

CELEBRATING WORLDLY INDULGENCES & LUXURY LIVING

CAVIAR AFFAIR

Paradise Found

The Summer Escapes Issue

Undiscovered island retreats
Seasonal dining destinations
A Belizean Eco Oasis

Tokyo Revealed

An insider guide to
Japan's cosmopolitan capital

CAVIAR GETS HIP | MARSEILLE'S ARTSY NEW IDENTITY | HOTEL-INSPIRED HOME DÉCOR | IMPECCABLE JET INTERIORS
SOMMELIER-RECOMMENDED ROSÉS | ROAD TRIPPING IN A BENTLEY CONVERTIBLE
SPAIN'S JAMÓN IBÉRICO DE BELLOTA | A TALE OF TWO CABOS



ALEXANDER LOBRANO

“Pearls from the Earth,” page 26

Originally from Connecticut, Alexander Lobrano has lived in Paris since 1986. He is the author of “Hungry for Paris” and the forthcoming “Hungry for France” (Rizzoli, April 2014) and was a Gourmet magazine correspondent until it closed in 2009. Today he is a contributing editor at Saveur magazine and writes regularly for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Bon Appetit and Conde Nast Traveler among others.

NADINE RUBIN NATHAN

“Farm to Fork,” page 40

Nadine Rubin Nathan began her career in South Africa as Editor-in-Chief of Elle magazine. After relocating to New York, Rubin Nathan contributed to Harper’s Bazaar and was senior editor at Assouline Publishing. Rubin Nathan, who co-authored the soon-to-be released “Louis Vuitton Guide to Cape Town” splits her time between Brooklyn and Cape Town.



CHRIS SCHMICKER

“Marseille Makeover,” page 85

Chris Schmicker is a writer and editor based in New York City. He began his career surveying the national cultural landscape at Town & Country and now covers culture and travel trends for a range of print and online outlets, including Departures, Executive Travel, Wine Enthusiast, Tasting Table, Random House, Out and more.

LINDA TUCKER

“Saving the White Lions,” page 68

Linda Tucker is founder of the Global White Lion Protection Trust, a nonprofit conservation organization protecting white lions in South Africa’s northeastern bushveld. She is the author of “Saving the White Lions: One Woman’s Battle for Africa’s Most Sacred Animal” and “Mystery of the White Lions: Children of the Sun God”.



ERIN MICHELETTI

“Tokyo Rising,” page 58

Erin Micheletti is a travel and lifestyle writer, photographer and foodie who has snorkeled with whale sharks, trekked into the Amazon, and eaten her weight in sushi – all in the name of a good story. She has lived on four different continents in as many years but currently calls Austin, Texas home.

ROGER MORRIS

“Rosé-Colored Glasses,” page 29

Roger Morris writes about wine, food and travel for publications including Town & Country, Wine Enthusiast and Sommelier Journal, and regularly reports from vineyards around the world. He lives in rural Pennsylvania, where he and his wife Ella recently published their second regional cookbook, “The Brandywine Book of the Seasons”.

An aerial night photograph of Tokyo, Japan, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers and buildings illuminated by city lights. The image is used as a background for the article.

Tokyo Rising

By Erin Micheletti

Tokyo is a study in contrasts: The capital of Japan is a city of geishas and harajuku girls; ramen noodles and molecular gastronomy; Shinto temples and skyscrapers. Here, time-honored tradition meets modernism, and the details of daily life are impeccably presented.

Tokyo does not easily give up its secrets. The best izakayas and ramen bars are tucked away down basement stairs. Shochu and whisky bars are hidden in unmarked office buildings. But with persistence and patience, the city will open itself like a delicate cherry blossom, revealing a world that's highly polished, exquisitely crafted and flawlessly executed beneath the concrete and neon urbanscape.

This is Asia's most modern and sophisticated city. This is Tokyo rising.

NEIGHBORHOOD SPOTLIGHT: ASAKUSA

A short water bus ride from the heart of Tokyo will bring you to the historic, vibrant streets of Asakusa, which was once famous as a theater district. Here's a sampling of Asakusa's key attractions.



