



Rising To The Occasion

The lobby entrance of E&O Hotel Penang.

"Prospects for growth in revenue base for the E&O Hotel and Lone Pine Hotel are promising as both hotels possess unique positioning – each with history and heritage unrivalled within the hospitality industry in Malaysia."

According to the May 2013 STR Global Construction Pipeline Report, the Asia Pacific hotel development pipeline comprises 1,828 hotels totalling 394,856 rooms. The industry also does not seem to be faltering in the next year as there is an expected 534 hotels planned to open in the region for 2014. This continuous rise in the demand for expansion in the hospitality industry has spurred some of the region's biggest developers to take on hotel and resort property projects and to expand their remit into this industry as well as seek out designers and fit-out experts who lend the expertise in building some of the region's best hospitality establishments.

Strategic Partnerships

Some of the major townships and hospitality projects in Malaysia have Sime Darby's involvement in them and recently, the conglomerate have increased their remit and extended their presence into property development in the hospitality sector by aligning themselves with lifestyle property developer Eastern Et Oriental Bhd (E&O) for a strategic partnership to develop parts of its projects in the Klang Valley as well as projects in Penang and Johor.

As the demand for more hotel rooms increases in the Asia Pacific Region, so does the demand for the acquisition of land to develop properties as well as the necessary tools and fixtures that come with building and fitting out these properties. We look to the developers, experts and visionaries that put together the buildings that drive the hospitality industry forward.

"E&O has the brand recognition in developing hospitality and wellness projects," said Sime Darby Property's Managing Director, Datuk Abdul Wahab Maskan. The strategic direction of this partnership is so that the E&O group can take the concepts of their flagship properties, and extend it toward a portfolio of hotels and resorts in Malaysia and around the region.

"E&O plans to strengthen our foothold in the hospitality management segment where we have been leveraging on the Eastern Et Oriental Hotel's position as a leading heritage hotel in the region," explained Eric Chan Kok Leong, Deputy Managing Director at E&O.

E&O have embarked on the refurbishment and upgrading of its two heritage hotels to create a reputation that matches their sister heritage hotels in the region such as The Raffles in Singapore and The Strand in Rangoon.

The Science Of Space

The concepts behind E&O Group's refurbished flagship properties would not have been made possible if not for the visionaries behind the two architectural firms that they work closely with, namely; GDP Architects and internationally-acclaimed hospitality concept architects Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo (WATG, Seattle).

GDP Architects are masters when it comes to addressing the context of space and this is why they were chosen as the lead in refurbishment projects of heritage hotels such as the Victory Annexe Wing of the E&O Hotel as well as the Lone Pine Hotel in Penang.

As the E&O hotel was a heritage architectural icon, the E&O Group insisted that the new annex wing recapture the architectural spirit of the Victorian era. In keeping to the original Victorian styled model guestrooms of the early 1900s, claw-footed bath tubs are set against colonial-patterned tiling and chromed taps, while crisp

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Keeping With The Times

Even the iconic spaces are taking a cue from the influx of new hospitality developments and it rings true with one of KL's most beloved flagship hotels, the Hilton Kuala Lumpur. The Hilton KL is back with a brand new hotel experience that boasts a stylish, modernist redesigned lobby lounge and five exciting new concept dining outlets. The refurbishment responds to the current needs of a sharpened Hilton brand image and creates a new invigorating design language

that will set a new standard for Hilton.

Markus Scheuller, Vice President, F&B Operations, Hilton Worldwide Asia Pacific mentioned to HA, "it is about building destinations and how the design and concepts fit into building the brand as a whole as well as what is commercially successful. When all is said and done, we want a successful interior design and that can go hand in hand with operations to bring it to life."



Above (L to R): Suite in E&O Hotel's Victory Annexe; Rooms in the Victory Annexe were designed by GDP Architects to emulate the Victorian era.

white linens furnish the dark-wood furniture lending a throwback aura to modern conveniences.

In the same vein was the refurbishment of another iconic Penang-based property, the Lone Pine Hotel which was an original jumble of sorts. The designers did not take anything away from the old colonial charm of the building but instead infused into the configuration of space, materials such as clay bricks and concrete blocks, glass and metal, that gave the building an organic feel and created a peaceful and serene environment.

Hub Of The City

Due to sit on the land off Jalan Raja Chulan that is now occupied by the Seri Melayu restaurant and Chulan Square (which are slated to be demolished), the new Harrods Hotel mixed development recently broke ground and is expected to be completed by 2018. This new mixed development will be the joint venture between Tradewinds Corporation Bhd and the Pavilion Group and Qatar Holding LLC. The project will not just comprise of the hotel but also two residential towers, office building and retail outlet which will link to Pavilion mall.

To put things into perspective as to the investment of Urusharta Cemerlang (KL) Sdn Bhd, the developer of Pavilion Kuala Lumpur the whole development will have a gross development value of RM800mil.

Shafee Sajari from ACID interior design consultancy was behind the design teams for the dining areas and he mentions that "understanding the brief for the refurbishment was one thing but understanding how this brief fits in with the brand standards was another. It is also about understanding the expectations of the patrons and the clientele and that was integral in visualising the concept."

Daniel Welk, General Manager, Hilton Kuala Lumpur adds that "it is the coordination between visualisation, design, operation and local market knowledge as they are all equally weighted to bring about a successful realisation of a new look and feel."

Leaving It To The Experts

HCM Hospitality Consultancy and Management

Of course, where would concepts be without those who understand how to put together the pieces of the puzzle to make it into reality? HCM Hospitality Consultancy and Management is the hospitality consultancy agency headed by FC Chong that works with clients from a variety of backgrounds to offer a holistic approach to hospitality building concepts. Chong elaborates that HCM work with the clients from A to B. "We first understand the hotel owners' dreams and wishes before engaging architectural and interior design consultants to work together to piece together the formula of realising a design concept."