

108 Kyoto

Ace Hotel Kyoto



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25 Step inside the starry, golden-lit lobby of Ace Hotel Kyoto (hotel.qantas.com.au/acehotelkyoto), where vibey electronic beats ease out of the speakers and it feels like you're entering the epicentre of cool. We're talking turntables and vintage vinyl in the guestrooms, local creatives wearing Yohji Yamamoto monochrome tapping away at laptops in the lobby and artisanal everything – right down to the hand-wrought ceramic soap dishes. Behind the doughnut-shaped reception desk, a helpful guy with pink

hair, blue sideburns and leopard-print sneakers points out the local sights on a map, his fingers adorned with 3D nail art.

Part new build, part renovation of the century-old Kyoto Central Telephone Office, this 213-room property is the East-meets-West creation of acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma and Los Angeles-based Commune Design, with most of the premium rooms located in the high-ceilinged historic section. Downtown in Japan's cultural capital – a 10-minute cab ride from Kyoto Station, close to tea houses and temples – Ace celebrates contemporary Japanese craft *and* the arty hotel chain's American roots. So you'll find paper lantern lights in

the guestrooms but also Gibson guitars (and absurdly comfortable bespoke mattresses).

Once night falls, grab a rooftop terrace table at Mr. Maurice's Italian and order the signature *tonnarelli cacio e pepe*. Slide into a velvet banquette at buzzy, Art Deco-inspired Piopiko Bar & Taco Lounge and try the scallop ceviche with uni. Better still, order a Wonder Mojito with lime sherbet and white choc chips and get chatting to a fellow traveller. The goal here is good times and fortuitous encounters.

Not just a design-lover's delight, this hotel does seem "a friendly place" (as promised on the jacket in the gift shop), which means the Ace is cool but kind of warm-cool.