RICKSHAW RIDE

Although you can explore the neighborhood by foot, try taking a guided tour on rickshaw, known as jinrikisha or "man-powered vehicle." A standard ride is 30 minutes, though shorter and longer rides are available.

FUJIKIYA KIMONO RENTAL

Get into the Japanese spirit by sightseeing in traditional Japanese garb.

Men and women can choose their own outfit or let Fujikiya's stylist choose from a wide array of silk kimonos, obis, shoes and bags.

fujikiya-kimono.com

SENSO-JI TEMPLE

Asakusa's most popular attraction, Senso-ji, is Tokyo's oldest temple. Built between 628 and 645 A.D., this Buddhist temple is entered through outer Kaminarimon, or "Thunder Gate," then approached via a street full of shops before passing through the Hozomon, or "Treasure House Gate," to the inner complex. The shops are not mere tourist attractions but rather part of an ancient tradition of selling to religious pilgrims. Once inside, donate 100 yen (\$1) and consult the oracle for guidance.

senso-ji.jp



asakusa

east meets west

A BURGEONING BAR SCENE CATERS TO JAPAN'S LOVE OF WHISKY



Indulge your inner mad scientist with a custom whisky blending set (above) at Hibiya Bar Whisky-S (below), Tokyo's latest whisky tasting hotspot.

"FLY ME TO THE MOON, LET ME PLAY AMONG THE STARS," CROONS FRANK SINATRA AS I MIX TOGETHER TEST TUBES FILLED WITH LUMINOUS GOLD LIQUIDS. Like a couple of mad scientists, my partner, Harold, and I are busy concocting our own whisky blend (1800 yen) at Hibiya Bar Whisky-S, Tokyo's latest whisky tasting hotspot.

Dressed in a white smoking jacket, Hibiya Bar's proprietor, Akito Obama, expertly guides us through the blending process.

"Grains give the blend backbone and malts decide the blend's flavor," advises Obama as he recommends blending the medium grain with sherry wood malt.

The resulting thick, mellow smoothness and lingering, rich aftertaste pair perfectly with our smoked, miso-marinated pork, Hibiya Bar's take on upscale bar food. Just a few sips in, and we can already taste why Tokyo is becoming one of the hottest destinations for whisky connoisseurs.

While whisky may not be new in Japan – the country's most famous brand, Yamazaki (owned by beverage conglomerate Suntory), just celebrated its 90th birthday – the last decade has seen an explosion of Tokyo whisky



Sip 25-year old Yamazaki, the world's "Best Single Malt Whisky," from the Park Hyatt's 57th floor.

bars curating rare drops for the city's most sophisticated drinkers. Once a secret of whisky connoisseurs, Japanese whisky is now not only hot at home, but also gaining popularity abroad. Suntory's 2012 U.S. whisky sales skyrocketed 44 percent over the previous year's sales figures.

We begin our Tokyo whisky tasting tour at Zoetrope, the beloved creation of whisky fanatic Atsushi Horigami. Horigami, a famed Japanese video game developer, quit his job to start the bar, combining his passion for whisky with black-and-white movies – there's always a film playing in the background. In fact, Horigami says that each dram should take roughly as long as the movie to finish.

For those new to the Japanese whisky scene, Zoetrope is the perfect place to receive an informal introduction. Zoetrope stocks more than 300 types of Japanese whisky; first-time visitors can request custom tasting flights from the big dogs (Suntory and Nikka) or dive headfirst into up-and-coming distilleries like Venture Whisky.

Armed with our new knowledge of Japanese whisky, Harold and I finish our blending at Hibiya Bar Whisky-S and head to Bar On, Tokyo's most exclusive whisky-tasting establishment. Bar On is just a short walk from Hibiya Bar Whisky-S, but its whisky-tasting philosophy is miles away from Hibiya's. Over the last two decades, Bar On's proprietor, Koichi Tanigochi, has amassed more than 3,000 bottles of the rarest Scotch whisky from around the world. An extreme purist, Tanigochi only allows his whisky to be served neat – no water, no ice.

