688 [MAP F1]
- NBS Niseko Base Sports NBS ニセコ ベース スポーツ 21 5050 [MAP B2]
- Niseko Sessions ニセコ セッション 080 6070 2780 [MAP B2]
- SAS Scott Adventure Sports スコットアドベンチャー スポーツ 21 3333 [MAP B2]
- J-Sekka Suites ジェイセッカスイート 21 6133 or 21 7788 [MAP B2]
- NISADE ニセード 22 0038 [MAP C2]
- Niseko Ground Service ニセコグランドサービス 21 2503 [MAP C2]
- Niseko Management Service ニセコマネジメントサービス 21 5020 [MAP D3]
- Niseko Powder Connection ニセコパウダーコネクション 21 2500 [MAP D2]
- Outdoor Travel Japan アウトドア トラベル ジャパン 21 2171 [MAP C3]
- Ski Japan スキージャパン 22 4611 [MAP D3]
- The Niseko Company ザ ニセコ カンパニー 21-7272 [MAP F2]
- Deep powder tours ディープパウダーツアーズ 21 5827 [MAP D2]
- Hokkaido Tracks 北海道トラックス 23 3503 [MAP C2]
- Hokkaido Travel 北海道トラベル 233 327 [MAP C2]
- Holiday Niseko ホリデー ニセコ 21 6221 [MAP A3]
- Izumikyo 泉郷 23 3301 [MAP D4]

Accommodation providers



Australian Alpine Club Niseko
オーストラリアンアルパインクラブニセコ
223 006 [MAP E4]
The lodge has eight western style guest rooms. Membership is available for A\$6,500 www.aacniseko.com

- Whiteliner Buses www.whitelinerbuses.com.....011-242-2040
- Chuo Buses www.chuo-bus.co.jp/kikan/ski...011-231-0500
- Donan buses www.donanbus.co.jp/ski.....0123-46-5701
- Hokkaido Resort Liner www.access-n.jp/ski_info.html..011-219-4411
- Niseko 343 ニセコ 3 4 3 23 0343 [MAP C3]
- Rhythm & Beats リズム&ビート 22-0165 [MAP E2]
- SAS Scott Adventure Sports スコットアドベンチャースポーツ 21 3333 [MAP B2]
- Sports Rent Ciao スポーツ レンタル チャオ 22 5178 [MAP F2]

Rental

- Niseko Auto Rentals and Sales ニセコオートセールズ&ドレンタル 090-2055-6074 [Higashiyama]
Niseko Auto can assist you with local sales and export. Licensed auction dealer - 4WD and sports vehicles.
- Sun Sports Land サン スポーツ ランド 23 3220 [MAP A3]
- Demo デモ 21 66 77 [MAP C2]
- NBS Niseko Base Sports ニセコ ベース スポーツ 21 5050 [MAP B2]
- Grand Hirafu Ski Hire グランドヒラフスキーハイヤー 0136 22 0109 [MAP D1]
- Niseko Powder Boards ニセコパウダーボード 0901 384 5772 [MAP D3]



We are trying to collect every phone number in the village for this directory. There is no charge for basic listing. If your business does not appear here, please email info@powderlife.com

もし電話帳に御社の電話番号の記載が無い場合、又は誤った電話番号が記載されていた場合はkris@powderlife.comまでご連絡下さい。

www.powderlife.com

AIRPORT
New Chitose Airport 0123 23 0111
www.new-chitose-airport.jp/language/english
New Chitose was opened in 1991 and became Japan's first 24-hour airport in 1994. It services Sapporo and Niseko with direct international flights from various Asian cities and Australia. The Tokyo to Chitose route is the busiest domestic route in the world. It is the largest airport in Japan by land mass.

INTER-RESORT TRANSPORT
A shuttle bus connects the Grand Hirafu, Higashiyama and Annupuri ski areas. There is a private company bus which costs ¥500 and a free shuttle bus which is included in your all mountain pass. See the timetable on the course map for more information. If you have a 12-point ticket, one point per trip is needed. Others need ¥500 for adult and ¥300 for child per ride.

Getting From New Chitose To Niseko
On arrival at Chitose international airport, visitors not on a full travel package have a few options to complete this last leg of their journey to Niseko and back. Although the trip is only 110kms, due to icy roads and no direct train route, it takes two to three hours.

BUS
The bus is the most convenient and commonly used form of transport from the airport. Buses depart about every 30 minutes from the airport to Niseko. They take about three hours, including a rest stop halfway and a dropoff at Rusutsu. ¥2,300 - one way and ¥3,850 for a round trip. The buses disembark at six designated bus stops within the greater Niseko United Resort. You will find two different points to get off at each of the main ski areas.

