Photos by Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan

Discovering the ‘Aspen of Asia’

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Photo courtesy of Metropolis Magazine

Exploring Yokohama Harbor

PAGES 8-10

Welcome to the Pacific

Got a great shot of mainland Japan, Okinawa, Korea or Guam? If so, submit it and maybe it’ll end up on the front page of Welcome to the Pacific.

Photo deadline: Jan. 15

Photo courtesy of Metropolis Magazine

2021 Calendar inside!
Life lessons learned from mom

We do not have to wait until Mother’s Day to celebrate our mothers. I call my mom every week to check in on her and to see how she is doing. I often wonder, though, is there more I can do for her? Is there something I can do that would make her day? I also wonder what it would be like to really give back all the love and effort she has given me through the years. This can seem like an overwhelming task, but I hope this article gives a little glimmer of hope to all those out there who want to appreciate their moms.

Appreciating our mothers can come in different forms. For me, I have her to thank for my skills in writing. When I was younger, my mom showed me her own versions of stories she used to write. I used to read over her short stories and dream about the possibilities of my own short stories. I found her writing to be fascinating, and not surprisingly, it encouraged me to pursue my own writing. I was not sure where my writing would take me, however, I knew that it gave me a creative outlet I had been longing for.

The most memorable thing about my mom is that she used her writing and grammatical skills to help me on my essays. I continued to be impressed by how my writing had developed over the years since I took his courses. However, when I could no longer ask my professor for help, I could always count on my mom.

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Another lesson I have learned from my mom is that the opportunities life can give you are limitless. When I was younger, I envisioned what I could be when I grew up. My mom was always there to cheer me on. The great thing about my mom was that she never judged me when I changed my mind about my career. She was always willing to review my essays, even when she was tired after a long day of cleaning the house and doing laundry. What makes this act of service even more special is that I used to get my English professor from a community college to review my essays after I graduated. My professor continued to be impressed by how my writing had developed over the years since I took his courses. However, when I could no longer ask my professor for help, I could always count on my mom.

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Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez
Dealing with frustration

BY HILARY VALDEZ
STRIPES JAPAN

The jungle drums say, “Frustration begets anger and anger begets aggression.” Frustration and anger are fundamental emotions that everyone experiences. Frustration involves a lot of little tensions accumulated over time. Welcome to the human condition. All humans suffer from frustration. Frustration is not necessarily bad; it’s a signal that a change needs to happen and learning to bounce back from it, an important skill to develop.

Frustration is the reaction to the obstacle or hardship that prevents a person from reaching a goal. Don’t get stuck in anger, or disappointment and being constantly annoyed. Identify the issue then develop your plan to overcome your frustration. Don’t sit around crying, “Poor me, poor me, pour me a drink.” Bounce back!

Don’t start your day with Zoloft and Jack Daniels. That is a deeper form of insanity. All of us have an emotional duffle bag of pent up emotions. The only thing missing is planning, action and desire. Every day we all go through a social tug of war with the world. Adjust your pace. You’re not competing with anyone; you’re competing with yourself.

People experience conflict-produced frustration if they are not on good terms with the people they deal with regularly. It can be caused by hostile feelings towards others. Conflicting frustrations usually occur between friends, colleagues, or among supervisors. Ask yourself. What am I doing to cause this situation? What am I thinking about? If you feel threatened, you’ll react that way. The goal is to move on. You have a right to your feelings, but sometimes it’s better to keep them to yourself, otherwise it could hurt someone.

There are internal sources of frustration, as well as external sources. Frustrations are divided into environmental, personal, conflict-produced and motivational conflict. Environmental frustration is the frustration that arises from an individual’s surroundings, such as the workplace, family, or bad weather conditions. Personal frustration is caused when a person tries to achieve an unworkable goal. When an individual has frustration due to personal limitations, it’s called personal frustration. Motivational conflict occurs when the conditions you encounter outside yourself are the sources of frustration. These include the people, places and things that serve as barriers to getting things you want done or when an individual has opposing ideas. Resolving frustration contains natural and temporary periods of confusion.

People react to frustration in a number of ways. They get angry, give up or quit, lose their self-esteem, feel a loss of self-confidence, and experience stress, feel sad, depressed or anxious. Some people turn to substance abuse, or engage in other negative, self-destructive or addictive behaviors. Conduct a reality check. What is the worst part of the frustration for you? What is the worst thing that can happen? What are your options? No one is in control of your happiness but you. You have the power to change anything about yourself. Trust your hopes, not your fears.

Simple relaxation ideas are deep breathing. Relaxing imagery can help calm down feelings of frustration and anger. Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm. While breathing, slowly repeat a calm word such as “relax,” “calm down” or “take it easy.” I do this. Also, yoga, simple stretching, or going for a walk can relax your muscles and make you feel calmer. Strenuous and vigorous exercise can also help you to work off frustration and angry feelings. I do this too. Talk with someone you trust. Talking can help you become clear about what you are feeling. Write about your feelings. Recognizing things that you cannot change. Make changes to help reduce your anger and frustration. Be open to opposite thinking. Maintain a positive attitude. Find the balance between defensiveness and openness. Are you taking things too personally?

