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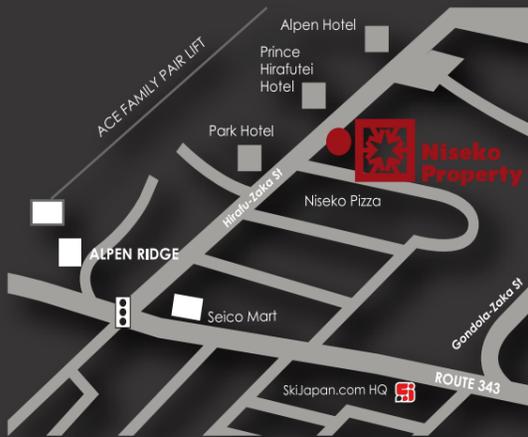
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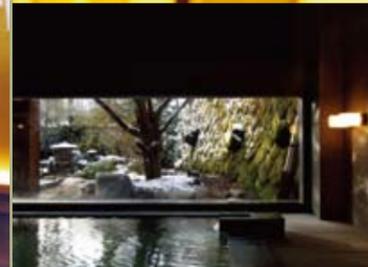
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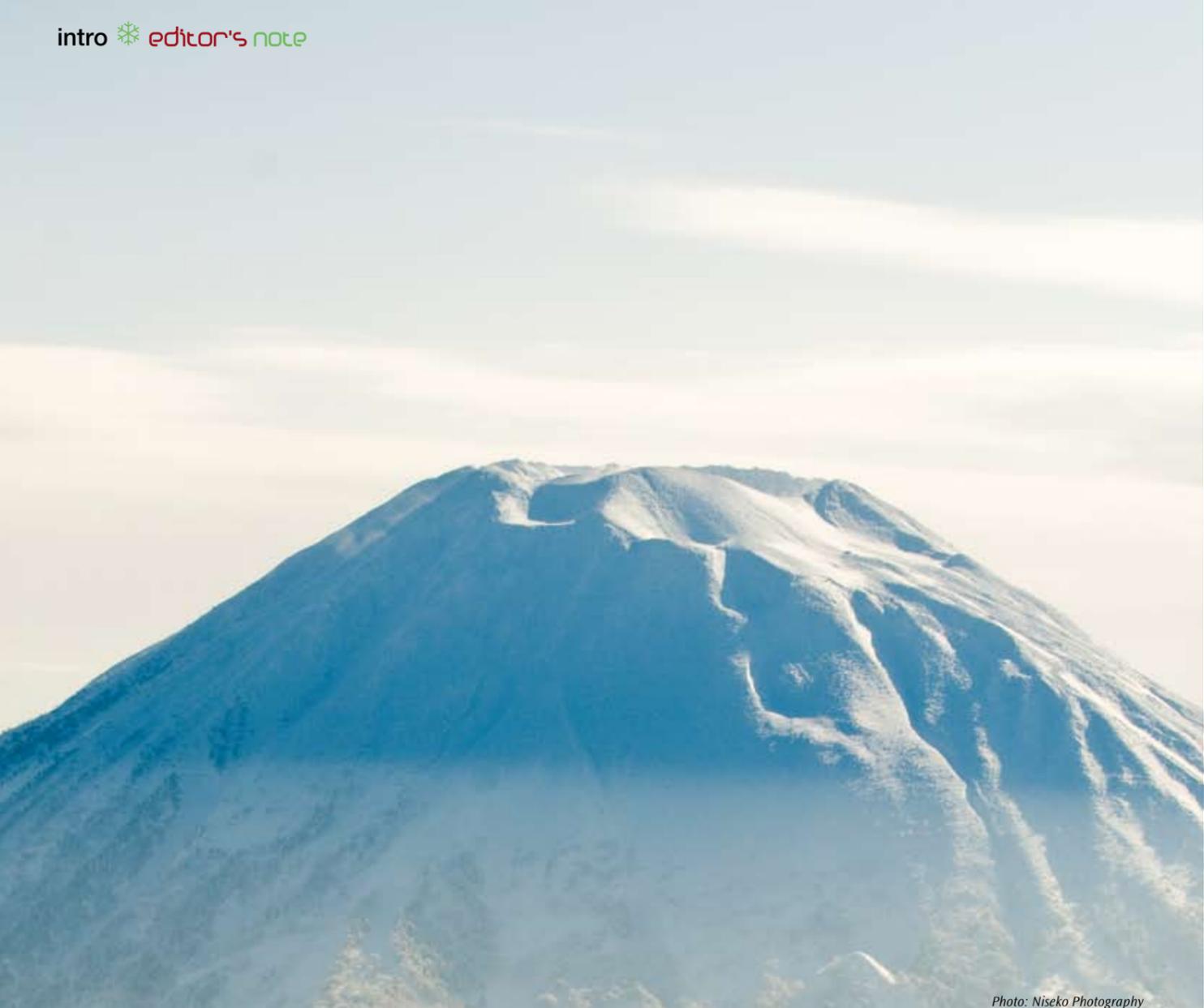


Photo: Niseko Photography

editor's note...

WE'VE well and truly entered the latter half of what has been another great winter in Niseko. March, which conjures up images of sunny blue skies and the start of slightly warmer spring-like weather. The depth of Hokkaido's harsh winter has passed but there's still plenty of snow around. The base depth is at its peak and should slowly start to back off over the coming month as the snowfalls become fewer and farther between and the sun stays in the sky a little longer each day.

The winter season is still far from over and March is a great time to be in Niseko. For a start, there's generally more sunshine for the first time since November – up from an average of about 50 hours a month from December through February, to up over 100. Having said that there is still a good chance of some excellent powder days, with up around 1.5m of snow common and well over 2m possible. In between falls, it's a great time to hit the backcountry to find the last untracked lines of the season.

There are plenty of on-mountain events and competitions on in March too. Kicking off with Hirafu's famous Namara Ippatsu Big Air comp on March 8. If you can tear yourself away from skiing/onsen/eating/drinking, be sure to check this one out. There are also some great deals on accommodation, activities and meals at the moment thanks to the Niseko United's winter campaign (see www.niseko.ne.jp). For those reading this on the web from elsewhere in the world, it's a very good time to get yourself some top quality accommodation at bargain prices and enjoy a ski holiday in Niseko.

We've wrapped up March for you in this edition of Powderlife, so for those already here, we hope you have an amazing March in Niseko, and happy sliding!!

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

編集者の言葉...

ニセコでの素晴らしい冬も後半期となり、晴天の青空、温暖な春の始まりを思い起こさせる3月となりました。北海道の過酷な冬は過ぎ去りましたが、それでも多くの雪が残っています。また積雪量は今がピークですが、これから先少しずつ少なくなり、日中の照射時間が長くなるでしょう。

今シーズンはまだ終わりではありません。3月のニセコもまた素晴らしいです。今期は例年と比べて12月から2月の晴天日が多く、月平均の照射時間は50時間、多い時は100時間でした。3月でも上質なパウダースノーに巡り会うチャンスがあります。通常で1.5メートル、コンディションの良い日では2メートルの降雪があるでしょう。豪雪が続く日は、まだ誰も足を踏み入れていない新雪に今期最後のシュプールを描くことができるバックカントリーが最適です。

3月8日に行われるヒラフで有名な「なまら一発」を皮切りに3月は多くのイベント、競技大会が各スキー場で開催されます。スキー、温泉、食べ歩き&飲み歩きの他にニセコを満喫したい方にはこのイベントはお勧めです。また、この時期はニセコユニティッドの冬期キャンペーンにより、宿泊施設、アクティビティ、食事等において様々な割引があります(詳細はwww.niseko.ne.jpにて)。ウェブサイトでパウダーライフを楽しむ世界中の読者の皆さん、最高級の宿泊施設を特価で楽しめる今、スキーホリデーに是非ニセコへ足を運んではどうでしょう。

今号では3月のニセコを楽しむ情報を満載しています。ニセコにいる皆さんが3月も素晴らしい時間を過ごし、雪山での滑りを楽しまれますように。

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Niseko roars back in late February

FEBRUARY began a little quietly with only a few snowfalls and one aberrant day where all of Japan was hit with an amazing warm snap. On that day temperatures in Tokyo reached over 22 degrees, and Niseko received a day of steady rain. While resorts often take a long time to recover from rain, the ensuing massive snowfalls covered up the frozen base quickly. The powder continued unabated and it was still snowing consistently at the time of going to print. The last two weeks of February had barely a day without snow. These falls, on top of an already massive base, made for some of the best riding of the season.

Local ski instructor Mike Richards, who has been taking snowfall measurements in Hirafu for the past three seasons, had recorded a cumulative snowfall of 10.36m at the end of February, with the month's total at 262cm. While this season the consistency of its falls has seen Niseko once again be the envy of resorts all over Japan, this time most of Japan received the mid-February falls. Hokkaido resorts kept pace with Niseko throughout the remainder of February, but the warm weather returned to Honshu and most resorts in that area suffered from a return of the rain. Here's hoping for continued great falls throughout March.



Photo: Mike Richards



Culture experience

HAVE you ever wondered what you would look like dressed up in a Japanese Kimono and train in a Japanese tea ceremony? Well thanks to Sanae-san's Sakura Japanese Cultural Experience now you can. Drop into the souvenir store behind the Seicomart and you can dress up in your choice of kimono and have some professional photos taken. You can then also learn how to participate in a traditional tea ceremony – there's more to it than you think!

Gentlemen, start your engines



PETROL DRIVEN... Chris Peck from Annapuri revving out his snowmobile.

A GROWING group of extreme locals is discovering the beauty of petrol power in Niseko.

Sales manager at Niseko Property, Craig Mickle, recently sent *Powderlife* shots of him and his buddies on their latest boy toys. The group of six were snapped on their snowmobiles shredding up the Kyogoku ranges, about 20 minutes out of town.

Craig says his group heads out deep into the backcountry a few times a week, and the gang is getting bigger all the time. He's noticed locals are finding out there is more amazing terrain to explore that's simply not accessible by hiking, skis or board (but they strap their skis and boards on their backs just in case). "There is just ridiculous terrain to be had," Craig says. "It's just filthy out there, as you can probably see from these photos."

Craig and Co. usually stick close to Niseko, but have been known to venture out several hours to Nakayama Toge, a popular snowmobiling haunt for local Japanese just outside Sapporo. "It's just me, my mates and the smell of petrol," Craig says. "Getting face shots on a snowmobile is just as much fun as on a board. The other day, there were two of the boys coming down the same face and we couldn't even see or hear the snowmobiles because of how deep they were – we could only see the occasional head poking out."

It's Craig's second season on a snowmobile, but he says he and his posse are working towards pulling some pretty hairy tricks. "We're getting there – hitting some steep faces, and just jumping off a few smaller things," he says. "We're even thinking about setting up a nice big jump out Annapuri way!"



Film fest a huge hit

HIRAFU'S Après Bar was at capacity for Niseko's first Flake Film Festival late last month.

Hundreds of tourists and locals, ranging from film buffs to 'watch a DVD at home' types, packed out the venue for the festival, which has in recent years gained a huge reputation at Australian ski resorts.

A mixed bag of short comedies, dramas, animations, youth and snow films screened on the night, MC'd by founder and organiser, Anthony 'Chook' Trovatello, who was 'stoked' with the interest in this year's festival.

Those in attendance were asked to vote for their favourite short film. The winners were *Half A Horse* by Dean Hewison (1st place - Best Film Overall); *The Tourist* by Matthew Jenkin (2nd place – Best Film Overall); *In Few Minds* by Alistair Wharton (Best Youth Film); *No Hat, No Play* by Sean Balmer (Best Snow Film); and *Half A Horse* (Funniest Film).

This season's Flake Film Festival in Niseko was a repeat of the 2008 Australian event, but Chook is already seeking local entries for next year.

For more information check www.flakefilmfestival.com.

Hollywood celebs ski Niseko

IT was an unlikely combination.

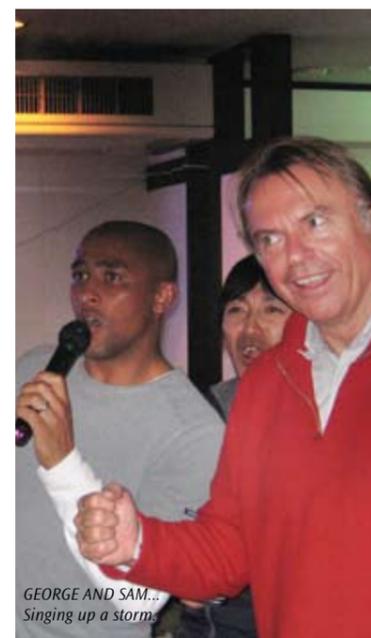
New Zealand actor and Hollywood superstar, Sam Neill, and former Australian rugby union captain, George Gregan, were snapped recently belting out a few tunes at Niseko's karaoke bar, Angel. From the look of this photo, Neill (seen in movies *The Hunt for Red October*, *Jurassic Park* and *The Piano*), with smile and clenched fist, really looks like he is getting into Japan's favourite musical pastime. The expression on Gregan's face is, however, reminiscent of his concentration while on the field playing scrum-half.

Word has it Neill spent time in Niseko with his wife, high-profile Hollywood make-up artist, Noriko Watanabe, and another movie celeb, Bryan Brown (*Cocktail*, *Breaker Morant*, *Along Came Polly*).

But Neill, Gregan and friends aren't the only celebrities to experience Niseko's vibrant nightlife and, of course, our plentiful powder. Anonymous sources have revealed to *Powderlife* that many other famous faces have slipped in and out of town this season.

Several big-name Asian stars have also found their way here. Daniel Wu - an American-born Chinese film actor, director, and producer known mainly in Hong Kong for his martial arts films – enjoyed Niseko's winter wonderland. Japanese pop star Uzaki Ryudo also came to town, along with famous Japanese reporter, Mai Satoda.

In the off season, Emmy Award and Tony Award-winning film, theatre and TV star Hugh Jackman (*X-Men*, *Kate and Leopold* and *Van Helsing*) also came to experience all that Niseko can offer in the warmer months.



GEORGE AND SAM... Singing up a storm.

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Niseko shaken by missing skier

THE Niseko community was rocked last month when Australian skier Scott McKay (*right*) went missing after leaving local bar Wild Bill's.



An IT business owner from Brisbane, Mr. McKay, 27, was last seen leaving the popular Hirafu nightspot by himself on Friday, February 20, around 1.30am.

Friends arrived home only minutes behind Mr McKay, to find he had not returned to accommodation at Pension Fuu, on the outskirts of Hirafu at St Moritz, and notified authorities soon after. A few hours after Mr McKay was reported missing, friends searched alongside police in a first attempt to locate him.

After initial searches failed, Mr McKay's father and uncle arrived from Australia and signed off on an official search, which saw an increased police presence, as well as on and off-duty army, fire and search and rescue teams performed continual searches for almost a week. Helicopters also flew low over town searching for several days, while skin divers dived in nearby rivers.

Snowfall and high winds hampered the immediate transportation of helicopters to Niseko, while the low number of sniffer dogs in Hokkaido also hindered rescue attempts.

Several sweeping volunteer searches of Niseko and the surrounding area saw hundreds of locals and tourists band together and offer their time to help search for Mr McKay, using sticks, probes, their own dogs and anything else that may have helped locate him.

Authorities were at times baffled by Mr McKay's mysterious disappearance, especially due to the fact that he was seen leaving Wild Bill's at a busy, populated hour, and on an evening of clear and calm weather.

