

# Rediscovering the Old Tokaido Highway

**Tony Everitt, a renowned travel expert in the Asia-Pacific region, has settled in Atami City, Shizuoka Prefecture, an area known for its nature and history, where he works to promote tourism.**

**SATO KUMIKO**



□ Hakone Hachiri—a section of the old Tokaido Highway  
Photo: Courtesy of Tony Everitt

**B**orn in Fiji and raised in New Zealand, Tony Everitt has been promoting tourism in Asia-Pacific for thirty years, having lived in a variety of locations also including Singapore, Shanghai and Tokyo. He moved to Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, in 2015, feeling that it was the most fascinating of places.

Shizuoka is located in the middle of Japan's main island of Honshu, facing the Pacific Ocean for 155 kilometers from east to west. Everitt lives in Atami, a quaint seaside hot spring resort and gateway to the Izu Peninsula. Atami's hot springs have been enjoyed since the eighth century. The Izu Peninsula is also famous for cherry trees that bloom



■ Atami City is situated at the foot of mountains facing the Pacific Ocean in Shizuoka Prefecture

Photo: Courtesy of Shizuoka Prefecture Tourism Association

■ Early-blooming (February) cherry trees in Kawazu Town, Shizuoka Prefecture

Photo: Courtesy of Shizuoka Prefecture Tourism Association

as early as February—Atami Sakura—and for the annual Kawazu Sakura Festival.

Everitt tells us, “I live in a forest overlooking the Pacific. Sea breezes fan my place through Japan’s sticky summer, and our winters are mild. In 45 minutes I can be in downtown Tokyo, using the bullet train at the bottom of the hill. This is a unique twenty-first-century lifestyle.”

Everitt is currently involved in tourism development, marketing and human resource development for the tourism industry, including as Strategic Advisor to Tourism Shizuoka Japan, a destination marketing organization.

Everitt says, “Japan is a wonderful country for tourism. Things that Japanese people take for granted are novel in the eyes of international visitors. For example, Japan is a world leader in sustainable public transport, and other infrastructure is superb. A high sense of social responsibility creates a safe and orderly environment. Japanese people are natural at providing outstanding hospitality to visitors.”

Everitt says that Shizuoka also has abundant natural and cultural tourism resources.

Blessed with a mild climate year-round, Shizuoka enables outdoor activities in a stunning natural environment, including trekking and cycling. Shizuoka’s long Pacific coastline is popular for marine sports. Mount Fuji, Japan’s highest peak, is a local Cultural World Heritage Site.

A trip to Atami can be combined with a visit to neighboring Hakone. Everitt focuses on the old Tokaido Highway running through Kanagawa and Hakone into Shizuoka.

He says, “The 400-year-old Tokaido foot highway, the historical main drag between Japan’s new capital of Edo (now Tokyo) and old capitals of Kyoto and Osaka, contrasts with the state-of-the-art Tokaido bullet train that zooms along a similar route today. Most visitors to Japan ride the bullet train but aren’t aware that it is named after the old foot highway.”

From Edo to Kyoto, fifty-three post towns dotted old Tokaido for weary travelers to rest and carouse each night of their journey. Nearly half of these post towns are in Shizuoka, where remnants of life on the old highway can still be enjoyed today.

This year, Everitt founded



■ “Morning Fog at Mishima” (in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture), from the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road* by Utagawa Hiroshige

Photo: Courtesy of Kuboso Memorial Museum of Arts, Izumi

HIKE Hakone Hachiri, providing hiking tours to international visitors along the old Tokaido. Hakone Hachiri is a 32-km section of the old highway from Odawara through the mountainous Hakone Pass to Mishima. Everitt speaks of his aspirations to “immerse visitors in the spirit of walking this picturesque historical route.”

COVID-19 has restricted global movement this year, but one can hardly wait for HIKE Hakone Hachiri to begin operations. Visitors can create their own memorable travel tale while thinking of a time when Japanese people of old traveled by their own feet along the Tokaido Highway. 7