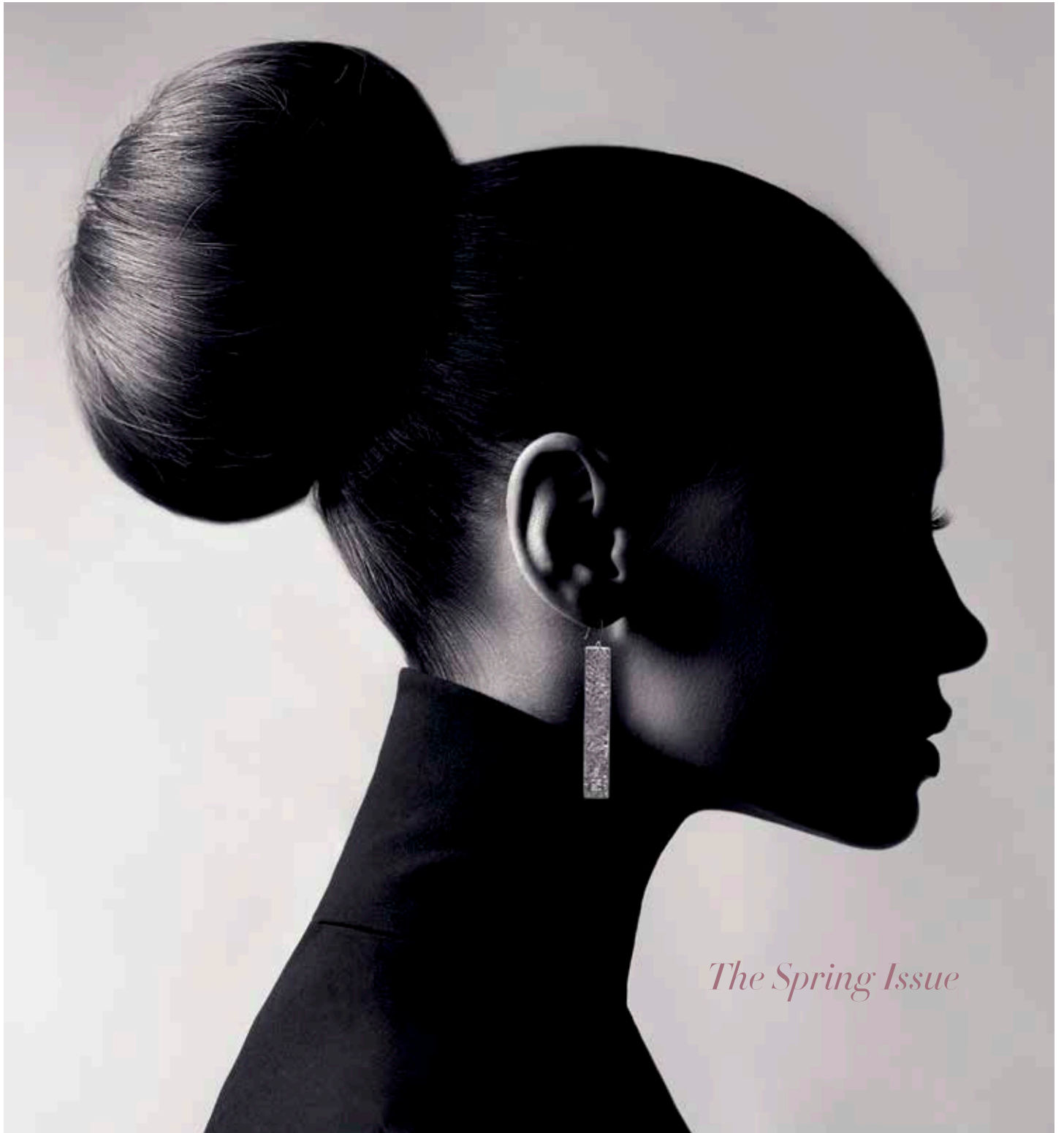




ESCAPE

FOOD | TRAVEL | CULTURE | LIFESTYLE



The Spring Issue

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Back to Black

By ALEXANDRA HOMMA

SIMPLICITY MEETS ELEGANCE AT THIS BAR
LOUNGE IN THE HEART OF TOKYO.

“Dress to impress” is a phrase we take more seriously than we should. Sometimes, stripping all the additional decorations and accessories we hide behind and simply opting for simplicity, can bring out the best in us.