Instant Insight: It’s difficult to negotiate an attitude.

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and publishes books on social and psychological issues. His books are available on Amazon and for Kindle. Learn more about Valdez and contact him at hilaryvaldez.com or at InstantInsights@hotmail.com

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During World War II, the camp that serves as the modern-day headquarters for U.S. Army Japan was Japan’s version of West Point.

The Imperial Japanese Army Academy, which operated on the site of Camp Zama in Kanagawa prefecture west of Tokyo, trained 22,000 officers from 1937-45. The history of the camp is being preserved by Japan Ground Self-Defense Force troops who serve there today alongside American soldiers.

A collection of relics housed in a small museum near the camp’s gas station is curated by Warrant Officer Daisuke Chiba, 51. The collection has been at the camp for decades but moved to its current spot two years ago.

Mannequins in the museum wear World War II-era cadet clothing, including ceremonial uniforms. Weapons on display include a 7.62 mm machine gun used by the JGSDF in the 1960s and replicas of carbines used by Japanese troops in the 1930s and ’40s.

A model of the camp as it was in the 1930s shows rows of barracks. There are photographs of troops training and of the academy’s five commanders. There’s also one of Hiroshi Nishimura, an ordinary cadet. Now 91, he’s still a regular visitor, Chiba said.

Emperor Hirohito attended the graduation ceremony for some of the first troops to study there in 1937. There’s still a photograph at the camp for decades but moved to its current spot two years ago.

One of the academy’s most famous graduates was Park Chung-hee, who served as a general in the South Korean army during the Korean War and president of South Korea from 1962 to 1979.

A shelf holds medals, including one awarded to troops who served in Manchuria, which Japan invaded in 1931 and occupied until 1945.

The academy’s curriculum included college-level courses, martial arts and horsemanship. Glass display cabinets hold old horse harnesses along with a radio that troops listened to, an antique range finder and paper money issued to troops.

There are old German military books about “Krieg” (war) on display, reminders of a time when Japan was one of the Axis powers along with Germany and Italy.

One cabinet includes relics from the battlefield at Iwo Jima, where a Japanese garrison of 21,000 defenders suffered at least 18,500 deaths from combat against U.S. Marines. It includes a bayonet, bullets, bomb fragments and a canteen.

A painting in the museum shows Hirohito and Japanese political and military leaders accepting the Potsdam declaration that set the terms of Japan’s surrender in 1945.

Half of the Zama museum is devoted to Japan’s modern-day military and includes a desert camouflage uniform worn by Japanese troops in Iraq and photographs of soldiers assisting during national disasters, including the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan’s east coast in 2011.

The history of Camp Zama isn’t all inside the museum. Graduation ceremonies were held inside the camp theater, which is still in use. Some of the manhole covers on the base date to World War II and still bear the Imperial Army star. There’s a memorial that Hirohito dedicated beside the theater, and behind it a bunker where the emperor could take shelter during an air raid.

The academy was abolished along with the Imperial Japanese Army at the end of 1945.

Museum preserves Camp Zama history
Central Acupuncture Yamato hits the spot

Does acupuncture really work? Short answer is yes, for a variety of ailments and conditions. How acupuncture works scientifically remains unclear. Some people claim it works by balancing vital energy, while others believe it has a neurological effect. An acupuncturist will insert needles into a person’s body with the aim of balancing their energy. Acupuncture is done using hair-thin needles. Most people report feeling minimal pain as the needle is inserted. The needle is inserted to a point that produces a sensation of pressure or ache. Needles may be heated during the treatment or mild electric current may be applied to them.

Some people say acupuncture makes them feel energized. Others say they feel relaxed. This, it is claimed, can help boost wellbeing and may cure some illnesses. Conditions it is used for include different kinds of pain, such as headaches, blood pressure problems, stomach problems and leg problems. Most any pain that you can think of.

Traditional Chinese medicine says everyone has QI, pronounced as “chi.” Your body has to have a proper balance of chi. A good analogy might be when your computer takes a lot of hits and all the data is scattered all over the place, it doesn’t work very well. So, what do you do? You use some software to bring everything back together again and so your computer works great.

Think of acupuncture like software that fixes everything in your body: putting everything in proper balance. Balance is important everywhere. You have to balance your checkbook, or you might bounce a check. You have to eat the proper balance of food or you don’t stay healthy. OK, so now we sort of understand what acupuncture is. This is my personal story to you about a place called Central Acupuncture Yamato in Kanagawa Prefecture.

