

Two Private Lounges Added in Dogo Onsen Honkan

Matsuyama city announced that two new private lounges would be added on the third floor of Dogo Onsen Honkan when it reopens on July 11. Each can be used exclusively by five groups every day. The reservation for their use can be made from June 3 on the official website or by a phone call.

The two lounges are the “Hisho-no-ma” which can accommodate up to 10 people in a 12-tatami-mat size room, and the “Shirasagi-no-ma” can accommodate up to 18 in the 19-tatami-mat size room. The room charge for one group for 90 minutes is for ¥3,000 for Hisho-no-ma and ¥6,000 for Shirasagi-no-ma. In addition, admission for the bath is also required (¥1,300 for adults, ¥650 for children). Rental yukata, a lounge wear, and towels are included in the room charge. Guests of the private lounge can enjoy both the Kami-no-yu and Tama-no-yu baths. Also included is a tour of Yushinden, an exclusive section built for the imperial family.

A new Japanese sweet, a cookie in the shape of a flying egret, will be served. Matsuyama Mayor Noshi said that it was mandated to retain the traditional value and atmosphere of Dogo Onsen Honkan even after reopening, and he hoped that the satisfaction of visitors would be improved by the installment of this new service.

A ticket to enjoy the three Dogo bathing facilities, Dogo Onsen Honkan, Asuka-no-yu, and Tsubaki-no-yu, can be purchased at a 20% discount at those three facilities until January 2025 to celebrate the 130th anniversary of Dogo Onsen Honkan.

The reservation system for the two private lounges will open at 0:00 am on June 3 on the official website, or by calling the Dogo Consortium at 089-932-1126 from 6:00 am on the same day. The reservation can be made up to 90 days in advance. A lounge can be used without pre-booking, space permitting.

For reservation (Only in Japanese):

<https://dogo-yoyaku.rsvsys.jp/reservations/calendar>

(May 14, Ehime Shimbun Online)

Nice Coffee with Spectacular View

A kitchen car called "Karst Coffee", run by a Matsuyama-based company, Artefice, ranked 3rd in the "Ranking of Cafes with a Spectacular View", on a travel magazine "Jalan" published by Recruit in Tokyo. The cafe serves drip coffee in Shikoku Karst in Kumakogen Town. 1st place was "SEA HOUSE" in Geisei Village, Kochi Prefecture, and 2nd place was "MISHORAN CAFÉ" in Amami City, Kagoshima Prefecture.

According to Recruit, the kitchen car was highly praised for its spectacular view of the greenery of the Shikoku Karst and the blue sky, as well as the exhilarating feeling of drinking outdoors served by the kitchen car. Hidekiyo Toda, the president of Artefice said, "I hope it will give people an opportunity to come to Shikoku and they will be moved by the scenery and even more moved by the delicious coffee." The survey was conducted online among people in their 20s to 50s. They chose from the cafes that the magazine company selected mainly from the information reported in its magazine. Valid responses were from 1,034 people.

(May 12, Ehime Shimbun)

50% of High School Students Want to Stay in Ehime

It was found that more than 50% of high school students in Ehime prefecture hoped to settle in the prefecture in the future by a survey conducted by IRC (= Iyogin Regional Economy Research Center Inc.).

The survey was carried out in December last year and targeted 7,633 second year high school students in Ehime, and about 64% responded. The result was released at the end of April.

About 54% responded as "I would like to continue living in Ehime" and "Even if I go to another prefecture, I would like to come back to Ehime at a later stage of my life". It can be seen that the more attachment with Ehime they show, the stronger the desire to settle in and return to Ehime.

However, to a question if there are any companies that they would like to work for in the prefecture, a 49% answered "I don't know".

IRC conducted a separate survey of 38 high school students. 10 out of 18

students who hold a clear vision for their future intended to go to a different prefecture, and the other eight would like to stay and work in Ehime. One student answered that she could have a desire to have various experiences outside Ehime because she had a home here where she would like to return and live in the future.

IRC analysis indicated that having a home which gave peace of mind made it possible for them to go outside Ehime and try for a higher education or find a job.

In the survey, the less clear image they have of living in Ehime, the more they intend to go outside Ehime. IRC pointed out that the low awareness of local companies influenced this tendency. There is very little opportunity to know about the companies in Ehime once young people go to the other prefectures, so it is needed to keep them connected with the region, and create an opportunity to let them come back to Ehime.

The population in Ehime was recorded the most in 1985, at 1.53 million. It has been slightly declining since then and became less than 1.3 million in 2023. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, it will decline to about 940,000 in 2050.

3,298 young people (15 – 24 years old) moved out of Ehime in 2023. More than 3,000 young people have been moving away to seek for higher education or a job every year in recent years, and they may never return to Ehime.

