

Luxury Hotel

(Publicity)

Luxury hotels plan to satisfy all your needs

Five-, six-star establishments in Tokyo fill their calendars with special events, experiences

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Spacious, exclusive rooms with grand vistas and exquisite cuisine are some of the features you naturally expect at luxury hotels. But with the so-called "hotel wars" that swept through the country forcing the premier names to upgrade their hardware to the highest possible levels, these establishments are starting to concentrate more on ways to

refine their software.

Discerning customers are quick to pick up on such changes and are devouring the emotional values that five- or six-star hotels are offering. Impeccable service, ambience, unobtrusive hospitality and exclusivity away from humdrum daily life have become the norm for luxury hotels in Japan. But what's next?

The answer lies in the experiences and special moments they can offer that are worth

more than the price you pay.

On a simple, private level, this may be time away from your busy schedule to enjoy a relaxing glass of your favorite drink during their happy hours. But there's always so much more on the menu.

When you can afford the time, check out their special events or services — you'll find there's something special almost every day, week or month of the year — with the concierge or guest relations,

or a visit to their home page will give a clearer image of what they can offer you.

At luxury hotels, organizing extravagant seasonal events is just part of their routine. They are joined by Western festivities like Halloween and Christmas, and don't forget traditional Japanese events such as the yearend and New Year's. Then there are hotel originals, such as French gourmet weeks or sake tasting, for example. And you will

always be able to find something special for the "ladies." As a result, most days of the calendar will be filled with events and campaigns.

Of course, which of these events you decide to try depends solely on your taste and preference. But if you are pressed for time, another point to consider is the location of each hotel. Though driving or taking a taxi may be more comfortable and convenient, trains are often a smarter means of transportation in Japan. This is especially so during the high tourist seasons like autumn when the roads are very congested. After all, you wouldn't want to spend more time stuck in traffic, with the meter running, than at the hotel itself!



Family affair: A special gala dinner, featuring Primum Familiae Vini (PFV), an association of some of the world's finest wine-producing families, will take place Nov. 18 in the Shangri-La Ballroom on level 27.

Enjoy the art of hospitality at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo

Art is the focus this autumn at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo, located in the heart of hip, exciting and fashionable Roppongi.

The "lifestyle destination hotel" is inviting you to come and enjoy its 200 plus contemporary art installations throughout the hotel, and to savor the culinary art of the season at its fine restaurants. Highlights of some of the most tempting autumn events follow.

The Oak Door

The Oak Door is known for premium-quality meat and seasonal produce dynamically cooked in its wood (oak)-burning oven.

Through Nov. 30, there's a "Wine and Dine 2009" promotion on the terrace. This all-you-can-eat-and-drink event offers a variety of attractive grills, including sausages and pork rilletes, as well as free-flowing beverages, including sparkling, red and white wine, beer and soda. It's ¥6,500 per person for any two hours between 6 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. (last admission 8:30 p.m.).

On Halloween, Oct. 31, a Halloween Brunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The children's lunch plate (¥2,800) is topped with a variety of colorful candies in small plastic pumpkins as a special take-away treat. In the evening, a Halloween Party plan is available, with as much to eat and drink as you can manage. Any two hours between 6 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. (last admission: 8:30 p.m.) will cost you ¥6,300.

For more information and reservations for both events, call (03) 4333-8784.

The French Kitchen

This dining and drinking area serves authentic seasonal dishes in buffet and a la carte styles, from breakfast to dinner. The main interior features include eye-catching floor-to-ceiling racks of wine with glass walls, a chic bar, a catwalklike runway, a breezy terrace and open kitchen.

A Halloween Grand Buffet dinner will be served Oct. 30 and 31, from 6 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. (¥8,600 for adults, ¥4,300 for children).

And Oct. 31, there's a Halloween Brunch, from 11:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. (¥6,300 for adults, ¥3,150 for children). Those who come in costume will receive a small gift.

Maduro

This is the luxurious main bar of the hotel, and offers nightly live entertainment, a special whiskey-tasting room, gas-burning lanterns and an extensive selection of premium cigars.

Through Nov. 30, you can enjoy a relaxing "Breeze from the Caribbean," featuring mojitos, the signature, rum-based cocktail from Havana that was one of Ernest Hemingway's favorite tipples. There'll be live Latin jazz, five different types of premium vintage rum and three kinds of Cuban Cohiba Maduro 5 cigars.

Club Chic

The mini autumn version of this popular annual disco event will be held Oct. 23 at Co-



High quality: Floor-to-ceiling racks of wine at The French Kitchen Brasserie & Bar in the Grand Hyatt Tokyo

riander. Club DJs will spin the greatest hits of the '70s and classics from back in the day while you shake out the creases in your flares on a specially re-created disco dance floor under an oversize mirror ball. Charge: ¥10,000 per person.

The Christmas version of Club Chic will be held Dec. 25, featuring popular soul singer Bro. KONE, who will be joined on stage by illustrator-cum-dance instructor Ai Emori, the DJ of the night. The heat will really be turned up with the arrival of Michael Tsuruoka,

aka the "King of Soul," who will show you how to get down with some spectacular dance lessons. VIP tickets are ¥23,000, regular tickets ¥13,000.

Both of the above events will kick off at 8 p.m. and run through midnight. The dress code is semiformal and no jeans or sneakers are allowed. As the drinks will be flowing freely, there's no admission to those under 20 years of age. For reservations, call the Events Department at (03) 4333-8838.

