

Bellagio Celebrates Japanese Culture with Vibrant Spring Conservatory Display and Art Installation by Renowned Sculptor Masatoshi Izumi

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LAS VEGAS, March 27, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Bellagio welcomes spring with a dynamic celebration of Japanese culture through two stunning exhibits showcasing the passion for nature and art in the Land of the Rising Sun.

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An Inspiring Display: Conservatory & Botanical Gardens

Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens invites guests on a peaceful journey through the island nation's rich culture with its first Japanese-inspired display. Pairing the soothing aesthetics of Japan's traditional gardens with Bellagio's striking grandeur; the new display boasts a vibrant collection of more than 82,000 flowers and larger-

than-life floral creations.

"Springtime in Japan is truly breathtaking and we are excited to share this extraordinary cultural experience with our guests from around the world," said Randy Morton, president and COO of Bellagio. "After traveling more than 5,000 miles to study gardens in Tokyo and Kyoto, our horticulture and design teams created a dynamic interpretation of Japan's enchanting spring season, featuring many of the culture's most recognizable elements."

Among the thousands of flowers, including fresh tulips, daffodils and snapdragons, guests will discover traditional bonsai trees nestled among recreations of some of Japan's most iconic landmarks. Adding to the charming atmosphere, live musicians perform Japanese melodies on a floating platform, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. daily.

The West Garden is a sacred scene featuring a 26-foot-tall Japanese temple inspired by Kyoto's famous Golden Temple. Resting on the shore of peaceful waters, the regal temple is elaborately arrayed in gold veneer featuring wood frames with traditional rice paper Shoji screens.

In the East Garden, guests are greeted by a towering, 18-foot-tall cherry blossom tree, gracefully adorned with 300 acrylic blossoms and leaves. At the foot of the tree, 75 live Koi fish enjoy the refreshing waters of a tranquil pond, while a cascading tsukubai waterfall flows from 16 feet above. Two ornate floral topiaries showcase a combined 15,000 fresh-cut flowers: one, a majestic crane standing six feet tall and the other, a burly turtle stretching seven feet in length. These botanical animals enjoy shade offered by a colorful parade of 35 hand-painted parasols, each exquisitely decorated and suspended in midair.

Nestled among raked, golden sand in the South Garden, a traditional Japanese-inspired tea house invites guests to take in the splendor of the exhibit. Custom built using bamboo pieces, natural logs and mineral copper accents, the 12-foot-tall structure celebrates Japan's ancient tradition of drinking tea.

In the North Bed, just steps from the tea house, is a hanging garden of Wisteria and Bougainvillea vines. Abstract stone art rests below, each representing different Japanese cultural icons such as Mount Fuji, the crane and turtle. Stone lanterns are placed within this serene setting, illuminating the garden and contributing to its reflective ambiance.

On view through May 11, the Japanese Garden will culminate with Golden Week, a national celebration in Japan recognizing several significant holidays including Constitution Day, Children's Day and Greenery Day.

The Conservatory display is a collaboration between Bellagio's expert horticulture team and MGM Resorts International Event Productions with consultation from Master Gardener Kanji Nomura from Nagoya.

Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens is complimentary to the public and open daily, 24 hours a day.

Enhancing Bellagio's Commitment to the Arts: Masatoshi Izumi Sculpture Installation

Continuing the celebration of Japanese culture, Bellagio unveils a striking new art installation handcrafted by renowned Japanese sculptor Masatoshi Izumi just outside of the hotel's main entrance.

The installation, A Gift From the Earth, is comprised of four distinct stone sculptures, Wind, Fire, Water and Land, each representing one of Earth's four elements. Meticulously hand carved from basalt over the course of 18 months, each sculpture weighs between 17,000 and 27,000 pounds. Basalt, a form of lava that has cooled on the volcano's surface, is frequently found in Japanese art as it represents the origins of the island nation.

"Art and culture are integral to the Bellagio experience, with original works throughout the resort, in addition to rotating exhibits at the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art," said Tarissa Tiberti, executive director of MGM Resorts Fine Art Collection. "The Izumi installation is a tremendous addition to this experience and is a beautiful representation of the authentic art forms within the Japanese culture."

Izumi was born into a family of stone carvers in Japan and began working on his own craft in 1953. His work celebrates harmony with nature by taking existing forms and altering them slightly to reveal an even more beautiful state.

Izumi's work has been showcased around the world in Japan, Taiwan, San Francisco and Chicago, in addition to Mandarin Oriental Las Vegas where "CACTUS Life – living with Earth" has been part of the iconic CityCenter Fine Art Collection since the hotel's opening in 2009.

For additional information, high-resolution images and behind the scenes footage, please click <http://bit.ly/1GogVLC>.

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