

**BROKERAGE**

# Christie's International Real Estate expands to Japan

The move comes less than a year after Chicago-based brokerage @properties bought Christie's and amid a period of globalization for American brands



BY JIM DALRYMPLE II  
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Christie's International Real Estate, a long-time industry stalwart that last year became part of Chicago-based brokerage @properties, announced this week that it is expanding into Japan.

The expansion — which comes amid a period of increasing globalization for U.S. housing firms — will see Christie's partner with H2 Group, a local real estate company based on the island of Hokkaido. The partnership will involve H2 Group's residential brokerage operations becoming a Christie's affiliate and rebrand to use the name H2 Christie's International Real Estate.

The companies expect the new affiliate “to take advantage of resurgent demand for luxury real estate in Japan as the country reopens to international buyers following the 2.5-year global pandemic,” the companies said in a statement. They added that Hokkaido in particular should benefit from the reopening because it’s home to ski resorts, tourist destinations and a strong second-home market.

Simon Robinson and Michael H. Chen founded H2 Group over two decades ago and today serve as co-CEOs. Chen is “thrilled and honored to be selected by Christie’s International Real Estate as its Japan affiliate,” he said in the statement.

Christie’s has a presence in “nearly 50 countries and territories,” according to the statement. It has been a major name in the real estate industry for decades but was acquired last fall by @properties, a Chicago-based brokerage that focuses on technology and which recently branched out into franchising. The deal was meant to give hundreds of Christie’s offices around the world access to @properties technology, while at the same time significantly expanding @properties global reach.

The expansion into Japan highlights how that reach continues to grow as H2 Christie’s International Real Estate has signed a licensing agreement to grow the “brand throughout Japan, including in the key markets of Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Hakuba, Fukuoka and Okinawa,” the statement further noted.

Christie’s expansion also comes amid a time of rapid international growth for several American real estate companies. EXp Realty, for example, has recently pushed into Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Italy and Hong Kong, among other places. And Keller Williams has recently expanded in the Caribbean, as well as in Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

Such expansions have taken place despite the global coronavirus pandemic which threw real estate markets into chaos and closed many national borders for two years.

In this week’s statement, Robinson — co-CEO of H2 Christie’s International Real Estate — said the new partnership will give his company “even more credibility and reinforce our expertise in the Hokkaido luxury residential market.”

Mike Golden, co-CEO of Christie’s International Real Estate, also expressed excitement about the new partnership.

“With their luxury focus, strong international connections and innovative, full-service approach to real estate, Michael and Simon are the perfect partners to expand Christie’s International Real Estate in Japan and give the brand even greater visibility in East Asia,” Golden said in the statement.