Central Acupuncture Yamato is run by Mr. Joe. One good thing worth mentioning about Mr. Joe and his staff, is everyone speaks English. And, of course, they all speak Japanese and possibly some Chinese, although I’m not sure about the later. Additionally, it’s worth mentioning that they all have great personalities and are fun to talk to during your treatment.

Now to my personal experience. About a year ago I was trying to understand what was wrong with my leg. I couldn’t sit down in our car for longer than 10 minutes at a time because of the pain. I went to the doctor and finally they figured out I had sciatica. Sciatica refers to pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from your lower back to your hips and buttocks and down each leg. I went to a hospital where the doctors tried very hard to help me, prescribing various creams, ointments and also pain killers. I even went for physical therapy. This lasted for almost a year and I still was in pain.

Finally, a doctor at Atsugi Naval Air Facility suggested I might try acupuncture. I went for two or three treatments and this pain went away. It’s been about a year now and the pain from sciatica has not returned.

However, several months ago, I developed a severe headache. It was such a strong pain in the back of my head. I visited several doctors and acquired many types of medicines to try to stop this pain, but nothing worked. That smart doctor at Atsugi suggested that I might have Occipital Neuralgia and that I might want to try acupuncture again. So, I went back to Central Acupuncture Yamato. After several treatments, the pain went away and hasn’t returned for six or seven months and I’m still feeling very good.

I realize there are many people who are scared of needles. I was, too. But Mr. Joe and his staff are very much aware of this and are sensitive to your needs. They talk you through the process. The instruments are not like the needles used for injections, they are tiny pieces of wire (hair thin) with a top base and they get tapped in gently with the doctor’s finger.

Different body locations have different levels of sensitivity. For example, you may feel more on your fingertips than on your back. The needles tell your brain it needs to send help to that area of your body that is in pain. Almost always, you will need multiple sessions. It’s like maintenance for your body. I wouldn’t have taken the time to write this article if I didn’t feel strongly about this and that it would be helpful to you. So, if you’re experiencing some kind of pain and no one can solve the problem, give acupuncture a try. It sure helped me.
Deep within the snowy folds of Hokkaido’s picturesque Hirafu Resort area lies the luxurious ski-in ski-out resort of Skye Niseko. Perched on an incline, the resort takes full advantage of its spectacular snow-capped surroundings and is one of the few resorts in the area to feature an uninterrupted view of Mount Yotei.

Niseko experienced an influx in both domestic and overseas tourists during the 2000s and began to be likened to other popular ski destinations, eventually earning the nickname “Aspen of Asia.”

The resort, which is comprised of two interlocking “L” shaped buildings, features 105 premium apartments inclusive of five spectacular penthouses, a restaurant, ski-in and ski-out concierge facilities and a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Japanese onsen (hot spring). This grand project is the result of over eight years of extensive planning. Many world-renowned architectural firms were involved in the design concepts of Skye Niseko, with Australia’s pre-eminent architectural and design studio Architectus producing the finalized design. The structure incorporates industrial and organic materials to achieve a dramatic juxtaposition between the building and the alpine environment. The complex is connected underground, which ensures that all rooms have an unobstructed view of the surrounding landscape. The resort also features an optimally located ski valet with ski-in/ski-out access that is unmatched anywhere else in Hirafu.

Architectus Design Principal Luke Johnson shared some insight into the structural layout and features of the hotel, stating that, “our aim with Skye Niseko was to embed it into the surrounding landscape. We wanted to create meaningful conditions and experiences that heighten people’s engagement with what is particular and unique about this context.” With the majority of their projects being brought to life in their native Australia and close neighbor, New Zealand, Skye Niseko is one of the studio’s most ambitious projects yet. The interiors, designed by Pike Withers and Wilson Associates, are warm and engaging, made from elegant, durable and locally sourced materials selected to withstand the extreme winters, including Japanese ceramic tiles and sustainably harvested timbers. Local Hokkaido culture is brought to the foreground by an integration of art, textiles, furniture and crafts throughout the interior.

“The interior design is all about warmth. It’s about providing a cocoon that is engaging and ultimately makes people feel good about being there,” says Johnson.

It’s not just in winter that people flock to the hotel, the rising getaway destination is open all year-round. Once the snow melts and Hokkaido’s warmer months set in, the winter landscape gives way to a sprawling green vista, allowing the resort patrons to enjoy picturesque scenery, no matter the season. A balanced combination of nature and splendor, Skye Niseko encapsulates the raw beauty of Hokkaido’s pristine ski region.

SKYE NISEKO IN THE ‘ASPEN OF ASIA’

The perfect fusion of alpine and architecture

BY BROOKE JACKSON, METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

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Hokkaido
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Photos courtesy of Metropolis Magazine
igokudani is famous for its hot spring-loving macaque monkeys. It's the only place in the world where wild monkeys bathe in hot springs. Located at an altitude of 850 meters in Nagano prefecture, the steep cliffs and steam rising from the hot springs is how Jigokudani earned its name, also meaning Hell Valley.

