



# Japan Style

## Asahikawa / Furniture

The woodworking industry prospered as dwellings needed to be built for personnel, and Asahikawa came to be a major furniture production site, backed by an abundance of forest resources in the Taisetsu mountain range. Being an active industry even during the snowy winter, the government proactively cultivates human resources and supports the industry. Quickly putting an end to the age of mass production and consumption, placing importance on design, and shifting to thorough handmade manufacturing also led to the current highly unique furniture culture.



— Company 01

# Asahikawa Design Center



## PRODUCT

Products from approximately 30 member companies of the Asahikawa Furniture Industry Cooperative are on display. Visitors can see the latest designs of Asahikawa and their appeal.



### Feel the charm of locally sourced materials

This is the booth of a custom-made furniture brand, “gauzy calm works”, which is run by members in their thirties or younger. Many of the items on display are made by utilizing locally sourced materials and solid wood with knots, like the ones shown here.



### Both major brands with nationwide presence and individuals that run workshops

Arflex, originally an Italian furniture maker, relocated its sofa production department to Asahikawa. A wide variety of items are gathered here, from major brands as well as artisans who work individually.



## STORY

The furniture industry of Asahikawa grew together with the development of the city. The actions to constantly convey its information and serve as a connecting point to the world have begun.

### A shop that brings together furniture from designers in the Asahikawa area

The Asahikawa Design Center is a shop run by Asahikawa Furniture Industry Cooperative. Highly unique products from about 30 furniture makers in Asahikawa are on display. The Asahikawa area manufacturers were encouraged to make furniture for their dwellings. It is one of the major lumber distribution centers in Japan and flourished with the production of cabinets as marriage furniture (luxury cabinets that parents of the bride buy as wedding gifts), but such needs decreased significantly due to changes in lifestyles. The industry has been searching for ways to develop new paths since the 1990s, led by the Cooperative.

### Attempts to build new relationships with the world they found connections with through competitions

One of these is the “International Furniture Design Competition”, which has been held once every three years since 1990. Furniture makers refined their skills by making prototypes based on designs from in and out of the country and helped the city grow as a town of designer furniture. “Asahikawa Design Week” continues to take place in June every year to hold exhibitions and deliver information on furniture. Similar contents are on permanent exhibition at the Asahikawa Design Center. The International Operation Department, established in 2015, plays a role as a window to the world, providing support for negotiations between manufacturers, buyers, and developers.

## COMPANY

- **Have export experiences**
- **Language support** Japanese, English
- **Name** Asahikawa Design Center
- **Address** 10-chome 1-35 Nagayama 2-jo, Asahikawa-shi
- **Contact address** TEL 0166-48-4135 FAX 0166-48-4749
- **Email** info@asahikawa-kagu.or.jp
- **Establishment** 1957
- **Business Description** Exhibition and sale of products made by member companies of Asahikawa Furniture Industry Cooperative
- **Products** Chairs, tables, cabinets, sofas, beds, lighting fixtures, tableware, interior goods, toys, etc.
- **Number of Employees** 7 people
- **Representative** Representative Director Naoyuki Watanabe

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Sun (including holidays), 9:00 am - 5:00 pm \*Closed during year-end and new years holidays and Bon holiday (mid-August). Please ask for available dates.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to approximately 30 people
- Time Required for Observation: Approximately 1 hour
- How to Apply: If visiting in groups, apply for the desired date and time of visit by email at least one week in advance, and include the purpose of the visit
- Other: If a guide is not necessary, visitors can drop by any time during opening hours (open Monday to Sunday, including holidays, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm).

— Company 02

# CONDE HOUSE



## PRODUCT

“Appreciate nature and make furniture near forests.” A “Japanese spirit” with respect for nature and consideration for others combined with skills and expertise created the smooth touch and organic design of this furniture.



### Kamuy LUX Dining Armchair H (Wooden Seat)

The method used for making plywood was applied to the curved backrest: solid wood was sliced thinly, warped, then put together. It looks smooth and beautiful, as though a solid piece of wood was warped.



### Mom Dining Extension Table/Runt Om Chair (Upholstered Seat)

The chair with a round seat, as the name “Runt (Round)” suggests, is a long-selling and symbolic item of CONDE HOUSE which has been redesigned multiple times since its release 45 years ago. Paired with an extendable table.



## STORY

Efforts and challenges of creators that have been passed on since its establishment cast remarkable designs into shape.

