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VIETNAM

SEPTEMBER

MARTIAL MATTERS

Time to Tackle
Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

PAGE 20

THE HEAVY HAND

Corporal Punishment
for Misbehaving Kids

PAGE 26

NOMADIC FAMILY

A Family of Five on
a Global Odyssey

PAGE 56

THE SIMPLE LIFE

Quietness and Serenity
on Thanh Da Island

PAGE 90

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Contents



TRAVEL & LEISURE

A BIKE AND A BACKPACK

Experiencing Taiwan's scenic east coast by pedal power

58

FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

With these events, you'll never have to bored again

P12 TROI OI

See why pangolins, warships and a bathrobe made our noteworthy numbers this month

P14 THE BULLETIN

What new promos and exciting places are here this month?

P16 THROUGH THE LENS

Old gives way to new in Saigon's relentless march towards urbanization

P20 MARTIAL MATTERS

A Brazilian form of Japanese Jiu-Jitsu comes to HCMC

P22 A THOUSAND PAPER CRANES

Hanoi artist Nguyen Hung Cuong's origami for the 21st century

P24 A STAR IS BORN

A Japanese cooking studio where style meets taste

P26 THE HEAVY HAND

The state of corporal punishment in Vietnam

P56 THE NOMADIC FAMILY

A family in their third year of non-stop world travel shows how it's done



COVER STORY

NIP/TUCK/TAN

A guided tour of medical tourism in Vietnam

2

30

WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Oi reviews the shochu-fueled authenticity of Robata Dining An, samples an eclectic menu at Hatvala, and then finishes the culinary tour off with a fusion feast at White Forest



COLUMNS

P28 SAIGON MYTHBUSTERS

Does mandatory motorbike insurance actually protect you?

P29 JOIN THE CLUB

Born to be wild with the Saigon HOGs

P44 FLAVOR OF THE MONTH

Wine tasting 101

P60 LIFE'S A TRIP

Tips for becoming the world's smartest traveler

P84 LEGAL EASE

What to do when you're stuck with a defective product?

P85 FOUND 404

Is Vietnam ready for mobile payments?

P86 MONEY TALKS

Setting aside for retirement in Vietnam

P94 THE SYLLABUS

English speaking Vietnamese youth - fantasy or reality?

P96 HIGHER LEARNING

Justifying the high tuitions of international schools

P97 POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM

The rhythms of life along the water

THE OUTER DISTRICTS

P90 THE SIMPLE LIFE

Exploring Thanh Da's surprising country vibe

Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 7
SEPTEMBER 2013

Club Med

THE FIRST TIME I visited a dental clinic in Vietnam on the recommendation of a friend, I was amazed. I'm not exactly sure what I was expecting, but it surely wasn't nice, clean, well-equipped facilities run by efficient staff with a dentist who spoke English. When I got the bill, I was even more taken aback: VND200,000. My friends back home routinely pay 10 times that amount. While I haven't used that many medical services here in Vietnam, recently I've been going for acupuncture for my carpal tunnel (the bane of working in publishing). My thrice weekly visits to a little clinic located in a nunnery provides blissful relief, all for VND20,000 a visit, less than the cost of lunch.

This month, *Oi* investigates the state of medical tourism in Vietnam, as it reaches for a slice of the lucrative pie, now dominated by heavyweights in the region like Thailand, Singapore and India, where the field has developed over the past decade or so. Some of the experts we talked to were optimistic, while others came down pretty hard. No matter how you feel about it, it's definitely a relevant topic that every expat has thought about at one point or another.

Another controversial topic covered this month is discipline - to spank or not to spank? Growing up, my father was an avid proponent of corporal punishment, perhaps too much so. Michael Arnold explores the polarizing topic in an 'East Meets West' clash of opinions in *The Heavy Hand*.

Whatever my father's faults, time has faded certain memories somewhat. Now, he spends three months of every year with me on his annual trips to Vietnam. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate having him around (and especially the care packages he brings from the US). We've bonded as never before. But after the first month, the luster begins to wear as my apartment becomes ever more claustrophobic and we start to get on each other's nerves. Growing up, I remember fun family trips to Coney Island and going clamming. As adults, family travel took on a more sinister tone. I remember a family trip 12 years ago to Vietnam with my parents and five sisters that too often broke out in arguments over differing opinions about what to do and where to go. It simply was

a matter of too close quarters. So when I read Gabi Klaf's grippingly truthful article, *The Nomadic Family*, on the ups and downs her family of five have experienced over 30 months of non-stop travel, I had to take my hat off to them. She sums her experience up beautifully: "After things explode in your face, you discover the raw, dusty, tearful, beautiful, and real blessing in each and every one of your family members."

On my first visit to Thanh Da nine years ago, the tiny island northeast of downtown HCMC, I remember thinking that it was very quaint, almost a kitschy representation of country life. I'm glad to see that not much has changed. James Pham explores the quieter side of city living in his article, *The Simple Life*, which had me penciling in a return trip to the rice fields and fishing ponds of Thanh Da.

In our sports feature, NPD Khanh covers Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in Saigon. I remember thinking the first time I saw it that it was pretty violent. I immediately switched the channel. Then I chanced to see Royce Gracie, whose family pioneered Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Here was a guy significantly less bulky than his opponents, but who was able to submit them with such grace in the face of muscled aggression. He was a smooth operator.

My experience with origami is pretty much like every other kid's. I think I remember how to make a box and a ball, and everyone's favorite, a crane. But that's child's play compared to the mind-blowing creations of Hanoi artist Nguyen Hung Cuong. James Pham discovers the mind behind these amazing 3-D sculptures created from just a few sheets of paper and some serious ingenuity in *A Thousand Paper Cranes*.

While we're covering several sobering issues this month in medicine and child rearing, there's also a lot to celebrate about Vietnam in this issue. As always, here's to your health! ■

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor



Bistro Saigon

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

PHU MY HUNG NETWORKING NIGHT
Friday 13th September - 5pm-8pm

BOOMARANG WINE CLUB
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Datebook

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SEPTEMBER 13

What: Henry Saiz Album World Tour

Where: 8pm at Cargo Bar (7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4); vouchers are VND250,000 in advance, VND350,000 at the door and include a free drink

About: As a part of Henry Saiz's album launch and world tour, his band will perform as he delivers one of his explosive DJ sets. His rising reputation earned Henry the honor of being asked to mix Balance Music's 019 compilation. Following on from the likes of Timo Maas, Joris Voorn, Will Saul and Agoria, Henry's addition to this world-renowned mix series has more than lived up to expectations and has set a new benchmark in depth and quality.

Contact: Vouchers available for purchase at *Black Market*, *Bootleg DJ Café*, *Cargo Bar*, *Decibel*, *McSorley's*, *Saigon Outcast*, *Yoko*, and www.keewi.me. More info can be found at facebook.com/events/410059192432118/



SEPTEMBER 14

What: Art Market

Where: VinGallery (2 Le Van Mien, D2); 10am – 4pm

About: An opportunity to see great work, meet the artists of paintings, drawings and limited edition prints, photography, handmade jewelry, fashion and accessories, and more. There will be games for kids that includes paper craft, making your own jewelry, and face painting.

Contact: Visit www.vingallery.com for more info

SEPTEMBER 14

What: International Travel Expo

Where: Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre (799 Nguyen Van Linh, D7); free admission

About: Always love to travel? Planning for your next holiday? Discover and choose from a wide range of exciting travel products from over 50 destinations. Take advantage of the best travel deals you can find, from airfare to accommodation and many more at the expo. There will also be travel professionals there to assist you. Win fabulous prizes by joining their campaigns and lucky draws.

Contact: For more info, visit www.itehcmc.com



SEPTEMBER 15

What: Narrow the Gap Community Event

Where: Q4 (7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4); 9am - 12pm; ticket price in advance is VND220,000 and VND320,000 at the door

About: The Narrow the Gap Community Event is an annual event and the final step in the Narrow the Gap Fund community voting process. This year, the NTG Fund and Event focus on helping disadvantaged children in HCMC.

The event will feature a lot of fun games and activities, such as fair games, a photo booth, sand painting, balloons, raffles, and more, all of which will make for a great family Sunday for a good cause! In addition to the games three projects, run by local not-for-profit organizations helping children in need, will be presented. The presentations will include videos and information booths where guests can meet the staff of the three non-profits running the projects. Guests will vote for their favorite project to help determine the size of the grant awarded to each project from the Narrow the Gap Fund, thus combining a great time with a good cause.

In addition to donating, HCMC residents are also invited to help choose which projects will receive funding. They can do so by voting for their favorite projects online or at the event.

Contact: More information about the Narrow the Gap Fund and event is available at www.linnv.org



SEPTEMBER 28

What: Vietnam Swans' AFL Grand Final Party

Where: Boomarang Bistro (Crescent 2, 3-4 107 Ton Dat Tien, D7); from 9am – 4pm; adults tickets are VND1 million (pre purchase) or VND1.2 million (at the door); under 18 VND500,000 (pre purchase) or VND600,000 (at the door); kids under 12 are free

About: The event is a significant fund raiser for the club and their charitable causes. While during the year they continually raise money for charitable events, the bulk of the profits from the party are what keeps the club going, play footy in Asia and supporting charities such as Swim Vietnam and others. Breakfast, lunch, drinks, raffles, auctions, big screen TVs and kids' activities will be provided.

There will also be an after-party at The Spotted Cow (111 Bui Vien, D1) with a courtesy bus provided.

Contact: Tickets can be purchased at Commonwealth Bank (65 Nguyen Du, D1) and Boomarang Bistro. Visit www.vietnamswans.com for more info



SEPTEMBER 29

What: BBGV 13th Annual Fun Run

Where: The Crescent, Ton Dat Tien, Phu My Hung from 7am – 10am

About: This is a fun event and a great opportunity for team building while at the same time raising money for charities in Vietnam, including the Christina Noble Children's Foundation, Thien Chi Community Development & Support Center, Friends for Street Children Association, and Hagar International.

Last year's event raised almost VND800 million and over 7,800 people participated in the event. They aim to increase the 'fun' element this year by introducing game booths.

Contact: Email Tran directly at officemanager@bbgv.org or call 3829 8430

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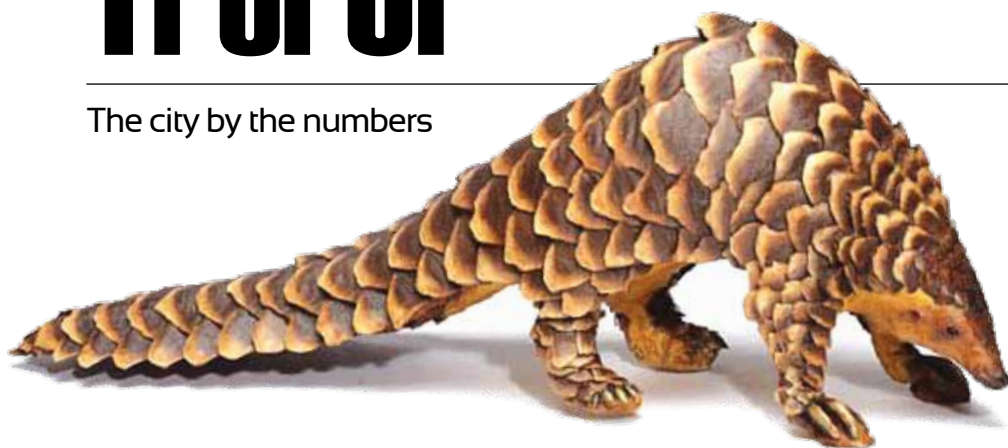


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Troi Oi

The city by the numbers



6.2

tons of pangolins were seized in northern Vietnam. Hai Phong customs authorities said they have seized the pangolins smuggled in from Indonesia at Hai Phong Port. Pangolins are protected under both the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Vietnamese law. Under the law, anyone who illegally hunts, kills, breeds or keeps endangered wild animals in captivity, or transports or trades their body parts, or products made from them, could be imprisoned for up to seven years. They can also be fined up to VND500 million



530

death-row inmates have been waiting for their execution ever since Vietnam decided to switch from firing squad to lethal injection in November 2011. The executions have recently begun again after having stalled due to the unavailability of drugs

12

WWII ships, which mostly likely capsized, were discovered off the coast of Vung Tau last month by port authorities. Most of the ships, which are more than 100 meters long, belonged to Japan, said Le Van Chien, director of Vung Tau port administration. They are situated 13-15 meters beneath the sea with most of their bodies buried in the seabed



375

dollars, the cost of a chenille microfiber shawl-collar robe at the Nam Hai, in Hoi An, named by Conde Nast as one of nine worldwide hotel bathrobes travelers will want to take home



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The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC...



EATING AT A DISCOUNT

From now until September 15, Oi readers will receive a special 10 percent discount at **Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe** (122 Le Thanh Ton, D1; www.grillbar.com.vn). Grillbar is a New York style café specializing in Vietnamese charcoaled grilled food. They offer a set lunch menu priced at VND95,000 which includes a main course (choice of charcoal grilled chicken skewer baguette, or grilled pork marinated with chili sauce with broken rice or coconut rice), dessert (homemade yogurt with honey or cream caramel) and a drink (house tea, Vietnamese iced coffee, or sugarcane juice). Mention "Oi" when ordering.

UP ON TOP

The Novotel Saigon Centre will debut its rooftop bar called **On Top Bar** (20th floor, 167 Hai Ba Trung, D3) on September 7. Along with offering expansive vistas of the city, the bar will have a menu with over 20 cheeses and authentic European charcuterie complemented by wines from around the world. Vietnamese and international inspired tapas are also on offer with an extensive cocktail menu featuring the latest cocktails from Europe - "Spritz" and "Hugo."

Happy Hour is available from Monday to Thursday with 50 percent off drinks.

For more info, visit www.facebook.com/ontopbarsaigon or call 090 909 2779.

3D VIRTUAL MUSEUM

The Vietnam National Museum of History in Hanoi has recently launched its experimental 3D virtual version, which is the first of its kind in Vietnam, on its website www.baotanglichsu.vn. The museum is showcasing two virtual galleries titled **Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Heritage** and **Vietnamese Ancient Lamps** featuring 150 antiquities that are on display in the real museum with information on the objects in English and Vietnamese.

According to Vu Manh Ha, Deputy Director of the museum, the cost for making a 3D virtual museum in Vietnam is three times lower than in other countries due to the lower technology and service price. However, he also added making 3D versions of all objects of the whole museum will cost a very large amount. "We hope that after touring the virtual museum, visitors will be encouraged to discover the real museum," Ha said, adding he doesn't want the virtual museum to overshadow the physical museum.



KINDERMUSIK ANNIVERSARY

Kindermusik-Vietnam Early Childhood Education Center celebrates its first anniversary at the Crescent Residence 2, Phu My Hung. This premiere music and movement English language program for very young children from birth to seven-years-old invites new parents and children to attend a free class. From September 10 until December 1, there is a 10 percent discount offered for 12 weekly lessons that promote early literacy, social skills and more.

Visit www.kindermusik-vietnam.com for more info



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LUCKY NUMBER 13

While the number 13 is believed to be an unlucky one, at **InterContinental Asiana Saigon** they think differently. On September, Friday the 13th they will have special offers to make it a lucky night. Market 39 will offer a buffet dinner priced at VND613,000 VND++ per person including house wine, Tiger draught beer and soft drinks. While at Yu Chu it's all-you-can-eat dim sum at VND313,000++ per person excluding beverage

Email dine@icasianasaigon.com for more info

MOONCAKES

Whether you're bringing them home for your family to enjoy or sending them as a special gift to clients or friends, the **New World Hotel** has designed versatile moon cake boxes, which double up as a wine carrier case. Alternatively, use the many compartments for storing jewelry, cosmetics or other small items long after the mid-Autumn celebrations are done.

Saigon Bakery's moon cakes are priced at VND780,000 for a box of eight pieces (75g), VND800,000 for a box of four pieces (225g) and VND175,000 an individual cake (225g). Plus, purchase 10 to 20 boxes to receive five percent discount, 21 to 149 boxes to receive 10 percent discount, and 150 boxes or more to receive a 15 percent discount.

Complimentary delivery to District 1 and District 3 on orders of 50 boxes or more. Platinum members will receive an additional five percent off the order total. Moon Cakes will be available until 19 September. For further info, email saigon@newworldhotels.com.

MEDITERRANEAN MEDLEY

Never content with just reveling in the success of his three restaurants – Ciao Bella, Blu Bar & Grill and Phat Phuc's – Tony Fox is set to launch a Mediterranean inspired restaurant sometime at the end of September or early October. Slated to be called **Mezze** (51 Hai Ba Trung, D1), the place will offer mostly small plates (bigger than tapas but smaller than main courses) with items such as *shakshuka* (bell pepper and tomato stew with merguez sausage and egg), zucchini and feta fritters with caper yoghurt sauce, Persian pomegranate and walnut chicken, and Portuguese pork and clam stew with chorizo and potatoes in a paprika tomato sauce. Mezze will also feature fun Mediterranean décor.

SIGNATURE MONTH

At **Indochine Spa** (69 Thu Khoa Huan, D1), buy any Signature therapy, Signature Facial or Signature package, and receive a spa gift voucher. Located near Ben Thanh Market, Indochine Spa employs skillful therapists who use 100 percent natural products to ensure your treatment is relaxing and holistic. The staff can speak Cantonese, English, French, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

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IMAGES AND TEXT BY **LEE STARNES**





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Martial Matters

A Brazilian form of Japanese Jiu-Jitsu comes to HCMC

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**

SAIGON LUTA LIVRE sits in the last place anyone would expect to find a foreign-owned martial art studio, in a four-by-12 apartment on the third floor of a decades-old Vietnamese building. The path that leads to it is a tiny alleyway branching off Tran Quang Dieu Street, literally minutes away from the infamous Nhieu Loc canal. Along the dusty hallway, Vietnamese tenants hang their clothes to dry on the balconies and air their old shoes outside the doors of their non-air-conditioned abode. It doesn't get any more expat-unfriendly than this.

The room is B315 and as strange as this may sound, this unassuming little place is the "heaven before heaven" for a globe-trotting

two time international champion of No-Gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ).

As Erik Koehne, the owner of Saigon Luta Livre, puts it, he's "been around the world." He's seen London, Tokyo, Berlin, Chicago, New York, Paris, Munich, and more. His career as a professional BJJ master started in 2008 when the stock market crashed and the subsequent depression robbed him and millions of others of a job. Instead of diving right back into the fray, Erik decided to go and see the world.

"I'm from the US, from California, the Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is a rat race. I was working 12 hours a day. I was making a lot of money but my brain was never at rest.

People are under a certain amount of pressure to be successful under the Western guideline. It's not about being happy but about making money. It's about being successful, and to me, achieving happiness is success," says Erik.

From the Ground Up

It was during this journey that he found Luta Livre, otherwise known as No-Gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. BJJ is both a martial art based on ground fighting and a close contact combat sport that teaches a smaller person how to defend themselves against a larger adversary by using leverage, and for the uninitiated, it can be extremely confusing. To the untrained eye, the movements and motions of BJJ - flailing,



“Luta Livre is a ground game, a submission game where you choke a person or lock a person’s arms to make them give up rather than knocking them out”



grabbing, sweeping, a mess of hooking limbs and bodies too close to be comfortable - can be hard to decipher. However, to the more patient observer, there is an underlying pattern, a language and logic of the body that hints at the famous combat efficiency BJJ is known for.

“The interesting thing is that this sport is a little bit different because you don’t have to be into sport to fall in love with this one,” Erik explains. “It’s not the same. You don’t have to be quick. You don’t have to be strong. It’s like playing chess, like moving pieces on the chessboard.”

“Luta Livre is a ground game, a submission game where you choke a person or lock a person’s arms to make them give up rather than knocking them out... like punching. There’s a difference. It is violent when you punch or kick somebody. But this is not a violent sport. But it’s very effective because you’re controlling the opponent with weight and leverage until they give up.”

In 2008, Erik began training under the BJJ legend Leopoldo Serao. In 2010, he won his first gold medal in the Grappler’s Quest. In 2011, he boarded a plane on a quest to bring Luta Livre to Vietnam.

“When I came here in 2008, I completely

fell in love with Vietnam. Saigon is a city I especially love and I’ve been to a lot of cities around the world. This city is very different and it’s very much my style to live in. I took to it. Ever since moving here I like it more. It grows on me. The more I learn the language, the more I understand the culture,” explaining why he chose Vietnam.

His starting point was The Gym on the 5th floor of Parkson Flemington.

“I went to many, many gyms. I liked this one because of how it was set up. But I was not denied by a single gym to start this sport in theirs. That would not happen in America. In America, you would have to sit in a boardroom with five people and sell the idea. There was no sale here. They just said yeah, come in and do it.”

It was at The Gym that he found his first few students. Eventually, he moved to the current location for better control of the environment as well as the direction of the *dojo* (a Japanese term for “place of the way”). His intention was never about making lots of money but rather, to spread Luta Livre into Vietnam. His dojo is suitably styled to his intended target, simple with no frills and carried on a strictly Vietnamese cost schedule.

“I didn’t want it to become an expat gym. I really want it to become something for Saigon. To be honest, I’d rather the Saigonese people be taught this art than an expat, because expats have other resources. There are a few other expat gyms that teach similar combat styles like Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Only the expats can afford it for the most part. This is affordable to a Vietnamese person.”

Saigon Luta Livre currently has 20 active members coming from all walks of life: students, workers, teachers, businessmen, Vietnamese and expats alike, and they are all bound by their love for Luta Livre as well as their shared goal to spread it to all of Vietnam not just as a sport or a martial art but as a way of life.

BJJ is an art form, a philosophy and a way of life in itself, originating from Japanese Kodokan Judo and evolving on Brazilian soil and culture. Erik’s move from The Gym to his own studio, away from the commercial and business aspect of BJJ, is one that lets him stay faithful to BJJ as an art form, a philosophy and a way of life and allows him to share it exactly how he sees it to others.

For more info, visit www.facebook.com/VietNamLutaLivre ■



A Thousand Paper Cranes

Hanoi artist Nguyen Hung Cuong puts a new twist on a millenia-old art

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM



ANCIENT JAPANESE LEGEND has it that anyone with the devotion and patience needed to fold 1,000 paper cranes will please the gods thereby earning one wish.

If that's true, Nguyen Hung Cuong has a few wishes coming his way for his unique 21st century take on the 2,000-year-old art of traditional origami.

A post-graduate student studying Electronics and Telecommunications at the Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Cuong's labor-intensive creations gained international attention recently, being featured on several art blogs and on *Huffington Post*, where one commenter noted that "it's not just the great artistry but the fact that he has to visualize so many steps and dimensions ahead. It makes my head spin."

Now 24, Cuong has been folding paper



since he was six as part of his school's arts and crafts lessons. "I didn't even know that it was called origami until I was about seven or eight when my parents bought me a book about it. My [older] sister did it with me when she was younger, but in my family, I'm the only one with a passion for it."

When his parents saw that he could fold everything in the book, they bought him more books and took him to buy origami paper. He then started experimenting with creating his own designs, eschewing the ones taught at school as too simplistic.

The cabinets in his small room are now full of his designs, everything from tiny, intricate horses in motion folded from a single Vietnamese banknote to a great white shark, mouth agape, perched atop a swirling blue wave.

Origami is traditionally two-dimensional, highlighted by precise folds and straight edges. Modern-day origami has incorporated the use of curves and crimps with some artists adding twists like creating abstract 3-D sculptures or spheres, in addition to modular origami, the art of using many sheets of paper to create larger, more complex designs.

More than Tenfold

Cuong's origami is surprisingly lifelike, as opposed to the traditional, stylistic variety (think paper cranes). It all begins with an idea. "For some, origami is a means of relaxation. For me, the joy is in the process of thinking up an idea and then figuring out how to execute it. I'm engrossed by it even though it can sometimes give me a headache. You always have to think many steps ahead, analyzing whether making a crease here or there is going to show on the final product. For instance, to create the shark, I had to work out how to make everything from the fins to the teeth to how to make the eyes

stand out. Then it's on to experimenting, using dozens of practice sheets and trying something hundreds of times to get each individual technique right. Before I started, I thought the most challenging part would be the head because it was the most detailed and I wanted to make it look realistic and wild but afterwards, it was actually getting the proportions of the body and tail just so that was most difficult."

