

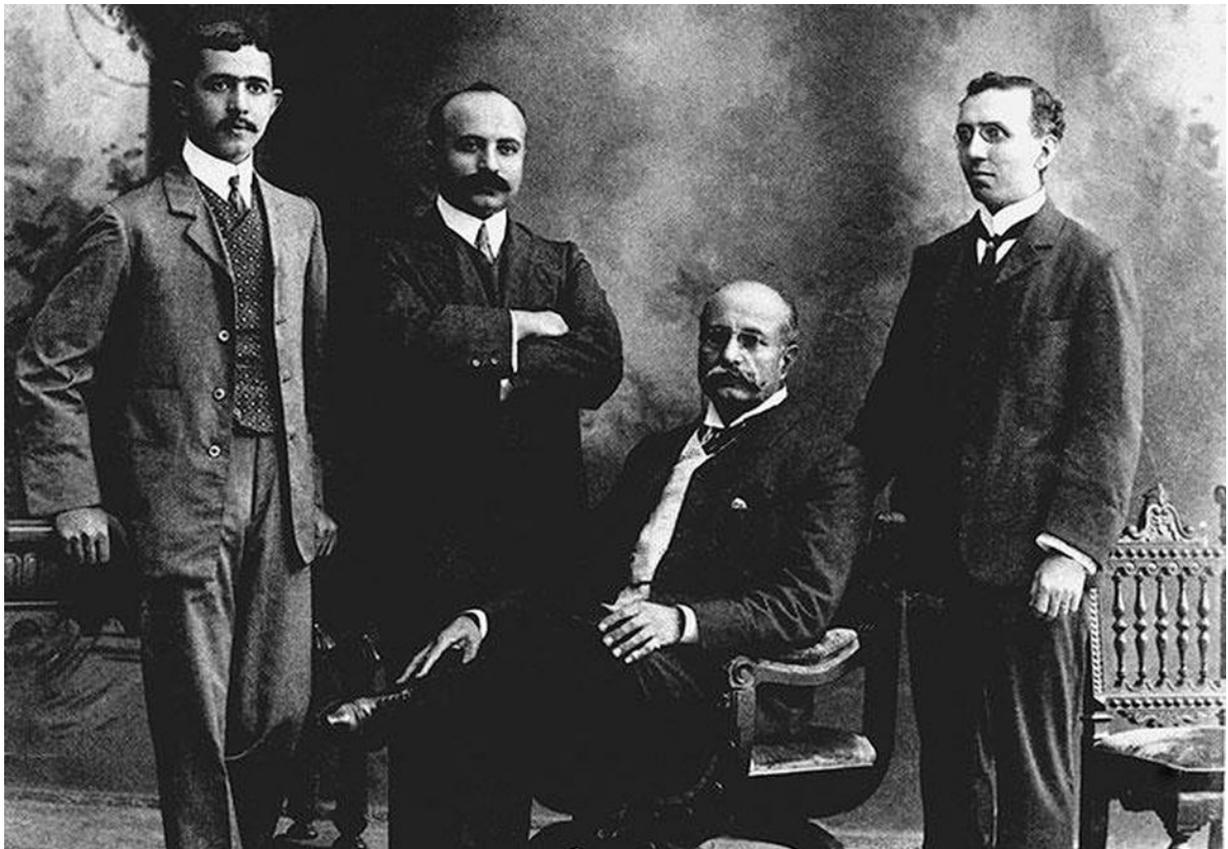
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# Penang's Pearl: The Eastern & Oriental Hotel



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This story appears in the October 2018 issue of Forbes Asia. [Subscribe to Forbes Asia](#)



Martin Sarkies, seated, with brother Arshak to his right, circa 1906. On the left, hotel manager Joe Constantine; on the right, Raffles managing proprietor Martyrose Arathoon, who would become a partner of Sarkies Brothers in 1917. When this photo was taken the E&O was thriving, as was Penang's rubber industry. Arathoon, as the firm's sole remaining partner, received the bankruptcy order in 1931, putting Sarkies Brothers into receivership.

