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INTERVIEW

A Swiss baker teaching to 5000 Japanese students

Interview with François Wolfisberg, Director of Wolfisberg shops

François Wolfisberg is both an award-winning baker and a successful entrepreneur. He spent five weeks in Japan teaching bakery skills to students of the Japan Home Baking School. Over the summer, more than 5000 students learned how to prepare a selection of Wolfisberg's specialties.

We met him in his family's first shop in Carouge (Geneva).

Could you please introduce your company and yourself?

The shop where we are today is the original shop my father took over in 1961 and, with my mother, they turned it into a successful and well-appreciated business. Like my father before me, I travelled a lot to learn more about bakery and pastries. Later, in 1996, my parents took a well-deserved retirement and I took over the family business. Since then, my wife Elisabeth and I developed and enlarged the business. Today, Wolfisberg has four shops and proudly keeps the quality at its highest level.

You just spent five weeks in Japan, for what purpose?

I was invited by the Japan Home Baking School as a teacher for their summer seminar. This seminar is limited only to the most



François Wolfisberg preparing a delicious stuffed bread

advanced students. Every year the school invites a foreign teacher to teach foreign specialties that are not well-known in Japan.

What was your everyday activity?

During the five weeks, I taught a selection of 9 recipes almost every day to classes of 150 to 250 students. Very concretely, I prepared the specialties in front of the class, explained and answered questions about it. I did it in five different cities: Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka and Sapporo.

Fortunately, I also had time to learn more about Japan during

lunch and after classes. I have been very impressed by the dedication of the students. Doing things in Japan is not like elsewhere. They are seeking for excellence in a unique way.

How did this project start?

Over the year, I took part in several competitions. Because of my good results, and because I speak five languages, I have been asked to be on judging panels many times.

When it comes to gastronomy, Japanese people firstly think about France, consequently, most of the teachers invited by the school are French. However, since I have been president of the Jury of the bakery world cup, the school asked me to take part in this project. In Japan, titles matter.

What differences did you notice between Swiss and Japanese markets?

I took the opportunity to visit Japanese shops, focusing naturally on bakery, but not exclusively. Obviously Japan and Switzerland have many qualities in common. Both countries value high quality products, honesty and hospitality. But I must say that in Japan it goes much further than in Switzerland. Cities,

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INTERVIEW

for instance, are incredibly clean, much more so than in Switzerland, despite the fact that they are much bigger. In the shop, the quality of the service is incredible.

Regarding bakery, both countries are quite different. Switzerland has a long tradition of eating bread. We have our own specialties, but also French, German or Italian ones. In Japan, bread is more recent and they prefer soft bread, which is much better than what we can find here.

The bakeries I visited were mostly French, sometimes Belgian. I do believe that Swiss specialties have a great potential, because Japanese consumers like both chocolate and cheese, two products for which Swiss knowledge is broadly recognized.

Are there any Japanese specialties that might be interesting for the Swiss market?

As explained earlier, the way bread is prepared in Japan is very different. Here, soft bread is mostly meant for toast and is not particu-

larly tasty, but in Japan the quality is amazing. I like to try new things; this is why I came back with some typical Japanese products that I would like to adapt for the Swiss market. Matcha, Anko (red bean paste) or Yuzu might typically fit well in Swiss bakery and pastry.

As an entrepreneur, are you interested in the Japanese market?

Yes, indeed. I travelled a lot and

there are only a few places where I would like to start a business. Japan is definitely one of them and I do believe that some Swiss specialties could do well there, like the hedgehog stuffed bread, which was particularly appreciated by the bakery students. Anyone curious about food should visit Japan. As an entrepreneur, I can see the potential of Japanese market.



François Wolfisberg told us how much impressed he was by the kindness and seriousness of the students

Message from the Governor of Hokkaido

活動

ACTIVITY

As you might now, Hokkaido (North Japan) has been hit by a heavy earthquake on Sept 6th. This northern island and prefecture is not used to earthquakes like other regions of Japan unfortunately are. Hokkaido's Governor asked governmental organiza-

tion to dispatch a message to thank everyone for their warm support. Hokkaido is recovering well and would like to inform all potential visitors that usual services are available everywhere on the island except within the very epicentre of the earthquake. "We

encourage everyone from all over the world to continue visiting our beautiful home to enjoy our splendour and hospitality" said Governor Takahashi.

Full message is available on:

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

Safe travel in [Hokkaido](#)

Strong interest for Japanese market in Fribourg

Invest in Japan seminars are held regularly by JETRO to give you access keys to the Japanese market which is a very demanding market and codified one.

On September 19th, JETRO and its partners, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Fribourg and S-GE, had for the first time the chance to hold an Invest in Japan seminar in the canton of Fribourg. The event gathered 26 people; among them a lot of CEOs were interested in the Japanese market.