Another one of his favorite pieces is the gorilla which he recently redesigned four years after the original. "I love it not just for its features but the way I've been able to capture its posture and teeth-baring ferocity. It's not just pretty to look at but the process was enjoyable. I could fold and refold it many times without getting tired of it."

Cuong uses large single sheets of Vietnamese tree bark paper known as *giay do*, similar to Japanese *washi*, for his work, sometimes adding a layer of glue for stability. For more structural pieces, like the wave beneath the shark, he used thick watercolor paper with a layer of colored paper. "The materials for the shark and wave only cost about VND60,000 but it took about 35 hours to create."

Is monetizing his work in the cards? "I'm not really interested in selling my work because there's not much of a market for it," he says. "On the other hand, some people want to buy my work for cheap. They don't realize how much time goes into each creation. Sometimes my friends and neighbors will ask me to make things for them but I don't do it often because I only give away really nice ones. It's also hard to mass create these. Even after figuring out how to do something, like with the shark, it's not necessarily easier to make the second time.

It's still more art than science."

Scan to see more of Cuong's work. ■



"I didn't even know that it was called origami until I was about seven or eight when my parents bought me a book about it"





A Star is Born

A corporate consultant turned entrepreneur tempts the 20-something crowd with Japanese treats

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN

THE THREE BEST friends with matching handbags collectively hold their breath as they watch the delicate matcha (green tea) chiffon that they've been working on for the past hour slide out of its bundt pan, perched upside down over an empty wine bottle where it's been cooling for the last 20 minutes. Sighs of relief accompany the sight of a perfectly made cake, impossibly springy to the touch.

We're at Star Kitchen (2nd Floor, 8/15 Le Thanh Ton, above 4P's Pizza, D1) one of the newest cooking classes in the city and the brainchild of the most unlikely of bakers, 30-year-old Yuya Arashima. Armed with a degree in social entrepreneurship, Yuya started out as a business management consultant for IBM (Tokyo) advising Japanese clients looking to enter the overseas market. But contentment did not come along with success.

"Consulting wasn't as exciting as I thought it would be. After considering and analyzing, I might propose Options A, B and C, believing A was the best choice, but sometimes the client would end up choosing C. Even if the venture was successful in the end, it wasn't because of me because I didn't have a hand in the execution," he says.

So Yuya turned to entrepreneurship instead, following his parents' footsteps as small business owners running a handful of ventures, including a remodeling business, a ramen shop and a BBQ restaurant. "It was natural for me to start up my own business and not work for someone," says Yuya.

In July 2012, he started analyzing the Vietnamese market and came to the conclusion that there were many Vietnamese in their late 20s, having graduated from good universities with good jobs. "I saw that people here don't work so much like in Japan and

people didn't have much to do after work, often satisfying either their consumption needs like going out for coffee with friends or going to a bar, or their intellectual needs like learning a language or being on Facebook. I saw a gap in the entertainment field which satisfies both these needs." So was born the idea for a fashionable cooking studio that is, in equal parts, taste and style.

"I want people to be brilliant in their life. Our motto is: 'Make your life sparkling'. We're not just a cooking school, we're selling style and the experience. Cooking is just one part of our product; like a culinary Disneyland, it's all about the experience," says Yuya of the small but stylish kitchen located in an upstairs space on a small alleyway off of Le Thanh Ton known for its cluster of Japanese joints.

A Matter of Taste

With no background in cooking ("I don't see myself as a foodie but I like food"), Yuya brought on a cooking advisor from Japan who designed the food and trained the teachers. "It's been challenging to teach the Japanese style to my assistants, not just cooking but the whole concept and service. I want the classes to be standardized, unlike most of the classes here where each teacher teaches his or her own recipe. We started from the beginning, like how to crack an egg, even though some of our trainers had decades of experience in five-star hotels. Vietnamese consumers are savvy so I want everything to be perfect."



"We're not just a cooking school, we're selling style and the experience. Cooking is just one part of our product; like a culinary Disneyland, it's all about the experience"



Back in the cooking studio, the students are working on their second cake of the morning, carefully folding the egg whites for maximum aeration under the watchful eye of trainer Tran Ngoc Hoai My, with 20 years of pastry experience in upscale hotels like the Equatorial and the Windsor Plaza. "The Japanese are meticulous. Each step is very precise. Everything takes longer, but it's better because the results are more reliable," My says of the Japanese baking style as the students line the bottom of the pan with dried *sakura* (cherry blossom) flowers brought over from Kyoto.

Star Kitchen specializes in Japanese treats like *mochi* cream, *matcha nama choco* (green tea chocolate) and *kinako* (ground roasted soybeans) balls. There are also Japanese takes on European classics like the Tokyo

cheesecake and the Star Tiramisu. "We aim to combine traditional and modern styles, Japanese style with a European influence, like filling our mochi creme with blueberry cream cheese. When people think of Japan, they think of sushi and kimonos. I want people to have a more modern take on Japan and learn about our culture and background through cooking."

While the treats are exotic, employing ingredients like green tea powder and cherry blossom leaves soaked in brine, there has been some modification for the Vietnamese palate. "We've actually decreased the sugar by almost half in some dishes, to suit the Vietnamese taste. It's strange because the Vietnamese drink *café sua da*, which is crazy sweet but when it comes to desserts, they don't like things too sweet. We've also

decreased the amount of butter and cream because the Vietnamese don't seem to like fatty things."

Star Kitchen officially opened this July after many months of preparation and training, but Yuya likes the way things are going. "My parents are from the typical old generation. They think Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia are the same. They joked that I was starting a cooking school in the jungle and told me to be careful not to step on land mines. But I'm really happy. Even one year ago, I couldn't have imagined I would've started a new business here."

For more information about the classes, which can be conducted in English, Vietnamese and Japanese, or to pre-order cakes or purchase baking ingredients, visit www.star-kitchen.jp ■



The Heavy Hand

In Vietnam, teachers and parents still believe kids need to be beaten to behave

TEXT BY **MICHAEL ARNOLD** IMAGES BY **GUNN RYAN MATTINGLY**



UNICEF'S REPORT ON Vietnam under its Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, released just a few months ago now, was surprisingly conservative. If you follow such things, you tend to expect a barrage of criticism and finger-pointing – but this time, its report conceded that the country has come a long way since the days of “*thuong cho roi cho vot, ghet cho ngot cho bui*” (If you love your children, beat them; if you don't, spoil them). The big question now is just how far there is to go before corporal punishment in Vietnam is a thing of the past.

Westerners come from a similar ideological background – spare the rod, spoil the child – but the past century has seen a growing recognition, in Western countries, of how the cycle of violence works its way through the generations and becomes its own legacy. The move to eradicate the beating of children has proved a very painful transition everywhere it's been tried.

Whether the same evolution in attitudes is underway in Vietnam is a moot point. Legislatively, corporal punishment has been banished from almost every arena save for the most intimate – in the home – but there are still frequent media reports of excessive violence in schools perpetrated by frustrated teachers. Extreme forms of corporal punishment are the exception rather than the rule; however, speaking with local caregivers does suggest that ‘mild’ discipline such as slapping aren't all that uncommon even now.

A few enquiries are all it takes to demonstrate the point. I questioned one local teacher who openly admitted to hitting her students by hand or with a rolled newspaper despite being well aware that such punishments are now illegal in Vietnam. “I only slap the children when they're really naughty and if there's no other way to make them better,” she says. “I feel guilty and regret it sometimes, but the pressure of having to look after so many children at the same time makes me lose control.” Misdemeanors that resulted in slapping, by the way, included not eating or sleeping at the proper time. Parents, she continues, “care about the issue very much, but ignore it if the punishment isn't too serious”.

Without legislative restriction, the situation in the home isn't so different. One mother spoke in similar terms of being unable to maintain self-control despite feeling that what she was doing was wrong. “You have to teach your child gradually, explain properly and talk gently with your children,” she says. “That's the principle. In real-world practice, there are children who are too excitable and too energetic, and sometimes the parent cannot control or restrain their own anger or worry, so they'll come to use a more violent method.”

Adding: “There are several techniques you can use to discipline your children, such as kneeling, caning the palm, and spanking. It depends on the severity of the child's problem – even though we know that we shouldn't use these methods.”

Without meaning to pass judgment, it's not

untrue to say that no matter where people are from, the arguments they use to justify things they wish they didn't do is startlingly familiar. It's always something like “but I didn't hit her that hard.” What disturbs me is that I've seen violence against children here, and what I saw was not altogether mild. Late one night on a bus, a beleaguered mother and her two infant children, a boy and a girl, were fellow passengers. When the daughter refused to sit still after being asked several times, the hand came down. Repeatedly. With a force that would have given dark, black bruises even to me, let alone a little girl not yet five, all distorted in screams, inciting her mother, face torn in a fury, to hit harder.

Forgive me, but I have no way of reporting how common that is. No one will talk about that.

Zero Tolerance

Statements from international schools, while cautiously phrased, are usually nonetheless emphatic in declaring zero tolerance for any form of corporal punishment whatsoever. I received unequivocal assurances from both BIS and the Montessori School of Vietnam, for example, that such methods of punishment are expressly forbidden. One parent assured me that “certainly in international standard schools and kindergartens, no teachers would be allowed

to raise a hand against a child.” The same can't be said for local schools. “There have been cases in the press, from across Vietnam, about teachers abusing children. In fact, my helper pays her kids' teacher a tip to avoid this.”

While she hadn't heard of an instance of a nanny using physical

punishment (sadly, I myself have indeed heard of such cases), she did advise parents to be absolutely clear in their instructions given to household help. “Write it down clearly on paper, and translate the NEVER situations such as hitting, shouting, locking in a room, etc. The cultural differences are huge.”

Be that as they may, cultural differences are only partly to blame for a phenomenon that knows no borders. Patient, good instruction – delivered with the knowledge that sometimes your child may yet persist in doing something that infuriates you – is hard. What's even harder for offending parents to understand, though, is that an act of violence against a child, no matter how serious, is always in itself a far more contemptible breach of discipline than whatever misdemeanor on the part of the child brought it on. Like all bad decisions, the consequences are inevitably worse than the causes.

As one interviewee said to me, “As a mother, every time I use these severe methods with my own child, I feel pain. There are times when I would enact this punishment while crying myself. I hope that anyone reading this piece will, from then on, restrain themselves whenever they're trying to teach or educate their children, or else the next generation in this country will be an incredibly violent one.” ■



THE MYTH:

As all motorbike drivers are required to buy motorbike insurance, does the insurance actually protect you?



ACCORDING TO REGULATION No. 126/2008/TT-BTC from the Ministry of Finance, all motorbike drivers are required to purchase civil liability insurance for their motorbikes. The mandatory civil liability insurance is priced at VND66,000 (inclusive of VAT) and is valid for one year. This is, however, not to safeguard the motorbike owners themselves but rather to indemnify the third party in case of accidents. It works like this: suppose you crash into someone, break their leg and/or damage their vehicle. The insurance company will then, on your behalf, pay the other party's medical expense of up to VND50 million and the vehicle damage of up to VND40 million. In short, the civil liability insurance makes sure that other motorbike drivers/pedestrians are protected from your potential inability of paying compensation should accidents take place.

The civil liability motorbike insurance is widely referred to as "motorbike insurance" and this is what traffic cops

stop you for to check. They will ask to present proof of purchase of the 'motorbike insurance.' If you fail to do so or present an expired one, then you will be fined VND100,000. Remember to renew it every year to avoid being fined because the fine costs more than the insurance itself.

Apparently in order to claim the civil liability insurance, you - as the insured party - have to present the police report and any medical reports of the other party. But insurance companies will only indemnify to a certain pre-determined fee for each case. Each insurer has a standard compensation percentage for every case and with this practice you as the insured party need to fork out from your own pocket to pay the balance of the formal fee (billed medical fee, repair fee, etc.) for the other party. As with most accidents in Vietnam, the injured parties almost always want to be compensated more than the formal fee, sometimes to an unreasonable extent, claiming 'trauma.' For this, no type of insurance can protect you and it is now

up to your negotiation skills to work out an agreement.

Last year, according to a report by the Vietnam Insurance Association, 39 percent of indemnified cases were successful - amounting to about only one-third of all claims that were filed. The report also mentions that for the first time in recent years, the 2012 revenue for civil liability insurance dropped dramatically and this shows the "awareness" of the people about what this type of insurance really does for them - only as a shield from traffic fines.

In essence, the civil liability insurance doesn't protect you at all. You need to purchase an optional vehicle and passenger insurance which costs you a lot more than VND66,000. This optional insurance is priced at different levels depending on the chosen level of indemnity. You can purchase this at any insurance company and my advice is to choose the larger, more well-known insurers so that they have sufficient financial ability to cover you.

- Clara Phuoc Nguyen ■

Hogging the Streets

For those who are dedicated to riding Harleys

TEXT BY **CHRISTINE VAN AND CLARA PHUOC NGUYEN** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**



THE FIRST AMERICAN-MADE motorcycle, the iconic Harley-Davidson, was made popular in Saigon during the American War in the 1960s. Recently, the motorcycle has become a firm favorite on the city's streets too. The Saigon HOG (Harley Owners Group) was formed in 2008 when Vietnam officially allowed large capacity motorcycles to be imported into the country. At the time the only person to own an Ultra Classic was Phuong, now Vice President of Saigon HOG. Mesmerized by the classic rumblings of his Harley engine which he likened to "tribal drums," Phuong gathered together equally passionate Harley aficionados to form the club that currently counts 73 members, of which only one is female. On any given Sunday, 30 bikes show up for the HOG's gathering and amongst them is a 1200 Sportster, a V-rod, a Dyna, a Rocker, a Buell, and a bunch of Electra Glides, the newest being a '10 CVO Ultra Classic Electra Glide. This particular bike cost about USD100,000 in Vietnam as the import duty alone is roughly 175 percent for "luxury" motorcycles, plus registration, shipping, and miscellaneous charges.

"Harley-Davidson motorcycles may be suitable for a wide range of ages, however they are not suitable for everyone," says Tran Vinh, who owns a Heritage Softail 2004, 1500cc. "The owner's character is revealed by the model they drive."

Dzung is a member of two HOG clubs (Hanoi and HCMC) and has to travel back and forth to attend the gatherings but it allows him to ride his big beast along the highway and share his passion with other motorcycle buffs. "I bought this motorcycle in the US several years ago. This three-wheel

Ultra Classic motorcycle was ridden by Russian President Vladimir Putin when he was in the Ukraine. I had it pimped in the US to enhance the characteristics for my ride."

According to Dzung, riders don't attend the weekly meetings to show off speed but rather to boast about style. Members discuss everything from colors and designs to the special roar the engines make. They say it's a chance for them to share experiences in motorcycle maintenance and accessories.

Come Along for the Ride

Joining Saigon HOG isn't difficult; you just need to own a Harley and have an A2 class license. But to be a fully-fledged card-carrying member requires going beyond just showing off these mechanical beauties. Members give back to the community by doing volunteer work in the education sector. When asked why education was specifically chosen as the group's focus for social work, Phuong responded enthusiastically: "All the club members are family people who are intensely devoted to contributing towards Vietnam's young generation."

They've partnered with many organizations, associations and government agencies to build classrooms and provide scholarships for underprivileged students in remote areas. This year, the club has organized multiple events in an effort to raise awareness on safety and responsible driving amongst grade school and university students in the city.

"We organize excursions through Vietnam every year. We also organize some charitable activities during the trips. For example, we went to the mountainous province of Son La

and Muong La District to help poor children. We also offer exchanges with HOG in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia," says Dzung.

In Vietnam there's still a lingering preconception that these easy riders are gangsters or hoodlums but they'd be surprised to learn that Saigon HOG members are actually successful CEOs, businessmen and academics. They would have to be considering the cheapest price of a Harley is around USD25,000.

Initially drawn to the seductive rumblings of a Harley, Phuong now eats, breathes and sleeps in HD because of the welcoming worldwide vibe that comes from being part of the HOG. Phuong has the assurance that no matter where he finds himself, he'll be welcomed as part of the HOG family. "We all have HOG blood," he says.

Whether you come from the Americas, Australia or Asia, and regardless of your job, be it company director, journalist or artist, just owning a Harley makes you a part of the HOG family. Pride and the connection between Harley Owner Group members has made it one of the most close-knit and exciting of all luxury motorcycle clubs. But make no mistake. HOG isn't just a club, it's a lifestyle.

Saigon HOG has weekly meetings from 9am-12pm every Sunday morning at Café L'Anmien (76 Le Lai, D1). On alternating weeks, the club organizes sessions on driving techniques, keeping up with the latest Harley news and charitable and social events.

For more info on Saigon Hog, check out its Facebook page (www.facebook/saigon.hog) or find it online at www.saigonhog.vn/vn (both in Vietnamese). ■



REDUCE

Nip

LIFT

Tuck
Tan

PLUMP

ENLARGE

Vietnam has one of Southeast Asia's fastest-growing economies and has set its sights on becoming a developed nation by 2020. Tourism has increased at a steadily impressive rate over the last 10 years. In 2010, Vietnam welcomed nearly four million international tourists. Most visitors come from China, with around 10 percent coming from the US, Japan and South Korea. Building on this success, the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism is looking to develop and diversify the tourism industry. Will medical tourism be a part of this expansion?

Sun, Saigon... and

THE STATE OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN VIETNAM

WHEN KEO KAK, 58, crossed the border from Cambodia into Vietnam on his way to Cho Ray Hospital, he became a medical tourist. Defined in its broadest terms by the Medical Tourism Association, medical travelers are "people who live in one country [but] travel to another country to receive medical, dental and surgical care while at the same time receiving equal to or greater care than they would have in their own country, and are traveling for medical care because of affordability, better access to care or a higher level of quality of care."

However, this niche market within the travel sector has proven notoriously difficult to study and quantify, in part because it requires sensitive information to be shared between countries and industries, a hard ask when anonymity is considered an attractive feature of medical tourism for many. Keith Pollard, Managing Editor of the *International Medical Travel Journal* explains: "There is no standardized approach to collecting data on medical tourism, and most of the numbers that you see on the Internet are wild guesses or invented by those who want to hype the market. Different countries in Southeast Asia attract different patients from different countries for different reasons."

Add to that the blurred nature of what exactly makes a medical traveler. Some industries take a more narrow view and exclude outpatients, dental patients, patients returning to their (or their parents' or grandparents') country of origin for treatment, people who decided to mix travel for medical care with travel for other purposes, and patients traveling across borders to nearby countries (such as between Cambodia and Vietnam). Therefore, the estimated number of medical tourists worldwide ranges wildly from 60,000 to 50 million, spending upwards of USD60 billion annually.

For years, Vietnam has been a medical treatment destination for Cambodians where the healthcare system is less developed. Local Khmers wryly say that the hospital is a place where people go to die, not to live.

Kak had been dealing with an enlarged heart condition for years, bouncing between doctors without seeing much improvement. Kounila, his daughter, talks of their experience: "There are some good hospitals with good doctors in Phnom Penh, but they spend most of their time at their private clinics, so regular patients don't get good care. We tried going to a heart center, but the staff were unethical and we just got fed up. The newer, international hospitals are just too

expensive."

On the advice of a patient with a similar ailment who told of his improved condition after seeing doctors in Vietnam, Kak decided to obtain cross-border care. Kounila remembers accompanying her father to Vietnam. "My first impression of Vietnamese doctors was very good. After a brief registration, he was put into a wheelchair and went right in to see the doctor. The hospital was well-equipped and the doctor spoke some English."

Kak belongs to the estimated 250 Cambodians who cross over into Vietnam daily seeking medical treatment at Ho Chi Minh City's hospitals, often at Cho Ray, FV and the Medical University Hospital (commonly known to Cambodians as "215"). Some of these hospitals have Khmer-speaking staff on hand to service these medical tourists. Other patients employ freelance interpreters, as Kak does, at USD10 per visit. According to the *International Medical Travel Journal*, the number of Cambodian patients treated at Cho Ray Hospital increased by over 90 percent between 2008 and 2011, prompting the hospital to start construction in 2010 of a Phnom Penh branch, with the first 200 of a proposed 500 beds set to open this month.

While it may be a stretch to describe Kak as a conventional "tourist," people like Kak fit the traditional model of international medical travel, journeying to more developed countries in search of health care, meanwhile consuming services associated with travel, such as transport, lodging, and hospitality. On one trip, he even brought his family with him and after a doctor's visit in the morning, took the evening bus to Dalat for five days.

A NICHE MARKET

However, a growing number of medical providers in Vietnam are seeking to capitalize on the more lucrative medical tourism niche spearheaded by regional powerhouses like Thailand and India, where patients are from highly developed countries traveling to less developed areas of the world to receive quality medical services at a fraction of the cost compared to their own country.

George Adams, CEO of Medical Tourism Vietnam, a Hanoi-based medical tourism company, describes the current state of medical tourism in Vietnam as "in supreme infancy". "At the moment, it is simply convergence, not cost," he says, as to why someone would

Surgery?

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM





come to Vietnam as a medical tourist. "The client has already booked a holiday [here]."

Dr. Rafi Kot, CEO of Family Medical Practice, comments bluntly on the current medical offerings: "What we have here isn't medical tourism the way you and I understand it. Vietnam isn't even on the map yet. Cambodians come to Vietnam because it's slightly cheaper than Bangkok. [As a Westerner,] if I saw it advertised in my hotel, I might consider it. But I wouldn't fly in for it."

Mr. Tuan-Anh Le, Director of Marketing for the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism agrees. "Medical tourism in Vietnam hasn't been developed. The number of domestic tourists on medical tours is limited, and the number of foreigners coming to Vietnam as health travelers is only a few hundred a year. So far, these products and services are part of a larger packaged tour and haven't gotten to the point where they've become the primary reason for someone to come to Vietnam."

Experts concur that Vietnam is still years away from being known as a typical medical tourism destination - glitzy, high-tech machinery operated by foreign-trained doctors in a setting which looks more like a five-star resort.

However fragile, though, some pieces of the puzzle are in place. "Vietnam has a lot of pluses," says Tuan-Anh. "Traditional Vietnamese medicine contains the essence of Oriental Medicine. A case in point is acupuncture which has been recognized worldwide as being effective in treating many ailments. Vietnam is also endowed with many natural resources suitable for the development of centers for relaxation, rehabilitation and treatment. There are already tours like this, like in Quang Ninh where travelers can combine a visit to the Yen Tu Temple with an herbal medical treatment, or in Khanh Hoa, where tourists can relax and have an Ayurvedic treatment at the mineral hot springs. There are also eco and wellness combination tours like the Oriental Medicine treatments in Dong Thap Muoi and herbal bath treatments by ethnic minorities in Sapa."

For now, medical tourism in Vietnam seems to be focused on general wellness (also known as health tourism) like the spa industry, along with dental care and minor surgeries, largely procedures which are not heavily invasive and do not require long recovery time or specialized post-procedure care, allowing travelers to continue on with their non-health related trip.

ORGANICALLY GROWN

Even so, the industry looks to be growing organically rather than systematically, being supported by national strategies as the Thai, Indian, Singaporean and Malaysian governments have in place. Australian David Kelly, owner of Dental Assistant Vietnam, a dental referral service, says that his business started with friends asking him to find them good dentists. "Most Australians come to Asia because of the proximity and because dental costs in Australia have skyrocketed. Medical is covered by government insurance, but dental isn't. So when they have to pay for something, they realize how expensive it is."

David's clients say that dental costs in Vietnam are about a quarter of the price of Australia. "Back home, a filling costs a few hundred dollars. Here, for the same price, you can get a cap on top of the filling. Vietnamese dentists can do everything from basic fillings and cleaning, right up to implants, veneers, bridges and crowns. One of our clients needed a lot of implants. He was quoted AUD20,000 in Australia and ended up getting them done here for AUD5,000. People are starting to discover that they can get as good a job done in Vietnam as in Thailand, a country which has really taken the lead in dental tourism over the past 10 to 15 years."

Dr. Duy An Vo, Director of the Nu Cuoi Duyen Dental Clinic, where 70 percent of his foreign patients are *Viet Kieu*, agreed that economics was the driving factor for dental tourism. "Vietnam is much cheaper

than Europe. After adding up the costs of buying a plane ticket, visiting family and going sightseeing, there's still some money left over compared to what they'd have to spend getting treatment in their home country. Even compared to Singapore and Thailand, Vietnam is four to six times cheaper."

