



Michael Casella's MT FUJI HOSTEL MICHAELS

PORTFOLIO

SUBMITTED BY:
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ABOUT MICHAEL

Michael Casella is a 71-year-old American entrepreneur from New York. He was born and raised in Queens, New York, on February 25, 1954. Michael moved to Japan in 1996 to build a promising future with his Japanese wife, whom he married in 1989. He is not only a devoted husband but also a caring father to his daughter and a grandfather to two grandchildren. Michael and his wife settled in Fujiyoshida City, Yamanashi, where they built a home and opened businesses. He has been an active member of the community for over 35 years.

What Michael Cherishes

Michael made it very clear that what he loves most about Japan, especially Yamanashi, besides the friendly people and Mt. Fuji, is his ever-loving wife, Kazuko Casella. They have been married for more than three decades, and behind Michael's success is the supportive presence of his wife. Kazuko supports Michael in many ways, even in the smallest things like his hobbies. Michael has recently taken up golf, but one of the things he is most fond of is baseball.



A fun fact about Michael: he used to be a baseball athlete in college and recalled that he nearly got drafted to play for the California Angels. However, due to some personal conflicts, he chose a different path—one that may have paved the way for a wonderful married life here in Japan. Nowadays, Michael and his wife enjoy watching baseball games together in their free time.

Educational & Career Background

Michael spent all of his academic years in California before coming to Japan. He graduated from Chaffey College, a junior college in California, where he majored in Business Management. His experience at Chaffey College helped prepare him for the unexpected turns his life would take. After graduating, Michael joined the Air Force and began his service in 1976. He served for 20 years working with computers, an area quite different from what he studied in college. During his service, he met Kazuko in Guam where he lived for 10 years.

ABOUT THE HOSTEL



Humble Beginnings

After moving to Japan, Michael recognized the potential to develop a business with no competition—an American lounge. With the goal of fostering connections between Japanese people and foreigners, he launched his first venture, Michael's American Cafe and Pub, in November 1996. In 2007, they relocated to the present location, and in July 2010, Michael started his second business—a hostel—on the second floor of the same building where the cafe and pub operate. However, three years ago, Michael decided to focus more on the hostel business and sold Michael's American Cafe and Pub to a former employee.

With the goal to provide a comfortable and affordable place where travelers can relax during their vacation, Michael opened Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's in Fujiyoshida City. As a traveler himself, he strives to value his guests' happiness by putting himself in their shoes to gain a better perspective on how to serve them well, as he would want for himself if he were traveling somewhere.

***Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's
accommodates 2,000 to
3,000 tourists annually.***

Unlike many booming hotel businesses nearby, his hostel maintains the same affordable price throughout all four seasons. It accommodates 2,000 to 3,000 tourists annually, with about 4,000 Japanese guests recorded last year. Most foreign visitors come from France, China, America, Germany, Australia, and Canada.



MORE ABOUT MT FUJI HOSTEL MICHAELS



Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's is a 20-minute walk from Chureito Pagoda, a famous tourist attraction in Fujiyoshida City. You can also reach the hostel by walking about 5 minutes down Chuo Street from Gekkoji Station. It has six rooms (three different room types) available and welcomes guests aged 17 and above. Check-in times are from 15:00 to 20:00.

Rooms & Rates

Mt Fuji Hostel Michael's offers three types of rooms:

- Mix Dormitory Rooms (shared dorm-style accommodation)
- Western Style Private Rooms (private rooms with western-style beds)
- Japanese Style Private Rooms (private rooms with traditional Japanese futon bedding)

Mix Dormitory Rooms

Mix Dormitory rooms can accommodate up to 10 guests, at 3,900 yen per person per night. The difference between Dorm A and Dorm B is the setup of the bunk beds. Dorm A is closer to the patio and smoking area, which is available to all guests. Moreover, every bunk bed has a private curtain and a reading light.



