

# Serviced apartments: the smart traveler’s choice

## The preferred alternative to hotels for globe-trotting executives and families on the move

By MICHIRU YOSHINO  
Contributing writer

From Beijing and Dubai to London, Los Angeles and Sydney, and on to Tokyo, serviced apartments are becoming the choice of smart international travelers and short-term residents.

Serviced apartments are furnished, self-contained apartments that are rented for short periods of time, usually from several weeks or months. As a home away from home, they generally have a lounge, a bathroom and a kitchen, in addition to one or more bedrooms.

With the continual increase in international travel and the rising sophistication of travelers, serviced apartments are quickly becoming a preferred alternative to hotels. This is especially so among business

people because the apartments offer more privacy and freedom while being comparatively inexpensive. Reflecting the demand of globe-trotting executives, many today come with desks and Internet connections. Furthermore, some even provide small offices to cater to business executives on short-term contracts in a foreign country.

Serviced apartments also appeal to families on the move. They offer ample space and freedom to cook and share a family meal, for example. Many families thus choose to live, eat and sleep in one apartment, rather than being spread out over several hotel rooms. Another advantage of serviced apartments is that they are often in good locations within city centers.

The quality of the apartments can vary. This is especially so in Western countries, where people with second homes rent them out for short-stay visitors. Agencies may offer a higher standard of apartment because they realize that people who rent short-stay accommodations seek comfort and a good standard of furnishing. Furthermore, quality serviced apartments also usually offer greater levels of customer service.

**Tokyo serviced apartments**

The concept of serviced apartments is quite new in Japan, and it is only recently that they have become popular. Monthly rates differ greatly from around ¥200,000 to ¥3 million, depending on the offered services. Usually,

it takes around one week after your first visit until you can actually move in.

Explained below are the general procedures you will have to take with an agent to rent a serviced apartment in Tokyo.

First, you make an appointment to inspect the apartment. After checking the apartment, you decide whether you would like to rent it. Applications are usually accepted up to one month before moving in. You should then check the terms of the contract. Some apartments offer a minimum leasing period of weeks while others can be rented for one month and more. The leasing procedure differs according to whether it is a corporate rental or an individual rental.

When renting on a corporate basis, the following documents are necessary: copies of the corporate registration, corporate seal registration certificate, corporate summary, corporate annual report or tax return application, as well as an identification certificate of the resident(s).

In the case of renting as an individual, the necessary documents are: copies of an employment certificate, identification certificate, seal registration certificate, as well as the income tax return from the previous year.

The lease agreement should be signed and submitted at least one day before moving in. The full amount of the rent for the term of your contract should also be transferred to the designated bank account at least one working day before moving in.

Generally speaking, services included in the rent are management fees for common use areas, air conditioning, utilities fees such as gas, water and electricity, as well as various other services such as the Internet, cable TV and telephone line rental fees. At the most exclusive serviced apartments housekeeping is also included in the rent.

No key money or security deposit is usually required, and the number of people allowed to live in the apartment is determined by the rent. High-grade serviced apartments generally have a bilingual concierge desk to respond to the various requirements of residents, such as medical facility guidance, shopping advice, school information and so on.



THE ENTRANCE of one of Retec's serviced apartments, Roppongi Duplex M's. The complex rubs shoulders with foreign embassies and exclusive homes in a superb location that offers a comfortable and convenient urban life in Tokyo's cosmopolitan Roppongi district.

# ‘Just bring a suitcase’ to a Duplex

Retec Consultants Co. and Duplex Gathering Co. provide serviced apartments, enabling short- or long-stay tenants to enjoy a comfortable life in the heart of Tokyo.

Retec Consultants original-

ly started as an architectural office, and it has been planning, developing and selling high-quality condominiums since 1980. Duplex Gathering is one of its business divisions that specializes in managing

its serviced apartments.

Today, Retec Consultants operates eight serviced apartments in the heart of Tokyo, including the Roppongi, Ginza, Takanawa, Kamiyacho, Mita, Minami-Azabu and Ikebukuro areas. All the apartments are in extremely convenient locations, a two- to seven-minute walk from stations.

Duplex aims to offer a high-quality urban lifestyle by providing the services of a city hotel while maintaining the comfort and functionality of an exclusive apartment. Retec's experience and know-how as a real estate developer is reflected in the attention to detail and considerate services offered by the apartments, which make urban living a genuinely enjoyable and comfortable experience.

