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Thursday, August 4, 2016

Eastern & Oriental Hotel - Penang, Malaysia

A 2-hour delayed flight from Langkawi, choppy plane ride and wrong bus stop; I was worn-out, drained and almost ready to give up. My buddy was tired but not as cranky as me. I was totally battered; until I walked into our suite at Eastern and Oriental Hotel and got blown away by our funky retro modern room. I went into the bathroom and almost cried in so much joy. I didn't expect that bathrooms can totally revive my spirit back.

It was sundown as we arrived at Penang International Airport. We took a bus, instead of a cab, 'coz the rush hour traffic might cause ridiculous fare all the way to our home in Georgetown. Oh, by the way, we booked on one of Penang's heritage sites for three days.

Established in 1885, Eastern and Oriental Hotel (or E&O) was built during the British colonial era by four Armenian brothers, the Sarkies, who also established some of the best hotels in the world that are still in operation today (including The Raffles in Singapore and The Strand in Yangon, Myanmar). Braving two World Wars, E&O stood the test of time and

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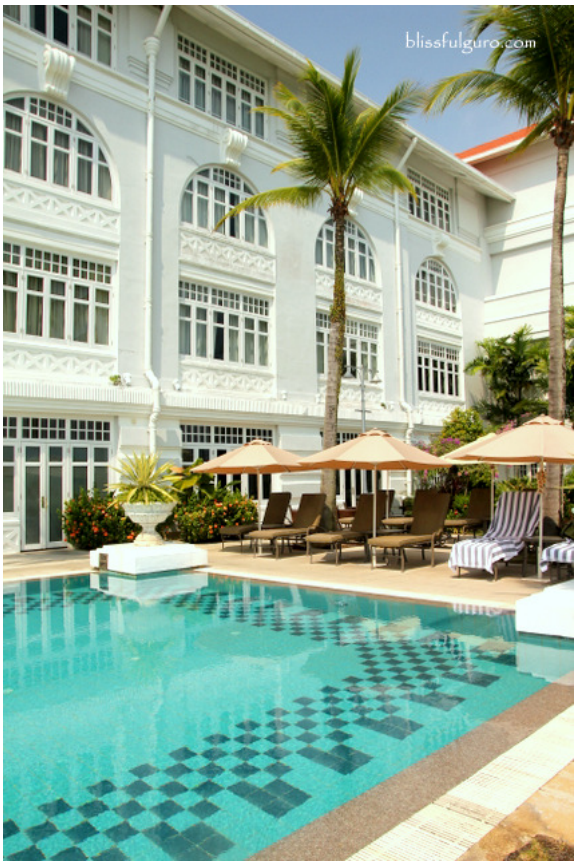
retained its charm after more than a century of providing luxurious accommodation to its guests. There are two wings at E&O, Heritage and Victory Annexe, the former being the oldest of the two. Both share the same coastline, Penang's Selatan Strait.



Heritage Wing's swimming pool

Confused on where the wings were, we entered an old school revolving door and were transported back in time; there's a dome in the center of the lobby that reverberates everyone's voices, a spiral staircase that seemed to have its own stories to tell than most of the shophouses in Georgetown, an old elevator that still has grills on it, a lone piano resting on one corner, and front desk ladies that appeared to have just come out from a black & white TV show. It felt timeless, classy and lavish.

Heritage Wing's lobby

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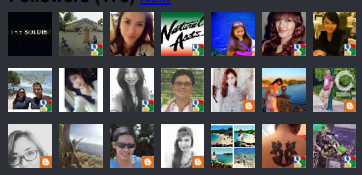

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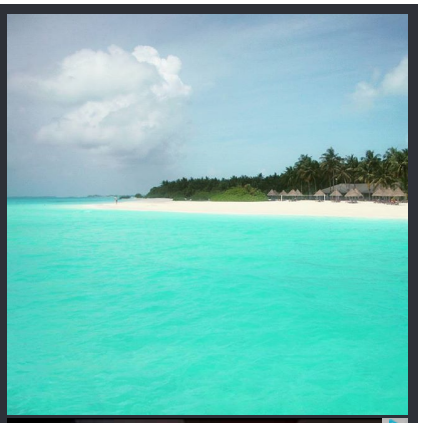
Heritage Wing

Old school wash room at the Heritage Wing

Walking along the hallways and corridors going to Victory Annexe, I felt out of place as I tugged my funky blue backpack and camera bag. Neutral colors dominated the area and I could imagine the footsteps of Rudyard Kipling and Hermann Hesse as they walked along the same path I was tracing.

Heritage Wing

The Victory Annexe was completely different from the Heritage Wing. It had the same feel of elegance but the stylish lounge chairs with orange throw pillows gave a modern twist to it.



