



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From Aussie Mechanic to JDM Tour Pioneer: How Joshua Buffin Brought the Dream of Authentic Touge Driving to Life in Japan

Kawasaki, Japan – 11 July, 2025 – Joshua Buffin, a 35-year-old Australian and former licensed mechanic, has transformed his lifelong love for JDM cars into an unforgettable experience for driving enthusiasts visiting Japan. As the founder of Drivers Lounge, a newly launched driving tour company based just outside Tokyo, Joshua invites global car fans to live their dream—spirited self-driving tours across Japan’s legendary mountain passes, behind the wheel of iconic Japanese performance machines.

Joshua's journey to this point is one of passion, grit, and a bit of destiny. When he moved to Japan six years ago with his Japanese wife and family, he struck one important deal: “I’ll move here, but only if I get to enjoy Japan’s mountain roads,” he joked. With savings in hand and no clear roadmap, he cycled through various jobs — from an English teacher, to a trike mechanic and to working as a van driver at a local medical center — quietly searching for the opportunity to reconnect with his automotive roots.

That opportunity came when fate introduced him to an investor who shared his vision of bringing authentic Japanese driving culture to a wider audience. Together, they founded Drivers Lounge in Kawasaki, just 16 minutes by train from Shinjuku, Tokyo’s bustling center. With tremendous effort and determination, Joshua navigated the stringent Japanese regulations, acquired the necessary licenses, and curated a fleet that would make any car enthusiast’s heart race.

An All-Star Lineup of JDM Legends

The Drivers Lounge fleet is a dream garage for any fan of Japanese performance cars. It includes the mighty Nissan R35 and R32 GT-Rs, the iconic Mazda RX-7, the modern Toyota GR Supra and GR Yaris, rally-bred beasts like the Lancer Evolution VI and X, and the sharp-handling Honda Integra Type R.

But that’s not all. The crown jewels of the collection are two ultra-rare tuner-complete cars: the Honda S660 Spoon Complete and Suzuki Alto Works Monster Sports Complete. These aren’t just modified cars, they’re full builds from Japan’s most respected aftermarket legends: Spoon and Monster Sports. Joshua notes, “These two are rarer than many Ferraris. There are only three Spoon Complete S660 and two Monster Sports Complete Version 5 Alto Works in the world. You don’t just drive them; you experience something you can’t find anywhere else in the world.”

Hakone and Tsukuba: Two Touge Dreams

Drivers Lounge offers guided self-drive tours to Japan’s most celebrated driving roads. Their Hakone tour



takes drivers through over 120 kilometers of twisty, scenic touge routes including Hakone Turnpike, Ashinoko Skyline, Hakone Skyline, Nagao Touge, and the sweeping Izu Skyline. It's an all-day experience that blends adrenaline with Japan's breathtaking mountain landscapes.

Meanwhile, the Tsukuba tour shifts focus from scenery to motorsports heritage. While most car fans know the Tsukuba Circuit from Best Motoring videos, Drivers Lounge introduces the hidden mountain gems north of the city, culminating at Motegi Circuit's Honda Collection Hall. The route is an ideal blend of heritage and high-revving thrills.

What Makes Drivers Lounge Different?

While a handful of tour companies offer driving experiences in Japan, Joshua built Drivers Lounge with a unique twist: **multi-car rotation**. Instead of being locked into a single vehicle for the entire day, participants can swap cars during the tour, trying up to four different cars in one go. "It's a rare chance to compare the character of each machine back-to-back," says Joshua. "A lot of guests come in thinking the GT-R is unbeatable, and leave realizing that the little Alto Works might be the most fun of all."

This format has already created a strong word-of-mouth following. Though the company only began operations a little over three months ago, it's already seeing repeat customers from around the world, including one American guest who changed his flight home just to join a second tour.

