

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORLDWIDE HOTEL INDUSTRY

DECEMBER 2012

HOTELS

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IN TOKYO



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HOTELS

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about the cover



Palace Hotel Tokyo, which opened this past May in the city's Marunouchi commercial district next door to the vast green space of the Imperial Palace, aims to convey a commanding presence — one that represents the best of Japan with grace and elegance. Lead interior designer GA Design International, London, accomplished this with subtle colors such as cool grays and soft greens and dramatic apaces such as the lobby that bring the outdoors in. The property also boasts a collection of approximately 1,000 pieces of artwork by some of Japan's best contemporary artists. Read more in Design starting on p38.

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correction

On p48 of the November issue of HOTELS, Christian Lundwall of Lwa Architects should have been identified as designer of the guestrooms at Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel. HOTELS regrets the omission.

PALATIAL PRESENCE

PALACE HOTEL TOKYO AIMS TO REFLECT ITS LOCATION, HISTORY AND CULTURE WITH GRACEFUL SIMPLICITY.

By Ann Bagel Storck, managing editor



A massive window in one of the lobby seating areas frames a "tamukayama momiji" Japanese maple chosen for its biannual bloom, so the changing seasons might make guests' stays more memorable.

PALACE HOTEL TOKYO

OPENING DATE:
May 17, 2012

SIZE:
290 guestrooms, 10 restaurants and bars, an Evian spa and extensive meetings and events facilities covering 570,487 sq ft (53,000 sq m)

LOCATION:
Tokyo's Marunouchi commercial district next door to the Imperial Palace — on the same site that once housed the Hotel Teito, which opened in 1947, and the previous Palace Hotel, dating back to 1961

COST:
The hotel is part of a US\$1.2 billion development that also includes the 731,946-sq-ft (68,000-sq-m) Palace Building, which houses the headquarters of some of Japan's most prestigious corporations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / GENERAL MANAGER:
Masaru Watanabe

OWNER:
Palace Hotel Co. Ltd., Tokyo

ARCHITECT:
Mitsubishi Jisho Sekkei Inc., Tokyo

LEAD INTERIOR DESIGNER:
GA Design International, London

DESIGN AESTHETIC:
Using a garden theme inspired by the nearby Imperial Palace site, the hotel is meant to be not just attractive, but also meaningful, with a long-lasting character to become personal to guests.

THE vision for Palace Hotel Tokyo was to create a property that could live up to its name — not to mention a spectacular location, rich history and deep cultural traditions. The 290-room new-build hotel opened this past May in Tokyo's Marunouchi commercial district and next door to the Imperial Palace — on the same site that once housed the Hotel Teito, which opened in 1947, and the previous Palace Hotel, dating back to 1961. It is part of a US\$1.2 billion development that is also home to some of Japan's most prestigious corporations.

"The overarching concept throughout was to build a hotel with a real 'presence' — one which would represent the best of Japan and do so with grace and elegance," says Masaru Watanabe, executive director and general manager of Palace Hotel Tokyo.

"The intention was to make the interiors not simply attractive, but to give them meaning — a long-lasting character that would evolve and become personal to those that use it," adds Terry McGinnity, managing director of London-based GA Design International, the property's lead interior design firm.

The design of Palace Hotel Tokyo is strongly influenced by the nearby Imperial Palace, a 1.3-sq-mi (3.5-sq-km) green space in the city's center. Cool grays, soft greens and pale blues with hints of muted gold dominate the interiors. Public spaces such as the lobby seating area and wedding chapel aim to bring the outdoors in via expansive windows, and guestrooms share a similar philosophy with understated earth tones and generous balconies.

Other amenities include a 12,916-sq-ft (1,200-sq-m) Evian spa in addition to 10 restaurants and bars. Wadakura is the hotel's signature Japanese restaurant, for example, while Crown serves French fare. The Royal Bar, meanwhile, draws upon the site's history with the bar top from the outlet of the same name at the previous Palace Hotel. "The Royal Bar was famous, and the original design was overseen by the legendary bartender Mr. Kyoshi Imai," McGinnity notes. "We retained the bar top in his memory and, alongside this, faithfully recreated the original designs to function as they once did."

Watanabe reports occupancy has increased steadily since the hotel opened, with average rate at approximately US\$473. He highlights a higher-than-expected return rate from local clientele at the spa as well as robust weddings business — Watanabe says the property, which can host up to 12 weddings daily, is sold out through June 2013.

But the goal is to keep evolving. Watanabe notes a target to increase the percentage of international guests from 50% to 60% as well as boost the percentage of leisure guests, currently at 45%. "Sentiments such as, 'I'll be back!' and others along those lines delight us most," he says. "It may seem very simple, but such sentiments speak volumes about our guests' stay experiences, and at the end of the day, that's what matters most."

DESIGN: PALACE HOTEL TOKYO



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The ambience at Amber Palace is old world China, with details including antique wood paneling and traditional musical instruments throughout the amber color scheme.

A signature design element of the main ballroom is a 23-ft-by-72-ft (7-m-by-22-m) window overlooking the Wadakura moat and the Imperial Palace gardens.

Intended to be a chic, contemporary interpretation of a traditional chapel, the wedding chapel offers floor-to-ceiling windows to give couples the sense they are exchanging nuptials amidst the beauty of the Imperial Palace gardens.

Baths are enclosed in clear glass and take advantage of guestrooms' views. Simple blinds and sliding panels can close the bathroom down to maintain complete privacy when required.

DESIGN: PALACE HOTEL TOKYO



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT

A sculptural origami ceiling installation runs the length of the spa's main interior space and represents a flock of birds.

The hotel is located in Tokyo's Marunouchi commercial district and next door to the gardens and moats of the Imperial Palace.

Wadakura, the hotel's signature Japanese restaurant, showcases cedar wall carvings inspired by the flora of the Imperial Palace gardens.

The Grand Kitchen anchors the lobby and aims to convey the atmosphere of the main hub of a great residence, complete with an open kitchen.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The Palace Lounge can host Japanese-style afternoon tea or evening cocktails thanks to touches such as a white Steinway grand piano.

Guestrooms feature leafy carpet motifs and an earthy mix of golds and creams to allow impressive views to take center stage.

As an extension of the spa's Alpine-inspired design, the swimming pool was conceived to resemble a deep blue mountain pond.