

Art Biotop announces its grand opening on October 2, 2020.

Located at the foot of the Nasu Highlands

in Yokozawa (Tochigi Prefecture),

with Suite Villa and Restaurant “μ” (myu).



art biotop

Art Biotop was created under the direction of Hitomi Kitayama, the founder of Niki Club (1986-2017), continuing the concept of a resort integrated with nature. Opened in 2007 as a cultural project to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Niki Club, it became an art colony

where people could come together under the banner of art. The landscape art “Water Garden” (*Mizuniwa*) designed by Junya Ishigami completed in 2018; the Suite Villa designed by Shigeru Ban; and the restaurant μ (myu) have now been added and are ready for the grand opening.



Art Biotop is a nurturing environment for art.
An ecological biosphere where everything interrelates
including the elements, nature,
and peaceful evenings under the starry night sky.

There, silence, and solitude are the greatest gift of all.
Life is found in everything, and everything is shared equally.
At Art Biotop, you can use your own hands to
plow your own field.

The Suite Villa was designed by leading Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, winner of the Architectural Institute of Japan Award, the Pritzker Architecture Prize (considered the Nobel Prize of the architectural world), and the Mother Teresa Social Justice Award for his contributions to disaster relief housing. The guestrooms consist of 14 villas (15 rooms) located on a gentle slope facing the beautiful mountain streams that run along both sides of the property. Retaining walls made of

stone excavated from the construction site are built around the Suite Villa to demonstrate the environment of this area spreading from the foot of the volcanic Nasu Mountains. The interiors are mainly built from Japanese cedar and white ash to create a warm space where one can experience the natural materials. The bathroom, which is designed to extend onto the terrace, can be opened via a wickerwork door. Guests can enjoy bathing outdoors using various herbal bath salts.



Suite Villa



Restaurant "μ"

The beds have original headboards designed by Reiko Sudo while top quality mattresses by Kyoto Iwata assure a restful night. For breakfast, guests can choose a morning basket to be delivered at the time of their choosing and enjoyed on the terrace or have a Japanese breakfast at Cafe Kantan (currently known as the Gallery Cafe) in Art Biotop Residence. High tea service is offered daily in the library lounge for a relaxing afternoon. In addition, based on the example of Gallery Satsu

(Kudanshita, Tokyo) which has been in operation for many years, all the guest rooms are decorated with carefully selected contemporary crafts and books in a small exhibition space called Sanka. For the opening, a special exhibition, "Goethe's Eyes, or Dancing Garden" will be held under the supervision of Takashi Niimi, a former director for Oita Prefectural Museum and Professor at Musashino Art University.

Restaurant “μ” (myu) is run by a talented young chef, Masashi Motooka, and his team.

Restaurant “μ” (myu) will focus on carefully selected ingredients obtained locally from the Tochigi region. The restaurant is run by a team of young chefs, including Masashi Motooka, who was selected as “Young Promising Chef” in the 2020 edition of the prestigious restaurant guide “Go e Miyo.”; Takumi Chiba, and other up-and-comers. Kazuhiro Matsuki, who served as *maitre d’hotel* at Taillevent Robuchon (currently Joël Robuchon)

and Masayuki Muroi, who served at the Garden Restaurant in Niki Club for many years, and former Niki Club restaurant staff will welcome and serve guests. From a location set amongst beautiful trees overlooking the Water Garden, Restaurant “μ” (myu) will serve an original menu designed to stimulate the five senses.

Art and design leading to a unique imaginary world

The ceramic object installed in the entrance hall was created by Takahiro Kondo using Okura Sabitsuchi clay made from the weathering of Date crown stone, known to have been used by Isamu Noguchi in his later years. These porcelain plates symbolize the land of Nasu and demonstrate a perspective of the world created by the power of human skill and raw materials. Dolls created by Takashi Niimi have been placed on the shelves in the library lounge as inspiration for writers and artists from around the world and to guide guests toward the inspiring and mysterious horizon of art.

Graphic designer Kenya Hara is responsible for the graphic direction of the entire facility, including all print materials, the Art Biotop logo, and the signs on the premises and text by Makoto Saeki. The concept book for Water Garden, which can be found in every guest room, was photographed by Yoshihiko Ueda. The fabric that decorates the guest rooms was created by textile designer Reiko Sudo, while the tea box in the guest rooms was designed by Kenichi Samura.

Brand Producer:	Hitomi Kitayama (Founder of Niki Club)
Graphic design:	Kenya Hara
Suite Villa:	Shigeru Ban
Restaurant interior design:	Age Co., Ltd. (Representative: Ichiro Sato), Plus New Office Co., Ltd. Architect Office (Representative: Kenji Seto)
Water Garden (Mizuniwa):	Junya Ishigami
Construction:	Hakko Construction Co., Ltd. (Representative Director: Tsuyoshi Munakata)
Joint business enterprises:	Takara Leben Co., Ltd. (Representative Director: Kazuichi Shimada), Nikissimo Inc., (Representative Director: Miyu Kitayama), Agricultural Corporation Yokozawa Farm

Art Biotop has been developed as a joint business enterprise between Nikissimo Inc. and Takara Leben Co. Ltd.

The Art Biotop project is run by two companies: Nikissimo Inc., (Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; Representative Director: Miyu Kitayama) and Takara Leben Co., Ltd., (Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Representative Director: Kazuichi Shimada). Nikissimo manages resort properties with an emphasis on the concept of

cultural activities inspired by nature, art, and learning, while Takara Leben, who will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2022, aims to improve people's lives, operating under the corporate vision of "Think Happiness and Make the Happiness."

