

THE AUSTRALIA SOCIETY TOKYO



australiasocietytokyo.com

November 2008 – Volume 29



Mark your calendar for these upcoming events & check the web for updates.

Adults' Christmas Party

SORRY, this event has been cancelled due to insufficient numbers.

Coffee Morning

Date: Thursday 27th November, 2008

Time: 10am to 12noon

Place: Oakwood T-Cube Residence, Roppongi

Price: FREE

Children's Christmas Party

Date: Sunday 7th December, 2008

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Place: B1 Function Room, Australian Embassy

SORRY, SOLD OUT

Australia Day Gala Ball

Date: Friday 30th January, 2009

Place: Grand Hyatt, Roppongi Hills

Time: 7pm to 1am

Price: Members ¥28,000, Non-members ¥30,000

Tickets on sale for members now, non-members from 28th November

Go to the website to book: <http://www.australiasocietytokyo.com>.

President's Report

What a year! As we were making New Year resolutions at the beginning of 2008, how many of you considered that the price of oil would hit all time highs and then fall to less than US\$50 dollars a barrel, while the Aussie would dollar drop below ¥60 and the ASX200 would teeter above 3,000. Not many of us can ignore the situation, however the Australia Society continues to attempt to make the best of a challenging time by bringing a bit of fun and celebration to Tokyo this festive season.

Jodie, Tony and Leanne hosted a great Melbourne Cup luncheon earlier this month and we would like to thank Arun and his team at the ANZ Bank for their generous support again this year. Table 9 was very happy with their return on investment and several Society members were seen celebrating their winnings around Tokyo late into the evening.

Jennifer and Alison have had very generous support from The Australian Embassy this year, providing the venue for this year's Children's Christmas Party. The event is already sold out unfortunately, but all those in attendance are sure to have some fun and we already have word from Santa that he is making this his first stop on his journeys this year. The chance to sample some great Aussie wines while giving gifts this year seemed to have some influence, but don't tell your kids.

Anna, Jude and David are working hard to secure final sponsors for next year's Ball and tickets are on sale to members already. Please visit the web site for details and to secure your table now. The party of the year will be one that you certainly don't want to miss and all the proceeds go to great charities again.

Let's remember that the festive season is the season of celebration with family and friends. At least 2009 can't get much worse.....or can it?

Aussies in Tokyo will still have friends and a great network to count on through the Australia Society Tokyo. Hope that you will find a chance to celebrate with us.

Cheers for the festive season

MICHAEL

From the Editor

Firstly, I must apologise for the lateness of the newsletter. This is a bit of a mad time of year and a few things have conspired to delay this publication (including, but not limited to, the editor's inertia). It's also a fairly brief edition, so read it over an espresso rather than a long black.

Secondly, Christmas and the end of the year is nigh and I have no idea why this year was made so much shorter by the powers that be. This will be the last newsletter for the year which may make some people very happy, and some people very sad (those latterly-mentioned individuals please email me so I can arrange counseling).

Also, please remember to share those millions of digital images you click while at various Society functions, or even a few pretty ones you've taken of the changing colour of the foliage. Load your photos at: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/772013@N21/pool/>.

Best wishes for the Holiday Season.

David.



Outback Niseko

(Martin Spann)

This article by Martin Spann reminds those of us who are not ski-conscious that the ski season is well and truly here. Here he describes the ups and downs of skiing off the beaten track. Martin runs Casi 67, a luxury ski chalet in Niseko Hirafu village. He has availability this season, so if you are interested see the website at <http://www.casi67.com/> or email info@casi67.com.

Having been a regular visitor to Niseko in Hokkaido since the winter of 2000, I have turned into somewhat of a powder junkie and enjoy nothing more than snowboarding in Niseko's now famous deep powder. It was Niseko where I learnt how to board in powder and it was also Niseko where I had my first experience boarding through trees. I enjoyed the fact that I could find fresh powder in my "secret spots" even at the end of the day – I was surely a Niseko mountain master!

In stark contrast to the days when I was one of the few foreigners on the slopes or in the bars at the end of the day is the Niseko of today: it has become renowned internationally for both the quality of its powder and the consistency in which it is delivered (an average snow fall of 14 meters per year). As a result of this popularity my once famous "secret spots" are unfortunately now being skied out by lunch time. The peak gets tracked out thanks largely to our fellow Aussies who make the trek to Japan each winter. As a result I started looking to the outback for my powder fix in the backcountry of Niseko.

Armed with my avalanche beacon, snow probe, shovel, first aid kit, ski poles and snow shoes I set off the back of the peak with two friends to climb the nearby Iwaonupuri. While the peak was just about tracked out on the front side (which connects skiers back to the slopes of Hirafu) the back side of the peak was pretty much untouched powder. I didn't cross a track from top to bottom and wondered why I had not tried backcountry skiing earlier.

My guide for the day was an Aussie mate who lives in Niseko and is a regular backcountry skier, while it was only my second time in snow shoes. For the next two and a half hours I was left to contemplate the wisdom of backcountry skiing where you essentially walk up the mountain to ski down; the no lift scenario pretty much guaranteeing you fresh tracks.