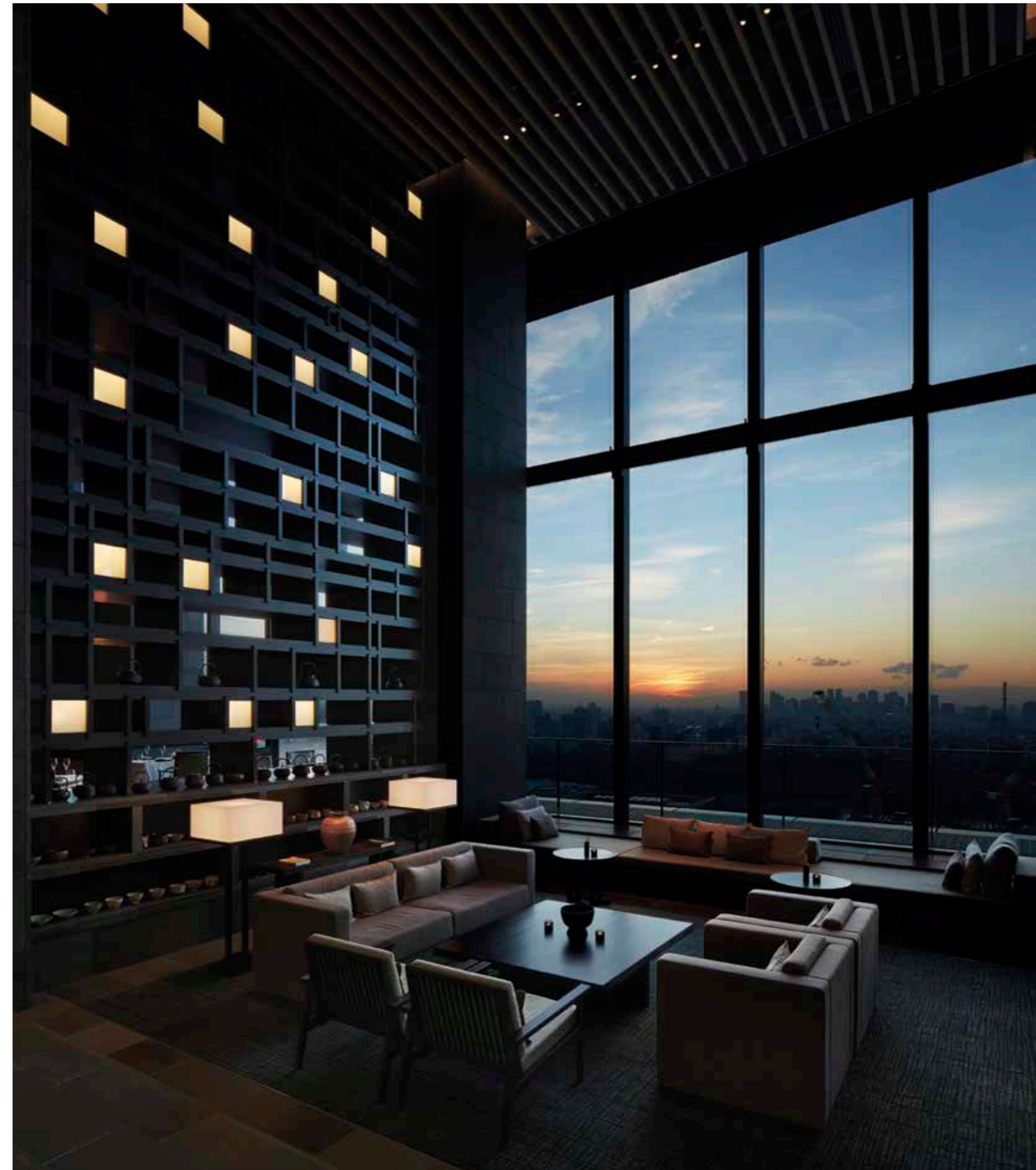
The Lounge by Aman is this kind of place: a simply decorated but elegant lounge that lets you escape the busy city life while physically still being at its very heart. Located on the 33rd floor of Aman Tokyo in Otemachi, the lounge is designed to resemble the inside of a Japanese shoji paper lantern and features an 8-meter-high ceiling, a centerpiece decorated with seasonal flowers, and a wooden engawa strip that separates the internal part of the bar from the rest of the lounge in a typical *wabisabi* manner. The rest — to your right and left — is black: black chairs, black tables, black walls, and black plates.

Sitting by the floor-to-ceiling windows overseeing Tokyo and even Mt. Fuji on clear sky days, here you can enjoy a wide

selection of liquors from around the world, original cocktails, the Lounge’s signature Black Afternoon Tea and a number of elegantly crafted foods. Cigar lovers are also welcome at the attached Fumoir, a space to enjoy over 50 kinds of premium Cuban and world cigars, discover new liquor and cigar pairings, or savor favorites. The lounge is open for guests and visitors, offering all-day dining that includes both Japanese and Western dishes.

The Lounge by Aman is a quiet place stripped from any unnecessary additions in a bid to make what matters the most stand out: your comfort and its hospitality. It is also a kind of place where you are reminded that at the end of the day, less is more and going back to minimalism may be worth it once in a while. As Coco Chanel once said, “Simplicity is the keynote of all true elegance.” If she were alive and in Tokyo, this would be her kind of place.

Address: The Otemachi Tower, 1-5-6 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo **Tel:** 03-5224-3339 **Hours:** 11am-12pm
www.aman.com/resorts/aman-tokyo/the-lounge-by-aman



