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February 2012 Issue 8

The Valentine Issue Love On The Rock!



Valentine's day is almost here, so this month we've got some info about Valentine's in Okinawa and also White day along with some ideas on how to spoil your loved one.

We've also got reviews of Fashion Candy this month and Sunset Music School. There's also our regular dive update from Reef Encounters, Tricks & Tips and Weird & Wonderful. Enjoy!

As usual you can also view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com

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Music In Okinawa

Sunset Music School

Now's the time to learn that instrument you've always dreamed of playing.

If you're new to the island, have a bit more time on your hands or maybe you want to learn a new skill for your New Year's resolution then now's the time to get started.

Established in 2002, Sunset Music School has been teaching a variety of musical instruments to the local community for many years. The director and teacher, Mimi Nierva Ueta was born in Okinawa and



has been playing piano since the age of 5 later studying at the Ryukyu Classical Academy.

Apart from the usual musical instruments you will definitely have heard of back home, they also have the opportunity to learn the Okinawan shanshin.

The Okinawan shanshin is believed to have close ties to the Chinese sanxian due to the link between the old Ryukyu kingdom and China. They are traditionally covered in snakeskin with a body, neck and three strings. If you're looking to purchase your own shanshin to learn and later take back home you should know that shanshin covered in real snakeskin are illegal to import into some countries including the US and UK. There are companies producing imitation snakeskin shanshin that still look good and are of a high quality.

Whatever instrument you decide to learn, now's a great time to get started. Sunset Music School are offering a 50% discount on the first month of tuition right now, so you've got no excuse to put off learning a new musical instrument! Registration is 3000 yen and with the discount above your first month will be 3150 yen for 30 minutes or 5510 for 1 hour.

Sunset Music School is located on the seawall in Chatan, you can register online using the website below or call them on 098-926-0616 for further information.

www.sunsetmusicschool.com





Google Map











Montessori Half Day Program

Surshine Montessori School will be offering half day classess 5 days a week for ages 3 years old through 5 years old during the school year 2012-2013.

We will be accepting applications starting February 2012. This program is designed for 5 mornings from 8:30am. – 12:00pm.

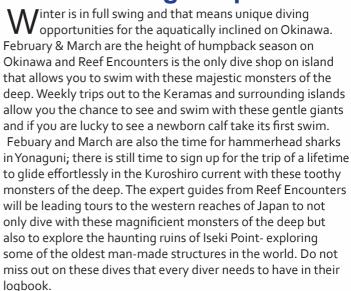
For more information please contact:
Phone: 090-936-9968/9971 or school@sunshipemonteson/okingwa.com



to

Dive Undate

Winter Diving? Yep!



February is also the time of year that those divers looking to join the ranks of dive professionals have the chance to join in on the professional development courses offfered at Reef Encounters. They will be offering training courses for both Instructor and Dive Master. Courses will be offered with both day time and evening schedules to meet any work schedule. For those wanting to continue their diving education without getting wet during February we will also be offering classes on regulator repair and maintenance. Remember just because the weather is a bit chilly does not mean you cannot get your diving fix!

Open 7 days a week from 9am - 6pm Boat departs daily at 9am Tel - 098-995-9414 Dollars OK English & Japanese OK

www.reefencounters.org





















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Werd and Wanderful Japan

Prison Break

* A Chinese man escaped from a prison in Hiroshima by scaling over a



5 meter high wall. It was Japan's first prison break in over 20 years. The man Li Guolin had been sentenced to 23 years for firing a handgun at

police and attempted burglary. He was captured, still in Hiroshima not long after escape.

Taiwanese Murder Suspect

* A Taiwanese man who was allegedly responsible for the murder of two female classmates was captured by police but somehow managed to stab himself in the neck on the way to jail. He had been searched, but police didn't find the knife. He died before reaching hospital.

Color Balls

* If you've ever wondered what the bright orange balls sitting next to the cash desk in Japanese stores are, then let us enlighten you. They're to identify criminals! The balls contain bright paint, which can't be easily washed off and are designed to be thrown at escaping suspects. The police in Saitama recently caught a suspect after a convenience store robbery when the staff managed to hit the fleeing man.

Some police forces also have the equivalent of paint ball guns that can be used to "tag" escaping suspects!

New Radiation Limits

* The Japanese government is planning to introduce new limits on radiation in food that would be around 20 times stricter than American or EU standards.

For example, the new guidelines would introduce limits of 200 becquerels per kilogram for drinking water and baby formula compared to a limit of 1200 in the USA and 1000 and 400 respectively in the EU.

