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## Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang

Live Life Lah / 23 hours ago



Once upon a time, over 120 – 130 years ago, the Eastern & Oriental Hotel was the place to be if you were rich, famous or had the ‘breeding’ aka class.. Yes, back in those times, the Eastern & Oriental Hotel was the grand dame of Penang, the must visit place in South East Asia, and it was definitely “The Premier Hotel East of Suez”, with over 100 rooms, 40 of them that had adjoining bathrooms, hot and cold running water, individual telephones and a 902-foot seafront, “the longest of any hotel in the world”.



It began with the Eastern Hotel which was founded by the Sarkies Brothers in 1884. Within just one year, the hotel had prospered and got so popular, that the brothers decided to establish another hotel right next door, known as the Oriental Hotel, in 1885, leading to a merger of both hotels into the Eastern & Oriental Hotel in 1889.

It was after this, the Sarkies brothers then established the famous hotels, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore in 1887 and the Strand Hotel in Rangoon, Burma, in 1901. Yup... I was also surprised to find that the Raffles Hotel and the Strand Hotel are actually younger siblings to the Eastern & Oriental Hotel here in Penang...



The E & O hotel eventually went through several major expansion works, culminating to the completion of the present hotel complex in 1929. However after the World War II, the hotel underwent several decades of decline, until 1996, when a decision was made by the hotel management to temporarily close down the hotel for major reconstruction.

Under its new owner, The E&O Group, the hotel was reopened to the public in April 2001.



In 2013 the old Victory Annexe which had about 40 rooms was demolished and replaced by a new building consisting of 118 studio suites...



...and 14 over-sized corner suites with separate living area, guest washroom, expansive balcony and dining area with sea-view and a claw and ball long bath looking out to the sea... Yup, you can take a nice soak in the bath and enjoy the magnificent sea view of the Straits of Melaka – some people call it Straits of Malacca, but I learn from some Melaka people that they prefer their state to be called Melaka rather than Malacca which is not such a nice word...so out of respect, am using Melaka... ok...

