

# *Les Clefs d'Or Japan*

# **Key News**



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# FAM Trip to Hakone Organized by Hakone DMO

**By Akane Tanaka**

Several members gathered at Odawara Station on February 27th at 10:00. Blessed with clear skies, despite heavy snowfall a few days prior, in Hakone. Reunited with Mr. Sato from Hakone DMO. All boarded a bus and headed towards Hakone.

After about 40 minutes of travel by car, arrived at Tenyu in Sengokubara to start off. At the entrance, there was a footbath corner and a photo spot where visitors could take pictures with overlooking the Hakone DAIMONJI as a backdrop, capturing their memorable moments.

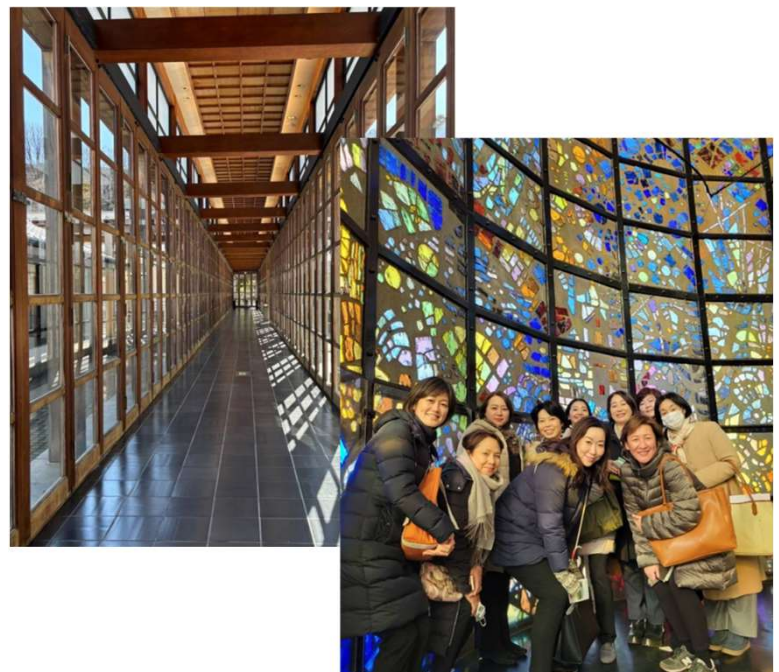


Moved on to their private bath area, Mori no Yu, and Bettei Yasuragi. Here, there are six private family baths available, and advance reservations can be made online. There is also Hakone Hotel Sengokubara, targeting families, equipped with the latest facilities such as automatic check-in/out, luggage storage, and cashless payment.

Around 12:00, arrived at Gora Kadan. After enjoying a wonderful kaiseki lunch, which heralded the arrival of spring, toured the premises guided by Mr. Mitsunaga. The famous corridor at Gora Kadan is designed after Nara's Hasedera Temple, characterized by its

tilled floor. Recently, under the supervision of Sushi Yoshitake, Sushi Kadan has also newly opened.

Moved about 5 minutes by car and arrived at Madoka no mori at 14:00. Inside the building, one can feel the proprietor's dedication with tatami flooring throughout and abundant use of natural wood in the building and furniture. All 20 rooms are equipped with open-air baths, and they strive to provide attentive yet unobtrusive service. In the restaurant serving Kyoto kaiseki exclusively for guests, they have introduced hydrogen cooking utensils in a kitchen for the first time in the world. Furthermore, after a 10-minute drive, the group arrived at the Hakone Open-Air Museum. Though time was limited, we had a quick visit to the Symphony of Happiness sculpture, famous on social media, and took commemorative photos amidst the admired glass art.



Upon arrival at Hakone Prince Hotel at 16:00, commenced the meeting with local Hakone suppliers. Mr. Sano, the initiator of this trip, introduced an overview and selling points of Hakone. Hakone offers opportunities to enjoy nature, is easily accessible by public transportation, is renowned for its hot springs, and is home to various art museums worth visiting. New apps like Hakone Digital Map and Hakone Travel Map have been developed, providing information on congestion in various areas. Recently, they seem to have started services like same-day delivery of luggage. According to a local guide Mr. Kaneko, 75% of foreign visitors to Hakone are day-trippers. Some visit Hakone for hiking purposes, and efforts have been made to promote the Hakone Kyukaido, which cannot be reached by public transportation, becoming a hidden gem. Among them, Mr. Kaneko often recommends the area around the Amazake Teahouse, boasting a history of over 100 years. Mr. Saito, a mountain guide, recommends arranging transportation by car by the day before. It is advisable to be aware beforehand that immediate arrangements on the day might not be possible. Currently, most visitors to Hakone travel by private car or

train, and requests for hire cars account for only 10%. Efforts have been made to reduce congestion and provide services by introducing shared taxis and light electric vehicle (LEV) taxis. Regarding tattoos at public baths, local health departments leave the decision to each facility, so it's essential to check in advance when planning visits.