As we duck into the narrow bar, Tanigochi

greet us with a quizzical stare. He's clearly sizing up our whisky knowledge; without Harold as my experienced guide, I doubt Tanigochi would let me through the door. There's no formal menu for ordering; the bottles here are all hidden behind cabinets.

As Harold describes his flavor preferences, Tanigochi silently lines up bottles for us to taste. We start with the Douglas Laing & Co Old Malt Cask aged 40 years (3600 yen a glass). The nose is clean and fresh, the palate smooth, and despite the initial burn, it finishes with a hint of candied orange.

Tanigochi silently sizes up our reaction. Harold prefers his whisky slightly more balanced with a lingering finish, so our curator presents us with a 1965 Glenlivet aged 44 years (5700 yen a glass). From the first notes of green fruits to the perfectly balanced butterscotch and wood char finish, Harold declares it the best whisky he's tasted all night. Among Tanigochi's collection are Glenlivet bottles from 1944, 1955, 1966 and 1969. A return tasting is arranged even before we pay our bill.

We close out our highbrow bar crawl with a nightcap at Park Hyatt's New York Bar, made famous by the film "Lost in Translation." While the clientele are more Bill Murray than Scarlett Johansson, the 57th-floor views of Tokyo's skyline are all the eye candy we need.

Sipping 25-year-old Yamazaki (10,000 yen a glass), honored with the 2012 "World's Best Single Malt Whisky" award by UK-based Whisky Magazine, we soak up the drink's notes of cinnamon and woody dryness. It's easy to taste why Tokyo is a whisky drinker's paradise. ❖



BAR ON

Aster Plaza Building, 1F
7-7-6 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Tip: Start with the 1965 Glenlivet, and ask to taste rare vintages from your birth year.

HIBIYA BAR WHISKY-S

Kaneko Building, basement
3-3-9 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Tip: Blend your own whisky with a custom set.

PARK HYATT

3-7-1-2 Nishi-Shinjuku,
Shinjuku-ku

Tip: Sample the 25-year-old Yamazaki, awarded "World's Best Single Malt Whisky."

ZOETROPE

Gaia Building #4, 3rd floor
7-10-14 Nishi Shinjuku,
Shinjuku-ku

Tip: Request a custom Suntory or Nikka tasting flight, or try Ichiro Malt's "Queen of Hearts" from Venture Whisky.

whisky
bars

Omotesando

fashion follows form

A Coach flagship serves as Tokyo's latest architectural gem

WALKING DOWN OMOTESANDO, ONE OF TOKYO'S MAJOR SHOPPING DESTINATIONS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO BE STRUCK BY THE HIGH-END DESIGN – and that's not even referring to the fashion. Coach's ninth Tokyo flagship store, created by international architecture firm OMA, is the latest addition to the cutting-edge architecture that defines Tokyo's shopping scene (almost as much as the designer goods housed within).

In a futuristic city where the only architectural constant is change, architects take chances, continually reinventing the concrete cityscape with new glass and steel creations. Flagship stores for luxury brands like Prada, Louis Vuitton and now Coach are leading the way – transforming the city's shopping landscape by melding the worlds of architecture, interior design and fashion.

Coach's flagship store, which opened in April, sits on a prominent retail corner on Omotesando, a tree-lined avenue stretching from the Meiji Jingu Shrine to the Nezu Museum. OMA designed the store to directly integrate retail displays into the facade. Rather than one street-level display, OMA's minimalist design creates a two-story glass wall of Coach products for the ultimate window-shopping experience.

The new design pays homage to Coach's past while providing a clever nod to the brand's future. When the luxury leather goods



PHOTO: © IWAN BAAH



retailer first opened in 1941, a single row of library-like wooden shelving displayed Coach's wares. Inspired by this original presentation, OMA created a modular display system that showcases the brand's latest handbags, wallets, shoes and accessories.

Display units are configured in an alternating horizontal and vertical herringbone pattern, allowing a range of curatorial options. A tower of illuminated units encase the store's central stair, seamlessly connecting the women's first floor to the men's second level. Products appear to "float" among the modular displays and can be viewed from multiple angles, mimicking art installations within a gallery.