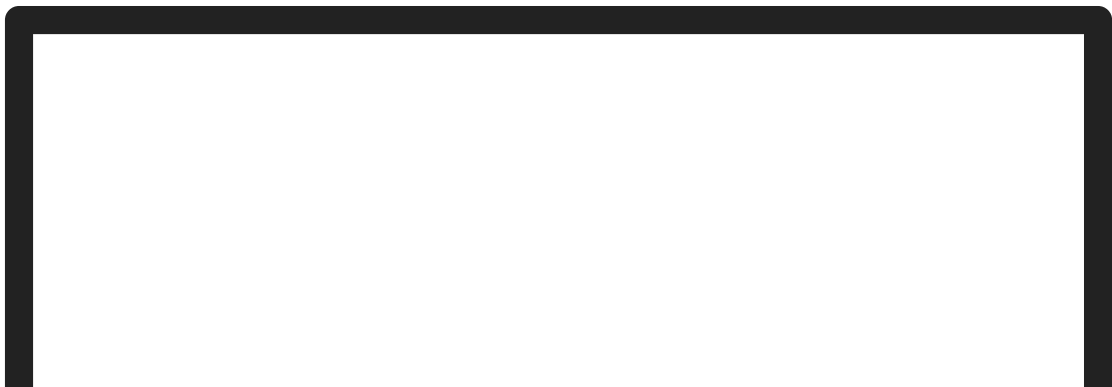


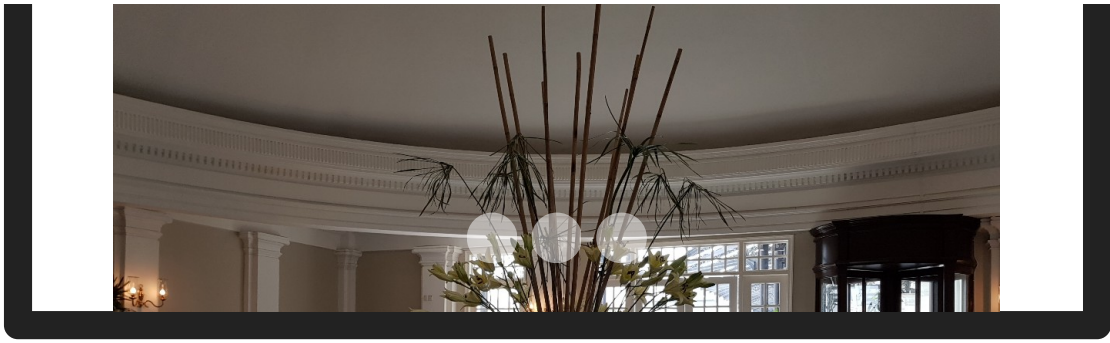
Ever since I was little, I have passed by the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, since my mom used to frequent the Penang Bowl bowling alley just next to it and I remember admiring the façade, even though it did not look as grand as it does now... somehow or other I am always drawn to heritage buildings, and medieval sites, so it always does appeal to me.. and besides, not many buildings can boast of having survived two world wars, right..

So when the hotel was reopened, I was wishing hard to be able to visit the hotel.. and well, my dream finally came true over the weekend and well, my mini me was the lucky one who got to follow me there...

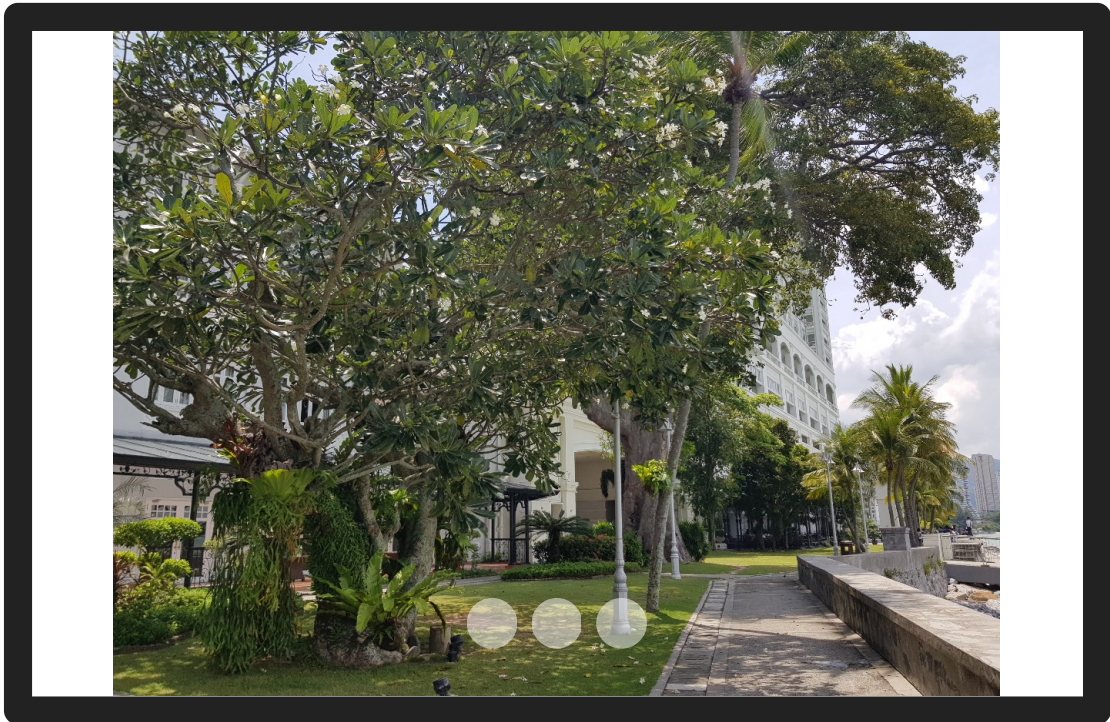


Words cannot express the joy bubbling up as my Grab car dropped me off at the main entrance of the Heritage Building. There is yet a small wooden and glass revolving door which my daughter could not resist.. and well, being the adult, and since a doorman in khaki colonial style uniform was holding the door opened, I graciously stepped through thanking him, to be greeted by a breathtaking view that kind of transported me back in time...





The first thing that caught my eyes was the round entrance table with its magnificent vase full of lilies and other flowers that was below a copper whispering dome, and a little further away, a birdcage Otis lift, and nearby, a magnificent mahogany check-in counter with pigeonholes at the back and even an old telephone I use to play with at home as a kid, but which I have not seen for ages.