Penang, an island oasis in the northwest corner of Malaysia where travellers head for culture and cuisine, is often called "The Pearl of the Orient." On the banks of the Andaman Sea, the pearl of Penang is the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, established in the 1800s by the Sarkies brothers, Armenian hoteliers who also founded two famous sister hotels--Raffles in Singapore and the Strand in Rangoon.

The Sarkies brothers grew up in Persia, were educated at an Armenian college in Calcutta and then made their way to Penang. In 1884, 23-year-old Tigran opened the Eastern Hotel, and soon after was joined by Martin and Aviet, who established the Oriental, which they combined into the E&O in 1889. As they left Penang to expand abroad, Arshak, the youngest, was left to run the E&O in 1898. Under his command, the E&O expanded into a glittering social scene, boasting an orchestra and 130 suites. Having the longest hotel seafront in the world, it became a magnet for Noel Coward, Rudyard Kipling, Sun Yat-sen, Somerset Maugham and Hermann Hesse, who in 1911 called the E&O the "most beautiful hotel for Europeans in the East Indies."

The party ended in 1931. At age 63, Arshak, the last surviving brother, died just before Sarkies' firm was declared insolvent, his lavish spending on the business coinciding with the Great Depression. Two years later, the E&O was subsumed under the Raffles Hotel company, the first of several subsequent owners of this iconic hotel.

### **The Sarkieses expanded the E&O in several phases**



JANE A. PETERSON

The Sarkieses expanded the E&O in several phases: The Victory Annex, built in 1923, honored the British contribution in World War I. It featured a 300-seat

dining area and a ballroom. Eighteen years later Japanese forces occupied Penang, and their senior officers lodged in the E&O until 1945. Today the hotel is owned by a listed property consortium, Eastern & Oriental Bhd., which bought the hotel in 1994 and completed a major restoration in 2001.

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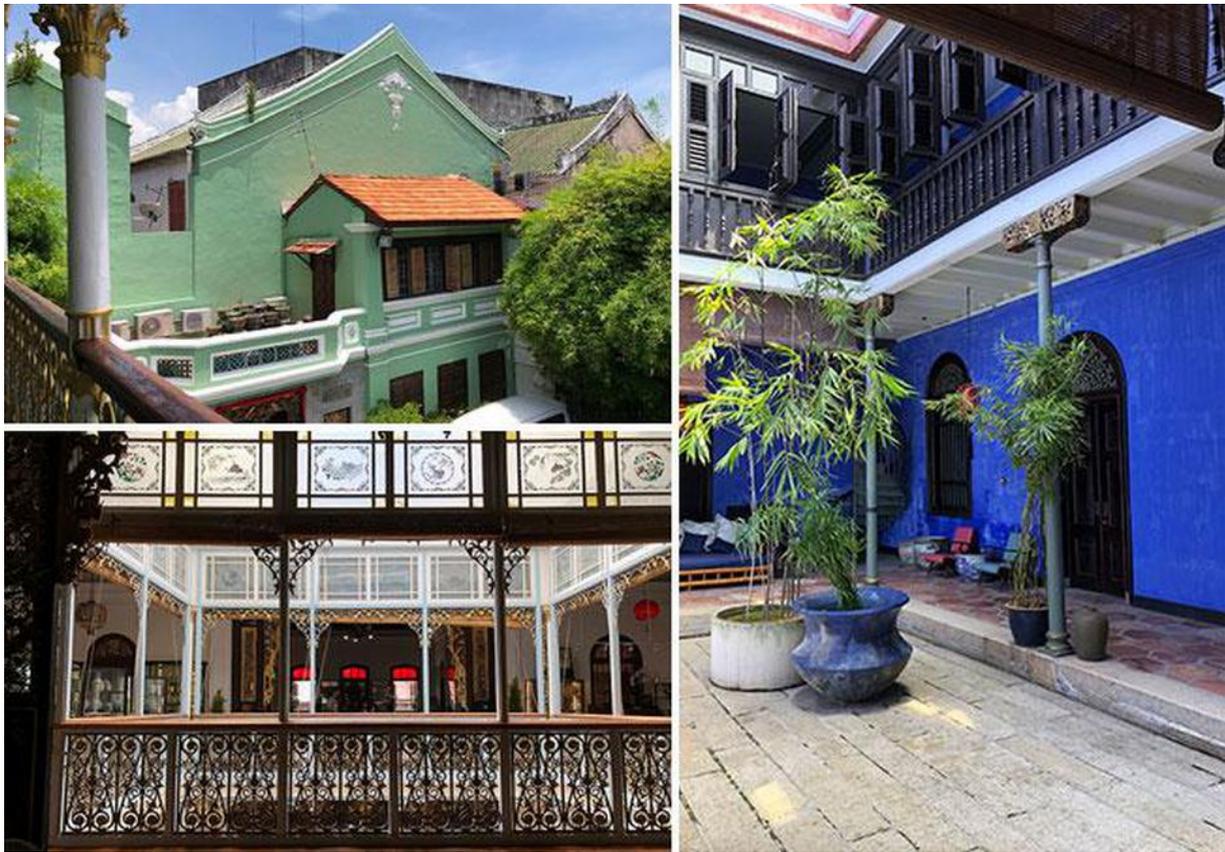
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### History at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel



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### Historic Landmarks



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Visit two beautifully restored mansions. The mint green Pinang Peranakan Mansion, now a museum, was once the home and office of merchant Chung Keng Quee in the 1800s, while the Blue Mansion belonged to Chinese tycoon Cheong Fatt Tze, known as China's last mandarin, first capitalist and "Rockefeller of the East." Now a boutique hotel, the Blue Mansion offers daytime public tours.

Martin Sarkies, seated, with brother Arshak to his right, circa 1906. On the left, hotel manager Joe Constantine; on the right, Raffles managing proprietor Martyrose Arathoon, who would become a partner of Sarkies Brothers in 1917. When this photo was taken the E&O was thriving, as was Penang's rubber industry. Arathoon, as the firm's sole remaining partner, received the bankruptcy order in 1931, putting Sarkies Brothers into receivership.

### Places to Visit



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Begun as a rice stall in 1965, the no-frills Teksen Restaurant on Carnavon Street offers a mix of cuisines: Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka and Peranakan. Expect to get a playing card that marks your place in the fast-moving queue. Don't fret--it's worth the wait. Signature dish: Assam Tumis fish and trotters in black vinegar.

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## Survivors' Voices Are Powerful, And Survivors Across The Country Are Standing With Dr. Blasey Ford



Jordan Brooks Brand Contributor  
Civic Nation BRANDVOICE

For survivors, these past weeks have been incredibly hard. To watch someone tell trusted confidants their story, wish to remain anonymous, and then slowly watch that anonymity stripped away, is devastating.

To watch that incredibly brave woman, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, make what must have been a gut-wrenching decision to give up that anonymity in order to protect and defend all of us, is devastating. She is a true patriot, and I wish I were as brave as she is.

To watch as Republican pundits slander her, this courageous woman, knowing that the hatred and vitriol she faces is exactly what she was trying to avoid for herself and her family by staying anonymous, is devastating. To watch her receive death threats is devastating.

To watch as Senators who claim to support survivors, Senators who claim to be supporters of the #MeToo movement, Senators who claim to be supporters of women's rights and autonomy, refuse to call for an FBI investigation of Dr. Blasey Ford's allegations and continue to support Judge Kavanaugh, is devastating.



Every survivor has the right to decide if, when, and how they tell their story. Dr. Blasey Ford should have been afforded that right. But now, we fight with her, we fight for her, for every survivor who has ever suffered at the hands of a JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

And Dr. Blasey Ford's truthful, courageous, powerful testimony was inspirational but also gut-wrenching and devastating.