AIRLINES

ANA	0120 029 222
British Airways	03 3570 8657
Cathay Pacific	03 5159 1700
China Airlines	03 5520 0333
JAL	0120 255 971
Korean Air	0088 21 2001
Qantas	0120 207 020
Singapore Airlines	03 3503 3311
Thai Airways	03 3503 3311
United Airlines	0120 114 466

DOOR TO DOOR TRANSFER
Skybus offers a door to door transfer service from the airport to Niseko or Sapporo. Chitose to Niseko for ¥9000 return per person, or better deals for private shuttle transfers - ¥30,000 one way for up to 5 passengers, ¥40,000 one way for up to 9 passengers, or ¥50,000 one way for up to 14 passengers. Go to www.skybus-jp.com/index.html

CAR RENTAL
If you are comfortable driving in the snow, renting can be convenient as it allows you to take a trip to Kutchan to stock up the fridge before returning the car. One way hire from Chitose to Hirafu is about ¥7,000 for six - 24 hours. Nippon Rentacar, Mazda and Orix have offices in the Niseko area. If you want a car only in Niseko, you can contact Black Diamond Lodge in Higashiyama.

- Mazda Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-45-8756, Niseko 011-231-0118 (drop off and pick up in Niseko only available on weekdays)
- Nippon Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-26-0919, Niseko 0136-43-2929
- Orix Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-22-0543, Izumikyo (Hirafu) 0134-25-0543, Black Diamond Lodge : 0136-44-1144

TAXI
A standard taxi from Chitose to Hirafu will cost about ¥30,000, but you may not fit all your gear in it. Prai Taxi charges ¥20,000 for a small taxi (3-4 people) or ¥33,000 for a jumbo (8-10 people). Call 011 207 5166 or www.prai.co.jp.

TRAIN
This is the most scenic way to get to Niseko. Unfortunately there is no direct train from Chitose to Kutchan station (the closest major station). All trains run through Sapporo and Otaru. The journey takes about three hours and the cost is about ¥2,600 for an unreserved seat. If you want a reserved seat, you can ask at JR information desk, B1 Chitose airport. www2.jrhokkaido.co.jp/global/index.html

The train schedules are subject to change so it is best to call the numbers below or visit: www.japanrail.com.
Airport.....0123-45-7011

EARTHQUAKES
In the event of an earthquake, stay out of elevators,

stand in a door frame and watch for falling objects. The safest places are in large open areas such as parking lots of ski areas, schools, parks etc. Your accommodation is likely to have an emergency earthquake pack.

EMERGENCIES
Police110
Ambulance and Fire.....119
Emergency Interpretation.....03-5285-8185
Japan English Helpline (nationwide emergency assistance).....0570-000-911

ETIQUETTE
Japan is perhaps the most courteous country in the world. Say excuse me (sumimasen) and thank you (arigato) regularly. Do not eat while walking, or wear your shoes on tatami mats or in most indoor residences. A bow can be used to say thank you, sorry, hello, goodbye and excuse me. It is impolite not to return a bow. The deeper the bow, the more polite it becomes.

EATING
At most casual dining Japanese restaurants (izakaya) meals are ordered for the table and shared. You will often receive a small snack with your first drink which may or may not be billed. Rest your chopsticks across the top of the bowl or plate - never leave them sticking out of the rice!

DRINKING
It is tradition in Japan to pour from a bottle into your guest's small glass regularly. Kampai is the Japanese word for cheers - use it readily! Also please remember to stay well behaved when under the influence. Poor behaviour by drunken Australians in Niseko has received national media attention in Japan. Remember you are an ambassador for your country at all times while you are abroad.

TIPPING
Although tipping is not generally done in Japan, some restaurants and bars will include a service fee for groups.

GARBAGE
Hokkaido has some of the strictest garbage separation rules in the world. Please try to follow them, follow the signs on the bins to the letter.

ONSEN (HOT SPRING BATH)
Buy a ticket, strip down - no swim suits allowed, keep your clothes in a basket, your valuables in a locker. Take a little towel only into the onsen with you, wash and scrub your body well before you go in to the bath. You can fill your towel with cold water before you enter the onsen. Do not put your towel into the onsen water - leave it on your head and squeeze the cold water out when you get too hot (it's best not to bring drinks into the onsen). After bathing rinse off under the shower. Finally dry your body well before you walk back into the changing room.

CURRENCY
You can exchange your money into Yen at the bank, post office, and most inbound travel operators. Please bring your passport - it may be more convenient to change with your hotel. You can also exchange USD travellers cheques at banks or at Kutchan post office.