日本の四季が生んだ
甘さを手にひと息

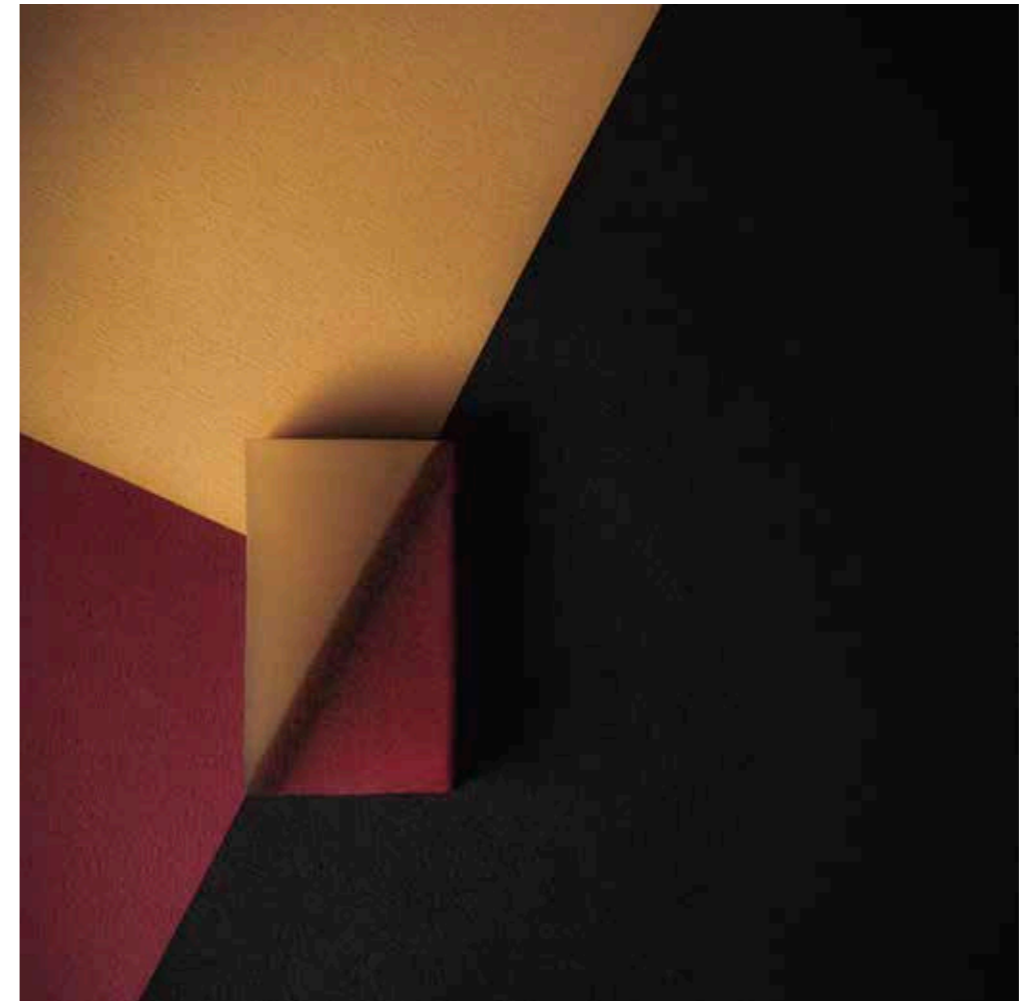
In Search of *wagashi*

By LOUISE GEORGE KITTAKA

Photography DAVID JASKIEWICZ

Nerikiri Tsubaki

Nerikiri is a type of fresh *wagashi* typically served with matcha during a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Made from rice flour and sugar, it's filled with white bean paste and shaped into a *tsubaki* (camellia) flower. Available at Tsuruya Yoshinobu, ¥432 per piece.



Yokan

Azuki beans, sugar and agar are combined and chilled to make a sweet jelly. This seasonal creation comes from *wagashi* artisans, Toraya, known for their signature, seasonal yokan. Red and white plum yokan, ¥1,800.

It doesn't take long for visitors to notice that Japan has a love affair with sweets, and with the Japanese attention to detail and appearance, they usually look every bit as good as they taste. While Japan has enthusiastically embraced Western confectionery, it has its own rich culture of sweets, too: Welcome to the wonderful world of *wagashi*.

The term *wagashi* can be translated to mean “sweets” or “confectionery” in its myriad Japanese forms, from traditional to modern. With heightened interest in Japanese culture overseas and the influence of social media, *wagashi* culture continues to evolve.

The earliest Japanese confectionery was made from natural things such as fruits and nuts. Even today the majority of *wagashi* are produced from plant-based ingredients, including red bean paste, rice flour and agar. This makes them a relatively healthy alternative to richer Western-style sweets. In addition, while *wagashi* may be sweet, they typically contain less sugar. *Wagashi* flavors are delicate, with great attention also being placed on the aesthetic appeal.

Chinese culture influenced Japanese sweet-making in the seventh century with the introduction of more sophisticated production techniques. Another important stage in *wagashi* history was the Edo period



An-Yaki

A cookie-like confection made from bean paste, egg yolk and baking powder. Pictured here from left to right are the matcha, black sesame and white bean paste-flavored versions. Available at Toraya, ¥238.

(1603-1868), which brought improvements in agricultural productivity and transport. This was also the period when Japan's well-known tea ceremony culture enjoyed significant development. As wagashi were an integral part of the tea ceremony, demand for high-quality sweets increased.

As is the case with many aspects of traditional Japanese culture, the colors and designs of wagashi are often drawn from nature and the four seasons. Spring motifs include the famous pink *sakura* cherry blossom, as well as a delicate, fresh green inspired by *yanagi*, or willow. Summer sweets tend to contain more water, and cool jelly-like confections are popular. Autumn wagashi may draw on orange and red foliage for inspiration, and make use of seasonal ingredients such as persimmon, sweet potato and chestnuts. Popular designs for winter confections include pine, bamboo and plum, which are celebratory motifs for the coming of the new year.

These days, Western and Japanese ingredients are sometimes combined to create hybrid sweets. Pastry chefs are embracing hybridity, experimenting with a fusion of styles and ingredients such as matcha-flavored pirouette wafers, black sesame butter toffee and hojicha cream-filled mille-feuille.

Every region of Japan has its own special wagashi, and trying these delicacies is one enduring aspect of

