

Les Clefs d'Or Japan

Key News



August 2023 *Vol.73*

Publisher: Aiko Imaizumi

Editor : Eiji Tanaka, Nozomi Sagasaki / Adrian Fautt, Akhil Tiwari

SHINSOAN a Private Inn in Kyoto

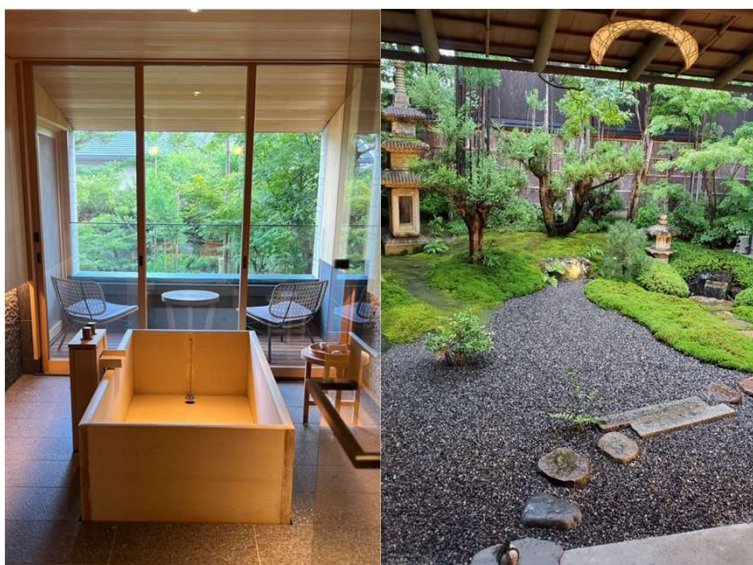
By Nozomi Sagasaki

In July and August, several of our members were invited to stay at "Shinshoann" a private hotel in Kyoto for an overnight experience. The hotel is located in the quiet residential area of Okazaki, not far from Heian Shrine. There are only four rooms, all suites. Each room had a different taste, and each was luxurious yet comfortable with a sense of tradition.

In their spacious room, you can enjoy a relaxing breakfast at the famous Kyoto cuisine restaurant "Higashiyama Ogata" in the hotel, which is exclusively for guests of the hotel. In addition, guests can enjoy tea and drinks in a private lounge in their guest house, which is a masterpiece of Sukiya carpentry by Mr. Saiji Nakamura, who created the tea ceremony room of the Ise Jingu Shrine. Guests can also enjoy the beautifully landscaped Japanese garden from the house and Higashiyama Ogata. We were contacted before our stay for event information and assistance, and during our stay, we felt that the service was personal and attentive, with constant attention to our needs.

The amenities in the rooms were very high quality, sophisticated, and made of environmentally friendly materials. The luxurious furniture and furnishings blend beautifully with the rooms, and the large hinoki cypress bathtub is a perfect place to relax.

The large Japanese umbrella pine bathtub with a view of the garden was most relaxing and peaceful place to forget time.



As a fine luxury hotel is recommended for those who want to spend quality time in peace and tranquility. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Shinshoan for giving us this precious opportunity.

The hotel accepts bookings from referral only, but they will do their best to accommodate our introduction from the Les Clefs d'Or Concierge.

Contact: info@shinsho-an.com

Dinner Gathering with Ryokan Collection

By Shinobu Kojima

The Ryokan Collection invited us to the networking event, “Tokyo Sales Week”, an event for sales activities to DMC, travel agencies, media, etc. 10 members of Les Clefs d’Or Japan attended.

“The Ryokan Collection” is the world’s first consortium of luxury ryokan traditional Japanese inns & Japanese small luxury hotels. Past decade, they have been introducing exciting new discoveries & experiences to guests from all over the world. Traditional Japanese inns and Japanese small luxury hotels that have passed strict screening are members and they are working to maintain and develop the inn culture to revitalize the local culture and economy.

On July 18th, approximately 30 people gathered at the restaurant “Shinshu Matsumoto Hikariya KITTE Marunouchi” for The Ryokan Collection networking event.



The venue was a restaurant operated by Myojinkan, a member facility of The Ryokan Collection. This restaurant serves many dishes using delicious ingredients from Shinshu, including Japanese noodle Soba, using buckwheat flour from Shinshu and locally brewed Sake.

To start with, Mr. Hiroki Fukunaga, Founder and CEO of The Ryokan Collection, extended greetings, and then all participants were introduced. After that, all participants deepened their friendship to build a good relationship.

It was a great opportunity to re-recognize the importance of the network built through friendship. The Ryokan Collection & Les Clefs d’Or Japan will continue to work together to bring joy to both our customers.



Getting to know our members!

■ **Experience as a Concierge** : 15 years

■ **Member of Les Clefs d'Or** : 5 years

■ **Highlights of your hotel:** The Tokyo Station Hotel dates back to 1915, a year after Tokyo Station opened. Officially designated as an Important Cultural Property of Japan in 2003, the hotel underwent a massive preservation and restoration project in 2007 and reopened its doors in 2012. In 2024, new 10,000 yen bills will be issued featuring Eiichi Shibusawa, known as the father of Japan's capitalism, and Tokyo Station on the back side. The significance is that the original red bricks used in the construction of Tokyo Station were manufactured by a company founded by Eiichi Shibusawa in his hometown Fukaya.

