



Heart in the Right Palace

STORY BY Dian Arthen PHOTOS BY Palace Hotel Tokyo

Japan is known as a modern country that still maintains its traditional values, and this translates to its architecture. Palace Hotel Tokyo in the Marunouchi district is one perfect example of traditional-meets-modern architecture. It has a modern design that pays homage to Japanese heritage site and with a touch of nature within the area.



Marunouchi is the less touristy district in Tokyo when compared to the popular ones such as Ginza and Shibuya. Marunouchi, located between the Tokyo Imperial Palace and Tokyo Station, is Tokyo's financial and commercial district, the largest office area in Japan where most big companies are located including the country's three largest banks.

Instead of tourists, this area is flocked with international business travelers from all over the world, allowing for the hospitality industry to flourish. Among the many places to stay in Marunouchi, there's one hotel that stands out for its sleek tower design, historical background and strategic location. This place is called Palace Hotel Tokyo.

The History

Palace Hotel Tokyo is located on 1-1-1 Marunouchi and has been opening its door to guests since 1961. But if you look back to previous years, Hotel Teito was actually the first occupant of the address. It was opened in 1947 and featured a western-inspired structure. The property was originally built as

the Forestry Office of the Imperial Household before being converted into a hotel. In 1959, Hotel Teito was sold and replaced with Palace Hotel, a modern hotel for a modern era.

Back in those days, Palace Hotel was the first in Tokyo to share property with an office building. The total area of the hotel was 10,430 sqm with a total floor area of 65,470 sqm. Its outer walls were blanketed with 1.6 million Shigaraki tiles from the Shiga Prefecture that symbolise harmony with nature. The combination of traditional materials and modern architectural style with a Japanese touch was considered a breakthrough back then, garnering Palace Hotel the Architectural Industry Association Prize in 1953.

In 2009, Palace Hotel was closed temporarily for an extensive renovation and was rebuilt from the ground up to reopen three years later. The new Palace Hotel Tokyo is more contemporary in terms of design but still maintains its strong historical elements; the Shiragaki tiles were repurposed, the original bar counter from Royal Bar was restored and the traditional ink wash painting that was previously hung in the old Chiyoda Suite now can be seen at the entrance of the new suite.

design overseas PALACE HOTEL TOKYO

The Palace

Right across Palace Hotel Tokyo is the ancient Otemon Gate of Edo Castle. The hotel is also a 10-minute walk from Tokyo station and a stone's throw away from Marunouchi Naka Dori, one of Tokyo's high-end shopping and dining destinations.

When it comes to design, Palace Hotel Tokyo hired several design firms to transform its vision into reality. Mitsubishi Jisho Sekkei Inc. was in charge of designing the mixed-use development. GA Design International was in charge of the lobby, public spaces, dining outlets such as The Palace Lounge, Royal Bar and Grand Kitchen, guestrooms and Amber Palace. A.N.D. (Aoyama Nomura Design) was in charge of the hotel's signature Japanese restaurant Wadakura and its in-house wedding chapel. Design Post Inc. was in charge of the hotel's French fine dining restaurant Crown, Lounge Bar Privé and its Shinto Shrine. Moreover, MEC Design International collaborated with GA Design International

for the hotel's evian SPA Tokyo, swimming pool, fitness centre and meeting spaces.

Stepping inside the entrance area, guests will notice the Shiragaki tiles that resemble the stones from the Imperial Palace across the street. The hotel's opulent design is most visible in the guestrooms, lobby and other spacious areas.

The hotel was purposefully designed to showcase Tokyo's greeneries and picture-perfect skyline, most of the rooms are painted in natural colours and have balconies overlooking the Imperial Palace.

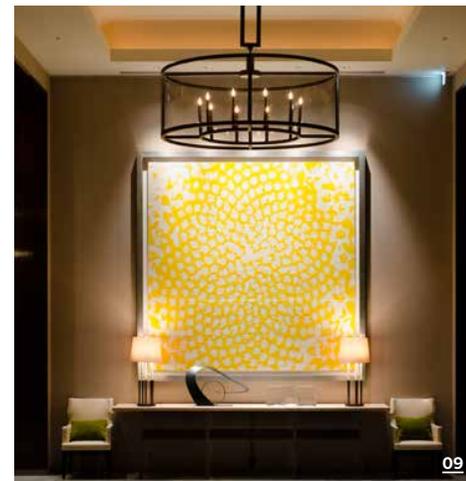
The lobby is airy, with double-height ceilings, tall windows and modern paintings hung in several spots. There's a large fireplace found at the Palace Lounge, and not far from it is a white grand piano and bespoke six-metre shelves carved from Macassar ebony that give a luxurious look. To balance out the modern element, a



Japanese maple tree tamukeyama momiji is planted in one of the lobby's seating areas to symbolise changing seasons.

Tree patterns on the walls of Lounge Bar Privé, its leaf-shaped bar to the hotel's hand-tufted, deep green carpets all echo the connection with nature. Located on the sixth floor, the bar is very chic and boasts an intimate atmosphere. By day visitors can see the Imperial Palace gardens and by night the twinkling lights of the city's skyline from the outdoor terrace.

At the hotel's signature Japanese restaurant Wadakura, a team of local artisans worked together to skillfully combine traditional Japanese techniques and building materials with contemporary artistic interpretation to create extraordinary craftsmanship.



The textured walls were made by artisan plasterer Naoki Kusumi, there's intricate naguri-style woodwork seen on the floors of tatami-style private dining areas.

Meanwhile, the design of its famous evian SPA Tokyo is inspired by French Alps. Hence the natural setting. The floor-to-ceiling windows provide views of snow-capped Mt. Fuji that can only be seen on a clear day.

Apart from these nature elements, Palace Hotel Tokyo has a vast array of artworks, highlighting the talents of some of Japan's finest contemporary artists and showcasing the country's rich artistic heritage. Palace Hotel houses around 1,000 paintings, watercolours, glassworks and other artworks that were commissioned specifically for the hotel and all of them took inspiration from its scenic setting. #

- 01 Palace Hotel Tokyo's Main Lobby
- 02 Exterior with Tatsumi Watchtower
- 03 Wadakura Private Dining, Tatami Style
- 04 Palace Hotel Tokyo Grand Kitchen
- 05 Palace Hotel Tokyo Crown
- 06 Grand Kitchen Terrace
- 07 Palace Suite Bedroom
- 08 Autumn views seen from the hotel
- 09 Art collection Sunflower by Masahito Katayama