Langues de Chat

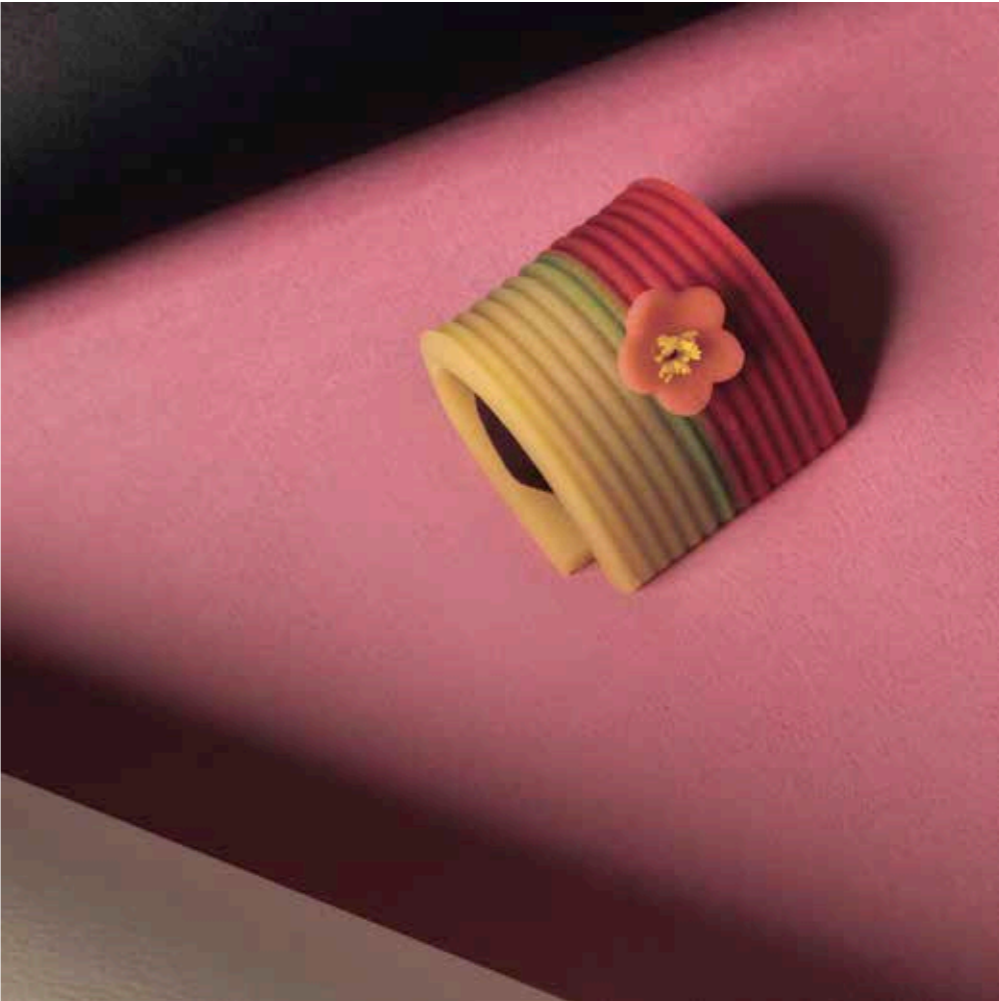
Langues de Chat and Cigar Cookies get a Japanese makeover with these Uji matcha-infused versions from famous tea house Cha no Wa. Langues de Chat (¥1,080/8pcs), Cigar Cookies (¥1,080/10pcs).





Karukan

This is a sticky yet fluffy steamed cake from Kagoshima Prefecture in Kyushu, southern Japan. Made with rice flour and yams, Karukan are often filled with azuki bean paste. (¥864/6pcs)



Nerikiri Plum

A fresh wagashi creation from Tsuruya Yoshinobu meant to symbolize the red and white blossoms of the plum tree through its colors, flavors and light plum scent, ¥432 per piece.

domestic tourism in Japan. Whole sections in guidebooks are devoted to the best shops to visit if you want to taste the local sweets. Beautifully wrapped boxes of wagashi are popular gifts with Japanese travelers to take back to family and friends, too.

However, due to the fact that they contain little or no animal fat and preservatives, most wagashi have a short shelf life. For international visitors, they are probably best enjoyed during your stay in Japan.

In the bigger cities, a great option for those wanting to see many wagashi at once are the department store *depachika* or food floors, found in the basement.

One wagashi brand to keep an eye out for is Tsuruya Yoshinobu (www.tsuruya.co.jp), one of Japan's most prestigious and famous wagashi makers. Founded in 1803, the sweet-maker's flagship store in Kyoto and branches in Tokyo include a cafe with counter space where you can actually watch one of the chefs making beautiful wagashi right before your eyes.

While wagashi are designed to pair beautifully with a cup of green tea, any kind of tea or even coffee works well, too. Take some time out to peruse the offerings on display, then once you've made your selection, sit back and enjoy a sweet taste of Japan!

春空に舞い散る美しい花

Fragility & beauty

By ASHLEY OWEN

A REMINDER THAT LIFE IS OVERWHELMINGLY BEAUTIFUL YET TRAGICALLY SHORT.

Sakura, or cherry blossoms, are an unmistakable symbol of spring. In Japan, however, these elegant blossoms are so much more than that. Bursting into bloom across the country in a flurry of intoxicating splendor, they disappear again merely days later. For the Japanese, their fleeting charm embodies the impermanence of life itself, and encourages us to appreciate the beauty in this transience. Luckily, the country is dotted with optimal spots to delight in their ephemeral loveliness – and be reminded to celebrate our own.



Hokkaido Shrine, Sapporo

Prefecture: Hokkaido
Estimated range of bloom: Early to mid-May
Best time to view: May 3-8

Let tall rows of sakura guide you to this shrine, where there's the rare chance to see cherry and plum blossoms simultaneously.



Mount Yoshino

Prefecture: Nara
Estimated range of bloom: End of March to mid-April
Best time to view: Beginning of April

Lose yourself in an infinite ocean of pink as 30,000 sakura trees burst into flower across the mountainside, creating indescribable beauty.

Osaka Castle

Prefecture: Osaka
Estimated range of bloom: End of March to early April
Best time to view: March 30-April 2

Over 3,000 cherry trees fill the spacious grounds around this soaring citadel, with nightly illuminations adding an extra sprinkle of magic.



Yamazaki River, Nagoya

Prefecture: Aichi
Estimated range of bloom: Late March to early April
Best time to view: Beginning of April

More than 600 sakura trees line the narrow river, their petal-laden branches arching elegantly down toward the water's surface.



Chureito Pagoda, Fuji Five Lakes

Prefecture: Yamanashi
Estimated range of bloom: Mid-April
Best time to view: April 16-18

A striking crimson pagoda emerges from a sea of sakura to greet Mount Fuji in the ultimate portrait of Japan.

Philosopher's Path

Prefecture: Kyoto
Estimated range of bloom: End of March to mid-April
Best time to view: Beginning of April

Trace the footsteps of one of Kyoto's most famous thinkers, contemplating the impermanence of life under the equally transient blossoms.



Kaizu Osaki, Lake Biwa

Prefecture: Shiga
Estimated range of bloom: Beginning to mid-April
Best time to view: April 8-12

Six hundred cherry trees create a stunning four-kilometer tunnel of pink blossom alongside the gently lapping water of Lake Biwa.

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CYGNE Titanium facial massage tool with an ergonomic design that conforms to your facial contours. Available in silver, gold, champagne, and chocolate. Price starts at ¥20,000.