Medical tourist Huynh Phan brought her husband to Vietnam to have a partial denture made. "It was only USD300. In the US, it would've been at least five times that much. We got a recommendation from friends and the quality seems to be good. It was a good compromise, to be able to visit family while getting dental work done."

On the issue of quality, David says of his recommended dental clinics: "The implants done [at our clinics] are manufactured in other places like Switzerland, Germany and Israel and are mainly fitted here using Vietnamese labor." However, Tri Phan of Phann Dental Laboratory in Houston, US advises caution. "I've had clients get dental work done in Vietnam and when something breaks, they have to see a dentist here because it's too expensive to keep flying back. Some of the work I've seen isn't as good as in the US; I'd rate it four or five out of 10. Here, to open a lab, you have to pass exams and be certified. In Vietnam, dental skills are often passed from father to son. In the US, you have to use materials approved by the FDA [Food and Drug Administration]. In Vietnam, you can use any material. I've seen some of the metal used to cast crowns and they contain lead which can be very dangerous. The standards are nowhere as strict as in the US."

PLASTIC OR NON?

Another area making small inroads in Vietnam is cosmetic surgery. Dr. Kot recalls an Australian patient who came to his clinic with all her girlfriends, having traveled to Vietnam to get tailored dresses for an upcoming wedding. The bride-to-be said that it was 10 times cheaper than going to a tailor in Australia, even with flights and hotel included. The same can be said for plastic surgery.

"There are a few things done in Vietnam which attract tourists. One of them is plastic surgery. It's a big thing in Asia. The mother and father of plastic surgery is South Korea. If you're 14 and don't get a lip job, that means Mom and Dad don't love you. In the US, it's traditionally very expensive; it's a luxury." But despite the slowdown of the US economy, "the demand for cosmetic procedures has not decreased. In the UK, estimates project that the number of cosmetic procedures nearly doubled from 2005 to 2007," says a report commissioned by the Deloitte Center for Health Solution.

Hans van der Broek, a Hoi An-based tour operator looking to break into

the medical tourism business notes that "for cosmetic surgery, small facial corrections are popular [in Vietnam] and especially non-surgical treatments like reducing wrinkles, skin whitening and laser treatments. But not a lot of Western visitors will take the risk for plastic surgery." Dr. Kot adds food for thought: "Vietnam may be cheaper, but don't forget that plastic surgery is different when it comes to Asians and Caucasians. They have different skin, different aesthetics."

In order to become more of a regional player in the medical tourism niche, Vietnam must overcome issues that similarly plague the global industry and then some. The Medical Tourism Climate Survey 2013, funded by the *International Medical Travel Journal*, polled more than 400 industry people in 77 countries and found that the most important factor for a medical tourist in choosing a health care facility in a particular country are the expertise and qualifications of the doctor/dentist. However, without going through a medical broker, potential medical tourists are left with a dilemma when it comes to Vietnamese credentials. Out of a reported 100 government-owned hospitals and medical centers in Ho Chi Minh City, not counting the dozens of privately-owned clinics, only one center, the Cao Thang Eye Hospital, is accredited by the Joint Commission International, one of the health care industry's most prominent accreditation institutions. In contrast,



22 organizations are accredited in Singapore and 41 in Bangkok alone.

"As long as Vietnamese doctors who graduate in Vietnam cannot work overseas because no OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) or Western country recognizes their training, there will be no medical tourism in Vietnam. Vietnam has no 'brain re-drain' happening (the trend of local doctors studying abroad and then coming back to practice in their home country). Nobody needs doctors from Vietnam because they don't qualify. As long as Vietnam is losing a billion dollars from Vietnamese going overseas to seek treatment, what are we talking about?" asks Dr. Kot. "New hospitals are called international, but there's nothing international about them. It's the same guys working at overcrowded public hospitals, just moving over to private industry. Just having a white coat and a cravat [in a building] with the word 'international' doesn't justify adding a zero to the bill."

Dr. Vo, though, is more optimistic. "Foreign doctors I've met at conferences say that the skill level of Vietnamese doctors is delicate, even masterful compared to foreign doctors. Vietnam has access to the most up-to-date techniques. When a new technique comes out, companies that specialize in equipment and products organize seminars and bring in foreign specialists because they want to get those products into the market ASAP."

THE RISK FACTOR

Another area of concern is the issue of liability. A 2011 medical tourism review commissioned by the OECD poses the question, "In the event of an adverse outcome arising from failings in clinical and professional practice, how do patients fare in seeking redress given there is no international regulation of medical tourism?"

"Most of the time, there is no recourse in case of trouble. Putting pressure on people to refund in case of problems is often the only way to get some of the money back. But by then, the damage is already done," says Hans.

Dr. Vo agrees: "Registered medical clinics are inspected twice a

year. But the Vietnamese health care system isn't far enough along to address what to do in the case of malpractice. Malpractice insurance isn't required. Usually, the patient will negotiate a settlement directly with the clinic. But the maximum payout is USD10,000 to USD20,000, not in the millions like in the West. And whether the clinic can afford to pay is another matter."

Keith cautions, "[Medical travelers] must factor in the risk. Lower price means higher risk. If something goes wrong, then they will have to pursue the doctor/clinic through the legal process in the destination country. And there is usually little chance of this happening."

Specifically to Vietnam, Dr. Kot adds, "Compensation here is usually limited to just millions of dong, so it's not worth it. If you want good doctors, you've got to pay them. Nobody likes to pay for health care. Vietnam ranks at number 133 out of 200 countries in expenditure on health. If you need big surgery and it's elective, go home. Be with your family," he advises.

With only a handful of brokers working to bring medical tourists to Vietnam, for now at least, individuals are largely making their own decisions regarding their health needs, the best form of treatment and the most qualified provider. The Medical Tourism Climate Survey 2013 found that most providers are funneling the bulk of their marketing dollars into website content. However, the OECD review warns that because "internet sites are relatively cheap to set up and run" and are often "not subject to clear quality controls or advertising standards," the information presented may be selective, conveniently ignoring issues such as post-operative care and support.

Referral services like Dental Assistant Vietnam aim to be simply that - a source of information which the prospective patient must process themselves. Owner David Kelly says that when he was looking at dentists, "information was lacking. There wasn't a website that we were happy with that had all the information in one place. Some people don't trust coming to a developing country, so we act as the middleman. We give them information about qualifications, cleanliness, photos of the dental office, what they specialize in and feedback from



"IT'S TRUE THAT THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN VIETNAM HAS YET TO MEET THE HIGH REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS. FACILITIES ARE SMALL AND OFTEN OVERCROWDED AND THE STAFF DO NOT SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. THERE'S ALSO A LACK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN HOSPITALS AND TRAVEL COMPANIES TO DEVELOP PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO ATTRACT MEDICAL TOURISTS."

previous clients. We're a little bit like the Agoda of dental treatment. We present a lot of similar clinics and provide information. Clients can compare and then make the decisions themselves."

What the future holds for medical tourism in general, a maturing cottage industry which has been projected to grow in excess of 35 percent annually, and for medical tourism specifically in Vietnam, is uncertain. Keith says, "Whether Vietnam is an attractive destination will depend on which target markets it wishes to explore. There will be very different reasons for patients from Australia seeking dental treatment to those from Myanmar seeking heart surgery. Obstacles for Vietnam include the level of competition from other destinations within the region, for example Malaysia, Singapore and Korea. The lack of a clear strategy is also a drawback. This takes time to develop. [There also needs to be] financial backing from the government or from individual hospitals and clinics to actually put Vietnam on the map."

Tuan-Anh of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, while pragmatic, remains optimistic. "It's true that the quality of medical services in Vietnam has yet to meet the high requirements of international visitors. Facilities are small and often overcrowded and the staff do not speak a foreign language. There's also a lack of cooperation between hospitals and travel companies to develop products and services to attract medical tourists." However, he shared some recommendations from the Strategy and Master Plan for Tourism Development 2020, with a view to 2030, such as developing the traditional medicine and herbal therapies sector indigenous to Vietnam; encouraging the construction of hospitals aimed at medical tourists, complete with modern hotel facilities and international-standard treatment rooms and staff; and coordinating with the Ministry of Public Security to devise preferential extended visa policies for international visitors who are coming for health tourism.

Hans of Green Apple Hoi An predicts, though, that "as long as there are no strict health regulations and some kind of backup in case of problems, [medical tourism] will not really take off. It will remain an add-on to tour packages." ■

Here is a list of notable health care destinations in Southeast Asia. Some of these countries are leading the world in medical tourism, while others are just entering the market. Regardless, the region as a whole stands to build a strong and sustainable industry around healthcare

THAILAND

The Land of Smiles has been one of the most successful countries in the world at developing and promoting medical tourism. The combination of world class medical facilities and beautiful vacation potential makes Thailand a premier destination for overseas medical care. Some of their most popular procedures include elective cosmetic procedures, weight management surgeries and orthopedic surgeries. One of the most widely reported benefits of medical care in Thailand is the phenomenal level of care. Many patients report fantastic experiences with highly professional and friendly staff. On top of that, Thailand boasts 70 to 80 percent cost savings from the US or the UK. The savings are more than enough to cover a few extra weeks recovering on Thailand's beautiful beaches with a tropical drink in hand.

SINGAPORE

The Lion City has carved out a respectable medical tourism industry, attracting close to 500,000 foreign patients annually. Currently, the World Health Organization ranks Singapore as having the best medical infrastructure in Asia and the sixth best in the world. In true Singaporean fashion the government has gotten on board and is making a sweeping, coordinated effort to grow and promote the industry. Singapore is attracting primarily Asian tourists, but as the country grows and develops it certainly has the potential to be a worldwide medical hub.

MALAYSIA

While Malaysia may not be at the same scale as powerhouses Thailand and Singapore, the country still attracts nearly 250,000 foreigners a year seeking medical care. It may just be a secret jewel for people who know about it. While the country still doesn't possess the technological development for advanced procedures, Malaysia has a highly specialized burn center as well as great preventative care services. A comprehensive health screening by highly-trained and skilled doctors can be a seventh of the cost in the US. With these kind of savings Malaysia won't be a secret for long.

INDIA

India offers top medical care in a number of cities across the nation, including Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Chennai. Overall the country is one of the fastest growing medical tourism destinations in the world, reporting 30 percent patient growth annually. India attracts most of its foreign patients from the US, Canada and Europe looking for less expensive cardiovascular and orthopedic procedures. A heart valve replacement, normally quoted at around USD150,000 in the States, can be done in India for USD9,500. With pricing that attractive India's medical tourism is growing so quickly the government has started investing money to improve infrastructure and help support the industry.

SOUTH KOREA

Although not technically Southeast Asia, South Korea stills needs to be mentioned. Considered one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, South Korea has built medical facilities and infrastructure that can compete head to head with any other developed nation. Surprisingly they have also managed to keep costs lower than most comparable countries. South Korea specializes in highly technical surgeries, such as spinal and brain, as well as a wide range of cosmetic procedures, for which they have built a globally recognized reputation. This country may not be the least expensive option but they compete to top the quality of more expensive countries.

So if you have been putting off a long needed vacation or perhaps prolonging an inevitable medical need, procrastinate no longer. Southeast Asia has become a veritable paradise of vacation potential and affordable medical care. After all, recovering from a hospital visit with a little vacation time is not a bad way to live.

— TYLER NORWOOD

Under the Needle

TEXT BY LOTTIE DELAMAIN

AN EXPAT RECALLS HIS EXPERIENCE WITH BOTOX INJECTIONS IN HCMC

JAMES, 33, SPLITS his time between New York, London and Saigon. Having had Botox a couple of times in New York and been thrilled with the results – “I couldn’t stop looking in the mirror” – he found the expenditure a drain on the wallet. And so while he was over here for business, the comparatively tiny price tag beckoned him to the doctor’s surgery.

“It is always about recommendations. I would never go anywhere a friend hadn’t recommended. There is always a risk involved with medicine, wherever you are in the world, so you have to trust your instincts,” he says. It’s important you know exactly what you want and feel comfortable questioning your doctor and the results. “Just because he does Cameron Diaz, it doesn’t mean your eyebrows are straight.”

With this in mind, he took a friend’s advice and visited a clinic on Dong Khoi. First impressions were good – it was clean and professional. “They asked all the right questions.” And he had the reassuringly familiar mountain of paperwork to fill out prior to the consultation. The Vietnamese doctor who spoke perfect English, talked through the procedure and discussed recommended units of Botox. Twenty minutes later, true to his friend’s experience, he left the clinic with his forehead wrinkle-free, feeling refreshed and looking five years younger.

So good was James’ experience that eight months later he returned for round two. The same doctor, the same professionalism, however not such good results. Instead of a natural-looking healthy glow, he left with a “frozen plasticity-shine.” His forehead had an unnatural sheen and he struggled to show expression. Most worryingly, when he raised his eyebrows, only one moved. Horrified, he returned to the clinic.

Although the doctor was understanding, the clinic was reluctant to accept any wrongdoing. It was described as “normal”, something that “sometimes happens.” The solution? More Botox. So James had a corrective dose of Botox (free of charge), to make both eyebrows equally immobile. And “it took about a month for things to begin to return to normal,” explains James.

THE PRICE OF YOUTHFULNESS

To those who are yet to dip their toes into the world of cosmetic surgery, this might be enough to put you off. However, James is more philosophical about his experience. “The thing is, this can happen anywhere. In the US it happens all the time and it would have been dealt with in exactly the same way. It is not like it has caused life-long damage.”

James is all too aware, that with all surgery, cosmetic or otherwise, there is a chance it may go wrong. And in Vietnam, where the industry is comparatively young and comparatively unregulated, he felt it would be almost impossible to bring them to justice, let alone get any compensation or have them cease operation to prevent further damage to other people. “You’re definitely more vulnerable as a foreigner – going up against a Vietnamese doctor, the whole institution, it would be overwhelming. [Also because] of what is seen as acceptable. For example, in Saigon, like in LA, it’s totally normal to look like you have had work – it doesn’t matter if you have big scars behind your ears, or overly taut skin stretched across your face. The priority is wrinkle-free, whatever the cost. And everyone’s at it, from nose jobs, to double eyelid surgery, and from a very young age.”

Adding: “If I had gone in and said I want my eyes done, at my age, they would have said, ‘Sure, no problem.’ In the West, that would have alarm bells ringing.” In the West, he wouldn’t be allowed to have his eyes done at 33-years-old because there’s nothing wrong with them, nothing to ‘do’. But here, he thinks they would have done it anyway and he would have looked ridiculous.

However, the fact remains, having work done here is a fraction of the price. The Botox that James had for USD150 would have cost him USD1000 in New York. And in his experience, if you do a bit of research and follow your instincts, you’re no worse off here than anywhere else in the world. And if the proof is in a repeat customer, would James go back for more? Without hesitating, “Yeah, probably!” ■

“IF I HAD GONE IN AND SAID I WANT MY EYES DONE, AT MY AGE, THEY WOULD HAVE SAID, ‘SURE, NO PROBLEM.’ IN THE WEST, THAT WOULD HAVE ALARM BELLS RINGING”



Wine & Dine

■ IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY





The Forest for the Trees

Some of District 1's best restaurants are not in the main thoroughfares you might expect to find them

TEXT BY **ROBERT STOCKDILL** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

WHITE FOREST (14bs Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1) is big, bold and beautiful. A blend of Scandinavian and European design and handmade Vietnamese furniture makes this an urban oasis, an ideal place to chill for a wine, tapas or a full Continental-influenced meal.

Owner Thu Hieu Phung wanted to open a restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City with a European offer targeting Vietnamese and foreigners alike. She chose a larger than average site with a wide street frontage and engaged France-based Vietnamese interior designer Anh Nguyen to create her 'forest.' The beauty is in the detail with features like hand carved Jaguar heads which front the arms of each of the sumptuous white framed dining chairs with maple leaf print cushions. A feature wall has rounds of local timber arranged in a mosaic and bracketed by slim pale bricks.

The menu is fixed to a slab of timber, rustic brown sheets of paper with a cowhide cover, all strung together with a wooden twig and jute cord. Very forest-like. It ranges from traditional breakfasts, artfully designed sandwiches for the first half of the day, then a comprehensive range of imaginative salads, pastas, meats and fish for dinner time. There is also a tapas menu on a blackboard which is changed frequently. These options can include oysters, *foie gras*, cheeses,

snow fish, meats and an avocado salad.

The Meal

White Forest's menu is of a generic European style - neither Italian, French, Spanish nor Mediterranean - it draws on flavors from across the continent.

For starters we tried the beef carpaccio with *foie gras*, truffle paste, rocket salad and parmesan cheese (VND175,000) and the orange salad with mixed leaves, walnuts, cherry tomatoes, feta cheese, red onions and orange dressing (VND155,000). The beef was astonishingly thin, and thus very soft, almost melting in the mouth. Drizzled with olive oil and served with large slices of parmesan, it teased the palate but did not leave us feeling too full, rather heightening the anticipation of our mains, which is the whole point of a starter, after all.

The salad was amongst the best we have tried in Ho Chi Minh City, crisp leaves of purple and green, juicy chunks of orange, soft moist feta cheese and juicy baby tomatoes. In a way the salad heralded the overwhelming lasting impression of White Forest: Fresh. Every item we have tasted on the menu looked and tasted as if it had just been harvested or caught. In a country with supply chain challenges as harsh

as Vietnam, that is no small achievement.

With three of us enjoying the dining experience, we were able to choose three contrasting main courses, each recommended by different staff.

Our waiter was very eager for us to try the rack of lamb with butter spinach and blackberry sauce (VND370,000) "How many restaurants have you been to where lamb is served with blackberry sauce?" he challenged. None, of course, so we accepted the dare.

Our second choice was pan fried veal with mixed seafood in white wine sauce (VND195,000) and our third, duck breast with orange and prune sauce (VND245,000). Duck served roasted or baked European style is a dish often poorly presented in Asia - too raw, it can be tough or stringy. White Forest's version was tender and pink - some may find it a little too well done, but we appreciated the texture and flavor, and the piquancy of the orange sauce mixed with the sweetness of the prunes.

The lamb was pink, succulent and tender and served on a potato gratin foundation angled like a whole fish at first glance. The berry sauce proved a delicious accompaniment so we were pleased we heeded our waiter's advice.

The veal was pink and tender, probably redder and more like beef than many Westerners would expect. It was served delicately balanced on a mound of creamy potato, itself sitting on a 'raft' of three fresh asparagus spears and augmented with a prawn, cockle and mussel.

Perhaps the only disappointment about White Forest is its dessert menu which is surprisingly limited given the innovative nature of earlier courses. The only options are chocolate mousse cake, cheesecake, panacotta, a semi freddo with pistachio and prune or a walnut brownie.

To be honest, most diners will be well satisfied before dessert anyway.

White Forest may be new, a little over a month old, but it feels established and confident. The design is extraordinary and refreshing without being the least bit ostentatious, the food is fresh, tasty and modestly priced and the service friendly and attentive. This reviewer has already been back! ■



Family Dining

A one stop eatery specializing in tea, coffee and hearty food

TEXT BY **ROBERT STOCKDILL** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**



BY DAY, **Hatvala** on 44 Nguyen Hue, D1 is gaining a deserved reputation as a destination for quality espresso coffee and one of the broadest ranges of hot teas in town. But Hatvala also has a full bistro-style restaurant offer, merging elements of Vietnamese and Western cuisine into an unusual and eclectic menu to suit all tastes. From breakfast and lunch through dinner, it's a friendly haven for tourists, expats and locals alike with modest price points, attentive service and a relaxing environment suited to business meetings or catching up with friends.

Owner Geoff Hopkins came to Ho Chi Minh City to work in IT but has since opted for a 'seachange,' turning tea and coffee trader and restaurateur.

Even though he combines both East and West qualities into his food, Geoff makes no such concessions to the Vietnamese palate when it comes to coffee - you won't find *ca phe sua da* here!

Dinner menu starters include such staples as deep fried spring rolls, taro with shrimp, crispy tofu and grilled pork skewers (all from VND50,000 to VND95,000), along with salads, soups and the more exotic fresh soft shelled river crabs fried in butter and garlic. Mains include grilled mackerel wrapped in banana leaf, fried stuffed squid, grilled pork and honey, beef steak, salmon and five spice beef with rice - along with the traditional Vietnamese diced beef *luc lac*. All range from VND115,000 to no

more than VND255,000 (for the beef). There are also rice, noodle and claypot dishes and a selection of simple desserts.

The Meal

On the ground floor is a cafe with a state of the art coffee machine and a tea room for sampling sessions or groups. Upstairs is an intimate, air conditioned restaurant area where we were fortunate to snap up the seat beside the large window and indulge in the never-ending entertainment of watching cars and motorcyclists narrowly avoid each other at the 'clock roundabout.'

While we carefully selected our entrees and mains, a charming waitress brought us a plate of fried rice paper to crunch on, along with free water (still all too rare in Ho Chi Minh City) and we selected a bottle of Venisquera Yelcho Reserve Especial Cabernet Sauvignon from Chile's Colchagua Valley (VND549,000) from a small but carefully compiled wine list.

For starters we opted for the contrast of pumpkin flowers stuffed with pork, mushroom and onion (VND69,000) and - at the waitress' suggestion - a selection of deep fried spring rolls (VND52,000).

The pumpkin flowers were unusual - pan fried rather than deep fried, thus soft and moist rather than crunchy and decidedly better nutritionally than the spring rolls. They were deliciously peppery, but the sweet sauce tempered the de facto spice feel and

they proved moorish and decidedly filling. There were six rolls - two each of pork, shrimp and vegetable - while light and tasty, some diners may prefer them to have just a little less oil on the plate.

For mains we again opted for something recommended and something unique: rolled beef with peanuts and herbs (VND164,000), and grilled duck (VND189,000). The rolled beef definitely excited the tastebuds; it was tender and fragrant, the filling comprising basil, peanuts, honey and seasoning - a unique combination by any measure. The beef had clearly been marinated in a Vietnamese sauce and the rolls had a barbecued look and scent, but were evenly cooked, not charred or dry. Three rolls were served with a tasty salad, fresh green peas and baby corn. This is a dish we definitely recommend for those seeking something a little out of the ordinary.

Our guest assured us the duck was tender and well cooked, not chewy or stringy. While she usually prefers her duck a little rarer she could not fault the flavor. The dish comes with three sauce options: tamarind, orange or green pepper, an impressive choice for a duck dish. It was served with sautéed potatoes and salad.

We left Hatvala feeling content and well fed. We enjoyed tasty hearty cafe food, served by attentive, friendly staff who treat diners like family rather than customers. And the price point is very reasonable, whatever the dining budget. ■

Domo Arigato, Mr. Robata

Within HCMC's Little Tokyo is a new standout Japanese restaurant

TEXT BY **MICHAEL ARNOLD** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**



DISTRICT ONE'S LITTLE Tokyo along Le Thanh Ton is hardly short of Japanese venues, but you'd probably have to be Japanese yourself – or at least intimately familiar with the culture – to spot what's been missing.

From the overly-vibrant sushi platters to mispronounced greetings uttered distractedly by kimono-clad Vietnamese girls at the door, there has been a distinct lack of heart: no sense of the exhausted, hard-working Japanese salaryman and his business colleagues, their broad grins and the warmth of the *shochu* and grilled meat at the table; the Japanese culture as it's actually lived – and not merely put on show for foreigners.

Robata Dining An (15C Le Thanh Ton, D1) gets the ethos dead right. From its downstairs dining bar lined with copious bottles of Japanese spirits to its private rooms upstairs with their sunken tables, sliding *fusuma* doors and tabletop barbeques, this is how you'd imagine a back-street Japanese restaurant to be like. It's taken just over a year to resonate with an impressive number of loyal Japanese clientele, their names tagged to scores of reserved bottles of *shochu* on display downstairs – the best recommendation the venue could possibly have. They're promises to return to a place that to them has already come to represent home in this foreign land.