I've been walking around for the past few weeks with a pit in my stomach. As this story has unfolded, we're faced with the reality of both the progress we've made and the long journey still ahead. My dear friends, survivors, and allies alike, have

told me they feel the same way. Last week, a group of survivors gathered outside the Supreme Court to support Dr. Blasey Ford. As we peacefully gathered, we were greeted by a man who screamed at us that he didn't believe Dr. Blasey Ford, and that it was all a Democratic conspiracy. Nearly 30 years after Clarence Thomas's confirmation hearings, in the age of #MeToo, we are reminded of just how much work we still need to do to ensure survivors are treated with the respect and dignity due to all people.

I've been working on women's issues and on violence prevention for more than ten years in hopes of creating a world where women and girls from all communities have access to equal opportunities and lives free from this sort of violence and misogyny. Each day of those years has brought both beacons of hope and progress, and moments of pain when we're reminded of the distance ahead. And while there have been previous disappointments, this moment feels different. Harder. More personal.

Perhaps it's because of the similarities between my assault and Dr. Blasey Ford's. Perhaps it's because I'm disappointed that we haven't come further in the past 30 years. But I think it's deeper than that. As my dear friend and activist, Jess Davidson, the Executive Director of End Rape on Campus, said at a rally recently, "for the first time in our young lives, we are watching as an administration actively celebrates those who are perpetrators, and is doing everything they can to undermine voices of survivors." That knowledge is devastating.

As thousands of people gathered on Capitol Hill and around the country yesterday, we take comfort in the fact that we are all here, survivors and allies, fighting together. Fighting for those whose voices have not been heard, and fighting to say we will not sit by and let this happen. We will not allow yet another perpetrator take his place in the hallowed halls of the Supreme Court. But, as we continue this fight, let's make sure we acknowledge the pain, and support each other, check in with each other, and make sure we all know that we are not alone. If I've learned nothing else in the excruciating Trump presidency, it is that we need to take care of each other; we need to remember that it's okay to be feeling what we are feeling—to cry, to hurt and to be scared. It's absolutely okay to do whatever protects our well-being, and as the incomparable Brittany Packnett reminded us yesterday, "set your boundaries and don't let anyone judge them. And please, please, know that you are loved, supported, and believed."

Every survivor has the right to decide if, when, and how they tell their story. Dr. Blasey Ford should have been afforded that right. But now, we fight with her, we fight for her, for every survivor who has ever suffered at the hands of a perpetrator. Her testimony yesterday was a striking reminder of our strength and power. We join together to say that not only will we not tolerate a perpetrator as a Supreme Court Justice, but in any other position of power.

Survivors' voices are powerful. Dr. Blasey Ford's voice is powerful. Our voices are powerful. Her courage has given me the strength to tell my story, and to continue to fight for what is right. And now, Senators who say that they are supporters of women, supporters of survivors, must step up and show us they mean what they say. If they don't, we'll make sure they remember on Election Day that they made the choice not to stand up for all of us.

To survivors, please take care of yourselves and each other, and feel the love that we all send your way always.

And to Dr. Blasey Ford – thank you. From the bottom of my heart, and from the hearts of so many survivors, thank you for making an incredibly courageous decision to tell your story. You have inspired so many survivors with your bravery. Every single one of us is here for you, we believe you, and we will do everything in our power to make sure that your voice does not go unheard.

**Call your Senators now and tell them that we must say NO to Kavanaugh on the Supreme Court: 202-224-3121.**

For resources for survivors of sexual assault please visit – [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) or call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673.



**Jordan Brooks** Brand Contributor

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Jordan Brooks is the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of the United State of Women, a non-profit dedicated to being the megaphone for gender equality, and organizing women around the country. Prior to that role, Jordan spent nearly 8 years in the Obama White Hou... **Read More**

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