The severe environment of ice and snow — buried for one third of the year — is home to the Japanese macaques or snow monkeys. The monkeys have turned this frozen and harsh place into their own paradise and since 1964, when the monkey park was opened, it's been a popular place to watch the monkeys bathe in the hot springs.

The monkey park was created by Sogo Hara, an employee of the Nagano Electric Railway. He observed that as the habitats of the monkeys shrank due to increasing ski resorts and lifts that the monkeys often invaded and raid-ed farms down the mountain. As they became known as pests, farmers began to hunt the creatures — until, at last, the monkeys were found in a hot spring resort for people.

Once photographed, they became a worldwide phenomenon. Hara had his ticket to saving the monkeys’ natural habitat. The man-made hot springs of Jigokudani Monkey Park are fed by natural sources and provide the monkeys — and guests — with enjoyment. The monkeys are uncaged and unfenced, free to roam and be in their natural environment. The park is first and foremost a conservation area. Guests are not allowed to feed the animals as it disrupts the balance and makes the monkeys too reluctant to return to their natural habitats at night.

Thanks to the park staff feeding the monkeys throughout the year (though not enough that the monkeys become reliant) the cute little macaques can be found near the hot springs any time of year. Visitors can delight in watching the macaques go through their daily rituals such as grooming, eating, and socializing. It’s a truly special place to be able to see this unusual red-faced monkey troop.
VIEW FROM SEA BASS

Editor's Note: When you travel, please practice preventative measures at all times including wearing a facemask, social distancing and washing/sanitizing your hands often. Follow guidelines set by your base command.

VIEW FROM SEA BASS

Yamashita Park

Among the many attractions and cities to visit within the vast Kanto Plain, Yokohama is one of the major hubs with a lot to offer. It is one of Japan's largest port cities and draws millions of visitors and commuters every year.

For those living on Yokosuka Naval Base, NAF Atsugi, Yokota Air Base and Camp Zama, Yokohama is a great destination for a full day of activities. Yokohama’s waterfront is especially popular and is easily navigable by car, train, foot and even by “Sea Bass,” a ferry that shuttles tourists around beautiful Yokohama Harbor.

The Sea Bass service has four stops on its route - Yokohama Station, “Minato Mirai,” “Pier Akarenga (Red Brick Building)” and “Yamashita Park.” While you can stop at each station on regular ferry, Sea Bass offers an express ferry that will take you from the station to the park in 15 minutes.

My wife and I recently hopped on the Sea Bass to enjoy the cityscape and for a quick, relaxing cruise to the park. Although it was a hot and steamy day, the 15-minute cruise on the air-conditioned vessel let us enjoy the view of Yokohama’s entire harbor in a very comfortable and fun ride. The seats are installed low at nearly water level, so it felt like we were swimming through as we passed some of the area’s popular buildings and structures, like the Redbrick Storehouse, Bay Bridge, Oosanbashi International Passenger Terminal, and Marine Tower.

Soon, we were dropped off at the Yamashita Park pier and ready for a day of exploration.

NOTE: All the locations in this story are open, however all are taking precautionary guidelines to prevent COVID-19 spread.

For more information, visit each attraction’s website.

Yamashita Park

Yamashita is a large Western-style park facing the Yokohama Harbor with a bunch of green space surrounded by many trees, and decorated with colorful flowerbeds, fountains and statues. The memorial ship Hikawa Maru, which is berthed at the park, along with Yokohama City's famous hotel Tel New Grand, a famous hotel where Gen. Douglas MacArthur was a guest just after the end of WW II.

Doll Museum

We walked along the park's pedestrian path to the Yokohama Doll Museum. Once we entered the fancy four-story building, we felt like we were being watched. We soon found the source of our strange feeling was coming from the hundreds of dolls “watching” us from their glass cases. Surrounded by countless dolls made us feel as if we strayed into the world of fantasy.

While the first floor is a shop where you purchase a variety of souvenirs; and fourth is a theater, the second and third floors house more than 10,000 dolls.

The second floor is called “The World Festival” and displays dolls from over 100 countries. The third floor is home to a variety of traditional Japanese dolls, such as Kokeshi and Hina. Several old sets of Hina dolls from different eras and regions showed us the variations in style and traditions of dollmaking.

While the Puppet Craftsmen Studio demonstrated the puppet-making process, stuff animals and Disney characters and pieces of popular animated movies are also displayed on the second floor. “Memories of Dolls,” one of the exhibits, displays dozens of photos of children and dolls throughout the post-war age. The photos were organized in a neat timeline and show happy children embracing dolls.

Hikawa Maru Ship

After leaving the watchful eyes of the many dolls, we headed to the Hikawa Maru ship to take a look. Though it looks like the ship is permanently embedded into a concrete platform now, once inside we realized that it is actually still floating at the pier and slowly moves with the change in the water.