■ **How I spend my time on my day off:** I love to travel and explore new things that I might be able to share with our hotel guests. At times, I prefer the slower, more relaxed pace of a beautiful garden stroll or sitting quietly in a café and watch the world go by. The very best days are spent with family and friends. And now that my first grandchild is born, I see myself spending quality time with our precious bundle of joy.



Marie Antoinette Mori
Chief Concierge
The Tokyo Station Hotel

■ **My Favorite Spot:** Tucked in the corner of Shinjuku, Kagurazaka holds a charm like stepping back in time to another era. The back alleys of stone pathways, the hidden nooks and quiet laneways offer a story of what once was a place where geishas gathered. While it retains the Edo period atmosphere, stylish shops and restaurants in the area create a balanced combination of the old and the new. Home to famous Michelin restaurants, Kagurazaka is indeed a fun and energizing neighborhood to explore and get lost in.

■ **Favorite Restaurant:** Among the long list, L'Effervescence stands out for many reasons. Food is meticulously prepared to perfection. The ambiance boasts of quiet elegance and the gracious flow of service impeccable.

Chef Namae's overall approach pays homage to nature, environment and the society at large.

The commitment to reduce food loss, energy usage and improve work environment earned them the "Sustainable Restaurant Award" in 2018. Their effort in giving back to the community providing free boxed meals to medical staff during the height of the pandemic was truly remarkable.



Kaori Kato **Chief Concierge** **The Westin Miyako Kyoto**

Experience as a Concierge: 16 years

Member of Les Clefs d'Or: 6 years

Highlights of your hotel: The Westin Miyako Kyoto's history began in 1890, and the hotel celebrates its 133rd anniversary this year. In April 2021, the hotel renovation was completed, with remodeled rooms and a new Spa facility with hot springs drawn directly from the hotel grounds. On weekends, we offer complimentary guided tours to showcase our facilities and hotel history. We have five restaurants in the hotel, and our all-day dining restaurant "Raquou" is especially popular with floor-to-ceiling windows offering a spectacular view of the city. The hotel is located in the Higashiyama area, a short distance from the city center, providing a quiet atmosphere.

How I spend my time on my day off: I enjoy spending my day off walking around the neighborhood and having lunch with my family or exploring the back alleys on my bike with friends and discovering things that I might have missed. I know the interests of each of my friends and invite each of them to visit museums, temples, shrines and to go hiking etc....



I also like to take day trips not only to Kyoto but also to other areas that are accessible by Train or car. Even if I have to work the next day, I will stay overnight and come back in the morning.

Special place to visit: My favorite place is "Lake Biwa Canal" walkway. I explored it for the first time last spring. It is a walking trail along the waterway that runs from Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture to Kyoto and it takes about 3 hours to walk along the 10-km path, and it feels just like taking a walk in the woods. Along the waterway, you can enjoy and see rapeseed blossoms, cherry blossoms, and autumn leaves depending on the season. There are also many benches set up along the path, so visitors of all ages can enjoy to bringing their lunch or snack and take a break while strolling at their own pace.

Favorite Hotel Movie: "Omen", founded in 1967, located near Ginkakuji (Silver Temple) is one of my favorite Udon noodle restaurants in Kyoto. They serve homemade Udon noodles with seasonal fresh vegetables and condiments such as fragrant aromatic sesame seeds with dipping sauce. Vegan dipping sauce is also available. It's a simple dish, but we always get positive feedback from our guests.



Monthly Meeting

JULY

• July meeting was held at Belnatio located in Tokamachi city in Niigata. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Tomoyuki Sano, the Executive Officer of Belnatio took us to the hotel backyard tour and showed us behind the scene thoroughly.

• There is an announcement theme of next seminar which to be held in January 2024. The theme is “The world of DX and The Concierge”. We will be hearing a lecture how we would be able to work effectively by utilizing DX system also we will have an opportunity to see how the other concierge is working with DX in different countries.

• After the meeting, Ms. Yui Kamichika the Assistant Manager of Marketing Group of Belnatio took us to the fam trip around the Tokamachi city. We have visited a beautiful beech tree forest “Bijinbayashi”, a valley with a magnificent view of the shelf style rice field “Hoshitoge no Tanada”, a life-size ground art craft “Hikari no Yakata (House of Light)” created by the American artist James Turrell where the people could rent this incredible house to stay a night.



AUGUST

• Meeting in August was held at a conference room in Tsukiji Fish Market. There was an announcement that we welcomed a new member to the Les Clefs d'Or, Ms. Saori Maitani the Concierge at Hotel Granvia Kyoto.

• We held the annual summer gathering the night before the meeting. It has been 4 years since we held this gathering to see face to face with members and affiliates.

• There was a presentation from KRO Travel Engineering Mr. Daichi Tominaga about their company. They provide personalized service to customers for Japan's luxury travel.

• As we are members of Les Clefs d'Or, we brainstormed about how can we be more engaged with our affiliates and other related parties in order to build a better network .