The cuisine isn't secondary to the venue's unpretentious authenticity – Head Chef Mr. Sakai has an implicit understanding that flawless dishes are just as important to the

Japanese way of life as the heady ambience of the décor and good service. We start with simple, healthy appetizers – a plate of *endame* beans to snack on, and an An special salad (VND80,000) – not expecting to be overwhelmed by the sheer bulk of the latter. Far too used to the smaller portions of other Japanese venues, we wondered if we'd made a mistake in ordering two plates of sushi once the super California roll (VND100,000) showed up snaking enormously on a traditional heavy wooden platter, but we were rather pleased with our foresight when the crispy shrimp tempura roll almost upstaged it, both dishes with their acutely flavorful ginger and soy sauce on the side.

This Isn't KFC

We'd been told that the most popular dish by far with Japanese patrons is the deep-fried chicken with garlic salt sauce "An" style (VND100,000). As a Westerner raised on fast food, it's impossible not to compare a plate of battered chicken pieces with the likes of KFC – but this turned out to be a good yardstick, as without the secret herbs & spices it's clear that there's nothing artificial about this dish, bringing out the natural flavors of the meat magically devoid of the heaviness of cooking oil. If the first nibble seems a tad plain, be sure to make good use of the dipping sauce with its pleasant sesame overtones.

I was grateful to have been told of the

Japanese preference for deep-fried items on the menu, otherwise I'd have been guilty that the standout dish of the whole meal for me was the fried salmon with cheese (VND100,000). An ingenious Japanese reinvention of a very gentle deep-fry, the melted cheese oozing from between the slices of fresh salmon (along with the accompanying *taru* and homemade mayonnaise dipping sauces) put up such an elegant seduction.

None of the above would do justice to the Japanese culture without regular gulps of *shochu* between courses to freshen up the palate and spread its warmth through every other part of the body. There are multiple ways to enjoy Japanese 'wines' – hot, on ice, straight – but most Japanese expats here prefer it with mineral water for the simple reason that dilution fools the body into allowing you to drink more of the stuff. I settled for a large icy *kurokirishima shochu* from a jet-black bottle that left me wondering why I don't think to enjoy Japanese spirits more often. The hot glow of its body and its unmistakable aroma remained with me throughout the meal like an angel with his hands on my shoulders.

In the pleasant aftermath of the meal and the *kurokirishima*, I had to wonder if the gradually ascending pleasure of dining and drinking is in fact the essence of the wonderful cultural mystery that Robata Dining An successfully captures in this stargate to Japan. ■

Sippin' in Saigon

Wine tasting is not the same as drinking it



SWIRL, SIP, SPIT. Is that all there is to tasting wine? Well, yes and no. I think there's a lot of pretentiousness out there when it comes to tasting wine - fancy verbiage, oddly inflated egos, specialized glassware, and a myriad of fancy corkscrews and decanters - that can overwhelm a lot of folks.

I don't think that wine needs to be fancy to be enjoyed, or even appreciated. So, what can the average person do when they want to explore the world of wine (and there is surely a lot to explore)? From Old World to New World, Right Bank to Left Bank, Barolos to Bardolinos and everything in between, what does it all mean? For the novice taster, does it really matter? I don't think so, and don't let others tell you it does. What matters is this: find the wine you like and drink it! Everyone has their own unique taste and wine allows for that, with literally thousands of wines that offer different types of flavor profiles available right now in Vietnam.

C.A.T in the Glass – Three Basic Tasting Steps

C. There are three basic steps to evaluate wine. The first step is the color test. Check for any imperfections, impurities or

cloudiness. The color will also give you hints as to the age of the wine (but more on that in a future column).

A. Now is when you should start to swirl. Wine is like a genie. It's been trapped in a bottle for quite some time. Swirling the wine exposes it to oxygen and brings out more aromas. Now sniff. Everyone's aromatic appreciation is different depending on their experience. When I taste wine with people from Vietnam, their sense of smell references things from their experience. Sometimes I smell pineapple where they might smell passionfruit. Neither is incorrect, so don't worry about being 'wrong.' There are no wrong observations here.

T. Now to the best part: taste. Again, keep swirling, as your genie will still be catching her breath. Take some wine into your mouth. Ensure that your sip coats your whole mouth. It isn't required to slurp air into your mouth, as some do, but it is a fair amount of fun, and it helps bring more air, and hence, more flavor into the wine. This combination of smelling and tasting gives you a complete picture of the wine. Do you need to spit?



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Michael Kloster grew up in a vineyard county west of Fresno, California. He has over 20 years of marketing, hospitality, food and beverage experience.

Not really. But please note that after several tastes, if you don't spit, your palate will get tired and you will essentially stop tasting.

Three Great Places to Taste:

Sheraton Saigon Hotel and Towers

(88 Dong Khoi, D1)

Check out Sheraton's Lobby Lounge. It features two flights (three 50 ml glasses of red or white) for VND260,000++. The wines are each from a different place, and made from different grapes. The trio also comes with a placemat with tasting notes so that you may compare your observations with those of the experts. There is a similar deal upstairs at the Level 23 Wine Bar. In addition to a great view, the al fresco venue offers three different flights at the same price.

Vino

(74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1; Number 1 Duong So 2, D2)

Proprietors Jim and Kylie bring a laid back Aussie feel to both their District 1 and District 2 locations. Their extensive list of wines by glass always features a few predictable drops, or you can browse the shelves and pick any wine you like from one of the best selections in Saigon. Enjoy it elsewhere, or pay VND100,000 extra and drink it on their terrace. If you're feeling peckish, try your hand at pairing their wines with their tasty tapas selection.

Wine Embassy

(13 Ngo Duc Ke, D1)

A relative newcomer in Saigon, Wine Embassy is quickly proving it is here to stay. It easily has the largest and one of the best selections of wines by glass in town (130!), and you can pick from three different portion pours (prices vary with the wines, so ask your server for details). Certified sommelier Francois Cateau and his team of local talent preside over an Automat of wine selection thanks to their fancy wine preservation machines that keep the wine fresh for weeks, rather than the one to two days that most wines are only really good for after opening. I find it fun to compare and contrast similar types of wine in this way. The whole place is organized around the idea of exploring the wine world. Take a sip and dive in! ■

>>The List

Wine & Dine



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents - website launching 2013

bakeries

Bread Talk

With a mission to revitalize the once-stale business of bread, Singaporean BreadTalk now has outlets throughout Asia and has established itself in several HCMC locations. A brand partnership with Gloria Jeans has seen a wide range of bakery goods available in the cafes, with both brands sharing the premises at this location.

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 3181

Brodard Bakery

Brodard Bakery has been operating in Saigon for over 30 years. It provides finely crafted cakes for all occasions in addition to ice cream, pastries, chocolate and tarts.

95 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 2416
6am - 10pm

Cakewalk Cupcakes

Small boutique cupcake shop offers cupcakes with panache. Traditional cupcakes as well as new, creative flavors are sure to satisfy everyone who is compelled to bend to the will of their sweet tooth.

84 Nguyen Cong Tru, D1
6295 9087
10am - 9pm

Givral

The cakes and tradition of this unique cake shop have captivated generations of Vietnamese customers. With many outlets throughout the city, this particular store was reopened in 2010 on its original site at Vincom A, built on the old Eden complex.

171 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 8659
www.saigongivral.com
6am - 10pm

Gourmand Shop

A traditional delicatessen shop featuring freshly baked baguettes, croissants, chocolate breads, charcuteries, pastries, finest macaroons and other French delicacies prepared daily. Special products imported from France are also available such as French oysters, Damman Freres luxury tea, and a range of authentic products.

Ground floor, Sofitel Saigon Plaza
17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555

Harvest Baking

Harvest Baking offers a delivery-based bakery service with a charitable focus, teaching young Vietnamese hopefuls how to bake delicious breads and cakes through their food training program.

30 Lam Son, Tan Binh
3547 0577
harvestbaking.net
7am - 5pm Monday-Saturday

Kinh Do Bakery

Kinh Do Bakery makes reasonably priced baked goods to-go, such as cakes and cupcakes, tarts, sandwiches, Vietnamese "banh bao", Western-style hamburgers and mini-pizzas and gelatin-based desserts.

128A Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 6552
kinhdobakery.vn
6am - 10.30pm

La Doree

Providing patrons with over 50 varieties of cakes, along with a rich sandwich menu from luxurious French-designed premises. La Doree is the best place in town for macaroons.

216 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3822 1718
www.ladoree.com
7am - 9.30pm

L'amour Bakery & Cafe

More than just another bakery, L'amour is the perfect place for those whom are looking for respite from busy HCMC. This patisserie offers a large selection of European cake and pastry, fresh juice and coffee. You will also find pastas, salads, and sandwiches, ideal for lunch time.

Open from 6am - 10:30pm
24 Hai Ba Trung D1

Nhu Lan Bakery

One of the most famous and prestigious local brands of bakeries in the city, Nhu Lan Bakery supplies bakery products, cakes, bread, ham, sausage, poultry, roasted pork, and dried foods.

50 Ham Nghi, D1
3829 2970
www.nhulan.vn
4am - 12am

Pacey Cupcakes

This cozy little bakery features elegant décor and offers 12 kinds of cupcakes daily, located near the cathedral in a hip, modern setting.

53G Nguyen Du, D1
3823 3223
nguyen.tran@paceycupcakes.com
www.paceycupcakes.com
9am - 10pm

Pat'a Chou

French-style bakery with charming décor. Specializing in baguettes, fresh croissants of various varieties, small quiches, and cakes for every occasion.

74B Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8179
5am - 10pm

Savouree Bakery

Shops have a wide selection of cookies, sweet and savory breads and cakes including cashew chocolate, taro and orange. Custom cakes can be ordered for weddings and holidays.

Unit E3, 1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 3773
www.savoureebakery.com

Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

The bakers at Schneider's offer fresh, healthy, delicious breads, cakes, and pastries, introducing Ho Chi Minh City to eight centuries of German baking tradition.

27 Han Thuyen, D1
2229 6910
www.schneiders-finest.com
9.30am - 9pm

Tous Les Jours

A Korean owned French-style bakery franchise serving fresh baked bread and popular pastries, all baked on-site.

180 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 8302
6am - 11pm

bars

Allez Boo

A popular bar in Saigon featuring tropical bamboo decor, multiple levels and a DJ spinning funky beats. This unique bar offers a wide range of beers, shakes, spirits cocktails and food throughout the day.

187 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
6291 5424
allezboo@hcm.fpt.vn
24 hours

Alto Heli Bar

From the 52nd floor of the Bitexco, you can enjoy sweeping panoramic views of the city's skyline. Try the tapas tasting platters, sip on French Champagne, or choose from the selection of fine wines, local and international beers available.

Level 52 Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai
Trieu, D1
6291 8752
info@altosaigon.com
www.cirrusaigon.com

Bernie's Bar & Grill

An Irish bar and restaurant serving international cuisine like pizza, burgers, pasta and more. Celebrates happy hour from 5 to 7pm, and frequently provides live music.

19 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1720

Blue Gecko

Blue Gecko provides a classic bar experience complete with a pool table, darts board, cold beer and friendly staff. Guests can watch live sports and relax in the comfortable ambience of the bar.

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3483
simon@hcm.vnn.vn
www.bluegeckosaigon.com
4.30pm - 12am

Bootleg DJ Cafe

Modern, moody, and minimalist cafe bar with reasonable prices by day, chic lounge with DJs playing by night. Has a limited menu of sandwiches and other health-conscious Italian fare.

9 Le Thanh Ton, D1
090 760 9202
dorutudose@gmail.com

Boston Sports Bar

Located in the heart of the backpacker area, Boston Sports Bar is open 24 hours and provides guests with a modern bar-going experience. The bar boasts a pool table, live sports on LCD TVs, and western food.

28/4 Bui Vien, D1
6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar

Famously known for 'not being a bar' Broma is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most popular hangouts with prices ranging from VND30,000 - VND500,000. Broma is a more upscale option for those wishing to escape the cheap drinks in The Pham.

41 Nguyen Hue, D1
3823 6838
bromasaigonbar@gmail.com

Carmen Bar

Carmen Bar features a small cavern-like entrance with rough rock walls decorated with ambient lighting. With an exclusive range of drinks and cocktails, guests can relax while enjoying tunes from an excellent Flamenco band.

8 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3829 7699

Charm Bar

Unassuming expat bar in the central city with table soccer and an upstairs floor for private functions. Opens late night.

58 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1
3915 3826
thecharmssg@yahoo.com

Boudoir Lounge

Designed to look like a lived-in yet immaculately styled Parisien home with plush leather sofas, silk cushions and velvet armchairs, Boudoir Lounge serves up everything from afternoon tea to evening cocktails along with signature dishes for any occasion from informal meals and business lunches to gourmet canapés accompanying evening drinks.

Ground floor, Saigon Sofitel Plaza
17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555

Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

The HCMC venue is in the flashy Kumho complex on the edge of the central district, and features a wide 24-meter restaurant frontage on the mezzanine level and a contemporary and chic setting with German-inspired wooden benches and a long wooden bar counter. Serving authentic Bavarian cuisines and premium beers.

39 Le Duan, D1
9822 4206
brotzeit.co/kumholink

Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 O's Pick

A fun place to unwind, with cold drinks, good music (customers can choose the music) friendly staff, light pub food, weekly quiz night (Mondays), darts and televised sport. Try a challenge shot from the big Chilli on the bartop.

104 Ho Tung Mau, D1
09 8376 3372
ff6291182@yahoo.com
4pm-4am

Chu Bar

At this beautiful, laid back venue, tourists and locals alike can sit around Chu's large oval bar or on luxurious padded benches. It has a full cocktail menu as well as a short menu of snacks and sandwiches.

158 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3907
7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

Located near Turtle Lake, this stunning bar offers panoramic views of Saigon. Guests can peruse an extensive international wine list or choose from an array of creative cocktails and international beers.

Level 667, Hai Nam Building, 2 Bis Cong
Truong Quoc, D3
090 944 5544



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Ginger 60

A low-key expat bar with an extensive drink menu and live music in a friendly atmosphere.

60 Ton That Thiep, D1
093 772 1011

Go2

Go2 is a popular nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.

187 De Tham, D1
3836 9575

Hard Rock Café

Memorabilia from Hard Rock's iconic collection adorns the walls of Hard Rock Café Ho Chi Minh City and there is live music most nights. Located in the Kumho Plaza complex.

39 Le Duan, D1
6291 7595
www.hardrockcafe.vn
11.30am - 2am

Heaven Bar Saigon

Standing out from other nightclubs, Heaven Bar impresses their guests with nice decor in tone of red and blue, a broad range of sparkling drinks, Ladies' night, awesome DJ at weekend, and many exciting events for expats.

8 Le Quy Don, D3
090 534 3316
www.barsaigonheaven.com
5pm - 2am

Ice Blue

A small, atmospheric, emphatically English-style pub, Ice Blue is a popular meeting place for Ho Chi Minh City's expats with reasonably priced drinks, friendly staff and a cozy atmosphere. Great place to play darts.

54 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 2664
3pm - 1am

Kim's Tavern

An expat bar on the edge of the downtown shopping district renowned for friendly, attractive staff, cold beer, and a relaxed 'local pub' environment.

20 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1
090 777 5141
4pm - 1am

Last Call 🍷 Oi's Pick

A fine hole-in-the-wall cocktail bar in the centre of town opposite the Sheraton Hotel, Last Call is a 70's themed lounge with a permanent neon glow. Now one of the most popular expat/hip local late evening bars, with a small deck from which to overlook the nightlife set on Dung Du.

59 Dong Du, D1

3823 3122

Le Pub

In a brawny Australian snub to the effete vestiges of French Colonialism that pervade in Saigon, Le Pub is a hearty Oz-styled pub proudly located in a small alleyway between Pham Ngu Lao and Bui Vien st, Opposite the Chua Au lac arch, where it is a magnet for backpackers and blokey expats. The manager and staff are friendly enough too, I suppose.

175/22 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
3837 7679
www.lepub.org

Lindo

Cozy sports bar with big screen TVs and

restaurant quality meals. The Sunday afternoon "Sausage Sizzle" and other weeknight events make this an appealing venue for expats any day of the week.

149 Ton That Dam, D1
3915 3149

Long Phi 🍷 Oi's Pick

One of the staples in the backpacker district, Long Phi is a no-frills bar that doubles as a cheap diner serving some fairly decent French and European cuisine.

207 Bui Vien, D1
3837 2704

6pm to very late, Tuesday - Sunday

Lush

Another of Saigon's more infamous night venues, this have-to-go/love-to-hate club is still as popular as ever, attracting a pumping Vietnamese and foreign crowd on a nightly basis – if the reports from local events websites are to be believed. Lush has a highly distinctive, modern look, with different areas catering to different needs, including a VIP space with plush couches for chatting with hot new friends.

2 Ly Tu Trong, D1
www.lush.com.vn

M52 Bar

A bar catering primarily to foreigners. Offers a simple setting for a night of drinking in the company of friends.

34 Ton That Thiep, D1
3821 0151
5pm - 12am

Miss Saigon 🍷 Oi's Pick

Recently opened, this quaint and cozy bar offers great service and delicious cocktails for those looking to quench their thirst after work. Beers start at VND30,000 and cocktails start at VND55,000 with happy hour from 6pm – 8pm where beers cost VND20,000. Open from 6pm to midnight.

8A/ICI Thai Van Lung, D1

MTV

A large Vietnamese cafe in D3 spread over two levels with space for quiet romantic chat or larger group meets. Serves a broad range of coffees and chilled drinks.

65 Vo Van Tan, D3
3930 2597
thuylangmtv@yahoo.com
www.mtvcafe.com.vn
7am - 11pm

Number Five Bar

Number Five Bar has become notorious for its "all you can drink" draught tiger beer offer. Attractive waitresses are always enthusiastic contestants on the billiards table.

44 Pasteur, D1
3915 3150
heinzvn@gmail.com
3pm - 1am

O'Brien's 🍷 Oi's Pick

Two-storey Irish-themed bar & restaurant furnished to high standard. O'Brien's promotes a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. Known for its excellent food menu, this is a fun place to socialize while shooting pool, playing darts, or chatting with the friendly staff.

74/A3 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 3198
www.irish-barsaigon.com

Phatty's

A sports bar offering a selection of ice-cold local and imported beers as well as a complete range of tasty pub food. Central features are the TVs, connected to an extensive sports channel network.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

Purple Jade

Purple Jade is a stylish and chic venue with exceptional world class cocktails by the city's award-winning bartender along with snacks to melt away the bustle of the city.

First floor- InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Red Bar & Restaurant

Popular nightspot and networking event venue near Bitexco Tower. Serves Aussie pub food and hosts a live Filipino band.

3rd Floor, 70-72 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
2229 7017

Ryan's Pub 'Banter Bar' @ Stella

Occupying the top floor of Stella, this new bar has an outdoor terrace along with a pool table and dart boards indoors. Happy hour drinks are also available.

First Floor, 119 - 121 Bui Vien, D1
090 000 0042
[www.stellacaffe@yahoo.com](mailto:stellacaffe@yahoo.com)

Saigon Saigon Bar

In wartime Saigon, the rooftop of the Caravelle hotel was one of the most popular drinking holes in the city for foreign journalists and expat embassy staff – and it remains one of the most sought-out casual tourist attractions in the city today. Panoramic views of Saigon can still be obtained on the garden terrace despite all the construction, and efforts have been made to preserve the original character of the venue with its multiple ceiling fans, subdued decor, and quietly romantic atmosphere with oil candles on the table tops.

19 Lam Son Square, D1
3823 4999
www.caravellehotel.com/en/1/15/325/products.aspx

Saigon Retro 🍷 Oi's Pick

One of the newest expat bars on the block, offering friendly bar service. Live sport on screen, including English Premier League.

113 Ho Tung Mau, D1
6278 2349
4pm - 2am

Sheridan's Irish Pub 🍷 Oi's Pick

Offering traditional Irish food like biscuits and sausage, along with British dishes like fish and chips or bangers and mash and even local menu items.

24 Ngo Van Nam, D1
3823 0793
8am to midnight

Slate

Slate takes its name from the dark grey slate tiling that covers the floor of the entire establishment. A modern, relaxing spot for an after-dinner drink with an extensive martini list and delicious BBQ menu. A tad difficult to find above a BMW dealership, but accessible from the hotel it is worth the effort.

3rd Floor, Moevenpick Hotel, 253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 9222
5pm - 11pm

Spotted Cow

Hearty breakfasts, great pub grub, cheap drinks and the latest sport on TV make this an appealing destination for tourists of all budgets. Located in the heart of the backpacker district.

111 Bui Vien, D1
3920 7670
spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com
11am - 12pm

Storm P

Storm P restaurant and bar is named after

the famous Danish cartoonist Robert Storm Petersen, and it's the only Danish restaurant in Vietnam.

5B Nguyen Sieu, D1
3827 4738
www.stormp.vn
10am - late

Vasco's

Stylish bar, restaurant and cocktail lounge in a converted colonial style house. European and Asian fare downstairs with extensive wine list and cocktails. DJs perform upstairs at night.

74/7D Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 2888
www.vascosgroup.com

cafés

Achaya Cafe

Achaya Cafe have two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meeting, relaxation or party. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, Vietnamese food from sandwiches, spaghetties, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.

90 Le Loi, D1

093 897 2050

11am - 10:30pm

Aisha Lounge

Secreted away in a small alleyway on Pasteur, Aisha lounge is a fascinating Turkish-style coffee shop designed with an Arabic architectural theme. The ground floor is washed in a Mediterranean blue tone, and seating is on plush cushions of the kind you'd expect to spend the evening lounging around on in a haze with an exotic pipe. Rather incongruously, however, Aisha offers a menu studded with various Vietnamese drinks and food – although the belly dance show does evoke the spirit of the interior design.

63/1 Pasteur, D1
6660 9040
aishalounge@aishalounge.com
www.aishalounge.com

AQ Coffee

Beautiful café situated in one of the city's oldest French mansions, serving coffee made with traditionally-roasted coffee beans.

32 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 8344
7.30am - 11.30pm

Angel-in-us Coffee

A sophisticated and classy coffee franchise with exemplary attention to detail, Angel-in-us has a pretty angel wing motif and a quality coffee menu.

145 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3827 8588
[facebook.com/angelinuscoffeevn](https://www.facebook.com/angelinuscoffeevn)

Blue Cafe

A sprawling, unique cafe in Go Vap, with indoor-outdoor seating and an attempt to recreate the appeal of rural Dalat. Enjoy the shade inside, or sit outside amidst the greenery and watch aircraft taking off from Ton Sat airport. Extensive menu and broad range of coffees and chilled drinks.

701-703 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3588 6824
www.mtvcafe.com.vn
7am - 11pm

Bobby Brewer's

A contemporary cafe in the backpacker area set over three floors, the cafe features a large free cinema, a great place for couples.

45 Bui Vien, D1
3920 4090
www.bobbybrewers.com

Boulevard Cafe

This Parisian-style cafe has a fine, white

tone and a warm ambiance that attempts a look of luxury with its plush sofas and chandeliers.

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Bukafe - Cafe



This quaint cafe offers a Japanese style setting with chairs that have you seated on the ground. While offering elegant drinks and tasty simple dishes, make sure to catch the live bands. It won't set you back much either with inexpensive drinks.

43 Nguyen Huu Cau, DI

090 265 2635

bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com

Cafe Ban Sonate

Cafe Ban Sonate is a peaceful haven, tucked away from the boisterous noise of the city. This cafe offers elegant decor along with indoor and outdoor seating options.

53 Dang Dung, DI

3290 6004

Caffe Fresco



A new player on the scene currently battling for supremacy in the coffee chain market, Fresco offers a wide range of espresso and local coffees, juices and smoothies.

121 Le Loi, DI

3821 1009

www.fresco.com.vn

Cafe Terrace



Cafe Terrace is a popular modern cafe/restaurant in the chic Saigon Center. This cozy, dimly lit cafe offers customers a long outdoor terrace with views of the bustling pedestrian and traffic scene. A second cafe is located on the first floor amongst fashion stores.

Ground Floor & First Floor, Saigon Centre,

65 Le Loi, DI

Cafe Vuon Kieng



Cafe Vuon Kieng is a quiet, casual cafe near the banks of the Saigon River, boasting relaxing views and refreshing breezes. This riverside cafe offers jasmine tea, coffee, ice cream, beer, even cocktails.