All leads and possibilities were considered, said police, yet all failed to locate Mr McKay.

Before leaving Niseko bound for Australia on Wednesday, February 25, Mr McKay's father praised the Niseko community for its help searching for his missing son. Mr McKay's friends also returned home after almost a week of searching.

At the time of going to print, Mr McKay still had not been found. Powderlife would like to express its condolences to Mr McKay's family and friends, and hopes for the best possible outcome from this situation.

March means mountains of comps

MARCH is competition time in Niseko, and this season is no exception.

Most resorts around town will be holding their own comps, so make sure you make it out to see the best Japanese and international skiers and boarders battle it out.

Kicking off proceedings is Niseko Village's Wonder Weekend on March 7 and 8. The Chokkari Cup on March 7 starts at 8am, a ski and snowboard time trial for men and women. At 5pm there will be a free snow cart race, followed by the after party at Ezo at 6pm. The Wonder Weekend continues March 8 with an eight-hour ski and board endurance race from 8.30am-4.30pm.

Hirafu's Namara Ippatsu Big Air competition is on March 9 at 8.15am, a popular event in Niseko that sees skier and boarders give everything they've got for one hot lap of the terrain park.

On March 14, Hanazono will hold its popular yearly competition, Hano Slopestyle #4 at Stomping Ground

terrain park. Entrants from Japan and around the world in male, female and junior skiing and snowboarding divisions will compete for a shot at the ¥200,000 prize pool.

The next day, on March 15, Grand Hirafu will host the 11th Kutchan-cho Junior Grand Slalom ski and board time trial under Ace Pair Lift #3.

Also on March 15 is Annupuri's 10th Minami Ski and Snowboard Battle. Almost 200 male and female skiers and boarders over 16 years old will battle it with high skills and at break-neck speeds.

Grand Hirafu will also host the 27th Hokkaido Junior Ski Technique Competition on March 26 from 9am.

Rounding out the month is the Hirafu Old Boys Giant Slalom on March 29, where the over 50s are out to prove they've still got it.

For full details of competitions check www.powderlife.com/niseko/events/.

Flighty finish for darts finals

IN one of the busiest nights of the year at Wild Bill's, the Niseko-Hirafu International Darts Grand Slam came to a close recently in a nail-biting grand final.



Late last month, foursome Pissed by the End (*above*) took out the premiership against formidable opposition Humphrey Bodart, with PBTE now proud owners of the somewhat dubious-looking trophy, not to mention bragging rights for the next year.

When PBTE were awarded their trophy after a neck and neck night's play, the room erupted in applause as Queen's *We Are The Champions* was aptly cranked throughout the bar. Camera flashes went off crazily to capture the moment, like majo sporting grand final.

The darts competition has been supremely successful this year, with a record number of teams turning out every week this season to play over three nights.

Powderlife's sure we speak for everyone involved when we thank organisers, the venue and sponsors for making such a great league possible.

Powder seminar

HANAZONO resort recently hosted a two-day closed-door 'Powder Seminar' right here in Niseko. The seminar, held at the resort over February 22 and 23, aimed to achieve several objectives, including promoting off-piste skiing, addressing local sustainability, reducing the risks and educating on skiing and snowboarding, and raising the curtain on K2's new Backside ski range.

Three-time Mt Everest climber and Guinness world record holder Gota Muira – who climbed the world's highest mountain last year with his 75-year-old father – gave an inspirational speech entitled 'Life in the Extreme Zone'. A local highlight of the seminar also included an interesting speech on avalanche development from long-time Niseko mountain safety figurehead, Shinya-san. Pro Guiding's very own legendary mountaineer and author Martin Volken gave a speech on current markets, expectations and safety in adventure skiing and boarding.

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Equipment Hire

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Baked

Officials in Gunma found “several **hundred**” **cannabis plants** in the ruins of a house that was gutted by fire. No word on whether the firemen battling the blaze inhaled.

A 22-year-old native of Tonga who plays rugby for Japan’s national team **tested positive for marijuana** and “other substances.”

Flights were delayed at Miyazaki Airport while an SDF crew removed the fuse from a **World War II-era bomb** that was buried nearby.

In other ordinance news, the government said it would set aside ¥1 billion to find and remove **unexploded shells from World War II** on Okinawa. It is estimated that this job will take 100 years.

Officials in Nara announced a **major renovation of Daikodo hall** in the Horyuji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Defying the downturn

It was reported that Tokyo Disney Resort enjoyed a **12.5 percent jump in sales** and a 41.3 percent increase in profit in fiscal 2008.

Thanks to the strength of its fixed-line internet and mobile services, NTT reported a **70 percent jump in profits** from April to December compared to a year earlier.

McDonald’s Japan said its sales in 2008 rose **2.9 percent to ¥406 billion**, an all-time high.

Softbank reported that its operating profit **jumped 2.4 percent** in the third quarter of 2008.

The Cabinet Office announced that its **consumer confidence index rose by 0.2 percent** in January.

It was reported that **1,800 people lined up for a job** at Universal Studios Japan, double the number of applicants compared to last year. USJ employs about 1,200 part-timers annually.

Me talk pretty one day

The National Center for University Entrance Examinations said that average English scores on its tests have **dropped about 10 points** nationwide during the past year.

Scientists at Keio University announced that they used **human stem cells** to repair spinal cord damage in paralyzed mice, allowing them to walk again.

Honda released its **new Insight hybrid car** amid a worldwide slump in gas prices, leading one company official to complain, “If [the vehicle] had gone on sale a half year earlier, it would have been such a sure hot-seller.”

It was reported that **half-Japanese lingerie model** Jessica Michibata (*below*) and British Formula One driver Jenson Button have been “enjoying each other’s company.”



Not so smiley

Police **arrested one woman for defamation** and are mulling charges against 18 others after they posted comments on the blog of 37-year-old Japanese comedian Smiley Kikuchi.

The Ministry of Finance said that, although the total amount of drug smuggling cases decreased last year, **the**

number of cases involving stimulants increased by 53 percent.

Sotheby officials said they expected an **8th-century tortoiseshell box** that was presented to Emperor Shomu as a gift by the Tang Dynasty to fetch more than \$5 million when it is auctioned in April.

Cheap labor

The justice ministry says that **65,000 prison inmates** around the country are employed in some type of work, mostly manufacturing auto parts for large companies.

It was reported that around **2,000 of these prisoners have lost their jobs** due to the economic downturn.

Officials in Adachi ward will spend **¥4 million to buy thermometers** for some 5,000 fifth grade students, who will then be asked to keep temperature records as a part of an environmental project.

It is estimated that if the officials hired private companies to keep the records, **the cost would be ¥400 million.**

A 69-year-old accident victim who was **denied treatment at 14 hospitals** in Hyogo last month subsequently died of his injuries.

Russian authorities released the crew of a Japanese crab fishing boat it had **seized in disputed waters.** The boat’s owner paid about ¥14 million for the crew’s release.

Blue moon

After **cutting wages and working hours**, a Fujitsu factory that manufactures microelectronics said it will allow its employees to moonlight.

In a similar move, Toshiba said it would let **16,700 of its workers take second jobs** after they were temporarily let go due to production cuts.

The vice-president of the opposition Democratic Party called Prime Minister Taro Aso a “**con man**” and a “**tax thief.**”

STATS

¥19,110,000 million
Amount won by a bettor at Funabashi Racecourse, an all-time record for a single horse race in Japan

¥100
Amount staked by the bettor, who nailed a trifecta

5,600
Foreign workers who have lost jobs during the past six months due to the recession, according to the labor ministry

42,510
Number of bosozoku biker gang members in 1982, according to the National Police agency

11,516
Members last year, according to the NPA

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

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SNAP



INSKI

Inski's Stack of the Week

IF you leave a camera rolling long enough, you are sure to capture some gold eventually. Skiers Ross Kupisiewicz and Matt Laforet dropped by the Powderlife office recently with a video of Matt hitting a little man-made kicker in Niseko. Here, Matt hits the booter and manages to skilfully kick off both his skis into the air. The peak of Matt's stack is frozen in time in this still, with skis perfectly parallel in their air, and Matt well on his way to landing on his head. Thanks to Niseko's pillowy powder, nobody was harmed in the making of this video. Well done, Matt, for your troubles you've won a Salomon Ranger helmet, courtesy of Inski Skis, Boards and Snow Wear. 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 Powderlife and we'll publish them for all the world to see. The best photo at the end of the season will take a home a major prize. Email hi-res photos with a short blurb to ed@powderlife.com. Oh, and happy stacking!

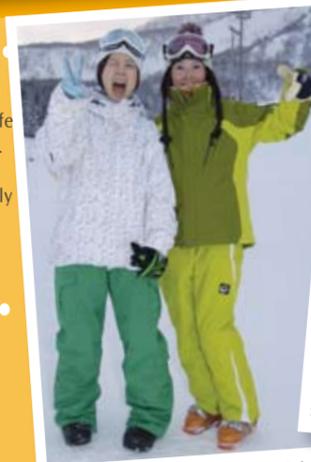
Powderlife hit the mountain to take some happy snaps, and asked skiers and boarders about their favourite piece of snow equipment...



Right-to-left, Tracy loves her Burton Malolo board, but also wants Jim's Smith I/O goggles (middle). Meanwhile Kim (left) wishes he was riding Jim's brand new silver Burton Fish board.



Naohika and Masato, from Fukuoka on the mainland, were stoked to be snapped for Powderlife! Their favourite pieces of equipment were their beloved snowboards – a Salomon Official and a Rome Graft.



Mizue and Yuko were up from mainland Japan's skiing hotspot, Niigata, because they're having a bad season down south. Mizue says she loves her 'kawaii' (cute) goggles and Yuko loves her Volkl skis.



Kazuaki, little Miya and Marina were up from the Kansai area of the mainland, and who can go past Miya-chan's adorable one-piece jump suit and bear bzeanie?! Kawaii ne!



Hong Kongers Steve, Eric, Man, Dorothy and Johnson were back in Niseko for the second (and not last) time. All agreed Eric's Gore-Tex denim jacket couldn't be beaten.

Mountain style

STUART from Australia is on the search for 'the perfect board'. Aren't we all? A board-maker by trade, this Sydney shredder is a little more discerning, though. The colourful craft Stuart is riding at the moment – a Sapient – 'rips the powder pretty well', but it's still not quite what he's looking for. Apparently the 'sick-looking' artwork had nothing to do with his purchase. Stu didn't buy it for the pretty pictures, it was 'all about the tech specs'. "And so the search goes on," says Stuart. "Maybe I'll have to start making my own boards again?"

Stuart styles up with a Four Square jacket and fluoro orange Gore-Tex pants (the main reason Powderlife approached him). Fashion dictates a lean towards plain jackets and bright bottoms these days...and Stu's all over it. "My mate's mum was feeling generous one day and bought it all for me," he recalls. "She took us shopping and said 'go ahead, pick what you want'." A possible lesson here: perhaps we should all get that little bit closer to out mates' mothers?



Weasel (NZ), Stuart (AUS), Michell (AUS) and Laura (GER) were all stoked with the girls' 'monster green' jackets. The girls reckon they look 'fast and scary', while the guys said it made them easy to locate.

Powderlife went to three of many parties around town in the last fortnight.

FLASH



One of these kids just doesn't belong here. Paula's the odd one out, with James and Jake sporting their bright beanies.



Cool kids Isaac, Stuart and Tenzin weren't playing darts but still turned out to hang loose in Wild Bill's.



AJ and Jess were ladies dressed as lamb, and spent the night dodging the advances of a pack of dart-happy wolves.

Wild Bill's Darts Grand Final



Jessie and Red perch themselves up high on a table to get a good view of the darts finals action.



Where's Paul?



Allie bounded across the room, dodging several darts, for the chance to be in this shot with Mami, Micks and Ai.

Samurai Bar

With Micka Etheridge



Jo from Australia and Helen from the UK were all eyes for the camera at Samurai Bar.



Everyone was seeing double when it came to sexy sisters Avril and Maddy.

Red Bar

Beats party



When it comes to partying, for Javier, Dennis, Nigel and Julia, some dress up while others dress down.



Things got hot and sweaty at the Red Bar for Bond and Deals, who weren't afraid to show off their costumes (and it wasn't even fancy dress!).



Hannah, from Scotland, let her feelings be known for Canadian Anna by writing a message on her okonomiyaki.



The lights were dimmed but Chris's bright orange ski suit lit up the room for Richie.



New Swedish friends Lisa and Emma showing some public displays of affection.



Micka ducks over to the Red Bar after his gig for some downtime, but is instead swamped by groupies Narelle and Tracey.



Awesome foursome Jodie, Sarah, Christian and Bryan enjoying the good times and great music Micka was sending out.



Josh, Yahiro, Noriko and Richie enjoyed some couch time as Micka's tunes washed over them.



Chris gets cosy with Powderlife Cafe's wizz chef Dennis.

Saturday, February 21

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

Saturday, Mar 7

***Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Motonao Ito quartet (sax). No cover charge
Blowing tenor sax player from Sapporo is performing hard be-bop.

Sunday, Mar 8

***Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Hokkaido University Jazz Workshop, no cover charge

Monday, Mar 9

***Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Hokkaido University Jazz Workshop, no cover charge

***Java Bar Ladies Night, 9pm - 11pm**

all the drinks will be half price

Tuesday, Mar 10

***Mini Concert by Kansai Phil Harmony @ Niseko Northern Resort Annupuri**
7pm at "Éclat" restaurant on 2nd floor
8pm at "Forester Lounge" on 1st floor
No cover charge.
Bring a Powderlife magazine and get dinner buffet at 3000JPY(regular 3700JPY)

***Java Bar DJ Night, 6pm - 10pm**

You will have 100JPY discount from all the drinks

Wednesday, Mar 11

***Mini Concert by Kansai Phil Harmony @ Niseko Northern Resort Annupuri**
7pm at "Éclat" restaurant on 2nd floor
8pm at "Forester Lounge" on 1st floor
No cover charge.
Bring a Powderlife magazine and get dinner buffet at 3000JPY(regular 3700JPY)

Thursday, Mar 12

***Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
"Slingo" Mark Slingsby from Australia, acoustic music.
No cover charge

Saturday, Mar 14

***Half Note Jazz Live, 9pm**
Dream Factory Jazz Orchestra
The Last live of the season! Cover charge 1000JPY
Ticket available at Half Note

Monday, Mar 16

***Java Bar Ladies Night, 9pm - 11pm**
all the drinks will be half price

Tuesday, Mar 17

***Java Bar DJ Night, 6pm - 10pm**
You will have 100JPY discount from all the drinks

Wednesday, Mar 18

***Java Bar Nomihoudai, 9pm - 11pm**
2000JPY

Thursday, Mar 19

***Splash & Java Bar present**
Sonic Wall Link Up Vol6 100% Reggae Party@Java Bar,
9pm Cover charge 500 JPY with one drink



Got an event on between March 21 and April 3? Get it on this page in the next edition of Powderlife - input it in to the events page on our website by March 6.
3月21日から4月3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3月6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。

Wednesday, Feb 18 - Sunday, Mar 29

***Kutchan Art Exhibition at Shu Ogawara Museum of Art**
9am - 5pm (closed on Tuesdays)
Paintings by local artists.
Admission: ¥500 (adult), ¥300 (high school students), ¥100 (elementary and junior high school students).
For more information, please contact 0136-21-4141.

