

Les Clefs d'Or Japan

Key News



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Les Clefs d'Or Japan



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Les Clefs d'Or Japan 25th Anniversary

By Hisae Kojima

It was a great and so brilliant moment that Japan was approved as 33rd chapter of the UICH on 18 November 1997 at the international congress in Budapest. I still vividly remember it. 25 years has passed and we had a wonderful 25th anniversary party on 15th November 2022 at Grand Hyatt Tokyo.

It was started with greetings by president Mayako Sumiyoshi, she confirmed the joy of gathering all members here after two and a half years due to COVID 19 and made sure that We have to strive to improve ourselves with the same purpose.



We thank to Mr. Cooper General Manager at Grand Hyatt Tokyo for the warm welcome speech, then 12 former members are introduced by the president.

Also we would like to thank Ms. Helena Phua, Executive Vice President, Asia Pacific of The New York Times Company, she has been supporting us for long time and she toasted for us.

Enjoyable chatting with each other and delicious buffet was started after the toast and an amazing 25th anniversary cake by the team of pâtissier at Grand Hyatt Tokyo impressed us very much.





By Misa Yamamoto

In the speech given by Ms. Rikako Ikeda, one of the founder members, we were told that our logo with the motif of Mt. Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan, represents our wish at the time of establishment that "Les Clefs d'Or Japan offers the highest level of hospitality in Japan". Also, an important sentence from LE HALL was introduced, "Human being considers the true meaning of hospitality to be the emotional touch given by others, beautiful smile, sincerity, and thoughtfulness. The true service and philosophy of concierge will be passed on forever, even as we introduce and adapt to many wonderful technological innovations.

Then, Mr. Aratani of Gconcept LTD. and Mr. Tanahashi of Suntory Spirits Ltd. delivered congratulatory speeches on behalf of our affiliated companies.

Also, the six new members made speeches introducing themselves and their aspirations for the future. We are confident that they will be a breath of fresh air and bring even more vitality to future of Les Clefs d'Or.





Toward the end of event, a letter and the video message from international members were shown, and the participants were moved by the warm words from all over the world.



As conclusion, Ms. Aiko Imaizumi, Vice President expressed her gratitude to all those who have supported Les Clefs d'Or Japan from its birth to today.

It was a moment that reaffirmed for us that no matter how difficult the situation, we concierges never lose our passion for our profession and the bonds of friendship.



FAM Trip to Ishikawa Prefecture

By Kaori Kato

On October 26th to 28th, seven Les Clefs d'Or members participated in the FAM trip to Ishikawa prefecture which is located in the Hokuriku Region of Honshu Island.

It takes about 2.5 hours by Shinkansen bullet train from Tokyo or by Limited Express train from Kyoto directly to Kanazawa station which is the capital and largest city of Ishikawa Prefecture. We had a wonderful and quality time experiencing the traditional crafts and culture of Ishikawa Prefecture.

We had the pleasure of traveling in a small luxury coach with comfortable independent seating.

On Day 1, we started from Kanazawa Station and visited Noto area which was a 2 hour drive and the first stop was the Sojiji-Soin Temple. This is one of the Soto Zen Buddhist temples and was established in 1321. Since the original temple was destroyed by fire at the end of the 19th century, it was relocated to Yokohama city, but the original location is in Noto and is still revered. Sojiji-Soin (it means Sojiji ancestor temple) still today attracts many visitors and monks in training.

One of the monks in training is originally from Germany and speaks both German and English. He services the guest from overseas as customer service agent



After we went to Heidi Winery which is built on a small hill overlooking the ocean and enjoyed a lunch including cheese and beef paired well with the wine with the ocean view from the windows. The wine at this winery is made by grapes are picked by hand to make them decrease stress and you can notice the flavor is so rich.



After the lunch, we visited the "Wajima Kiriko Art Museum" where you can see about 30 different sizes of Kiriko lantern floats displayed and they are used for the Noto's Kiriko Lantern Festival which is certified as a Japan Heritage. Kiriko is a large lantern and each lantern is uniquely decorated. Also, about 200 Kiriko festivals are held all over Noto area from summer through autumn.

At the end of the day, we visited Osaki Lacquerware Shop where is designated as a National Tangible Cultural Property and is uniquely used as workplace and home. We learned about the process of lacquering and were honored to see some works created by a human national treasure. We were all fascinated by the delicate and traditional handmade craft works.

The accommodation for us was at Ryokan Kagaya Bettei MatsunoMidori which is a villa of Kagaya(one of the very famous and well-known Ryokans) located in Wakura Onsen.



Wakura Onsen is an iconic seaside hot spring in the Hokuriku region and has a history of 1,200 years. All rooms has ocean views and all-inclusive plan. Also, you can enjoy a number of local traditional handicrafts that are museum quality while you are staying there. We also enjoyed a cuisine prepared with an abundance of local, seasonal ingredients which are served on special plating in a private room. The guests can also experience an authentic tea ceremony in the garden's tea room during their stay.