New Metal

BREAKING THE MOLD

NAGAE+

THE CUSTOMIZABLE ACCESSORIES COLLECTION FROM
NAGAE+ BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO METAL.

Established 60 years ago as a multifaceted metalworks company in the seaside town of Takaoka in rural Toyama, Nagae Ltd., has proven itself a pioneer of the industry time and again through technical innovation and meticulous Japanese craftsmanship. Fast-forward to 2015 when renowned creative designer Shoko Tsurumoto came onboard and launched its new homeware products brand Nagae+ to nationwide acclaim, re-establishing Nagae Ltd., at the forefront of Japanese metal artwork and design. In 2018, the brand shifted its focus once more to include intuitive statement jewelry made from premium metals, creating a flagship collection called *Tin Breath* that's now being showcased at its first-ever store in the fashionable district of Omotesando, Tokyo. Each product in the *Tin Breath* line uniquely fits to its wearer by using pliable tin material that can be molded with a light amount of pressure. Each design has a linear style complimented by a choice of embossed textures but it's the soft flexibility of the tin material that invites the owner to complete the design process, allowing them to form each piece to their own image. Unlike typical pieces of jewelry made from fixed elements that have to be matched to the outfit or occasion, items from the *Tin Breath* collection can be shaped to express a different statement depending on what the wearer wants to say. It is truly a tailor-made collection, crafted for the mold-breaker in you.

By LAUREN LEYSHON THOMAS



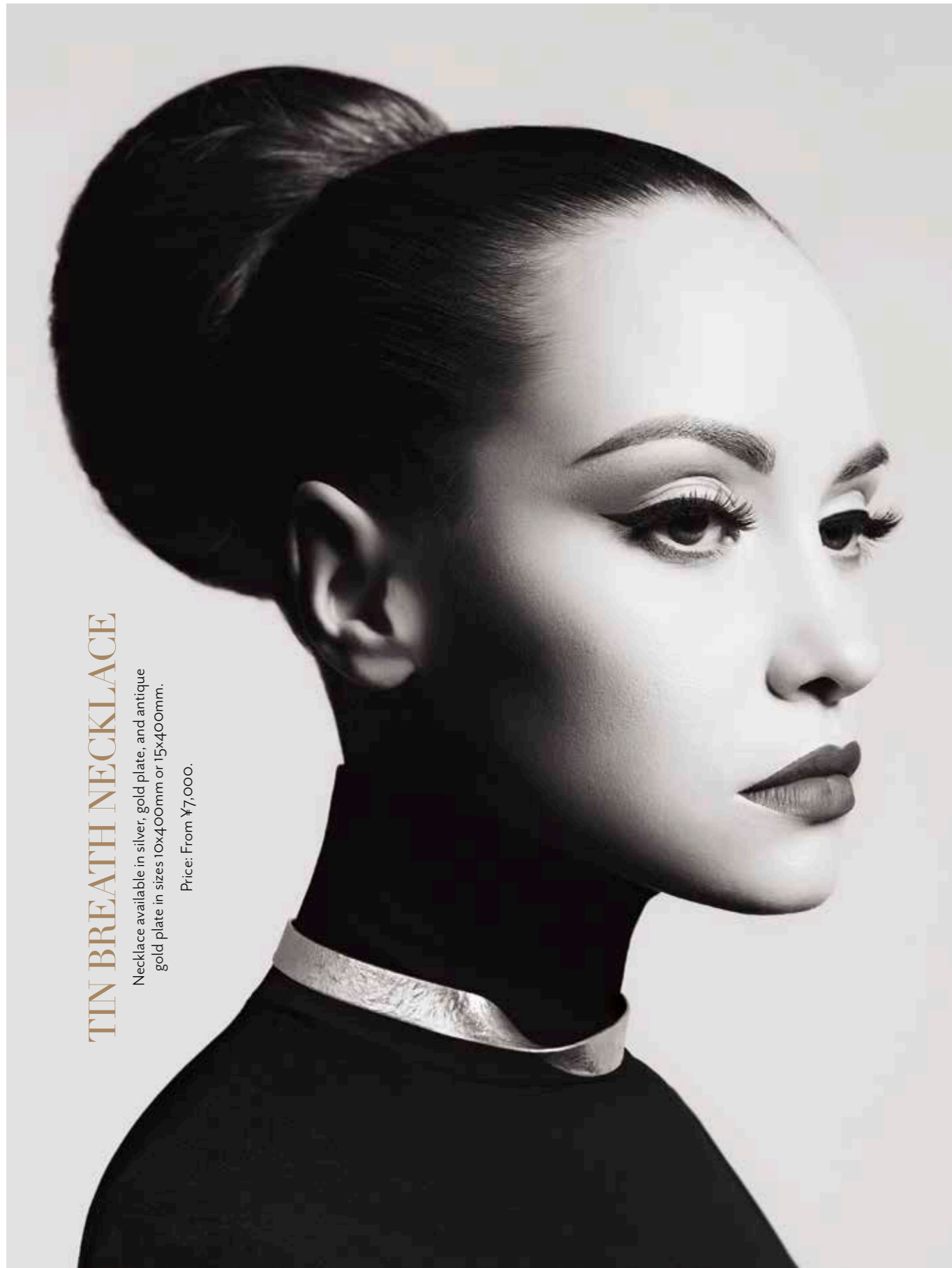
PLEATED NECKLACE

Crafted in collaboration with 140-year-old local textile company Matsui Silkweaving Co., Ltd., the silk pleated necklace is finished with metallic embossed leather and a magnetic clasp. Available in white, grey and black.

Price: ¥38,000.



The Tin Breath Collection:
Pierced earrings, silver,
10×50mm (¥8,000); Lariat
necklace, silver, 10×10×820mm
(¥8,000); Bracelets, silver,
60mm (¥6,000), 40mm
(¥5,000); Ring, silver,
20×80mm (¥5,000); Leather
clutch bag, silver, 380mm cross-
body strap (¥32,000).