### Minoru Nagahara, the founder who read trends and explained the importance of designs

One cannot discuss the current Asahikawa – “The Town of Designer Furniture” – without referring to the presence of Minoru Nagahara, the founder of CONDE HOUSE. He began training as a furniture craftsman after graduating from junior high school, then went to Germany when he was 28. After returning home in 1968, he started making chairs while the rest of Asahikawa was producing cabinets. He made new attempts at pointing out the importance of designs, using locally sourced water oak – which was sold to other countries back then – and introducing German-made machine tools. He loves the forests of Asahikawa and led actions to promote the use of local wood materials.

### Cutting-edge machines and human hands. A constant challenging spirit creates new designs

That challenging spirit still lives in the craftsmanship of CONDE HOUSE. The company established a mass production system for organic design furniture by introducing state-of-the-art 3D machine tools to improve the processing technique of solid wood, which is their strength, and letting craftsmen add the finishing touches. To expand the range of “work that can be done within the company”, they venture to work with designers from outside the company to pioneer new techniques. In recent years, they are attempting designs that recapture the Japanese spirit and aesthetic sense from the point of view of foreign designers. They continue to lead Asahikawa in delivering new “Japanese Furniture”.

## COMPANY

– <b>Exporting to</b>	Locally incorporated companies in USA and Germany Companies in Korea, Taiwan, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, India, Thailand, and the Philippines under dealer agreements	– <b>Email</b>	international@condehouse.co.jp	– <b>Number of Employees</b>	293 people
– <b>Language support</b>	Japanese, English	– <b>Establishment</b>	1968	– <b>Representative</b>	Executive Chairman Naoyuki Watanabe, President Tetsuya Fujita
– <b>Name</b>	CONDE HOUSE CO., LTD.	– <b>Capital</b>	160,000,000 yen		
– <b>Address</b>	6-chome Nagayama-Kita 2-jo, Asahikawa-shi, Hokkaido	– <b>Business Description</b>	Production of residential and commercial furniture, interior design, designing, construction		
– <b>Contact address</b>	TEL 0166-56-0409 FAX 0166-49-2225 (International Department HQ)	– <b>Products</b>	Sofas/ottomans, chairs, tables, chests/cabinets, beds, accessories, etc.		

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Fri, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm\*May be open on Saturdays. Please inquire.\*Closed during year-end and new years holidays, Golden Week (from late April to early May), and summer holidays (mid-August). Please ask for available dates.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to approximately 30 people
- Time Required for Observation: Approximately 1.5 hours
- How to Apply: Apply for the desired date and time of visit by phone, fax, or email at least one week in advance
- Other: The showroom and factory are also available for visits.



— Company 03

# Sasaki Kogei



## PRODUCT

Animal motifs with expressive features are popular in Asian variety stores. With small items, elaborate details are eye-catching.



### Door Melody Fukuro (Owl)

The Chinese characters used for the name “Fukuro” literally mean “bring luck”. Seven types of wood are used and its features are created using only the wood’s original colors. Gentle, distinctive sound of wood can be heard every time a door is opened or closed.



### Card Case MOTTO

A business card holder with the warm features of wood. A lot of thought was given to the fine details: the hinges are inside a groove so that they don’t damage the inside lining of pockets. The tools used to make this card case were custom-ordered.



## STORY

Furniture craftsmen use wood scraps to create small interior goods that convey warmth. Their creation is only made possible in Asahikawa, where a variety of tree species are available.

### Their ability to create detailed parts with an ecological mindset boosted production of variety goods

Sasaki Kogei was founded in 1976. It all began with the previous president’s establishment of a studio, where parts such as handles, knobs, and legs were made when Asahikawa was flourishing with the production of cabinets as marriage furniture (it used to be a custom for the parents of the bride to give cabinets as wedding gifts in Japan). They used to receive timber from furniture makers and made parts out of them. The materials were high quality as they were for luxury cabinets. The previous president, who felt that it was “a waste to throw away wood scraps”, began creating variety goods with them, and they gradually became their main products.

### Naturally beautiful, without any added colors. A wealth of tree species in Asahikawa enables creation of such items

Currently, the number of original items alone amounts to approximately 200 kinds. CEO Yujiro Sasaki says that “the availability of varieties unique to the town of furniture production is what makes it possible” to combine wood of different colors and create a wide range of goods with expressive features, without the need to add color. The latest NC router processing machine and laser engraving techniques have been introduced to meet the demand for mass production. They are also recycling conscious and have a system that automatically gathers woodchips, burns them, and uses the generated heat for heating. Their ecological mindset triggered by the use of wood scraps is utilized in products as well as their production processes.