10B Ton Duc Thang, DI

3823 3279

Cake Durian Duiro



A chain of cafes selling durian inspired crepes and buns with prices under VND100,000.

Kiosk in Le Thi Rieng Park, 875 Cach Mang

Thang 8, DI

093 333 9365

www.banhhsaurieng.com

Centrofarms Coffee

This recently opened cafe, located near the airport, sells its own eponymous brand of Centrofarm organic roasted beans direct from Dalat with indoor and outdoor seating that's perfect for people watching and getting your daily dose of caffeine.

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

Chi's Cafe



Chi's Café is a restaurant serving both Western and Vietnamese food in the backpacker area. The menu is extensive, with everything from sandwiches and pizzas to their popular baked potatoes with filling.

40/31 Bui Vien, DI

3836 7622

Ciao Cafe



An icon in downtown HCMC, Ciao cafe features two floors serving simple food, coffee, smoothies and ice cream – and an opulent lounge bar on the top floor. Antique tiles mix with velvet curtains and stylish paintings to make this a memorable chill out environment.

74-76 Nguyen Hue, DI

40 Ngo Duc Ke, DI

Cosmo Lounge



Cosmo Lounge is a popular location for stylish and trendy locals and expats alike. Chill out in a bold blue and white environment with local and European cafe food and a broad selection of coffees and drinks.

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, DI

3823 5848

Cooku's Nest



Cooku's nest has a clean, artsy vibe offering drinks and snacks.

13 Tu Xuong, D3

2241 2043

Crêperie & Café



Inexpensive Western fare targeted mainly at locals, delivering some fairly decent low-cost sandwiches.

5 Han Thuyen, DI

DeJa Vu Cafe



It is easy to mistake this cafe for someone's home as the tranquil atmosphere will have you tension free in no time. The peaceful setting is ideal for dates or low-key social events. Make sure to catch the live bands that frequent the cafe.

314/2 Dien Bien Phu, D10

6276 6966

info@dejavu.vn

Elle Cafe



Keeping in line with the sense of style that comes along with the Elle fashion label brand, the menu and décor of Elle Cafe sets it apart from the competition.

Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 45

Ngo Duc Ke, DI

6291 8766

Geisha's Coffee and Tea House



Experience a funky, relaxed atmosphere with a refreshing drinks & delicious snack at Geisha Coffee and Tea House. A retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the streets of Saigon.

85 Pasteur, DI

3829 4004

www.geishacafe.com



Hatvala



This tea house, coffee shop and restaurant offers selected, quality Vietnamese tea and coffee to drink or to buy as leaves and beans. They also have a delightful all day casual dining area in their stylish bistro.

44 Nguyen Hue, DI

3824 1534

8am - 11pm

hatvalavietnam@gmail.com

www.hatvala.com

www.facebook.com/hatvala

Hi-End Coffee



Located near the leafy Tao Dan Park, Hi-End Coffee is one of a few venues serving up just as much music as caffeine.

126 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI

3824 1004

Open to 10pm

Gloria Jean's

Australia's most popular coffee franchise

now has a solid presence in Ho Chi Minh City with multiple locations in the inner city. While the favourite Dong Khoi address has now been given over to a Sony store, new venues in Vincom A and at CMT8 prove this favourite brand with locals and expats alike is steadily growing in Vietnam.

2 bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3

www.gloriajeanscoffees.com/vn

Highlands Coffee



With over 50 cafes in Vietnam, Highlands Coffee serves up international and traditional Vietnamese blends. Coffee lovers can also find Highlands premium quality blends in selected hotels and supermarkets.

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, DI

i-Box Cafe



iBox cafe is a unique, cafe with aristocratic decor. This decorative cafe specializes in red wine, Asian dishes and spaghetti. They also offer an extensive selection of ice cream creations.

135 Hai Ba Trung, DI

3825 6718

ID Café



Separated from the bustle of nearby Ben Thanh Market by a tiny alleyway, ID is a retro cafe opening a door to an earlier Saigon.

34D Thu Khoa Huan, DI

Imagine Coffee shop



One of the walls of this rustic cafe is literally covered with books. An easy place to get lost for an evening with prices below VND100,000.

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan

090 956 0105

www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop

09 0956 0105

nguyenmaihoan@gmail.com

8am - 10pm

Kebab Cafe



The healthiest kebab! Featuring an excellent homemade white sauce, fresh veggies and chicken or pork marinated without oil. The French owner also serves savory and sweet crepes and a home-made puree.

538/2/8 Doan Van Bo, D4

01648 805 915

contact@kebab-cafe.com

www.kebab-cafe.com

10am - 10pm

Kem My



This quiet ice cream shop is the perfect place for families and couples to indulge their sweet tooth. It offers a fresh release from the heat of Ho Chi Minh City.

11 Duong 41, D4

093730 3030

www.kemmy.vn

3.30pm - 11pm

Kesera



A cozy and friendly cafe/bar serving coffee, beer, wines, freshly-baked homemade cakes and delicious Western food.

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, DI

kesera.kesera.com

Kita Coffee



This three-storey establishment provides patrons with Lavazza coffee along with a unique Mediterranean menu.

39-41 Nguyen Hue, DI

3914 0683

kitacoffee@gmail.com

7.30am - 10pm

Kopi Beans



Kopi Beans Cafe is a favorite among high school kids. It's a small takeaway coffee shop with cheap espresso and iced coffees.

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

L'amour



A stylish bakery and cafe new to Hai Ba Trung, in the city centre, L'amour specialises in cakes and desserts and serves Illy Coffee. Eat in or take away.

24 Hai Ba Trung, DI

3520 8180

www.lamourbakery.com

L'Anmien Dining Cafe



Linked to the luxurious Mui Ne hotel of the same name, this internationally-styled sidewalk cafe is a place to relax and enjoy the cool air and watch the busy inner-city traffic from a more refined vantage.

76A Le Lai, DI

38212718

LightBox Cafe



This stunningly designed cafe also doubles as an event and photography studio, so make sure you dress to impress at this location because you never know who might snap your picture. They also serve vegetarian cuisine with prices ranging between VND300,000 - VND500,000

179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan

3517 6668

www.lightbox.vn

L'Usine

L'Usine is a retail, cafe and gallery space occupying two locations in the center of DI. Its retail space is dedicated to Vietnamese designers and more established brands from abroad as well as stocking a wide range of stationary and home ware items. The cafe in both locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.

151/1 Dong Khoi, DI

70B Le Loi, DI

www.lusinespace.tumblr.com

9am - 9pm

LOVE IN VIETNAM

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www.LoveInVietnam.com

Le Tokyo Baum

Popular Japanese cake cafe with quiet seating area, specializing in orange cakes.
46 Nguyen Van Trang, D1
3926 0388

May Coffee

A superb, friendly, and inexpensive little café most notable for its perfect view of the Cathedral tower bells and close proximity to the post office.
1 Cong Xa Paris, D1
3827 7099
www.maycoffee.com

Minhu Coffee

This specialty cafe offers a wood furniture interior setting, which resembles the cabins you would expect to see in the western North American frontier. Live bands are a regular feature at the cozy cafe and prices are inexpensive.
149/35 Le Thi Rieng, D1
3601 9319

MTV Cafe

Providing a relaxing atmosphere after a hard day's work with some of the top hits out today, MTV cafe is the perfect place to unwind with that special someone or just a cup of coffee.
65 Vo Van Tan, D3
3930 2597
mtvcafe.com.vn

NYDC

A fun, dynamic and cosmopolitan place for food, desserts, beverages and not forgetting the company of good friends. Prices range between VND100,000 - VND300,000.
Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, D1
3822 9992
www.nydc.com.vn

Onset Cafe

This lounge cafe features live bands and is a good setting for work events or business meetings. With bold interior furniture it is a popular respite for Ho Chi Minh residents.
319 Ly Thuong Kiet, D11
6670 7092
onsetcoffee@yahoo.com.vn

Paris Deli

A French style cafe serving some of the best pastries in Saigon, this cheerful spot is a real slice of Parisian life. Many European drinks and dishes.
Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3821 6127

Passio Coffee to Go

Passio Coffee offers its guests fine Italian style coffee made from the finest ingredients. Since Passio's inception in 2006, this enthusiastic team of coffee brewers has become recognized by international coffee drinkers.
112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

Phuong Cac Cafe

With indoor and outdoor lounge areas this cafe is a relaxing respite from the grind of Ho Chi Minh City. With live bands and drinks under VND100,000 it makes for the perfect getaway.
Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 7484

Phúc Minh Coffee

Phuc Minh coffee is an airy, clean environment providing a varied menu and delicious coffee. The staff is attentive and quick with a friendly approach. Prices start around VN 25,000 for this simple cafe.
51 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
www.quancafe.vn/phucminh.l

Princess and the Pea

A fairytale-themed venue for the

dreamers of Ho Chi Minh City, hidden away in a tiny alleyway off Pasteur. Discover it if you can.
63/18 Pasteur, D1

Regina Coffee

A popular hangout for hip, young Vietnamese around Nguyen Du, serving western coffee in a vintage, artsy environment.
84 Nguyen Du, D1

Soho Coffee

Two level local cafe chain serving light meals, coffee and local chilled drinks.
185 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3839 5038
7am - 11pm

Starbucks Coffee

Has a large, open ground floor space with ample seating in booths and tables, and a smaller space upstairs with views out on the busy Nga 6 Phu Dong roundabout. Also has outdoor seating. Expect to pay Western prices.
76 Le Lai, D1

Stella Restaurant & Cafe

Providing authentic Italian and Vietnamese food using fresh imported and local premium-quality ingredients. Where else can you find such good coffee/cuisine at such reasonable prices?
119-121 Bui Vien, D1
3836 9220
www.stellacaffe.com

The Blue Cafe

A spacious cafe divided into two different areas with a lush, outdoor garden seating lounge and an air conditioned in-door lounge. The Blue Cafe has live music with drinks under VND100,000.
701-703 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3588 6824

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

Offering over 22 varieties of coffee and 20 kinds of tea, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf has been serving the best coffees and teas from around the world for more than 40 years in its cozy, handcrafted oak paneled stores.
www.coffeebean.com.vn
7am - 11pm
39 Le Duan, D1
Ground Floor, Crescent Mall
Ton Dat Tien, D7
157-159 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
39 Le Duan, D1
12-14 Thai Van Lung, D1
94 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1
235 Dong Khoi, D1
1-5 Le Duan, D1
60-62 Cach Mang Thang 8, D3
1-3 Phan Chu Trinh, D1

The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon
Ground floor - InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

The Living Room

The Living Room has two floors providing a laid-back atmosphere for meet-ups or after-work relaxation over drinks and Western and Vietnamese food.
40-42 Dong Du, D1
3822 0377

Tram Coffee ☺ Oi's Pick

A unique romantic cafe experience hidden well off the beaten track, but close to District 1 in neighbouring Phu Nhuan District. Sip a coffee, juice or beer or

indulge in good cafe food over candlelight in a dark, intimate environment hidden amongst trees and trickling streams. Relax in an air conditioned room or dine alfresco amongst the greenery. The perfect spot to impress a date with your local knowledge.
100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan
2240 5306

The Myth Cafe

Escape the daily grind of Ho Chi Minh City with a trip into the mystical setting of Myth Cafe. With live bands and prices under VND100,000 it's no wonder The Myth cafe is one of the best around.
176 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3820 9735
thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com

Trung Nguyen Cafe

One of the most ubiquitous coffee brands in Vietnam. With a burgeoning presence throughout the city, it's hard to go anywhere without tripping over a Trung Nguyen café - serving gourmet Vietnamese street coffee.
26B-C Le Loi, D1

The Serenata Cafe

The Serenata Cafe is a peaceful, relaxing oasis in a French Colonial house. This cafe embraces nature with plants, fishponds, and small fountains, and offers music in the evenings.
6D Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
3930 7436

Windows

A highly fashionable cafe near the cathedral. For many years, this eye-catching venue has remained a place to see and be seen, often frequented by the famous, the well-to-do, and the ne'er do well.
12 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
38238408

Zoom Cafe ☺ Oi's Pick

This distinctive Vespa-themed Café has been a popular fixture in D1 for ten years. Today, the café serves as the place for Vespa enthusiasts and tour veterans to swap stories over ice-cold beers and what many claim is the best selection of mouth-watering burgers, paninis, and baguette sandwiches in town.
169A Bui Vien, D1
3920 3897

chinese

Dragon Court

Dragon Court is a large restaurant opposite the Opera House in Saigon's bustling District 1. Enjoy Chinese dishes from many regions with dishes like glass noodles, hot pot, and a large dim sum collection.
11-13 Lam Son Square, D1
3827 2566

Dynasty

New World hotel's in-house Chinese restaurant is certainly a venue of fine contemporary Chinese dining. The chef offers a variety of authentic Cantonese dishes along with classic dim sum under a high lantern/chandelier-lit ceiling, in a broad dining room decorated in classic Chinese style. VIP guests can dine in one of four semi-private or three totally private rooms.
New World Hotel
76 Le Lai, D1
3822 8888
www.saiгон.newworldhotels.com

Hung Ky Mi Gia

Hung Ky Mi Gia is a famous and long-standing restaurant with more than 13 years of operation. It serves traditional Chinese cuisine with authentic dishes

such as roasted chicken, duck, and pork.
20 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3822 2673

Kabin

Kabin is a Cantonese restaurant specializing in exotic dishes such as baked duck tongue, grouper cutlet, and lobster soup. Located in the five star Renaissance Riverside Hotel, this restaurant offers a wide variety of dim sum.
Renaissance Riverside Hotel,
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

Located in the Sheraton Hotel, Li Bai offers a selection of over 50 dim sum dishes as well as traditional Chinese and Cantonese specialties. Diners will enjoy the relaxed, upscale ambience provided by the wood paneling and oriental art.
Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 2828
www.libaisaigon.com

Ming Court

Since the Nikko Hotel graced the Saigon skyline, the venue has managed to set the standard for classy, five-star dining with its bold grey modern decor and Japanese-style efficiency. Ming Court, on the hotel's third floor, is a large Chinese restaurant with all the expected graces of the Orient belonging to the exotic fantasy of the dynastic era.
3rd floor, Nikko Saigon Hotel
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1
3925 7777

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

It's worth traipsing out to D6 for this one. Not only are the Dim Sum, Peking Duck, and pan-China home-style cuisine exemplary, but the venue design, with its architectural flourishes from the seven wonders of the world (including the Great Wall, the Taj Mahal, and the pyramids) makes for a highly distinctive dining experience.
12 Duong 26, D6
3755 1577
www.7kyquan.com

Shang Palace Restaurant

The slightly off-centre, high-class Norfolk Mansion Hotel on Ly Tu Trong is home to one of Saigon's most well-respected Chinese restaurants outside of Chinatown. Located on the 1st floor, Shang's dark intricate wooden tables and chairs with white linen and deep red carpeting make for an atmosphere of moody opulence; there is seating for over 300 guests, and private rooms are available.
1st Floor, Norfolk Mansion
17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D1
3823 2221

Shi-Fu Dim sum

Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant specializing in dim sum, with modern Chinese décor and over 68 dim sum dishes.
139A Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 1111
www.dimsunhouse.vn

Yu Chu

Yu chu is renowned for the quality and presentation of its authentic Cantonese and Peking cuisines along with its elegant décor. Watching the chefs prepare signature dishes such as hand-pulled noodle, dim sum and Peking duck right in the kitchen is a prominent dining feature here.
First floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

french

Alibi Restaurant and Bar

Centrally located a stone's-throw from the Opera House in downtown D1, this is a

warm, appealing lounge environment with modest prices.

5 Nguyen Sieu, D1
3825 6257

Au Manoir de Khai

Au Manoir de Khai is an authentic, first class French restaurant. Guests can enjoy traditional French cuisine in this classic 100 year old villa. Their menu is extensive and features dishes like Kobe beef, foie gras, red grouper, and truffle mushrooms.

251 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3930 3394

Bon Appetit

A small French-Vietnamese fusion bistro on Pham Ngoc Thach with a simplistic charm enhanced by a fine selection of old-style French music.

78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

090 789 8345

Bonjour Restaurant

Bonjour serves up international dishes with a French flair. The large menu of main courses feature roast duck, salmon, lamb and steak with specialties being ostrich and venison.

150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1
3926 0699

Cordon Blue

A unique French venue decorated with blue and green shades serving high-quality French cuisine on the outskirts of the inner city.

38 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3822 5216
www.cordonblue.vn

La Brasserie de Saigon

Set in a trendy space featuring art nouveau décor and intricate iron spiral staircases, La brasserie de Saigon presents authentic French cuisine with Parisian brasserie service experience.

38 Dong Du, D1
0862913657
contact@labrasseriadesaigon.com
www.labrasseriadesaigon.com
11.30pm - 2.30pm; 6pm - 12am

La Camargue

Known for its high food quality, reasonable prices and a fine selection of wine, the long running La Camargue serves up home-style French cuisine in an open plan 1st-floor terrace.

74/17 Hai Ba Trung, D1



La Creperie

La Creperie is the first authentic Brittany French restaurant that serves savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and the best apple cider in Saigon.

17/7 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 7070
infosgn@lacreperie.com.cn
Mon-Sun 11am-11pm



La Cuisine

This ultra-fine little bistro is an exercise in minimalism with its twenty seats and bare, chic-rustic interior of wooden furnishings

and black & white photographs on whitewashed walls. Its warm lighting and clean atmosphere belies a certain sophistication, however, and the price of the fare is significantly damaging enough to make this a rare treat for those not in the restaurant's fabulously wealthy target market.

48 Le Thanh Ton, D1
2229 8882
www.lacuisine.com.vn

La Doree

La Doree provides its patrons with over 50 varieties of cakes, as well as a rich sandwich menu. They are located in the heart of District 1 in a building with a luxurious French design. In addition to sweets and snacks, this eatery also serves coffee, cocktails, and their specialty: green tea tiramisu.

216 Ly Tu Trong, D1
08 3822 1718
www.ladoree.com

La Fourchette

Small and cozy, La Fourchette is a favorite amongst the French expat community. The vintage posters and wood paneling add to the charm of this French eatery located downtown, a stone's throw from the Saigon River.

9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 8143
www.lafourchette.com.vn

La Nicoise

A small, friendly French bistro with about a dozen tables, La Nicoise serves up typical French dishes under the watchful eye of its French-Vietnamese owners.

56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 3056

L'essentiel

A recent arrival to the growing ranks of authentic French dining experiences in

HCMC, L'essentiel offers a quiet intimate dining experience downstairs with space for private functions and alfresco dining on an upper floor. The menu changes weekly, the food is fresh and the wine list carefully collated.

98 Ho Tung Mau, D1
0948 415 646

Le Bordeaux

Set in a French colonial-style mansion, Le Bordeaux serves southwestern French cuisine in a beautiful setting. Known for its foie gras and large selection of wines, Le Bordeaux is worth the trip to Binh Thanh district.

72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh
3899 9831
restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn
11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm

Le Bouchon De Saigon

Red and white checked tablecloths and closely set tables make Le bouchon de Saigon the place to go for a casual, classic French bistro experience under the eye of iron chef Vietnam winner David Thai.

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.lebouchonsesaigon.com

Le Jardin

Le Jardin is a gorgeous enclosed garden space that allows eaters to follow the example of the French colonists a century ago and pretend they're actually in Paris. Whether dining outside under the shaded terrace or within the old, warmly-lit villa, the cuisine, decor, and general mood of the place is like a Stargate direct to France.

31D Thai Van Lung, D1
3825 8465

L'Olivier

L'Olivier is a restaurant serving authentic Mediterranean cuisines, located on the

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2nd floor of the Hotel Sofitel.
Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555
www.sofitel.com

The Refinery 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Parisian bistro hidden away in its enclave on Hai Ba Trung is an exceptional venue, making for an elegant repatriation of the sins of the past. It was here in French Colonial days that opium was manufactured, bringing ruin to the people of Asia; it is here that a far softer side of the French culture now exercises its influence over present-day Saigon, serving modern European cuisine in its tastefully decorated dining area and airy outdoor patio.

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 7667
www.therefinerysaigon.com

Ty Coz 🍷 Oi's Pick

An unpretentious venue focused only on serving great cuisine. Ty Coz provides a fine balcony view of the cathedral, intimate atmosphere, and affordable prices.

178/4 Pasteur, D1
3822 2457
www.tycozsaigon.com

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

This is a fine, well-managed, and even luxurious dining venue serving authentic French cuisine in a Franco-Viet design space. There's red carpet along the entrance way, gallery-standard art on the walls, and an overall atmosphere of refinement and good service.

120 Bis Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
08 5404 2220
vatelsaigon.com

indian

Baba's Kitchen 🍷 Oi's Pick

Baba's Kitchen, also known as the best Indian restaurant on Bui Vien, is familiar among expats and locals alike, rating 4.5 out of five stars on Trip Advisor. Their vindaloo is a must try.

164 Bui Vien, D1
3838 6661
www.babaskitchen.in
 11am - 11pm

Bombay Indian Restaurant

Located in D1 near the Ben Thanh Market area, serving Indian & Halal cuisine. The ambiance is relaxed thanks to Bombay's easy-going, family kitchen vibe.

57-59 Ham Nghi, D1
9am - 10.30pm

Ganesh

Ganesh serves authentic northern Indian tandooris & rotis along with the hottest curries, dandas, and vada from the southern region.

15B4 Le Thanh Ton, D1
8223 0173
www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com

Indus Indian

Indus Indian is a relatively new Indian restaurant in Saigon providing all the classic Indian favorites. Operated by a dedicated husband/wife duo, this restaurant specializes in Halal food.

2C Thi Sach, D1
3521 0324

Mumtaz

With bona-fide Indian owners and chefs, authenticity at Mumtaz is guaranteed. While the service and setting is relatively basic, the food is amongst the best of its type in the city in terms of taste alone. The brand has a second branch in Da Nang

city if you're ever on holiday and missing your curries.

226 Bui Vien, D1
3837 1767

The Punjabi

Authentic North Indian cuisine prepared in a home-made tandoori oven makes Punjabi a popular spot for budget conscious eaters who crave Indian standbys like spinach naan and chicken tandoori.

40/3 Bui Vien, D1
3508 3777

italian

Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.

Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, D1
3520 9099
6.30am - 10.30pm

Capricciosa

You'll find the standards here – pizza, pasta, soups, salads, with a few special dishes such as calamari and onion in squid ink sauce. They're all prepared according to strict Japanese standards, and the result is actually really good.

Booth B3-03A, Level B3
Vincom Tower, 70 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3993 9786
www.capricciosa.com.vn

Casa Italia

Italian owned & run, Casa Italia's menu ranges from home-style cooking that includes steaks, seafood, a large variety of homemade pastas, jumbo salads, appetizers and the best pizzas.

86 Le Loi, D1
3824 4286
www.casaitalia.com.vn



Ciao Bella 🍷 Oi's Pick

Hearty home-style Italian food served with flair and excellent service. An extensive menu is complemented with daily specials. Arriving guests are greeted with a free glass of Prosecco. Diners sit in a cozy setting upstairs or on the ground floor for people watching. Big groups should book in advance.

11 Dong Du, D1
3822 3329
tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



Good Morning Vietnam

Italian restaurant with a unique menu including traditional Italian dishes. The restaurant is conveniently located in a beautiful old house in the heart of Saigon, well integrated in the local architecture.

197 De Tham, D1
3837 1894
www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com

La Hostaria

Designed with an intimate atmosphere

involving something like an Italian town, this venue focuses on traditional ethnic Italian cuisine (rather than the ubiquitous pizza and pasta), creations of the skillful executive chef – straight out of Venice. The place lights up on romantic Thursday evenings with candlelight and light music.

17B Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1080
www.lahostaria.com

Lucca 🍷 Oi's Pick

A Brooklyn-style Italian eatery upstairs with an adjoining bar. Downstairs is a relaxing cafe offering generous breakfasts, simple cafe fare for lunch and some of the best espresso coffee you'll find in the city.

88 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3915 3692
8am - 11pm

Margherita

Well-reviewed overseas, Margherita is a familiar place to tourists trawling the nooks of Ho Chi Minh City. This is partly a result of its agreeable price, sumptuous Western-style pizzas, English-speaking staff, and more than average customer service.