While we followed an established track winding up the mountain side I still found my 90kg's sinking into the snow a good 10 inches even though I was wearing my brand new snow shoes. My mate was quickly disappearing into the distance, the exertion had me stripping off my helmet and jacket, and the sweat was dripping into the bottom of my sunglasses.



After reaching the top of the mountain we took a well deserved twenty minute break before digging a hole to check the snowpack for avalanche danger. It was then time to start the fun part of the trip. Our point of departure was a chute only about 8 meters wide which dropped off so dramatically that I could not see how steep the descent was. The run down the mountain was awesome with the chute opening up into what looked like a massive half pipe full of light dry bottomless powder. It was definitely one of the best runs I have ever experienced but the question was: was it worth the effort in getting there?

Abso-bloody-lutely!

As a word of warning, never go backcountry skiing without a guide and a full set of avalanche gear.



Wine for Christmas

(Richard Cohen)

There is only one choice of wine for Christmas as far as I am concerned, my rule is simple and I follow it every year (or every year I am in Japan at least).

Forget the once every ten years Christmas in Australia which is a mad collage of relatives and children. Fancy a nice quiet red over a quiet meal? Not very likely. More likely a crowd moving in and out of range of the dining table, flicking from one conversation thread to

the next, creating a dull roar that will put a Porsche in an underground parking lot to shame (and that's before everyone gets into full gear in the mid afternoon before finally cruising out to the sun deck and shutting down).

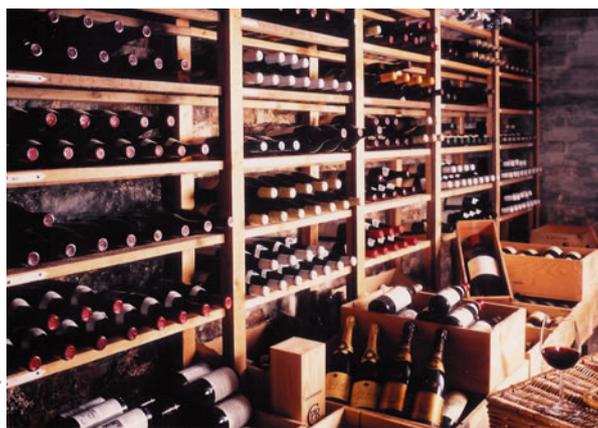
This is NOT conducive to enjoying a glass of very good wine.

What wine for the other 9 out of 10 Christmas dinners, eaten in Japan; those dinners with just the two of us, with the girls if they are home, and maybe one or two Japanese couples who enjoy quiet conversation and a bit of western cooking for a change? The atmosphere is much more Prius than Porsche: silent electric torque rather than brute burbling force. This is definitely a time to drink something with a little mood, rather than just attitude.

OK. I won't keep you in suspense anymore. I always go for Australian wine: a sparkling, a white, and a red with something like seven to ten years of age on it. A wine that can be drunk slowly, stretching lunch out to the evening; calmly, without any feeling of excess. For this reason it definitely pays to keep a cellar, even if it only for a few special occasions a year. If you want some suggestions drop me an email.

All the best for Christmas.

Richard Cohen, Village Cellars.
rcohen@village-cellars.co.jp





Author at this year's Shichigahama triathlon near Sendai

Triathlon: The Gear You Need and the Gear You Don't Need

(By Ben Distel)

This is the second of a series of articles by Ben Distel, our expert obsessive exercise nut, discussing the sport of triathlon and how to set yourself up for taking part. He is Japan's only certified triathlon bike fitter.

He can be reached at Info@t1bicycles.com.

I hope you enjoyed reading last month's article and that I've inspired you to start working out. I thank all who have contacted me and hope that you'll enjoy the triathlon journey. Are you starting to recognize triathletes when they work out: the shrinking waist lines, tight fitting apparel, shaved legs, always wearing a cap or visor showing off the latest race they competed in?

Now you need determination and a goal. There are a few really great races coming up in the spring so this is the time to get going. In mid April the legendary Ishigaki Triathlon will be held on Okinawa: a classic 'must do' race for all triathletes and a great destination for that

very first race. Once you have your goal set you need a training schedule and training partners to push you to the next level.

So now that you're ready to give up that last beer at Legends, let's talk about the stuff you need to participate in triathlon.

- General Rule #1: just because your friend or favorite pro uses it does not mean it will work for you. Do the research and make sure you can try the equipment you want before purchase.
- General Rule #2: stick with what works for you.

Swim:

All you need for the swim is some good swim apparel and a pair of goggles. You can also opt for a trisuit which is a one or two piece race suit with some light padding that you can use for the entire race. Goggles can be bought anywhere with brands like Speedo, Aquasphere and TYR all making top quality gear.

Art Sports in Shibuya is a good source for triathlon gear, goggles and much more.

Bike:

The single biggest expense for your triathlon adventures will be the bike. If you don't have a bicycle yet you have a tough choice to make.