## COMPANY

- **Exporting to** Hong Kong (for retail stores) and Taiwan (for retail stores and events at department stores)
- **Language support** Japanese, English
- **Name** Sasaki Kogei Co., Ltd.
- **Address** 3-chome 4-10 Nagayama 14-jo, Asahikawa-shi, Hokkaido (Factory Headquarters)
- **Contact address** TEL 0166-25-2288 FAX 0166-22-2101

- **Email** honsha@sasaki-kogei.com
- **Establishment** 1976
- **Capital** 10,000,000 yen
- **Business Description** Production and sale of wood crafts
- **Products** Stationery, tableware, interior goods, clocks, cases, toys, etc.
- **Number of Employees** 27 people
- **Representative** CEO Yujiro Sasaki

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Fri, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm \*Closed during year-end and new years holidays, Golden Week (from late April to early May), and summer holidays (mid-August). Please ask for available dates.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to 3 or 4 people
- Time Required for Observation: 15 minutes to 1 hour
- How to Apply: Apply for the desired date and time of visit by emailing the CEO (y-sasaki@sasaki-kogei.com)
- Other: The shop/showroom in Asahikawa (5 minutes by car from the headquarters) is also available for visits. A directly managed store, “nocra”, is located in Ueno area of Tokyo (<https://www.nocratokyo.com/>).



— Company 04

# Taisetsu Mokko



## PRODUCT

Wood materials that are locally sourced but not commonly used for furniture are transformed into fascinating products. Designs that shine with the rediscovery of materials and techniques.



### Chair 01

Since Alder is soft, it is not suitable for chairs with thin legs, but this weakness was overcome by making the legs wide and flat, while the Alder helped make them dramatically light. Long-standing shelf-building techniques have been applied to the seat adjustment parts.



### Desk in a Box

A piece of furniture made with a playful spirit and a desire to “commit to creating boxes as a manufacturer of boxes”. The interior of the box is isolated from the outer world and somehow calming. Sakhalin fir from Hokkaido is used, with the knots included to add zest.



## STORY

A company that mainly manufactured mass produced cabinets and shelves became one of the leading companies that use local materials. The design project changed their weaknesses into strengths.

### A change in direction: A decision made by a conventional furniture maker at the end of the era of mass production

For 20 years since its establishment, Taisetsu Mokko’s main strength had been the mass production of inexpensive conventional closets, cabinets, and cupboards. However, in an age where meticulous features are more in demand than low prices, a change in direction was necessary. The turning point came in 2016, when “Taisetsu’s Taisetsu (Important) Project” began. A team of designers including Makoto Koizumi were invited to participate in this development project, but the CEO, Masanobu Hasegawa, wished to create an atmosphere in which all the employees actively participate, and took nearly two years to realize it.

### Now 70% of their products are made from Hokkaido-sourced materials. Designs transform tree species that draw no attention

An abundance of knowledge based on experiences the company gained as a conventional furniture maker was incorporated into products made in the project. For instance, their masterful use of Alder, which used to be a mere substitution material, works to their advantage. Alder is not widely available and little known, but it can be utilized now because the market has shrunk. The idea was to rediscover the appeal of the materials, and this has raised their already high usage rate of local materials to as much as 70%. The company is now gaining attention as a leading manufacturer that challenges the use of locally sourced materials.

## COMPANY

– Exporting to	Hong Kong (retail stores, 12 items)	– Email	info@taisetsu-mokko.co.jp	– Number of Employees	36 people
– Language support	Japanese	– Establishment	1983	– Representative	President Masanobu Hasegawa
– Name	Taisetsu Mokko Co., Ltd	– Capital	37,000,000 yen		
– Address	4-chome 13-2 Kitamachi, Higashikawa-cho, Kamikawa-gun, Hokkaido	– Business Description	Production and sale of furniture and special plywood, production of special building materials and furniture materials		
– Contact address	TEL 0166-82-2900 FAX 0166-82-2918	– Products	Display cabinets, tableware, writing desks, chairs, etc.		

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Fri, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm \*Closed during year-end and new years holidays, Golden Week (from late April to early May), and summer holidays (mid-August). Please ask for available dates.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to approximately 10 people
- Time Required for Observation: Approximately 1 hour
- How to Apply: Apply for the desired date and time of visit by fax or email at least one week in advance
- Other: The showroom and factory are also available for visits. Please inquire about the scope of observation. Interpreters can be arranged if requested in advance.

— Company 05

# Takumi Kogei



## PRODUCT

All product lines by Takumi Kohgei allow you to feel the “handwork” as well as new machine manufacturing techniques. A number of original long-selling items are being released.



