

## PRESS RELEASE

## HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO

*Set to Open 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020*

## Unveils Its Two Restaurant Concepts and Michelin-star Culinary Team



TOKI (Gastronomy Teppan)



FORNI (Italian Cuisine)

(London, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020) – Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd. and Mitsui Fudosan Resort Management Co., Ltd. have unveiled the restaurant concepts of their two outlets; TOKI and FORNI and the Michelin-star culinary team for its first flagship luxury property: HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO.

The signature restaurant: TOKI, combines the ingredients used in traditional Japanese cuisine and the techniques of French cookery to create a new ‘Gastronomy Teppan’ experience. Stretching out beyond an expansive water feature in the hotel’s garden, TOKI is a strikingly modern take on traditional Japanese design where guests can enjoy full-flavoured dishes prepared on a long open plan teppan brushed steel surface framed by an elegant wooden counter fashioned from Japanese Kabazakura bird.

TOKI will open with Tetsuya Asano at the helm as Signature Restaurant Chef. In 2017, Asano was the first Japanese chef to hold the title of Executive Sous Chef at the Ritz Paris’ two Michelin-star L’Espadon. Asano said: “French cuisine is acclaimed worldwide both for its sense of tradition but also its positive approach to new techniques, something I believe French cuisine shares with Kyoto culture. At TOKI we aim to showcase the heritage and techniques of Japanese culinary arts, combined with the essence of French gastronomy to create a new concept – a bridge between east and west – and deliver an unrivalled experience in dining, the ultimate Gastronomy Teppan.”

TOKI will offer diners innovative, beautiful dishes that excite the senses. A sustainable approach will underpin concept menus, utilising seasonal and home-grown produce to provide a taste connection to the history, culture and seasons of Kyoto. The culinary team will champion local farmers and visit them to learn first-hand about their agricultural heritage and the origin of the ingredients selected for recipes.

The second restaurant: FORNI (*Italian for wood-fired ovens*) features an *okudosan* – a traditional Japanese *kamado*-style cooking range – reimagined as a wood-burning oven for pizzas and oven-roasted dishes. FORNI will open with Shozo Sugano as Head Chef, who launched his career with a move to Italy where during the course of eight years he worked in Michelin-starred restaurants across the country including the two Michelin-star Il Mosaico and the three Michelin-star Enrico Bartolini.

Dishes at FORNI interweave provincial Italian cooking methods and Japanese ingredients. Sugano said: “Italy has a rich and bountiful nature – a wonderful source for delicious fresh ingredients – something it shares with Kyoto. *Amore and passione* are the secret behind Italian cuisine, where attention is always paid to the quality of the ingredients and simple cooking to allow the flavours to take centre stage.” FORNI’s concept menus take inspiration from the solar calendar and the finest Italian and Japanese ingredients will be sourced.

General Manager, Manabu Kusui comments; “We have brought together a team with a wealth of Michelin-star experience in the sector, working with notable high-end international brands. Kyoto has a rich food culture with establishments often centring around *Kyo-ryori* (Kyoto cuisine) and *Kaiseki* cuisine. We are stepping outside of the box to bring to the table a new Gastronomy Teppan experience – a balanced fusion of east meets west at TOKI, and provincial Italian cooking expertly infused with Japanese ingredients at FORNI. The culinary team selects the finest ingredients from around the world and across Japan, starting with famed local Kyoto produce, to deliver sustainable menu concepts and ensure food provenance across the restaurants.”

### THE GARDEN BAR



In addition to the two restaurants, the hotel features THE GARDEN BAR which provides the perfect setting to view the landscaped grounds which beautifully showcase the changing seasons; the breathtaking beauty of *sakura* cherry blossoms in the spring, the resplendently verdant in summer, the striking gold and crimson hues of autumn and the white snowscape of winter.

