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Issue 20



ot a sweet tooth? We've got just the thing: candy made in Okinawa, infused with Okinawan flavors and shapes. Check out our feature article to find out how to get your hands on these sweet treats. Also in this issue, we review Perestroika Russian restaurant in

Naha and the new 360 Grille. We've also got the latest dive report and newest edition of Weird & Wonderful. You can view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com



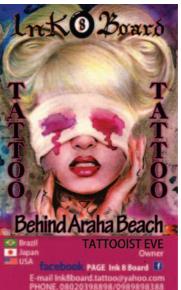
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Restaurant Review

by Melissa Nazario

Perestroika

Naha's Premier Russian Restaurant

ocated a block away from Kokusai Street near the Naha bus terminal, Perestroika has been offering up authentic Russian cuisine since 2007. With it's phenomenal food, charming atmosphere, and friendly staff, I hope it's around for many more years to come.

What I love about Perestroika is it's charm. Owner Elena and staff make you feel welcome, as if you're quests in their



Plums and apples wrapped in beef

home. There's a lot to see as you wait for food, including colorful murals inside and outside the restaurant, cute Russian décor on the tables, and Russian dance and music concerts on two TVs.

World Class Russian Cuisine

I have yet to try a dish at Perestroika I don't like. The restaurant's borscht, a red broth made from beets and other vegetables, is subtle, yet full of warmth and flavor. It pairs well with pirozhka—a soft, bready dumpling filled with minced meat and cabbage. Both borscht and pirozhka are included in Perestroika's three courses, which are different dinner sets offering significant savings if you want to sample several items.



Napoleon

Russian food is hard to explain to those who haven't tried it. The ingredients are familiar to Western palates, yet their combinations and preparations, such as plums and apples wrapped in tender beef, make them exciting to try. Evgeny, who was the chef at the most famous restaurant in Vladivostok, prepares all the dishes, and his attention to detail and flavor combinations make even the simplest potato salad delicious.

My favorite dish is miyaso-po-ribatski, a baked pork dish topped with scallops, tomatoes, onions, and a layer of melty cheese. The dish seems small, but once you taste the flavors of

savory pork, acidic tomato, and creamy cheese, it's quite satisfying.

Try to save room for dessert, as these are made fresh, and worth the extra calories. The Napoleon consisted of pastry layers dense enough to require a knife to cut through. Combined with nuts, syrup, powdered sugar, and bright, lemony flavor, it's distinct and delicious.

Hours: 6:00 pm to 12:00 am

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Google Map & Directions



tiny.cc/perestroikanaha









Dive Update

Humpbacks & Hammerheads Are Here

ebruary brings the giants of the Pacific into Okinawan waters. Humpback whale season is in full swing with mothers and calves frolicking in the waters of the Keramas



and surrounding islands of Okinawa. These gentle giants will be gracing our waters for the next two months as the mothers come to the Keramas' warm waters to give birth and have the calves fatten up before heading back to cooler waters north of mainland Japan and beyond.

Night diving is also a special treat this time of year as the singing of the male humpback whales can be heard

resonating throughout the dive sites of Okinawa. The purpose of these songs is not known, but it is believed that they may be used to attract a mate, or maybe, like many people, they just have to sing! Although songs can be heard during the day, the best time to hear these distinct haunting melodies is on calm nights at dive sites such as Zanpa Misaki and Maeda Misaki.

If you are up for a little more heart pumping action, February and March are the best seasons for hammerhead sharks in the waters of Yonaguni. These huge aggregates of apex predators make for the dives of a lifetime. Swimming with up to hundreds of these toothy predators is a dive not to be missed. Yonaguni, which is just a short flight away, is one of the few places in the world where this spectacular sight can be witnessed.

Whether it's the gentle giants or the awe inspiring predators that make you want to get wet, Reef Encounters professional guides and divemasters are the ones to get you in the action. Whale watching tours are available for private charter almost daily for groups. For the more adventurous, we offer chances for snorkeling with the gentle giants also on select tours through February and March. Excursions to dive with the hammerheads and explore the underwater ruins of Yonaguni are also available. Contact Ai at reservations@reefencounters.org for details.

Also coming this month are training classes for decompression techniques, diversaster and instructor courses. For those wanting to teach diving this summer, now is the time to get your professional level training completed.

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by Melissa Nazario

360 Grille

Enjoy vistas of Okinawa as you eat--kangaroo?

ritting eight floors up, where Blueberry Café once was, 360 Grille Thas an unparalleled atmosphere. It's circular layout guarantees almost every seat a panoramic view of Okinawa. In addition to it's prime location, other aspects prove that no detail has been overlooked. Servers punch orders into tablets, and communicate via headsets. They're also attentive—no long waits for food each time I went. Plus, doorbells on tables ensured we could easily get our server's attention if needed. Flat screens playing nature shows line interior walls, and music playing throughout the restaurant adds to the modern vibe, too.