The admission to enter the ship is 300 yen (about $2.70). According to a handout, the Japanese ocean liner was built in 1929 and ran a regular between Yokohama, Vancouver and Seattle. With the splendid dishes served aboard and beautiful art deco interiors, the ship was dubbed “The Queen of the Pacific.” The first-class social hall and dining room reminded...
a variety of traditional Japanese dolls, such as Kokeshi and Hina. Several old sets of Hina dolls from different eras and regions showed us the variations in styles and traditions of dollmaking. While the Puppet Craftsman’s Studio demonstrated the puppet-making process, stuff animals of Disney characters and plastic figures of popular animation movies are also displayed on the floor. “Memories of Dolls,” one of the exhibits, displays dozens of photos of children and dolls throughout the post-war age. The photos were organized into a neat timeline and show many happy children embracing dolls.

HIKAWA MARU SHIP

After leaving the watchful eyes of the many dolls, we headed to the Hikawa Maru ship to have a look. Though it looks like the ship is permanently embedded into a concrete platform below, once inside we realized that it is actually still floating at the pier and readily moves with any change in the water. The admission to enter the ship is 300 yen (about $2.70). According to a handout, the Japanese ocean liner was built in 1929 and ran a regular between Yokohama, Vancouver and Seattle. With the splendid dishes served aboard and beautiful art deco interiors, the ship was dubbed “The Queen of the Pacific.” The first-class social hall and dining room reminded us of James Cameron’s 1997 movie, Titanic.

Considering the small admission fee, the access we had was pretty good. On the upper deck, we checked out a special suite-cabin Charlie Chaplin used during his visit to Japan in 1932. We even tried our hand at the steering wheel and compass in the Captain’s rooms on the highest N2 and N3 Decks. We also had access to the lower decks to have a look at the ship’s engine, generator, galley and third-class rooms.

According to some of the historical photographs on display, the cruiser was converted into a hospital ship during WWII. The ship was damaged three times while on mission and barely made it out. After, it was refitted as an ocean liner and returned to its original Yokohama-Seattle sea route until it was decommissioned in 1960. The Hikawa Maru completed 238 voyages and transported 25,000 passengers and has been permanently berthed at its current location since 1961.

CHINATOWN

Hungry, we headed to Japan’s largest Chinatown, which is only a five-minute walk from the ship. When we entered through a decorative, blue traditional Chinese gate, we saw thousands of tourists walking along the streets filled with restaurants, cafés, grocery stores and souvenir shops housed with traditional Chinese facades. Vendors standing in front of the facades kept shouting, trying to draw in customers.

We dropped by one of the dumpling shops, Hotenkankaku, to sample xiao long bao (steamed soup dumplings). We chose both seafood and pork dumplings and found the rich flavor of the meat paired with the crispy bun made a great match with Chintao Beer. Our stop in Chinatown was a great way to wrap up our Yokohama stroll on a hot afternoon.

See tasty restaurant on Page 10
Tasty lunch with ocean view at Yokohama Bay Quarter – Kirin City

S
trolling the Yokohama Bay-side is fun. The area has many museums, shops, restaurants and activities to offer. Check out Yamashita Park, Marine Tower, Minato Mirai district with Cosmoworld, its famous Ferris wheel, Landmark Tower and Queen’s Square.

Before you head there on the “Sea Bass” ferry, Yokohama Bay Quarter, a shopping area near Yokohama Station’s east exit, is a great spot to grab a quick bite to eat.

At Yokohama Bay Quarter, you can pick from dozens of restaurants ranging from Japanese, French and Indian to Chinese and Hawaiian food. Among them, Kirin City Plus Yokohama Bay Quarter is definitely a great option that offers a tasty lunch at a reasonable price and in a scenic setting.

This is mine and my wife’s go-to whenever we’re in the area. The spacious interior, high ceilings and wide windows always make us feel at home with a kind of open and cozy atmosphere. At this restaurant, you can sit either indoors or on their large terrace.

I recommend the terrace, as you’ll have a beautiful view of the waterfront. The wooden tables are equipped with large umbrellas, ensuring you have some nice shade while you enjoy the tasty food, ice-cold beer and nice sea breeze.

The spacious interior and the terrace seat can accommodate more than 120, but during the week, you might have to wait for a seat during the lunch hour, so come prepared.

The marinated fried chicken breast flavored with soy sauce, onion and pepper mayonnaise for 1,380 yen (about $12) is one of our favorites. The rich and complicated flavor of pepper mayonnaise and soy sauce brings a great flavor to the crispy, yet tender, chicken.

Another popular menu item, “Black-Red half & half,” is steamed rice topped with the restaurant’s signature dish, “dark beer beef curry” and “red wine hashed beef.” The spicy black curry sauce and full-flavored broth of well-stewed beef, onions, mushrooms and tomato, makes a savory combination on the rice.