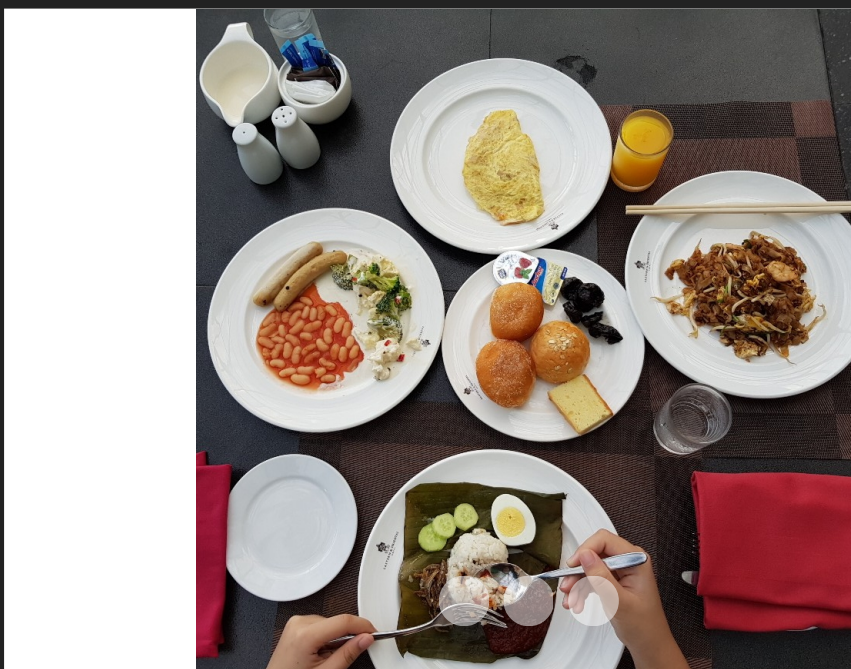
However, as I was booked into the Victory Annexe building, the newer building, I had to take a little stroll to the other side.. passing by the gardens, old cannons and a magnificent ancient tree which is still growing beautifully... a giant 'kelupang', or Java olive tree, which has to be the largest and the oldest tree of its kind in Penang, heck, this tree is even older than the hotel itself.

I got myself checked in and was just in love with my Studio Suite that came with Victorian details such as very spacious en-suite bathrooms that came fitted with claw footed long baths, twin vanities, an old fashioned type rainforest shower and hand held shower, lazy ceiling fans and breezy balconies we could watch fishermen boats, cargo and passenger ships passing through to get to the Penang Swettenham Pier..



I managed to get a peek in one of the rooms over at the Heritage Wing consisting of equally spacious bathrooms, with free-standing bathtubs, huge vanity units, immense walk-in showers, exquisitely stylish 1920s black and white tiles; king sized beds; high-speed WiFi, desks, minibars and yes, round-the-clock butler service..

This is after all the place where rich colonials, notable planters and elites patronise, and the guest list has included Noel Coward, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, Herman Hesse and even the Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, Lee Kuan Yew and Charlie Chaplin...



If and when you are staying at the Victory Annexe, you actually can have a choice of having your breakfast either at Sarkies on the Ground Floor for an International Buffet Breakfast which is pretty sumptuous and comes with local Penang delicacies as well like Char Koay Teow, Apam, Nasi Lemak, etc.... and believe me, these dishes are really as good as the one you can get at the hawker stalls and cooked with fresh ingredients...



