



The Luxury Handbag Industry's Best-Kept Secret is in Toyooka



The cobbled streets of Milan, a romantic storefront in Paris, the slew of skyscrapers dotting the bustling NYC streets - luxury bag aficionados tend to gravitate towards the classic fashion capitals when on the prowl for their next big purchase, but we have to ask: where's the love for the bespoke beauties of smaller, hidden gem locations? We welcome [Toyooka](#), a small city in Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, to the bag spotlight.

No shopping spree to Japan is truly complete without touching ground on Toyooka's Bag Street, lined with boutiques producing and selling the best of the best in bags - the [Toyooka Kaban](#) brand. From drafting to the finishing touches such as hardware and zippers, Toyooka Kaban designs are imagined and given life in Toyooka. Even with over 30 brands under the Toyooka Kaban label, every handmade piece is inspected individually for compliance with Toyooka Kaban's quality control standards, and only those products that are found to fulfill them are marked with the trademark blue and red label.

Some Recommendations:

[Alter Ego](#)

Every bag and wallet leaving Alter Ego's boutique doors is an artistic amalgamation of creative drive shared between customer and artisan. Designed from a single sheet of Italian leather, clients work directly with Alter Ego's in-house designer to consult the size, color, and details ranging from hardware to inner lining before the transformation into the couture bag of their dreams takes form. As with many luxury purchases, Alter Ego's products are an investment rather than a casual buy - leather wallets lined with gold-plated snake skin and handbags crafted from star-patterned stingray are considered the norm for clients' purchases.



Kagen

With longstanding ties to the willow-covered landscape of Toyooka, Kagen continues its 200-year-old history of bag artisanry without sacrificing quality nor material in the face of growing demand. Although many of Kagen's creations have moved to favor high-quality leather skins instead of high-quality wickerwork, the brand's profound connection to Toyooka's willow crafting heritage is lovingly preserved in a small museum of wicker trunks, baskets, and bags from generations past on the shop's second floor. Sustainability has continued to span Kagen's centuries-old history as a core, indisputable value in the brand's identity - shreds of leftover leather never see the inside of a trash bin and are instead crafted into small fashion items such as coin purses and belt loops.



Atelier Nuu

In an industry where more is more and fast output often overrules precise craftsmanship, Atelier Nuu stays true to its small-town business identity with a promise to sustainability as a bonus for green-minded shoppers. Through eco-inspired collections such as totes made from castaway fishing nets and wallets stitched together using wayward scrap materials, Atelier Nuu's ambitious "Re:nuu" strategy is on the fast track to slow-fashion success. By 2025, Atelier Nuu aims to throw a helping hand into the slow-fashion revival with durable collections created completely from environmentally low-impact materials.



Creezan

As if the sleek Oriental White Stork silhouette logo wasn't already a dead ringer for the brand, Creezan is instantly recognizable with its trademark white leather serving as the chic and simple base for over half of their creations. The simple white backdrop allows for the strengths of every design to shine, ranging from briefcases, purses, and luggage, all beautifully stitched together at the Creezan lab. Itten Itten, Creezan's younger, fun-loving sibling, is a must-check brand if you're looking for a splash of color with Creezan-tier quality. A little lost on which bag to buy? Take a Kinosaki lunch break at Creezan's in-boutique hamburger shop before closing the deal.





[Kinosaki Onsen](#) is a town of time-honored hot springs dating back 1300 years ago. It is home to seven public bathhouses, all located within walking distance of each other and the train station. Guests are encouraged to wear yukata and geta, stroll through the town, and go onsen-hopping.

[Toyooka](#) is a downtown area home to the Oriental White Stork, a bird that was revived from extinction in this very town. The city's efforts restored the Oriental White Stork population, and now over 300 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



[Izushi](#) is the resident castle town, popular for its nostalgic atmosphere of Edo-era Japan. It is home to many interesting attractions such as castle ruins, a samurai house, a kabuki theater, and a clock tower. The town's specialty is Izushi Sara Soba, buckwheat noodles served in small portions on small plates.

[Kannabe](#) is a mountainous area with fun activities year-round. In the winter, one can go skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. In the warm months, one can go camping, paragliding, fishing, tree climbing, and more. Kannabe is the perfect destination for adventurers.



[Takeno](#) is a quaint fisherman town that is a hidden gem among the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. The beach has clear, blue waters while the mountains surrounding it offer great hiking opportunities. It is encouraged to stroll through the peaceful town, where one can find small shops and traditional landscapes.

[Tanto](#) is a quiet countryside town with magnificent nature—including a giant field of sunflowers in the summer and brilliant red-leaved trees in the fall.