TIN BREATH NECKLACE

Necklace available in silver, gold plate, and antique gold plate in sizes 10x400mm or 15x400mm.

Price: From ¥7,000.

Browse the Tin Breath collection and other products from Nagae+ at www.nagae-plus.com. Or visit their flagship store at 102 Seizan Gaien, 2-5-4, Jingumae, Shibuya Ward, Tokyo.



TIN BREATH LEATHER

The ready-to-go purse embosses soft leather with metal leaf to create a unique texture reminiscent of Japanese washi paper. Available in silver, gold, and antique gold (735mm crossbody strap).

Price: ¥45,000.

THIS SPRING,
IMMERSE YOURSELF
IN THE BEST OF
JAPAN'S CULTURAL,
GOURMET AND
SEASONAL
FESTIVITIES.

By ALEXANDRA HOMMA

ESCAPES

今春、日本に華を添えるイベント



Alice in Strawberry Wonderland: Sweets Buffet

One wonderland we all wouldn't mind getting lost in, this indulgent and oh-so pretty-in-pink sweets buffet features playful and creative sweets and treats that would surprise even Alice herself.

Where: The Ritz-Carlton Osaka, 2-5-25 Umeda, Kita Ward, Osaka

When: Until May 6, 2019, 2:30pm-4pm or 4:30pm-6pm

Cost: ¥4,700 (Adults), ¥2,350 (Children from 6 to 12)

www.ritz-carlton.co.jp

Sanja Matsuri

The wildest of the Three Great Festivals of Tokyo, Sanja Matsuri celebrates the founding fathers of the famous Asakusa Shrine. The traditional music and dance performances at its famous parade attract millions of tourists and locals alike every year. A must-see cultural event!

Where: Asakusa Shrine, 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taito Ward, Tokyo

When: May 17-19, 2019

www.asakusajinja.jp/sanjamatsuri



Photo: Rae Huo

Yoshida Brothers: Special Concert

Japan's Yoshida Brothers have elevated the traditional Japanese string instrument, shamisen, to a whole new level by incorporating western musical elements and collaborating with rock and pop artists from all over the world. Celebrating their 20th anniversary this year, the famous duo will hold a special concert, titled "A world of nothing but shamisen."

Where: Kyoto Art Theater Shunjuza (Kyoto Geijitsu Gekijo), 2-116 Uryuzancho, Kitashirakawa, Sakyo Ward, Kyoto

When: April 20, 2019, 4pm

Admission: ¥6,000 (General), ¥3,000 (Students)

www.domomusicgroup.com/yoshidabrothers



Tokyo International Art Fair

More than 150 exhibitors from over 40 countries will be visiting Tokyo for the 5th edition of this annual cultural event, held to celebrate art in all its contemporary forms. All artworks are available for purchase, so go ahead and grab a few new paintings to brighten up your walls!

Where: Bellesalle Roppongi, 7-18-18, Roppongi, Minato Ward, Tokyo

When: June 7, 2019, 6pm - 9pm & June 8, 2019, 11am - 6pm

Admission: ¥1,500 (Private View & Vernissage), Free entry for live paintings, Buy Art Show, Global Art Awards Ceremony
www.tokyoartfair.com

Peace on Earth

This year marks eight years since the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami that struck off the coast of Tohoku on March 11, 2011. This outdoor concert festival and bazaar is Tokyo's largest annual memorial event for the victims of the disaster. Japanese celebrities, activists, and musicians will be working alongside NPOs and other charity groups for Tohoku to collect donations and other means of help.

Where: Hibiya Park, 1-6 Hibiya-koen, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo

When: March 11, 2019, 12pm-8pm

peaceonearth.jp



Chichibu Shibazakura

For an alternative, but equally mesmerizing flower-viewing experience, head to Hitsujiyama Park in Chichibu to see the shibazakura (moss phlox). The annual Chichibu Shibazakura Festival displays around 400,000 fully bloomed moss phlox that stretch over the Shibazakura Hill, creating a scene as beautiful as a painting.

Where: Hitsujiyama Park, 6360 Omiya, Chichibu, Saitama

When: April 12-May 6, 2019

Admission: ¥300 (Adults)

navi.city.chichibu.lg.jp/p-flower/1808/



Ukiyoe that Challenges Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi ... and More!

This unique exhibition puts the spotlight on rebel *ukiyo*e master Utagawa Kuniyoshi and his disciples who certainly weren't any less bold in their own creativity and self-expressionism.

Where: Nagoya City Museum, 1-27-1 Mizuho Street, Mizuho Ward, Nagoya, Aichi

When: Feb 23-April 7, 2019, 9:30am-5pm

Cost: ¥1,300 (General)
www.chunichi.co.jp/event/yoshiyoshi



砂粒の数以上に存在する魅力



TOTTORI

By ALEXANDRA HOMMA
& VICTORIA VLISIDES

A LAND OF SAND,
SUN AND INFINITE
SURPRISES.

The Dunes Spanning roughly 16 kilometers, Tottori Sand Dunes are the prefecture's most popular sightseeing destination.



Starry Night

Stargazing is one of the sand dunes' most popular attractions. On clear summer and winter nights, especially, the sky appears within hand's reach.

Best known for its majestic sand dunes and mischievous *yokai* (ghouls and hobgoblins), Tottori, Japan's least-populated prefecture, is a stunning coastal area in southern Honshu which you most probably haven't thought of traveling to. However, easily accessible from Tokyo with daily 90-minute flights from the capital, this tiny prefecture is filled with wonders, surprises and endless splendid sights you won't ever forget.



Mount Daisen

Daisen-ji address 9 Daisen, Saihaku District, Tottori

see THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPES

As small as it is, Tottori is an endless well of places to inspire you and keep you coming back.

NAGEIRE-DO

Known as "Japan's most dangerous national treasure," Nageire-do, located on Mitokusan mountain, is a mysterious temple built on a massive rock. You arrive here after passing through eight other temples located along a steep and dangerous hiking route, used by monks as a sacred pilgrimage route since 706. The road to the top is long and challenging, but the view is worth every drop of sweat.

