

Palace Hotel Tokyo  
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## TRIED&TESTED Hotel

# Palace hotel, Tokyo

**BACKGROUND** Open since May last year, the 23-storey Palace, a member of the Leading Hotels of the World, is on the site of the old Palace hotel that was originally unveiled in 1961, but is a complete rebuild, the result of a ¥90 billion (£600 million) investment. The property was closed for three years, though 60 per cent of the staff were retained.

**WHAT'S IT LIKE?** Extremely stylish and modern, with more than 1,000 paintings, metalwork and other pieces from Japanese contemporary artists. The entrance is constructed from Aji stone – the same material that lines the moats around the Imperial Palace opposite – and there are lots of references to nature, from the leaf-shaped bar to the deep green carpets. As is common in modern five-star hotels, the designers – GA Design International, led by Terry McGinnity (also behind the Corinthia in London) – saw the public spaces as “a grand residence”, so the lobby lounge has a living room feel with a Steinway kept from the previous hotel and six-metre-tall shelving detailed with Macassar ebony. Overall, very little remains from the old property, though the restored counter in the Royal bar is the original one designed by the hotel’s first (now retired) bartender, “Mr Martini”. Staff were excellent but English wasn’t spoken by everyone.

**WHERE IS IT?** Opposite the ancient Otemon gate of Edo Castle in the business and shopping district of Marunouchi. It’s a good hour by limousine bus to Narita airport, 70km away. Haneda airport is a 20km journey. The hotel has a direct link via the basement retail arcade to Otemachi subway station, or it’s a pleasant ten-minute walk to Tokyo station.

**ROOM FACILITIES** The 290 rooms come in 12 categories, ranging from Deluxe (45 sqm to

55 sqm) to suites (75 sqm to 255 sqm). Rooms are spread across floors eight to 23, with the higher levels the ones to choose for the views. About 60 per cent have balconies. All have free wired and wifi internet, 46- to 60-inch LCD TVs and Blu-ray players. The minimal design incorporates leafy motifs on the carpets, and a gold and cream palette. There are 300-thread count Imabari sheets and towels from Ehime prefecture, while the free Maruyama Nori teas are manufactured in the Tsukiji district. Most rooms have open-style bathrooms in polished granite with separate tubs and showers, TVs, Anne Semonin toiletries and automatic Japanese toilets, with everything from heated seats to bidets built in. Club room guests and above have access to the 19th-floor lounge, serving free breakfast, soft drinks, afternoon tea and alcohol (5.30pm-8pm).

### RESTAURANTS AND BARS

There is a huge choice. Japanese restaurant Wadakura features tempura bar Tatsumi, Go for



teppanyaki and Sushi Kanesaka for sushi. There is also a Chinese eatery, Amber Palace, and the sixth-floor French restaurant Crown, a collaboration with Patrick Henriroux, who runs the two Michelin-star La Pyramide in Vienne, France. Not to be forgotten is the all-day dining Grand Kitchen on the ground floor, and Sweets and Deli, a pastry shop. The hotel has three bars – the Palace Lounge is a contemporary teahouse, the sixth-floor Lounge Bar Privé seats 50 inside and 25 on the outdoor terrace, while the Royal bar is where to smoke cigars and drink martinis, whisky or cognacs.

### BUSINESS AND MEETING FACILITIES

The main ballroom is huge, seating 1,440 people theatre-style, with a 154 sqm window overlooking the Imperial Palace gardens. On the 19th floor is a formal boardroom seating 28, and two smaller meeting spaces for up to 12. There are 11 venues in total.

**LEISURE FACILITIES** On the fifth floor is an indoor pool and a 127 sqm fitness centre with Technogym and Life Fitness equipment, and a Kinesis system. The 1,200 sqm Evian spa is the only one in Japan and has six treatment rooms, heated baths and saunas.

**VERDICT** A triumphant return for the Palace, which, although unrecognisable from the previous hotel, has managed to combine the feel of an experienced and comfortable property with one that is new and stylish.

### TESTED BY Tom Otley

### HOW MANY ROOMS?

290 – 192 Deluxe, 24 Grand Deluxe, 56 Club Deluxe and six Club Grand Deluxe, and 12 suites.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Great location and views, free wifi and a superb selection of restaurants.

### PRICE

Internet rates for a midweek stay in May started from ¥44,090 (£305) for a Deluxe room.

### CONTACT

Palace Hotel Tokyo, 1-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; tel +81 332 115 211; palacehoteltokyo.com; lhw.com

- FREE WIFI
- MINIBAR
- 24hr ROOM SERVICE
- 11 MEETING ROOMS
- BUSINESS CENTRE
- EXECUTIVE FLOOR
- 4 RESTAURANTS
- 3 BARS
- GYM
- POOL
- SPA