## MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN



## Japan-o-rama: can cute and kooky kick-start team Nippon again?

Does Japan want to be taken seriously or will it become the Italy of Asia (a bit too slow for real global success)? A MONOCLE SPECIAL REPORT

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- A AFFAIRS Mission critical: a report from the corridors of Japan's foreign ministry
- **BUSINESS** Steady flow: why Japan's pen makers are anything but stationery
- CULTURE What the Fukuoka?
  The nation's other media hub
- **DESIGN** Craft capitals: eyewear towns to lunch-box boroughs
- **EDITS** A tatami-tastic selection of fine hotels and useful goods in Tokyo's newest creative corner

# PAGES ON MODERN JAPAN

People to meet, brands to invest in, places to stay and products to purchase

## KONICHIWA, WORLD

Doraemon\* as a soft-power diplomat

## **TOP 25**

The cultural and media forces shaping Nippon

### WOMEN ON TOP

A shift in positions for corporate Japan

### GET MOVING!

From boardroom to design lab

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need for speed

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Sushi and samba in Brazil



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The state of the globe's third-largest economy

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The world's cult hiking boot marches on

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Monocle has a fresh fashion team – three stories with the best tailoring, outerwear and accessories

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A cosy urban retreat in Kanazawa

## 2020

Five years
and counting:
stepping up
the pace
for Tokyo's
Olympic Games

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UK £6 USD \$12 EUR 12(GE EUR 10(ITA DKK 122



\*He's a cartoon robot cat from the future



#### 11 Cutlery Common

Since starting in 2014, Common's mission has been a humble one: to create homely pieces that can be used regardless of their setting or what's on the menu. The firm behind this tempting tableware – Niigata-based Tsubame Shinko – has been at the sharp end of the cutlery trade since 1919. — JAF commontableware.com

#### 12 Yuzu saké Kitajima Brewery

The Kitajima brewery began business in 1805 and we're partial to the playful seigaiha (concentric wave pattern) that decorates the striking bottle. Japan is well known for its distictive yellow Yuzu fruit and the addition of a pinch of salt brings out the sweetness of this sippable citrus-infused saké. — JAF kitajima-shuzo.jp

#### 13 Pendant lamp Scotch Club

In a nod to the design of a disco ball, each Scotch Club pendant lamp has 72 internal panels to cast light further.

Created by ceramicist Xavier Mañosa and Berlin design studio Mashallah for Barcelona-based lighting brand Marset, the lamp's ceramic exterior is fired four times for strength and comes in four colours. — VE. marset.com

#### 14 Envelopes Drop Around

Sapporo-based Drop Around has updated the humble envelope with a striking new collection. Each set features eye-catching colours and geometric panels, while the card inside can be rearranged to alter the look of your letters. — vt. droparound.com

#### 15 Salt and pepper shakers Nendo for Materia

Japanese designer Nendo added an enlarged cork stopper that creates a unique silhouette to these shakers. The transparent top can be removed to access the condiments and the cork keeps its contents airtight. — VL

materia.amorim.com

#### 16 Rum Chic Choc rum

Québec's first spiced rum is made from ingredients sourced in Canada's Chic-Choc mountains. Complex notes including green alder and wild angelica are offset by fragrant orange peel. — MDB domainepinnacle.com

#### 17 Chocolate bars Maverick Chocolate Co

A habit of bringing home speciality chocolate from his travels led Paul Picton to found Cincinnati-based Maverick chocolate two years ago. Made in batches of 400, the eight bar varieties include the

chilli-spiked Fahrenheit 513 and the Prohibition Bar with smoked sea salt and bourbon. — MDB maverickchocolate.com

MINT

TED EDITION

#### 18 Blanket Mourne Textiles

On the shores of Carlingford Lough on Northern Ireland's east coast, Mourne's looms have been weaving since the 1950s. "We use Irish wool from Donegal wherever possible," says Mario Sierra, company head. "We also use spinners, dyers and finishers in Scotland." — JAF mournetextiles.com



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CHOCOLATE