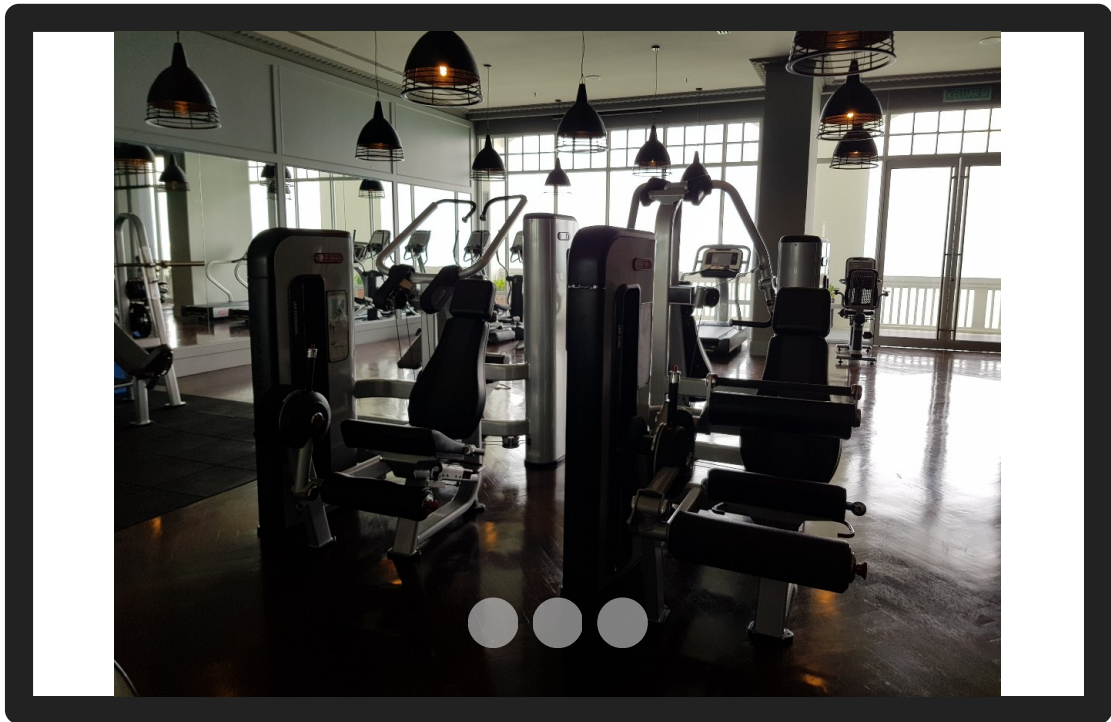
...or you can also head over to the Planter's Lounge on the 6th floor near the pool area for a Continental Buffet Breakfast.. this of course, is more intimate as the venue is more quiet and private since most would choose to go downstairs to Sarkies for more variety...

..and my daughter and I enjoyed some quiet moments indulging in our breakfast, smelling the briny sea scent which my daughter argued came from the freshly smoked salmon she was eating, and watching the boats go by...