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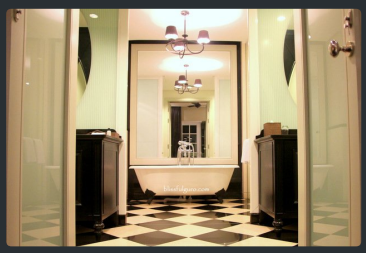

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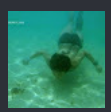

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A Guide on Butuan - Surigao - Siargao - Bucas Grande
I have this strange thing about exotic-sounding Philippine

Victory Annexe's lobby

Our booking reservation was swiftly attended to at the front desk and minutes later, me and my buddy were up on the 14th floor and were being welcomed by some framed Penang photos with individual spotlights on the corridor. It actually felt like a gallery rather than a hallway.

Framed Penang photos on hallways

We found our Studio Suite (check room types and rates) and were totally blown away with it.

On my left was a white wooden shutter cum divider that concealed the room but my attention was focused on the en suite toilet and bath on my right. Dominated by shades of black, grey and white, the standalone bathtub with three-lamp chandelier on top was its focal point. And it totally changed my mood altogether. It felt extravagant and lavish that it made me take a warm bubble bath right away to soothe away all my stress.

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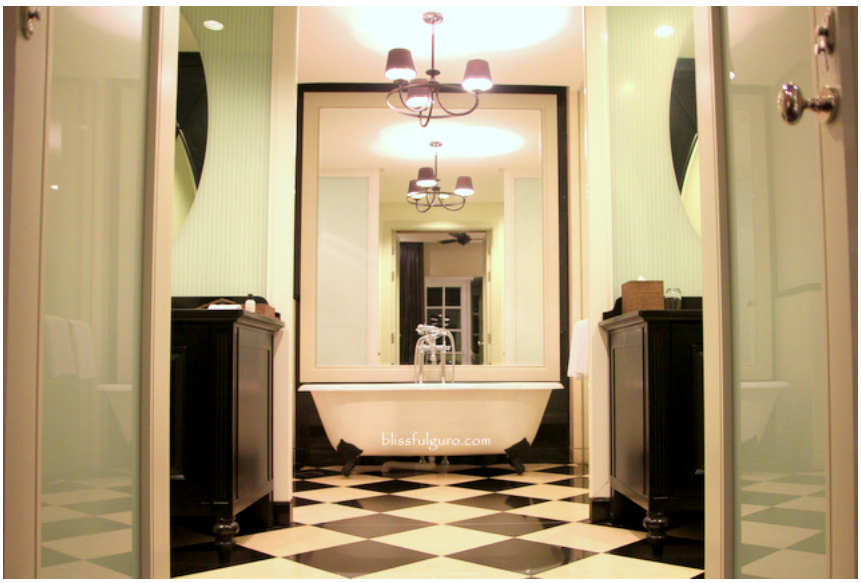
His and hers lavatories with its own set of bathroom amenities and vanity closet greeted me as I open the frosted glass double door. It thrilled me as I checked my own space and area.

I move farther and found a separated toilet and shower area on both ends of the tub. The black and white checkered tiles added charm to its modern retro feel.



Gorgeous, ain't it?

Moving on, I went on a corner of our room and examined it from that standpoint. A separate desk with lamp and chair was set as a work station. Dark wood was employed and it perfectly matched the wood parquet flooring.

A wooden entertainment rack rested beside it with flatscreen TV, mini bar with complimentary drinks and coffee machine.

Studio Suite

I walked where the bed was and tried to stretch out for a few seconds. My body was aching for rest when my buddy gasped as he pushed aside the heavy drapes on one end. It revealed an open-aired balcony with a great view of the city and Selatan Strait. At night, the hazy sky lit up. It was instantly our favorite spot in our suite (aside from the bathroom).

I went back inside the room and rested on a comfy lounge chair. We were planning a night out but then decided to just have dinner on an eatery nearby and went back to our suite for a much needed respite that lasted for hours; It was *the* best I had after weeks of our Beach Hop Asia 2016 summer backpacking trip.

View from our private balcony

Morning light creeped into our room as I stirred to wake, I remembered leaving the drapes open last night as I wanted to open up the space. It was eight in the morning and the sun was slowly emerging from the horizon. It was a great day, I declared.

I woke my buddy up and mentioned that a Penang breakfast was waiting for us on the ground level.

Complimentary breakfast comes with the stay and is served either at Sarkies Restaurant (which have more choices) or the Planters Lounge on the fifth floor; we opted to have it on Sarkies.