While I appreciate the investment in those little details, it wouldn't much matter if the food wasn't good. Fortunately, 360 Grille's eye for detail extends to its kitchen's offerings, too. The menu is an eclectic mix: the appetizers alone range from chips and salsa, to Italian bruschetta, to calamari. Entrées include salads, sandwiches, burgers and sushi, plus steaks, burgers, and interestingly, exotic meat like kangaroo and ostrich.



Skewer sampler plate

I recommend trying the sampler skewer plate, if you're even a little interested in discovering what camel or crocodile taste like. The skewers were seasoned differently, were savory and juicy, and so close to meat you've already tried, you probably couldn't tell the difference in a taste test. The crocodile skewer was a favorite, coated in herbs, and akin to seasoned chicken. The sampler plate includes two skewers each of camel, kangaroo, crocodile, ostrich, lamb, pork, beef, and chicken, and includes a cabbage and iceberg salad with orange wedge.

If the thought of eating kangaroo makes you queasy, the kalua pork sandwich is a safer, yet equally tasty choice. This popular Hawaiian dish was salty and full of flavor, and went well topped with shredded coleslaw on a big, fluffy bun. A side of curly fries doused in Cajun seasoning complemented the sandwich, though there are numerous sides to choose, from healthy to indulgent. While you may not have room for dessert, 360 offers many tempting choices, including several different kinds of cheesecake, and a sweet yet tangy apple tart.

American style breakfasts, such as eggs and bacon sets, are available earlier in the day on weekends. As it's a new venue, 360 Grille is testing different lunch and dinner hours, so their Facebook page is the best place to check for the most current times.

¥, \$ or card

Soogle Map & Directions

098-923-0187

Hours: Check facebook.com/36ookinawa







how sweet!

Candy in Okinawa



okinawan black sugar

Kokuto, or Okinawan black sugar, is often touted as "healthy" by Okinawans, as it retains minerals that are removed from white and brown sugar. While eating chunks of it, as the locals do, may not appeal to you, it's also good mixed with peanuts, as brittle. Find *kokuto* in groceries, convenience stores, gift shops and even 100 yen stores all over Okinawa.

gourmet chocolate

Gourmet chocolates make lovely gifts for Valentine's Day, birthdays, or housewarming parties. In Japan, women give men chocolate on Valentine's Day, and the men return the favor with gifts on White Day on March 14th. Find fancy designer chocolates and other sweets made exclusively in Okinawa at the Fashion Candy store in Ginowan near Futenma. Worth trying: sakura chocolate, flavored with pink Okinawan cherry blossoms.





pineapple chocolate

Pineapple chocolate combines white or milk chocolate with Okinawa's most popular fruit flavor, sometimes filled with dried pineapple pieces. Pineapple chocolate, as well as pineapple cakes, wine, and all sorts of treats can be sampled and purchased at the Pineapple Park in Nago. Entrance to the park is ¥600 for adults, or free if you just want to browse the gift shops.

Once February and March roll around, we tend to forget all those rigid resolutions we set for ourselves in January, and start getting realistic. Hey, we're all for good nutrition, but sometimes you just have to splurge. What better way to indulge yourself than trying a sweet that's distinctly Okinawan? Whether for Valentine's Day, White Day, or "just because", we think these Okinawan candies will satisfy any sweet tooth.

ben imo kitkats®

Ben imo KitKats® are an Okinawan twist on this beloved candy. The Okinawan purple potato is mixed with white chocolate to create a cute lavendar chocolate bar with a sweet, slightly tangy flavor to go with those unmistakeable crispy layers. While ben imo is praised for being a nutrient-dense super food, we're pretty sure these KitKats® count more as a treat than a health food. Find ben imo KitKats® at the Pineapple Park and other Okinawan gift shops on island.





shisa candy

These *shisa gumdrops* are almost too cute to eat. They're sure to brighten any kid's day--or any adult's, for that matter. Buy them individually in different colors and flavors. There are also *shisa* bubblegum candies sold individually or in packs of five. So far we've only found these candies at *Okashi Goten*, also known as the Purple Potato Factory, in Onna Village near Zanpa Lighthouse.

find these candies at the stores mentioned with our oki sweets map:



http://tiny.cc/okisweets

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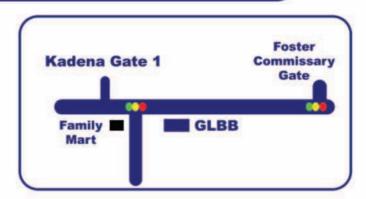


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Weird and Wenderful Japan

More than 1,000 ill in food scandal

Frozen food packages produced by Maruha Nichiro have caused numerous reports of food poisoning throughout Japan. Police found malathion, a pesticide, in some of the firm's frozen food packages, causing the company to recall 6.4 million products so far and warning that the tainted packages will have a strong smell. It's doubtful anyone will risk eating their products now, let alone smell it for contamination.