2月18日(水)から3月29日(日) くっちゃん Art展
地元アーティストや倶知安に関わりのあるアーティストによる合同展
時間: 9:00am-5:00pm (毎週火曜日休館)
場所: 小川原脩記念美術館
料金: 大人500円、高校生300円、小中高生100円
詳細は 0136-21-4141 まで

Saturday, Mar 7

***Skiing/Boarding Costume Day at Hanazono, 9am**
Put some crazy ideas together and come up with a costume to ski or board in. Prizes include Roxy/Quiksilver goggles, beanies and much more! At 1pm, you can enjoy Fashion Parade Final.
For more information, please contact 0136-21-6655, or visit www.skihanazono.com

3月7日(土) 花園スキー/ボードコスチュームデー
コスチュームでスキー/スノーボー? 奇抜な格好でゲレンデで一番目立ちたい人に最適なイベント。1時から行われるファッションパレードの勝者にはロキシー、クイックシルバーの洋服などの賞品有り。
時間: 9am
場所: 花園スキー場
詳細は 0136216655 または www.skihanazono.com まで

Saturday, Mar 7

***Hirafu March Weekend Fireworks Premiere, 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

Sunday, Mar 8

***Namara Ippatsu Hirafu Big Air,**
Above Niseko Kogen Hotel. Hit the big air in front of the crowds at Hirafu. This is one of the events of the year. Open to everyone - ski/board, male/female.
For more information, please contact 0136-22-110.
3月8日(日) なまら一発2009
ボーダー、スキーヤー達が待ちに待ったニセコ最大のジャンプコンペが今年もやって来た。空中に華麗に舞って皆の注目を独り占めしよう!
時間: 8:15 am受付開始
場所: ニセコグラン・ヒラフ、高原コース
詳細は0136-22-110まで

Sunday, Mar 8

***Free ski/snowboard @ Asahigaoka Ski Slope in Kutchan, 9am - 4pm**
The last day of the season. Enjoy skiing and snowboarding at this lovely local ski slope.
For more information, please contact Kutchan Town Gym on 0136-22-2288, or Asahigaoka Ski Slope on 0136-23-2743.
3月8日(日) 旭が丘スキー場町民無料デー&営業最終日
今年最後の町民無料デーで思いっきり雪を楽しもう。
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(0136-23-2743) まで

Saturday, Mar 14

***Hirafu March Weekend Fireworks Premiere, 9:30pm**
Fireworks every Saturday in March on the slopes outside the Alpen Hotel.
3月14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

in the loop

Saturday, Mar 14

***White day Special, 10am - 8pm (Last order at 7:30 pm)**
Any plans for White Day? Graubünden offers a special sandwich and cake menu for you and that special someone. Sandwich with soup for ¥900, cake with coffee or tea for ¥700.
For more information, please contact 0136-23-3371.

3月14日(土) ホワイトデースペシャル@グラウブünden
バレンタインのお返しデートにぴったり。
時間: 10am - 8pm (ラストオーダー7:30 pm)
料金: サンドイッチとスープ ¥900、ケーキとドリンク (コーヒー又は紅茶) ¥700
詳細は 0136-23-3371 まで

Sunday, Mar 15

***The 10th Minami Ski & Snowboard Battle in Annupuri registration starts at 8am**
Registration fee ¥3500. Entries close March 6. Exciting ski and snowboard cross race at Annupuri.
For more information, please contact 03-3292-0373.
3月15日(日)

第十回ミニミススポーツ主催スキー、スノーボードの大バトルレース
時間: 8:00am受付開始
場所: アンヌプリスキー場
詳細は 03-3292-0373 まで

Sunday, Mar 15

***The 11th Kutchan Junior Giant Slalom, registration starts at 7:45am**
A time trial event held at Grand Hirafu for the elementary school students. Registration fee ¥2000. Entries close March 6. For more information, please contact Mr. Fujita (Kutchan Town Office) at 0136-22-1121, or 0136-22-2288 (Kutchan Town Gym).
3月15日(日) 第11回倶知安町長杯・ニセコひらふ北海道小学生選手権ジュニアグランドスラローム
ヒラフスキー場で小学生による白熱のタイムレースを観戦しよう!
時間: 7:45am 受付開始
場所: グラン・ヒラフスキー場
詳細は 0136-22-1121 (倶知安町役場・生活安全係フジタ)、0136-22-2288 (倶知安町総合体育館) まで



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

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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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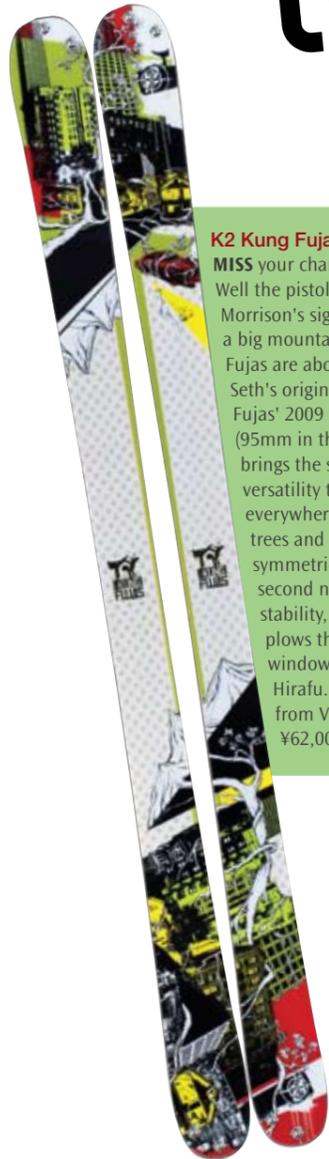
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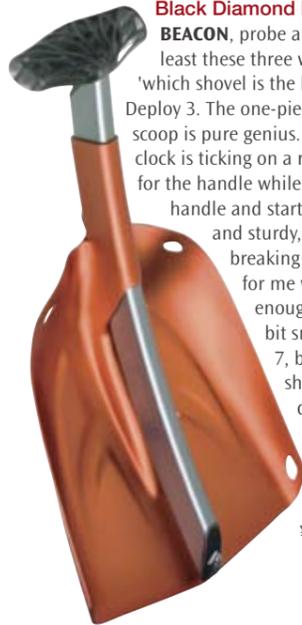
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Powder tools



K2 Kung Fugas

MISS your chance to buy K2's classic Seth Pistols? Well the pistols maybe no more, but as Seth Morrison's signature ski has morphed into more of a big mountain beast (the ObSETHed) the K2 Kung Fugas are about as close as you're going to get to Seth's original magic mid-fat twin-tip design. Pep Fugas' 2009 pro-model ski is a tiny bit slimmer (95mm in the waist, down from 98mm), but brings the same easy-flexing, torsionally stiff versatility that made the old Seth shine everywhere from deep and steep faces to tight trees and monster terrain parks. A nearly symmetrical side cut makes going switch second nature without sacrificing forward stability, and a fully-wrapped solid fir core plows through crud like a brick through a window. Available for hire from Fusion in Hirafu. Call 0136-21-6633. Also available from Victoria Sports, Tokyo for about ¥62,000.



Black Diamond Deploy 3 Shovel.

BEACON, probe and shovel. We know we need to be packing at least these three when we head out the back. If your question is 'which shovel is the best?', the answer is easy: The Black Diamond Deploy 3. The one-piece unit with the handle that collapses into the scoop is pure genius. The last thing you want to be doing when the clock is ticking on a retrieval is digging around your pack looking for the handle while someone's life is on the line. One click on the handle and start digging. The metal structure is super-rugged and sturdy, so you'll never be afraid of it bending or breaking (I wouldn't want my riding buddies searching for me with a plastic blade!). The size is compact enough to fit in any day pack. Some critics say it's a bit small and suggest opting for the larger Deploy 7, but in terms of speed of digging, a larger shovel is only preferable in softer snow. Most avy debris is generally solid and dense, so I don't know how much a bigger shovel would really help dig someone out of danger. The square handle is easy to grip with wet or snow-covered gloves. Available from NAC for ¥7,350. Call 0136-23-2093.

Dupraz D1

LIKE Gentem's Taro Tamai, Dupraz's Serge Dupraz started his company to wrench snowboarding away from the grip skateboarding currently has on it, and bring it back to its surfing roots. Like Gentem, Dupraz's tagline is 'snowsurfing'. And for good reason. Ripping a turn in pow on a Dupraz will make you feel like throwing both arms up just like you would ripping a massive cutback on a wave. So much fun. The D1 is Dupraz's original deck, and many think is still the best. The nose is soft, and pointed like a surfboard, with an upward camber to keep it above Niseko's white waves. It's stiffer in the tail, with extra flex under foot, and the small side cut radius will enable you to carve super-powerful turns, as close to the ground as you like without fear of losing an edge. Like all good pow decks they are long with a small effective edge, so you can flick them just like a 150cm. Opt for the generous 178cm over the 165cm and you won't regret it. Available from next year from Native Products, until then available online from www.sierrasnowboards.com, for about USD\$495.



Polaris RMK 600

BUILT to take on the deepest snow Niseko's back country will no doubt serve up, the Polaris 600 RMK Snowmobile is built for powder turning in the backcountry. The RMK 600 is marketed as entry level, but will rip as hard as anything for anyone under 100kgs. It can climb steep slopes, float on side hills and play in the bowls. But you might want to borrow Stirling's snorkel before going out on this one. The track (chain that runs along the snow) has an interlaced off-setting panel, so it's always pulling snow, a great asset when you're pulling deep turns in soft powder. The current model is even lighter than previous years. By shedding the heat exchange pads in the foot panels and using a freestyle seat, it weighs in at a super svelte 55kgs, and at 125 horsepower it has a power-to-weight ratio that is second to none. You can even add more horsepower and reduce the weight of the sled with the optional SLP exhaust silencer. Available from Niseko Snowmobiling Adventures (NSA). Call 090-9757-4083



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GROOMER Akio



LIFTIE Goku Chou



SKI PATROL Yurine

name Akio Nagahata
age 32 **hometown** Iwate
Prefecture how long have you been in niseko? 7 years
do you like powder? Yes
ski/board? for now, snow-boarder how long have you been skiing/boarded? Ski 8 years, board about 11 years
why did you come to niseko? It just happened
what did you do in summer? Make jibs what languages do you speak? Japanese, Tohoku dialect, fake Kansai dialect
trips overseas? USA, Canada, Korea where do you want to go next? Italy, Spain
favorite...
colour Red
brand Burton **food** Soup Curry
restaurant Tsubara Tsubara
bar None **onsen** Yuki Chichibu
ski run Tetsu Course
where else do you want to go skiing overseas? Park City (USA) how long will you be in niseko? See how it goes
what does niseko need? McDonalds **niseko secret?** Gonta water (it comes from a bear statue)
what's your life philosophy? Easy come, easy go

名 ナガハタ アキオ
年齢 32歳 **出身地** 岩手
ニセコに来てどのくらいですか? 7年 **パウダースノーは好きですか?** 好き **スキーヤー?スノーボーダー?** 一とりあえずスノーボーダー **スキー歴/ボード歴** スキー8年、ボード11年くらい **なぜニセコに来たのですか?** 流れで夏には何をしましたか? ジブ作り **話す言語は?** 東北弁、ニセ関西弁
海外には行った事ありますか? アメリカ、カナダ、韓国 **次はどこに行きたいですか?** イタリア、スペイン
好きな...
色は? 赤 **ブランドは?** パートン **食べ物**は? スープカレー **レストラン**は? つばらつばら **バー**は? なし **温泉**は? 雪秩父 **コース**は? テツコース
海外のスキー場で一度行ってみたいスキー場は? パークシティ(アメリカ)
ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか? 流れのままに
ニセコに今無い物で、必要だと思うものは? マクドナルド
ニセコの秘密は? ゴンタの水(熊から水がでてきまーす)
あなたの人生観は? Easy come, easy go

name Kazuaki Tsuda **age** 35
hometown Osaka prefecture
how long have you been in niseko? 8 years **do you like powder?** A little **ski/board?** Board how long have you been boarding? 10 years
why did you come to niseko? I wanted to come to a heavy snowfall area
what did you do in summer? Maintaining lifts
what languages do you speak? Japanese **trips overseas?** Never
where do you want to go next? Alaska
favorite... colour Orange
brand Oakley **food** Gyu-don (beef slices on rice) **restaurant** Maru **bar** Don't drink onsen
At home ski run Ace Family course, good for practice
where do you want to go skiing overseas? Nowhere in particular
how long will you be in niseko? Probably a long time
what does niseko need? Yoshinoya (gyu-don restaurant franchise) **niseko secret?** There is a man who rides scooter in winter time
what's your life philosophy? Work well, learn well, play well

名 ツダ カズアキ
年齢 35歳 **出身地** 大阪
ニセコに来てどのくらいですか? 8年 **パウダースノーは好きですか?** まあまあ好きです **スキーヤー?スノーボーダー?** ボード歴10年 **なぜニセコに来たのですか?** どうせ行くなら豪雪地帯へ夏には何をしましたか? リフトの整備
話す言語は? 日本語
海外には行った事ありますか? ない **次はどこに行きたいですか?** アラスカ
好きな...
色は? オレンジ **ブランド**は? Oakley **食べ物**は? 牛丼 **レストラン**は? まる **バー**は? 飲みません **温泉**は? 我が家 **コース**は? エースファミリーのコースこそ練習には最適です
海外のスキー場で一度行ってみたいスキー場は? 特になし
ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか? たぶらずっと
ニセコに今無い物で、必要だと思うものは? 吉野家
ニセコの秘密は? 冬になるとバイクに乗るおじさんがいる
あなたの人生観は? よく働き、よく学び、よく遊ぶ

Yakitori & Bar Yosaku

ONE of Hirafu's coolest new restaurants is yakitori joint Yosaku. Yakitori literally means 'grilled bird', although 'bird' really just means chicken. But there are plenty of other meat and vegetable combinations, which can come cooked in either salt or a dark soy-type sauce. Owner Akihiro Kimura (second from right) came to Niseko four seasons ago to work as a carpenter. When he noticed the large basement space below the NOASC building was available he decided it would be a good place to make a restaurant/bar. Stepping down out of the snow in to Yosaku and smelling the strong smell of Yakitori is a great Niseko/Japan experience.

焼き鳥 & Bar 与作

ヒラフにある新しい飲食店でお勧めなのは、焼き鳥 & Bar 与作です。焼き鳥とは字のごとく"鳥を焼く"という意味ですが、鳥とは鶏肉です。鶏肉以外の肉も、野菜も塩かたれでやきます。店長の木村彰宏さんは4シーズン前に大工の仕事でニセコに来ました。NOASCの下の空き物件を見つけ、レストランかバーを開くことにしました。やきとりのにおいに誘われて雪から一息ついたたくさんのお客様でにぎわっています。



Izakaya Sakae

IZAKAYA Sakae may be one of the newer restaurants in Hirafu, but its owners are some of the longest serving business people in the village. 73-year-old chef Masayuki Sakai and his wife Sada opened one of Hirafu's first pensions, Ryokan Sakae, in the 1960s. The old lodge sadly had to be demolished recently as it was getting too old, and the Sakais weren't able to rebuild on the site. So they sold up and moved just to Izumikyō, on the outskirts of Hirafu. They started the quiet izakaya (Japanese tapas restaurant) two seasons ago. For those who have never eaten at an izakaya, Sakae is a great introduction as the menu is fairly simple with photos of everything, meaning first timers won't be overwhelmed. Izakaya Sakae is next to Maru in Izumikyō II on the free Hirafu shuttle bus route.