True to its catch phrase — “Just bring your suitcase” — Duplex serviced apartments are all equipped with modern furniture and the latest household electrical appliances that create a comfortable living environment for short- and long-term visitors. The reasonable monthly rents from ¥167,000 for a studio, which translates to a mere ¥5,400 per day, also make these apartments particularly attractive. Even a two-bedroom unit measuring over 70 sq. meters can be rented for around ¥600,000 a month. Due to such attractive pricing, many corporations are signing up on an annual basis.



THE LIVING room of a two-bedroom (J type) unit at Ikebukuro Duplex Tower. The unit, located on the top floor of the 27-story tower, occupies 71.3 sq. meters (above). The exterior of Ikebukuro Duplex Tower, which stands in a premium location just a two-minute walk from the Ikebukuro Station past the Metropolitan Plaza's brand-name shops (right).



THERE ARE 172 rooms on 14 floors at Roppongi Duplex Tower, which is just a six-minute walk from Roppongi Station.

For example, Roppongi Duplex Tower is a pure white, 14-story building that houses 172 rooms, and is only a six-minute walk from Roppongi Station. Roppongi is not only extremely convenient for business, but offers access to some of Tokyo's most fashionable lifestyles and culture through such facilities as Roppongi Hills, Tokyo Midtown and The National Art Center.

Studios, single-bedroom and double-bedroom units are available at the Roppongi Duplex Tower. The front desk has bilingual staff on a regular basis, who respond to visitors, take messages when you are out and provide information on nearby facilities. At night, security staff take over the front desk to watch over the building and its grounds, and ensure the safety of residents and visitors.

Ikebukuro Duplex Tower, meanwhile, is just a two-minute walk from the West Exit of Ikebukuro Station. It is the first fully furnished serviced apartment complex in Ikebu-

kuro with over 100 suites and front concierge service. Ikebukuro is one of Tokyo's major rail terminals, serving the JR Yamanote, Seibu and Tokyo Metro lines.

Located within a 27-story high-rise in front of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space, where various concerts, theatrical performances and other events are held, Ikebukuro Duplex Tower offers a vast array of room types, from studios to two-bedroom units, with scenic views.

Owing to the high quality of the living space, facilities, services and hospitality offered by Retec's Duplex, the serviced apartments attract many tenants from around the world, including Europe, the U.S. and Asia. Enjoy spacious living in ever-changing Tokyo. Duplex's serviced apartments are here, waiting to become your second home. (M.Y.)

THE SPACIOUS, serene lounge of Ikebukuro Duplex Tower faces a wood-deck sunken garden, which leads to the main entrance.



ROPPONGI DUPLEX TOWER G-TYPE



IKEBUKURO DUPLEX TOWER FRONT



TAKANAWA DUPLEX'S RELAXATION CORNER

### SERVICES MENU

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Bed-making  
House-cleaning  
Laundry

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Visitor Message Reception  
Information  
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Specific amenities for each apartment vary. For details, please inquire directly.

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(Publicity)

# SERVICED APARTMENT SPECIAL/WORLD

## Spacious hideaways in town

Daiwa Monthly Co. is a large-scale operator of serviced apartments in Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka. New properties that opened in Yokohama in February and Azabu Juban, Tokyo, in March are the first in a series of new complexes scheduled to begin operations this year.

The concept of the serviced apartments operated by Dai-

wa Monthly, an affiliate of the Daiwa House Group, is the provision of fully furnished, exclusive residential space. Specifically, the aim is to provide more space than you could possibly ask for — or get — at a business hotel. The D-Room Stay concept allows you to bring just a bag for a relaxing stay at a spacious hideaway that is much roomier than a hotel.

Opened in the futuristic bay area of Minatomirai, Yokohama, D-Room Stay Minatomirai Ocean Tower offers breathtaking views of the harbor city. This serviced apartment complex is just an eight-minute walk from Minatomirai Station on the Tokyu Minatomirai Line or a seven-minute walk from Shin-Takashima Station on the same line. It

can also be reached by foot from Yokohama Station in 15 minutes.

In addition to the magnificent views, the high-class serviced apartments have a 42-inch dynamic home theater system, so you can enjoy your favorite movies on the huge screen while relaxing over a drink. The bedrooms are equipped with a spacious double bed, from which you can also enjoy the sea view. There are 52 rooms of varying types, from single-bedroom to two-bedroom apartments, with floor space of 38.98 sq. meters to 66.07 sq. meters. Available for 30 days and up, monthly rents vary according to room type and length of stay. Separate fees are charged for electricity and cleaning upon moving out.