About Nikissimo Inc.,

Nikissimo Inc., was founded in 2015 by the owner of Niki Club, the Japanese-style boutique resort in Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture. In 2018, it succeeded the business from Niki Resort Co., Ltd. which operated Art Biotop Nasu in addition to hospitality education and cultural businesses. Since 2008, it has been promoting art and culture related activities through the open college *Schule im Berg* and Artist in Residence (AIR) for the support of young artists.

N I K I S S I M O

Location: Park Mansion Chidorigafuchi 1st floor, 2-1-17 Kudan Minami, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0074, Japan

Established: June 2015

Business Activities:
Hotel planning and operation, hospitality education and cultural business, etc.

About Takara Leben Co., Ltd.

With the motto, "Think Happiness and Make the Happiness" and the mission, "Create together," Takara Leben develops new condominiums as its main brand and is also engaged in rental properties, mega solar, etc. Committed to happiness for people's lives, and giving shape to their dream homes, Takara Leben promotes the creation of safe and supportive communities and the establishment of an environmentally friendly society.



Location: 16F, Tekko Building, 1-8-2, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 Japan

Established: September 21, 1972

Business Activities:
Planning, development, and sales of its own brand condominiums "LEBEN" and "NEBEL" series and houses, power generation business, hotel business, renovation and redevelopment business, overseas real estate sales business, etc.

URL: <https://www.leben.co.jp/>

Art Biotop overview	Opening date:	October 2, 2020
	Location:	2294-3, Michiue Takakuotsu, Nasu-machi, Nasu-gun, Tochigi Prefecture
	URL	https://www.artbiotop.jp/
	Number of guest rooms:	Suite Villas 15 rooms NEW (2 dog-friendly rooms, 2 connecting rooms), Residence 15 rooms
	Restaurant:	μ (35 seats) NEW
	Cafe:	Kantan (25 seats)
	Other facilities:	Water Garden, Pottery studio, Glass studio, White Limousine
	General reservations open:	October 2, 2020
	Room rate:	From 60,000 yen per person (weekdays; 1 night, 2 meals, 2 persons occupancy, tax & service fee not included)
	Restaurant:	Lunch 7,000 yen
		Dinner 14,000 yen (tax & service fee not included)

For inquiries from media

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Background on the birth of Art Biotop



Niki Club

In 1986, the hermitage Niki Club founded on the principle of coexisting with nature, started with only six guestrooms. The unique building, designed by architect Akira Watanabe using traditional Japanese materials such as Oya stone and red pine, became a hot topic in the design world. The name “Niki” recognizes the vision of the resort: more than a once-in-a- life-time encounter, and placed a high value on guest relations. A boutique resort that combined the functionality of a hotel with Japanese hospitality was created as a new type of small-scale accommodation facility.



Restaurant “La Brise”

In 1997, an annex designed by Takashi Sugimoto, a space designer, was added to the premises. In addition to the 14 new guestrooms, a restaurant and bar were also included. Instituting a farm-to-table concept well ahead of its time, many of the ingredients were cultivated pesticide-free in the resort’s own garden. With an open-air bath in the forest and Japan's first aromatherapy treatments, Niki Club was highly praised for offering a unique accommodation experience.



NIKI CLUB&SPA

In 2003, Niki Club & Spa opened on the same premises. Designed by Conran & Partners led by Sir Terence Conran, a long-stay spa resort with 24 cottages, a spa and aromatherapy treatment rooms were created on a gentle plateau utilizing the surrounding forest. Twenty-four guest rooms in separate villas were arranged around an inner courtyard designed to encourage guests to communicate with one another, while the concept of “healthy body and mind” was incorporated into the cuisine of Niki Club.



Shichiseki Butai: Kagami

In 2006, the outdoor theater *Shichiseki Butai: Kagami* (Seven Stones Theater: Mirror) was completed on the site of a natural spring using seven huge boulders and stainless steel. Designed by Mr. Hiroshi Naito under the direction of Mr. Seigo Matsuoka, this stage is unique as it has no roof or pillars, only the ancient stones and the sky and trees reflected upside-down on the mirror-finished stainless steel. This has been used as the main stage for Schule im Berg since 2008.



Glass studio

Art Biotop Residence (formerly Art Biotop Nasu) opened in 2007 as a cultural project to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Niki Club (1986-2017). With complete pottery and glass studios, the facility has continued to hold its Artist in Residence program to help Japanese and international artists stay and create new work. In addition, various workshops by Japan's leading contemporary craftspeople such as Hiromi Itabashi, Kazuhiko Miwa, Shoko Koike, Kinpei Nakamura, Takuo Nakamura, Akio



White Limousine



Schule im Berg



Water Garden

Niisato, Kentaro Kawabata, and the open college *Schule im Berg* are held every year. Designed by architect Yoshiharu Tsukamoto (Atelier Bow Wow), White Limousine operates a temporary stall as a symbol of the weekend Marche, a new public place in the courtyard.

In 2018, “Water Garden” was created on the site adjacent to Art Biotop Residence. Since its completion, this landscape art, which expresses a new kind of architecture at the point where the wisdom of humans and nature intersect, has welcomed many visitors. A memory of the original forest, which first became rice paddies and then pastures, is rendered as a mosaic of 318 trees and 160 ponds.

The garden was designed by Junya Ishigami, an architect who has received numerous awards including the Japan Institute of Architecture Award. Water Garden was introduced at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art “Junya Ishigami Free Architecture” exhibition (Paris in 2018, Shanghai in 2019) and gained attention worldwide. It won the Cool Japan Award in 2019 (Cool Japan Council) and received the Good Design 2019, Best 100. Junya Ishigami was awarded the best newcomer for 2019 Fine Arts and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Art Department Prize for his achievement. Water Garden also received a new architecture prize, the Obel Prize, in 2019, which noted that Water Garden was regarded as an “influential idea that could redefine the future path of architecture.”