The main speaker, Mr. Koichi Oba, Head of corporate target market roofing at SIKA AG, pointed out the challenges to succeed in Japan. He explained the strategy of SIKA in Japan where patience and right

investment targets are part of the success. To sum up the message given by the speakers; to succeed in Japan a company needs a lot of

time and good preparation, but also to understand both Japanese corporate culture - a yes may not be a yes - and Japanese consumers demands.

活動

ACTIVITY



Mr. Koichi Oba explaining SIKA's strategy in Japan

Revised figures show better first quarter than initially expected

Japan's 2018 second quarter (April-June) has been better than initially expected. On Sept. 10, the Cabinet Office published the second preliminary figures. GDP growth has been 0.7% instead of 0.5% as calculated one month before.

Thanks to a higher level of companies' investments than initially expected (3.1% instead of 1.3%), the annualized GDP growth would be 3%.

Household consumption remains unchanged at 0.7%.

However, the natural disasters of this summer will affect the Japanese economy. Consequently, the

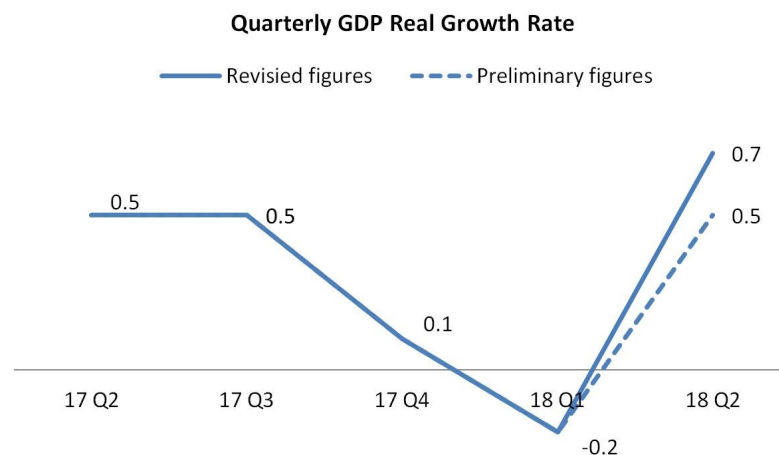
next quarter is not expected to be as good as this one.

Except for the first quarter of 2018,

Japan is enjoying the longest continuous growth since the '80s.

動向

SITUATION



Source: Cabinet Office

革新

INNOVATION

New area for research on Neutrinos thanks to Japanese lead

Japan has been at the forefront of the research on subatomic particles and neutrinos in particular. Thanks to the detector “Super-Kamiokade” - an underground structure containing 50,000 tons of water - the University of Tokyo has made several breakthroughs in the field that have been awarded many times including 2015 Physics Nobel Prize to Professor Takaaki Kajita.

Looking to the future, Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will fund the construction of Super-K’s successor: “Hyper-K”.

Hyper-K will be ten times more sensible and contains 300,000 tons of water.

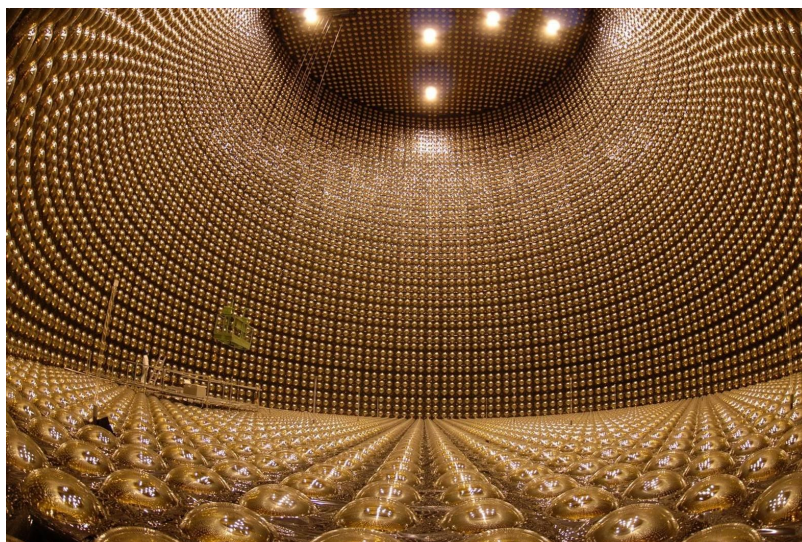
Among the foreign universities collaborating to this program there

is the University of Geneva which welcomed this good news and said they were looking forward to take

part in the next step.

[Tokyo University](#)

[Geneva University](#)



“SuperK” during a maintenance. Probably the largest “swimming pool” on earth used to detect one of the smallest known particles in the Universe.

Agenda

✓ The “Fête Japonaise” is back after one year of absence

Place de la Sardaigne, Carouge (GE), Sunday, Sep. 30th - 11:30 to 17:00

This well appreciated annual event will take place this Sunday (Sep 30) in Carouge (GE). Because the municipal hall is still under construction, the event will take place on “Place de la Sardaigne”. All details [here](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO’s core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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