Most of the entrees on the lunch menu come with rice, but you can substitute bread, tortillas, or even a small-size beer instead.

Since it is a beer restaurant, there are, of course, a variety of Kirin beer available.

Due to COVID-19, the lunch buffet no longer available.

While we enjoyed our meal at Kirin, we noticed a nice mix of people sitting around us. Most were salarymen from Nissan, Fujitsu and other companies in the vicinity, but there were also many young mothers with their baby strollers enjoying a ladies’ lunch. While the office employees were clearly in a rush, eating quickly and checking their watches for time, the young mothers seemed to be enjoying their leisurely lunch, chatting with their friends over glasses of wine or beer. In the midst of all of this activity were my wife and I – neither parents of small children nor on a lunchbreak from the office – just enjoying a nice glass of beer, some great chicken and each other’s company.

Make Kirin City Plus Yokohama Bay Quarter your next stop for a filling, yet tasty, lunch. I’m sure it will make your Yokohama stroll even tastier and more enjoyable.

The beer restaurant, Kirin City, is available in more than 40 locations throughout the nation. Check out their webpage for your nearest shop.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

Kirin City Plus

HOURS: 11 a.m. – 11 p.m.
(Lunch: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
LOCATION: Yokohama Bay Quarter [5F], 1-10 Kinkocho, Kanagawa-ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Pref.
URL: http://www.kirincity.co.jp
TEL: 045-440-3251
A top a hill, Acquamare di Acqua Pazza overlooks Tokyo Bay from behind glass walls that give its patrons the feeling of a luxurious dining experience without the extravagant check.

Located in Kannonzaki Park, part of the Yokosuka Museum of Art, Acquamare provides a relaxing atmosphere while retaining a fancy ambiance thanks to its location and elegantly dressed customers.

Upon your arrival, the English-speaking staff offers you the option to either dine inside or on the outdoor terrace. Expect to wait anywhere from 15-30 minutes for a table on weekends, when the restaurant is busiest.

The terrace seating is pet friendly and some diners will bring their small dogs.

Menus printed in English will ease your decision-making. The lunch sets offer a choice of pasta, risotto or pizza, with a green salad and drink starting at 1,400 yen (about $13). The dinner menu has more options, such as seasonal fish and duck.

I sampled the spaghetti with bacon and onions, which was served within 10 minutes despite a packed house. The pasta was fresh, delicious and not overly oily.

I was served an ice cafe latte afterwards, giving me a chance to digest and take in the scenery.

As part of any Italian restaurant, wine from the motherland is present to add to your own tailored experience. Beer is also available.

Food arrives to the table as quickly as 10 minutes after ordering depending on how busy the restaurant is at the time.

Your check arrives unbidden following your meal to make your eventual departure easier.

Exclusively for Stars & Stripes, Acquamare offers a variety of dishes, including

- **Chef’s Anniversary Special Course**: A custom dinner tailored to your special occasion with included aperitifs, cake with a plate of chocolates and photography service. Three days’ notice is required.

The restaurant also has several special courses to choose from if you’re looking for a different experience. For instance, the Chef’s Anniversary Special Course tailors a dinner for your special occasion with included aperitifs, cake with a plate of chocolates and photo service. Three days’ notice is required.

The Kannonzaki Park parking lot is free to all customers during the weekdays, and the museum parking lot is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. for 310 yen, or $2.85, an hour.

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EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
STARS & STRIPES.
www.starsstripes.com

Good food, even better views at Yokosuka’s Acquamare di Acqua Pazza

LOCATION: 4-1 Kami, Yokosuka, Kanagawa Pref. 239-0813
HOURS: Open daily, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
PRICES: Menu items average 1,400 yen, or about $13.
DRESS: Casual for lunch; formal for dinner.
DIRECTIONS: Exit at Uraga Station — five stops after Yokosuka-Chuo — and take the bus to Kannonzaki Park. It’s a one-minute walk from bus stop.

Information: Phone: 046-845-1260; Online: acquamare.jp

Overlooking Tokyo Bay, Acquamare di Acqua Pazza provides a relaxing atmosphere while retaining a fancy ambiance.
nestled between the mountains and the sea, Kamakura is only 25 minutes from Yokosuka by train but 1,000 years away. Seat of the first shogunate in 1185, ancient capital, and center of Rinzai Zen, Kamakura is blessed with beautiful nature, rich history, and a thriving artist community.

Kamakura Mind (https://www.kamakuramind.com/) offers a variety of hands-on experiences to give participants a greater understanding of Japanese culture in English, including guided tours of Kamakura, nature hikes, craft classes, cooking classes, the Japanese tea ceremony, and Zen meditation.

Founder Yukiyo Matsuzaki Smith started Kamakura Mind in 2018 to bring more people into contact with Japanese culture, art, and nature in her hometown by the sea.