Like its neighbor, Prada's Omotesando flagship is a can't-be-missed architecture and fashion mecca. Swiss architecture team of Herzog & de Meuron reinterpreted their signature diamond panes, varying flat, concave and convex windows to form a six-story glass crystal. The building itself appears to bubble and move based on the light, like a dress rippling in the wind on a woman's body. At night, the store glows like a Japanese lantern.

Just up the street from Prada is the Louis Vuitton flagship, designed by Jun Aoki to resemble haphazardly stacked luggage trunks. Each trunk represents a unique, right-angled space made to different proportions, scales and shapes. Inside Louis Vuitton, these spaces function as the store's different retail display levels, interconnected by labyrinthine corridors mimicking a trunk's "journey." Aoki layered metal mesh, polished stainless steel and glass panels to create the store's unique exterior which, similar to the Prada store's exterior, appears to move and change with the light.

In Tokyo, where the city's concrete sprawl morphs into a neon ocean of frenetic energy at sunset, the Coach, Prada and Louis Vuitton flagships are a refreshing breath of air from an architecture and design perspective. By blending consumption with design, these stores are reshaping not only the landscape of shopping, but also the city's urban identity. ❖



Luxury flagships are reshaping the Tokyo's urban landscape. This page: Louis Vuitton flagship (top); Prada flagship (below). Opposite: Design renderings for the new Coach flagship.

PHOTOS: (TOP) VUITTON STOREFRONT © LOUIS VUITTON; (BELOW) PRADA STOREFRONT © PETER SUKONIK

chopsticks required

Four must-try Japanese specialties and the hidden hotspots serving them up

From all-night izakayas to molecular tapas bars, there's no shortage of dining or drinking options in Tokyo. But, in a city famed for its 100,000 restaurants, some of the best spots are not those with Michelin stars. They're well-kept secrets passed among foodies by word of mouth, beloved for serving up a single item exceptionally well. Caviar Affair went on a culinary exploration of Tokyo's insider favorites, the result of which can be summed up in four perfect mouthfuls.



From top to bottom: Sushi chefs prepare the daily catch carefully selected from Tsukiji Market, soba noodles with fresh bamboo shoots and quail egg at Yutoku, and the otoro and uni at Sushi Dai that is so excellent diners begin to line up at 5:30am.

Otoro at Sushi Dai

Acclaimed for its buttery texture and sophisticated flavor, otoro is the most prized cut of sushi taken from the fatty underbelly of bluefin tuna. Just like Kobe beef, otoro is graded based on its luxurious marbling. The best otoro is so fresh and perfectly cut that it melts in your mouth – and it's best sampled at Sushi Dai, a tiny stall in the Tsukiji fish market.

Not much larger than a studio apartment, Sushi Dai still feels like a neighborhood spot despite its epic popularity: the sushi faithful line up as early as 5:30 a.m. to taste the day's fresh catch. Don't expect to be picky; sushi is strictly omakase (chef's choice), although otoro is always included.

In addition to otoro, expect to sample magurozuke (marinated tuna), kajiki (swordfish), shiraebi (baby shrimp), aji (mackerel), akagai (red clam) and uni (sea urchin), based on availability.

Sushi Dai

Tsukiji Market

6-21-2 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku

Soba at Yutoku

While ramen may be Japan's best-known noodle, soba noodles – made from buckwheat – are the country's most revered noodle, eaten for good health and long life. Like any great pasta, the best soba is handmade each day for a silky-smooth texture and a strong, nutty flavor.

Slurp your soba noodles at Yutoku, a restaurant that epitomizes Tokyo's collision of cutting-edge design and reverence for tradition. Famed architecture firm ISSHO designed the can't-miss exterior of rippling metal slats, a welcome change from Tokyo's typical hole-in-the-wall soba stands.

Yutoku's seasonal menu, which is as remarkable as its architecture, features handcrafted soba with fresh delicacies like spring bamboo shoots and a perfectly hardboiled quail's egg. Try the zaru soba (cold noodles), a traditional preparation that includes tsuyu, a soya-based dipping sauce and tempura vegetables. The tsuyu enhances the noodle's earthiness while the tempura adds the perfect crunch to each bite.