居酒屋 さかえ

居酒屋さかえはヒラフにある新しい飲食店のひとつかもしれませんが、オーナーはこのヒラフでもっとも長い間、商売をしています。73歳の板前、阪井正行さんと奥さん、サダさんはヒラフで最初の旅館、さかえ旅館を1960年代に開業しました。長く続いたさかえ旅館も老朽化がすすみ、人手に渡り、最近取り壊されました。そして、ヒラフのはずれにある、泉郷に移ってきました。居酒屋さかえは2シーズン前にオープンしました。まだ居酒屋にいったことがないなら、さかえは特別にお勧めです。メニューは写真があり、わかりやすく、注文しやすいです。居酒屋さかえは泉郷IIのれすとらんまるの隣にあります。ヒラフシャトルバスの停留所の近くです。

Pension Bluebell

STAYING in a family-run pension in Niseko is a great opportunity to experience true Japanese culture by living with the locals who love the area and introducing it to visitors. Pension Bluebell is run by 73 and 75-years-young couple Morozumi and Hiroko Hayato, and their son Eiji. Morozumi-san was born in Nagano, mainland Japan's main ski area, but moved to Tokyo for study and work. When his job took them to Sapporo, they often visited Niseko for skiing and to enjoy the nature here. In 1995 they built Bluebell. Hiroko bakes fresh bread everyday for their customers and they want to run the pension until they are 100.

ペンション ブルーベル

ニセコを満喫したいなら本当の日本文化に触れ、旅行者にニセコの魅力を伝えられる、家族経営のペンションに滞在することをお勧めします。ペンションブルーベルは73歳と75歳の夫婦、両角隼人さんと弘子さんと息子さんの英司さんで経営しています。ご夫婦はとも若く70代とは思えません! 両角さんはスキーで有名な長野県出身で、大学、就職と、東京に上京し、転勤で札幌に移りました。スキーや自然の豊かさにひかれニセコに何度となく訪れ、1995年にペンションブルーベルをオープンさせました。弘子さんは毎日パンを焼いてお客様を迎えています。100歳まで働きたいと元気いっぱいです。



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Wakka Spa

Burring for powder:

Cat skiing in Niseko

By Matthew Thomas



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE... cat skiing offers a powder experience unreachable by ski, board or foot. Photo: Glen Claydon

THERE'S no doubting that we in Niseko are blessed with access to some of the best snow and terrain in the world. And what makes us even luckier is that so many of these runs – even the backcountry – are easily accessible by lift or gondola. After all, a hike of 20 minutes or so from the top lift can find you on the peak of Mt Annupuri, facing the exciting prospect of a 1000m vertical drop in waist-deep, untracked powder, all backed by beautifully isolated, natural terrain. With the right knowledge crowds are not even an issue; many times throughout the season you can be enjoying these sorts of conditions with only your buddies, and not another soul in sight.

With so much terrain accessible so easily, we hear

you ask 'why bother venturing any further out?' Well, why not? We at Powderlife can acknowledge there is more to Niseko and its surrounds than can be attained by ski, board or snowshoe. For those who are after fresher tracks, even more-challenging terrain, or simply a taste of something different, there are plenty of other options for all levels – ranging from first lines on tame groomers to being in the middle of nowhere and staring down at some of the Devil's own country. Sometimes petrol power can open up the door to a whole new realm of fresh powder and epic terrain. With this in mind, we thought we would look into one such mode of transport in particular – cat skiing...

Weiss Cat Skiing

THE virtually abandoned Niseko Weiss ski resort, hidden past Hanazono, is a ski resort frozen in time. And therein lies its charm.

Since the lifts were shut down a few years ago, the only way the mountain can be ridden these days is by cat.

Upon arriving at the rustic Weiss resort, which opened about 40 years ago, you immediately get the feeling you are experiencing a ski resort of a more simplistic, traditional nature. Perhaps this is what skiing used to be like back in '80s Hokkaido? It's usually deathly silent at Weiss, and there are shutdown lifts and machinery relics littered about the place, so there's almost the feeling you are trespassing or wandering through a graveyard, stepping on the grave of skiing's past. Even the clock outside the resort seems to have eerily stopped, frozen at '12:26' for the rest of time. All this just about makes you feel like you shouldn't be there. The drive in the car to Weiss is even an experience in itself – it's in the middle of nowhere, nobody uses the road except for those accessing the resort or the nearby hotel, and the roads are often coated in deeper powder and flanked by high, unmaintained walls of snow. The only things that seem to be functioning at Weiss today are the basic resort clubhouse and, of course, the cat that takes you up the mountain.

A 15-minute incline in the cat drops you at one of

Weiss' highest points, facing back down to the clubhouse, with a 2.8km run ahead. When Powderlife visited Weiss, we shared the entire mountain between the three of us, and two Japanese skiers. How about that?!

With an altitude of 940m, Weiss is a mellow ride, wide-open runs with plenty of trees and a really natural, organic feeling. The runs are not very steep, and the day we went to Weiss there was half-a-metre of thigh-deep powder that slowed us down a little. So we found ourselves sticking to the groomer just to get some speed up, then ducking off into the fresh pow for a few nice turns, then heading back to the cat track to regain speed. Weiss would definitely be better on a fast snow day, likely to be found after a light dusting has covered a smooth, quick snow base. So if conditions like this arrive, Weiss may be a good option if you fancy a mountain basically to yourself.

At only a couple of thousand yen per person, per run, Weiss is also probably the most affordable option for those wanting to get a taste of cat skiing.

- Niseko Weiss cat skiing costs ¥2000 (per person, one run), or ¥6500 for a day pass. Local companies in town also organise tours of Weiss for those who don't want to make their own way there. For bookings or more information call 0136-22-2515, or check www.niseko-weiss.co.jp.



FROZEN IN TIME... Weiss offers a glimpse of Niseko's skiing past



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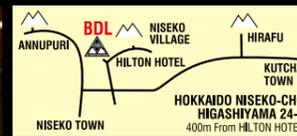
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Iwanai One-Day Cat Tours



OCEANS OF POWDER... Iwanai offers a unique chance to ski towards the sea.

EVER wanted to ride your very own mountain for an entire day? Of course you have!

Well, Hirafu-based tour company NOASC can make your dreams come true with its one-day Mt Iwanai Cat tour, only about an hour's drive in winter from Niseko's village centre.

You and seven friends (that's eight people in total) can experience some unforgettable powder turns on your own mountain for a whole day.

With more than 700m vertical per run, and breathtaking views of the west coast of Hokkaido, it makes for a tour not to be missed.

Most definitely the major drawback and big point of difference with this particular tour is riding down the mountain with the view of Iwanai Bay, and the ocean below. You can even see ships and trawlers in the bay. It's a pretty safe bet to say most people will have never skied by the sea. Looking in other directions, you also see many more of the surrounding ranges and back

towards Mt Yotei. With ocean on one side and mountain ranges surrounding, get this tour on a clear day and it is simply amazing!

Mt Iwanai is ideally suited for your intermediate to advanced rider, similar to Weiss in offering a powder experience both in and out of the trees. So whether or not skiers and boarders are comfortable with trees, they can still enjoy the powder. If you can go through peak gates four and five at Hirafu, and comfortably handle Miharashi, you should have no problems riding Iwanai.

The runs on Iwanai are generally well-maintained like a fully-functioning ski resort. This is achieved because when the cat transports riders up the hill, it simultaneously grooms the runs. And as is the charm of most cat skiing tours, the runs never get tracked out! The powder is usually plentiful, too, because Iwanai is one of first mountains hit by weather from the ocean –

so the snow really smacks against this resort.

Iwanai is laid out similarly to Hirafu, in that the cat goes as far as the top lift, then you hike 200-300m to get to the peak, Iwanai-Dake.

The pitch is similar to the King 4 area of Hirafu, with a solid fall line in parts. There are a few open bowls and a couple of ridge lines.

But the beauty of Iwanai, especially for snowboarders, is there are no flat benches – it's just straight down all the way!

- NOASC does one-day Cat tours for ¥25,000 (per person, for four to eight people, or ¥164,000 for the entire cat). Tour lasts from 8am-5.30pm. Price includes cat rental, lunch, guiding, and pick up and drop off. Age minimum is 13 years. Bookings accepted up to 4.30pm the day before the tour. For more information visit www.noasc.com, or call 0136-23-1688.

Fresh Tracks Cat Skiing, Niseko Village

THERE'S something to be said for being one of very few people riding Niseko's mountain before the lifts are even open. And that's exactly what you can do when you carve your own first lines with Niseko Village's Fresh Tracks Cat Skiing.

Most skiers and boarders are still rugged up in bed at 6am, and this was when two Powderlife staff, and four other keen snowboarders, were lucky enough to jump aboard one of these nifty cat trips.

We discovered quickly that we'd had a lucky 15cm-plus coating of fresh snow overnight as we crept up the mountain – a surreal experience with the sun rising slowly in the distance. The only thing to be seen on the mountain during the 20-minute trip up to launch point were other cats as they groomed the runs ahead of the coming day's play. Not a skier or boarder in sight makes the mountain feel completely different and an almost unrecognisable environment. And it must be said that the ski or board down may be the main attraction, but part of the whole experience is riding in the back of a cat, watching this snow monster chew through the powder as you climb the steep terrain.

Upon arriving at our destination (the top of Niseko Village's intermediate to advanced 'Superstition' run – usually only accessible by a tow rope during the day), we buckled into our boards and were instructed by our two seasoned guides for the day (who, incidentally, must have one of the best jobs in the world!) of what areas we



MAKING TRACKS... the cat might get first lines, but you'll get second at Niseko Village.

could and could not ride. Then it was on! All of a sudden it was a race to the best and freshest lines. But the beauty of it was that wherever you went, it was all fresh! Carving deep forehand and backhand turns, it was face shots aplenty. There was so much light, fluffy powder that we found ourselves literally inhaling and choking on snow. At the bottom – all of us completely coated from head to toe in snow, laughing and slapping high fives - our cat awaited to take us back up to do it all again.

When we reached the top of our second run, we let our group get a head start on us. It was then that it finally dawned on my colleague and I that we had the mountain to ourselves. "Hey, you realise we're probably the only people riding this mountain right now?," I said to my colleague as I buckled into my bindings once

more, watchings as our group rode off ahead of us leaving behind their powdery wake. "Yeah, hard to believe, huh?" was his response. What sweetens the deal is that Niseko Village only does one of these tours each day.

Sharing this moment with a close bunch of mates would also only heighten an already unforgettable experience.

- Niseko Village does First Tracks Cat Skiing mornings at 6.10am. Bookings (maximum of six) must be made by 6pm the previous day. Cost ¥15,000 per person, including light breakfast, t-shirt and photo (weather permitting). For more information call 0136-44-3990, or check www.niseko-village.com/winter-activities/.



LAUNCHING... hitting big booters in the backcountry. Photo: Glen Claydon.

The extreme side to Niseko

NISEKO Snowmobiling Adventures (NSA) specialises in providing some of the best snowmobiling services in the Niseko area.

But what many don't know is they also provide a niche cat skiing service to the crème de la crème of skiing and snowboarding pros visiting Hokkaido.

This service is not available to the general public just yet, and not many punters would be interested or game to take on what it offers anyway.

Only recently, NSA has taken out riders from Rip Curl, Salomon and Norwegian pro female skiers for days of hardcore, extreme riding that most of us wouldn't dream about taking on.

Most pros are happy to spend most of the day on a cat, hiking and searching for the perfect natural feature for that one killer shot. Forget long, untracked, free-riding runs - this is all about performing for the camera.

The tours are customisable to what the pro is after, but they are usually chasing the same thing - pillow lines, cliff drops and rocky outcrops.

If you're a pro rider, and are after a go at some of Niseko's best-kept secrets, chances are NSA will know where to go. These pro cat skiing tours are where all those amazing shots you only see in the magazines come from.

It's great that along with providing record amounts of powder, Niseko also has some really steep, intense terrain to keep these extreme riders coming back for more.



ALL ACCESS PASS... a cat will take you where you want to go. Photo: Glen Claydon.



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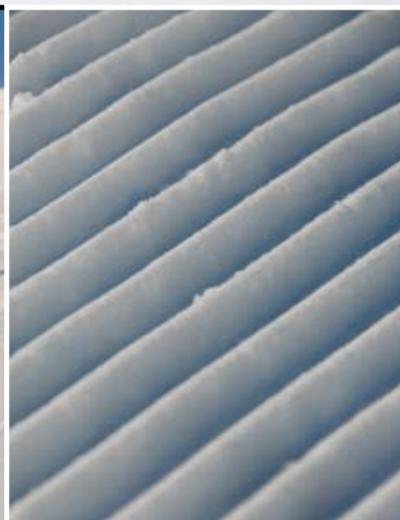
A THOUSAND WORDS...



TIPS UP... Yasuyuki Shimanuki lets his ski brand be known. Photo: Yoshi Mizoduchi



POWDERY WAKE... Summing up what Niseko's backcountry is all about. Photo: Glen Claydon



BI-BOARD... These custom skis are made for powder, but Toki-san can work them on the groomers, too. Photo: Takahiro Nakanishi



SIDEWAYS... Hide-San leans right over into a bed of powder. Photo: Luke Hurford.



CARVE... Ben Gillespie digs the rail in for a face shot. Photo: Niseko Photography.



DIGGING DEEP... Jeff Marks makes an impression. Photo: Luke Hurford.



Izumi Kano

YOU'VE more than likely seen her pouring drinks behind the bar at Wild Bill's, but Powderlife spoke to Izumi Kano about everything from her choice of snowboard, to the tunes she listens to while carving her powder turns...



Name	Izumi Kano
Nickname	'Izumimasen'
Born	19/7/1974
Setup	Burton Lexa; regular; 46cm; front 21 degrees; rear -6 degrees
Time in Niseko	Three years
Favourite terrain	Anything with powder on it!
How many years riding?	10 years
Favourite move on a snowboard?	Big turns in powder!

Top 10 Powder tracks

1. *Solitaire*, Strung Out
2. *Dedicated*, C.L
3. *Ms O'Ginny*, Verses
4. *Heart Beat*, Nneka
5. *Mambo No. 5*, Special Others
6. *#4*, Husking Bee
7. *Thriller*, Fall Out Boy
8. *Jack*, Pia-No-Jack
9. *Same Girl*, R. Kelly (feat. Usher)
10. *Konayuki* (Powder Snow), Hinouchi Emi



Teriyaki Boyz, *Serious Japanese*, 2009

THIS album would be one of the best Japanese hip-hop albums, featuring some of the biggest names on the scene: Ad-Rock from the Beastie Boys, Pharrel from N.E.R.D and Kanye West. However, being the best from Japan at hip-hop is like being the best figure skater in Ethiopia. Sorry, Tsete Mtobeke, you are still good in my books. Founded by the owner of B.A.P.E, the Teriyaki Boyz do put out a fun album that is technically sound, and it is refreshing to hear Japanese vocals to a commercial U.S hip-hop beat. **Rating:** 3 Teriyaki Boyz Is A Pedophiles Dream out of 5. **Songs to listen for:** *Still Love H.E.R.* (ft. Kanye West), *5th Element* (ft. Cornelius) and *Sweet Girl*.