MOUNT DAISEN

In the west of the prefecture, sacred Mount Daisen carries summer hikers and winter skiers straight from the ocean up into the clouds. Despite being the highest mountain in the Chugoku region, it's still a relatively easy hike to the summit. Three hours up will take you to Misen peak for beautiful views of the Sea of Japan, and you can explore the holy sites of Daisen-ji Temple and Ogamiyama Shrine along the way. The climbing season opens over the first weekend of June and is marked with an extraordinary medieval-style torchlight parade at night. In the winter, the slopes transform into the popular Oku-Daisen Ski Resort.

Nageire-Do

Address 1010 Mitoku, Misasa-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori



“The road to the top is long and challenging, but the view is worth every drop of sweat.”

stay IN COMFORT

No matter if you prefer mountainside, riverside or oceanside, Tottori's *ryokan* (inns) and hotels make for a restful yet sophisticated and culturally immersive stay. Relish in every detail of your accommodation, elevated by Japan's top *omotenashi* (hospitality).

SANIN MISASA HOT SPRING

Dating back to 1932, the Sanin Misasa Hot Spring inn captures the pinnacle of Japanese architecture with traditional tatami mat rooms. Made from ancient wood that beautifully displays a strict adherence to tradition, each room was built by shrine carpenters so that no two rooms were alike. For dinner, guests feast upon the fresh seafood and meats from the region, including the show stopping snow crab and beef prepared by their award-winning chef. After dinner, dip into the calming waters of one of Japan's only hot springs with radium, said to help boost immunity. This inn exudes a stark authenticity among today's cookie-cutter hotels.

Sanin Misasa

Address 302-1 Misasa, Misasa-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori **Tel** 0858-43-0211 www.o-hashii.net/en



Lake Daisen Hotel

Tucked away in the mountainside lies Lake Daisen Hotel, bringing together luxury and nature.
Address 1521-154 Tatarado, Daisencho, Saihaku-gun, Tottori **Tel** 0859-52-3333 daisen.com



“This ultra-modern hotel will bring you a world of splendor, especially in the winter months for a ski retreat on the slopes.”

LAKE DAISEN HOTEL

In the heart of Tottori lies the great Mount Daisen and Lake Daisen Hotel is the perfect accommodation for a getaway with a mountain and lake view. The spacious Platinum Suite features a wooden three-room interior reminiscent of a log cabin villa on the Swiss Alps, where visitors can unwind on the sofa. The suite's western-style beds

define comfort and the ceiling-mounted shower and window-facing private bath are elegantly separated from the main area by a pristine glass barrier. This ultra-modern hotel will bring you a world of splendor, especially in the winter months for a ski retreat on the slopes. Last but not least, head to the on-site spa for a 140-minute body and facial treatment sure to refresh you for another day of sightseeing.

taste THE LOCAL CUISINE

Tottori's tastes originate from humble beginnings yet each ingredient shares a delicate palate.

MITAKIEN

A feature in Tottori's Michelin Guide 2019, Mitakien and its gourmet spread is truly the apex of traditional Japanese fine dining—set in a peaceful mountain village. Bask in this open-air restaurant graced by cedar trees, roosters and fish ponds, which all contribute to the freshness of the menu. Dine on Tottori's hand-picked and hand-prepared dishes including mountain vegetables and plants, specially made tofu, crisp tempura, and freshly grilled river trout as part of the multi-course meal. In fall, try the extremely rare delicacy of *momiji* leaf tempura.

TAKUMI KAPPO

Rumor has it *shabu-shabu* (a hot pot dish of thinly sliced meat and vegetables boiled in water) started in Tottori at a restaurant called Takumi Kappo. However, despite the fact that it didn't exactly start in Tottori (it was Kyoto), the man who brought over this flavorful dish from China ended up in Tottori and started this restaurant. Formalities aside, Takumi is one of the most popular restaurants in Tottori to date and offers top quality Tottori beef shabu-shabu that instantly melts in your mouth. Even if you are just passing through, it's only a five-minute walk from JR Tottori station.



Takumi Kappo

Address 652 Sakaemachi, Tottori City, Tottori
Tel 0857-26-6355 **Hours:** 11:30am-2pm, 5-9pm. Closed every 3rd Mon., except in Aug. and Dec.



Mitakien

Address 707 Ashizu, Chizu-cho, Yazu-gun, Tottori **Hours** Daily from 10am-4pm **Reservations** 0858-75-3665 (from 9am-3pm) or ashidumitakien.jp/en/contact.html

try

THE MANY ACTIVITIES

Whether you're an adventurous traveler or you prefer a sit-back-and-relax kind of trip, Tottori brings together the full travel package.

TOTTORI SAND DUNES ADVENTURES

Offering much more than just a fantastic landscape and endless opportunities for creative photos, Tottori's sand dunes are the prefecture's most famous place for one-of-a-kind activities. Here you can try paragliding, fat biking, sandboarding and peaceful camel rides during the day, and romantic stargazing at night. The first three are an awesome challenge (be warned though: there's a lot of sand walking involved), but you won't regret a minute spent there. Plus the photos you'll take will be unforgettable. The more you can fit in in one day, the better!

WALKING KIMONO TOUR IN KURAYOSHI

For a more relaxed experience, head to Kurayoshi, Tottori's beautiful historical city where time passes slowly. Here you can opt for the popular kimono rental plan, which lets you stroll around the city in a *kurayoshi-gasuri*, a traditional handmade indigo kimono woven by women only in this region. The tour includes kimono rental, help with wearing it, hairstyling, a kimono bag and *tabi* socks. For book-



Paragliding

Set yourself free flying above Tottori's sand dunes.

ings, stop by at Akagawara Bldg. 1 along the Shirakabe Dozo Gun, the area's landmark white-walled storehouses.

