



# Les Clefs d'Or Japan Key News



July 2013, Vol. 13

## Suntory Hakushu Distillery Tour

List of attendees:

Ms. Kay ABE (Grand Hyatt Tokyo)  
Mr. Yasutoshi ABE (Conrad Tokyo)  
Mr. Adrian FAUTT (Park Hyatt Tokyo)  
Mr. Osamu HAMASAKI (Hotel Okura Tokyo)  
Ms. Etsuko HIGASHIDE (Hotel New Grand)  
Ms. Aiko IMAIZUMI (Grand Hyatt Tokyo)  
Ms. Hiromi MARUYAMA (The Ritz, Carlton Tokyo)  
Ms. Naoko SHIBATA (The Prince Park Tower Tokyo)  
Ms. Mayako SUMIYOSHI (Palace Hotel Tokyo)

By AIKO IMAIZUMI

On July 16, 17 participants including 9 Les Clefs d'Or members took part in the Suntory Hakushu Distillery tour hosted by the Suntory Beer & Spirits Ltd.

This distillery, known as the "Forest Distillery", was established in 1973 in the land of Hakushu where expansive rich nature forest exists surrounded by the major summits in the Southern Alps and Yatsugatake mountain ranges. It is the second distillery by the Suntory following the Yamazaki distillery.

The land of Hakushu best suits to take advantage of Japan's nature in the process of making whisky water. Snowmelt and rainfall in the mountains soak into the ground, filtered and cleaned by the granite layer become the *Suntory Natural Mineral Water from Southern Alps*, which takes nearly two decades to complete the process. The world famous whisky *Hakushu* is made using this mineral water. In order to obtain good-quality natural water, Suntory has been working on forest and bird conservation activities since the opening of the distillery.

The tour started with visiting the manufacturing site of the mineral water. All bottling and packing processes are done on



the site to keep the product fresh.



After lunch, the whisky distillery tour began. We were led into the stillroom and observed fermentation, distillation and maturation. We were lucky to be led into the restricted area to closely see the fermentation process.

In Scotland, where the whisky originated, there are many distilleries and they create a whisky by blending different whisky from different distilleries. However in Japan, because the limited number of distilleries, a single distillery makes many different pure whiskies and creates a variety of whiskies at the distillery, which are called "Single Malt Whiskies". The Suntory Beer & Spirits Ltd. makes more than 100 kinds of pure whiskies by using many different sizes and material barrels at their two distilleries. The Suntory's world famous whiskies are created by the blender who tastes these varieties of pure whiskies every day.

The final part of the tour was whisky seminar. After having studied the difference between tastes and flavors of several pure whiskies, we enjoyed tasting the *Hakushu* and *Yamazaki*.

We studied not only the manufacturing process of whisky, but we also learned that how the Suntory is conscious about environment and how they are involved in the conservation activities in order to create a high-quality water and whisky.

The Hakushu distillery is about 3 hours by car from central Tokyo, 2 hours 15 minutes by train from Shinjuku Station to Kobuchizawa Station and then another 15 minutes by free shuttle bus. They have an audio guide in English, Chinese and French on the whisky distillery tour for visitors from overseas.



## June Meeting

On June 19, Les Clefs d'Or Japan's meeting was held in Tokyo. 20 members attended the meeting.

In the meeting, the launch of the 9th Asian Congress Organizing Committee was announced and Ms. Kay Abe, the concierge at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo, was appointed the chairperson.

The Global Blue Japan applied to become the associative company and was accepted as a new member.

## JCA June Meeting

On June 19, the Japan Concierge Association (JCA) held its monthly meeting in Tokyo.

In the meeting, Mr. Yasutoshi Abe, the Head Concierge of the Conrad Tokyo, gave speech to the audience on how to build relationship with the neighboring restaurants including some practical examples.



## Asian Congress July Meeting

By KAZUYOSHI NISHIKAWA

On July 10, the first meeting for the Asian Congress organizing committee was held in Kyoto. 14 members attended the meeting.

In the meeting, the dates for the congress was fixed for Aug. 24 until 27, 2015 and the team leaders reported activities and future activity plans.

Major time was spent for discussion on how we can share the spirit of Asian hospitality with participants.

During the congress, cultural experience programs and visits to some symbolic places are planned. We will carry out a questionnaire in Bangkok to gather participant's requests.

## JCA July Meeting

By KAZUYOSHI NISHIKAWA

On July 10, the JCA held its monthly meeting at Shunkoin Temple in Kyoto. Ms. Akemi Koyama, the Chief Concierge of the Kyoto Brighton Hotel, hosted the meeting.

The Deputy Head Priest Kawakami gave keynote speech on the history and features of the temple.

In the workshop by the member of "GO ON", a group of craftspeople in Kyoto who share or contribute their Japanese crafts-making techniques in creating totally new designs and crafts, the participants were able to hear some interesting stories on preserving and developing their crafts-making skills and enjoyed networking with them.

## A New Full Member from Japan!

On July 10, Ms. Naoko Shibata, the Chief concierge of the Prince Park Tower Tokyo, became a full member.

As of July 31, Les Clefs d'Or Japan

consists of 2 honorary members, 15 full members, 10 adherent members and 9 associative companies.



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