You can either spend the money and buy something now that will last you for years and for which you will never look back thinking 'I should have got the better bike'; or if you are not sure triathlon will be a long term commitment buy an entry level bike which you may potentially look at a year from now and think 'I should have got that better bike'.



The trisuit on the left is uni-sex. Guys wearing the suit on the right should be disqualified

There are too many factors involved in the selection of a bike to explain in detail here but I'll try to give a few pointers:

1. If you don't have a bike yet, I strongly recommend that you rent or borrow a bike somehow to do your first race. Once you've caught the triathlon bug, go out and get yourself a really nice, fast bike that will give you years of joy.
2. **Bike Fitting:** The single most important factor in buying a bike is the bike fit. No matter how expensive, aerodynamic or light it may be, a bike that does not fit you well will not make you go fast and is likely to get you injured. T1bicycles is Japan's only certified Triathlon bike fitter, so please contact us if you are about to buy a bicycle so we can help you select the right bike for you.
3. **Other essentials:** helmet, bike shoes, bike shorts and a jersey.
4. **Where to buy?** You can go by price alone and buy from an online retailer, or if you are willing to pay a bit more for the convenience of a friendly bike shop and mechanic I strongly recommend that you take this option. Be aware that product availability in clothing for tall people will make that a challenge in Japan.



Customer during the fitting of her brand new bike

Run:

It is critical that you have an expert look at your gait (or running style) and then recommend the proper shoe for you. Most serious run stores in the USA offer this service, but in Tokyo I've only found the Asics store doing a job I'm happy with: <http://www.asics.co.jp/running/store/index.html>

Equipment you need: Running shorts, running top, socks and in the winter good warm breathable base layers.

There are a couple of good spots to run in Tokyo but all involve endless loops. Try to find one that doesn't bore you too much, or mix it up a little.



Exiting the water at Desaru Half Ironman, Malaysia

Other Thoughts:

Lots of companies are making good money from triathlon competitors. In order to keep selling they will continue to invent new goodies and invent reasons why you should buy them. Some are good inventions and some are totally bogus.

For your first races I strongly suggest to stick with the basics as listed above and while training with your fellow athletes you'll find out what makes things easier for you. So don't spend your good money yet on triathlon bags, GPS monitors, disc wheels, Vo2 MAX tests and aero helmets. We'll get to them later.

In the next article I'll talk about where the crazies work out, where good coaching advice can be found and share valuable tips on male leg shaving, a must for serious triathletes.

Enjoy the training! Ben

From the Boudoir

(Marilyn Klein, Boudoir)

The avocado and beauty.

The avocado is not only rich in potassium and vitamin A; it is also traditionally used to heal skin problems. You can also soften your body with this wonderful fruit. Just take a ripe avocado, remove the pit and skin, and mash it up in a bowl. Slather it all over your body, let it sit for 20 minutes and then rinse off. Your skin will be sooo soft — avocado is a natural moisturizer. You can also use the flesh of a ripe avocado to sooth sun burnt skin. Just cut the fruit in half and rub it gently over affected areas.

Eyes or Lips?

If you want to look gorgeous on a big night out just remember this one simple beauty rule: Don't play up both the eyes and lips. Choose one feature to stand out you don't risk looking like a reject from the 80s!

If you choose to play up your eyes with s smoky dramatic look using eyeliner and false eyelashes, then stick to a natural shade or lip -gloss to enhance your lips. If you want your eyes to smolder and get all the attention, do not compete with your lips.

If on the other hand it's your lips that you want in the spotlight, then you can go for a red lipstick and get that Hollywood glamour feel to the look by adding a bit of lip gloss. Your eyes only need a line just on your upper lashes with a couple strokes of mascara to finish.

Keep your hands in top shape this winter!

If you've got your hair and make-up sorted this season, it's time to turn your attention to your talons. What are the latest trends on the catwalk for nails?

- Lady in red-Wearing a red dress or red lipstick puts you on the road to attention and so do red nails. This season go for classic reds which have a blue base and a matte finish. Apply two coats for complete coverage and color depth, and then seal in the color with a topcoat.
- Get Shorty -While your nail files are still out, it's time to talk length for winter '08. You want your nails to be just past the tip for a really smart look; you need to team this nail length with a dark color. Finish it off with a nice high-shine topcoat.
- Shape it-Last year's shape was quite square, but this year's is much more 'squoval'. To get this look just follow the natural shape of your nail. The only thing that can top this look is well-hydrated hands so keep the moisturiser handy this winter and, really, it doesn't get any easier than that.
- Dark and delicious: Think dark plums, inky-reds, grays and charcoals and deep purples and blues. But what if deep hues aren't your thing? Go for gold tones — they looked fantastic with the oh-so-feminine frocks, perfect for up and coming festive parties.

For more information on Boudoir's products and services please call 03-3478 5898.

Boudoir Day Spa: www.boudoirtokyo.com

Australia Society Gala Ball 2008 Sponsors

The Australia Society Tokyo would not be able to bring you this fabulous event if it were not for the support of its sponsors.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following:

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Melbourne Cup



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