

**Owani Hot Springs, Aomori Prefecture**

**Hoshino Resorts KAI Tsugaru Renewal Opening on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

**Tsugaru Seasonal Water Garden and Brand-New KAI Signature Rooms**

Hoshino Resorts KAI Tsugaru, located in the Owani hot springs of the Tsugaru region in Aomori Prefecture, underwent renovations of the public areas and guest rooms and reopened on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. The new KAI Tsugaru features the theme of “Tsugaru Seasonal Water Garden”. All guest rooms were converted to KAI Signature Rooms based on the traditional craft of Tsugaru koginzashi needlework.

**Birth of “Tsugaru Seasonal Water Garden”**



**Background**

At KAI Tsugaru’s famous pond, Tsugaru koginzashi lanterns are decorated and lighted in summer to create a surreal nightscape. Tsugaru koginzashi needlework is a traditional quilting pattern in Tsugaru. At KAI Tsugaru, the new “Tsugaru Seasonal Water Garden” and the corridors provide guests a closer relationship with the local culture and artwork of Tsugaru of each season.

**Four Main Features**

**1 Touch Local Traditional Artwork**

In addition to the Tsugaru kogin lanterns, guests can touch other artworks like Tsugaru vidro, glassware made from exquisite colored glass with a four seasons theme.

**2 Experience Local Traditional Tsugaru culture**

The Tsugaru Shamisen Show is put on every night as part of KAI Tsugaru activities and other special performances are also held at the water gardens. Enjoy Tsugaru shamisen music while viewing the beautiful seasonal landscape of Tsugaru.

### 3 Feel the Four Seasons of Tsugaru

Weeping cherry blossom trees, autumn leaves, and cedar tree decorate the water garden with different arrangements according to the season. In spring, Tsugaru Kanayama Pottery lights with cherry blossom design are presented. While in winter, snow-themed kamakuras are placed outside.

### 4 Tea Relaxation in the Day, Bar Relaxation in the Night

In the daytime, guests can relax while enjoying seasonal teas and juices such as cherry blossom and apple teas in the Yuagari Lounge. The lounge converts into a bar at night, where guests are able to enjoy alcohol featuring locally-brewed sake served in Tsugaru vidro glassware.

## The Seasons of the Tsugaru Seasonal Water Garden

### Spring

In spring, the nationally-famous Hirosaki cherry blossoms come into bloom. We aim to express the profound beauty of these flowers through Tsugaru Kanayama parquetry, characterized by its deep earthy tones and texture. Lamps made in this style illuminate the terrace and float on the water's surface, so you can enjoy a peaceful spring evening paired with warm cherry blossom tea.



### Summer

To reflect the bright lights of the renowned Hirosaki Neputa Festival that occurs in summer, the Water Garden will be lit with about 150 different lights handmade in Tsugaru. From a *uchiwa* fan-making workshop to nightly shamisen performances paired with apple sake, there are countless ways to enjoy a refined festival atmosphere.



### Autumn

Autumn in Tsugaru brings not only the vibrant hues of fall leaves, but also the bounty of apples known to be Japan's finest. Spend time under the trees at the Apple Tea Party, where you can taste apples prepared in a variety of ways, such as in pie or bean jelly, all served in confectionery boxes painted with elegant Tsugaru *nuri* lacquer.



### Winter

The cold, snowy winters of Tsugaru are what led to the development of the koginzashi needlework craft, as it helped reinforce the durability of clothes for bearing freezing winds and temperatures. Lanterns embroidered in traditional designs line the area, and inside a cozy *kamakura* igloo you can enjoy delicacies like a warm apple cocktail.



## New KAI Signature Rooms



Since 2013, KAI Tsugaru has been collaborating with Iemasa Yamahata, a kogin designer born in Aomori prefecture, on the Tsugaru Kogin Project. As part of the project, the KAI Signature Room featuring shoji (paper screens) and other rooms featuring a modern style of koginzashi needlework patterns were launched in March 2015. After the renewal, all 41 rooms were transformed into KAI Signature Rooms, and each guest room was furnished with raised mattresses and sofa for guests to relax in modern comfort. In addition, shoji screens and Koginzashi designed walls are now covered with symmetrical designs, creating a relaxing and refined space.

\* KAI Signature Rooms feature traditional local handicrafts that showcase the history, famous products, and essence of the region.

### Two Key Points

#### 1. Japanese-style rooms Designed for Comfort

The KAI Brand promises to provide experiences that are both parts modern comfort and authentic tradition. These newly renovated Japanese-style rooms have been fitted with low beds and sofas for increased relaxation. In addition, patterned designs based on traditional koginzashi needlework heighten the calm atmosphere of the space.

#### 2. Unique Take on Kogin Tradition

There are about 40 different basic patterns in koginzashi needlework, and the combination of these makes for even more elegant, sophisticated designs. 41 different patterns are featured throughout the guestrooms, such as in wall decorations and paper screens found around the space as well as on the design of provided teapots.

### Tsugaru Koginzashi Needlework

A traditional handicraft displaying a motif of horizontally and vertically symmetrical rhomboids. It is said that Tsugaru koginzashi needlework is filled with detailed quilting of multiple layers of linen cloth in order to strengthen the clothes against the harsh coldness in Aomori prefecture.



### Kogin Designer: Iemasa Yamahata

Kogin designer Iemasa Yamahata was born in Aomori prefecture. He was exposed to kogin needlework in Hirosaki city as a high school student. He then started a website kogin.net that espouses the charm of koginzashi needlework and started writing actively. His techniques and patterns are on display at the guest room interiors at the KAI Tsugaru. Original designs using kogin patterns based on traditional patterns are digitized and utilizing novel materials and unexpected colors are displayed. These designs bring out the uniqueness of Tsugaru koginzashi needlework and leave a poignant impression.



### **Sakakura Associates architects and engineers**

The renovations were supervised by an architecture design firm established by Junzo Sakagura, the Japanese modernist architect who apprenticed under the great Le Corbusier. The firm has developed a more refined space that continues to utilize current design elements.

**Major works:** Tokyo Midtown, Gallery Saka, the apartment-style villa Oiwake Club

### **Hoshino Resorts KAI Tsugaru**

- Address: 36-1 Aza Kamibotanmori, Owani, Owani-machi, Minamitsugaru-gun, Aomori
- TEL: +81-(0)50-3786-1144 (Reservation Center)
- Official Website: <https://www.hoshinoresorts.com/en/resortsandhotels/kai/tsugaru.html>
- from 21,000 yen / person for 1 night's stay inclusive of 2 meals
- No. of Rooms: 40 (34 Japanese-style Rooms / 6 Western-style Rooms / 1 Japanese-style Suite with Private Garden)
- Check-in at 15:00, Check-out at 12:00