

LIFESTYLE / TRAVEL

An experience report on luxury condominiums and restaurants guided by Niseko's popular figures!

Niseko, Hokkaido is attracting attention from all over the world as a travel destination. With reverence for nature in mind, we will fully enjoy the refreshing autumn air of nature and rich food under the guidance of Atsuko Tossani Itoda of Ricardo Tossani Architecture, who is contributing to the development of the city of Niseko. .

BY MINA OBA

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Early October 2023. You can see Mt. Yotei in the morning from the apartment condominium "MUSE NISEKO".

Niseko Town, Hokkaido, is now a high-end resort area that Japan boasts to the world. Not only can you enjoy winter sports on the world's highest quality powder snow, but it is also a beloved summer resort, and people are captivated by the rich expressions of nature that can be seen in each season, such as the changing leaves of autumn and the budding of spring. Furthermore, with the emergence of many warm and luxurious inns and residences, there has been an increase in demand in recent years for isolated stays where you can enjoy the magnificent view of nature from your room.

Ricardo Tossani Architecture (RTA), the unsung mastermind behind revitalizing Niseko's tourism industry and making it a world-class destination, created a master plan for the Niseko Hanazono Resort, which was held as part of Niseko's urban planning in 2004. won the design competition, and since then has contributed to the development of the region while protecting and respecting Niseko's natural heritage and passing on its culture. This time, we asked RTA president and interior designer Atsuko Tossani Itoda to give us a special guide around Niseko.

Dinner course at Niseko's first Michelin restaurant



KAMIMURA is the main dining area where you can enjoy course meals. There is also a sister restaurant, KITCHEN, on the same floor, where you can enjoy bar menus and grilled dishes in a more casual setting. The modern and chic space designed by Tossani also has a calming charm.



Chef Yuichi Uemura of "KAMIMURA".



Chef's Degustation "Egg Soup".



Chef's Degustation "Fried chestnuts and peppermint". A special dish made with local chestnuts and mint fried with buckwheat flour.

Dinner on our first day in Niseko was at KAMIMURA, a Michelin star restaurant located on the 1st floor of Shiki Niseko (Chatrium Niseko). Owner- chef Yuichi Uemura welcomes us, and even though it's our first time here, the chef's smile makes us feel at ease, making us want to say ``I'm home.''

The amuse of the day was seasonal deciduous mushrooms picked nearby this morning, mixed with daikon radish and yuzu. After that, an appetizer of Rausu-grown kinki with perilla and Japanese ginger appears, and you'll immediately fall in love with the essence of the cuisine, which perfectly balances the best of Japanese and French cuisine. What completely captivated me was the next dish titled "Egg Soup." As a Japanese person, there is something nostalgic about the rich flavor of matsutake mushrooms, deciduous mushrooms, boletus mushrooms, and maitake mushrooms, and the smooth texture of chawanmushi. As I was in agony over the extravagant deliciousness, Uemura smiled brightly and said, ``These are the ingredients that were picked in that area today.''



Chef's Degustation "Deciduous Mushroom".

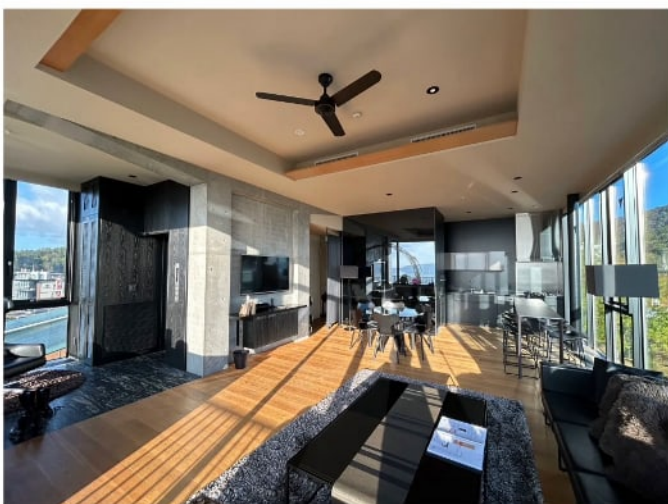
In addition, sommelier Miyuki Uemura poured Hakodate wines that are attracting attention around the world, such as Domaine de Montille and Norakugura, and her love and knowledge of wine enriched the meal even more. Afterwards, they continued to enjoy dishes made with plenty of autumn Hokkaido ingredients, such as salmon roe, chestnuts, grilled Shiretoko chicken and porcini, and were praised by people from both Japan and abroad for a delicate, beautiful, and unique food experience that can only be had here. No wonder it has received so much support.