D-Room Stay Azabu Juban is also superbly located, just a five-minute walk from Akabane-bashi Station on the Toei Oedo Line or an eight-minute walk from Azabu Juban Station on the Toei Oedo and Tokyo Metro Nanboku lines.

The vista from the windows here is a close-up of Tokyo Tower. The living rooms are the most avant-garde business space that you will find anywhere, but they still manage to combine human warmth, quality and refine-



THE LIVING and dining room of a one-bedroom unit at D-Room Stay Azabu Juban has 23.96 sq. meters of floor space, and is equipped with a fabric sofa, a 37-inch TV and work desk.

ment. The sophisticated ambience has attracted overseas staffers assigned to Japan for less than a year, Japanese businessmen working in Tokyo for several months, as well as others seeking a second home in the heart of the nation's capital.

The living rooms have a natural-colored fabric sofa,

with matching lighting, curtains and other interior items, complemented by a 37-inch TV.

The bedrooms have a natural wooden bed that is very spacious and luxurious. The closets are fitted with wooden slats to prevent damp and mold from forming. Forty-seven studios or one-bedroom

units are available, with floor space ranging from 40.44 sq. meters to 56.2 sq. meters.

Here again, the minimum length of stay is 30 days, and monthly rents are according to room type and length of stay. Separate fees are charged for electricity and cleaning upon moving out. (M.Y.)

## Hotel-like service and home comforts

Tokyu Relocation's Tokyu Stay Yotsuya Residence serviced apartments can be rented for one month or longer. Due to its popularity, the complex was recently renovated to offer more comfortable and functional facilities, a high level of security and heartwarming hospitality. As a result, the property is attracting long-term guests, including company executives from around the world.

The most recent addition to Tokyu Relocation's serviced apartments is Tokyu Stay Aoyama Residence. Blending into refined and chic Aoyama, the new complex offers more

spacious and advanced facilities to provide a more affluent lifestyle.

Both properties offer a luxurious stay in a fully furnished, rented residence in the best parts of Tokyo close to all amenities. To ensure the type of high-end services you would find at a hotel, these two residences offer the functionality and convenience you would look for in good office space, and the comfort and relaxation of high-quality housing.

To fulfill the needs of the most discerning tenants, Tokyu Stay Residences offer 24-hour front service, including

a delivery receiving service and laundry service. To assure the safety of residents, in addition to a 24-hour security service, the elevators to the residential floors are for the exclusive use of tenants.

Comfortable living is also guaranteed by the daily necessities, such as furniture, household electrical appliances, kitchen utensils and so on that you will find in every unit. There is a regular housekeeping service, including room cleaning and linen exchange (once a week at Tokyu Stay Yotsuya Residence, twice a week at Tokyu Stay Aoyama Residence).

Furthermore, real-time office work can be conducted over the Internet LAN cable installed in each room. The lounge areas (private lounge for Yotsuya and a public one for Aoyama) can be used for various meetings, business and private.

Tokyu Stay Yotsuya Residence is only a four-minute walk from Yotsuya Station on the JR and Tokyo Metro lines. The lobby area looks onto a courtyard with lush greenery and running water. With only 32 units, each room here is spacious, with even the smallest (A type) measuring 41.6 sq. meters. The largest (D type) offers 62.55 sq. meters of floor space.

Monthly rents are from ¥380,000 to ¥460,000.

A one-month deposit is required for one to three-month rentals while residents staying for four months or more have to pay a two-month deposit. Another point of note is that you can enjoy a complimentary continental breakfast throughout your stay at the Yotsuya and Aoyama properties.

Tokyu Stay Aoyama Residence will open April 15. Close to Gaien-mae Station on the Tokyo Metro Ginza Line, the property is ideally located in Aoyama, with its fashions,



A STUDIO (B type) at the Tokyu Stay Aoyama Residence offers 41 sq. meters of space and is available for ¥490,000 a month. The serviced apartment complex will open April 15.



THE LOBBY of the Tokyu Stay Yotsuya Residence (above) looks onto a courtyard with lush greenery and running water (below).



world-class cuisine and rich green environment just outside the front door.

Aoyama is a synonym for sophistication and social status. In this affluent Tokyo neighborhood, Tokyu Stay Aoyama Residence offers 50 rooms of three different

types: A-type studio (35 sq. meters), B-type studio (41 sq. meters) and C-type 1-bedroom apartment (50 sq. meters). Monthly rents are ¥420,000, ¥490,000 and ¥600,000, respectively, and a one-month deposit is required. (M.Y.)