TV On The Radio, *Dear Science*, 2008

PEOPLE say to me all the time, 'how good is this album?', and I say, 'I know, right!'. Unfortunately, when the same question was put to me about TV On The Radio, I was a deer in the headlights. Sadly, this is the first TVOTR album I have ever heard, and I really regret 'hitting TVOTR puberty' so late. I have honestly never before heard an album that could be liked by almost everybody. Except people who listen to Nickelback (I really have to get over that!). With vocals not dissimilar to Kele Okereke from Bloc Party, and electronic samples mixed with indie rock, *Dear Science* makes for a great listen. Honestly, one of my favourites from the last two years. **Rating:** 5 'I Know, Rights!' out of 5. **Songs to listen for:** *Halfway Home*, *Golden Age*, *Red Dress*.



Blitzen Trapper, *Furr*, 2008

IT'S a well-known fact that I'm a man who likes to appeal to the masses. So, when Mr Starship Weedsmith, of Nimbin, wouldn't stop writing to *Powderlife* demanding that we review more psychedelic rock, I decided to answer his calls. I reviewed this. Bob Dylan has been reborn, but in the shape of six people. The Neil Young and Beatles influences are laid bare, the quirkiness is now more tuneful than cerebral, and the band has surrendered to the basic human craving for candied country melodies than in previous albums. In other words, it's 'stoner rock'. A good listen, but you may have to shower and go off the lentil burgers for a few weeks, because they will turn you to the hippy side in no time at all. **Rating:** 3.5 I Don't Particularly Care For Hippies But I Like This out of 5. **Songs to listen for:** *Gold For Bread*, *Sleepy Time in The Western World*.



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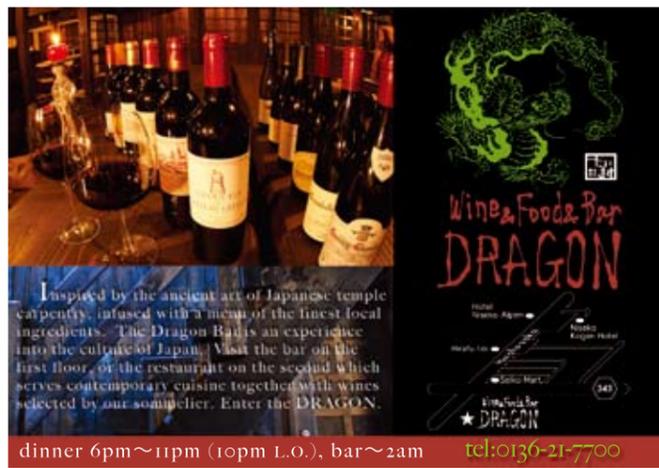
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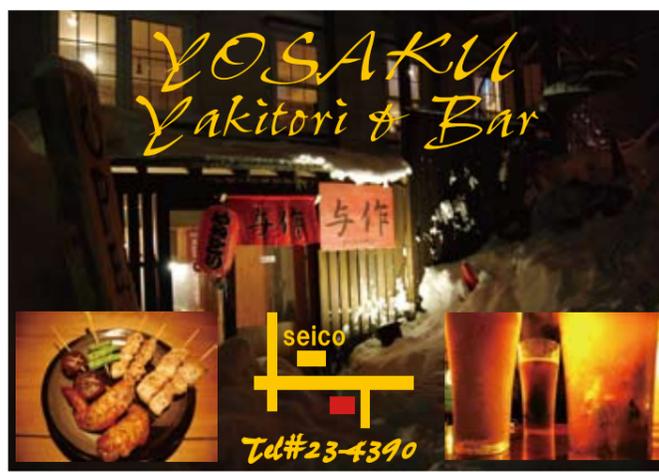
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WE first visited Senchou when we had only been in Japan for a week, and discovered there wasn't much concession made for non-Japanese speakers here. At least not in the summertime, when the English-speaking, peak season staff aren't around. Not that we were complaining, it's just that we had no idea what anything was. We developed a technique when choosing what to eat – if it smelled good, we'd go in.

Senchou has a big neon scrolling sign that leaves you with no doubt it's an eatery. But what sort? They have a few photos on the board out the front, with a variety of seafood, meat and smaller dishes on display. But what we discovered after our first venture was that it's actually an izakaya – a Japanese version of a tapas bar.

The place is small with only half a dozen tables and a few seats at the sushi bar. We were seated quickly and supplied with essential beverages, a small plate of crispy squid and a dollop of 'Kewpie', the world's greatest mayonnaise. We browsed the menu – well, the pictures mostly – and, settling on a few things, sat back, unaware of how delicious the night was about to become.

The first dishes to arrive were the chicken and pork yakitori (grilled skewers). The chicken was minced and served with aioli and a raw egg yolk to mix in. It was delicious, the meat moist and flavorsome, the film of egg yolk and aioli making it wonderfully rich. The pork was a skewer threaded with marinated slices of pork belly, grilled to a crisp on the outside that crunched

open as you bit it to let the melted fat and juices run out.

Next came an eggplant, sliced and stuffed with chicken before being steamed in a dashi broth and topped with fresh grated daikon. The eggplant was silky smooth and the chicken was just cooked, all drenched in the smokey dashi. Then came tuna with fresh wasabi. Oh, the joy of fresh wasabi!

Once you've had it, the green powdery junk that gets passed off in tubes as wasabi around the world will never be the same again. The tuna was swimmingly fresh and melted in our mouths. Marinated mackerel with fresh ginger was up next up, and wow! I mean, wow!! It was nothing like any we'd had before. The texture resulting from the pickling meant it was firm, but not cooked. The pickle enhanced the flavour of the fish, rather than overpowering it. It might come as no surprise that this was my favourite dish of the night.

And finally, Hokkaido lamb with asparagus and roast potatoes, coming out still cooking on a pottery hot plate, the smell was captivating. Upon lifting the lid to the cooker we found four fat slices of lamb, some asparagus and the famed Hokkaido potatoes all sizzling away. The lamb was already at a perfect medium rare so we dived straight in. Mmmmm, so juicy and tender. The potatoes were out of this world – soft and floury inside with the most terrific crunchy exterior.

We both agreed this was a fine end result to our latest 'smell and see' experiment. However, in the name of science, we reasoned that we would

really needed to return, as we had only just touched on the menu, and Senchou really deserved a thorough reviewing. Soon we were back, but with the resolve that we wouldn't have anything we had last time.

Once again, greeted and seated in a flash, it was straight into the draught beer, though this time the side snack was jellied pork rib. Oishii! Our resolve, as it turned out, wasn't that strong, as we couldn't make it past two of the favourites from the previous visit. The chicken and pork yakitori were once again the first dishes on the table. With our cravings somewhat sated, we were able to look at the menu a little more broadly – and we were glad we did. There are two types of salmon sashimi available – regular and delicious. I don't know about you, but delicious always sounds like a good path to follow. Coming from the fatty belly of the salmon it certainly lived up to its name – the flavour was delicate and the flesh melted in our mouths. We followed this with fried octopus, coated in a golden crust, seasoned with a hint of curry powder and topped with a squeeze of lemon.

Next came the show stopper of the night, scallop butter. This amazing dish consisted of a live scallop being fished out of a tank, then – quick as a flash – opened, sliced and whipped back into the shell with a touch of soy broth and a square of butter. The shell is then placed onto a small candle burner and brought to the table where it slowly heats and cooks to your liking. As it was placed down the chef pointed out all the pieces – heart, flesh, coral as well as

the skirt... in fact, there was not a lot missing. First was the heart, firm and tasty. Then the flesh and all the remaining bits quickly fell prey. As the scallop disappeared, the reason for the little spoon served with the dish became apparent. What was left in the shell was an unbelievably tasty broth made up of the simmered scallop juices and butter. Too good to waste, this was also quickly slurped down (lucky slurping is a compliment here!).

Then, a moment of serendipity occurred, maybe through miscommunication or misunderstanding, the next dish to arrive was potato gratin. We definitely hadn't ordered it, but after a cautious taste we weren't going to give it up. The dish was like a Russian doll revealing little surprises, layer after layer. On the outside were roasted Hokkaido potatoes and asparagus gratinated and topped with a little sour cream. Under that a layer of crispy grilled bacon, and under that, grilled scallops and baby squid. We were soon tapping the bottom of the plate to make sure there was nothing else there.

To finish with came a spin on chicken karaage (fried chicken). Rather than a few small pieces, it was one thigh, crumbed and fried whole, sliced, then topped with a spring onion sauce. Crispy and cut with the slight sweetness from the sauce, it was a fine finish to another great meal.

As we stepped out into the night, we knew it wouldn't be too long before we would be experiencing Senchou: Part III.



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Hokkaido soup curry

By Jerod McCann & Naoki Miyamura of EN in-house fine dining.

SOUP curry, a liquid curry with vegetables and rice, is just one of the specialties of the city of Sapporo. Japanese chefs are not the only ones serving their version of the curry – Thailand, China and India are also famous for their soup curries. Personalise each curry you order by choosing the spice level, vegetables and meat/seafood that goes into the dish, OR stay at home and create your own soup curry to impress. The best way to warm-up this winter.



Ingredients:

6 cups chicken or beef stock (see issue 12); 1 carrot, diced; 1 celery stick, diced; 4 onions, sliced thin; 1 apple; 1 can whole tomatoes; 1 chunk dark chocolate; 1 bay leaf; 5 large cloves garlic; 1 large thumb ginger; 1 large dried chili pepper; dry spice mix of cumin, turmeric, coriander, black pepper corn, garam masala, curry powder, oil (as needed), salt/pepper

MAKING THE ROUX

1. In a wide-base 2L pot, add sliced onion and a tablespoon of oil. Sauté on low heat until amber-brown with a paste-like texture (caramelised).
2. Grind garlic, ginger and apple into onions. Simmer 5 minutes, mash well.
3. Add all dry spice mix, chocolate, dried chilli, continue mashing. Simmer again until dry.
4. Add tomato and simmer, continue mixing.
5. Once roux has thickened to heavy paste, incorporate stock. Increase heat and bring to light boil.

FINISHING THE SOUP

1. Lower heat until simmering and add carrots, celery and bay leaf.
2. Simmer for 2 hours, occasionally scraping the bottom of the pot to prevent burning.
3. Cut heat and ladle curry into separate bowl through metal strainer. With each ladle full, push curry through strainer making sure to get all liquids out. Transfer back to 2L pot and bring back to low simmer.
4. Adjust seasoning with salt, adding more dry spices if necessary.

CREATING THE DISH

You can be creative – just about anything can go into a soup curry. Here's the chef's recommendation:

1. Boil some carrot, mushroom, pumpkin, potato and green snap peas until cooked, and an egg for 8 mins (cool in an ice bath).
2. Fry a chicken leg in hot pan. Sear on each side, lower the heat and cover.
3. Place all veggies and chicken leg into a large serving bowl, assembling nicely in the centre to create volume. Carefully ladle in the hot curry soup. Top with the boiled egg and fresh parsley.
4. Side with freshly cooked rice.

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How to survive Niseko's powder

By Matthew Thomas



NISEKO'S famous, fluffy and plentiful powder is what brings thousands upon thousands of snow enthusiasts to this little corner of Japan every year.

Every winter, harsh weather from Siberia travels across the Sea of Japan, drawing moisture from the ocean. And where is one of Mother Nature's first ports of call? Niseko, Hokkaido would be the correct answer.

Niseko's snow can be as light as baby powder; so light you can't make a snowball (so you're generally safe from snowball sabotage here...). Any Niseko local will even tell you the snow's sometimes so light, you can literally inhale it. You'll find the powder is sometimes so light and sticky it's hard to get rid of – coating your beanie, jacket, pants, hair, beard or moustache. Often the white stuff will just stick to you until it finally melts off with time.

The ultimate experience for skiers and boarders is to pull a big turn and get a nice face shot of Niseko's powder, then look behind you to see your snowy wake hanging in the air for second after second. This soft, pillowy snow also means you often have a softer landing to take that bigger drop, or go that little bit quicker than you ordinarily would.

For many first-timers, Niseko's light snow, and abundance of it, can be a little intimidating. The powder here can take a little getting used to, because it sometimes rides differently from other places in the world. But, once you are used to it, there'll be no turning back!

The *Powderlife* crew have spent plenty of time deep in the powder of Niseko, so we decided to share a few handy hints to enhance your powder experience...

GEAR:

Skis/board: longer, fatter skis and boards are a must in Niseko's powder! Some suggestions are K2 Pontoons for skiers, or the Niseko-produced powder-munching board, the Gentemstick. Generally, the longer or fatter the board means less rear leg burn and stress on the rear knee. Boarders should remember it's best to set your bindings back closer to the tail for powder. Skiers, the fatter your skis, the less you need to work on keeping your tips up. Powder-specific boards and skis are designed for staying out of the powder, with minimal work for the rider. A park board or thin skis won't really do the trick.

Powder skirt: (middle pic) this may sound a little feminine (especially to the guys) but a jacket fitted with one of these skirts will stop snow getting in unsavoury places. Underpants full of snow is (mostly) not a pleasurable experience. Also, if your jacket is equipped as such, make sure your skirt is fastened to your pants, making the skirt more effective, and also protecting

POWDER TOOLS... A trick up the sleeve, and below the belt, keep powder at bay.



your back/stomach from snow burn, should the jacket be pulled up while riding.

Sleeve skirt: (bottom left pic) also handy in the powder, this allows you to feed your thumb or fingers through holes to stop your sleeve from sliding up, and to stop snow from getting into your sleeves.

Face mask: you may look like Hannibal Lecter, or like you're about to rob a bank, but a good face mask will stop those cold, cold winds from freezing your face off. A Niseko run on a cold day or night can literally render your face numb and your mouth speechless. Face masks also stop powder and ice from congealing on your face (especially if you're proudly sporting a beard or moustache!).

Helmet: you can be shredding through powder at top speed then rip a turn only to see nothing but fluffy powder. This moment is generally when trees or other obstacles tend to sneak up on you, so best wear a helmet. These days snow helmets look pretty cool, are generally super-warm, and are even sometimes fitted with headphones! Plus, most of the locals here who are serious about their tree runs and backcountry riding wear one!

THE BASICS:

Fitness: Before the start of your season or holiday, it may be a good idea to work on your fitness and strength – your body will thank you later! Riding powder is without doubt a full-body workout, and after your first few days you can feel as though you have run a marathon, or at least had a heavy session in the gym. Every muscle can ache, especially your arms, abdominals, chest, shoulders and, of course, legs (thighs/calves). Therefore, prepare beforehand with some squats, push-ups, sit-ups, step-ups or lunges, along with some cardiovascular exercise. This will make your first powder experience much easier to bear, while also decreasing your risk of injury. For a detailed snow-training regime, visit: <http://www.powderlife.com/magazine/last-word-on-health/preparation/>.

GETTING THE MOST POWDER POSSIBLE:

- Heard the old saying 'the early bird gets the worm'? The same applies for powder. First lifts – or some serious local knowledge – are your best chance for finding some fresh. So, unless you deal well with late nights followed by early rises, maybe an earlier night is a good idea before a big powder day. It's hard to be king of the bar and king of the mountain. And with Murphy's Law the way it is, you can almost guarantee if you have a late night, the powder gods will have paid a visit come morning.

- There are places you may have a better chance of locating powder. Often the best pow can be found



Photo: Glen Claydon

amongst the trees (especially pine trees), as large amounts of snow can fall from the tree branches to the ground below, where the powder can accumulate, protected from the wind. Wind-blown stashes are also a good idea, so look at the direction the wind is blowing and consider where the snow may be going (such as gullies).