Stuffed Pandas

* Last year, a Chinese resident of Tokyo was arrested for attempting to sell a stuffed Panda to a Chinese visitor. There are only 12 stuffed pandas in Japan that have the correct paperwork. There's one in Nagoya that's currently up for sale for an eye watering 38 Million Yen!

F-35

*The Japanese government has officially chosen the F-35 to replace their Boeing F-4s. The first jets will begin being delivered to Japan in 2016.

Radiation Exposure

* Last month test results for 1,727 people who lived between 10-50 kilometers from the Fukushima nuclear plant were released. 97% or 1,675 were exposed to less than 5 millisiverts of radiation with 1,084 less than 1 millisivert.

None of the people tested came close to the 100 millisiverts that's considered the minimum level to cause an increase in risk of developing cancer.

Valentine's In Okinawa

Love On The Rock

Valentine's day and White day are coming up in February & March.

What's White Day?

If you're new to Okinawa or Japan then you will of course heard of Valentine's day, but what, you may be asking yourself, is White Day?

Traditionally in Japan, Valentine's day is for women to give gifts to men and White day is when men give gifts to women.

Like most countries though, Valentine's day has become increasingly commercialised in Japan, and now it's common for women to be expected to give chocolate to male friends, work colleagues and even female friends in recent years. Like other gift giving times in Japan, chocolate given to friends or work colleagues is usually something of low value, that can easily be reciprocated one month later on White Day by men.

What To Buy

As we mentioned, Valentine's day is for men in Japan. Chocolate is by far the most common gift. If you're looking for something special most of the local department stores sell exclusive chocolate sets made by famous chocolatiers or hotels in mainland Japan. If you are feeling truly adventurous then you can grab some cake or chocolate making equipment in most supermarkets and bake the man in your life something special!

When White day come's around, it's time for men to reciprocate. If the lady in your life is bored of chocolate then why not visit one of the silver shops in Depot Island, Chatan for some jewelry hand made in Okinawa. Depot Island also has a hand made leather accessories shop and to complete your gift a great wine shop located close to the main entrance.





Valentine's In Okinawa





For the traditional flowers, as it's not common in Japan to give roses or bouquets for a gift, then we recommend **flowerdrop.net** that delivers both on and off base and is used to American tastes in flowers.

Where To Go

If you want to take your other half out somewhere special then why not try out these ideas:

On a budget:

Nothing's more romantic than watching the sun set. If the weather's good, head out to Cape Zanpa and watch the sun set then enjoy a drink at the Royal Hotel just across the road from the beach. There's also the Alivila hotel close by with several restaurants & bars and views of the East China Sea.

Splashing out:

Okinawa has no shortage of high end dining experiences for an amazing night out. Why not try Yoshida Asian Fusion, from our December magazine, or alternately the Naha Terrace hotel provides a luxurious dining experience at their restaurant "Fanuan". For a truly luxurious break you can even stay over! Whatever you do enjoy Valentine's & White Day!



It's big, green and coming to Okinawa City soon!

St Paddy's day in Okinawa - Compulsory Entertainment

If you've never experienced St Paddy's day in Okinawa then get ready for a treat as the parade rolls down BC street and the green beer is flowing. As well as the parade, there's live entertainment from several different bands and performers as well as plenty of Guinness and Irish food.



This year St Patrick's day falls on Saturday 17 March, so the annual celebrations are likely to take place on the same day.

Please check www.irishpubokinawa.com for confirmation and more information in the next few weeks. We'll also post more information to Totalokinawa.com as soon as we have it. Whatever you decide to do have a great St Patrick's day!

Japan Tips & Tricks



Etiquette

This month we've got some more cut out and keep tips & tricks on how to behave in Japan.

Visiting A Home

The first thing to remember when



visiting somebody's home is to remove your shoes! Normally your host will

provide slippers to wear in their house after you've removed your shoes at the door.

If your host has a tatami floor, then don't forget to remove your slippers before stepping onto the tatami. Only bare feet or socks should be worn when walking on the mat.

While we're talking about slippers, don't forget to change them when visiting the washroom. There are normally toilet slippers just outside the door which you should use instead.

Bathing

If you're lucky enough to be invited to someone's home and want to take a bath, then as usual in Japan there's a few rules to follow.

First, you should wash your body using the shower outside the bath, then you enter the tub, which in Japan is for soaking only and not washing.