Don't be surprised when "dessert" arrives after your meal. Although it's not always agreeable to non-native palates, tradition dictates that the water used to boil the noodles (soba-yu) is added to the remaining tsuyu and drunk at the end of the meal for good health.

Yutoku

4-12-2 Meguro, Meguro-ku

Azuki at Toraya Cafe

For centuries, Tokyo's creative confectioners have crafted exquisite desserts made from azuki, a traditional bean paste, and consistently come up with innovative takes on the ingredient. Despite plenty of competition, Toraya Café's famous azuki bean and chocolate fondant cake is one of the most delicious contemporary spins in the city. The azuki beans add a silky texture and complex flavor to this delectably decadent dessert.

Toraya Café's desserts – like all food in Tokyo – are as flawless to look at as they are to taste. Even the packaging is exquisite; tiny boxes bloom open like flowers, revealing a sweet treat inside.

Not a chocolate fan? Try the delicate green tea macarons filled with a light azuki paste or a traditional azuki bean bun. Then take the flavor home with a jar of Toraya's famous An Paste, a creamy azuki paste that locals spread on toast like jam.

Toraya Café

6-12-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku

Shochu at Sho-Chu Bar Takayma

Although spectacular sake is plentiful in Tokyo, expand your drinking repertoire with shochu, a traditional Japanese liquor. At 25 percent alcohol (50 proof), this velvety-smooth, aromatic drink is lighter than vodka and layered with complex flavors.

Unlike its brewed relative, sake, shochu is made using a single-distilled process from soba, barley, sweet potato, rice or brown sugar. This single distillation process produces a slightly sweet or nutty flavor that is as distinct to a sophisticated shochu drinker as the flavor of a fine Bordeaux is to an oenophile.

For the ultimate shochu taste test, head to Sho-Chu Bar Takayma, just a short walk from Ginza. Hidden inside an unmarked office building, a sliding door opens to reveal a narrow bar stocked floor to ceiling with shochu bottles.

Sip shochu to a smooth jazz soundtrack and snack on Japanese delicacies like sweet tomatoes and sour plum, which are specifically paired to enhance different shochu flavors, just like a wine and cheese tasting. Drink your shochu neat, on the rocks, or try it with hot water – just like the locals.

Sho-Chu Bar Takayma

Cortile Ginza Bldg 2F
1-11-5 Shinbashi, Minato-ku



Trust the sushi chefs at Kyubey by ordering the omakase.

PHOTO: ©PETER SUKONIK

WHERE TO EAT By Polina Steier

YAMARIKI

Among Tokyo's many izakayas, pubs serving small plates of delicious Japanese food, Yamariki in Morishita stands out. This favorite has been around for four generations. Try its signature dish, Nikomi, beef intestines stewed for six hours and spread over garlic bread, along with crowd-pleasing Yakiton pork skewers.

yamariki.com

NAGAZUMI

One of Tokyo's ultimate culinary experiences is kaiseki, Japan's traditional, ritualistic meal in which chefs showcase their talents in a parade of artistically prepared dishes. Nagazumi holds a mere 10 people at a time, each of whom sits at an elegant bar with a clear view of Chef Masahi preparing the cuisine.

nagazumi.com

NANAO

Chef-owner Katsuko Nanao and her all-female staff eschew tradition at this Ginza district restaurant by merging homestyle cooking with traditional kaiseki. A standout is sole sashimi topped with delicately shredded mountain yam and ginkgo nuts.

nanao77.jp

KYUBEY

Posh Ginza sushi mecca Kyubey may not take reservations, but it's worth the wait. Owner Yousuke Imada's well-cultivated connections allow him to get first pick of the finest cuts at the Tsujiki fish market. Lucky diners score a seat at the private sushi counter, where they get one-on-one attention from the chef as they enjoy the omakase, or chef's choice, which literally translates to "I'll leave it to you."

kyubey.jp