For those unable to travel to Kamakura due to coronavirus, those who wish to take a piece of Kamakura home or simply to share the magic of Kamakura with family and friends, the Kamakura Mind limited edition winter gift packages are the perfect solution!

The theme for the Kamakura gift packages this winter is “warmth.” There are three different sets available, each perfect for a New Year’s or holiday gift. Winter gift packages are available until November 23. Supplies are limited and sales will end when everything’s gone.

Sunshine (5,500 yen) features an Arboles mug by Rei Toyoda and a “Winter Family” tenugui hand towel by Sachiyō Nakamura. Rei’s tree bark-inspired “Arboles” series is reminiscent of nature and is great for coffee, hot cocoa, or a cup of soup in the morning, and tenugui are versatile cloths that can be used as wall art, table runners, carrying bag and eco-friendly gift wrapping (they’re perfect for wrapping wine bottles, too).

Mountain (7,500 yen) features a small Arboles bowl by Rei Toyoda, a “Winter Family” tenugui by Sachiyō Nakamura, almond cookies by Kibiya Bakery, and a chai kit by Anan Spice Co.

Ocean (12,500 yen) is a deluxe gift set including small and large Arboles bowls by Rei Toyoda, “Winter Family” and “Snow Bunnies” tenugui by Sachiyō Nakamura, almond cookies by Kibiya Bakery, and a chai kit by Anan Spice Co.

Prefecture Ceramics Institute) runs pottery experiences for Kamakura Mind. Sachiyō previously worked as a web designer and web art director. After going freelance, she attended a design and craft school in Sweden to deepen her knowledge of dyeing and designing and leads tenugui dyeing workshops at Kamakura Mind.

No matter which Kamakura Mind gift package you choose, the lucky recipient will have a unique, handmade taste of Kamakura sure to brighten the chilliest winter day!
Miura Peninsula offers many attractions for both visitors from Tokyo and Yokohama, and locals alike. Since we live in Yokosuka City, my wife and I often go for long drives to the southern part of the peninsula on the weekends. Our last drive there recently was in search of some autumn views.

We took the peninsula’s hilly, winding roads enjoying the views of the green terraced fields bursting with cabbage, radishes and other delicious winter vegetables as we made our way to Miura Beach, a short 30-minute drive away.

At the beach, we found many people enjoying the great weather. This fall has brought with it. Though COVID-19 closed the beaches on the peninsula during the summer, children young and old were taking advantage of the off-season to enjoy kite-flying and seashell hunting. Our refreshing walk along the beach gave us a nice breeze and a panoramic view of the ocean clear enough to see straight through to Chiba Peninsula in the distance.

Our next stops were Ena Gulf, a small fishing port, where we strolled for a bit, and then Misaki, another port town on the peninsula. Misaki is known as “Tuna Town,” as it brings in the second largest annual haul of tuna in the country. The town itself is host to dozens of shops and restaurants offering fresh tuna cuts and tuna dishes. Our walk around the town center brought us to Kainan Jinja Shrine, the main Shinto shrine where many children in formal dress with their parents were visiting for the Shichi-go-san tradition. Seeing the kids reminded my wife and I of taking our daughter some 20 years ago to a shrine to celebrate.

After the shrine we headed to Fisharina Wharf Urari, a market in Misaki Port. Here 13 shops sell various tuna products from raw fish and tuna curry, to maguro tono, a bun with tuna filling, and even, tuna-flavored ice cream.

After our adventure in Misaki came to an end, we hopped in the car for a quick drive to Aburatsubo Yacht Harbor, set in a calm, beautiful inlet. From here, we got a great view of Mount Fuji above the countless yacht masts. We stood on the harbor taking in the ocean air and watching as the sky and Fuji gradually changed color in the late afternoon light.

The great thing about Miura Peninsula is that it’s an easy drive from Yokosuka Naval Base. This area is a treasure box of tourist attractions, beautiful beaches, cliffy coastlines, amazing produce and the quaint, old-town Japan you may not have imagined. Fall is a great time to nice walks and some exploring. Let’s go!

Miuara Peninsula map

Kainan Jinja Shrine
ADDRESS: 4-12-11 Misaki, Miura City, Kanagawa Pref.
WEBSITE: http://kainan.server-shared.com/
TEL: 046 881-3038

Fisharina Wharf Urari
HOURS: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
ADDRESS: 5-3-1 Misaki, Miura City, Kanagawa Pref. (a 40-minute drive from Yokosuka Naval Base)
WEBSITE: http://www.umigyo.co.jp/ (Japanese)
TEL: 046-881-6721 (Japanese)

On the road again
Driving around Miura Peninsula in search of autumn

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

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Though this year has been a challenge, the holiday season is upon us. The usual seasonal activities are not really ideal this year, but, if for you, the holiday isn’t the same without a bit of bright lights and festive trees, then keep reading. Some of the illumination displays set up at parks within driving distance of the bases offer a great opportunity to get out, enjoy a fresh walk, social distance and have at least a little taste of the holidays we could all use right about now. So, grab your face mask, sanitizer, and head out to these outdoor displays for some holiday cheer.