Christophe Lorvo was named the new general manager of the Grand Hyatt Tokyo on May 1. An expert in the hospitality industry, Lorvo brings a wealth of experience and understanding to his new appointment. His personal comments follow.

Working in Japan

In Japan, attention to detail, the sense of hospitality and quality of service are all of a very high standard. I had the opportunity of staying at a Japanese "ryokan (inn)" in Kyoto and experienced true, traditional Japanese hospitality. I also have eaten at many small family-run restaurants in Tokyo where the mother serves while the father cooks and the children help out. Such "authentic hospitality" is what we, at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo, continuously strive to offer our guests.

Heartwarming episodes

We hold many charity and gala events, which we also



participate in. I have been very impressed to see that these events have become very large scale, despite the current economic situation. It is heartwarming to see how people remain supportive and engaged.

Favorite pastime

I enjoy running and cycling to Yoyogi Park about three times a week, and hope to run in the

Tokyo Marathon next year. When it is raining, I spend time at our NAGOMI Spa and Fitness, which is equipped with the latest equipment for a refreshing workout.

Personal recommendations

We have 389 uniquely designed guest rooms and suites with spacious bathrooms, incorporating a selection of natural woods and fabrics that create the ideal residential ambience. Our 10 distinctive restaurants and bars focus on culinary authenticity, design originality, quality and service while our function rooms cater to multiple-use purposes, including conferences, banquets and weddings.

Our artwork program is also unique. It introduces art pieces and designs by artists and designers from around the world that are installed throughout the hotel, including the public areas such as the lobby and restaurants, as well as the guest rooms.

The Qing Dynasty mountain landscape, the elevators' Swarovski crystal-embedded handrails, the shimmering chandeliers, the gentle, tingling of the ginkgo leaf-shaped glass and the distinctive fragrance wafting throughout the building: These are some of the important elements that enhance the exclusive, time-slip experience you will find at the Shangri-La Hotel, Tokyo.

Although located next to the hustle and bustle of Tokyo Station, the hotel has created a tranquil "sanctuary" or as the name suggests, a haven from the city's ceaseless comings and goings. The Shangri-La Hotel, Tokyo, opened in March and is the newest luxury hotel in Japan. Some of its attractive fall events are introduced below.

PFV Gala Dinner

This gala dinner Nov. 18 will take place in the Shangri-La Ballroom on level 27. Created

part of an overnight stay package starting from ¥45,000, other complimentary services include access to the hotel's health club and pool, in-room broadband Internet access as well as late checkout until 2 p.m. The package will be available through Nov. 30 and more details can be found on the home page: www.shangri-la.com/en/property/tokyo/shangri-la

Nicolai Bergmann
Nicolai Bergmann, the Danish floral artist who serves as the flower design producer of

the hotel, will hold a special event Oct. 24 and 25 on the level 27 Banquet Floor. Aesthetically fusing European floral design principles with Scandinavian style and Japanese sensitivity to detail, the event will highlight his flower arrangements and demonstrations, and there will be special flower lessons combined with lunch or dinner.

For details, contact Nicolai Bergmann Flowers & Design by phone (03) 5464-0716, fax (03) 5464-0717 or e-mail events@nicolaibergmann.com

Wolfgang Krueger was appointed general manager of the Shangri-La Hotel, Tokyo, in November 2007. With over 20 years of experience in the international hotel industry behind him, he joined Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts in 2001. Below are his comments on his work in Japan.

Working in Japan

As in any country, there are always new discoveries and my assignment in Japan is one of the perks of working in the international hotel business. The Japanese take great pride in what they do and have a desire to perfect whatever task is assigned them. The opening of a luxury hotel in Japan is not an opportunity that comes along often and I have always considered it an honor to have been able to open the Shangri-La Hotel, Tokyo, together with a great team of colleagues.

Heartwarming episodes

I take great pride in hearing from my guests about how my colleagues are always willing to go that extra mile to delight them and show them true Shangri-La hospitality. One guest wrote to tell us about a bellhop who took him to the station to catch the shinkansen (bullet train). The guest missed his breakfast as he was running late, but the bellhop bought him a "bento (boxed lunch)" out of his own pocket. This is the kind of natural hospitality we are trying to

Favorite pastime

I am a very "hands-on" general manager and I enjoy being with my colleagues regardless of who they are, be it senior managers or junior colleagues. I take all my meals with my them in the employee restaurant, as do all my management colleagues.

Personal recommendations

The Shangri-La Hotel, Tokyo, has got to be in the best location in the capital, with the Ginza and Marunouchi districts just around the corner, and the traditions of Nihonbashi only a stone's throw away. Being located directly adjacent to Tokyo Station also makes it easy for guests to connect to any destination in Japan.



instill in our people. Needless to say, the guest was so delighted that he took the time to write to me. We have heard quite a few such stories since opening on March 2 this year.

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Natural flavors: The Oak Door serves premium-quality meat and seasonal produce cooked in its wood-burning oven.

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Shangri-La hotel
TOKYO

Guided by the young Tuscan chef Paolo Pelosi who was trained at Michelin-starred restaurants in Italy, Piacere epitomizes contemporary, authentic and exquisite Italian cuisine. With magnificent views overlooking Tokyo Station and Imperial Gardens, guests will be charmed by our meticulous service and one of the largest wine selections in Tokyo.

Piacere
Only at Shangri-La

Reserve your table online on:
www.shangri-la.jp

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