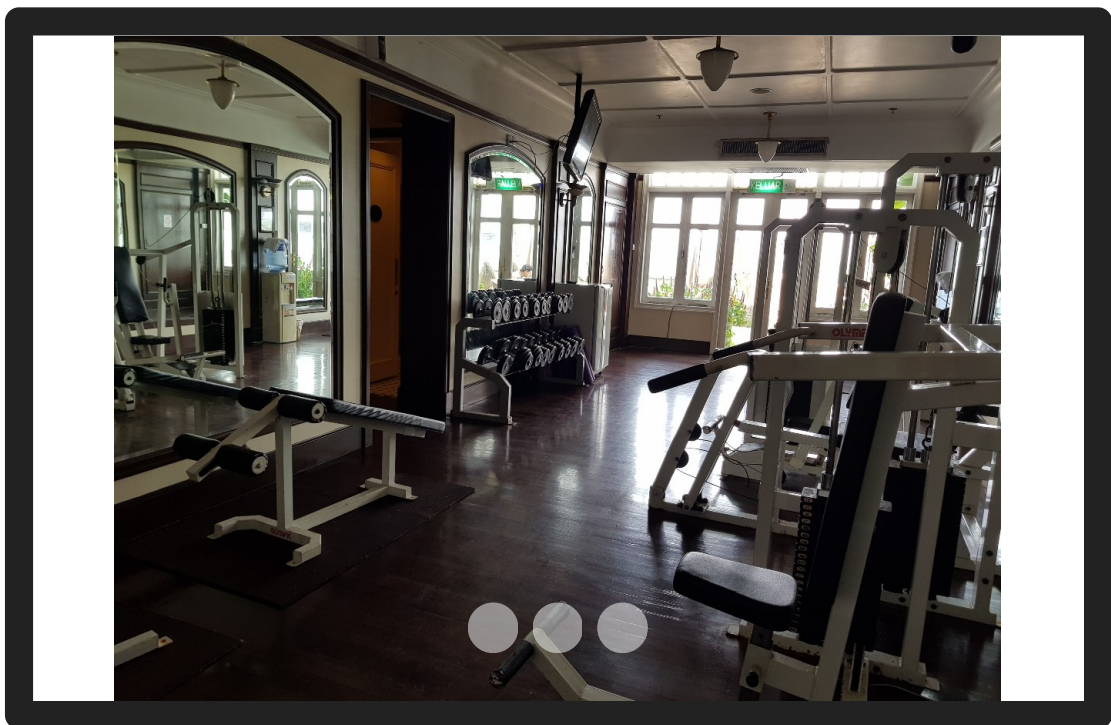


My daughter manage to take dip in the unique L-infinity pool where she could swim in the sun and also in the shade if she chose... and which also looked out to the Straits of Melaka. Likewise,

there are deckchairs which are under the shade of the roof, or rather ceiling and some under the sun with umbrellas and Pinang trees giving some shade...



If you are a gym bunny or buff, there are two gyms you can check out, there is one here on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor...



...and another one at the Heritage Wing Ground Floor...



If you have an event or are planning to get married, you ought to check out the function rooms as the magnificent Grand Ballroom with 400 – 600 seating capacity, a full stage and that comes with royal boxes and galleries which just reminds me of some exclusive and stylish theatre somewhere...



And if you are in the mood for more pampering, and relaxation, be sure to check out Panpuri Organic Spa which is also on the same level as the Planters Lounge and Swimming Pool on level 6...



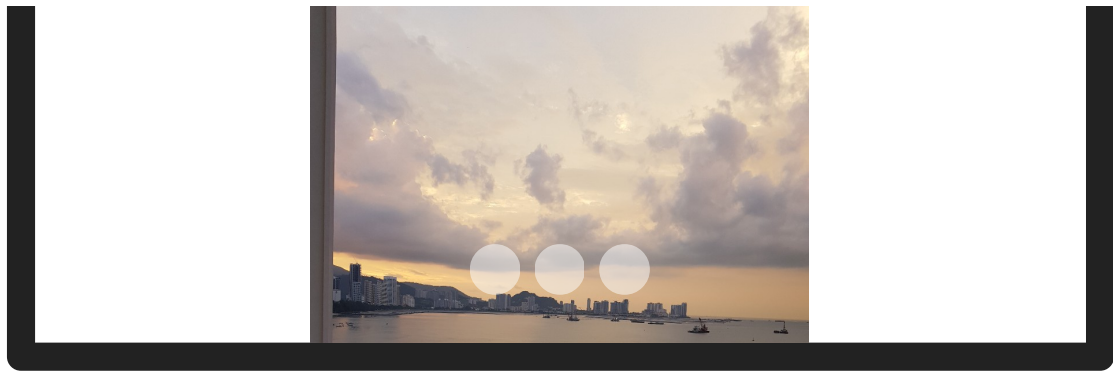
Our room was located on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor and it was a beautiful suite we loved. As I said, we had a very generous and spacious bathroom and changing room with ironing board, iron, hair dryer and a safe in the two cupboards behind the twin vanities. There is also bedroom slippers, towelling dressing robes and sarongs for our use along with ample amenities... and the rainforest shower worked like a dream with good water pressure...



The room came with a desk for working, a nice arm chair to curl up and relax in while reading the day's newspapers.. yeah... the Eastern & Oriental Hotel is probably one of the last few hotels that actually has the morning newspaper- the Star delivered to your room still...

Most of the other hotels only gives you a copy of the Sun free newspaper or ask you to check online for your daily news, and offer the daily papers at the lounge area or restaurants only...

My suite which was my home away from home for two nights, was definitely comfortable since I could alternate between the fan and the air conditioning and the bed was super comfy...



I also enjoyed the balcony where we could hear comforting rhythmic sounds of the waves crashing to the rocks and amazing views of the Straits of Melaka...

