

WHEN DAYDREAMS COME TRUE

It was a discovery of luxury and contentment at
The Edison George Town.

By Anu Venugopal



Sometimes getting lost is the best thing that could ever happen.

Whether one blames it on the absence of a sense of direction or divine intervention, all faults disappeared into thin air when the writer first laid eyes on the luminously lit heritage mansion on 15 Lebuhraya on a humid George Town night in November 2016.

Two years later, I returned to the scene of the incident, this time in broad daylight and as a guest, excited about the prospect of exploring The Edison George Town. Located in the fringes of the heritage precinct of one of UNESCO's World Heritage site, the hotel is close to Lebuhraya Farquhar, Lebuhraya Campbell, Lebuhraya Chulia, and Lebuhraya Pantai – well-known retail, commercial and cultural areas in the capital city of Penang.

The charms of The Edison Georgetown unravel slowly, starting at the entrance. The immense white building is a welcoming sight for travellers in search of rest after discovering the charms and secrets George Town has to offer. The architecturally rich building by K.H. Tan Architects sends of positive vibes of luxury, culture and history.

Stepping into the grounds of the blue chip Anglo-Colonia hotel, my experience began at the reception, when checking in was a breeze and the staff more than welcoming. After checking in, a staff passionately revealed the colourful story of The Edison's past.

Designed and built in 1906, the manor embodied the atypical residence of a tycoon, with extensive grounds that was home to a Yeo Wee Gark, and an annex for his servants' quarters. Over the past century, the property moved from one owner to another and was used for different reasons, until the present business owner took reins and made extensive renovations and fittings to create the atmosphere and look it is now known for. The Edison George Town re-opened its doors to travellers in July 2016 and since then has tastefully taken hospitality to the next level with The Edison Experience, as my experience revealed.

Not surprisingly, the building was designed with the affluence in mind, with aspects such as open space planning and the elaborate use of metal, glass and timber included in its design. The hotel's interior design is one that is both refined yet quirky, drawing inspiration from Penang's own unique characteristics. Featuring of a combination of whimsical touches of heritage blends with timeless elegance, visitors to the hotel are with no choice but to stop, look and ponder its richness and charm.

The Courtyard is the first thing one notices when entering the hotel. Located in the middle of the main building, all guests and visitors pass through to go to their rooms, The Lounge or The Library. Airy and bright, The Courtyard consists

of atypical architectural design of the time, which lines alongside the corridors and hallways leading to the rooms and other areas of the hotel. The restored original cast-iron columns and decorative frescos lend a back-to-the-past impression of the space, fitting with its deco theme.

Stepping further across the hotel and into The Lounge, the cosy spot is great for a little bit of socialising, deep contemplation or work. The self-service counter, with traditional snacks, drinks, fruits and yogurt are for guests to indulge in at any time of their stay. Doubling up as a breakfast area, The Lounge is the place many visitors choose to spend time at, when not in room.

The Lounge leads to the open air area, with more seating for guests especially for breakfast. Close by is the salt chlorinated swimming pool, small yet befitting a luxury hotel such as The Edison. The Cabanas overlooking the pool and outdoor lounge area are available for use of guests and non-guests to enjoy The Edison experience. Back inside the main building and up the wooden stairs is The Library - a quiet, comfortable space where guests can rest, relax, plan their day or browse the book cases.

Guided through their brand pillars that revolve around alluring heritage, timeless design, diverse culture and indulging luxury, The Edison demonstrates romance through its style and manner.

It comes as no surprise that the hotel was awarded winner for both World Luxury Hotel Awards and World Boutique Hotel Awards.

With 22 Deluxe, five Deluxe Twin and six Deluxe Premium rooms and two Suites, the hotel are able to host families, couples or groups. This



writer's Deluxe room was more than comfortable, equipped with necessary room amenities, the bathroom clean with a touch of luxury – and most importantly, a bed so inviting it is difficult to get out off once in it.



Still, the lure of local Penang snacks, coffee and juice worked on me, just as the pre-dinner Wine Discovery session, aka wine-o-clock, admittedly the highlight of the stay for this writer. It was certainly a wonderful hour sipping wine and a combination of fruit, cheese and crackers. After a good night sleep, the breakfast of local nasi lemak, eggs made to order, juices and coffee certainly got the morning started off on a good note – just before experiencing the going home blues.

Affiliated to the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, the hotel believes in going beyond the typical concierge recommendations, and they do by presenting guests with a suggested list of places to see and things to do within George Town. The hotel also does local artisans proud by displaying their creations, enhancing their own integration with the local community.

A one night stay at the hotel mansion proved to be an unforgettable experience, but luckily for this reviewer, the staff took effort to make it possible for a later checkout, and I got to indulge, reading Paulo Coelho's Hippiie while under the covers of the bed.

It was certainly difficult to let go of the bliss experienced at The Edison but with a train to catch back to reality, more time at The Edison was a luxury I couldn't afford at that moment. While walking out of the hotel grounds, I looked back at the hotel, and just like that faithful night two years ago, once again, promised to return soon.