

# Back, in Style

JAPAN'S TOURISM INDUSTRY TOOK A HAMMERING IN THE WAKE OF THE 2011 TSUNAMI, BUT TWO YEARS ON SOME INTRIGUING NEW HOTEL OPENINGS ARE HELPING LURE BACK WELL-HEELED TRAVELLERS. PAUL KAY AND JESSICA NG REPORT



## THE PALACE HOTEL TOKYO

Attention to detail is a quality often attributed to the Japanese, and not without reason. But even those who are accustomed to the nation's meticulous drive for perfection will be struck by the Palace's obsession with the finer points. From the elegantly appointed rooms replete with carefully selected amenities and traditional details – such as bath towels from Imabari, Maruyama Nori teas and handmade tea sets from Tochigi prefecture – to the impeccably trained, kimono-clad staff and beautifully measured décor throughout, the Palace will satisfy the most punctilious of pedants and delight lovers of clean, elegant design. Reopened in May 2012 following a US\$1.2 billion renovation that saw the old Palace Hotel demolished and completely rebuilt, the all-new Palace enjoys the same privileged position adjacent to Tokyo's Imperial Palace, primary seat of the emperor and his family. Bordered on two sides by the palace moat with its resident swans, the hotel offers breathtaking views of the Imperial Palace gardens, a 3.5sqkm green space in the heart of the city that was valued in the 1980s at more than all California's real estate, and the twinkling skyline beyond. There are no fewer than 10 restaurants and bars to choose from, including the gorgeous Wadakura (named after the moat used to transfer food to the Imperial Palace),

with its impressive water feature, hand-carved floor and flawless Japanese cuisine; and Crown, a grand French fancy from Patrick Henriroux of La Pyramide fame. The hotel also boasts a near 13,000sqft Evian Spa (only the second to open outside of France) that ranks among Japan's best, and two wedding venues: a serene and light-flooded chapel and an ornate traditional Shinto shrine with painstakingly carved ceilings and walls.

**PERFECT FOR** Roaming royalty  
**RESTAURANTS** Crown, Wadakura  
**BATHROOM BUBBLES** Anne Semonin  
**CLASSY TOUCH** Beautiful balconies from which to survey your empire  
**WEBSITE** [en.palacehoteltokyo.com](http://en.palacehoteltokyo.com)

**PALATIAL SPLENDOR**  
**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT**  
 Inside the Evian Spa at the Palace Hotel; the plush Royal Bar; the wedding chapel



**OPEN UP**  
**FROM LEFT**  
Spellbinding views from The Gate's lobby; room designs are courtesy of Masaru Suzuki

### THE GATE HOTEL KAMINARIMON

The newest kid on the block is the 137-room The Gate Hotel Kaminarimon, which lies on the cusp of past and present Tokyo close to the Asakusa Shrine. Designed by Shigeru Uchida of Kobe Fashion Museum fame, the revamped office block boasts an atmospheric roof terrace featuring an unhindered view of the skyline with the nearby Tokyo Skytree and even nearer Kaminarimon Gate as the breathtaking backdrop, a view the 13th floor lobby optimises courtesy of the floor-to-ceiling windows. Uchida's signature lighting is reflected in the custom-built lobby chandelier that plays on the refraction of natural light at different angles. Bold textiles courtesy of Marimekko designer

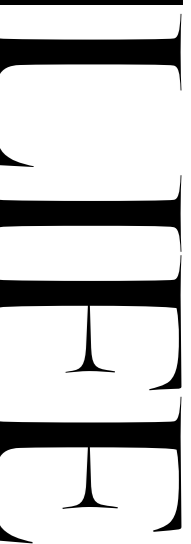


Masaru Suzuki adorn the rooms, while original artworks by Katsuhiko Hibino greet you in the lobby and throughout the hotel. Expansive windows overlook the famous *shitamachi* (Old Town) or contemporary Tokyo, and bathe the moody colour scheme in natural light.

**PERFECT FOR** The bold and the beautiful  
**RESTAURANT** R Restaurant and Bar  
**BATHROOM BUBBLES** Gemid Spa & Beauty  
**CLASSY TOUCH** Uchida L'uovo floor lamps  
**WEBSITE** gate-hotel.jp



**TRAVEL**  
Great  
Escapes



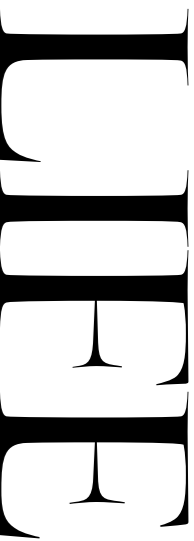
**ALL ABOARD**  
**FROM TOP**  
Make a grand entrance at The Tokyo Station Hotel; the fitness bath; lighting up Central Tokyo

### THE TOKYO STATION HOTEL

The decadence of railway travel makes a comeback in Japan thanks to the reopening of The Tokyo Station Hotel following a six-year facelift. Originally built in conjunction with the central railways and Tokyo Station, the nigh 100-year-old accommodation retains the charms of a bygone era, set out by Meiji-period architect Kingo Tatsuno. One hundred and fifty guestrooms are decked out with contemporary necessities such as iPod docks, flatscreen televisions and complimentary wifi. The British colonial-inspired décor adds to the historic air of the hotel, which survived the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake and World War II. The most spectacular of the suites are the two-storey maisonette guestrooms secluded in the corner towers and the 1,862sqft Royal Suite with separate living area and den. The Atrium guest lounge and cupola viewing platform continue the bygone-era theme, looking as if they could have been favoured haunts of some of Japan's literary greats. Among the in-house wine-and-dine options is the Bar & Café Camellia, where you can sip on its acclaimed one-of-a-kind cocktails before boarding the Shinkansen to the south.