### MUSHROOM

Stools made in collaboration with “h concept”, a variety goods brand. The combination of a small seat – only 22cm in diameter – and long legs created a new genre.



### YAMANAMI YC2

The product name means “mountain range”, and it was named after a beautiful local mountain, Asahi-dake. The back and armrest, united in a three-dimensional curved form, was made by stacking pieces of solid wood like bricks, warping them, machine processing them, then carving them by hand as a finishing touch. The oak used is sourced locally from Hokkaido.



## STORY

The president is a highly skilled craftsman who has ranked second in the WorldSkills International competition. 40 elite craftsmen exercise their skills on a beautiful hill amid the great landscape of Hokkaido, coexisting with the environment.

### Furniture-making in the great nature of Hokkaido, blending in with the landscape

The furniture industry of Asahikawa has sent craftsmen to WorldSkills International (furniture category) 14 times as representatives of Japan. The first to go was Yoshihiko Kuwahara, the president of Takumi Kohgei, and he won a silver prize in the competition held in Spain in 1967. It has been a quarter of a century since Kuwahara established his factory on a hilltop, somewhat far from the city center, to fulfill his wish to “create furniture amidst the great landscape of Hokkaido”. They commit to manufacturing, surrounded by gentle hills and rich farmlands. They also interact with neighborhood residents in various ways, such as by holding a concert at their company once a year.

### Craftsmen’s skills and expertise cast designers’ ideas into shape

In recent years, new items are being released one after another in collaboration with designers here and abroad, prompted the making of prototypes for “Asahikawa Design Week”. The skills and expertise that enable them to create delicate designs – such as thin legs and intricate curves – are highly trusted by designers. It is also notable how the company entrusts craftsmen with the whole production process for their assigned piece of furniture instead of dividing work, which in turn improves the craftsmen’s motivation and skills. Many of their craftsmen are creating furniture with their own designs. It can be said that this company now plays a key role in producing furniture makers in Asahikawa.

## COMPANY

– <b>Exporting to</b>	Retail stores in Canada, USA, Hong Kong, and Taiwan	– <b>Email</b>	takumi@takumikohgei.com	– <b>Number of Employees</b>	45 people
– <b>Language support</b>	Japanese	– <b>Establishment</b>	1979	– <b>Representative</b>	President Yoshihiko Kuwahara
– <b>Name</b>	Takumi Kohgei Co., Ltd.	– <b>Capital</b>	42,000,000 yen		
– <b>Address</b>	24 Minami-ichibandori, Higashikagura-cho, Kamikawa-gun, Hokkaido	– <b>Business Description</b>	Creation of original and OEM furniture (including custom-made furniture for various facilities)		
– <b>Contact address</b>	TEL 0166-83-4400 FAX 0166-83-4600	– <b>Products</b>	Tables, desks, chairs, display cabinets, cupboards, crafts, etc.		

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Fri, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm \*May be open on Saturdays. Please inquire. \*Closed during year-end and new years holidays, Golden Week (from late April to early May), and summer holidays (mid-August). Please ask for available dates. \*As February and March are busy months, visits may not be accepted. Please inquire.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to approximately 20 people
- Time Required for Observation: Approximately 1 to 1.5 hours \*Approximately 20 minutes if only visiting the factory.
- How to Apply: Apply for the desired date and time of visit by phone, fax, or email
- Other: Observation is limited to indoor facilities during winter. In summer, the outdoor lumberyard and surrounding environment can be observed.

— Company 06

# Time & Style



## PRODUCT

Products made at Asahikawa Factory in Hokkaido are finished with a coat of their original natural oil mix, revealing their uncompromising spirit, which is made possible by the factory being their own.



### Standard composition cabinet

A minimalist design discarded of excess decoration was achieved by applying push latches to cabinet doors and drawers. To add richness, wood veneers with a thickness of 0.6mm – three times as thick as usual – are finished with a coat of their original natural oil.



### Rain Table/The bird chair

An organic design with no boundaries between the tabletop and sides, and chamfered, smooth end side rails and legs. Paired with chairs that look like birds ready to take flight, with armrests stretched backwards.



## STORY

They were determined to utilize their aesthetic sense, refined through encounters with craftworks in Europe and Japan, in craftsmanship by their own hands. This is the story about a brand that established a factory in Asahikawa, Hokkaido, with such determination.