¥35 million diamond ring stolen



On Christmas Eve, two men pulled a fast one on a salesperson at the Wako Ginza store. They allegedly asked her to show them four diamond rings, requested that she

retrieve more information on the rings, and then asked her to help them get some money from the bank downstairs, which she declined. When they left, they had taken the ¥35 million ring with them. The staff member failed to notice the discrepency until she went to put three rings back instead of four!

Woman brings dead baby to police

Police arrested a 23-year-old woman in Saitama who allegedly turned herself in at a police station while carrying a bag of dead newborn son. She claimed the baby was dead at childbirth, and that she had been alone when she gave birth. The baby's body didn't have any external wounds or markings, and the umbilical cord was still attached.

Toyota hydrogen car by 2015

Toyota announced it will sell a hydrogen car in the U.S. by 2015. Its battery cell will be powered with hydrogen. The car will emit just water vapor as exhaust. Sales and power stations will start in California and branch out as more infrastructure is built. Toyota says the car will be able to travel 300 miles (480 km) without refueling. Refueling will take three to five minutes.

Bicycle seats taken, then found

A 61-year-old woman in Chiba Prefecture reported to police that her bicycle seat had been stolen. When police looked into the matter, they found more than 70 bicycle seats had been stolen in one condo parking lot. They later found the seats abandoned in a nearby park, lined up in a row on the ground. Perhaps the culprits had been planning to sell the seats back to the owners!

"Hustler" latest translation gaffe Suzuki's unveiling of the "Hustler",

Suzuki's unveiling of the "Hustler", its newest boxy minicar, raises some eyebrows as many associate the name with the racy adult magazine. It's only the most recent of brand names that Japanese companies pick based on how it sounds, and without researching its potentially distasteful connotations in other languages. Other examples include the sports drink Pocari Sweat, the Daihatsu Naked, and the Mitsubishi Pajero, that latter a slang term for sexual self-pleasure in Spanish.



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Local Business Review

to

by Melissa Nazario

Ryukyu Glass Craft Factory

Admire gorgeous glass and make your own piece you can take home!

Ryukyu glass making is a relatively new Okinawan craft compared to bingata dying and ceramics. Around the start of the 20th century, Okinawan craftsmen began making practical, colorless glass items for everyday functions, like oil vessels and fly catchers.

The post-WWII American presence in Okinawa affected the trade in two ways. First, Americans drank and discarded Coke, 7-up, and beer bottles, which local craftsmen melted down and into glassware that now had tints of blue, green, and brown.



Second, Americans stationed in Okinawa were attracted to the beauty of the handmade glass, and began requesting a wider variety of glass items for both entertaining and décor, including punch bowl sets, decanters, and colorful flowers. Soon, Ryukyu glass became popular souvenirs for tourists.

The Ryukyu Glass Craft center in Itoman is the largest glass workshop in Okinawa, and it's completely free to browse its shops, museum, and outdoor workshop. The main building is adorned with colorful glass mosaic pillars and murals; inside, the foyer's ceiling is a rainbow colored stained glass window.

The museum, located in the back next to the outlet shop, is filled with luminous glass pieces that are massive and dainty, stylized and utilitarian. A glass sanshin, the Okinawan banjo, sits majestically on one table. Colorless fly catchers and medicine jars from the early 1900's line some shelves. Many pieces by contemporary artists are for sale, too. Unfortunately, no photography is allowed in the museum.



The outdoor workshop is where all the action takes place. Craftsmen melt down glass and blow them free style or in molds. Starting at ¥1500, you can make your own piece, such as a tumbler, with the aid of craft workers. Because it needs time to cool, you'll need to pick up the finished piece three days later.

One of the highlights is checking out all the different kinds and colors of handmade glass for sale. Each piece is carefully inspected; if there is just one small undesired mark, a piece is sold at a deep discount, with a sticker next to the blemish to alert customers. Because these marks are often barely noticeable, the

pieces make fine gifts or additions to your own collection, at an outstanding value.

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www.ryukyu-glass.co.jp

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