**Yokohama Minato Mirai Illuminations**  
**KANAGAWA**  
**ADDRESS:** Yokohama Station East Exit - Minato Mirai Grand Mall Park-Sakura Dori  
**WEBSITE:** [http://ymm21-illumination.jp/](http://ymm21-illumination.jp/)  
**ADMISSION:** Free.  
- From 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.  
- Runs through Feb 14, 2021

**The Jewel of Shonan**  
**KANAGAWA**  
**ADDRESS:** 2-chome-3-28 Enoshima Fujisawa, Kanagawa Pref.  
**WEBSITE:** [https://enoshima-seacandle.com/event/shonannohoseki/](https://enoshima-seacandle.com/event/shonannohoseki/)  
**ADMISSION:** Prices vary by attraction from 200 yen per adult/100 yen per child up to 800 yen per adult/350 yen per child. Group prices, one day passes available.  
- From 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
- Runs through Mar. 7, 2021

**Flower Fantasy – the Garden of Illuminated Flowers 2020-2021**  
**TOCHIGI**  
**ADDRESS:** 607 Hasamacho, Ashikaga, Tochigi Pref. 329-4216  
**WEBSITE:** [https://www.ashikaga.co.jp/flowerfantasy_special2020/jp/](https://www.ashikaga.co.jp/flowerfantasy_special2020/jp/)  
**ADMISSION:** Adults 1,000 yen Children 500 yen  
- From 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (9 p.m. on weekends)  
- Runs through Feb. 7, 2021

*Please follow base guidelines set by your command if, and when, you decide to travel. Locations above require temperature checks, face masks, and adhere to social-distancing practices.*

With information and photos from Metropolis Magazine.
MWY award with my former team. Nowadays, though, I play for a franchise known for its defense. Who
lineman on your team. No, I ate him for breakfast. That strict diet led me to the 2016 NFL Defensive
SAY MY NAME!

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Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

SUDOKU

How to solve:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and
each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

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Answers to Last Week’s Sudoku:

1. Travel by bike
2. Days of ...
3. Loretta Lynn’s father was one
4. Let up
5. Ball in a socket
6. Polo, for one
7. Bag for books
8. Secondhand
9. Lands of an
10. Estate
11. Skillet material
12. Bold poker bet
13. Police operation
14. Warm and cozy
15. Gyro holder
16. Military lockup
17. Digitize an old
18. Pose, perhaps
19. Days of ...
Use art to elevate your breakfast toast

Browsing through your Instagram feed this year may have inundated you with a variety of creative food posts ranging from breads and pastries with life-like interpretations of cherished TV or videogame characters like Pikachu or Mario.

In the land of kawaii culture where anime characters and cute designs never stop finding new canvases to pop up on, it’s no surprise that “toast art” is now one of them. Just like Japan’s Kyaraben (decorative bento) took social media by storm, colorful designs and characters recreated on toasted bread are now drawing attention, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic is moving more to cook at home.

Staying at home to cook more also means people are finding new ways to change up their daily meals. While some draw simple cartoon characters and designs, others recreate artistic works such as Japanese Ukiyo-e or cover art of Vogue magazine. Recipes for toast art vary a great deal as well. On one hand, there are simple ways such as cutting aluminum foils in the shape of characters and patterns to put them on bread before toasting, advanced ones require you to cut vegetables in specific shapes or draw characters with fruit jam, whipped cream, peanut cream, etc.

If you are not confident of your drawing skills with food but still want to replicate your favorite characters on your slice of bread, an easy way is to make a stencil using pasteboard or plastic sheet, just like I did for a Mickey Mouse. Once the mold is ready, all you have to do is just trace it with cocoa powder, cinnamon sugar, etc.

Let’s get creative and become a toast Picasso, too!

DIRECTIONS

1. Draw or print out the character you want on a piece of paper.
2. Put the drawing over a paste board or a plastic sheet.
3. Cut out outlines and facial features using scissors or a paper cutter. (Have an adult do this for you).
4. Toast the bread and smear butter on it.
5. Place the stencil over the toast, then sprinkle generously with cocoa powder.
6. For my design, I also added a dollop of strawberry jam for my characters mouth.
7. Carefully remove the stencil.
8. Bon appetite! Get your picture for the ‘Gram, then enjoy!

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Printed design
- Paste board or thin plastic sheet (you can find these at the 100-yen store or even use a sheet protector)
- Toast
- Butter
- Cocoa powder, cinnamon, matcha powder, or any sweet powder you want to decorate your toast with.