**PERFECT FOR** Trainspotters  
**RESTAURANT** Bar & Café Camellia  
**BATHROOM BUBBLES** Bulgari and Gilchrist & Soames  
**CLASSY TOUCH** The view from the Archive Balcony  
**WEBSITE** thetokyostationhotel.jp





THE VIEW FROM THE TOP IN TOKYO

**PARK HYATT**

The memorable setting for the Scarlett Johansson/Bill Murray movie *Lost in Translation*, the hotel in the imposing 52-storey Shinjuku Park Tower offers amazing views over Tokyo, with Mount Fuji as the backdrop to the cityscape. [tokyo.park.hyatt.com](http://tokyo.park.hyatt.com)

**THE PENINSULA**

A bird's-eye view over the Imperial Palace, Shinjuku's skyline and the illuminated skyscrapers of Ginza mean you don't have to leave the room or the 24th floor restaurant, Peter, to take in the sights. [peninsula.com/tokyo](http://peninsula.com/tokyo)

**HOTEL NIKKO**

Spectacular views of Tokyo Bay and Rainbow Bridge. Say your I-dos at the Luce Mare chapel, recline in the outdoor jet bath, or dine in the plethora of restaurants, all with a panoramic bay-side backdrop. [hnt.co.jp](http://hnt.co.jp)

**MANDARIN ORIENTAL**

Sweeping views take in the attractions of the business centre in Nihonbashi, one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods with a 400-year history. Nine dining and drinking options, including French-inspired Signature on the 37th floor, can dull that rush of acrophobia. [mandarinoriental.com/tokyo](http://mandarinoriental.com/tokyo)



**THE SIMPLE LIFE**

**FROM LEFT** Let nature in at Hoshinoya Okinawa with the villas' open bathrooms; take a dip in the pool under the wide Okinawan sky; get hitched at Hotel Nikko

**HOSHINOYA OKINAWA**

Ferrying further south to Taketomi Island is the resort of Hoshinoya Okinawa, nestled near villages and a way of life that time forgot. A village in itself, the six-hectare complex offers 48 villas that range from 570sqft to almost 2,800sqft (including a private garden). There is a central Okinawan-French fusion restaurant, Ryukyu Nouvelle, a spa house, a 24-hour open-air pool and a lounge with complimentary refreshments. The resort blends into the nearby village with its red-roofed wooden houses surrounded by high stone walls that wind through the premises. White sands of crushed coral pave the roads and gardens and reflect natural light through wood-framed sliding glass doors. Of the 300-odd inhabitants on the tiny island, you're sure to meet a few by enrolling in traditional handicraft classes or just making a splash in the surrounding coral reefs.

**PERFECT FOR** Serenity seekers

**RESTAURANT** Ryukyu Nouvelle

**BATHROOM BUBBLES** Hoshino's own

**CLASSY TOUCH** 24-hour butler service

**WEBSITE** [global.hoshinoresort.com/hoshinoya\\_okinawa](http://global.hoshinoresort.com/hoshinoya_okinawa)



**T**  
FOR MORE  
ON TRAVEL, VISIT  
[HONGKONGTATLER.COM](http://HONGKONGTATLER.COM)

**RITZ-CARLTON, OKINAWA**

From local favourite to international destination, the secret's out on the getaway of Okinawa. Overlooking the East China Sea and the Motubo Peninsula, the 97-room Ritz-Carlton Okinawa stands within the Kise Country Club, with its impeccably manicured 18-hole golf course, and next to the ancient Yambaru forest. Two suites of more than 1,000sqft rest within the hotel's distinctive red clay-tiled roof and whitewashed walls. As well as catering to a golfer's every need, the hotel also features The Ritz-Carlton Spa & Fitness by ESPA, a short garden stroll away in a separate enclave, which boasts 10 treatment rooms, a bedrock spa with white local corals, a gym and indoor pool. The two spa suites feature relaxation lounges, forest-view steam showers and stone baths that overlook private outdoor wooden decks.



**PERFECT FOR** Golf champs

**RESTAURANT** KISE

**BATHROOM BUBBLES** Asprey

**CLASSY TOUCH** Stargazing telescope

**WEBSITE** [ritzcarlton.com/okinawa](http://ritzcarlton.com/okinawa)

**ALL FORE ONE FROM TOP**

Relax at the Ritz-Carlton Spa by ESPA; home on the range in the surrounding golf course

