

The oldest hotel in Malaysia was opened in Penang in 1885 & here's how it's holding up in 2025

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It should go without saying that George Town is a historic city, with many buildings from yesteryear still standing in the 21st century. Wherever you go, there is always a story to tell. And if you stay at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, you yourself will be a part of a long, colourful story.

This hotel is located on Lebuhraya Farquhar, looking out onto the vast sea surrounding Penang. In fact, the E&O is a unique hotel in the sense that it's the only seafront hotel within George Town's UNESCO Heritage Zone. But that's not the only claim to fame for the hotel.

Founded in 1885

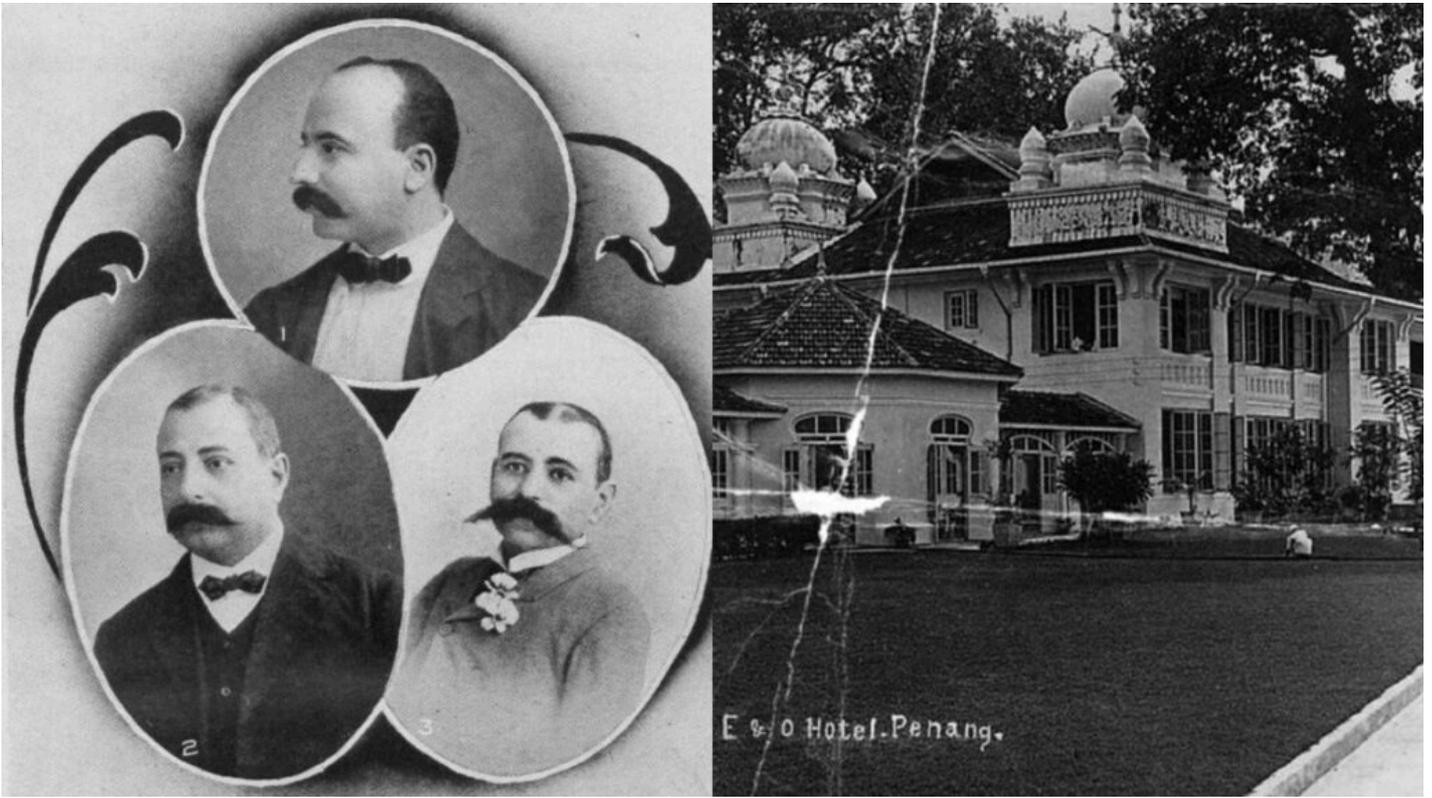


Image Credit: Wikipedia (Left), E&O Hotel (Right)

The E&O holds the prestige of being Malaysia's oldest surviving hotel. Founded all the way back in 1885, the hotel has seen so many historical events pass it by. If only the walls could talk, who knows what stories they could tell?

The hotel's story is tied to the Armenian community which once lived in George Town, hence the existence of Lebuhraya Armenian a few streets away. In the late 19th century, the Sarkies brothers, who were Armenians, decided to open a hotel in prosperous Penang.

Initially, the hotel was two separate establishments, the Eastern Hotel and the Oriental Hotel, which they would later combine into the E&O that we know and love. Here's a random fact: The Sarkies are also the fellows who founded the famous Raffles Hotel in Singapore.

A storied past



Image Credit: Lucas M on Google Review (Right), B Cools on Google Review (Right)

Under their management, the E&O gained a reputation for being the epitome of luxury, especially for European travellers. In fact, it played host to many important guests, including Rudyard Kipling (aka The Jungle Book author) and Dr Sun Yat-Sen (aka Father of Modern China).

Despite its status, the E&O began facing difficulties during the Great Depression. When the last Sarkies brother passed away, management of the hotel fell to the Raffles Hotel company. A few years later, during the Second World War, the hotel housed senior Japanese army officers.

Afterwards, the E&O Hotel had a bit of a turbulent time, exchanging hands several times in the years after. And in 1996, the hotel closed for renovations, which were supposed to last just a year. The hotel would only reopen in 2001 and thankfully, its fortunes have only picked up since.

Why stay at the E&O?



Image Credit: O La on Google Review (Left), Aya "Ayatete" Aya on Google Review (Right)

Now, that's enough of the history lesson. There are so many gorgeous hotels in George Town and Penang, so why stay at the E&O? Well, if you love pampering yourself while enjoying the vibes of the past, the E&O is the perfect place for you to stay.

The hotel has two wings, the Heritage Wing and the Victory Annexe. The Heritage Wing is what remains of the original hotel, with about 100 suites with colonial-style decor. The Victory Annexe is its younger sibling, with 132 suites facing the sea.

