

# Penang's icon of hospitality marks 140th year with gala ball



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Chow (right) and Eng Ho at E&O's 140th anniversary gala ball.

DRESSED to the nines, guests had a delightful night celebrating The Eastern and Oriental Hotel's 140th anniversary in George Town, Penang.

Malaysia's grande dame of hospitality marked this milestone with a gala ball.

Guests were treated to performances by the Totally Telemann Quartet, Musica Sinfonietta, and Big Band of Penang, all presenting a series of classical pieces reminiscent of earlier eras in the hotel's past.

The formal black-tie dinner featured a menu that paid tribute to the hotel's heritage with colonial-era sophistication.

The festivities began with canapes and champagne, followed by a dinner of scallop ceviche, lobster, Alaskan cod and Black Angus beef, accompanied by wine.

There was also a vegetarian menu.

The gala culminated with a fireworks display over the Andaman Sea.



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But the highlight of the night was a special video presentation capturing the hotel's timeless legacy.

The video showcased the hotel's history, from its inception in 1885.

Over the 140 years since its founding by the visionary Sarkies Brothers, the hotel has stood as a cultural landmark on George Town's seafront, mixing colonial grandeur with warm Malaysian charm.



Musica Sinfonietta entertaining guests with classical pieces.

The E&O (as it is fondly called) was the centre of social life and gaiety.

It was the venue for the island's major functions such as weddings, banquets and the annual St George's Day Ball.

Its walls have echoed the footsteps of luminaries as well as witnessed historic events and the city's evolution.

The hotel's first female general manager, Alison Fraser said: "The hotel is part of a story that has spanned generations.

"As we now embrace this milestone, we pay homage to the past and have great excitement about the future.

"We pledge that this grande dame will continue to shine as a jewel in Penang for generations to come," she said in her speech.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, who was guest of honour at the dinner, said 140 years was no small feat.

"It is a legacy that only a few institutions in our region can claim; it belongs not only to the hotel but to Penang as well.

"It is special that the oldest and most iconic hotel in Malaysia is not in the capital (Kuala Lumpur) but right here in Penang," he said.

Chow said the hotel was a true testament to Penang's role as a maritime trading state and a global connector since the 19th century.

"It is a role that continues to define who we are today," he said.

Also present at the gala were E&O Bhd executive chairman Datuk Seri Tee Eng Ho, its executive director Datuk Tee Eng Seng and managing director Kok Tuck Cheong.

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