### SHIKI-NO-MA



The hotel is located on the site of the former Aburakoji Residence, the Kyoto home of the executive branch of the Mitsui family. At the centre of that structure was the *Okushoin* - also known as the *Shiki-no-Ma* – a room that enjoyed unimpeded views of the garden throughout the four seasons. It was the room where heads of the Mitsui family would receive visitors and entertain guests. The SHIKI-NO-MA room at HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO is a modern yet faithful reconstruction of the original *Okushoin* constructed

from Japanese cypress. The new SHIKI-NO-MA may be used for hospitality and celebrations, as well as a private dining facility for the hotel's restaurants. All of the tasteful elements in the room, such as the alignment of the *tatami* to accommodate a *ro* sunken hearth and the design and features of the *tokonoma* alcove, have been overseen by So'oku Sen, heir apparent to the position of *iemoto* or headmaster of Mushakouji Senke, one of the three Houses of Sen. A special place where one can enjoy a tranquil moment in the Way of Tea whilst taking in the delightful scenery of the seasons.

### So'oku Sen



Born in Kyoto, So'oku Sen is heir apparent to the position of *iemoto* or headmaster of Mushakouji Senke. His Buddhist name is Zuiensai. After graduating from the Faculty of Environment and Information Studies at Keio University, Sen went on to attain his doctorate in the history of medieval Japanese art from the Graduate School at Keio University. In 2003, upon his acceptance of the position of heir apparent to become the fifteenth *iemoto* of Mushakouji Senke, Sen took the name So'oku. In 2008, Sen spent a year in New York, USA as a Cultural Exchange Ambassador at the behest of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Sen currently lectures as a Specially Appointed Associate Professor at the Faculty of Policy Management at Keio University, as well as delivering lectures on occasion at Meiji Gakuin University. In 2017, Sen oversaw *The Beauty of Chanoyu Curated by Sen So'oku*, an exhibition held at the MOA Museum of Art in Shizuoka, Japan. Sen has a profound interest in antique art through to modern art pieces.

To mark the opening HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO will offer a special room package - details below:

- Stay Period: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021
- Room Rate: From £700/\$930/€780 per room (up to two people), per night, breakfast included for two people (service charge included, tax not included)
- Package includes: monetary value equivalent to £71/\$95/€80 applicable for restaurants and SPA treatments

\*The above offer does not apply to stays booked for the Presidential Suite, Onsen Suites and Nijo Suites.

HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO is located near Nijō-jo Castle, address: 284 Nijoaburanokoji-cho, Aburano-koji St. Nijo-sagaru, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-0051.

-Ends -

<http://www.hotelthemitsui.com/>

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## Notes to Editors

- **Profile: Manabu Kusui, General Manager**



After joining Park Hyatt Tokyo in May 1994, Kusui spent several years overseas in a variety of roles at renowned international luxury hotels. Consequently, Kusui moved to The Ritz Carlton Tokyo to serve as Director of Sales. Kusui then assumed the post of Director of Sales and Marketing at the Four Seasons Hotel Tokyo at Marunouchi before moving to the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo as Executive Assistant Manager, overseeing Sales and Marketing. In June 2018, Kusui accepted the post of General Manager at HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO.

- **Profile: Tetsuya Asano, Signature Restaurant Chef**



Asano's career began at the Hotel Okura Amsterdam, after which he moved to Paris to serve as Sous Chef at several traditional Parisian restaurants such as Restaurant Drouant, moving to Restaurant Alain Ducasse at the Hôtel Plaza Athénée and the opportunity to work under the legendary chef himself, followed by Restaurant Le Cinq at the Four Seasons Hotel George V. In March 2017, Asano became the first Japanese chef engaged as Executive Sous Chef at L'Espadon (two Michelin-star), the main dining restaurant at the Ritz Paris – eventually serving as Executive Sous Chef across all of the hotel restaurants. In December 2019, Asano assumed the role of Signature Restaurant Chef at TOKI at HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO.

- **Profile: Shozo Sugano, Italian Restaurant Chef**



After graduating from the Tsuji Culinary School and learning the basics of Italian cuisine in a Tokyo restaurant, Sugano launched his career by moving to Italy and over eight years worked in Michelin-starred restaurants across the country, spending time in Milan, Campagna, Trentino and Puglia. The last four years were spent in Sugano as Sous Chef at La Sommita (one Michelin-star), Il Mosaico (two Michelin-star), and Enrico Bartolini (three Michelin-star) before returning to Japan, where he worked at the Shangri La Hotel Tokyo, followed by a stint as Sous Chef at IRAPH SUI Miyako Okinawa. In 2020, Sugano assumed the role of Head Chef at FORNI at HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO.