

The Yum List

eat • drink • stay • spa • explore



Farquhar's Bar, Eastern & Oriental Penang

Farquhar's Bar

Monica Tindall

The recent renovations of the Heritage Wing at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel in [Penang](#) have also brought about a revamp of Farquhar's Bar. Transformed from an old-school pub to a stylish cocktail bar (and losing that nasty Penang Sling cocktail), the outlet is bound to become of THE places to be seen on the island.

Farquhar's Bar E&O Penang

Located in the Heritage Wing of the hotel, it's a place where dressing up is rewarded with an as equally polished interior. Studded leather lounges, antique finishings, herringbone wooden flooring and a magnificent long bar, offer plenty of space to enjoy a beverage and conversation.



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Farquhar's Bar Menu

Farquhar's Bar offers an excellent drinks menu, with both craft cocktails on premium spirits and an extensive wine list as highlights.

Cocktails

The cocktail menu is divided into sections, and the first to catch my eye is an entire page dedicated to the Negroni. From the classic to an aged, a Kingston to a Rosita, versions

from around the world make me want to try them all. (A new liver for my birthday, please?)

I settle on the Aged Negroni (RM 60) upon sound recommendation from Java Tree's restaurant manager, Gianluca (bumped into him on the way over). JJ Whitley Gin makes a superb base for this drink with its eight botanicals - orange peel, lemon peel, juniper, angelica seeds, coriander seeds, liquorice, cassia bark and orris root. The hints of citrus and spice in the profile work well with the whispers of oak picked up from the barrel. A large cube of ice, stamped with the initials, E&O, punctuate the attention to detail the hotel gives at all levels.

Hubby's order, Tommy's Margarita (RM 48) also comes under sound suggestion. Replacing orange liqueur with agave nectar, Tommy's version enhances the character of the agave rather than citrus as is the case in the classic. It maintains the tequila base, and local lime finishes it with a nice acidity perfect for warm weather.

Tommy's Margarita & Barrel-Aged Negroni

We have the good fortune to be joined by the hotel manager, Christoph Girsch, who turns out to be just as passionate about quality imbibement as we are. He explains that Farquhar's Bar's sole focus is on the classics when it comes to cocktails. In his opinion, great cocktails have no more than three or four ingredients. While there are some bottom shelf spirits in the bar, they focus their recipes on more premium liquors.

Not yet on the menu, but brewing for cocktail list 2.0., Christophe orders a White Martini. Using equal parts of Sipsmith Dry Gin and French vermouth, the style is wetter than commonly found on many menus in this part of the world. I think it fits perfectly with the trend for lower ABV cocktails. The increased proportion of vermouth diminishes the alcohol burn, rounding the drink for easy sipping.

White Martini - Farquhar's Bar

Another off-menu order is Christoph's Perfect Boulevardier. The recipe dates back to the 1920s and is claimed by Erskine Gwynne, the publisher of "Boulevardier." The name of this magazine for expatriates living in Paris roughly translates to "wealthy, fashionable

socialite”. The classic proposes equal parts whisky, vermouth and Campari. Still, here Christoph has livened it with an infusion of pineapple in rye whisky. It gets barrel-aged for three weeks to reach its ideal depth of flavour. Reminding me of a Negroni, the quality of the fortified wine, and balance with the spirit is vital to its success.

Perfect Boulevardier

Bar Snacks

As we have lots of beverages to try, we think ordering ALL of the bar snacks is a good idea. There are a handful of small bites to take the edge off hunger. Still, our favourites are the Peranakan Sliders (RM 20) and Beef Lollipops (RM 28). The former are delightful mouthfuls of yum with braised duck breast stuffed between crispy mantao buns, alongside a chilli dip. The latter is literally beef cubes on a stick with saffron and garlic aioli.

Olives and Cheese (RM 25) are presented in a duo of small bowls and marinated in mixed herbs. Potato and Caviar (RM 28) turn crisps into a fancy snack by adding sour cream and black caviar. Lastly, the popular toastie is taken to new heights with the Gruyère Cheese Sandwich (RM 28) stuffed with the Swiss cheese and melted between brioche toast.

Bar Snacks - Farquhar's Bar

Wine List

As hinted at earlier, E&O Penang has an impressive collection of wines by the glass. Much of its expansion can be attributed to Christoph, a wine aficionado himself. Not only has the list been given much thought, but wine appreciation classes have also been introduced. We'd love to be in Penang for one of them but are not disappointed to try something new with Christoph this evening.

Just in, we open a bottle of Weingut Weinrieder Grüner Veltliner 2017. Coming from a winemaking family himself, Christoph personally knows the makers of this label. While Austrian wines are unhurriedly infusing themselves in foreign markets, much of what I've seen in Malaysia today is not yet of particularly high quality. This, however, is a different story.

It begins with stainless steel fermentation, leaving the juice on the skin for a short time to give freshness. After, it's aged for roughly six months in 1000-litre oak barrels, which helps to develop a gentle creamy character. I get lots of bright citrus and an attractive thread of lemon in the mouth, which ends light and juicy. Yum.

Weingut Weinrieder Grüner Veltliner 2017

Farquhar's Bar Review

At Farquhar's Bar in the Eastern & Oriental Penang, you'll find a classy ambience backed up by quality cocktails and a comprehensive wine list. It's a gorgeous setting for a date or pre or post-dinner drinks with friends.

Reasons to visit Farquhar's Bar: a beautiful, stylish setting; excellent wine list; quality cocktails - be sure to try their barrel-aged Negroni; actually, they have an entire page of Negronis - reason enough to visit in itself.

Farquhar's Bar

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Farquhar's Bar Opening Hours

Daily 2:30 pm until midnight

Dress Code

Comfortable until 6 pm.

Smart casual after 6 pm. (no flip-flops, singles or men's sandals)

[Read more about Malaysia's happening bar scene here.](#)