- Sometimes the best powder stashes are not the most obvious. Instead of just following someone's tracks, think outside the box and consider where you may find some untouched powder (without doing anything dangerous, of course!). Sometimes a short traverse or a bit of a hike can be very rewarding. Seek and ye shall find!

HOW TO SKI/BOARD POWDER:

Start out slow: Firstly, test out the powder just off the groomers to get a feel for it, before venturing further out off-piste, or into the backcountry, where areas can be more remote, dangerous and tend to have much deeper, harder-to-ride powder.

Lean back: Without putting yourself off-balance, you should lean back slightly to ensure your nose/tips are kept out of the powder. But, with the right powder skis or board, most of the work should be done for you.

Follow those tracks: If you hit a flat patch, to save yourself having to push, skate or hike your way out, sometimes it can be a good idea to ride in someone's tracks. Why do all the hard work when someone else has already done it for you?! Just make sure the tracks are going the right way back...and preferably not into a tree!

Feel the flow: When riding fresh powder as a beginner, it can be best to not perform too many fast, drastic turns. Just go with the flow, stay balanced and enjoy some smooth, slow, drawn-out turns.

Pay attention: Be aware the powder can change in an instant; one minute it can be fluffy and friendly, then the next hard, icy and wind-packed. Know the conditions, and the way the snow looks and feels.

PREVENTION AND RECOVERY:

Avoid falling over: This may seem abundantly obvious, but you'll learn this over time because it's just such a darn pain to get back up!

No turtling: If you're on your back in the powder 'turtling' (named as such because you look like a turtle trapped on its back, limbs flailing wildly) it can help to face back up the hill, roll over on your stomach and push yourself back up from there. Also, to stop your arms sinking into the powder when pushing up, try packing down the snow in front of you with your hands and using that hard-packed pad of snow to push yourself back up.

Hiking out: in case you are boarding and have to hike up a steep, powdery hill, hold your board by the back of your bindings, dig the board into the snow parallel with the hill, then use it, with your legs, to pull yourself back up. You can do the same with skis if you place them together with your stocks, or an easier option is to put some 'skins' on your skis and 'skin up'.

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In Focus... with Paul Haggart

Interview by Kristian Lund

PAUL Haggart came to Niseko from New Zealand three years ago, and has quickly become a respected ambassador for the foreign community here. He has got involved with all levels of the local community, and volunteers at every opportunity to help organise events, and help out wherever he can. He has become an unofficial tourism representative for Niseko.

What brought you to Niseko?

I have been living in Niseko now for three years. My wife is from Tokyo originally, and it was a combination of an opportunity to live a little closer to her family, and an exciting opportunity to work for Hokkaido Tracks, one of the area's most well-known developers, that brought me to Niseko, and back to Japan.

Can you tell us about your new role at the Green Leaf Hotel?

I am the manager of the hotel, in charge of hotel operations, and the hotel's drive back into the marketplace. This is an exciting challenge and I have a fantastic team of staff and great support from the resort in propelling the hotel forward into the future.

What is so special about Niseko, as opposed to other places in Hokkaido?

The people in Niseko make Niseko special. These people are really adept and very talented. They have a love for the district and are very welcoming and are quite international in their thoughts.

What's your favourite thing about Niseko?

I have more than one favourite thing about Niseko – the people, the food, the lie of the land, the versatility of the land, and the incredible array of produce are just some of the things that make this place special.

Which is your favourite season in Niseko and why?

My favourite season in Niseko is spring. I never knew that there could be two opportunities to experience autumn in one year – what I mean is, when the new spring growth on the trees start to appear, it comes out in very vivid colours, similar to autumn. The difference is that the air slowly becomes warmer. After the spring fall (harukoyo) the forests grow at the rate of about a metre a day. This is so fascinating to watch – it really makes you feel alive.

You are very passionate about Niseko and promoting it to outsiders. Why are you so passionate about it?

Niseko is a really special place and plays a very important role in Japanese tourism going into the future. I want people from the outside to experience the magic of Japan and have as deep an experience as possible while they are here. The more you know about the area and the culture, the more you want to know. It is this spirit that I really want to foster.

You do a lot of work promoting festivals and events in Niseko year-round. Which are your favourites, and why?

There are so many events on in Niseko each year, this is really difficult to answer. However, I really enjoyed the Pumpkin Harvest event last year in Niseko Town. This event really stood out as it gave people from all around the world who reside here an opportunity to network



and work together not only on the event, but in all aspects of community life. This event starts with the building of tunnel houses on March 10, 2009.

What do you think Niseko will be like in 10 years time?

In 10 years time I think Niseko would have had an opportunity to mature and the efforts that are being made now will be a lot more visible. I think that the entire district is learning a lot in 2009, and 2010 and beyond will give us a stage to show what it is that we can really do and what we as a district can show the country and the world.

What are your top three tips for visitors to Niseko?

1. You cannot leave the area without trying a Higashiyama Milk Kobo choux cream (custard cream puff). They are amazing!!!
2. Try out the onsens. The variety is huge, and the healing and wellness-giving properties really make a difference to the end of a day.
3. Get as much inside local knowledge as possible when traveling about. There are some very special places to see and experience.

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Lesson 7: Numbers

If you learn nothing else when you're in Niseko – you should at least learn how to order a few drinks in Japanese. Then you'll be able to impress your mates back home when you order a beer at your local Japanese restaurant – or a water with your sushi. And while we're on the numbers, wouldn't it be cool to be able to ask how much something is and actually understand the answer? In today's lesson you'll learn the difference between one hour and one o'clock as well as how to avoid ordering four bottles of wine, when you just want four glasses.

1. 1時 Ichi ji It's one o'clock.

You'll need to know the basic numbers to be able to tell the time. Here's one to ten: **ichi, ni, san, yon, go, roku, nana, hachi, kyuu, jyu**. Eleven is easy, just stick ten and one together: **jyuu ichi**. Twelve? You guessed it: **jyuu ni**. Then add **ji** for o'clock. **Ima nan ji?** (What time is it?) **Ichi ji**. (It's one o'clock.) For half past, add **han**. **Rifuto wa nan ji kara yatteru?** (What time do the lifts open?) **Hachi ji han** (Eight thirty). To be more specific, the word for minutes is either **hun** or **pun**. **Bar wa nan ji kara yatteru?** (What time does the bar open?) **Yo ji ni jyu ppun** (4:20). **Basu wa nan ji ni deru?** (What time does the bus leave?) **Jyuu ichi ji ni jyuu san pun** (11:23).

2. ビール2つお願いします Biiru futatsu onegai shimasu Two beers, please.

Huh?! Why **futatsu**? What about **ni**? Keep your pants on – sometimes two is **ni**, sometimes it's **futatsu** and sometimes it's something else. We don't say a flock of fish or a school of birds in English – that's just the way it is. Might as well learn the numbers for drinks if you're planning to get thirsty: **hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu, yottsu, itsutsu, muttsu, nanatsu, yattsu, kokonotsu, too**. Then you just need to know the order: drink + number + please. **Mizu mittsu onegai shimasu** (Three waters, please). You can also use these counters for coconuts, so the next time you want to order nine coconuts you can have fun saying: **kokonattsu kokonotsu** (nine coconuts). Oh, and when you're ordering beer, don't forget the long **ii** sound or you could up ordering two buildings. They'll be way more than 500 yen each – especially in Hirafu!

3. 3週間 San shuu kan three weeks

If you're talking about a period of time, you'll need to remember the word **kan**. **Niseko no taizai kikan wa?** (How long are you in Niseko for?) **San shuu kan** (Three weeks). **Nan jikan no tour?** (How long is the tour?) **Ni ji kan** (Two hours). If you're talking about minutes, you don't need the **kan**. **Gondola no machi jikan wa?** (How long did you have to wait for the gondola?) **Go hun gurai dake** (Only about five minutes).

4. ワイン4本 Wain yon hon four bottles of wine

If you want four glasses of wine, it's: **wain yottsu**, but four bottles is: **wain yon hon** – things could get messy if you make a mistake! Let's see how many ways we can say the number four: **yokka kan** (four days), **youka** (the fourth), **yon sai** (four years old), **yo nen kan** (four years), **yo nin** (four people), **yon mai** (four flat/thin objects), **yottsu** (four drinks etc), **yon dai** (four big objects – like a car), **yon ko** (four round objects), **yon hyaku en** (400 yen), **shi gatsu** (April), **yon** (four – when counting on your fingers).

5. 500円 Go hyaku en five hundred yen

If you want to make your yen go further, it could pay to ask around about prices. **Banana Bar no biiru ikura?** (How much is beer at the Banana Bar?) **Go hyaku en** (Five hundred yen). Thousand is **sen** and Japanese also counts in ten thousands:

man. Shiizun pasu ikura? (How much is a season pass?) **Jyuu go man** (One hundred and fifty thousand).

6. 荷物6個 Nimotsu rokko six bags

The counter **ko** is used for things like parcels or bags. **Nimotsu nan ko?** (How many bags do you have?) **Rokko** (Six). Kids also use it for almost anything before they've learnt the correct counter. So if in doubt, try throwing a **ko** on the end of the basic numbers - at least you'll sound cute!

7. 7人の侍 Shichi nin no samurai seven samurai

When you're counting people, you need to say **nin** after the number. That's why they didn't call the movie: **Shichi Samurai**. There are exceptions: **hitori** (one person), **futari** (two people). When you walk into a restaurant, they ask: **Nan mei sama desu ka?** (How many people are there in your group?) If there are five of you, answer: **Go nin**. While we're on the number seven, have you tried the popular Japanese condiment **Shichimi**? There are seven different ingredients, hence the name **shichi** (seven) **mi** (taste). Seven isn't always **shichi** though, sometimes it's **nana**.



8. 8月 Hachi gatsu August

Months are easy in Japanese! It's just a number, plus the word **gatsu** (month). **Itsu Nihon ni tsuita?** (When did you arrive in Japan?) **Jyuu ichi gatsu** (November). **Itsu kaeru?** (When are you leaving?) **Shi gatsu** (April). **Tanjiyoubi itsu?** (When's your birthday?) **Go gatsu** (May).

9. 9か月 Kyuu ka getsu nine months

When you're talking about a period of time, change the **gatsu** to **getsu** and throw a **ka** in front. **Niseko no taizai kikan wa?** (How long are you in Niseko for?) **Kyuu ka getsu** (Nine months).

10. 10日 Too ka the 10th

Most dates have a **ka** on the end – but it's not quite as simple as attaching **th** to a number, the numbers for dates change again. **Itsu kaeru no?** (When are you going back?) **Tsuitachi** (the first), **futsu ka** (the second), **mikka** (the third), **yokka** (fourth), **itsu ka** (the fifth), **mui ka** (the sixth), **nano ka** (the seventh), **you ka** (the eighth), **kokono ka** (the ninth), **too ka** (the tenth). From the eleventh the numbers get easier: **jyuu ichi nichii**, **jyuu ni nichii** ... until you hit twenty and there's a special word: **hatsu ka**. By the way, if you're counting the order people cross the finish line, you'll need the word **ban**. **Ichi ban** (first), **ni ban** (second), **san ban** (third).



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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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 For bus timetable information, visit the information centre, next to Seicomart



Enshrined in culture

By Shukin

AS a long-time resident of Kutchan it always disheartens me to hear people complain 'there is no culture in Hirafu, Niseko, or Kutchan!' Or, 'It just doesn't seem like Japan!' Many act as if up until five or six years ago, when the western real-estate and development companies decided to rebuild the area, there were samurai and geisha walking the streets, only horses and rickshaw on the streets, and if you weren't careful when you went out drinking sake you would end up in a sword fight with a drunken ronin. As if they were to get off the airplane and all of a sudden step into a black and white film, turn to their loved ones and say, 'it's just as I imagined, it's like *Seven Samurai*'. Hey, I enjoy a good Kurosawa film as much as anyone, but Japan has leapt with the rest of us into the 21st century. Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, an area that can boast about being one of the most historical, is littered with modernity. In actual fact, this area is dripping with Japanese culture, and if we were to take the time to wander the back streets of Kutchan, just a short bus ride from Hirafu, we will find that Kutchan is indeed the 'real Japan', and there are more than two handfuls of temples and shrines (jinja's) scattered around within walking distance. They may not be as grandiose as those of Kyoto or Nara, but just as 'spiritual', and very intimate, one of the main aspects of Zen. Their roofs are less ornate, due to the heavy snowfall, but their layout is based on the traditional paradigm. Daibutsuji (大仏寺), a Soto Zen temple located next to the ski field behind Kutchan Station, has an elaborately painted ceiling officially listed as a 'town cultural asset'. Brendan from the town office has put together a 'walking temple tour' of K-Town (see also the opposite page). He has contacted all the temples and shrines and composed a detailed list and history of 10 places which, upon appointment, will open their doors and show you around. Just drop by or call the information centre on the main street and set up this free self-guided tour. For more information call 0136-23-0222.

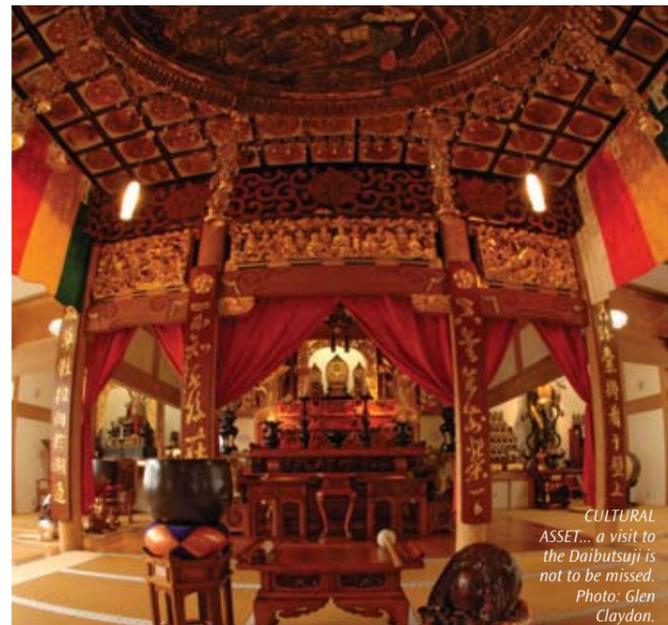
We have provided a map to give a general idea of how close they are, and also suggest visiting www.town.kutchan.hokkaido.jp/town/syoukoukankouka/English/temple_tour.jsp to download Brendan's tour. Free internet is provided at the information centre.

If I am free, I am more than happy to try to answer any questions you may have regarding Japanese culture, so swing by my Café Kaku. Have fun, be respectful, and enjoy Japan!

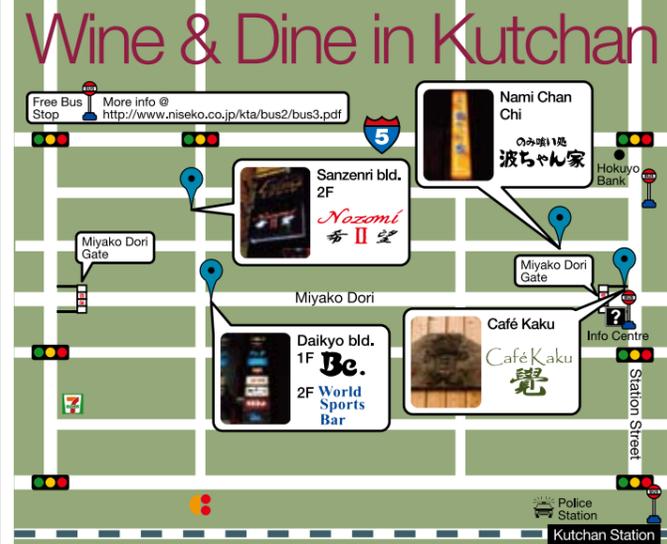
Praying at a Shinto shrine

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2. Ring the bell once.
3. Bow twice.
4. Clap twice in prayer while thinking about your wish.
5. Bow once.