On Day 2 in the morning, we joined the Noto Island cycling tour with Mr. Koyama who is an English-speaking guide and he focus on getting in touch with the local community showing people's ordinary lives. The tour is popular among Europeans, especially the French people. On the way back to Kanazawa city, we had a very unique experience of traveling on the "Chirihama Beach Driveway," the only sandy beach in Japan where can drive a car and a bus. During the lunch at Jardin Paul Bocuse which is an affiliate of Hiramatsu, we were able to exchange opinions with some members of the Ishikawa Prefectural Government Inbound Tourism Division. They explained about the status of inbound tourism in Ishikawa Prefecture and also, we shared our experience about this visit. At the end of this trip, we visited the Ohi pottery studio and museum. The owner, Mr. Toshio Ohi Chozaemon XI told us about his passion in creating pottery which is always inquiring mind and tackling unique ideas. We were all impressed by the special opportunity to see how he formed the clay by hand. On the last day, we visited popular museums and garden in Kanazawa city, and rediscovered the value of each site.



It was a great opportunity to know about Ishikawa Prefecture which is full of fascinating contents other than Kanazawa City. In particular, the Noto area is a valuable place that is not yet well known to foreign guests and we hope to share and recommend to our guests this area full of nature and tradition.

Getting to Know Our Members!

The Peninsula Tokyo Akane Tanaka



■ Experience as a Concierge : 22 years

■ Member of Les Clefs d'Or : 14 years

■ Highlights of my hotel: The Peninsula (established in 1928) now operates prestigious luxury properties in ten major cities. These include the flagship in Hong Kong, plus Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, New York, Chicago, Beverly Hills, Paris, Bangkok and Manila with London and Istanbul under development. The Peninsula hotels always stand at the best location of the town, Afternoon tea, Moon cake, Mango Pudding are very popular and well-known among the customers. The Peninsula Tokyo opened in 2007 September, and it is 15th years in 2022.

■ How I spend my time on my day off:

I always loved exercise and music since I was a child, so no matter how busy I am, I never miss going to the gym every week and taking a class of voice training twice a month. As for voice training, I recently started learning opera, and found it was much more difficult than I thought. Of course, I also like drinking and eating delicious food, also like cooking too. Every time I found something new when I went out with some members, friend or family, I try to see if I can reproduce it (of course, in my own way) at home.



■ Special place for me: My brother's place, since he lives nearby, I often go out with him and his wife, and once a month we have dinner together at his place. His house has no tall buildings around it and has a panoramic view of the west side of Tokyo. Especially on sunny days, you can see Mt. Fuji from the balcony. The real pleasure is watching the sky of Tokyo gradually dyed in sunset and the evening glowing.

■ Favorite Restaurant: Osteria Buono is an Italian restaurant located a 1-minute walk from Ikejiri Ohashi Station on the Den-en-toshi Line where I live. Mr. Shimada, the chef, and Mr. Miyazaki, his coworker and sommelier, travel to Italy every year to bring back and share the various encounters and memories they have made there. Highly recommended for those who want to try the authentic taste of Italy. It's a small restaurant that can be used as a hideaway, so you'll occasionally see celebrities incognito.



Les Clefs d'Or Japan Monthly Meeting

November

We were finally able to gather in person. Most of the members were present in one place at Grand Hyatt Tokyo since the monthly meeting turned into online meeting back in April 2020.

Hiromi Yamada the Chief Concierge of Nikko Princess Kyoto reported to us about the recent Fam trip in Ishikawa prefecture. Hiromi shared attractive information about Noto Peninsula. She talked about the beautiful experiences at Matsuno-Midori Ryokan where she stayed at Wakura Hot spring region at Noto Peninsula.

Marie Antoinette, Chief Concierge from Tokyo Station Hotel reported to us about UICH CSR activities. It was great to hear that the CSR members have now grown to 10 people. We were also informed that how the CSR team would contribute at Istanbul Congress, such as cloth and monetary donations etc.



As Team Japan, we will continue carrying on the activities and sharing our SDGs activities from each members hotel. We are looking forward to seeing if we can restart supporting the NPO Corporation Kids Door.

The former Les Clefs d'Or Japan member Naohiko Wako, who moved to Taiwan almost a couple of years back made a visit to Tokyo and greeted us at the monthly meeting.



December

Our monthly meeting was held at Tokyo Hotel • Tourism & Hospitality College.

It is a beautiful college, with several great facilities and we were warmly welcomed by the students at the college.

Report was presented about the 25th anniversary party held in November. A total of 64 people attended, including 30 members, 17 affiliates, 11 alumni, and 4 overseas members attended the party.

Ms. Sumiyoshi and Affiliate Ms. Wada participated in a visit to Unzen Amakusa National Park, and a report was presented.

There was a report on the exchange of opinions on the National Parks Official Partnership Program in which

the member Ms. Kamei participated. The exchange of opinions took place on the theme of public relations collaboration to enhance the brand power of national parks. Les Clefs d'Or Japan confirmed that we will continue to promote national parks on social networking services.

Ms. Kato reported about the visit to Ishikawa Prefecture in October organized by the International Tourism Division of the Tourism Strategy Promotion Department of Ishikawa Prefecture.

With the return of the international guests, the members had time to share information with each other about the challenges they face in the concierge field. Discussions included the shortage of human resources throughout the hotel, the lack of experience of new staff, and the increase in the number of restaurants and facilities that do not have a system in place to accept foreign guests.

