

June 5, 2025

For Immediate Release

KARUIZAWA DISTILLERS Inc.
SEIBU HOLDINGS INC.
FURANO City

**“From Furano to the World”
Three-Way Partnership Launches Ambitious Whisky Distillery Project in Furano, Hokkaido**



On June 5, 2025, Koji Shimaoka, CEO of Karuizawa Distillers, announced plans to construct a world-class whisky distillery on land in Furano City, Hokkaido, in partnership with Seibu Group and Furano City itself.

Located in the heart of Hokkaido, Furano is a picturesque rural city surrounded by majestic mountains and lush forests, offering natural beauty throughout the year. Inspired by these ideal conditions for whisky-making—Karuizawa Distillers is proud to embark on its new distillery project.

Furano is already well known for its tourist facilities and activities, with Seibu Group having operated the region’s leading hotels, world-class powder snow ski resorts, and golf courses for many years. The new distillery will build on these offerings to further enhance the area’s appeal, aiming to create a destination that attracts both domestic and international visitors.

To realize this vision – and to enhance the appeal of the Furano area and build a globally recognized brand - Karuizawa Distillers, Seibu Holdings Inc. and Furano City have entered into a formal partnership. A joint press conference was held today at the New Furano Prince Hotel to announce its collaboration.



From left

Blue Incubation Co., Ltd.
Takeo Harada, Representative Director

Taketoshi Kita, Mayor of Furano City

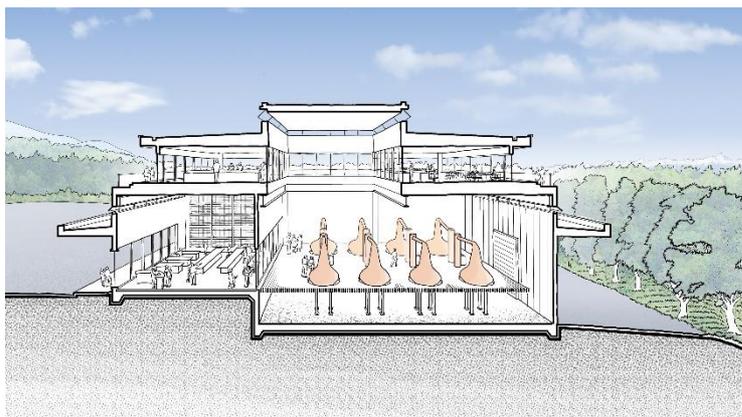
SEIBU HOLDINGS INC.
Takashi Goto,
Chairman and Representative Director Chairman and CEO

KARUIZAWA DISTILLERS Inc.
Koji Shimaoka, Co-Founder & CEO
Ian Chang, Co-Founder, Vice President & Master Blender
Yoshie Shimaoka, Co-Founder & CFO

Furaliss Distillery Image



Planned Construction Site



Cross Section View

About the Name

The name is a coined word that combines "Furano" with the meaning of "Bliss" as expressed in the word "FURALISS." It reflects the vision for the new distillery in Furano: a destination full of discoveries and surprises—somewhere people from around the world will be drawn to visit.



The Distillery's Vision

The new distillery is set to become a proud symbol of Furano —seamlessly blending striking architecture, thoughtfully designed to reflect the region's distinctive climate and natural landscape, with state-of-the-art equipment, crafted by true artisans.

Building on the success of the Komoro Distillery—Karuizawa Distillers' first distillery, selected by a European magazine as one of the "Top 3 distilleries to watch"—the new facility will offer not only distillery tours and educational programs, but also an on-site bar and shop.



Komoro Distillery

The distillery's whisky production will be led and overseen by Ian Chang, one of the world's most acclaimed master distillers & blenders, who brings global expertise, experience, and craftsmanship to the project. He shares the following vision:

"My goal is not simply to create a place for whisky production, but to build a symbol of growth, rooted in the land of Furano. With deep respect for nature, I hope to offer both world-class whisky and unforgettable experiences here."

Sustainability and Local Contributions

The distillery is committed to sustainable operations that harmonize with the natural beauty of Furano. It aims to pursue responsible, long-term whisky production, while preserving the surrounding landscape. By repurposing byproducts from the whisky-making process through partnerships with local farmers, food producers, and restaurants, the distillery will make meaningful contributions to the local economy. Leveraging Seibu's nationwide network of hotels and tourism facilities, the project will also help strengthen pathways to attract both domestic and international travelers to Furano.

Quotes:

Taketoshi Kita – Mayor of Furano City

"Furano is a region that draws visitors from around the world with its stunning scenery, natural resources and locally produced delicacies - such as outstanding fresh produce and wines. This new whisky distillery project represents an exciting step forward in generating renewed interest in Furano - in partnership with the Seibu Group, a longstanding ally in promoting the region, and our new friends at Karuizawa Distillers, Inc."

Koji Shimaoka – CEO, Karuizawa Distillers Inc.

"It is a great honor for us to take on the challenge of creating world-class whisky in the exceptional setting of Furano. At our new distillery, we are committed to making the most of the region's natural blessings and cultural richness, while pursuing excellence in both whisky-making and the guest experience."

Takashi Goto – Chairman and CEO, Seibu Holdings Inc.

"We are delighted to collaborate with Karuizawa Distillers and to integrate their vision, with the rich natural and cultural assets of Furano. Together, the three parties aim to create a dream project that inspires people around the world. We are committed to enhancing Furano's appeal and generating further interest in the region, through this collaboration."

Additional information

About Karuizawa Distillers Inc.

Founded on December 25, 2019, Karuizawa Distillers Inc. was established with a mission to create Japanese whisky of the highest quality. One of the three co-founders, Mr. Ian Chang, is a globally renowned master blender & distiller whose involvement made headlines in the international whisky industry.

In 2023, the company opened its first distillery, the Komoro Distillery, which gained attention both in Japan and overseas as a unique destination where whisky craftsmanship is combined with immersive visitor experiences.

In 2024, the distillery received the "Tourism Award" of the "Best Distillery of the Year" at the Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition—one of the largest competitions of its kind in Asia.

About the Partnership Between Seibu Group and Karuizawa Distillers

Seibu Group and Karuizawa Distillers Inc. began exploring business synergies through regional collaboration in the neighboring areas of Karuizawa and Komoro in Nagano Prefecture. What began as a discussion about establishing a whisky ageing warehouse on Seibu Group-owned land in Furano evolved into a full-scale distillery project.

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