

# MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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JAPAN  
SPECIAL



## 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**

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

JP

**72  
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 - our editor in chief on Japan's need for speed

### JAPAN'S LATAM DIASPORA

Sushi and samba in Brazil



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

### 5 ESSAYS

The state of the globe's third-largest economy

### GET YOUR GOROS ON

The world's cult hiking boot marches on

### NEW!

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

### SCREEN-STAR RESIDENCE

A cosy urban retreat in Kanazawa

### 2020

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

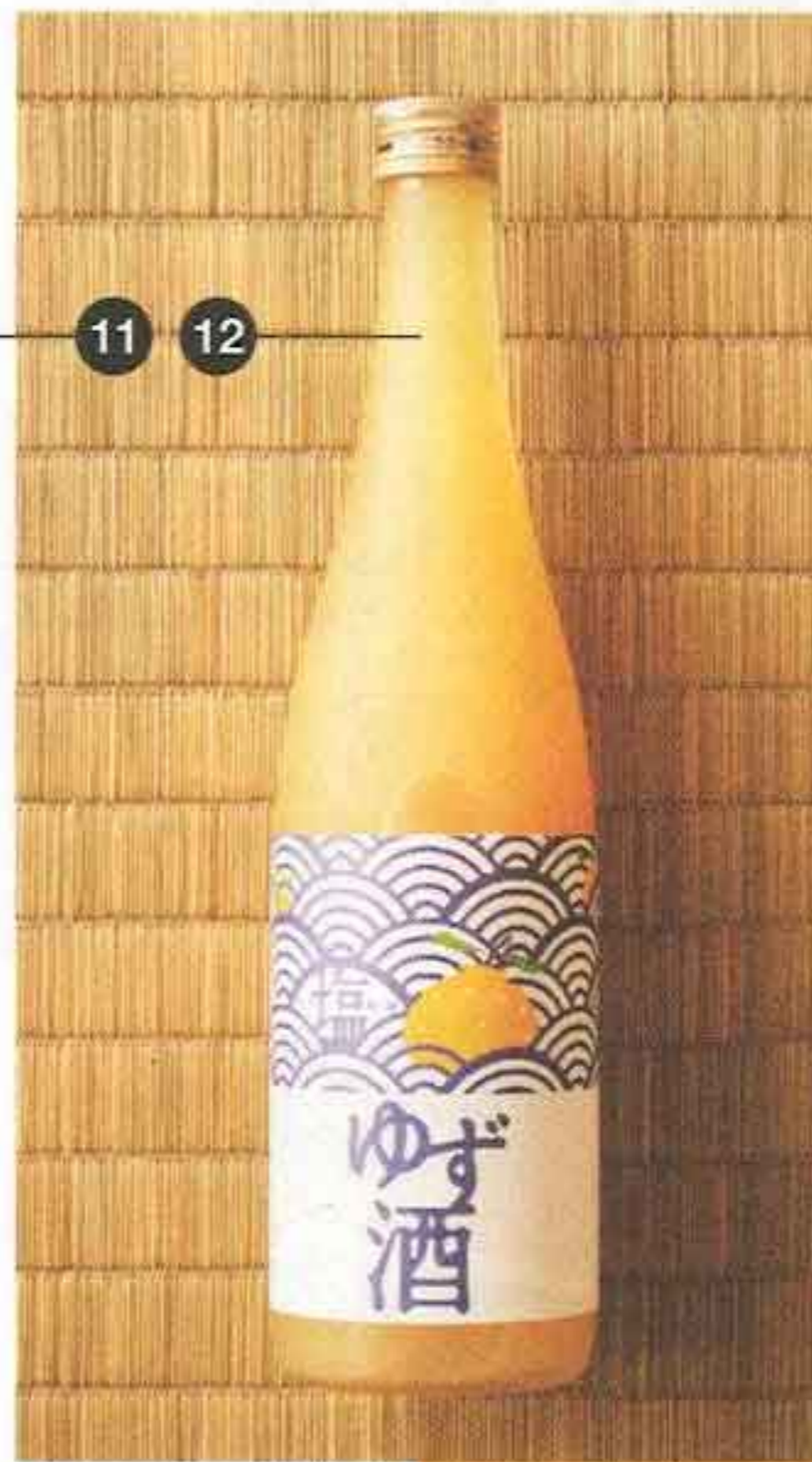
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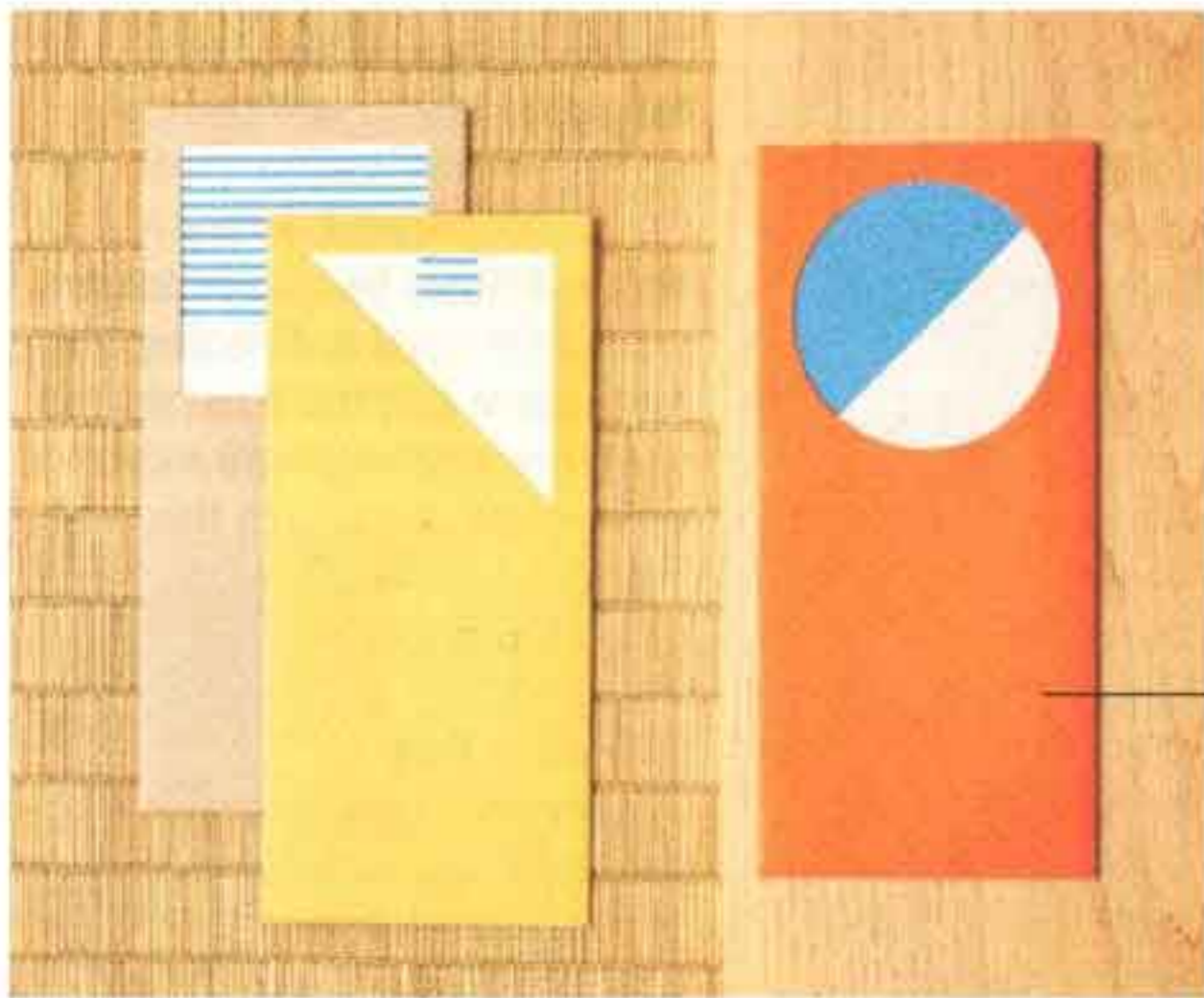
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11 12



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14 15



**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](http://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 distinctive 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](http://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. — VL [marset.com](http://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. — VL [droparound.com](http://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](http://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](http://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



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18

chilli-spiked Fahrenheit 513 and the Prohibition Bar with smoked sea salt and bourbon. — MDB [maverickchocolate.com](http://maverickchocolate.com)

**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](http://mournetextiles.com)

