

HEAVEN SENT

A LOCAL ARTISAN CRAFTS STUNNING JADEITE JEWELRY

AWARD-WINNING DESIGNER SAMANTHA LIM WAS BORN IN

Singapore, began her career in Hong Kong, and now lives and works in Tokyo. So it's no surprise that her jewelry line, Heavenly Jade, shares a similar international pedigree. Lim sources jadeite from Burma, works with a partner in Taiwan, and travels the world to share her creations with an eager audience.

Lim's latest designs, dubbed the Chinese Dragon Collection, include necklaces, earrings and bracelets, all of which demonstrate her flair for combining subtle hues with intricate etching. According to the designer, Burmese jadeite is prized for its natural colors variations, which range from green to honey brown to icy white. Combined with silver chains and pendants, the pieces are both elegant and eye-catching. Lim's choice of a dragon motif—the mythical beast appears in a variety of traditional poses—is a nod to her Asian heritage. "I am captivated by the image of the dragon and what it means to our Chinese culture," she says. "To this day, the Chinese still regard it as a sacred, auspicious symbol." See www.samanthalim.com for information about upcoming exhibits, or contact Lim's studio for a private appointment. 2-1-15 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-3446-1912. *ST*



Suzumiya Haruhi no Yuutsu, Nendoroid Suzumiya Haruhi, ¥3,000



Fate/hollow Ataraxia, Lin Tohsaka, ¥4,800

CYBER AKIHABARA

AMAZON JAPAN TARGETS THE COOL GEEK SHOPPERS

NOW THAT OTAKU ARE THE NEW TRENDSETTERS, you'll be sure to find what's hot in Japanese subculture wherever they congregate. The country's largest online retailer, Amazon Japan (www.amazon.co.jp), has created a dedicated spot for these self-proclaimed nerds to go gaga over the latest video games, DVDs, figurines, graphic novels, magazines, *cosplay* gear and so much more.

The Otaku Store is organized by its own editors, ranked by popularity and reviewed by peers, making it the go-to place for all coveted items on the otaku radar. One way to browse it is by popular anime character names, among which Evangelion, Suzumiya Haruhi and Nodame Cantabile are the most widely searched. Otaku living overseas can also partake in the shopping, since the majority of these items (excluding video games) can be shipped internationally. With some 30,000 products currently listed, this new resource brings the chaos of Akihabara right onto your computer screen, in a more organized way. See www.amazon.co.jp/otaku for more info. *MI*

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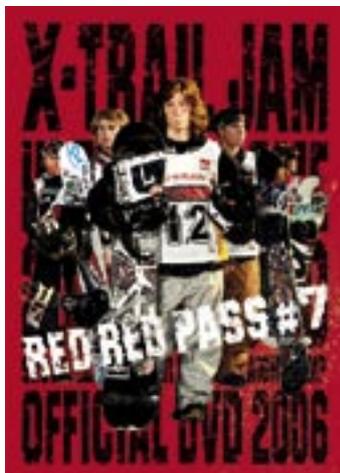
GO BIG

CATCH ALL THE X-TRAIL JAM SNOWBOARDING ACTION ON THE OFFICIAL DVD

IN DECEMBER, TOKYO

Dome played host to its seventh annual weekend of urban snowboarding madness that is the X-Trail Jam. Among the spectacles was an eight-story ramp covered in snow in the middle of Tokyo's most storied baseball field.

The XTJ is the biggest indoor snowboarding competition in the world, attracting around 70,000 spectators over two days. For those who weren't among the sellout crowd, a roundup of the competition was shown on Nippon TV, which organizes the event, on December 20. Now, promoter Sports Biz is set to unveil a 70-minute DVD version of the broadcast, with additional behind-the-scenes extras and extended footage of the quarter pipe and straight jump competitions. Though the narration is in Japanese, the foreign riders speak in English (with subtitles), and the action speaks for itself. **¥3,990, available Feb 28.** Order online at www.xtj.jp (Japanese) or through the automated "Loppi" ticketing machines in Lawson convenience stores. *BM*



buyline

Anyone who has seen director Sofia Coppola's lusciously crafted *Marie Antoinette* will be in the mood to shop. Isn't it convenient then, that the chic director now has her own clothing label, **Milk Fed** (www.milkfed.jp)? While you can browse the collection in several Tokyo locations, devout fans should consider signing up for the brand's newly launched email magazine. Whether you fancy Coppola's more simple designs or candy-colored knickknacks, the newsletter has plenty of info on new items and sale dates, and is sure to delight Japan's moviegoers-cum-fashionistas. • In Japan, you're never too old to be playing with dolls—at least around the March 3 *hina-matsuri*, or Doll Festival. To commemorate the big day, **Sakaeya Kimono Shop** in Omiya, Saitama will outfit you in style, with either a formal (¥15,000) or casual robe. The deal also includes a lunch party with traditional Doll Festival sweets and drinks, a photo shoot and a chance to travel to the "doll city," Iwatsuki, among other activities. Make reservations by February 23 at the website (www.kimono-sakaeya.com). • While blogging may be the *au courant* way of keeping a travel journal, some just can't catch the wave of the future. Well, **Moleskine** (www.moleskine.co.jp) is here to help. The popular brand's latest offering is the leather-bound City Notebook, which targets frequent travelers. Each of the notebooks is dedicated to a single city, with useable guides and maps as well as tabs, removable sheets for exchanging messages and lots more. Japan will launch the City Notebook's European cities series in March, and Air France is sponsoring a special competition for the occasion. Customize your own into an inventive travel notebook, enter it into the competition and you might win tickets for two to a European getaway. Details can be found on the website. Bon voyage! *NK*

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