DRIVING
When driving on icy roads the number one thing to remember is to drive slowly. Make sure the windscreen and back and side windows are thoroughly de-iced on the outside and de-steamed on the inside before setting off - don't simply clear a 'porthole' to look through. Maintain at least a five-second gap between you and the vehicle in front. Use a high gear to avoid wheel spin, but take care not to let your speed creep up. Brake gently to avoid locking the wheels. Never brake if the vehicle skids, instead, ease off the accelerator and steer slightly into the direction of the skid until you gain control.

ELECTRICITY
Standard voltage is 100v AC. You can use many higher watt items without a problem but higher wattage devices such as hair dryers may not run on full power. Plugs are the flat two blades type. Many recent buildings have 240v with Australian shaped plugs.

WALKING ON ICY ROADS
About 1/3 of all injuries in Hirafu are caused by people falling on the street. Wear shoes with good grip, buy and attach rubber sole covers with metal studs. Take small steps, walk slowly and never run, keep both hands out of your pockets and free for balance. Walking with two ski stocks is a great idea and protect yourself instead of the objects being carried.

INTERNET
Most accommodation in Niseko will have internet access. If you have a laptop, you can try finding the free wireless hotspots in cafes and bars around the village. Try Pow Pow, the Java Bar or Powderlife café.

MOBILE PHONES
3G phones only will work in Japan. You can hire a phone from IXSM travel 0136 21 5855 or Go Mobile 03 4496 4344. For longer term stays the three big carriers have stores in Kutchan:
au.....0136-21-5616
Soft Bank.....0136-21-2588
NTT DoCoMo.....0136-21-6868

TELECOMMUNICATIONS
Domestic Calls
Green and grey public phones take coins or pre paid telephone cards, available from convenience stores or at some phone card dispensers in some booths. Local calls don't require the "0136", unless made from a mobile phone.

Directory Assistance
Dial 104 (toll call) and then ask for an English speaker. You must know the location and name to get a number.
International Calls
International direct dial can be made using any of the following prefixes, 001 (KDDI), 0041 (ITJ) and 0061 (IDC). They will cost you.

Calling Cards
Brasel
The most popular international calling card service is available in Niseko. Known for its flat 24 hour rates as low ¥6 per minute to Australia from any type of phone using a non-toll free access number. Brasel has excellent customer service available in over 20 languages and the card is available at several locations in Hirafu and can be recharged at IXSM travel or by your credit card. New subscribers get five free minutes. Toll-free: 0120 659 534. www.brasel.com

Kazak
Rates from ¥20 for one minute to Australia. The kazak card is the highest selling card in the Niseko area. Kazak card is available from your hotel front desk, Piz Gloria convenience store and from most inbound tour operators.
0123 36 4000

POST OFFICES
Look for the red "〒" symbol. Stamps and the post office box are at Piz Gloria convenience store. For other services you will need to go to the post office in Kutchan.

TOURIST INFORMATION
Kutchan Tourism Information centre
Located on Eki-mae Dori opposite Best Denki, the newly opened tourist information centre provides an excellent English speaking service for visitors. They dispense brochures and can help you book accommodation. ph: 0136 22 1121

The Niseko Grand Hirafu Welcome Centre
At the main bus stop in Hirafu parking lot the Welcome Centre has a wide range of brochures and transport information. They can also help with booking accommodation if you've arrived without a booking - you risk taker you. 0136 22 0109.

Kutchan Kousei Hospital
The major hospital servicing the area is located 4 blocks from the main intersection of Kutchan. They have an X-ray, a slightly ageing MRI and medical dispensary. No appointment necessary, orthopaedics cases taken in the morning only. It will take you most of the day. Address: North 4 East 1-2, Kutchan-cho Tel: 0136-22-1141
Ueda Orthopedic Clinic

The Last Word: Vegetarianism

By Bevan Colless



Bevan Colless
Is a physiotherapist and exercise physiologist who has spent six years in Japan operating Tokyo Physio and as of 2006, Niseko Physio.

THEY say at a dinner party you should never discuss religion and politics. But I reckon if you're looking to start a heated debate and upset someone, vegetarianism is up there with the big two. Unfortunately, if there is a vegetarian at the table and the host has prepared a salmon entrée and juicy steak for the main it can be a hard subject to avoid, and to prevent one's own opinions

on the subject seep out. Much like religion and politics, I find vegetarianism very interesting, possibly because it is so contentious, and maybe even more so than the other two, as it is related to health.

So, to get it out in the open nice and early (as we're not at a dinner party, I feel liberated enough to get my opinions out there) here's my ¥2 worth. Are you ready for it? Please don't hate me in the morning. Vegetarians have got it all wrong. I use to be of the belief that only vegetarians who abstained due to health reasons were the ones whose reasonings were flawed, and that those who abstained because they didn't like the thought of eating a cute animal, or for religious reasons, had sound enough reasoning. But, if you look at the rationale behind them from a scientific perspective, it's pretty clear to me that those opinions are misguided, too. Firstly, the big one – religion. I certainly respect everyone's right to choose and practice their faith and understand that religion is intricately tied in with many people's sense of self-being, but I have a hard time accepting the premise on which virtually all religions are based on (that there is a greater being). Or, to leave it to someone much cleverer and well read than me on the subject, one of the world's top biologists, Professor Richard Dawkins who states: "There is almost certainly no God."