Sarkies

As I entered the restaurant, noise from the different buffet stations and from the diners dominated the area. It was a beautiful noise paired with different aroma from the food that was being served. There were different areas that featured international and Penang brekkie favorites.

My buddy dashed into the noodle station where he had *laksa* and *char koew teow* while I went into the roti station and had *roti canai*. It was a feast, as I filled my plates with everything I craved for during my Penang trips years back.

Char Koew Teow

Penang Laksa

We went back to our suite and relaxed for a moment. The scorching heat of Penang totally drained our energy so our plans on going out to our fave spots in Georgetown were ruined. Good thing there's had so many things to do at E&O to fill our day.

Ernest Zacharevic's (Penang Street Artist) Gallery located at the Victory Annexe Wing

Peranakan tiles from old houses in Penang

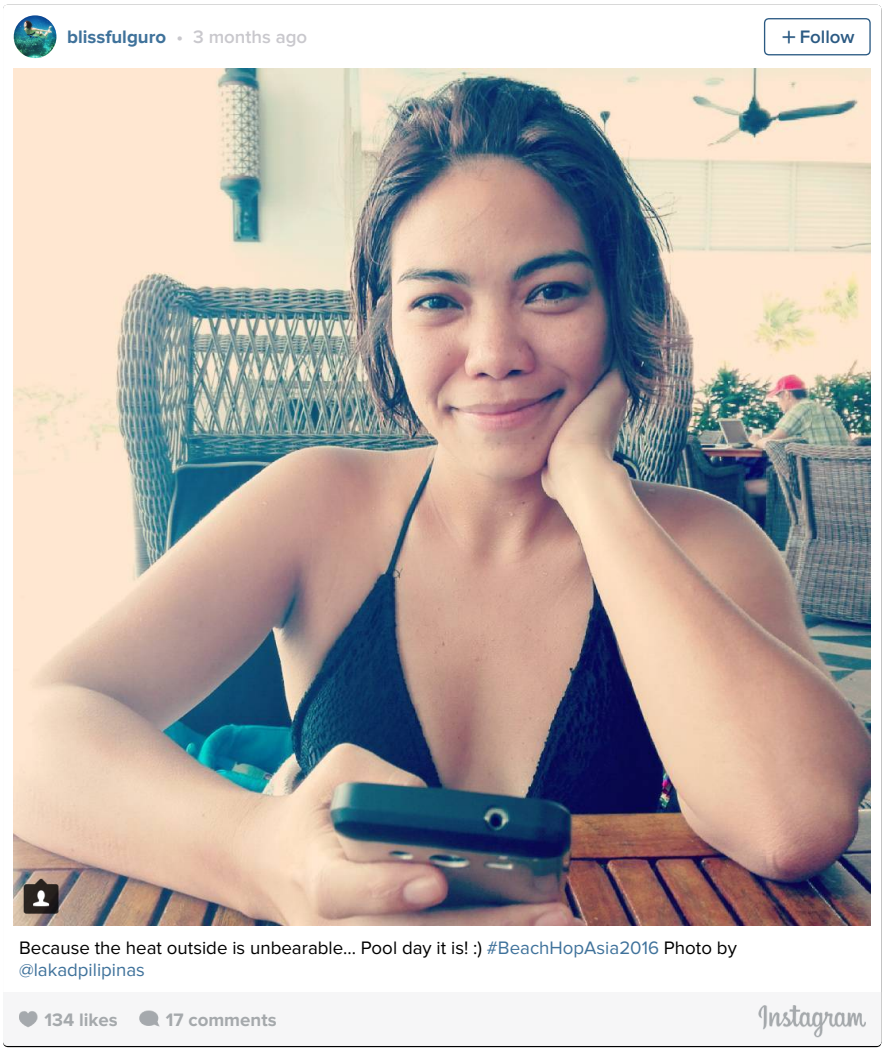
We had some chill time at the pool area which I loved, we also had afternoon tea at 1885 (a café at the Heritage Wing) and then enjoyed the cocktails at Planters Lounge where we had some free-flowing alcohol and snacks overlooking the calm waters of Selatan Strait. Our day was packed, and we haven't gone out yet.

Afternoon tea at 1885

Planters Lounge

Poolside terrace

The next day it was the same staycation itinerary; we did a quick dip at the infinity pool and lounged on our suite.



It was a short but sweet stay as we get to enjoy one of Penang's finest hotels. The walls of the century-old Eastern & Oriental Hotel were quiet witnesses to the splendor of the English colonial era that it felt like I was walking back in time. Lovely. Timeless. Splendid.

Eastern & Oriental Hotel (**check for discounted rates**)
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