

WHERE
NIIGATA AREA
JAPAN

WHO
SATOMI, YOSHIKAZU,
ICHIE, WAKA

WHAT
WOODEN
HOUSE

A bucolic Japanese retreat blending ancestry and modernity

Located half an hour away from the town of Niigata (north of Tokyo, Japan), this simple wooden house, nestled in a lush garden surrounded by mountains, embodies the quintessence of bucolic living where nature and architecture cohabit in a ravishing, balanced way. Japanese jewelry designer Satomi Sekiya and her husband Yoshikazu chose this idealistic location three years ago, with the idea of offering their children Ichie (7) and Waka (5) the opportunity to grow up in a vivacious, natural environment. By celebrating Japan's ancestral lifestyle, where nature's ever-changing seasons infuse the tone and tempo of day-to-day living, the couple created a routine for their kids where the principles of mindful simplicity meet modern habits and technologies.

"We believe that living with nature enables us to broaden our potential and activity," says Satomi. *"We want our kids to discover freshness, to fear or love on their own, beyond words. We're teaching them age-old techniques such as lighting a fire or tying a knot on a rope, as well as introducing them to modern technologies—and we love to listen to what they have to say."* The family grows its own

fruits and vegetables in the garden that surrounds the house, which has proven to be a fertile ground for shared activities and quality family time, as Satomi and Yoshikazu consider education to be in osmosis with the environment.

Satomi's jewelry brand Monshiro also encapsulates the spirit of this unique place, impregnating her delicate designs, each a poetic tribute to ephemeral flowers and crafted by local women. *"In Japan, each season brings dazzling fragrances, but the scent of spring is particularly awe-inspiring to me."* This is one of the reasons Satomi wanted a wooden house that could "breathe," where interior and exterior are connected in such a way that her children could constantly benefit from the fresh mountain air. *"Nowadays, houses are too insulated,"* she explains. *"We prefer the old ways of ancient Japanese wood construction techniques."* Fans of vintage furniture, the couple's white and wood interior scheme is simple and allows for the children to run around, from inside to out, while the selection of objects made of natural materials mixed with modern, connected devices creates a peaceful balance, a new order.