(May 9, Asahi Shimbun Digital)

2024 Logistics Problem Impacts Book Arrival in Ehime

Starting April, the upper limit on overtime work under the Work Style Reform Laws have been applied to worktime at transportation companies, resulting in changes in the schedule for shipping publications to some local bookstores. In some areas of Kyoto and Hyogo, as well as Wakayama and Ehime, books and magazines have been delayed by one day, and in Iwate and Akita, while magazines have been unchanged from the previous year, books have been delayed by one day.

Some people come to bookstores without knowing this and are unable to purchase what they want. Release dates cannot be managed by efforts of

individual bookstores, but are determined by coordination between publishers and distributors. Additionally, in recent years, delivery efficiency has deteriorated due to rising costs and a decline in loading amount due to a decline in the number of books sold.

Even before the laws, with the exception of a few major publications such as Haruki Murakami's new book, there is no uniform release date nationwide. In order to resolve the gap in awareness it is important for publishers to announce release dates over a certain period of time and to share information with bookstores in advance. (May 4, Ehime Shimbun)

Dog Therapy Helps Crime Victims

It has been four years since the Ehime Prefectural Police introduced dog therapy, which helps crime victims and their families heal through interaction with dogs. This year's therapy dog commissioning ceremony for private collaborators was held on April 27th at Dog Garden Deguma, the training facility in Doi-cho, Matsuyama City. At the ceremony, letters of commission were handed to eight owners of nine dogs, including French bulldogs, Shiba Inu, and golden retrievers.

Animal-assisted therapy, which can reduce stress by providing time with animals to people in need of healing, is used in various fields including medical care, nursing care, and education.

In 2021, the prefectural police became the first in the country among prefectural police departments to introduce dog therapy to support crime victims. The Crime Victim Support Office dispatches commissioned therapy dogs. Although the number of users has not been disclosed, it was reported that 20 therapy dogs were used last year, including for public relations activities.

In a speech at the ceremony, Takeshi Ishimoto, Director of the Prefectural Police's Public Relations Division, emphasized the importance of victim support, stating, "In addition to victims of crime, there are many who suffer secondary damage such as trauma, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and reputational damage on social media, some of whom have lost their jobs and are facing financial hardship." Ishimoto expressed expectations for the ability of

therapy dogs to comfort people in need.

Selected therapy dogs undergo training at K9Japan inside Dog Garden Deguma, and work at facilities with experienced owners.

Eriko Ueda, an office worker from Uwajima City, has celebrated her fourth year with her therapy dog Choco (11-year-old female). Eriko said, “Unlike in the nursing care settings, some crime victims are young. We are exploring ways to provide appropriate support for each user.” One day when she visited a user’s family, she heard a family member say, “I saw my child’s smile for the first time in a long time,” which greatly encouraged her a lot.

Rie Watanabe (53), a housewife from Matsuyama City, participated in the training with her dog this year. She became interested in dog therapy after her father’s hospitalization. Her therapy dog, Eito (3-year-old dog male), is not shy with people he just meets and can adapt to unfamiliar places at his own pace. She said, “It’s hard to imagine suddenly becoming a victim of crime, but I hope that spending time with therapy dogs can help them reduce anguish and regain a positive outlook.” (May 1, Asahi Shimbun Digital)

Drive Shikoku for Foreign Tourists

The tourism organization “Tourism Shikoku” has promoted famous spots and driving routes in the four prefectures of Shikoku on its website to help foreign tourists travel around Shikoku by rental car. The information is available in English, Chinese (traditional characters), and Japanese.

Drive Shikoku is a special section on the organization's official website (<https://shikoku-tourism.com/>). The organization analyzed data from past movements of foreign tourists traveling in Japan, provided by Navitime Japan (a major route search app). Approximately 60 tourist spots were selected in the four prefectures.

To serve as a reference for foreign tourists travelling by car, six courses have been prepared based on different themes. The Pilgrimage and Nature course starts from Takamatsu Airport and takes visitors on a 5-night, 6-day journey to sites such as Yashima Temple (Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture), Ryozen Temple (Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture), and Iwaya Temple

(Kumakogen-cho, Ehime Prefecture).

Staff members from the four prefectures of Shikoku introduce the features of each prefecture. Drive Shikoku includes plenty of information about well-known local restaurants and landmarks not found in Navitime's data, such as the Tokushima ramen restaurant Inotani (Tokushima City) and the barbeque restaurant Hagi no Chaya (Tosa City, Kochi Prefecture).

A representative said, "We have created courses that we highly recommend. We hope people use them."

English version: (<https://drive.shikoku-tourism.com/en/index.html>),

Chinese (traditional characters) version:

(<https://drive.shikoku-tourism.com/zh-tw/index.html>),

Japanese version: (<https://drive.shikoku-tourism.com/ja/index.html>).

(April 17, Asahi Shimbun Digital)