### A retail store that introduced outstanding designs transformed into a brand that creates its own items

Time&Style is a brand with an unusual background among furniture makers with a factory in the Asahikawa area of Hokkaido. It was originally founded in Berlin, starting as an exporter that introduced European variety goods and furniture to Japan. They gradually discovered the appeals of manufacturing and Japanese craftwork, then began designing original items in the locations where they obtained their materials and selling them in their shop in Tokyo. They opened their own furniture factory in Asahikawa approximately 10 years ago. Executive Director Yasushi Yoshida says, “we wanted a place where we could directly incorporate the opinions of our customers from our shops into our development”.

### The company aims to become a specialty store retailer of private label comprehensive interior goods in Asahikawa, Hokkaido, where it is blessed with talented craftsmen, resources, and environment

“There are many highly skilled craftsmen, a wealth of wood materials, and a subpolar climate that nurtures quality broad-leaf trees. Furthermore, a public institution where strength and endurance can be tested (Asahikawa Craft Center) and the vocational training school where craftsmen are trained (Hokkaido Prefectural Asahikawa Technical Training School) support such an environment”, says Yoshida. They were also delighted by big-hearted spirit of the people of Hokkaido and generosity of existing makers who provided manufacturing know-how, as it was the company’s first time to produce products themselves. With a blessed environment and advanced designing skills on their side, the company aspires to become a specialty store retailer of private label for general interior goods. Currently, they begin production by purchasing logs of Hokkaido and sawing them in order to become craftsmen who can inform customers of product traceability, such as “the ages of the trees used to make furniture.”

## COMPANY

- **Exporting to** All over Europe including Holland, Germany, France, and Italy, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, USA (L.A.), Australia (Retail stores, house builders, apartment developers, general contractors)
- **Language support** Japanese, English
- **Name** PRESTIGE JAPAN INC.
- **Address** Asahikawa Factory: 4-chome 13-2 Kitamachi, Higashikawa-cho, Kamikawa-gun, Hokkaido  
Headquarters: 4-chome 27-15 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo
- **Contact address** TEL 0166-82-7654 FAX 0166-82-7655
- **Email** factory@timeandstyle.com
- **Establishment** 1992
- **Capital** 10,000,000 yen
- **Business Description** Operation of interior goods store “TIME & STYLE” Planning/development/sale of originally designed furniture, tableware, textiles  
Designing/production of full-/semi-custom-made furniture, wall carpentry, and fixtures, etc.
- **Number of Employees** 82 people
- **Representative** President Ryutaro Yoshida
- **Products** Chairs, tables, cabinets, sofas, beds, lighting fixtures, tableware, etc.

## ABOUT THE VISIT

- Visitation Hours: Mon to Fri, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm \*Closed during year-end and new years holidays, Golden Week (from late April to early May), and summer holidays (mid-August). Please ask for available dates.
- Number of Visitors Allowed: Up to 30 people
- Time Required for Observation: Approximately 1 to 1.5 hours
- How to Apply: Email the desired date and time of visit at least one week in advance
- Other: Currently planning tours around the wildwood of Hokkaido, called “Forest Tours”. Guides on native forests of their business partners and forests universities do research on as well as food culture, climate, and workshop experiences are also under consideration. (Please inquire.)



## Asahikawa tourism

Asahikawa, situated close to the center of Hokkaido, is the second largest city in Hokkaido. As it is located in a basin surrounded by mountains, with the towering Taisetsu mountain range on the east side, there are significant differences in temperature throughout the year. It is extremely cold and snowy in winter, but the average temperature in summer is over 20°C. There are direct flights to major cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya from Asahikawa Airport. Transportation infrastructure, including railroads and expressways, are also in place. Asahiyama Zoo, visited by many tourists from across the world, and the beautiful hilly landscapes attract a great number of people.

Asahikawa, located in the center of Hokkaido, is the second largest city in Hokkaido after Sapporo. Furniture production sites spread across the basin, including adjoining towns Higashikawa-cho and Higashikagura-cho.

### NEAR BY...



#### Mt. Taisetsu

The area centered around the Taisetsu volcanic group, including Mt. Asahi (2291m), the highest mountain in Hokkaido, is called "The Roof of Hokkaido" and is popular among mountain climbers. "Shujitsu no Oka Hill", located southeast of Asahikawa Airport, is a famous viewing spot.



#### Biei no Oka Hill

A hilly area that spreads across both sides of the JR Furano Line. In summer, one can enjoy the view of various flowers such as potato blossoms, covering the hill like patchwork. The best time to view this scenery is the end of June, when the "Asahikawa Design Week" is held.



#### Asahiyama Zoo

A zoo known to display animals in ways that bring out their natural behavior. There is a tubular water tank in which seals swim up and down. Animal feeding "Mogu Mogu Time" and penguin walks in winter are popular.

**JETRO**

<https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/>