

LOG

Nestled between traditional houses halfway up the slope of Mt. Senkoji, LOG is one of Onomichi's hidden gems. Originally built as the Shinmichi Apartments in 1963, the building was converted by architect Bijoy Jain, founder of Studio Mumbai, and renamed LOG, which stands for Lantern Onomichi Garden. The project was the first one outside India for Studio Mumbai.

Jain transformed the three-story apartment block from a private building into a cultural hub, with gardens, a café and bar, and space for events. To encourage use by a mixture of local residents and tourists, the top floor of LOG was converted into a hotel, and the building hosts talks about architecture, as well as markets and events highlighting local food. Jain's style is focused on the need for buildings to become part of the landscape, rather than to dominate it, and to that end he likes to use natural materials and work with local craftspeople.

To bring LOG closer to its surroundings, Jain opted to cover the existing reinforced concrete structure with soil, plaster, and gravel—natural materials that give the building a softer, more textured, and more organic appearance. Jain was particular about using curved surfaces inside LOG to make the building smoother and more inviting. The rich, soft colors inside the building were created in collaboration with local artisans.

Jain also removed many of the original walls on the first two floors, creating more open spaces with pilotis (pillars), which brings people closer to each other and the environment. LOG offers not only stunning views of nearby old houses and the Onomichi Channel, but also the sense of being both indoors and outdoors at the same time.

The second floor café serves food and drinks made with local fruit. In the evening, the café becomes a bar where visitors can linger over Japanese wine or whisky while listening to music from the record player. The bar itself sweeps out from a corner of the room, the curved wood fitting in perfectly with the soft pastel red and green of the walls and floor.

On the top floor, each of the six hotel rooms at LOG is covered—including the floor and ceiling—in soft white *washi* (traditional Japanese paper) finished by *washi* artisan Hatano Wataru. The color and texture of the paper, along with the way light filters through the *washi*

on the doors and windows, give each room a safe, cocoon-like feeling, as though it were wrapped in cotton wool. Staying in a room at LOG, surrounded by the soft feel of the *washi*, is a hotel experience unlike any other in the world.

For hotel guests who are curious about the process of converting LOG, the onsite gallery is worth a visit. On display are original concept sketches of the building, models, paints, and examples of the materials used in its creation.