Spacious, comfy rooms

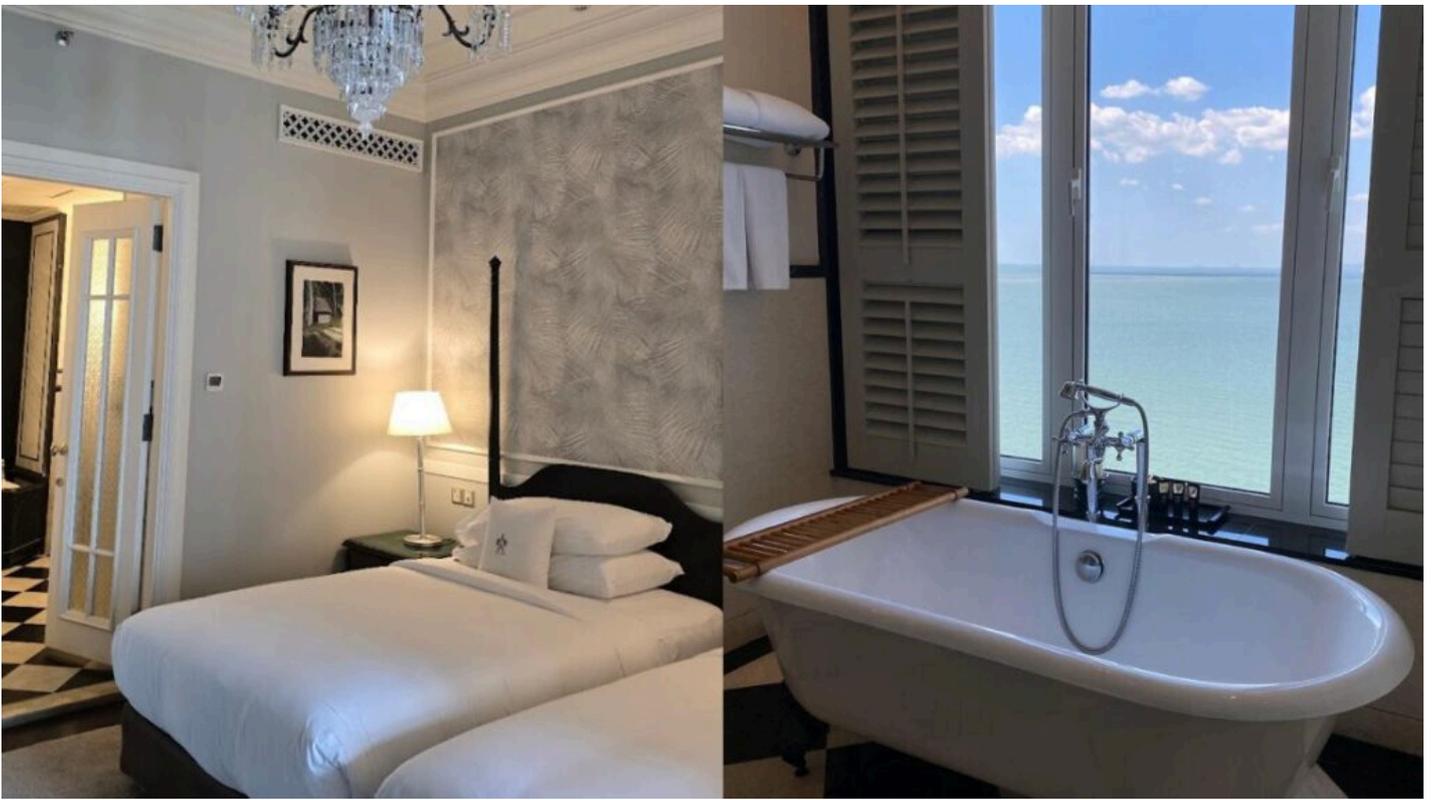


Image Credit: Robert Schipp on Google Review (Left), Alicia Item on Google Review (Right)

According to many Google Reviews, E&O's suites are highly spacious, with a lot of room to move about. While they retain the old-world charm, they come equipped with modern comforts like fully-stocked minibars and comfy beds. There are some complaints about TV reception, so that might be worth noting.

For the folks staying at the Victory Annexe, waking up every day to be greeted by the gorgeous sea view is a pleasure of its own. Guests at the Heritage Wing are also not without privileges, as they are eligible for free-flowing drinks at the hotel's bar!

The Victory Annexe suites can be rented for around RM600 per night, while the Heritage Wing suites are priced from RM800 per night. For those seeking a more luxurious experience, the Corner Suites offer lots of space and stunning sea views for RM1,500 per night.

Strategic location

The E&O's strategic location in George Town is also a point in its favour. It is within walking distance of many local attractions, such as the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion and Fort Cornwallis. There's also no shortage of restaurants in the surrounding area, perfect for the foodie in you.

Plentiful food options



Image Credit: J Cozi on Google Review (Left), Gilbert Tan on Google Review (Right)

If you are too lazy to explore George Town's culinary scene, you can still gorge yourself on the delicious treats served in the E&O's many in-house restaurants. At least one restaurant will be open at any time of the day, so there's always a place to go to when your stomach is rumbling.

Modern amenities



Image Credit: Ming on Google Review (Left), Byungjin Park on Google Review (Right)

What's better than one swimming pool? Two! The Heritage Wing and the Victory Annexe have their own individual pools. The Annexe has a serene infinity pool, giving swimmers a great view of the Andaman Sea. Aside from a well-equipped gym, the E&O also has a spa for you to pamper yourself.

Worth it?

Overall, if you have money to burn or just want to make a lifetime of memories, a stay at the E&O is worth it. After all, it is not every day you can stay in such a historic place. And who knows, maybe one day you will be part of its story?

The Eastern & Oriental Hotel

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Contact: 04-2222000

Website: eohotels.com

You should also check out: [NEW Onsen-Themed Hotel @ Genting Highlands!](#)

Feature Image Credit: E&O Hotel (Left), Mikie Lee on Google Review (Right)