



Networking with The Ryokan Collection

By HIROMI MARUYAMA

The workshop and social gathering of “The Ryokan Collection” and “Les Clef d’Or Japan” was held at the Ginza ICONIC by the support of Mr. Hiroki Fukunaga, the representative of The Ryokan collection. May 24th, 2017. 15 members from Les clef d’Or Japan gathered to attend the event led by Ms. Kay Abe, concierge at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo.

In the current days, concierges receive many requests from inbound guests to book *ryokan*, a Japanese-style inn, in order to enjoy the authentic Japanese destination and experience. As many of the concierges were already familiar with many participating facilities, we enjoyed our time finally meeting each other in person.



The event commenced by Mr. Fukunaga’s speech on

the purpose of the event. Then, the representatives from 19 facilities gave a brief presentation regarding their properties. All presenters were very passionate introduce their properties’ characteristics and features. It was interesting to recognize unknown part of each facility which were not seen on their websites nor published magazines. Those presentations were very fervent and gave us impact on how much they are willing to welcome our dear guests.

The subjects of panel discussion were based on the questionnaires filled out by both parties. It was quite interesting to find that both sides were wondering about each other’s needs such as how we could improve our service as members of the hospitality industry. We have acknowledged that we both have the same concern on how much we could prepare in advance to make our guests’ stay memorable and how we could cooperate in achieving the goal together. In the group discussion, we believe that we have created the strong bond by exchanging how to share information for such unique information of the town.

The Ryokan Collection has made brochures that cover all member facilities that could be handed to hotel guests. The idea of creating a quick lookup list of the facilities’ details was brought up.

The fact that every facility is providing unique local experience may be a good reason for the concierges to recommend the members of The Ryokan Collection.

The networking dinner was also a nice opportunity to have

conversation more in depth, but frankly to build up new bridge for both of us. Despite of the different categories of accommodation as well as location, we welcome many guests from all over the world with same passion aiming to provide amazing stay. Through this event, we have succeeded in consolidating our network for better customer service.

Fam Trip to Omiya Bonsai Village

By AI MAYANAGI

In April 2017, the World Bonsai Convention was held with 45,000 foreign visitors that participated in the event. Recently, foreigners’ interest in *bonsai* is increasing. Therefore, we



planned this fam trip to study basic knowledge of *bonsai*.

Left Tokyo Station and visited the Seiko-En and the

Bonsai Art Museum in the Bonsai Village in Saitama City. After having a wonderful lunch at The Palace Hotel Omiya, we visited the Hikawa Shrine and Omiya Zoo with 21 members under guidance by Mr. Kawamura, one of Les clefs d’Or members. The bus transportation was sponsored by the Hitachi Jidoshia Kotsu, one of our associate members.

Bonsai has front and back sides. How do you identify the front side? If the trunk is visible and the branches stretch out looking like a concierge welcoming people with open arms, that is the front side. The correct angle to appreciate *bonsai* is to look up from the low-angle. When you observe *bonsai* following this instruction, you will recognize the difference. One will feel as though one is watching a big tree in the forest.

We not only studied the actual *bonsai* appreciation, but also the history of *bonsai*, basin, water stone and how to decorate from Mr. Taguchi, the curator.



We would like to express our sincere appreciation to everyone who cooperated in organizing this wonderful and productive fam trip.

June Monthly Meeting

On June 28th, the monthly meeting was held in the city of Takayama, Gifu Prefecture. 8 members attended and paid a visit to the Kashiwa, one of the major Hida furniture manufacturing companies. Hida furniture is known for its finest quality. The members were given a lecture by the manager of the showroom and were invited for the factory tour. The company’s challenge for productivity improvement and polite staff at the factory were very impressive.



July Monthly Meeting

On July 19th, the monthly meeting was held in Osaka with attendance of 17 members. During the meeting, 3 members from Osaka gave short presentations on the introduction of undiscovered suggested spots in Osaka. The participants listened with great interest.

