

# Full line of real estate services for foreign clientele

More and more foreigners are looking for real estate in Japan — not only for investment purposes, but also for long-term and repeat stays related to tourism and business. There is also increasing demand among foreign residents for holiday homes.

Offering a broad array of services, an.a studio engages in real estate, renovation and interior design consulting for domestic and international customers.

“There are many hurdles for foreigners to buy real estate in Japan,” said CEO Naoko Oba. Purchasing a house and having it renovated the way one likes is supposed to be an exciting process, but it can be difficult and frustrating when there is a language barrier and potential for miscommunication. Communicating with all the stakeholders, from real estate companies and renovators to utilities and internet providers, for example, can be complex and time-consuming.

The company stands on the combined experience and skills of three professionals: Oba, Director Atsuko Saito and Adviser Akira Hikone, an architect. Providing one-stop services in both Japanese and English, the team uses various means of communication and information-sharing, such as online chat services, video streaming and

photographs, to undertake client discussions on the go and even while abroad.

Oba and Saito both have experience living outside Japan, which helps them identify and understand the differences between Japanese and non-Japanese houses and find solutions for cultural and other potential problems. They have also worked for international firms for many years, through which they gained the ability to bridge the gap between domestic and foreign business practices.

“We can give advice about various factors, including transportation, schools and neighborhood facilities based on our clients’ lifestyles,” Oba said.

From their time abroad and renovation projects for clients from the United States, Australia, Singapore, the Philippines and other countries, Oba and Saito are aware of typical problems and requests.

“Lighting in Japanese houses tends to be too bright and kitchen sinks are generally too low for foreign people. While Japanese houses have been Westernized in design, many of our clients have preferred to add some traditional Japanese touches,” Saito said.

The team is also capable of doing the



**Whether Western or Japanese, an.a studio can cater to both lifestyles.**

interior design for houses and buildings of various sizes. Unzen Miyazaki Ryokan, a historic hot spring inn they reconstructed in Unzen, Nagasaki Prefecture, won a Good Design Award in 2023.

Whatever the size and purpose, an.a studio aims to get a clear picture of how clients want to live and weave it into their designs.

