



Royal flash

Tokyo's luxuriously revamped Palace Hotel is fit for a king.



SIPPING MARUYAMA NORI TEA from a Mashiko-yaki pottery cup, that has been handmade in the Tochigi Prefecture, sums up the attention to detail you can expect at the Palace Hotel in Tokyo. Ditto when it comes to indulging in Anne Semonin's Parisian line of toiletries, or swanning around your room wrapped in a luxuriously fluffy Imabari bath towel while gazing over the Imperial Palace moat.

Tokyo's newest five-star hotel has finally opened its doors, following a three-year, \$1.2 billion rebuild. This is as good as it gets when it comes to city hotel locations. Situated on the site of the original Palace Hotel (which launched in 1961 as Japan's first mixed-use office-hotel building), the new, sleeker version offers unsurpassed views over the Imperial Gardens and *Blade Runner* skyline from each of its 278 guestrooms and 12 suites.

Award-winning Australian architect and designer, Terry McGinnity of London-based GA Design International, has drawn on the adjacent gardens for inspiration. The delivery is restrained and elegant, yet never dull. The designer has created a warm, welcoming tone by using nature-inspired motifs in fabrics and carpets throughout, teamed with an earthy colour palette (think moss greens and tans), with the only pop of colour provided by the artworks. Texture is also in evidence in the grassweave wallpaper, silks, timber and stone.

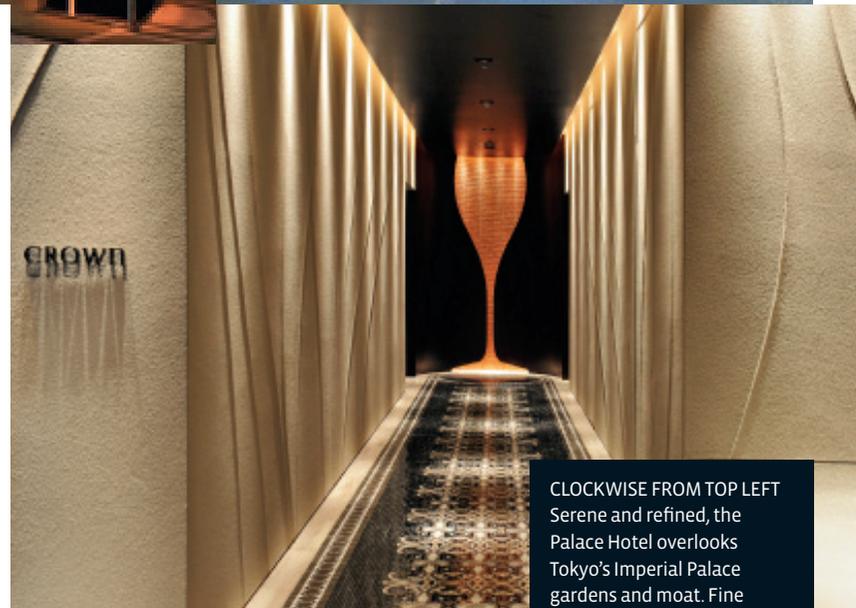
By Japanese standards the rooms are quite spacious, with 12 categories of accommodation, ranging in size from 45 to 255 square metres. More than half offer an open terrace and balcony, which can make a welcome change from constant air-conditioning. Open-plan bathrooms with large tubs also capture the views.

One of the hotel's biggest drawcards is the luxurious Evian Spa which, on a clear day, offers views all the way to Mount Fuji. This is the first Evian-branded spa in Japan, and it features five treatment rooms, a spa suite, heated baths, a marble sauna, cold plunge pool, dry sauna, reclining baths and relaxation lounges.

Boasting 10 restaurants and bars, foodies will not be disappointed by the dining options. The hotel has lured a couple of Michelin-star chefs to the helm. Patrick Henriroux (of the two-star La Pyramide in Vienne) is overseeing French restaurant Crown; while Shinji Kanesaka (from two-star Sushi Kanesaka in nearby Ginza) is heading up the sushi operation of Japanese restaurant Wadakura.

With its top location, magnificent views and luxurious appointments, the Palace Hotel is an elegant addition to this bustling city.

For more go to palacehoteltokyo.com.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Serene and refined, the Palace Hotel overlooks Tokyo's Imperial Palace gardens and moat. Fine French fare is on offer at Crown restaurant. The bright lights of the city are captured from the guestrooms.