175/1 Phan Ngu Lao, D1
3837 0760

Opera Restaurant

A contemporary, casual trattoria-style Italian restaurant overlooking the Opera House, Opera is located within Park Hyatt Saigon specializing in authentic pizza baked in a wood-fired oven, pasta and homemade Italian dishes.

1st floor Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, D1
3824 1234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com
6am - 11pm

Pizza 4P's 🍷 Oi's Pick

A little treasure hidden away at the top of an out-of-the-way alley off Le Thanh Ton, this Japanese pizzeria is a major hit with those in the know. Highly attractive premises and some extraordinary toppings catering to all tastes make this an unmissable pizza experience.

8/15 Le Thanh Ton, D1
012 0789 4444
www.pizza4ps.com

Pomodoro

In this family-style, simply-decorated trattoria restaurant with an arched ceiling and an all-brick interior, a fine Italian menu pleases diners with 12 different pizzas along with pasta dishes, parma ham with a spicy tomato chutney, and a highly-recommended French onion soup. Ideal option for a simple, reliable, and thoroughly pleasant night out with no complications.

79 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 8998
www.pomodoro-vietnam.com

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients.

125 Ho Tung Mau, D1
www.sarpinos.vn

japanese

Aka Taiyo

Aka Taiyo serves traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine with an extensive menu featuring more than 200 dishes. Also stocks a surprisingly comprehensive range of Japanese alcoholic beverages.

74B Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 4295
www.akataiyo.com

Ajisen Ramen

One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.

120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
3822 0522

Aki Japanese Restaurant

A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes.

15/9 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 9083

Blanchy Street 🍷 Oi's Pick

Once hidden upstairs at the Blanchy's Tash bar, Blanchy Street now has its own location in the courtyard of eateries on Hai Ba Trung, offering authentic Japanese food mixed with fusion cuisine and the occasional additional Southeast Asian dish. Run by an ex Nobu (London) chef with his own signature dishes, it has wide appeal. Food is designed to be shared and is backed by an extensive list of sakes and wines.

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
** Reviewed by Oi in April 2013*

Cam On Restaurant

Cam On specializes in Japanese health food, with a dedication to helping men and women maintain their beauty and health by providing quality cuisine with natural ingredients.

30 Thai Van Lung, D1
3823 3955
www.cam-on.asia

Dragon Hotpot

Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine. Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines.

122-124 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3825 8842

Dragon Noodle

A rather small but pretty restaurant with warm tones and a nice series of murals depicting old Saigon, Dragon Noodle focuses on the Japanese staple – ramen noodle soups – although their version is a little less spicy than is traditionally served, increasing perhaps the international appeal of the dish. There are a total of four soup bases to accompany the noodles.

29 Dong Du, D1
3521 0008
www.ramen.vn

Dragon Steak

A striking Japanese restaurant tucked away off Saigon's central street, Dragon steak specialises in thick wagyu cuts and tenderloin that could well have been cut off a beast the size of a dragon. They're so enormous that the restaurant once ran a cheeky competition – guests who finished one within half an hour dined free.

138 Ton That Dam, D1
3821 0288
www.steak.vn

Ebisu

Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles –

made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes.
35bis Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3822 6971
ductm@incubation-vn.com
ebisu-vn.asia

Fuji Restaurant

The cuisine is exceptional – fresh seafood and vegetables flown in direct from Japan and Dalat. A preferred venue for those staying at the hotel, and worth trying if you're living local.

Ground Floor, Nikko Hotel Saigon
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1
3830 8123

Hanayuki

A Japanese-style restaurant on Ton Duc Thang with a sushi bar on the ground floor and a fine mezzanine level, Hanayuki serves more than 200 exquisite Japanese dishes with more than 30 kinds of sushi and sashimi. Private, traditional Japanese VIP rooms are available on the top level.

21C Ton Duc Thang, D1
3824 2754

Inaho Restaurant

This unique venue specializes in traditional sushi & sashimi as well as hot pot dishes. Couples can retreat to the upstairs area; it's far more private than the downstairs bar.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3829 0326
11am - 2pm, 5.30pm - 10pm

Kabuto Tokyo

One of the more exuberant Japanese venues in this city, Kabuto Tokyo on Mac Thi Buoi specialises in both traditional and

fusion fresh Japanese seafood cuisine. It's a vibrant venue with its manga murals, carp lanterns, giant samurai warrior, and large aquarium – and in the evening it becomes a respectable upmarket bar. For a quirky beverage there, try a sake served in a bamboo tube.

45 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 2351
kabuto.com.vn

K Cafe

K Cafe Sushi is a large Japanese restaurant; an ideal place to gather for a business lunch or for a social dinner.

74A4 Hai Ba Trung, D1
38245355
www.yakatabune-saigon.com
11am - 2pm, 5pm - 11pm

Kokekokko Pandora

Kokekokko is a combination of modern style fast food with the essence of ancient Japanese cuisine. The restaurant space is designed with high quality materials and features youthful and modern dynamic subtleties. With prices under VND100,00 Kokekokko is a must see.

4th Floor Pandora, 1/1 Truong Chinh, Tan Phu
3849 6840
www.kokekokko.com.vn

La Fenetre Soleil

Glass tables with mosaic tiles and wooden floors set off large comfy sofas and high ceilings, and diners can look out over the busy Ly Tu Trong though 11 large French windows. Its sense of personality attracts artistically-inclined expats to return often, and many of these profess it as their favourite hangout in Saigon. Cuisine is Japanese-Vietnamese fusion.

44 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 5994

Mus Mus

Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.

117 Vo Van Tan, D3
3930 9185
info@musmus.net
www.musmus.net

Osaka Ramen

Traditional Japanese noodle restaurant offering traditional Ramen dishes as well as Japanese/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
67 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
10am - 10pm

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
6291 1036
sakurasaku.vn
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Sumo BBQ

Sumo BBQ is a rising star amongst Japanese venues in Saigon, offering smokeless table BBQ and a unique buffet/a la carte concept: get whatever you want from the menu, as much as you like. Free birthday beer specials on arrangement.

300 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 4757
sumobbq.com.vn
10.30am - 10.30pm

Sushi Bar

There are plenty of dining spaces – large

and small rooms, floor-level Japanese dining on tatami mats, private areas, and the eponymous large sushi bar on the ground level.

2 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 8042
www.sushibar-vn.com

Sushi Dining Aoi

Sushi Dining Aoi is one such restaurant, where the whole atmosphere of the place evokes the best of the culture. With its typical Japanese-style decor – the smooth earthen tones of the wooden furniture and surrounds, the warmth and privacy of the VIP rooms – it's possible to believe you're in a more elegant realm.

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 0039
www.sushidiningaoi.com

Sushi World

A four-storey restaurant in a Japanese-style, the first and second floors feature an open sushi bar, while the upper levels contain 15 VIP rooms decorated in a traditional Japanese style with tatami matting.

28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3911 0147
www.sushiworld.com.vn

Tokyo Deli

Tokyo Deli's menu consists of a wide range of distinctive and delicious meals, prepared by specialists to create pure Japanese flavor. The menu is always being changed and improved.

240 Le Thanh Ton, D1
5404 2244
tokyodeli.com.vn
11am - 11pm

Uraetel BBQ Restaurant

Uraetel serves yakiniku grill, a variant

BOOM BOOM

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090 953 2378



boomboomburgers.vn



Scan for the full menu

Baba's Kitchen
 164 Bui Vien, District 1
 49D Xa Lo Hanoi, District 2
 Phone: 083-838-6661 & 083-838-6662
 Open 11am to 11pm
 North & South Indian food
 Halal & vegetarian dishes
 Of course we can cater!
 order online at vietnammm.com & eat.vn
 "Baba brings India to Vietnam"

of the popular Korean dish bulgogi. The restaurant itself is attractively done, with a nod to feng shui in its selective placement of ponds and rocky pathways outside.

6673 9373

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ



It provides a fusion of Asian cuisines with dishes from Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Their menu is interesting and diverse, with many delectable seafood options.

42 Le Anh Xuan, DI

3823 3232

vichis.com.vn

10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm

Yoshino



The decor is straight out of the set of Shogun, with black wood, tatami mats, stenciled cherry blossoms and all the trappings of Japanese exoticism – tastefully done. While Ho Chi Minh City is certainly not short of fine Japanese eateries, this one is particularly impressive.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, DI

3823 3333

Yuki



Yukie is a popular Japanese restaurant located in the backpacker area of District 1. Offering authentic Japanese cuisine at affordable prices.

99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, DI

3824 2754

10am - 2pm; 4pm - 10pm

korean

Dae Jang Gum

All the theatrics of a traditional Korean experience are part of the service at Dae Jang Gum, named after an historic figure, but more pertinently after a wildly popular Korean drama focusing on her life – photos from the series appear throughout the venue. From waitresses in hanboks to vast plates of kimchi, this is the most authentic introduction to the cuisine available outside of District 7.

1st Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza

39 Le Duan, DI

3825 7974

www.daejanguum.vn

Hana Restaurant



Japanese-Korean fusion in the heart of DI. Hana has contemporary decor with a private, open feel. Its broad menu includes both cooked and raw fish in addition to traditional hot pot with fish eggs, rice and vegetables.

8 Cao Ba Quat, DI

3829 5588

9am - 10pm

Kimsine



A place to enjoy Korean style dishes in the city center. Kimsine's menu is extensive; offering everything from instant noodles to chicken's feet.

8A/5D2 Thai Van Lung, DI

7306 4045

094 467 2281

jymimil@hanmail.net

10am - 3am

Mi Han Quoc



This franchise has gained popularity in Ho Chi Minh City for having successfully adapted the spiciness of Korean cuisine to the local Vietnamese palate, serving perfectly balanced noodle dishes.

92 Ham Nghi, DI

3914 1565

www.mihanquocvn.com

8am - 11pm

Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof



This unusual Korean import famous for extraordinarily spicy chicken is an odd phenomenon on the HCMC culinary landscape, serving up a version of KFC that's actually painful. Lovers of spicy food rejoice. The restaurant itself is clean and modern in design, and there are another 50 Korean dishes on offer beyond the signature dish, including some tasty bibimbap mixed rice dishes.

20 Ho Huan Nghiep, DI

3823 9000

9am - 11pm

Seoul House



Seoul House is a well-known two-story Korean restaurant with a simple, cozy atmosphere. Its menu contains Korean favorites like Banchan, hotpots, grilled meat, clay pot mixed rice, and kim chi tofu soup.

33 Mac Thi Buoi, DI

3829 4297

7am - 10pm

steakhouses



Au Lac do Brazil



Serving Saigon for more than 10 years, Au Lac do Brazil is the very first authentic Brazilian Churrascaria in Vietnam, bringing a new dining concept - an "All you can eat" Brazilian style BBQ where meat is brought to your table on skewers by a passador and served to your heart's content. They have an extensive selection of fine wines as well.

HO CHI MINH CITY
Au Lac do Brazil I
238 Pasteur, D3
(08) 3820 7157
HA NOI
Au Lac do Brazil II
6A Cao Ba Quat, Ba Dinh
(04) 3845 5224
For Banquet & Catering
Call or email
pr@aulacdobrazil.com
090 947 8698

www.aulacdobrazil.com
www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil

Corso Steakhouse and Bar



Corso Steakhouse and Bar operates under an open kitchen concept, bringing together an exciting menu of Asian and European dishes with a focus on grilling. Guests can choose from a wide variety of wines and spirits.

117 Le Thanh Ton, DI

3829 5368

www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

6pm - 11pm

Dragon Steak



Specializing in generous portions of Wagyu cuts; they're so enormous that the restaurant runs a cheeky competition - finish one within half an hour, and it's free.

138 Ton That Dam, DI

3821 0288

www.steak.vn

11am - late

El Gaucho 🍷 OI's Pick

Serves great Argentinean steaks, hamburgers and more. A great place to entertain clients or friends from overseas. With outlets in Hanoi and Bangkok too.

50 Nguyen Sieu, DI

38251879

www.elgaucho.asia

New York Steakhouse



While situated in a fairly laid-back area, New York Steakhouse is definitely in the upmarket category and serves exclusive American imported beef dishes, with a whole range of steaks from rib eye, New York strip steak, and tenderloin being popular options.

25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI

3823 7373

contact@steakhouse.com.vn

www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99 🍷 OI's Pick



Not a traditional steakhouse per se, but Pho 99 is known for its excellent filet mignon steaks made out of Cu Chi beef. Also serves great pho.

139 Nguyen Trai, DI

3925 2791

6am - 2.30am

Samba Brazilian Steakhouse



This is certainly Saigon's most visible and colourful restaurant serving the popular Brazilian buffet style, where enormous skewers of meat are circulated around the tables for diners to enjoy as much of as they can.

10C Thai Van Lung, DI

3822 0079

www.samba.vnnhahang.com

Wild Horse Salon



Cowboy-themed western steakhouse with an impressive exterior on trendy Thai Van Lung, Wild Horse serves high-quality Tex Mex/American cuisine with enormous servings.

8A/1DI Thai Van Lung, DI

3825 1901

10am - 2pm; 4pm - 11.30pm

thai

Coriander



A small Thai joint pleasingly decked out in natural materials with cork walls and sedge-lined floors. The resulting ambience is nicely authentic, and the same goes for the cuisine – try the green shrimp curry, the fried noodles in Thai style, or the squid vermicelli for a taste of the Gulf of Thailand. The restaurant is also known for its almost embarrassingly cheap beer.

16 Bui Vien, DI

3837 1311

Golden Elephant



A cozy and relaxing Thai style restaurant, serving an extensive collection of Thai specialties including noodles, curries, rice, stir-fries, soups, and a good range of seafood.

34 Hai Ba Trung, DI

3822 8554

11am - 10pm

Jasmine Thai



A quiet, candle-lit affair complete with the ethereal tones of traditional music, guests can enjoy variations on dishes prepared in the Thai culinary tradition.

85 Quoc Huong, D2

35190038

5pm - 9.30pm Tue-Sun

Koh Thai



Stunning Thai-chic decor and unique Siam cuisine make Koh Thai one of Saigon's most authentic and memorable Thai restaurants. Located in the Intercontinental complex, Koh Thai serves Asian inspired cocktails in a trendy lounge environment with chill music.

1st floor, 39 Le Duan, DI

3823 4423

091 233 9138

www.kohthai.com.vn

11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai



Lac Thai is a large, three-floor restaurant offering a wide range of Thai cuisine with signature dishes like Pad Thai, Tom Yum Koong, Chicken Satay and many others.

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, DI

3823 7506

9am - 9pm

Mai Thai



Mai Thai is a Thai restaurant offering an extensive menu with many Thai favorites. This two-storey restaurant features traditional decorations and friendly service.

13 Ton That Thiep, DI

3821 2920

11am - 2pm, 5pm - 10pm

Malee Thai



A cute, central Thai venue decked out in royal purple decor, Malee is an intimate restaurant serving a wide range of consistently tasty dishes, although without the full effect of Thai cuisine's signature burn.

37 Dong Du, DI

3829 3029

11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Spice



Spice Thai restaurant has been a favorite among the locals in Saigon since 2003. This multicultural eatery offers Thai food & seafood in a décor fusing Oriental & Mediterranean artifacts.

27C Le Quy Don, D3

3930 7873

www.spicevn.com

11am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10pm

Thai Express



Thai Express is the world's largest Thai restaurant chain. Enjoy fantastically authentic Thai cuisine at reasonable prices in a relaxed, contemporary atmosphere.

8A Le Thanh Ton, DI

6299 1338

www.thaiaexpress.com.vn

10.30am - 10pm

vietnamese

3T Quan Nuong



With hanging oil lamps and wooden statues lining the stairs, this venue above the Temple Bar has a touch more atmosphere than most of its kind, but the otherwise simple décor with bamboo tables and chairs are fitting enough. The broad barbecue grill menu features classics of its kind.

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, DI

3821 1631

An Khue Quan



Serving a well-selected series of dishes from both northern and southern regions of Vietnam in an area where international diners are likely to be in abundance – and therefore well attuned to the foreign palate.

92B Le Lai, DI

3925 9583

An Vietnamese Bistro

An Restaurant offers exquisite dishes from the North, Central, and South of Vietnam, served by well-trained waiters and waitresses dressed in traditional Southern clothing.
71/5-6 Mac Thi Bui, DI
3825 8275

Banh Xeo 46A

Although known for a wide range of Vietnamese specialties, the local pancake stuffed with herbs and prawns is its tastiest dish.
46A Dinh Cong Trang, DI
3824 1110

Banh Xeo An La Ghien

The fare on offer is traditional Vietnamese, specialising in the Banh Xeo filled egg pancake, a favourite with foreigners with its light crispy shell and fragrant herbs and meats inside the pancake pocket.
74 Suong Nguyen Anh, DI
3833 0534
www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en

Barbecue Garden

The venue features all open-air dining and the atmosphere is distinctly festival-like, relaxing, and casual, becoming congenially boisterous in the evenings. The restaurant specializes in Western-Vietnamese fusion dishes such as beef with cheese, 5-spices beef, squid with satay sauce, and shrimp kebabs.
135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI
3823 3340
www.barbecuegarden.com

Beefsteak Nam Son

This local steak restaurant specialises in Vietnamese-style iron-plate meat dishes rather than the American steaks often popular with expats – but while these two varieties have their differences, the local version of the dish has a fresh, light character and is served with some good, delicate Vietnamese sauces.
188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI
3930 3917
www.namsonsteak.com

Bo Ne Le Hong

Bo Ne Le Hong is a popular Vietnamese restaurant specializing in beefsteak. It has a rich, diverse menu, and also offer fresh fruit juices.
489/27/39 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan
3990 5106

Bun Sai Gon

This franchise positions itself firmly in the local market with the slogan 'the bun noodles of the Vietnamese people' – indicating a concerted dedication to the authenticity of its noodle soup staples.
6276 2609
www.bunsaiigon.com.vn

Cha Ca La Vong

This venue only serves Cha Ca, a traditional Hanoian dish. Cha Ca is a salad made out of pieces of fish and spring onion stir-fried in a hotpot.
36 Ton That Thiep, DI
3915 3343

Cuc Gach Quan

This Vietnamese venue serves traditional, country-style foods, a mixture of street food dishes made with fine ingredients together with a selection of more contemporary options.
10 Dang Tat, DI
3848 0144

Ganh

With green suspended lanterns, simple and elegant furnishings, all touched off with bamboo baskets of fruit, flowers, and reed grass, the atmosphere is just as smooth and well-defined as a more

modern-styled venue.
58/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, DI
3829 5243
www.nemnuongganh.com

Gold Fish

Gold Fish offers a slice of authentic Vietnam with a genuinely rural cuisine.
73 Mac Thi Bui, DI
3822 5229
www.goldfish.vn

Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

A new trendy kitchen and cozy restaurant with the concept of taking traditional Vietnamese charcoal grilled street food and serving it in a New York style cafe.
122 Le Thanh Ton, DI
38227 901
www.grillbar.com.vn



Quan Bui - Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

Delicious mix of flavors superbly put together and served on earthenware pottery in a restaurant with a great atmosphere. This venue has the best value and most authentic Vietnamese food in town (definitely no MSG). Try the steamed fish, boneless chicken in various sauces or homemade tofu with fine wines or great fruit smoothies. Be delighted by the service and freshest ingredients.
17a Ngo Van Nam, DI
3829 1515
www.quanbui.vn



Highway 4

The menu reflects the ambiance of the north and wider Vietnam, although dishes are carefully selected to meet a more universal palate.
101 Vo Van Tan, DI
3602 2069
www.highway4.com

Hoa Tuc

Set in what used to be Saigon's opium refinery, Hoa Tuc serves up contemporary Vietnamese cuisine in a Parisian, art-deco atmosphere.
74 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3825 1676
www.hoatuc.com

Hoang Yen

A venue for those who are looking for high-quality Vietnamese cuisine. Try some of the country's delicacies in a modern yet inviting atmosphere. The eatery's various clay pots are flavorful; some feature mam, a delicious fermented fish paste. While the restaurant's cuisine is light and healthy overall, those with a penchant for green veggies should definitely order one of Hoang Yen's assortment of edible 'flowers' – especially the sautéed hoa thien ly. It is recommended to order a few dishes and share them all.
7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, DI
148 Hai Ba Trung, DI
Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5
CR1- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.hoangyencuisine.com

Lemongrass

The vibe aims at a harmony between modern styling and the Vietnamese traditional arts, and the dining room with

its tile floors and wooded wainscoting effects a comforting natural environment.
4 Nguyen Thiep, DI
3822 0496

Luong Son

Exotic beer garden style eatery famous for its barbecue beef. Luong Son also serves fear factor items such as scorpions, grubs, ostrich meat and crickets.
31 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3825 1330
www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan

Nam Phat Restaurant

A Vietnamese restaurant that specializes in hosting social events such as weddings and business conferences. Traditional Vietnamese cuisine is the specialty with prices ranging from VND100,000 - VND300,000. The setting is of an elegant banquet hall.
21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, DI
3910 6488
nahangnamphat@gmail.com

Marina Saigon

Marina Saigon is one of the leading seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3930 2379

Maxim's Nam An

Large and lavishly decorated, Maxim's Nam An restaurant serves Vietnamese cuisine in style. The carved wooden booths, completed with silk curtains, are a romantic hideaway for couples or small groups.
13-15-17 Dong Khoi, DI

Nghi Xuan

Lost down one of the less noticeable alleyways of the inner city, if you do happen to chance upon Nghi Xuan, the sheer grace of the venue will come as something of a surprise. Decorated as a high-class traditional Vietnamese mansion, Nghi Xuan is perfectly fitting for a venue serving the finest of Vietnam's classical cuisine – the imperial dishes of Hue. Service is courteous, fast, and quintessentially elegant.
5/9 Nguyen Sieu, DI
3823 0699
nghixuanrestaurant.com

Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.
160 Pasteur, DI
3827 7131
www.quananngon.com.vn
8am - 10pm

Papaya Restaurant

A petite, clean, and brightly-coloured Vietnamese restaurant with simple décor serving a light, healthy, northern-style cuisine. There's no fuss in the layout here – green walls with black & white artworks, brown wooden furnishings, and lanterns above every table make for a very pleasant atmosphere – and it's casual without being messy, and refined without any trace of pretentiousness.
68 Pham Viet Chanh, Binh Thanh
6258 1508
papaya@chi-nghia.com
www.chi-nghia.com

Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.
4 Phan Chu Trinh, DI
3822 2788
6am - 10pm

Pho 24

PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.
71-73 Dong Khoi, DI
3825 7505

Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

Leafy green roof garden, upmarket restaurant with reasonable prices and a wide menu of choices. Open style kitchen advertises its cleanliness. Designer interior with spot lighted pictures and beautiful cushions give an oriental luxurious feeling – augmented by dishes served on earthenware crockery.
17a Ngo Van Nam, DI
3829 1515
(deliveries: 3602 2241 or 091 400 8835)

Royal Revolving Restaurant

The Royal Revolving Restaurant is a unique restaurant experience. Experience stunning views of the city while you spin around in the sky. The restaurant offers more than 50 Hong Kong inspired dishes and a bar that serves coffee and cocktails.
3823 2232

Saigon Vegan

Saigon Vegan is located in a casual and inviting space with high ceilings, dark wood tables, and lots of natural light. Guests can choose from over 100 vegan dishes, all of which are either soy or vegetable based.
378/3 Vo Van Tan, DI
3834 4473

SH Garden restaurant

Established in the 1930s, the Terrace restaurant is located at the corner of two of the oldest boulevards of Saigon, Nguyen Hue and Le Loi, where romantic memories of Saigon float around. This restaurant offers a variety of delicious traditional Vietnamese dishes.
4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, DI
6680 0188
shgarden.com.vn

Song Ngu

There are eight different rooms capable of seating a total of 350-400 guests, each warmly-lit with dark wooden furnishings. On a small stage, a traditional chamber orchestra with ladies wearing classical Ao dai costumes perform Vietnamese music on genuine old instruments.
70 Suong Nguyen Anh, DI
3832 5017

Temple Club

Usually regarded as one of central Saigon's most authentically Vietnamese venues, this historic and good-looking features classic Indochinese decor, broadly interpreted as a blend of the old French colonial style with pan-Asian graces that appeal more to Asian exoticism than reflect actual Vietnamese styles. With antique furnishings and ceiling fans, the atmosphere is certainly pretty.
29-31 Ton That Thiep, DI
3829 9244
templeclub.com.vn

Thanh Nien Restaurant

With its attractive home-style layout, pretty garden for outdoor dining, and warm, yellow-toned interior for the buffet, it's a charming venue for tourists and a familiar favourite for long-timers. It's intentionally decorated like a private home, walls decorated with floral artworks, and the garden surrounded by bamboo.
11 Nguyen Van Chiem, DI
3822 5909
www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien

Tib Restaurant

This fine Vietnamese Hue-style restaurant

looks almost like a temple, and it's considered one of the city's premier settings serving imperial cuisine.
187 Hai Ba Trung, D3
3829 7242
www.tibrestaurant.com.vn

Tin Nghia

A charming little venue serving vegetarian cuisine. Its quaint appearance hides the fact that it was the first international vegetarian restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City and an important center of the city's vegetarian culture.
9 Tran Hung Dao, D1
3821 2538

Vietnam House

  Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine. This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.
93-95 Dong Khoi, D1
3829 1623
www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

(other) asian

Lion City

   This is a Singaporean franchise to watch with interest – since its humble beginnings in 2006 with the rather more unpleasant name Singapore Frog Porridge, it has risen in strength to become the most prominent representative of the cuisine in the city, and its growth has continued to be remarkable.
45 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3823 8371
www.lioncityrestaurant.com

Long Monaco Oi's Pick

 Long Monaco operates throughout the city under various brand names – this outlet is a standalone restaurant in the busy Etown office complex in Tan Binh district. You'll probably only visit if you're working nearby or visiting on official business, but you'll find the restaurant serves some great Asian business lunches.
Ground Floor, Etown 1
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh
www.longmonaco.com.vn

western/international

Al Fresco's

   Offering a mix of Tex-Mex, Italian, and Australian food along with cold local & imported beers and a wine list featuring Australia's finest whites along with affordable South American reds.
16 Nguyen Thi Nghia, D1
3926 0036
www.alfrescosgroup.com
8.30am - 11pm

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.
16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1. 3822 9391
41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630
5B2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3263 / 5412 3264
www.annam-gourmet.com

Au Parc

   It's only fitting that this Mediterranean-styled restored villa with its original tiles, old window frames, plush cushions, and opium-themed art collection sits in one of the most gorgeous streets of central Saigon. Au Parc is an unforgettable venue with a décor that manages to simultaneously capture the grace of the old Colonial architecture and the mood of west-Asian exoticism that transfixed Europe in the Romantic period.
23 Han Thuyen, D1
3829 2772




Bahdja
  Algerian restaurant serving north African delights such as couscous, tajines and desserts. Unique Mechoui set dinner is a popular choice and perfect for groups (available with prior notice).
87-89-91 Ho Tung Mau, D1
093 787 2010 (French, Arabic, English, Finnish)
0122 763 1261 (English, Russian, Vietnamese)
Mon - Fri 11:30 - 2pm
Mon - Sat 6pm - 11pm

Black Cat Restaurant

 Originally envisioned as a fast food Vietnamese sandwich place, Black Cat Saigon now serves international food with a focus on burgers, most famously its 'Big Cheese' featuring 500g of beef.
13 Phan Van Dat, D1
3829 2955
www.blackcatsaigon.com
7am - 11pm

Blu Bar and Grill

 Blu Bar provides a wide range of Asian and Mediterranean specialties for breakfast, lunch, and dinner along with many unique beverage options.
53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
3744 4111
7am - 11pm

Bobby Chinn's Oi's Pick

 This is TV celebrity and experienced international chef Bobby Chinn's showcase restaurant adjacent to Intercontinental Asiana Hotel in the Kumho Link. Stylish lounge environment offers fine dining with a separate lounge bar area. Extensive cocktail menu and wine list backed by artfully created western dishes. Ideal venue for launch functions - and possibly features the most luxurious restaurant restrooms in HCMC.
39 Le Duan, D1
6291 7788
www.bobbychinn.com

The Burger Corner

    Tasty, fresh homemade burgers with a range of ingredients aimed at satiating both foreign and local palates. Menu includes local 'rice burgers' and prices are well below those of international chains.
43 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 0094
www.theburgercorner.com.vn

The Elbow Room

  The Elbow Room on Pasteur is an American-style bistro with a long bar, exposed brickwork, white walls, and whirling ceiling fans – making for a casual, contemporary space with an international vibe. More of a diner than a restaurant, Elbow shoots at a cool, relaxed atmosphere, pleasantly decorating its warmly-lit walls with evocative black & white photos and subtle lighting.
52 Pasteur, D1
3821 4327
www.elbowroom.com.vn

Hog's Breath Café

  An Australian family diner and bar concept. Renowned for quality steaks, seafood and other western fare served in an informal environment. Smoke-free indoors.
Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
3915 6066
090 381 8700
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

Jaspas Wine & Grill Oi's Pick

  Jaspas Wine and Grill provides an extensive wine list along with many "reinvented" Jaspas dishes, new creations, and

mouthwatering steaks. Japas also offers a wide array of delectable dessert options.

74/77 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3827 0931
alfrescosgroup.com



MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Khoi Thom

   Khoi Thom - "fragrant smoke" in English - is a unique venue, set in a bright, colourful al fresco decor inspired by renowned architect Ricardo Legoretta. A long way from Mexico, Chef Alejandro Torres's menu blends "Cocina Potosina" and timeless Mexican classics.
29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
www.khoithom.com


La Habana

  Offering authentic Spanish cuisine and a wide choice of tapas, as well as Cuban cocktails, La Habana is a den of Cuban-Spanish inspired architecture located on inner-city Cao Ba Quat.
6 Cao Ba Quat, D1
3829 5180
www.lahabana-saigon.com

Ly Club

  Often used as a venue for gatherings, networking meetings, and events where an air of wealth and sophistication is useful, Ly Club is a sure bet for making an impression on a date or business lunch. Built into a traditional French villa with wide elliptical arches, the atmosphere of naked opulence persists throughout the property.
143 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3930 5588
www.lyclub.vn



Margherita

 For some, Margherita doubles as an unofficial expat rendezvous, partly a result of its agreeable prices and sumptuous Western-style pizzas and foods.
175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
3837 0760

Market 39

Market 39 showcases seven interactive live show kitchens, featuring a la carte all-day dining and an extensive buffet selection served daily during breakfast, lunch and dinner
Ground Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Mogambo Bar & Grill

  Mogambo is a darts, African-styled restaurant with some the finest US & Tex-Mex and exceptional burgers.
50 Pasteur, D1
3825 1311

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

  The city's best-known Spanish restaurant with a sports bar on the ground floor, two floors of dining space, and an open rooftop deck for cocktails and live music. Serving tapas, paella, and an extensive Iberian wine list.
97 Hai Ba Trung, D1
090 724 2757
andres@pacharan.com.vn
10am - late

Parkview Restaurant

  This restaurant is best known locally for its seafood buffet, with a wide variety of international specialties freshly-prepared at the live cooking stations. Local and imported seafood includes oysters and prawns, molluscs and organic lobsters.
76 Le Lai, D1
3822 8888
www.saiгон.newworldhotels.com

Pasha

   Serving Turkish and Mediterranean cuisine, the kitchen is headed by Chef Ismet with over 30 years of experience in similar restaurants.
25 Dong Du, D1
6291 3677
www.pasha.com.vn




Shri Restaurant and Lounge

 Visitors to Shri are regularly astonished to discover such an international-standard venue secreted away on top of a plain-looking bank tower, serving a catalogue of exotic recipes, and while prices are as to be expected, the fare is an impressive collection of dishes guaranteed to suit the palate of Western diners as well as pleasing those with an Asian culinary background.
Roof-top, Level 23, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3827 9631
www.shri.vn



Skewers

  An open-air kitchen at the front of the restaurant and a small cigar lounge upstairs set off the atmosphere and mark this venue as one with a unique presence in Saigon. The purely Mediterranean cuisine is appropriately authentic.
9A Thai Van Lung, D1
38224798
www.skewers-restaurant.com

Subway

   Subway is now in Vietnam, offering its internationally-renowned range of subs sandwiches and cookies. World travelers can expect the same high quality of ingredients regardless of what nation they are visiting.
121 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4118

Strata

  Located on the 50th floor of the Bitexco tower, Strata offers a stunning dining experience with views over the city and a dessert bar with coffee and tea. Popular with tourists and locals seeking a unique location for a special occasion.
Level 50, Bitexco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
086 291 8750
www.cirrusaigon.com
10am - 10pm

Warda

  Warda is a Middle-Eastern style bar and restaurant headed by a renowned Syrian chef. Guests can enjoy authentic middle-eastern cuisine indoors and outdoors while enjoying an almond cigar or shisha.
71/7 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

Xu Restaurant Lounge

  The venue is well-known for its pork wantons, bun cha, seared beef crostinis, bo luc lac diced beef and 'Xu-style' chicken rice. Xu is an elegant venue that works as a restaurant or a high-class bar for the upper echelons.
71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8468
www.xusaigon.com

Zoom Cafe Oi's Pick

 Zoom cafe serves Tex-Mex and Vietnamese cuisine as well as running a Vespa tour service from within the cafe.
169A Bui Vien, D1
3920 3897
vscooterguy@yahoo.com
7am - 2am daily

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY DANIEL MOORE



The Nomadic Family

The highs and lows of a family of five traveling for three years

TEXT AND IMAGES BY GABI KLAF



TRAVELING FOR MOST moderately affluent working families might be a perfectly pleasant all-inclusive week in the Caribbean, a 10-day sojourn throughout Vietnam or perhaps a lovely two weeks in Italy. For the more eccentric, it may even be a year-long sabbatical for which families plan and invest in making their rat race get-away an experience they'll never forget. And then, there's us - a steadily growing population of young families who want to travel forever.

We are part of a slow but growing movement of working-class parents who no longer find 'bigger, better, and newer' their goals in life, a rippling handful of career professionals who don't see the point of the ladder they are climbing if they've lost touch with their families, their health, their joy and

themselves. These rightfully coined 'outsider' families are redefining family world travel as they sell their possessions and buy one-way tickets to anywhere, create location-independent income and explore far-flung locales, eschewing suburban homesteads for overstuffed backpacks. Welcome to the nomadic family way of life.

My name is Gabi and together with my husband Kobi and three children, we left our lovely sunlit, mountainside home in Israel in March 2011 with one goal in mind - to travel indefinitely - though we did honestly question whether we'd maybe last three months without killing each other.

Our plan was to start by taking an RV through the Rocky Mountains. At six months, we were living in Boquete, Panama,

volunteering in the community and hiking around Volcan Baru. Then at nine months, we were living with an indigenous tribe in the jungles of Ecuador. In those seven weeks, the kids attended Quechua/Spanish school, Kobi got dengue fever (for the second time), and we washed our clothing, our bodies, and our souls in the river, while living an unplugged life of zero productivity. Surely, we would be ready to go home to our familiar life in Israel? Not just yet.

Falling in Love

At 14 months, we were living in a tent on the beach of Huanachaco, Peru, and watching glorious sunsets in Lima, Peru's Malacón Park. We had local friends, playdates, and lots of nights of really great dancing after



the kids were asleep. And so it continued as we entered our second year of family life on the road, and landed in Bangkok, Thailand. Fast forward to year three, and we're still in Southeast Asia and loving it.

It's hard to remember when we fell in love with Asia. Was it Kanchanaburi's Erawan Waterfalls or that birthday party off the River Kwai that made us learn to love sweltering Thailand? Or maybe our first glimpses into Buddhism and a culture that reveres barefootedness? Perhaps it was the lingering smile of the Cambodians, or just how lovely the Khmer language sounded to us after living in Cambodia for eight months? It could've been Dalat's crisp coldness or the university students so eager to talk to you in any given park in Ho Chi Minh City. Maybe it was swimming with whale sharks and sea turtles of Moalboal, Philippines but then again, we're pretty sure it was the marvelous Filipino street kids that made our own children love the Philippines with such passion.

After almost 30 months on the road, it's hard to quantify those moments that take our breath away and justify, again and again, why we wish to stay "The Nomadic Family."

But we know it's the people who help us, guide us, and love us in every corner in the world. It's the random discussions with a street vendor or a fellow bus rider that ends up determining where home will be for the next three months. It's the two hour lunches and lingering talks and morning cuddles that tell us this is what we want out of our family life. It's deleting all those other obligations and identities that kept us conveniently

busy through life, and with them stripped away, suddenly finding ourselves naked, daring to figure out who we want to become next. It's dancing to the rhythms of life which are alternately light-filled, fun, and energy-explosive, but also sometimes dark and miserable. It's the rawness of being five souls out there, holding on to each other, and facing the unknown with unilateral, equalizing cluelessness.

This fall we'll be hiking the Annapurna Circuit in Nepal and then registering the kids for six months in a Waldorf school in Goa, India. We're looking forward to yoga, meditation, and other passionate, meaningful pursuits. We anticipate pausing our nomadic wanderers in the summer of 2014. We miss family and friends, our native tongue, and not living out of a backpack. We think we may stay in our safe nest for two years before settling down in Spain, where the kids can attend school, while we spend vacations biking throughout Europe. We're really not sure how things will be or where we'll end up next. On the one hand, we have plans, ideas, and dreams and on the other, the wind, inspiration, and opportunity that will inevitably combine to create our colorful, nomadic family reality.

Bio: *Gabi Klaf* blogs about her family's ups and downs in their now third year of non-stop budget world travel. Hugely romantic, tantalizingly sweet, and hysterically funny, Gabi Klaf represents a rare Rubik's cube of family world adventure. Follow her adventures at www.thenomadicfamily.com and www.gabiklaf.com ■

TIPS FOR EXTENDED FAMILY TRAVEL

The Economics: While it may seem that long-term world traveling families must be very, very rich, we're doing it and we are definitely not. Most months, our family of five spends significantly less than USD2,000, and some months, just half of that. For our year in Central and South America, we bought a 4x4 and sold it when we left. In Southeast Asia, buses and low cost carriers allow you to move around for very little money.

The longer you stay in one place, the cheaper you can negotiate long-term accommodation. A night or two in a luxury hotel often equals a month of rent at more modest digs. In Siem Reap, Cambodia, in exchange for working a bit for a guesthouse, we got a huge room with all the amenities for USD5 a night. Be flexible with your plans. Talk to the locals. Don't buy a pre-paid package. Figure it out when you get there.

Long-term travel begins with a mindset. We set very clear goals to pay off loans and save. We had to buck the mainstream thinking that making more money means that we get to spend more, we deserve more, "bigger, better, faster and flatter." Instead, we decided that making more money means we deserve to be free to save more, and then determine how we want to rule our own lives, free from endless payments to support a lifestyle that will perpetually demand us to feed the insatiable consumer monster.

Family Relationships: Whenever you hear stories that make family world travel look like a picture-perfect postcard, be wary. For better but often for worse, we remain the same stubborn, slightly insane, radically dysfunctional people we were before we hit the road. Unlike back home where we could all conveniently escape from each other through school, jobs, and everyday busyness, being on the road erases the buffer and actually pushes it in your face. Pet peeves escalate when they surround you all day, selfish behaviors magnify, and dysfunctional dynamics become rawer when you and the ones you love share the same intimate space for, sometimes, a bit too long. And after things explode in your face, you discover the raw, dusty, tearful, beautiful, and real blessing in each and every one of your family members.



A Bike and a Backpack

Discovering Taiwan's scenic east coast

TEXT BY CASEY SIEMASKO PHOTOS BY DANIEL MOORE

"Taiwanese are as friendly as they come – cyclists and non-cyclists alike consistently go out of their way to make foreigners feel at home"

IT'S DAY THREE of our cycling jaunt down the east coast of Taiwan. My knees are starting to ache as a result of peddling yesterday's mountains. My bum is pleading for extra padding, relief from the unforgiving bike seat below. My mind is admonishing me for committing to a multi-day bike trip with no prior cycling experience. But my heart is content, at peace, inspired by the world around me.

Mother Nature has been watching over us the past few days. Rather than Taiwan's predictable gray clouds and rain showers, we have been gifted with crisp, cool breezes and endless blue skies. It's the kind of sky that merges seamlessly with the expansive ocean, inviting our gaze to stretch farther than is possible. Perhaps it is compensation for the sore bum.

Three days of persistent cycling has rewarded us with frequent opportunities to connect with the Earth, a welcome respite from the hours spent in front of a computer on a daily basis. We began our cycling trip in Hualien, the largest city on the east coast of Taiwan. The vibe here is noticeably different from the west of Taiwan; the traffic is slower, the morning markets less chaotic. The locals take double, even triple takes at us on our bicycles. Most tourists only stay

in Hualien for a night, using it as their base to explore the country's number one attraction: Taroko Gorge. We, too, were guilty of departing Hualien prematurely, but with 80 kilometers of cycling ahead, an early start to the day was necessary.

Our first day of cycling took us from Hualien to Ruishui (a rustic hot springs town in the mountains) via Highway 11. It didn't take long for us to discover why this is one of Taiwan's most popular cycling routes; almost immediately after leaving the city traffic behind, we found ourselves cruising past the Pacific Ocean, urban sprawl nowhere in sight. Taiwan's coastline is characteristically rocky and jagged with few sandy beaches. While this might not be conducive to sunbathing, the dramatic coastline is as picturesque as they come, ideal to enjoy from the cycling lane.

Unfortunately the mountainous coastline guarantees hills to traverse, and our first morning was spent wearily hauling our bodies and belongings up the unpleasant inclines. Luckily we weren't the only crazy souls determined to use the power of our legs to carry us. The more fit, experienced cyclists raced past, encouragingly calling out, "Jia you!"—Chinese for "Let's go!" Taiwanese are as

friendly as they come – cyclists and non-cyclists alike consistently go out of their way to make foreigners feel at home.

Biking made the day pass quickly, and before long our journey steered us away from the ocean breezes and toward the cool, crisp air of the East Rift Valley. A long and narrow valley bordered by the Central Mountain Range (to the west) and the Coastal Mountain Range (to the east), the East Rift Valley is home to a variety of natural landscapes. Waterfalls, river terraces, hot springs and badlands are just a few of the sights to be seen. Although our arrival at the valley coincided with dusk, our second day of cycling would provide ample time to observe the change of scenery around us.

Pedal to the Metal

The next morning began pleasantly along a welcome flat road, better known as Route 193. The journey was now quieter, with only the verdant rice paddies and occasional village houses to keep us company. We found ourselves daydreaming, imagining what life would be like here among the rice farmers. It didn't seem like such a difficult scenario, leaving everything behind in favor of a simple, grounded lifestyle. But then the moment was gone, and all too soon we had left the paddies and wistfulness behind. Little did we know that we were now approaching the most challenging – and rewarding – segment of our journey.

Out of the rice paddies emerged grass-flanked mountains and colorful wild flowers, the stunning result of the East Rift Valley and humid weather that perpetuates it, and a reminder of how truly diverse Taiwan's landscape is, so much more than the urban skyscrapers of Taipei that most people think of. Coinciding with the lush backdrop was the steepest climb of the trip thus far. The hills from yesterday were merely speed bumps compared to this fiend. We mentally prepared ourselves for the climb by internalizing our yogi mantras, but it didn't do much to combat the sweat that poured down us. Finally, finally, after reprimanding ourselves for not training adequately, we made it to the climb's peak. With no time to say farewell to the mountain range that embraced us, we speed on into the darkness of an awaiting tunnel.

Out of the darkness brought the highlight of our cycling trip: a bird's eye view and striking snapshot of the far-reaching Pacific Ocean colliding with the adjacent mountain ranges – plus twenty minutes of downhill coasting to enjoy it. Taiwan's wide-ranging landscapes effortlessly came together, seemingly stretching out to eternity. Suddenly the uphill climbs were but a minor fee for the prize they awarded.

As we near Taitung on our third day of cycling, I'm clearly exhausted, ready to trade in my bike for the power of something automated. However, I'm also incredibly grateful. I'm grateful for the ability to power my body over 200 kilometers. I'm grateful to live on such a beautiful island of contrasts. I'm grateful to experience the harmony of the world – sore bum and all.

Bio: Casey and Dan Siemasko are two lovebirds slowly and indefinitely traveling the world. They share practical travel tips, top-notch travel photography and inspiring travel tales at www.acruisingcouple.com. They're also the authors of *101 Tips to Living in Taiwan*, a free ebook available on their blog. ■



CYCLING TIPS

Cycling is an amazing way to discover a new place. It allows you to travel slowly but efficiently while internalizing the surrounding scenes. It's eco-friendly, locals love to cheer you on, and you're forced to travel light. There are numerous ways to cycle the east coast of Taiwan, boasting what is perhaps the most stunning scenery in all of Taiwan. In our opinion, the best route is to begin in Hualien. Follow Highway 11 until you reach Road #64 to Ruishui. From Ruishui, take Route 193 until it merges with Highway 9. You'll soon reach a junction for Highway 30 (after the ominous climb and tunnel). Follow the signs for Highway 11 once more; it will lead you to Taitung, your destination. It is easy to follow the road signs, but should you become lost, locals can help you find your way once more. The total route is 210 kilometers.

There's no need to take or buy a bicycle. Giant Bike Shops has a flexible, multi-day bike rental program. Pick up your bicycle at the Giant Bike Shop in Hualien and return it to the Giant Bike Shop in Taitung. Three days costs USD35; each additional day is USD7.

When packing, be sure to take biker shorts (the spandex might not be sexy, but the padding is worth it) and a tire patch kit (there are quite a few areas from Hualien to Taitung where towns are few and far between). Other than that, you won't need much. Taiwan has a renowned cycling infrastructure with a cycling path that circumnavigates the island. 7-11s and cycling rest stops frequent the east coast route should you need to stock up on supplies. If you are physically active, you'll have no problem completing the three-day cycling itinerary.

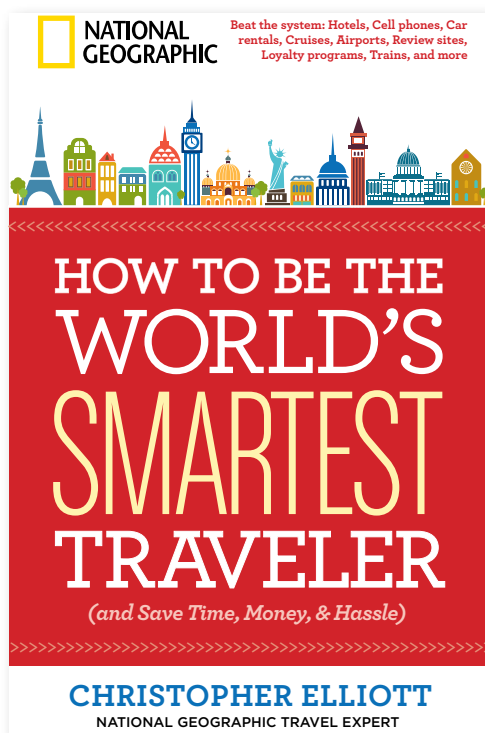


IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

Having visited nearly 60 countries as a travel writer and award-winning photographer, **James Pham** blogs about his adventures at FlyIcarusFly.com

Travel Warnings

How to be the world's smartest traveler

IN ALMOST 30 years of international travel, I've really only been in trouble twice. Once was during a trip to Phnom Penh in the mid-90s when it was something akin to the Wild West. A group of us were coming back from dinner at barely 9pm. As the last entered the gate, two hooligans zipped up from behind on a motorbike and pulled out guns. We were the victims of a home invasion. Thankfully, no one was hurt that night, just a few dollars lighter. Another time, I was traveling with friends to a country normally friendly to US citizens. It just so happened that for the Pope's visit that month, they temporarily tightened immigration (something the embassy didn't even know about when I checked prior to buying the tickets) and I flew all the way there just to immediately get back on the same plane while my Canadian friends waved good-bye. (A few months later, I was able to re-do the trip.)

All that said, I feel pretty fortunate to have avoided any serious problems while traveling. Part of it is that I'm ultra-vigilant when I'm in a new environment. I don't often check maps out in the open, I dress conservatively and I read up on the destination before I go, including checking out forums (which provide the most up-to-date information) and blogs.