G.base Collaboration: The Real JDM Seal of Approval

Drivers Lounge has recently teamed up with G.base, a new car culture hub in east Tokyo associated with none other than Keiichi Tsuchiya, the Drift King himself and his team. This collaboration further cements Drivers Lounge's credentials as the real deal in the JDM scene. Their G.base-supported Tsukuba tours even depart from the G.base shop, where lucky guests may catch a glimpse of Tsuchiya's legendary AE86—a bucket-list moment for any fan of Japanese car culture.

Why Choose a Guided Driving Tour Instead of Renting a Car?

For many car enthusiasts visiting Japan, the idea of renting a car and heading into the mountains sounds simple enough. But Joshua Buffin urges travelers to think twice. "Driving in Japan isn't like driving back home," he says. "The roads are incredible, but the challenges can catch even experienced drivers off guard."

Here's why more and more travelers are opting for guided tours over solo rentals:

- **Language Barrier:** Most road signs in rural and mountainous areas are in Japanese, and GPS systems may not provide reliable English guidance. One wrong turn can lead to frustration—or worse, dangerous situations.



- **Rules You Might Not Know:** From unique stop sign shapes to unusual parking laws, Japan's traffic rules can be confusing. Small mistakes could lead to fines, points, or accidents.
- **What Happens If Something Goes Wrong?** If you break down or are involved in a traffic stop or accident, dealing with local police or emergency services without speaking Japanese can be overwhelming. "It's not like Europe," Joshua explains. "If the police come and you can't speak Japanese, it becomes a really stressful situation."
- **Time Lost, Fun Missed:** With a guided tour, you don't have to plan, translate, or guess. You simply show up, get behind the wheel, and enjoy the best driving roads Japan has to offer—safely and confidently.

Joshua and his team handle all the logistics, navigation, language, and vehicle support, ensuring a seamless experience from start to finish. "All you have to focus on is the road and the machine you're in," he says. "And that's exactly how it should be."

A Hassle-Free, All-Inclusive Experience

Drivers Lounge tours are all-inclusive: car rental, insurance, fuel, tolls, and a tour guide are all provided in the price. The only extra costs? Beverages and attraction entry tickets. There are no hidden fees, and no surprise costs. "Once you factor in the time, cost, and logistics of renting a car in Japan, we often end up being the more affordable option," says Joshua. "And no regular rental company will let you swap between a Supra and an RX-7 in one day."

All vehicles are lightly tuned for mountain pass driving—focusing on handling, responsiveness, and driving feel—rather than cosmetic flash. This focus on pure driving joy is what makes the Drivers Lounge experience so special.

Media Inquiries & Contact

Drivers Lounge welcomes collaborations, reviews, and media coverage. For interview requests, press tours, or further information, please contact:

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Photo Gallery



Joshua with his cars in front of Drivers Lounge shop.



Joshua enjoying his moment working on a R32 GTR.



Fleet of Drivers Lounge's JDM with Mount Fuji as backdrop



Photo of Drivers Lounge fleet taken at Hakone



Some touge driving actions in Hakone



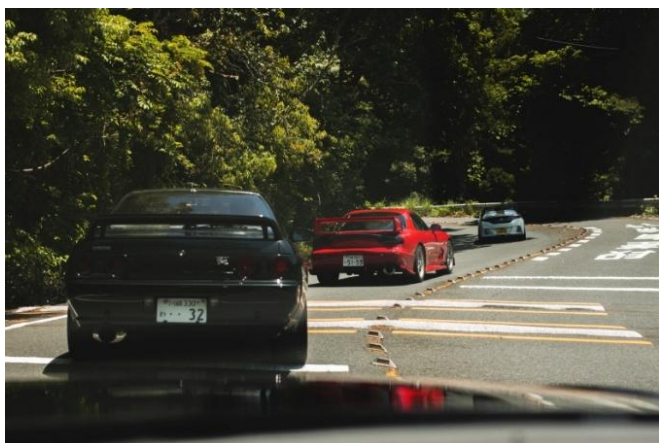
A group of happy Australian customers



Driving on the Izu Skyline



G.base collaboration with Drivers Lounge with tours departing from G.base



Driving through the mountains in Tsukuba