On February 28th, experienced a walking tour led by Mr. Kaneko at 08:45. Strolled along the Kuzuryu Therapy Road for about 50 minutes amid the morning serenity. Introduced places like the hidden cherry blossom spot, Hakone Kuzuryu no Mori, along the way. It was mentioned that there are hiking trails on the west side of Lake Ashinoko, taking about 5 hours. Arrived at Kin no Take Sharyo at 10:00. This facility, consisting of a total of 6 rooms, newly opened as a day-trip family bath facility specializing in golden bamboo. Additionally, Kin no Take Sengokubara has also opened as new, serving as an accommodation facility where guests can experience a luxurious atmosphere.

After a brief visit to the Pola Museum, had lunch at Fujiya Hotel. While being moved by the traditional setting of the historic hotel, moved to Hakone Ginyu and admired the lobby with a magnificent view. Finally, returned to Hakone Yumoto, listened to the current activities of the geisha at Hakone Yumoto Kenban, and started the journey back to Odawara. Compared to the previous visit, this inspection trip provided a significant insight into the changes in Hakone's response to the current inbound tourism. It was a fruitful opportunity that made us realize that regular exchanges of opinions will lead to even smoother guidance in the future.



# Legrand Filles et Fils Tokyo Visit

**By Nozomi Sagasaki**

We were invited to visit LEGRAND Filles et Fils Tokyo, which opened in Hiroo, Tokyo in 2022 and has its head office near Palais Royal in Paris. We were guided by Mr. Nicole Julien, a private account sales representative, and had a talk with him. The main store in Paris is a long-established wine store founded in 1880, and the Tokyo branch replicates the image of the main store, with a bar counter on the first floor where you can enjoy a glass of wine recommended at any given time.

The first floor also has a café space with tables and a terrace where you can enjoy roasted Bellville coffee. The wine cave on the basement floor contains back vintages and rare wines, and the salon is on the same floor. The store has about 500 bottles of wine from all over France, and it is possible to purchase wine at reasonable prices. I felt that Legrand Tokyo, which has been active in various wine events and as a place to learn about wine, will continue to develop as a restaurant loved by many people. We are grateful for this wonderful opportunity to get to know about them.



# Monthly Meeting

## March

- March meeting was held at Mercure Tokyo Hibiya Mr. Toshiaki Suzuki the General Manager of Mercure Tokyo Hibiya greeted us and gave us a welcome speech

- Discussed about the upcoming auction event in April for collecting the donation for the last Noto Peninsula disastrous Earthquake.

- Also discussed about the possible contents for the annual seminar for the next year.

- Affiliate members Hinomaru Limousine, Tokyo Sky Tree, Global Blue Japan and Restaurant Seryna shared their recent updates.

- Welcomed Tokyo Water Taxi as guest speaker. They have launched the water taxi service in 2015 with 12 piers within Tokyo port, nowadays they have increased the piers to 40 and holding seven of 6 to 8 seater boats.

The passengers can enjoy transporting with the unique view from the boat, also this is a dog friendly service. Tokyo Water Taxi introduces some seasonal cruise plans such as Cherry Blossoms ride, they also had built the design awarded boat and recently they have started the dinner cruise called "Omakase Dining Boat Kisen Hanare". At the dining cruise, the guests can enjoy the exclusive dinner with Mr. Naoki Eguchi the young chef of renowned restaurant "Kisen" over the 6 seater counter table.

## April

- On April 17, Les Clefs d'Or Japan held the annual general meeting at a meeting room in Kayabacho.

We reported on our activities in fiscal year 2023, and presentation of our activity plan for fiscal year of 2024.

- There was a call for donations for the damage caused by the April 3 earthquake in Taiwan. Taiwanese members gave us donations and courage in the wake of the Noto Peninsula earthquake, and we hope to be able to return the favor in some small way. The collected donations were handed over by Ms. Imaizumi to the President of Les Clefs d'Or Chinese Taipei at the International Congress in Bali.

- In the afternoon, a charity auction to raise money for the Noto Peninsula Earthquake was held jointly with the Japan Concierge Association.