The view of Mt. Yotei also becomes part of the art. The pinnacle of workation



The morning sun shining into the penthouse on the 6th floor of "MUSE NISEKO".

The accommodation is MUSE NISEKO, a conveniently located apartment condominium located a stone's throw from Kamimura and a 10-minute walk from the ski slopes. At the entrance, calligraphy in ancient Ainu characters by calligrapher Rieko Kawabe is written on the wall, and each room also displays works based on different concepts. The penthouse on the 6th floor is a stylish space that combines sophistication and warmth. Perhaps because of my good nature, I woke up refreshed the next morning with the sunrise, and from the living room I was greeted with a magnificent panoramic view of Mt. Yotei! The view of the sea of clouds spreading out at the foot of the mountain is so beautiful that words can't describe it, and the silence that allows you to bathe in the sun's energy makes you feel that luxury is what it is.



Spacious living/dining/kitchen. RTA is in charge of everything from architecture to interior design.

For breakfast, I had a cup of coffee and dipped the potato bread with Howlett Farm's blueberry jam. After I took a breather, I went for a short walk. When I get back to my room, I get some work done and get completely immersed in the charm of a workation. Time seems to be passing slowly, and it even feels like time has increased.



Uemura's potato bread was topped with three-berry jam (jam containing three types of haskap, blueberries, and red currants) from Howlett Farm in Hakodate, which I had visited the day before.

A new Japanese fusion restaurant



Chef Hideki Endo of "MAME NISEKO".



Ceviche of scallops and soy.

A rental villa with a spirit of hospitality



The living/dining kitchen of "HANARIDGE 11". RTA was in charge of everything from design to interior design.



Main bedroom.

The final chapter of Tossani's journey will be the luxury villa `` [HANARIDGE 11](#) '. Taking advantage of the natural condition of the slope, the entrance is located on the third floor, the top floor. As soon as you step through the front door, you'll be greeted by a spacious living/dining/ [kitchen area](#) of approximately 170 square meters , and through the large glass windows, you can enjoy the view as if you were merging with the forest.

There are four bedrooms on the second floor, all with en-suite bathrooms and toilets. Because the building is designed in a Y-shape towards Mt. Yotei, the two master bedrooms offer a similar dynamic view of the third floor. Furthermore, the first floor is equipped with a spa where you can enjoy natural [hot springs](#) , an open-air bath, and even a gym studio. It is a private healing space where guests can be invited during long-term stays .



Chef Kenji Nagashima of "81".



"Reconstruction of Carbonara".

In the evening, enjoy the visiting chef service provided by Chef [Kenji Nagashima](#) , the founder of the popular [installation art](#) restaurant `` 81 '' . Now that he travels back and forth between Hiroo and Niseko, Nagashima will visit the residence and serve food upon request. His signature `` Reconstructed Carbonara'', raw ham and salmon [salad](#) , pasta made from brown bear meat that was exterminated as a preventive measure, etc., make full use of the fruits of the sea and the mountains, and express the unique qualities of the ingredients. Expressing deliciousness in one dish. Don He is an essential part of Nagashima's cuisine, and you can get drunk on the long autumn nights with Perignon and various natural wines.

The next morning, when I went out for a walk at sunrise, I was a little excited by the chilly weather, a perfect reminder of the changing seasons. After warming yourself to the core in the open-air bath while bathing in the morning sun, you can relax and enjoy the rest of the day. During the day, the sunlight streams in brightly, and the large windows let in a breeze, making the room feel comfortable, and at night, the entire building is slightly warm. The technology that allows you to experience the blessings of nature through the beauty of the building's form is truly art.



An open-air bath connected to the spa and gym.



A morning view of Niseko as seen from the HANAZONO area.

Text: Mina Oba