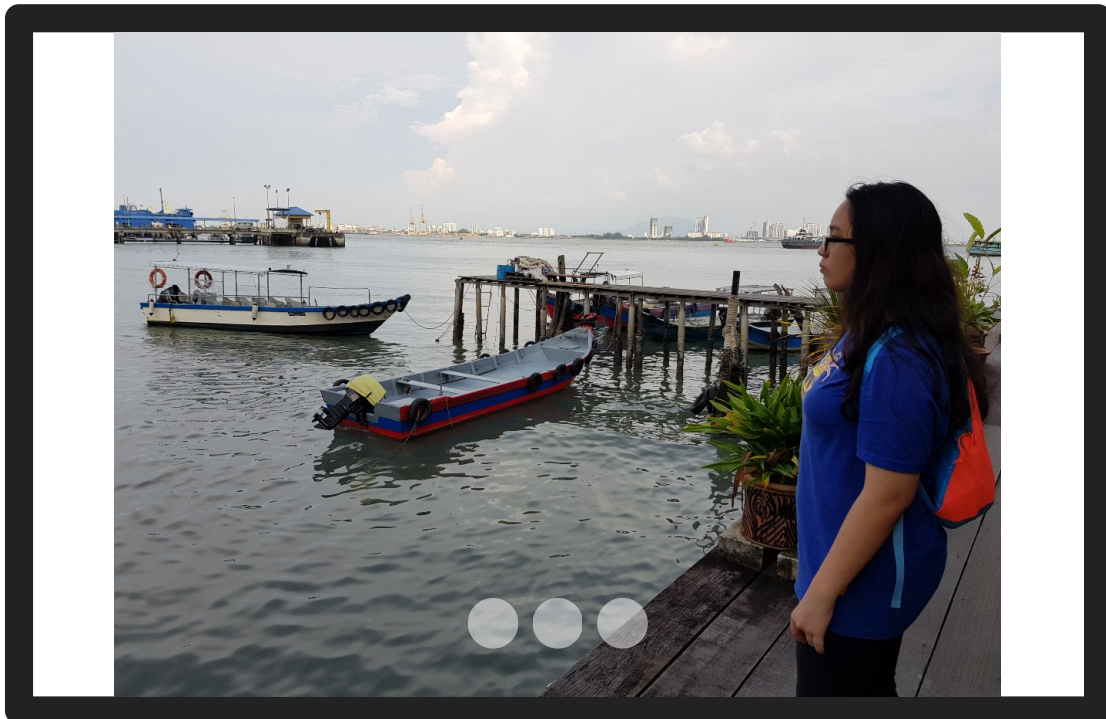
There is a TV with selected Vision 4 channels and Astro Channels as well as some private channels on the Eastern & Oriental Hotels as well as Penang..



There is also a mini bar stocked with some soft drinks, 4 bottles of RO water, a coffee making machine and a kettle and an assortment of tea...all complementary of course..



The corridor with wooden flooring made interesting sounds as we walked on it with our rubber shoe soles and was decorated with beautifully framed street photos but all was peaceful and neither my daughter and I encountered anything strange or supernatural, even though the hotel is said to be haunted.. and yes, mind you, my daughter has the sixth sense and has seen 'entities' before... and well, this lovely hotel is over 130 years old and there are spirits all around us....



Overall, it has been a wonderful stay at the hotel and my daughter and I enjoyed the old world charm of the hotel as well as the convenience of it being in the Georgetown heritage site as it was just walking distance to many places.. My daughter and I actually walked from the Armenian Street to Chew Jetty, and back to Chulia Street, Love Lane, Muntri Street, Leith Street and back to the hotel, while checking out heritage sites, some of Penang Street Art and fancy cafes...

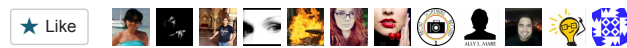
Will do another post on dining options etc at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel soon, which you will be surprise to know is actually much more affordable and value for money then you can imagine..

Add – 10, Lebuhr Farquhar, 10200 George Town, Pulau Pinang

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Sorry it is nice \*

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beautiful place it is.....

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**Ivianat** September 20, 2017 at 2:07 pm

The design of this hotel looks like Raffles hotel in Singapore. I wanna visit here soon.

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**Live Life Lah** September 20, 2017 at 4:47 pm

this would be because the hotel has been built by the same people, the Sarkies brothers... and the Eastern and Oriental Hotel is the Raffles Hotel's big sister

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**Foodwanderers** September 20, 2017 at 2:55 pm

Wow.. such a Grand hotel stay! =D

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