POTTERY MAKING AT POTTERY STUDIO KAIKEGAMA

There's nothing like taking a handmade souvenir back home, especially if it involves learning from a local pottery master at in the nostalgic settings of a traditional Japanese house. Run by Mr. Yuzo Ando, a well-respected business owner who has been managing the family business for over 50 years, at Kaikegama you can make plates, cups, bowls, chopsticks stands and other objects from scratch.



Photo: Trail Or

Plan Your Trip

Paragliding Book at Zero Paragliding School (www.zero-para.co.jp). Half-day ¥7,000, One-day ¥12,000.

Fat bike tour (www.trailon.jp) (Includes a few stunning photos taken by your guide): ¥5,000 per person. **Camel rides** Book through Rakudaya (rakudaya.info/camel) ¥1,300 for one, ¥2,500 for two. **Sandboard** Tottori Sakyu Sand Board School (tssbt1.wixsite.com/tottori-sandboard/menu) ¥4,000. **Walking Kimono Tour** Address: 1-2441 Shinmachi, Kurayoshi-shi, Tottori. Cost: ¥5,000 for two hours **Pottery Studio Kaikegama**

Address: 2-19-52 Kaikeonsen, Yonago, Tottori. Trial classes from ¥3,500 (includes clay, apron and instruction fees).

For Kyoto reservations
Tel: 075-757-6212 Fax: 075-693-9466
Email: gaisyo@mk-group.co.jp (English Service)



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世界のゴルフを支える職人の素顔に迫る

Magic of Miura

SECRETS OF THE TRADE



By KIERON CASHELL

Katsuhiko Miura has taken the forging of irons to a world-renowned high. Following the tradition of the ancient Japanese katana sword makers, Miura, the man behind one of the most widely recognized Japanese golf club brands of the same name since 1957, has left a lasting legacy. But to stay in business for over 60 years takes persistence gained from his vision that started at his workshop in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. It's a vision that emphasizes an acute attention to detail, craftsmanship and family which the company still maintains to this day.

Public record shows exactly what has been achieved with each hand-crafted Miura golf club: Two Masters victories, a United States Open win, a Senior PGA Championship and 25 wins on the Japanese Tour and counting. Still, these numbers are nowhere near the actual accomplishments of the myriad players who choose to swing with Miura clubs and have won in tournaments all over the world. *World Golf Hall of Famers* Retief Goosen and Jose Maria Olazabal have both won major tournaments with them. What's more, Miura was also making blades for the Titleist brand during the years Tiger Woods was using them (although it has never been confirmed or denied that Tiger played with the Miura-made clubs).

To this day, all Miura golf clubs are designed and manufactured at the Miura factory in Himeji, Hyogo. Being able to control the entire club-making process — from production right through to the golfer — is one of the keys to the cult success of Miura Golf Clubs. Miura

and his sons are in total control of the entire manufacturing process, keeping a close eye on the quality at every step of the process from the raw piece of metal to the hand-crafted finished club.

Miura's forging techniques — officially patented in 1977 — produce a sophisticated club head with the most stable and refined molecular structure found anywhere in the golfing industry today. Miura created a way to have the fundamental weight adjustments in the club head occur during the forging process, rather than the grinding process, creating a uniformity of club head weight and balance which is unsurpassed. This translates into an unbelievable feel at impact.

Unsurprisingly, you won't find Miura clubs in any discount golf chains. Miura sells either directly or through selected dealers and clubs worldwide, and they do not come cheap. For the new CB-301, expect to pay \$1,600 for a six-piece set.

People are typically surprised that Miura, who is often referred to by Japanese media as a man with "Hands of God," actually used to work hands-on in his factory every day. Though he is retired, Miura still passes down knowledge and skills to his two sons, Shinei and Yoshitaka, who now run the business.

When asked what he is trying to achieve with his life's work, the quiet master craftsman typically expresses his wish to give all golfers the best satisfaction and feedback from a well-struck shot.

CB-301

The first fully-forged cavity iron from Miura Golf since 2010, the CB-301 features stronger lofts that helps shots launch naturally higher. Available at Miura club fitters and online.





Junmai Daiginjo Tsugu

The makers of this exclusive *junmai* source high-grade rice with a particular shape that allows for longer polishing. The result? Only 2,500 bottles of exceptional quality sake — one (or more) of which you can get your hands on if flying via KIX.

Price: ¥40,000

Airport: Kansai International, Main Bld., 3F, Duty Free Store North



Kugel Ring in Sakura Gold

Inspired by the iconic hue of Japan's cherry blossoms, jewelry maker Tasaki have created an exquisite line of products in their patented SAKURAGOLD™. While Kugel means bauble in German, there's nothing gaudy about this elegant ring.

Price: ¥278,640

Airport: Narita International, T2, Main Bld., 4F, Tasaki

Golden Castella Sakura

With its 400-year history, castella is regarded as more of a local sweet in Japan than in its native Portugal. For spring, this simple sponge cake gets a limited-edition upgrade in the form of this sakura-flavored creation topped with gold from renowned cake makers Mameya Kanazawa Bankyu.

Price: ¥1,620

Airport: Haneda, T2, North Lobby 4, Tokyo Shokubinkan



By REBECCA QUIN

Keepsakes

Switch your last-minute souvenir shopping to cruise control with these airport-limited luxury gifts.

日本の思い出をスーツケースに



24-Carat Gold-Coated Beauty Massager

ReFa have been making waves in the beauty world since the brand first released its luxury beauty roller back in 2009. 10 years of best-sellers later and they have reached peak opulence with this 24K gold-plated massager which emits stimulating micro currents to further boost anti-aging.

Price: ¥123,500

Airport: Kansai International, T1, 3F, Duty Free Shop: Les Cosme



Sony Wireless Noise-cancelling Headphones

Sony turns it up a notch with the latest release in their line of noise-cancelling headphones, featuring smart listening that adjusts to your surroundings, even when you're on the move.

Price: ¥39,800

Airport: Narita, T1, Central Bld., 4F, Audio Space Japan



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