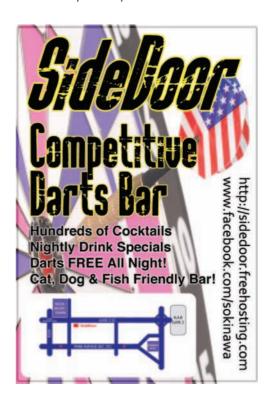
After your relaxing soak, get out of the bath and wash again with soap, making sure none gets into the bath water, then soak once more.

Although it may be unlikely being a guest, in Japan it's customary to re-use the bath water for other members of the household, so you don't cleanse yourself in the bath water, that's done before you get in!

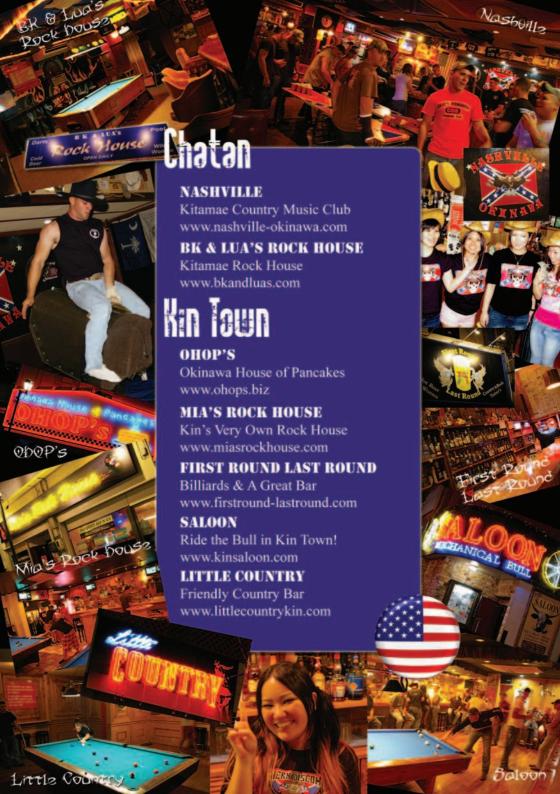
Sitting

If you're dining on a tatami mat then you may have to kneel on the floor. The formal way is called "seiza" and is basically kneeling with your legs behind. Foreigners aren't normally expected to do this for a long time as it can be uncomfortable.

In more casual situations, men normally sit cross legged and women sit with both legs on one side. These are considered to be the correct casual way to sit for men and women respectively.



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Cartoon Corner to



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O An Okinawan Original

text and photography by Wendy Brandon

Fashion Candy

Chinen and the Chocolate Factory

C reate custom boxes of delicious chocolates as a gift for someone special—or even yourself. Fashion Candy is a stylish boutique offering innovative confectioneries and beautiful packaging.

Ritsuko Chinen began her candy adventure in 1975 by selling cellophane wrapped candy and toys which became so popular, she began Fashion Candy to keep up with the demand. A manufacturing plant of chocolates, cookies, and pastries followed.

Today as you enter Fashion Candy, cases of delicate chocolates lead you into a store full of a variety of other Okinawan original sweets and pastries. Above the boutique are factory and manufacturing floors which produce 120 tons of raw chocolate annually.

Each piece created is a work of art with fine detail and unique pattern, shape, and color in every candy design. Aside from a multitude of chocolate bites are mini cake slices, cheesecakes, custards, and tarts. Turn around, and there are over 15 individual wrapped cookies and candies to make a custom assortment. If you need dessert for a group, choose from a variety of cakes or boxes of individually wrapped chocolate covered and fruit cookies.



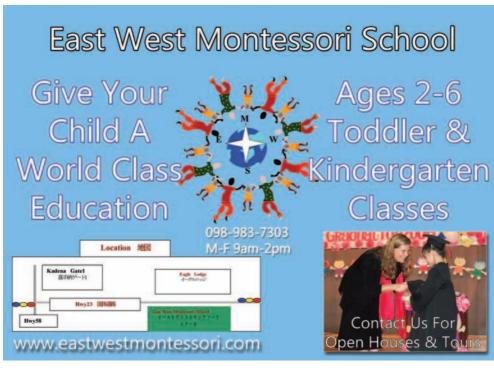
To visit Fashion Candy, take Highway 58 south past MCAS Futenma and turn left at the light before Jimmy's Bakery. Take the next left on to Pipeline road, and the boutique is on the left. They are open from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. daily. If you're in Naha, visit Ma Kukuru, a retail store by Fashion Candy, in Main Place and on Kokusai-dori.

For a special occasion or just for a flavor discovery, visit this treasure boutique of sweet delights. Bon appétit!





http://tiny.cc/fashioncandy





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