

METROPOLIS

ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN AT ALL SCALES
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Kengo Kuma and Commune Design have completed Ace Hotel Kyoto, the brand's first location in Asia. Its design concept was inspired by Japan's traditional wooden *ryokan* inns and includes details by local artisans, such as nonagenarian Samiro Yunoki, whose stencil-dyeing *katazome* appears on several custom pieces, including the hotel's logo and guest room art.

HOSPITALITY

Local Hero

An outpost in Japan had always been on the Ace Hotel wish list, but it took almost two decades from the brand's launch for the right site to reveal itself.

Part of the redevelopment of the Shinpuhkan complex, Ace Hotel Kyoto, which opened earlier this year in Tetsuro Yoshida's 1926 Kyoto Central Telephone Company building, marks the chain's first venture into Asia.

The 213-room lodging, designed by architect Kengo Kuma and Commune Design, embodies Kyoto's legacy as the artisan heart of Japan. "Kyoto is truly a treasure trove of Japanese traditional architecture, design, folk art, and craft," says Roman Alonso, owner and creative director of Commune.

"One of the things we love about Kengo Kuma's projects is his use of traditional Japanese materials in new and unconventional ways," Alonso says, mentioning *tamo* or Japanese ash, *washi* paper, raked stucco, *shou sugi ban* burned wood, and glazed ceramic tile. "These materials have beautiful organic qualities and a hand to them that fit perfectly within our 'craft' concept."

For his part, Kuma has a slightly different perspective on the material choices: "Traditional Japanese architecture transforms with time, and there is no such thing as a definitive shape of 'Japanese architecture,'" he says. "Dynamism to change is one of Japan's characteristics; therefore we wanted to bring that dynamism to the present." —Mikki Brammer