

Aglow with festive grandeur

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Guests mingling about and taking photos as the 6m-tall conifer is illuminated during the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony at E&O Hotel in Farquhar Street, Penang

DESPITE a few hundred miles away from home, the guests still felt the Yuletide warmth and spirit at the Eastern and Oriental (E&O) Hotel in Penang.

With locals and expatriates for company, they had a merry experience at the hotel's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

The crowd, around several hundred, mingled about as they snacked on canapes and cocktails under the Echo Dome of the heritage wing lobby.

The caucophonous chatter that resonated across the space soon quietened down as all eyes turned to the centrepiece – a 6m-tall Christmas tree.

After E&O group hospitality and lifestyle director Michael Saxon completed the countdown, it came alive with thousands of twinkling lights.

Earlier, it took the hotel staff 18 hours to decorate the conifer with an array of baubles, ornaments and ribbons in traditional hues of red and gold.

According to Saxon, the ceremony – now in its 14th consecutive year – has become an annual tradition that E&O employees and guests alike eagerly look forward to.

“What makes it even more meaningful is that the ceremony serves as a melting pot for people of diverse backgrounds to meet and share the joys of Christmas,” Saxon added recently.

He also thanked guests for their support over the years, saying that without it, the heritage hotel along Farquhar Street in George Town, would not have enjoyed the success it did.

Adding to the joyous evening was the appearance of Santa Claus and Santarina, and Christmas caroling by The Messengers choir.

Some among the crowd joined in the renditions of ‘O Holy Night’, ‘Jingle Bell Rock’, ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’, ‘Silver Bells’, ‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’ and ‘Santa Claus is Coming to Town’, among other tunes.

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