## Private-eye trial may reveal juicy secrets of stars

### Hollywood braces for embarrassing revelations

LOS ANGELES (AFP-Jiji) Off the record, on the q.t. and very hush, hush, the trial of a Hollywood private eye who counted A-list stars among his clients is stirring fears of what secrets might crawl out of the woodwork.

Anthony Pellicano, dubbed "the P.I. to the stars" went on trial Wednesday on 110 counts of illegal telephone tapping and racketeering with four coaccused.

Eyebrows were already raised among the rich and famous in 2006 when he was charged as the rumor mill went into overdrive speculating what juicy secrets might be revealed as police scoured his Sunset Boulevard offices.

Gossip mongers were salivating Wednesday as prosecutors unveiled a list of potential witnesses, including some of Hollywood's top stars such as Sylvester Stallone, Keith Carradine, Chris Rock and Farrah Fawcett.

They also said two of Hollywood's most powerful men, the head of the Paramount Studios, Brad Grey, and the former head of Disney, Michael Ovitz, who had supposedly hired Pellicano, could be called to testify.

"Perhaps Hollywood's paranoia regarding the trial of Anthony Pellicano was justified," said the industry daily Variety. Prosecutors told the court they would use as evidence hours of tapes between the accused and his clients.

The tapes were all seized when he was first arrested in 2006.

Those stars called to testify under oath at the trial might find themselves hit by some embarrassing revelations, says columnist Joel Stratte-McClure, who writes for the Los Angeles Daily News.

Tidbits, which have already filtered out to the press, suggest that Pellicano was hired for a whole range of issues, from divorces to disputes between producers and filmmakers.

One director, John McTier-nan, was sentenced to four months in prison in September 2007 for lying to investigators.

For Stratte-McClure, the affair is symptomatic not just of Hollywood but of "rich America" in which legal success is often measured by how much you can afford to pay your lawyer.

Pellicano, who is defending himself in court, said Thurs-



FORMER DISNEY HEAD Michael Ovitz (top), actress Farrah Fawcett and comedian Chris Rock could be called as witness in the trial of Anthony Pellicano. AP, REUTERS PHOTOS

day, that his clients' problems became his problems. For such personal care, he charged his clients tens of thousands of dollars.

"Hollywood is generally a very well-greased machine, that involves everybody from publicist to security officials, private trainers and everything else that caters to these individuals. They have a lot of money, and can have legitimate concerns about their security," says Stratte-McClure.

"But when you're involved with helpers, finders, fixers, you can go with someone who can solve problems quickly, even if he used illegitimate means."

So far, Pellicano, who has spent 30 months in prison for possessing explosives, has remained tight-lipped, refusing to talk about his clients.

## Use of force costly for police

LOS ANGELES (AP) A jury awarded a man a \$1.3 million verdict, saying deputies used excessive force when they peppered his sport utility vehicle with 66 bullets.

Winston Hayes, 46, suffered nine bullet wounds when deputies fired 120 shots at him at the end of a low-speed pursuit on May 9, 2005. More than half the bullets hit Hayes' vehicle. "Justice was done," Hayes said after the verdict.

"We do hope this verdict acts as a catalyst for building relationships between the sheriff's department and the community it serves," said Brian Dunn, Hayes' attorney. Lawyers for the county declined comment.

After 10 days of deliberations, the jury determined Friday that Los Angeles Sheriff's Department deputies Michael Haggerty and Vergilian Bolde used excessive force. Nine of the 12 jurors voted for the award, the minimum required in a civil case.

Deputies testified that they believed Hayes had attempted to run them down, and all said they only fired to save their own life or that of a fellow deputy. One deputy was caught in the crossfire but was only slightly wounded.

Thirteen deputies involved received disciplinary actions ranging from written reprimands to 15-day suspensions. Jurors said they discussed the past and motivations of Hayes, who had previous convictions for arson, assault, theft and resisting arrest. He conceded that he had used cocaine and marijuana the night the shots were fired.

Amateur video of the end of the 12-minute chase showed Hayes, who authorities believed had been involved in a shooting that night in Compton, Calif., stopped by a squad cars with about a dozen deputies approaching him.

The deputies opened fire after Hayes' SUV lurched forward and struck a patrol car.



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