



THE PENINSULA - TOKYO

Twenty-two floors above the Imperial Palace Garden, the grey bustle of Tokyo is silenced in the frame of a picture window. This view, taken in from bed at The Peninsula Hotel, contains a strange mix of the melancholic horror of late capitalism coupled with the unfathomably majestic beauty of a city that houses twelve million people in a pastel collage of seemingly infinite downtowns. It's what the eighteenth-century philosopher, Immanuel Kant, referred to as the "sublime": a bizarre combination of simultaneous pleasure and horror observed from the safety of a contemplative distance.

And certainly the distance for contemplation comes easily at The Peninsula. Enjoy an elaborately choreographed Japanese breakfast unfolding in a procession of lacquer boxes while watching cars twenty stories below diddle around like a game of tinker toys. In the lobby, Japanese women with high-arched painted brows spoon pastel sherbet wearing nude colored heels. One floor up, at the hotel spa, women wait for decadently priced spa treatments in a "relaxation room" equipped with individualized reclining beds, duvets, and fresh juice. Nineteen floors higher, a guest soaks in a bath, watching the muted television embedded in the marble wall while talking on a built-in bathroom speakerphone. Similar technological flourishes include a nail-polish dryer tucked into a wooden dressing room vanity and a bedside clock/light/temperature control panel activated by the heat of a hand. Back down in the lobby, the concierge organizes for three rolls of black and white film, developed for a guest earlier in

the day, to be sent up to their room. They will arrive in the guest's "Valet Box." Accessible for staff through the hallway, this small compartment in each room functions as an individualized mailbox for such necessities as the morning paper or a selection of requested restaurant recommendations.

This type of discrete ease is not only characteristic of the hotel; it seems to be its defining feature. A closet the size of a New York studio apartment ensures that even getting dressed is a luxury; but it's often more alluring to toss on the provided yukata (a cotton, kimono-style robe), order a delicate club sandwich from room service, and watch the moon rise over Tokyo from bed. Amidst a sea of towering luxury hotels in this city, The Peninsula stands out precisely because it has nothing to prove. It's quite content offering a view of the sublime. ^{BC}

THE PENINSULA - 1-8-1 YURAKUCHO, CHIYODA, TOKYO 100-0006, WWW.PENINSULA.COM
267 ROOMS & 47 SUITES, SOME WITH VIEWS OF THE IMPERIAL GARDENS, FROM 412 € PER NIGHT