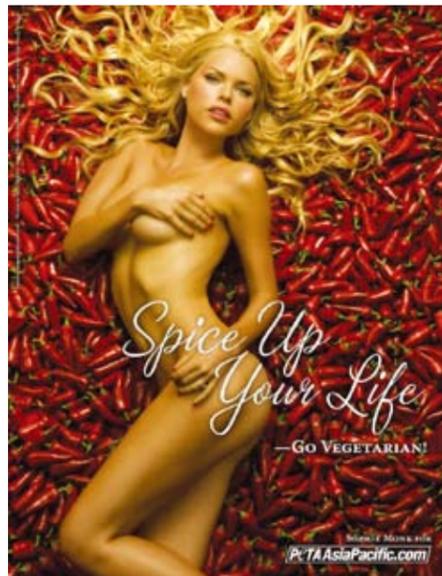
The other main group of animal protein abstainers are those who don't like the thought of eating Mary's little lamb. I definitely understand this one, and personally I would not eat animals that have a special relationship with humans, or that are particularly

majestic. I also share concerns over the way farmed animals are treated and concerns over the eroding of health benefits in meat that is not produced well. But we've worked very hard to be at the top of the food chain (Homo Sapiens – Premiers: 2,000,000 BC – 2009AD!). Why not rejoice in being the champions? For me, apart from breakfast, a meal is not a meal unless something has died for it. (Please send hate email to: ed@powderlife.com).

Vegetarianism is currently experiencing somewhat of a boom in popularity particularly to young, impressionable minds. This particularly concerns me, as during the crucial developmental stage of life that protein is really needed. Raising children as vegetarians can be done but it does require a lot of effort to provide the nutrients to replace meat. A recent study by Teenage Research Unlimited questioned teenagers on what they think of vegetarianism and 25 per cent said 'cool'. University students think so, too. A study conducted by Arizona State University showed that, sight unseen, salad eaters were rated more moral, virtuous and considerate than steak eaters. Little did they know Hitler, Pol Pot and Charles Manson were none of those things... but all avid vegetarians!

Humans were hunter-gatherers for about 2.5 million years until agriculture was introduced about 10,000 years ago. We used to wander about catching and killing animals when we could, smoke the meat to preserve it and forage for nuts, vegetables, fruits and eggs whenever we could. Studies on the skeletons of hunter-gatherers show that they tended to be tall and strong, with an average height of males of 5'10", and women of 5'6". When we began to shift to an agricultural-based system, we began to get smaller. If you've ever banged your head on the doorway in Japan (as this scribe likes to at least once a week), you'll understand that until recently meat was not a large part of the Japanese diet. The protein in animal meat is very difficult to replicate with other food and meat eaters tend to have large muscle mass than non-meat eaters. It is very challenging for elite athletes to be vegetarians.

The old dietary pyramid that we were drilled on in school, with grains and starchy carbohydrates at the base simply has not worked, and needs to be rethought. Several well-respected dieticians and



doctors have written books extolling a paleo-diet (also known as the caveman diet), and it makes a lot of sense to me. The theory is that we should return back to our hunter-gatherer roots and eat diets containing meat, fish, nuts, eggs, fruits and vegetables. It also suggests we should avoid dairy products as the animals who were possible sources of this dairy would have been too fierce to 'milk'. Our incisor and canine teeth have developed over hundreds of thousands of years of eating meat, so it make sense if our teeth are designed to be eating meat our bodies are, too.

An omnivore's guide to healthy eating

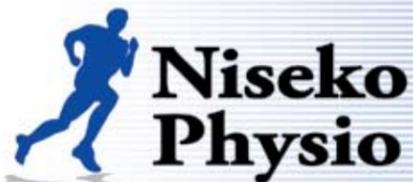
- * Eat lean cuts of meat regularly. As a general rule, animals that are more active are the healthiest (try turkey instead of chicken, kangaroo or venison instead of beef).
- * Eat grass-fed beef instead of grain fed (it has more Omega 3 in relation to Omega 6).
- * Eat fish three to four times a week. Deep sea oily fish is the healthiest.
- * Eat lots of colourful fruit and vegetables. Try to decrease your consumption of food that is white in colour – they are invariably higher in hollow calories.



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info@nisekorealestate.com
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Web: www.hokkaidotracks.com

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