It is also recommended that specific wishes are preferable to vague wishes.



CULTURAL ASSET... a visit to the Daibutsuji is not to be missed. Photo: Glen Claydon.



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Open: 19:00 to 03:00 Close randomly

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Open: 21:00 to 06:00 Close randomly

Men Who Ride Mountains

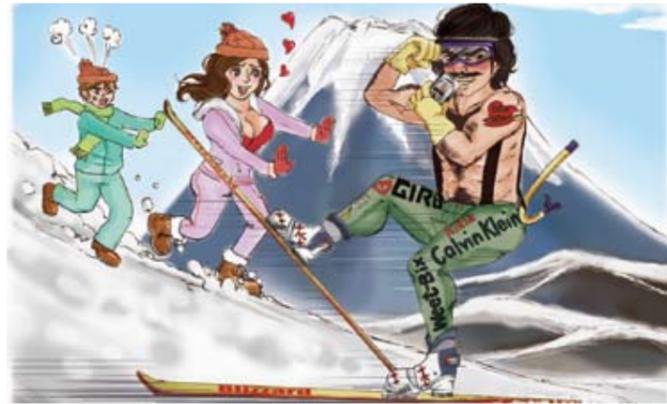
By Stirling Goldman

HAILING from the extreme terrain of Mt Baw Baw in Australia, Stirling Goldman was bred on waist-deep, man-made powder and extra steep chutes. Stirling has conquered the most beastly mountains across the world, and recently moved to Niseko. Stirling soon sensed that both local and international punters needed to be taught a thing or two and luckily for us, has decided to settle here for good. **Stirling Goldman: a man who rides mountains.**

SO, the Powderlife crew approached me again this week, asking me to impart my wisdom once more. This time they've asked me how I 'survive' Niseko's powder, to run with their article along the same lame lines. The reality is the article is trying to keep in touch with one S.G. Just like the ladies. The truth is I do powder a little differently. Very few ski as deep and as aggressively as Stirls; so really the following article is more dream-like than fact. No fat skis for S.G., just the old-school 210 Blizzards. No flashy high tech boots, just the rear-entry Nordicas. And, of course, the snorkel. At times I require the scuba gear, but I am able to hold my breath for 10 minutes under powder so usually it's not required. With that said, I do only speak the truth. A spade is a spade with Stirls. I was bred old school, and I remain old school.

With regard to the difficulty of being 'king of the mountain and king of the bar', Powderlife make a decent point. Only one man is humanly capable of such versatility and extraordinary ability. That's

right, no prizes for guessing it's the big SG. Yes, no less than 48 beers in preparation for a hard day on the hill. I do my warm up with the ladies the night before, so come first lifts, I'm up and ready and very light on the feet. When on the hill, my sixth sense is what keeps me getting freshies each day. It's so precise it's like a GPS device. Like a metal detector guiding me to the gold. When talking fitness...get fit to ski? What the hell is that? I was born ready. When I was born, the doctors were amazed I already had a six pack and a small 'tache developing. I had a body for two things: skiing and being marveled at by the ladies. It was so ridiculous, my pre-school teachers had to keep me in a separated play pen as all the other female toddlers kept following me. I've had to deal with this my whole life. But at least I get to pick and choose. I'm not complaining. Regarding technique for skiing powder, well, the truth is if you are asking that you shouldn't be on it. You don't body surf if you can't swim. You don't go to the bar if



you can't drink. And you don't try to pick up ladies when SG is in the house. It's simple science, really. Happy skiing punters... - SG.

Q: Stirling, you've been in Niseko longer than anyone. Can you share some of your secret spots? The Cat, US.
A: Are you kidding me? I don't share that info! Particularly with a person named 'The Cat'. What kind of joker are you? To be frank, I hate cats, although I do make the ladies purr. So go join your relative - Fat Cat on the has-been pile.

Q: Hi Stirling, I'm not implying anything here, but what's the general reaction when you walk in to an onsen? Helen, UK.
A: Helen, I know what you're implying. I

know you're after a large portion of Goldman. Well, Helen baby, it depends if it is a male-only or mixed onsen. It generally runs a little something (actually, more of a 'big' something) like this:

Male onsen: Jaw dropping. The only reaction given my chiseled body and 'package' that has trouble being concealed by a modesty towel despite my best efforts.
Mixed onsen: An influx of ladies surrounding me, listening to my many tales and wishing to be part of future ones. The water temperature seems to rise from my aura. Depending on appearance, some of the ladies receive a 'private onsen' back at my place. Get my drift, Helen? The male partners try to compete, yet fail miserably and tend to move toward the perimeter.

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Giving homes a new life

PLANS are coming together to rescue the soon-to-be-demolished homes on the site of Unitas 1 in Izumikyō 2.

Niseko Izumikyō Co. plans to clear the Unitas 1 site for its yet-to-be-disclosed project, which leaves multiple two-bedroom log cabins needing a new home.

Chris Lane, a company client advisor for Niseko Izumikyō Co., said he wanted to give the 'great little homes' a new lease on life.

"It would be a shame to let them go to waste," he said. "I'm responsible for six homes and as of today there are only two, maybe three homes left to be spoken for."

"I am still negotiating with a local builder that specialises in kit log homes to get the best price possible on relocating all six homes at the same time. I want all those involved to share the same discounted bulk rate. I'm asking for the bare minimum relocation price plus quotes on optional extras to be finalised before the end of March."



Yen loan review

THE Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) has made a commercial decision to suspend all new applications for its Japan Snowfields Loan product.

The loans, which were introduced last year, were available to anybody who lived in a country that had a CBA branch and would cover up to 50 per cent secured against the Japan-based property. It is believed the bank reached their original quota of 300 loans and that the AUD/JPY move had effectively doubled their exposure in AUD terms.

CBA general manager Richard Harris said: "The banks risk department in Australia will conduct a review to determine if the bank is prepared to increase its exposure to this market in the future. We expect this review to take approximately two months. While the review is being conducted CBA Tokyo will stop taking new applications."

"All existing purchase contracts where an approval has been issued by the bank will be honoured. This suspension will be in place while we review the total exposure that CBA is comfortable with in this market."

First private pool

PROJECT 260 Degrees, a construction project by NisekoRDC, is to have Hirafu's first private indoor pool.

The groundworks and foundations for project 260 Degrees have already begun, with the estimated time of completion to be in October this year.

The heat and energy for the pool will come from renewable energy sources such as geothermal and solar.

Matt Jones of NisekoRDC said the pool and its area would be first-class, which matches a new level of clientele coming to Niseko.

"There are LED coloured lights located in the pool, which light up the water in five different colours, and a mezzanine level above the pool looking down onto the water and out of the floor-to-ceiling windows towards Mt Yotei," he said.

"The windows looking towards Yotei are the largest panes of glass in a private residence in Hokkaido."

"We are seeing a new wave of clients coming through who want the same standard as the top international ski resorts in Europe and America."

West Canada Properties finds new home

WEST Canada Properties has announced it will relocate its Upper Hirafu office to a new location in Izumikyō 1.

West Canada Properties' new office will be located at 179-18 Aza Yamada in Izumikyō 1.

The company has been in its Upper Hirafu location here since its beginnings in 2007.

Preparations for the move are already underway, and operations in the new office are expected to commence at the beginning of March.

Russ Leftko, the president of West Canada Properties, said the new location would include state-of-the-art amenities.

"Our new office has a designated meeting room, stunning reception area and fully integrated office management system," he said.

Niseko architecture starting to go rusty

By Lorne Calhoun

WHETHER you call it 'ravaged', 'oxidised', 'weathered', or just plain 'rusted steel', it's been making a splash in international architecture... and it's coming to Niseko.

From Tokyo, Sydney, London, Hong Kong and beyond, over the past few years, Niseko has been lucky enough to have its natural splendor interpreted by many internationally famous architects. While it may not be large in population, the Niseko of late never seems to be far from the cutting edge of modern architecture.

After a brief spurt in popularity in the mid-'60s, rusty is trendy again.

The 'ravaged steel' look is big in Melbourne, forget pristine or perfect.

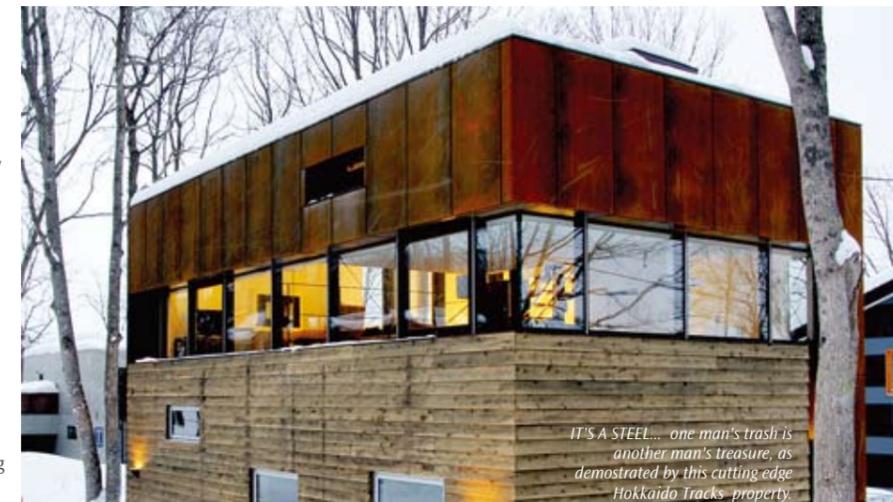
The latest look in Melbourne architecture is to let the ravages of time prevail - and the sooner the better.

The Age Newspaper writes: "COR-TEN steel is helping this process by providing a steel product that is treated to help accelerate the oxidation process. You can, however, still achieve a slower but slightly more affordable effect by allowing steel to oxidise naturally."

Although this product has been used in industrial applications, such as bridges and shipping containers, it will most likely be the natural process of rusting that will help it merge into the architecture of Niseko's earthy environment.

Hikohito Konishi, of Hiko Konishi Architects, used weathered steel while working on one of his latest projects in Hirafu for Hokkaido Tracks. "I thought about what would be the best material to blend with Hirafu culture," he says. "I thought this is a material which beautifully and naturally grows old, therefore, the steel rusting process and the completely rusted steel has a good affinity with nature, and I thought it might stay around nature without sense of incongruity in four seasons. Rust is of a natural phenomenon, so I think this building would be a good fit with nature. I enjoy seeing the process of the steel rusting daily," he says. "I feel the material's power when I see the black steel is changing to the rusty color, and begins to blend with the surrounding nature."

Weathered steel can also be used as an unfinished natural element to help add balance to some of the more polished materials that are common in today's projects. Fourfoursix is the concept designer for



Above+Beyond in Niseko, and since early designs has been thinking about how it can use COR-TEN steel in projects. "We were initially drawn to using weathered steel for elements of the hotel facade, due to the rough and raw appearance of the material, directly contrasting with such materials as finished timber used elsewhere within the facade," said Fourfoursix architect, Dan Welham. "This contrast between raw and refined, rough and smooth has been something which we have been keen to integrate within the scheme from project conception."

Whatever you want to call it, when most people first encounter it in architecture, it often tends to invoke a 'love it' or 'hate it'.

response. While some people may not be able to get their heads around using rusted metal for anything constructive, more and more modern designers are falling in love with the material's industrial yet natural form, its ability to achieve its deep ochre and brown colors, and its unfinished, raw presence.

When Shoya Grigg, the designer behind the Sekka brand, was asked why he chose to use this ravaged steel extensively in the construction of his new house, he quickly responded: "...because it looks f*cking amazing!"



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Q&A
 with Simon Robinson
 Interview by Lorne Calhoun

AFTER his house in the sun burnt down, he started building them in the snow. *Powderlife* caught up with the president of Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties, Simon Robinson.

Could you start off by telling me a bit about yourself?

I came here with my wife and business partner, Joasia, after we lost our home and business in the Canberra bushfires in 2003. We thought that Niseko needed a level of accommodation that matched the superb skiing experience, which was as good as anywhere that we had skied in the world. Niseko is now our home, and as much as we love winter – we're both powder skiers – we look forward to summer, which is so lush and green.

How many projects has Hokkaido Tracks been involved with?

Since 2003, we have built 140 apartments in nine buildings, and over 40 houses. We currently have three apartment projects for sale and two major housing projects – Escarpment Estate and Hirafu Houses.

What past project has had the most significant impact on yourself?

When we completed Youtei Tracks in 2006, it was the most significant building that had been built in Hirafu for some 25 years. It was the first large-scale project that we undertook and was a huge leap of faith for us. It was also a turning point for Niseko and brought a lot of confidence to the area.

How does building up an area such as the Escarpment differ from previous ventures?

It's the first resort community that we have

undertaken. It is situated on the edge of the village surrounded by exquisite nature and the master plan assures that the views of all blocks are protected. It's for people who are looking for the 'true Niseko' experience.

Why was Furano chosen as the next development site for Hokkaido Tracks?

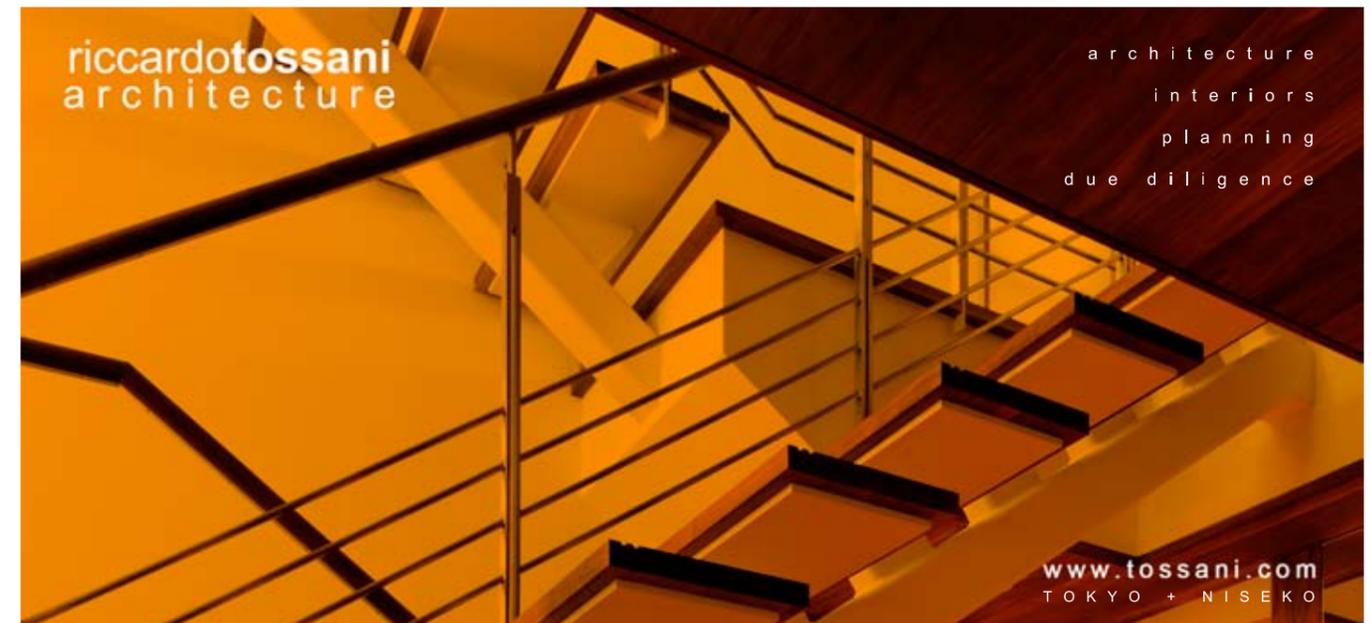
It's a just a magical area year-round and it is starting to see the sort of growth in visitation that Niseko saw in the early days. There is a good mix of skiing options with excellent on-piste skiing on Mt. Furano and off-piste skiing in the nearby resorts of Asahidake and Sahoro Links. The site we have secured in Furano is in a ski in, ski out location, and also close to the lavender fields and golf in summer.

