Walking Tour: Omote-sandō Architecture

Omote-sandō, the broad, tree-lined boulevard that connects Harajuku and Aoyama, is known for its parade of upmarket boutiques designed by the who’s who of (mostly) Japanese contemporary architects.

Start: Tokyo Plaza Omotesando, Harajuku
Distance: 1.2km
Duration: 45 minutes

1. **Tokyo Plaza Omotesando Harajuku** (2012) is a castle-like structure by Nakamura Hiroshi. There’s a spacious roof garden on top, with the city’s best-located Starbucks.

2. Andō Tadao’s deceptively deep **Omotesandō Hills** (2003) is a high-end shopping mall spiralling around a sunken central atrium.

3. The flagship boutique for **Dior** (2003), designed by SANAA (composed of Sejima Kazuyo and Nishizawa Ryūe), has a filmy, white exterior designed to hang like a dress.

4. Meant to evoke a stack of travelling trunks, Aoki Jun’s design for **Louis Vuitton** (2002) features offset panels of tinted glass behind sheets of metal mesh of varying patterns. Art gallery **Espace Louis Vuitton Tokyo** is on the top floor.

5. The criss-crossing strips of concrete on Ito Toyō’s construction for **Tod’s** (2004) take their inspiration from the zelkova trees below; impressively, they’re also structural.

6. Herzog and de Meuron designed this convex glass fish bowl designed for **Prada** (2003).


Take a Break... **Anniversaire Café** (http://cafe.anniversaire.co.jp; ☎️ 11am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat & Sun) has an attractive patio that is perfect for people watching.

Classic Photo Close-up of the bubbly facade of the Prada building.