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#JOM! STAY: A stay with the dame

By [Alan Teh Leam Seng](#) - March 9, 2022 @ 11:00am

A brief Pearl of the Orient vacation turns out to be an all-encompassing getaway that leaves lasting pleasant memories, writes Alan Teh Leam Seng.



The E&O was established in 1885 by the Sarkies Brothers.

THE sun casts a warm glow on the century-old terracotta tiles lining the tops of George Town's historic shophouses as residents of this renowned Unesco World Heritage Site wake up to another glorious excitement-filled day.

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Staying at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel (E&O), breakfast comes in the form of a sumptuous spread at Sarkies.

Located at Victory Annexe's lobby level, this perennial favourite with both in-house guests and locals is well-known for its mouth-watering selections of Malaysian and international delights.

A definite highlight, the freshly prepared char kway teow more than holds its own against existing competition. Served piping hot, it is so tantalising that additional helpings are common observance at each table.

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There are a total of nine suite categories for guests to choose.

MEMORABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Burning off calories at the E&O is easy. Comprising the Heritage Wing and Victory Annexe, this sprawling property, which is affectionately referred to as Penang's Grand Dame, requires almost an entire morning to explore.

The gift shop, aptly named Emporium, with its wide range of books related to the hotel and Penang's early history, is a good place to start.

Apart from the E&O's establishment in 1885 by the famed Sarkies Brothers, references reveal that well-heeled pre-World War 2 travellers often embarked on adventurous grand Asian tours which involved putting up at key hospitality landmarks throughout the Far East.

During stopovers in Penang, their choice was always the E&O.

This exciting knowledge, together with all the other interesting nuggets of information acquired, goes a long way in appreciating the E&O in its entirety.

With the morning still young, taking advantage of the cool surroundings to admire the external landscape is a no brainer.

Despite going through countless economic booms and busts as well as periods of dire conflict throughout its 137 year history, the hotel has successfully maintained most of its pristine all-white facade, including the iconic Moorish minarets, which effortlessly evokes reminders of the old world charm.

Complete with decommissioned cannons and lots of shady trees and palms, the well-manicured lawn offers opportunities for enjoyable quiet walks.

At the same time, stunning views of the azure Andaman Sea nearby bring to mind the fact that the E&O is the only one among all George Town hotels that boasts of a seafront.



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AN ENGLISH SPREAD

Venturing indoors at the Victory Annexe, attention shifts to the soothing modern-classic interior design which offers travellers conveniences while still retaining E&O's rich heritage of colonial ambience and charm.

The interconnecting corridors filled with interesting paintings, antique furniture and perfectly framed black-and-white photographs eventually lead back to the Heritage Wing.

Standing at the lobby area to admire the Heritage Wing's famed echo dome, thought goes out to scenes from the hit movie Crazy Rich Asians which were shot, among other places, at this very location.

Caught up in the moment by reminders of the film's jaw-dropping uber affluent lifestyle depictions and with lunchtime fast approaching, the sudden urge to sample E&O's luxurious Sunday Roast quickly overwhelms.



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The bone-in beef prime rib comes with Yorkshire pudding, vegetables, roasted potatoes and onion gravy. Pictures by Alan Teh Leam Seng.

Served exclusively at the adjacent Palm Court dining outlet, the tantalising choices bear close resemblance to traditional English tavern food.

Spoilt for choice, lunch selections finally narrow down to roasted bone-in beef prime rib and roasted chicken.

Accompanied by Yorkshire pudding, vegetables, roasted potatoes and onion gravy, the generous portions make for a really memorable dining experience no different from those enjoyed by guests back in the colonial-era days.

After the sweet dessert cake selection brings lunch to a fitting end, it is time to head back to the room to enjoy its many timeless luxuries.

A bath with premium toiletries and a nap embraced by luxuriant linen are in order to rejuvenate and prepare for an evening filled with excitement at various close by places of interest.



Lunch comes to a fitting end after enjoying the sweet dessert cake selection.

FAST FACTS

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STAY Offering 232, business and leisure travellers get to enjoy E&O's renowned tradition and elegance by selecting from the nine suite categories that range from Studio and Corner at the former while the latter presents Pinang and Premier to Deluxe and Superior options.

EAT Five outlets: Apart from Sarkies and Palm Court, check out delectable Mediterranean dishes at Planters Lounge, refreshing drinks and light snacks at Farquhar's Bar while tucking in to some of the best Straits Nyonya and classic European cuisines at the Java Tree, a semi-formal dining restaurant named after the iconic java tree that has stood on the seafront garden lawn years before the hotel came into existence,

DO Find time to sweat it out at the well-equipped gymnasium or simply take relaxing walks along the shorefront while enjoying calming sights of the sea.

GO With George Town's heritage enclave right at the doorstep and everything just a short walk away, it makes perfect sense to explore the city at leisure on foot.

HIGHS Strategic location and excellent service.