Where do you see the Niseko market going from here?

We will see a period of consolidation of foreign investment into Niseko. We should see a diversification of the accommodation mix not just top and bottom, but closer to rental demand. The successful development will depend on how well the authorities and stakeholders can guide the future development and expansion of Niseko. Master planning is crucial.

What might we expect to see from Hokkaido Tracks in the future?

Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties will continue to identify new market needs and develop our products accordingly. We believe that the next couple of years will be quieter, but that in the longer term, Hokkaido will continue to emerge as the 'lifestyle capital in Asia'.

riccardotossani
 architecture

architecture
 interiors
 planning
 due diligence

www.tossani.com
 TOKYO + NISEKO

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.)

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

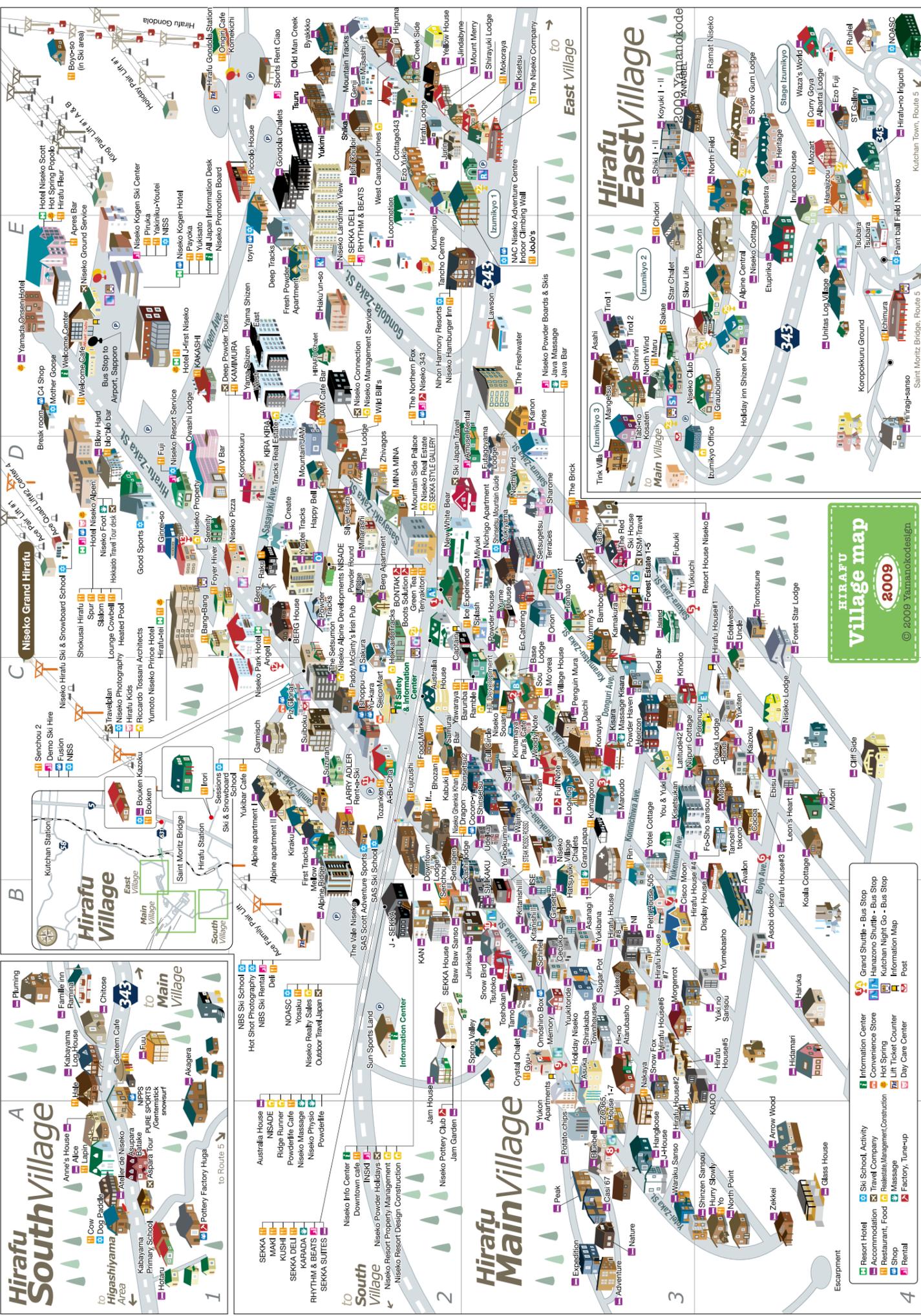
The Niseko Rules are Niseko's official regulations created for the safety and freedom of everyone using the ski resort and riding beyond the ski area boundary.

- 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.



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]
- Barunba** バルンバ 090 8907 9399 [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]
- Curry Goya** カレー小屋 23 3688 [MAP F4]
- Downtown** ダウンタウン 23 3354 [MAP B3]
- Dragon Wine and Food Bar** ドラゴン ワイン&バー 21 7700 [MAP B2]
- Fujizushi Sushi** ふじ鮨 23 2661 [MAP B3]
- Gentem Café** 23 3154 [MAP B1]
- Grandpapa** グランパパ 0136 23 2244 [MAP B3]
- Graubunden** グラウビュンデン 23 3371 [MAP E4]
- 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 Café 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** カミムラ 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]
- Landmark Deli** くまごろう 23 4285 [MAP E2]
- Loaf Lounge** ローフラウンジ 22 1022 [Kutchan]
- 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]
- 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]
- 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]
- 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]

- Yama Onsen Hotel** 山田温泉ホテル 22 0476 [MAP E1]
- Niseko Prince Hotel Hirafu-tei** ニセコプリンスホテルひらふ亭 23 2239 [MAP C1]
- Niseko Kogen Hotel** ニセコ高原ホテル 22 0117 [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 Park Hotel** ニセコパークホテル 22 2122 [MAP C2]
- Niseko Photo** ニセコフォト 22 5764 [MAP D2]
- Root Solutions** フートソリューションズ 221-025 [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
- 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]
- 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]
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- Sekka Teca Wine Shop** セッカテカワインショップ 21 3088 [MAP B2]

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.

Paul's Cafe and Bar
ポールズカフェ&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.

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!

Call for an appointment or just drop in. Ph. 0136 22 0399

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]
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- 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]

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Bars

- Angel Karaoke Bar エンジェルカラオケバー 23 1281 [MAP D2]
- Après Bar アフバー 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 ブロブロバー 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]
- 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 パディーマッキングティーズ 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]
- 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]
- INSKI インスキー 22 4199 [MAP E2]
- 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 セールズ 23 2221 [MAP C2]
- Niseko RDC ニセコ R D C 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]

Accommodation providers



Australian Alpine Club Niseko
オーストラリア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

- 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]
- Niseko Powder Holidays ニセコパウダーホリデー 23 4843 [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]

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]
- LJHooker Niseko エルジェイフッカーニセコ 55 8880 [MAP B2]
- 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 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]

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。

powderlife
NISEKO ニセコ

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.

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.

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

DOOR TO DOOR TRANSFER

Skybus offers a door to door transfer service from the airport to Niseko or Sapporo. Chitose to Niseko from ¥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.

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

Sapporo.....	011-222-7111
Otaru.....	0134-22-0771
Kutchan station.....	0136-22-1310
Niseko station.....	0135-44-2104

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.

Kutchan Night Bus

A free bus runs from Grand Hirafu ski area to Kutchan station every night. Step out from Hirafu village and enjoy shopping, eating, and drinking in Kutchan.

Taxis

Kutchan hire.....	0136 22 1212
Misora hire.....	0136 22 1171
Niseko hire.....	0136 44 2635

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

BANKING

Yes, we all know Hirafu needs an international ATM! Until then, use the post office in Kutchan open 8.45am to 7pm on weekdays, 9am to 5pm on weekends and holidays. You can also withdraw from the 24-hour Citibank ATM at 3F Chitose airport and the 7-Eleven near Kutchan station. Most of the cards with Cirrus and PLUS marks are accepted at these places, but round cornered cards are not.

CREDIT CARDS

American Express.....	0120 020 120
MasterCard.....	03 5728 5200
Visa Card.....	00531 44 0022

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.

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

Police	110
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.

MEDICAL SERVICES

At present there is no doctor in Hirafu and Niseko Physio is the only medical service available in walking distance of the slopes. For fractures or non musculo-skeletal cases you will need to go into Kutchan. If you can't speak Japanese you will need to bring a translator

Niseko Physio

Located on the second floor of Australia House, staffed with Australian physiotherapy graduates from North Sydney Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre (Australia's leading knee clinic). Primary care also available. Sports injuries, back and neck pain, braces and taping. Appointments preferred but not essential. www.NisekoPhysio.com Telephone 0136 22 0399.

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

A privately run orthopaedic clinic providing more time efficient service than the hospital. X-ray, medical dispensary. 1-4, South 3-jo West3, Kutchan 0136-22-1386

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 "T" 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.

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.

The Last Word: Shoulder dislocation

By Dave Garrick



Dave Garrick
David Garrick is a physio who works at North Sydney Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre in Sydney. He has completed a Masters in Sports Physiotherapy

WHERE alpine injuries are concerned, the upper body is less frequently injured than the lower. However, one relatively common winter sports injury is the dislocated shoulder. A dislocated shoulder is when the ball comes out of the socket and stays 'out of the joint'. A subluxation is where the ball comes partway out of the socket, usually resting on the edge, and then goes back in on its own. Dislocation is

often confused with an AC joint separation which is where the clavicle (collar bone) pulls away from the acromion (tip of shoulder blade).

The shoulder (glenohumeral joint) is the most frequently dislocated joint in the body. This is essentially due to its anatomical design. There is a ball (the head of the humerus), that sits in quite a small socket (the glenoid of the scapula). This has been likened to a golf ball on a tee, with the socket covering less than a third of the circumference of the ball. While this is great for allowing lots of movement in different planes, it does make for an inherently unstable joint. While there are ligaments, a joint capsule and a labrum (cartilage in the glenoid) helping to provide stability, these are not overly effective, particularly in a 'ligamentously lax' (hyper-flexible) person. The majority of the stability in the shoulder comes from four muscles collectively known as the rotator cuff. These muscles run from the shoulder blade (scapula) and attach into the humeral head. Together these muscles help to control and hold the ball in the socket as the arm is moved. Good functioning of these muscles and shoulder blade stability is the key to a stable shoulder joint. Consequently re-training rotator cuff function is a major part of most shoulder rehabilitations.

Shoulder dislocation is more common in snowboarders than skiers, largely due to the demands of the sport, which makes it more likely to outstretch the arms upon falling. With the development of terrain parks it has

become even more prevalent. The majority (over 90 per cent) of shoulder dislocations occur 'anteriorly' out the front of the shoulder. The group most susceptible is males aged between 16-25 years old.

Most shoulder dislocations occur in the '90/90' position. This is when the arm is abducted (taken to the side) 90 degrees and externally rotated (turned backwards) 90 degrees. Generally, if you are male and under 25 and shoulder dislocation occurs via trauma there is a 90 per cent chance it will happen again regardless of what non-operative rehabilitation you undertake.

What does a dislocated shoulder feel like?

Most patients will know straight away that they have dislocated their shoulder, as they have a feeling that it has come out of its socket. There will be a lot of pain, difficulty moving the arm, and a loss of the normal shoulder shape. Sometimes the arm will be held outwards. Muscle spasm will usually occur as a protective mechanism, and this can make it hard to put back in.

What do I do if my shoulder dislocates?

The general school of thought is that a joint is 'better in than out'. The longer the joint stays out, the more pain, muscle spasm and stretching of ligaments occur. Furthermore, there may be risk of damaging the blood vessels and nerves in that region. In saying that, only trained people (namely emergency or sports doctors) should be relocating these. A neurovascular check of sensation and circulation should be performed, as well as an x-ray after a dislocation. Ice or anti-inflammatory medications may help ease the initial pain.

Do I need a sling?

A sling may ease pain in the early phases. There is little evidence to suggest that wearing a routine sling with the arm on the stomach in internal rotation actually reduces recurrence rates. It is more for pain relief. A younger patient may benefit from a sling for a longer period of three to four weeks to allow things to settle. Elderly people should not be in a sling more than one-

to-two weeks, as there is a risk of a stiff or 'frozen shoulder' developing. A Japanese study showed there is reasonably good evidence that for first-time dislocators, a sling where the arm is held in external rotation (away from the body) helps with healing and prevents recurrence. The main problem with this is it is hard to encourage, as many people don't fancy walking around with their arm sticking out for a month!

Other than stretching the ligaments, can other damage occur upon dislocating a shoulder?

The answer is yes. More often than not a Bankart lesion will occur. This is where the front of the labrum is damaged as the ball knocks it upon coming out the front of the socket. Another less frequent injury is a Hills Sachs lesion. This is similar to a dent in a golf ball, where the head of the humerus (the ball) is damaged upon the shoulder coming out. MRI scan or specific x-ray views will generally help show both of these. In older patients, a tear of the rotator cuff is common. Occasionally blood vessel and nerve damage can occur and even fracture of the bone in a more serious case.

How do I stop it recurring?

Rehabilitation via physiotherapy focusing on a rotator cuff strengthening and shoulder blade stability program will help this in several cases. This may take up to three months, and some diligence. Bracing or taping by restricting the shoulder getting into risk positions may help to some extent. As stated previously, young males have a high risk of recurrence and often surgery is the best bet. A 'three strikes and you're out' rule is generally useful in the amateur athlete, whereby if you have three instability events, surgery is recommended. Surgery generally involves tightening up the joint and fixing any other joint damage. Depending on severity this can be done via camera, but sometimes needs to be done openly. Post-operatively, rehabilitation is required and the patients can return to sport over a six-to-nine-month period.

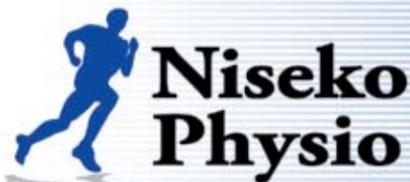
I hope this answers a few questions for you. Happy riding!



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Niseko Physio was established as a branch office of Tokyo Physio, to provide quality physiotherapy care for the English speaking residents and visitors to Niseko. We are committed to providing a standard of care that is up with the best in the world. Our Australian trained physiotherapists specialise in winter sports injuries, and are experienced in accelerated rehabilitation techniques to get you back on the slopes as soon as possible. We also stock a large range of braces to further assist your recovery.

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