Dorm A



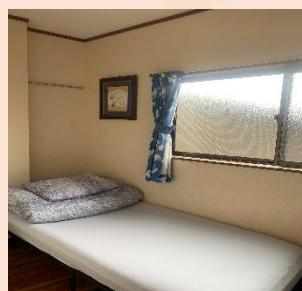
Dorm B



Patio & Smoking Area

Western Style Private Rooms

Western-style private rooms are available for 4,500 yen per person per night. The Private 1 room is suitable for one person only, while the Private 2 room accommodates two people.



Private 1



Private 2

Japanese Style Private Rooms

Japanese-style private rooms are tatami-style rooms that can accommodate 1 to 3 guests at 5,000 yen per person per night. Each room includes a futon, down quilt, pillow, small microwave, and refrigerator. However, the Japan A room is less spacious than the Japan B room.



Japan A



Japan B



Facilities



Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's offers free internet and Wi-Fi. Guests can also use the computers in front of the lobby free of charge.



Coffee and tea are available for free. Guests can also borrow various card and board games to take to their rooms. Additionally, they can swap books they own for ones from the hostel's collection.



The shower rooms and toilets are shared facilities.



18 lockers are available for free. However, if you accidentally lost the locker key you will be fined 1,000 yen.

There are many brochures, bus and train timetables, and pamphlets available that can be very helpful for tourists, especially travelers, to learn more about the area. Additionally, information and safety measures for climbing Mt. Fuji are posted throughout the hostel for guests' convenience and awareness.

ATTENTION:

- **Common room is not available.**
- **Quiet time is from 12pm to 6am.**
- **Reservation must be done in advance.**

Stay in Touch

To learn more about Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's, visit their website and follow their social media accounts:



Official Website



Facebook



Instagram

Telephone

(Reception hours: 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM)

Domestic: 0555-72-9139

Overseas: +81-555-72-9139

MICHAEL'S INSIGHTS



A Local's View: Michael on Overtourism

Michael's take on overtourism in the Fuji 5 Lakes area highlights several concerns and potential solutions. He observes that the main problem arises from many tourists disrespecting the place by not following rules, such as traffic regulations. He believes the area is not built to handle overtourism and that more could be done to manage visitor impact responsibly. To promote healthy tourism and spread economic benefits, Michael suggests making the region more accommodating by improving transportation and enhancing the city atmosphere. He stresses the need for better connectivity between the five lakes through accessible transportation options, which could also help alleviate overcrowding in popular spots.

While recent measures like climber limits and fees on Mt. Fuji is a step in the right direction, he feels their implementation could be improved and questions how the collected funds are used. Michael also emphasizes the importance of promoting the cultural and historical value of Mt. Fuji beyond just climbing activities, to preserve its significance not only as a World Heritage Site but also as a vital part of Japanese people's identity and heritage. Despite growing tourism, he expects the region to maintain its current pace without dramatic changes in the near future, noting that local communities face language barriers and lack English signage. Overall, Michael believes tourism offers valuable business opportunities for the area but urges more efforts to balance benefits with preserving the environment and local culture.

MICHAEL'S TIPS



Michael shares a philosophy centered on perseverance, seizing opportunities, and staying true to one's goals. His guiding principles include, *"If it's difficult then it's for a reason,"* and *"Never pass on an opportunity."* He firmly believes in having a clear goal and vision and advises, *"Don't let anyone stop you."* Currently, Michael's main focus is to run his hostel successfully, enjoy a comfortable and relaxed life with his wife and daughter, and make the most of the time he has left. He does not plan to start any new businesses but remains driven, acknowledging that he is not yet fully content because there are still many things he wants to accomplish.



He embraces lifelong learning, saying, *"Always learn something every day,"* and approaches life with a sense of urgency, reflecting that *"The older you get, the faster the time goes,"* and *"Tomorrow might not come."* To conclude, Michael's outlook blends realism with determination, encouraging an active pursuit of goals while appreciating the present.

