

Always New

Hotel New Otani A Monument to Japan's Progress

A giant hotel was completed near Nagatacho in central Tokyo in 1964, about a month before the opening of the Tokyo Olympics. On a site of approximately 70,000m², it had a spacious Japanese garden, and the majestic 17-floor building attracted attention because it was then Japan's first high-rise.

The Japanese government, concerned by a shortage of accommodation capacity after Tokyo was picked as the Olympic host city, asked the steel magnate Yonetaro Otani to build a hotel. The facility built on the site of his residence became the Hotel New Otani.

Otani's life was a dramatic one. Born to a poor farming family in Niigata prefecture, he moved to Tokyo at age 31. He worked as a day laborer, a rikishi (sumo wrestler), and a manager of a liquor store before he entered the steel industry, where he made the most of changing times to achieve great success. His life story mirrors Japan's turbulent post-war history, and the huge edifice of the New Otani is a manifestation of Otani's unfettered vision.

The New Otani was hailed as the "number one hotel in the orient", and its most noteworthy feature is the revolving restaurant on the top floor of The Main



building. Otani's ambition to "give every foreign guest a view of Mt. Fuji", together with the unrelenting efforts of corporate warriors who propelled post-war Japan, bore fruit. With the incorporation of a special bearing technology the rotating panorama restaurant was completed, and its unique, near-future appearance became an iconic symbol of Tokyo.

The hotel was used as the location or background for a Bond movie and various other domestic and foreign films, as the venue for the Tokyo Summit and Imperial court rites, and welcomed countless state guests, showing a dominant presence.

The New Otani also takes pride in the dining experience it provides, and houses numerous acclaimed restaurants. Among them, the Horikawa restaurant has been running since the hotel opened, and the Sekishintei teppanyaki (hot plate) restaurant stands in the hotel's Japanese garden. The Tour D'Argent opened its first, and to date the only, branch location in the hotel in 1984, which became Japan's first exquisite French restaurant. The hotel's name reflects Otani's spirit of "always new", which is being carried on to the present.

The Hotel New Otani Tokyo is a monument to the vitality and elation with which Japan emerged from its post-war chaos to achieve rapid progress and join the ranks of developed nations. "Always new" is the identity that the New Otani inscribed on its history, and proclaims its resolution to remain the symbol of Tokyo.

*Tea room (image left): Experience a Japanese tea ceremony in the tea room on the 7th floor of the Garden Tower on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, for JPY1,000. Contact the hotel for details.

