Welcome to the Former Kishi Residence in Higashiyama, Gotemba

The Former Kishi Residence in Higashiyama was built in 1969 as a private residence for the prime minister at the time, Nobusuke Kishi.

This beautiful residence was completed by famous architect Isoya Yoshida in his later years. It is in the traditional sukiya style and features a tea ceremony arbor, but also performs the functions of a modern house. In short, the Former Kishi Residence highlights the perfection of Yoshida’s architectural style.

Enjoy your visit to this historic Gotemba site.

Owner: Nobusuke Kishi (1896 – 1987) 岸信介
Born in Yamaguchi Prefecture, Nobusuke Kishi was one of the most influential statesmen of the Showa era.

After graduating from Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo), he entered the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. Before World War II, he worked for the Manchukuo administration, then came back to Japan and entered the Tojo Cabinet as Minister of Commerce and Industry. After the war, he was accused of war crimes and was arrested and imprisoned, but was not indicted. He reassumed his position in the political world and was instrumental in the formation of the Liberal Democratic Party, becoming its first chief secretary. Finally, he was elected as prime minister of the 56th and 57th cabinets and worked hard for the revision of the Japan-US Security Treaty and legislation for the national pension law.

In 1970, at the age of 70, he moved to Higashiyama in Gotemba City to spend the later part of his life, and lived there for 17 years.

Architect: Isoya Yoshida (1894 – 1974) 吉田 五十八
Born in Tokyo, Yoshida is considered the pioneer of modern sukiya-style architecture. He was named Isoya (meaning “58”) because his father, Nobuyoshi Ohta (the founder of well-known pharmaceutical manufacturer Ohta’s) was 58 years old when he was born. Yoshida studied architecture at the Tokyo Fine Arts School (now Tokyo University of the Arts) before gaining experience through travel to Europe and America. During these trips, he realized the need to concentrate on modernizing the Japanese architectural style and began to study modern sukiya architecture.

He designed for various clients, and his work included the residence of Japanese novelist Nobuko Yoshiya and that of artist Kiyokato Kaburagi, the villa of publisher Shigeo Iwami, the Yamato Bunkakan Museum, the Japan Art Academy Hall and Naritasan Shinshoji Temple. In 1964, he was awarded Japan’s Cultural Medal.

Entrance hall 玄関ホール
Modern materials such as vinyl chloride and aluminum are used in places.

Dining room 食堂
The shoji screens, glass doors, mosquito screen doors and shutters can all be slid into shutter boxes inside the wall so that nothing stands between the room and the garden in front.

Living room 居間
There are no shutter boxes inside the wall for the shoji screens*1, and their lower parts can be opened and closed: when they are open, glass-fitted screens allow the garden to be viewed. The lattice work of shoji screens is notable in that there are fewer frames on them than traditional ones.

Japanese-style room 和室
The absence of tsurizukai*2 and decorative parts on the transom windows gives the tatami rooms a very simple and stylish look.

Garden 庭園
A stream runs through the Japanese-style garden, where Prime Minister Kishi used to entertain VIPs and foreign guests.

*1 Paper sliding screens.
*2 Short pendant pillars used to lift lintels and support the ceiling.

〈Architectural information〉〈建築データ〉
Architect : Isoya Yoshida
Construction manager : Mizusawa Kounuten Inc.
Landscape gardener : Iwaki Zouen Corporation
Site area : 5,669.17 m²
Total floor area : 567.66 m²
Structure : wooden building, partial RC, two floors above ground
Completed : 1969