Another thing I do is learn from others' mistakes so I don't have to repeat them. I keep up with consumer advocate sites, my favorite being Chris Elliott's (www.elliott.org) hugely popular blog where he sheds light on common problems like checking into a pre-booked hotel only to find that it's

nothing like what was advertised or avoiding phone cards that only give you 40 percent of what customers thought they were buying to over-the-top snafus like a flyer wanting compensation for a USD4,000 fiberglass fish lost in checked luggage and a bridezilla who spent three days of her honeymoon sobbing over rusted bathroom fixtures and dirty glasses. (Disclosure: I'm also a volunteer editor for Chris' columns on his own site as well as in publications like *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.)

In early 2014, Chris is coming out with another book, *How to Be The World's Smartest Traveler*, and he's sharing with *Oi* readers some of his best advice.

On Cheap Airfares

Your airfare probably represents no more than a third of your trip expenses. You'll save yourself lots of time and misery by taking a deep breath and following this advice: If you see an airfare you can afford, book it now, and don't look back. You might be able to find a less expensive fare, but I can practically guarantee that you'll waste hours trying to find it - hours that could be better spent doing something more productive.

Airlines have spent a small fortune on yield management technology, but foiling it by subscribing to every fare alert newsletter, reading every airfare blog, and using every tool at your disposal in order to save USD10 on your next flight is a meaningless victory. Ask yourself: Is your time really worth only a few dollars an hour? Probably not.

Beware the Credit Card Scam

Beware of dynamic currency conversion (DCC), a practice that can allow an unscrupulous merchant to skim a little off the top of your purchase, at your expense. Here's how it works: If you're paying by credit card overseas, a merchant will sometimes ask if you want to make the purchase in dollars, "for your convenience." If you agree, your money is converted from the native currency into greenbacks and sent to your credit card, but at an awful exchange rate. (Bizarrely, you may still have to pay your credit card a fee for a foreign transaction — so you basically convert the money twice.)

Keeping Your Money Safe While Traveling

Many travelers swear by a money belt, a fabric strap for holding your passport and cash. There are variations of this solution, including socks and neckwear with pouches for storing valuables, but they're not the most elegant solution. Retrieving something from them means partially disrobing, which is a hassle, and thieves know to look for hidden pouches on tourists. However, a belt is better than nothing. Another option, one favored by security experts, is the dummy wallet or pocketbook - a decoy containing a small amount of cash and IDs. If you're ever asked to hand over your valuables, give the robber the bogus wallet. It's better than taking off your clothes, and handing over your money belt.

The "Menu Trap"

Many restaurants offer at least two menus: One for lunch, the other for dinner. Pay attention to the entrees on each one; they're often identical. What's different? The price, usually. Just like movie theater tickets, you're paying more because of the time of day. (To be fair, some restaurants do offer larger portions for dinner.) To avoid this pm premium, plan your "out" meal for lunch, and have a more modest dinner you prepare in your room, or buy in a grocery store.

I personally use all of these tips when traveling, saving myself from potentially expensive mistakes. Travel wise!



Chris' book is available for pre-order on Amazon or by scanning this code. ■



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3829 0981
mail.hcm@airfrance.fr
www.airfrance.com.vn

Asiana Airlines

39 Le Duan, D1
3822 2622
www.ea.flyasiana.com

Air Asia

No official office in Vietnam
www.airasia.com
Address of sales office: Noibai Airport, Terminal 1, International Departure Hall, 3rd Floor, Ha Noi
Website of agent: www.airasia.biz.vn
Phone: 04.37478953
95G - Ly Nam De - Phuoc Cua Dong - Quan Hoan Kiem - Ha Noi
Tel: (04).37478953

Cathay Pacific Airlines

R502, 5th floor, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ward 6, D3
3822 3203
sgn#rnt@cathaypacific.com
www.cathaypacific.com

China Southern

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 6800
passengerservice@cs-sgn.com
www.csair.com

Emirates

15 Nguyen Hue, 14th Floor, Dist.1, HCMC
Email: ehvietnam@emirates.com
Phone: 08 39113099
www.emirates.com/vn

Etihad

etihadairways.com

EVA Airlines

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 4488
www.evaair.com

JAL Japan Airlines

4F Hotel Nikko Saigon, 235 Nguyen Van Cu, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1
3830 6231

Jetstar

112 Hong Ha, Ward 2, Tan Binh Dist., HCMC
Tel. 08 38450092
servicecomments@jetstar.com.vn
www.jetstar.com

Korean Air

Unit 909, Floor 9, Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, D1
3824 2878
www.korean-air.vn

Lufthansa

14th Floor, Bitexco Building, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1
3829 8529
lufthansa.vn@dlh.de
www.lufthansa.com

Malaysia Airlines

37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3829 2529
www.malaysiaairlines.com

Qantas Airways

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3910 5373

Qatar

Suite 8, GF, Petro Vietnam Tower
1-5 Le Duan St., room 4, Floor 8, AB tower, Dist.1, HCMC
84 8 38273888
reservations@vn.qatarairways.com
Working hours: Mon-Fri: 8-17, Sat: 8:30am - 12:30pm
Hanoi phone No: 04 39336767

Singapore Airlines

29 Le Duan, D1
3823 1588
www.singaporeair.com

Thai

29 Le Duan Blvd, D1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Phone: (84-8) 3822 3365
E-mail: reservations@thaiairways.com.vn
Monday - Friday: 08:00 - 16:30 (excluding holidays)
Saturday - Sunday: Closed

Turkish

Sales office in Vietnam
76 Le Lai St., room 4, Floor 8, AB tower, Dist. 1, HCMC
84 8 39360360
marketing.sgn@thy.com
Working hours: Weekdays: 8am-12pm/ 13-17; Sat: 8-12, Sun: closed

United Airlines

Unit 708, 7th Floor, Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3823 4755
www.united.com

Vietnam Airlines

16F Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3832 0320
www.vietnamairlines.com.vn

Vietjet

CT Plaza Building 8th Floor, 60 Truong Son St., Tan Binh Dist., HCMC
84 8 35471866 / Hotline: 1900 1886
www.vietjetair.com
19001886@vietjetair.com

hotels

HO CHI MINH CITY

TWO STAR

Bali Hotel

★★
Ideally-located for attendees to any exhibitions held at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, Bali Boutique is flash and modern in style - with a little touch of the plush thrown in for good measure.
39 - 41 Hung Phuoc Villas, D 7
54104747

Calmette Hotel

★★
Charming hotel on one of the most attractively-named streets in the city, although slightly out-of-the-way. Quality, elegant furnishings and modern amenities.
151 Calmette, D1
39144951

Cat Huy Hotel

★★
Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi

Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D1
39208717

Ken Hotel

★★
A surprisingly well-designed hotel, this budget establishment looks anything but from within, although the location in a side alley off CMT8 is quite deceiving.
285/7 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
0906699371

Little Saigon Boutique Hotel

★★
A small, value-for-money boutique hotel with 18 air-conditioned, non-smoking rooms, Little Saigon Boutique Hotel is an easy walk to Ben Thanh Market and other D1 sights. Hidden away in a quiet back alley right in the central area.
36 Bis/2 Le Loi, D1
35218462

THREE STAR

A&EM Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung

★★★
Local accommodation chain that aims at the classy mid-level market; still budget, but with a touch of dignity about it.
8A/1D2 Thai Van Lung, D1
38224495

Blue Diamond Hotel

★★★
A cut above the multiple nearby 2-star properties, this hotel has been officially recognized for its quality décor and service, including high accolades in international publications.
48-50 Thu Khoa Huan, D1
38236167

Bong Sen Hotel

★★★
Located in the heart of D1, The Bong Sen Hotel offers luxurious accommodation for guests who wish to relax or get a little work done.
117-123 Dong Khoi, D1
38291516
www.bongsenhotel.com

Catina Saigon

★★★
Hotel Catina Saigon provides 3 star accommodation in large, boutique rooms that include free, high-speed internet access and city views.
109 Dong Khoi, D1
38296296

Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa- Nguyen An Ninh

★★★
The Tan Hai Long Hotel and Spa offers award winning 3 star service and stunning views of Ben Thanh Market and downtown Saigon. 3 star Hotel and spa located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh city with 160 rooms and suites, also providing professional spa services by skillful and experienced staff
15-17 Nguyen An Ninh, D1
38272738

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

★★★★
One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most famous as the location where much of

Graham Greene's The Quiet American was written in room 214.

132-134 Dong Khoi, D1
38299201
www.continentalsaigon.com

Kimdo Royal City Hotel

★★★★
Nestled in amongst the commercial buildings at the top of District One's central business strip, the posh-looking Kimdo is right in the heart of the administrative, business, shopping, and entertainment district.
133 Nguyen Hue, D1
38225914
www.kimdohotel.com

Liberty Central Hotel

★★★★
Liberty Central has a very prominent brand and is a particularly stylish, eye-catching property right in the centre of the tourist district.
179 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38239269
www.libertycentralhotel.com

Norfolk Hotel

★★★★
Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.
117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38293415
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Novotel Saigon Centre

★★★★
One of HCMC's newest hotels, Novotel is located on busy Hai Ba Trung St, just within walking distance of downtown attractions. It's everything you'd expect from the international brand with 24-seven guest services and a broad dining offer.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D1

38224866
www.novotel.com

Oscar Saigon Hotel

★★★★
French colonial hotel in District 1 offering stunning panoramic views and 4 star amenities.
68A Nguyen Hue, D1
www.oscar-saigonhotel.com

Palace Hotel Saigon

★★★★
One of the tidier properties of its class within the vicinity, with 144 deluxe guest rooms of contemporary design well-equipped with modern facilities.
56-66 Nguyen Hue, D1
www.palacesaigon.com

Park Royal Saigon Hotel

★★★★
Park Royal Saigon Hotel is an ideally placed conference hotel which caters to all MICE needs. The hotel offers a wide array of banquet services and can accommodate 30 to 300 guests.
309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
www.parkroyalhotels.com

Thao Dien Boutique Hotel

★★★★
Set in a secluded, verdant garden occupying 1.2 hectares along the Saigon River, Thao Dien village is a tropical hideaway that's just 20 minutes from the city centre.
195 -197 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
37442222
www.thaodienvillage.com

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era. Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining one of its most luxurious places to stay.
19 Lam Son Square, D 1
38234999
www.caravellehotel.com

Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

An international hotel located where the borders of the city's four main districts meet. The city's major commercial and entertainment area is only an 8-minute drive away.
242 Tran Binh Trong, D 5
38397777
www.equatorial.com/hcm

InterContinental Asiana Saigon

*****  **Ol's Pick**
Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, the InterContinental Asiana Saigon is dedicated to providing local, authentic, and enriching travel experiences. Decorated in tasteful oriental flair, the hotel is dedicated to representing the charms of Asia and evokes the mystique of this beautiful continent and its cultures. Right next to Saigon's key landmarks, this hotel is ideally placed for high-class travellers and groups seeking a high standard of accommodation. Full MICE areas and facilities are on-site.
Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9999
saigon@ihg.com
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Legend Hotel

Classic hotel offering 5 star amenities along with a scenic view of the Saigon River, and providing a unique culinary experience with many options for fine dining.
2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D 1
38233333
www.legendssaigon.com

Majestic Saigon

One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.
01 Dong Khoi, D 1
38295517
www.majesticsaigon.com.vn

Moevenpick Hotel Saigon

An international hotel chain with Swiss roots, this comfortable hotel caters to both businesspeople and families with fine dining options, a fitness centre, and multiple conference rooms.
253 Nguyen Van Troi Apartments, Phu Nhuan
38449222
hotel.saigon@moevenpick.com
www.moevenpick-hotels.com

New World Saigon Hotel

*****  **Ol's Pick**
One of the most impressive business hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, with stunning views and 5 star amenities. 533 luxury rooms and suites offering the perfect ambience for concentrated work and undisturbed relaxation.
76 Le Lai, D 1
38228888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Nikko Saigon

One of the city's newest

accommodation jewels, this lavish hotel is designed to make the maximum impression of austere Japanese-style class from the lobby upwards. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in HCMC, with classic, precise and elegant decor.
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D 1
39257777
www.hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn

Park Hyatt Saigon

Without a doubt the city's most luxurious hotel, Park Hyatt Saigon features French colonial inspired rooms, two award-winning restaurants, an outdoor pool and a stylish contemporary bar. The exterior is the result of meticulous research into the colonial architecture of the region.
2 Lam Son Square, D 1
38241234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

Rex Hotel Saigon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.
141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1
38292185
www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

*****  **Ol's Pick**
High-class getaway hotel located out of the city centre on exotic Thanh Da Island, allowing guests to escape from the chaos of the city life while remaining close to the action. More hotel than apartment complex, The Domaine's private residences are classic and luxurious, making the most of the natural surroundings.
1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
35561145
www.saigondomaine.com

Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City vibrant business and entertainment district, Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers is a 5 star haven of convenience, connecting guests with colleagues and friends.
88 Dong Khoi, D 1
38272828
sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com

Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

The Sofitel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.
17 Le Duan, D 1
38241555
H2077@Sofitel.com
www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.
18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
www.windsorplazahotel.com

CON DAO ISLAND

Six Senses Con Dao

True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful

area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.
Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son
06 4383 1222

DALAT

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises seventeen restored French-style villas from the 1920's and 1930's, preserving the original design, décor and charm, is and set in the cool climate of the rural highlands of Central Vietnam. Striking views of the surrounding town and countryside abound from all areas of the gently sloping hillside property.
Le Lai, Phuong 5, Dalat
06 3355 5888

Sofitel Dalat Palace

Hotel Sofitel Dalat Palace is one of the most beautiful and amongst the few remaining historical hotels in Southeast Asia. Built in 1922 and meticulously restored in 1995 to its original grandeur, the Sofitel Dalat Palace offers individualized service in the finest tradition of Vietnamese hospitality.
12 Tran Phu, Dalat
06 3382 5444
info@dalatresorts.com

DANANG

Furama Resort Danang

The Furama Resort enjoys a stunning beachfront location on one of Vietnam's finest beaches, fringed by natural pines and coconut palms. Two four-storey wings overlook the ocean on one side and a freshwater swimming lagoon and manicured tropical gardens on the others.
Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
051 1384 7333

Fusion Maia

Incorporating the spirit of our time, Fusion Maia Danang is a unique fusion of resort and spa where spa treatments are inclusive and a part of daily living in this beach resort. It is the first all-pool villa-style resort in the destination and offers 87 pool suites, spa villas, and beach villas each with modern, open-plan living and private courtyard with swimming pool. Customize-your-stay options and breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store.
Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
051 1396 7999

Life Resort Danang

Sitting on the Bac My An beachfront only 3km from downtown Danang, and 30km from Hoi An. A pair of four-storey hotel blocks house most of the resort's rooms, with villas flanking one side of a long pool corridor splicing the middle of the resort. Its proximity to three UNESCO World Heritage sites as well as the former colonial French hill stations at Bach Ma and Ba Na make this ideally placed for incentive excursions.
Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
051 1395 8888

HALONG BAY

Novotel Halong Bay

A glimpse into contemporary Vietnam with echoes of the country's intricate past through its elegant interior décor. Sturdy polished stone, glass and marble stand against the delicate Asian textures of silk, wickerwork and carved wood. With sweeping windows and large mirrors, the hotel captures panoramic views of Halong Bay and its spectacular seascapes at every turn.
Ha Long Road, Bai Chay Ward, Ha Long City
03 3384 8108
info@novotelhalong.com.vn

TUAN CHAU RESORT

Tuan Chau Resort is constructed in the style of classical French and modern Vietnamese architecture. This is the ideal place to find white sands, blue ocean, and the rejuvenative energy of the Vietnamese tropical sun.
Tuan Chau Island, Ha Long City
03 3384 2999

HANOI

Hilton Hanoi Opera

This landmark of Hanoi was inspired by the famous Opera House located nearby. A hotel of great beauty and luxury, the Hilton stands in the city's fashionable and elegant French Quarter, and is within close range of the charming Old Quarter and bustling Business District.
1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
04 3933 0500

Intercontinental Westlake

Superbly situated on the serene waters of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities,





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and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveller.

la Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi
04 6270 8888
Reservation.Hanoi@ihg.com

Sheraton Hanoi

 Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden and courtyard, the hotel provides the perfect balance between tranquillity and convenience. Take in panoramic views of Hanoi's largest lake and enjoy great comforts in the 299 spacious guest rooms and suites, specially designed for relaxation.

K5 Nghi Tam, H Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi
04 3719 9000

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

***** **👉 Oi's Pick**
 Located at the heart of Hanoi since 1901, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi has a long history as a luxurious place for prestigious events and popular rendezvous. Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

15 Ngo Quyen, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

04 3826 6919

h1555@sofitel.com

HOI AN

Life Heritage Resort Hoi An

 Rooms are designed along Japanese themes, each having a personal porch with couches for reading and relaxing. Spacious bathrooms feature stand-alone showers or recessed baths, and many bathrooms enjoy views of a private garden. Ideal for events where participants will be enjoying the colourful ancient town area.

1 Pham Hong Thai, Hoi An Town, Quang Nam
051 0391 4555

The Nam Hai

 A stunning all-villa resort located on the pristine China Beach featuring 60 one-bedroom retreats as well as 40 privately-owned two-to-five bedroom residences each with a private infinity pool.

Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam
051 0394 0000
reservations@thenamhai.com



Palm Garden Resort

 Set on five hectares of landscaped tropical garden with over 400 species of palm trees and plants right along the beach and near the World Heritage Hoi An Ancient Town.

Lac Long Quan, Cua Dai beach, Hoi An

0510 3927 927

www.palmgardenresort.com.vn

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

 The quiet sounds and vistas of the sea welcome guests to the first unique luxury beach resort with private pool villas in the area. Located a scenic 15km drive from central Hue, this is spacious resort with the largest villas and rooms in the area. The property includes private pool villas, beach villas, duplex and deluxe rooms in a wide range of styles and decor designed with complete and modern facilities.

An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang
05 4398 3333

La Residence Hotel & Spa

 This former French Governor's residence dates to 1930 and is a masterpiece of art deco design. Its incredible location overlooking the Citadel and the Perfume River brings this 122-room hotel a total and serene tranquillity. The hotel features a 40m outdoor salt swimming pool at river height giving the illusion of merging into the Perfume River. Ideal for executive retreats and exotic incentives programmes.

5 Le Loi, Hue
05 4383 7475

Pilgrimage Village

 Pilgrimage Village offers the harmony of a soothing natural environment and fascinating local culture. Delicious meals, sound sleep, and the peaceful life of the quiet countryside refresh the spirit.

130 Minh Mang, Truong An, Hue
05 4388 5461

NHA TRANG

Evason Ana Mandara

 The exclusive location affords city-centre access to Nha Trang's only beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.

Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang
05 8352 2222

Six Senses Hideaway Ninh Van Bay

 The resort is one of Asia's most exclusive and intimate beach escapes, sitting on dramatic Ninh Van Bay, with its impressive rock formations overlooking the South China Sea, white sand beach and towering mountains behind.

Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa
05 8372 8222

Sheraton Nha Trang

 Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa offers ten categories of accommodation – from spacious, deluxe rooms to 70m2 executive suites and a huge presidential suite. With exemplary conference facilities, this is the number-one MICE resort in the region.

26-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
05 8388 0000

PHAN THIET

Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

 The new face of the former l'Anmien, this resort offers an exclusive haven of luxury and relaxation in a spectacular beachfront location right in the heart of Mui Ne. The only property in the Mui Ne district with full conferencing facilities

and a range of exclusive villas – and it has an impressive wine cellar.

Mui Ne
06 2374 1888
muine@anantara.com

Princess d'Annam

 The look of the resort is classical, bright, and impeccably clean and private. The two Empress Suites are the pinnacle of luxury accommodation in Vietnam – they are mini millionaire's mansions in themselves, fully-equipped, bright and spacious, and possessing of the same ethereal design quality that pervades this whole resort. Set in the remote Ke Ga Bay, wordlessly beautiful.

Hon Lan, Binh Thuan
06 2368 2222
info@princessannam.com

Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel

Located in the resort capital of Vietnam – Mui Ne Bay, Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel offers an intimate setting for guests to enjoy a getaway on the beach to its fullest. The hotel is home to 24 cozy deluxe rooms with services and sophistication that are expected from a beach boutique hotel.

76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne (Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969

www.windflowermuine.com

PHU QUOC ISLAND

Chen Sea Resort & Spa

 Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers. The resort was born from a long and passionate study in order to be integrated and to respect the uncontaminated nature of the bay and of the coastal zone.

Bai Xep, Phu Quoc
07 7399 5895

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

 Located on a hill of coconut palm trees, Saigon Phu Quoc is a beautiful, quiet seaside resort with plenty of sunshine. Just 10 minutes from the airport, the resort is an ideal haven for relaxing, fishing, trekking, snorkeling, and scuba diving.

62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc
07 7384 6999
sgphuquocresort@hcm.vnn.vn

La Veranda

 The most distinguished of Phu Quoc Island's hotels and guesthouses, La Veranda sports paddle fans, butterfly exteriors, whitewashed louvers, and tropical gardens recalling a colonial plantation. Freestanding deluxe villas are notable for their sea-facing porches, spacious bathrooms, and cathedral ceilings.

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc
07 7398 2988

QUY NHON

Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

 A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam. This resort was awarded Best Wellness Resort in Vietnam in 2005, 2006 and 2007 by the Vietnam Economic Times.

Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh

05 6384 0132

quynhon@life-resorts.com

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

 Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen

05 7372 2563

VUNG TAU

The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is Vietnam's first largest integrated resort and ultimately will include an 1,100-room five-star hotel, a world-class casino, restaurants, high-tech meeting space, an exclusive VIP area, as well as a variety of beach-front recreation activities. The first 541-room tower of this development opened in July 2013 with its casino including 90 live tables and 614 electronic game positions. The second 559-room tower is on track to open in 2015.

Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District
Tel: (64) 3788 888
www.thegrandhotramstrip.com

serviced apartments

Avila Serviced Apartment

These serviced apartments combine an excellent location with luxurious amenities.

20-20bis Thi Sach, D 1

35218365

Bella Serviced Apartments

Affordable, classy apartment living in a tidy alleyway residence styled with white classical flourishes, Bella offers good living and proximity to the city without succumbing to the lures of the expat bubble. Facilities include a small but well-equipped gym on the top floor and pleasant terraces on front-facing apartments.

56/4 Nguyen Thong, D3
3526 0020

Cantavil Daewon Apartment

High-luxury complex with libraries, research center, and cultural information center on site. Also features an outdoor swimming pool. One of the most luxurious towers in the central area.

600A Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Central Garden Apartment

These luxurious apartments offer stunning views of downtown Saigon along with western style accommodations and excellent location.

225 Ben Chuong Duong, D 1
091 654 2598 / 093 347 6556

City View

Located in the prime business and residential district, only minutes away by car from downtown area, City View is the perfect place for home and/or business in Ho Chi Minh City.

12 Mac Dinh Chi, D 1
38221111

Hung Vuong Plaza Apartment

Hung Vuong Plaza apartments above the D5 Parkson are comprised of two 29 floor buildings with many luxurious apartments in bustling Cho Lon.

126 Hong Bang, D 5

Jasmine Court Serviced Apartment

A boutique property with only 12 apartments, comprised of one and two-bedroom suites of various sizes. All apartments are designed in a fresh contemporary style and finished in a pleasing neutral colour scheme.

307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh

38446639

Lancaster Serviced Apartments

Lancaster Serviced Apartments Le Thanh Ton enjoys a commanding

position over the nightlife, culture, and business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, offering a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window.

22 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D 1
38246666

The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.

58 Ton Duc Thang, D 1
38222098

Mai Ha Lan II Serviced Apartments

Mai Ha Lan II offers a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window. It offers 33 luxurious and graciously furnished apartments with studio and two bedroom options.

8A/IC Thai Van Lung, D 1
62990992 0909868052

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.

17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1
38226111

Saigon Court

Since its opening in 1998, Saigon Court has become well-known amongst the expatriate community for exceptional standards of service. This 12 storey building is among the highest in the area, offering its tenants commanding views of other parts of the city.

149 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D 3
39306466

Saigon Pearl Apartment

Ho Chi Minh City's largest five star apartment complex, Saigon Pearl comprises six 37-story residential towers located on the banks of the Saigon River in Binh Thanh District, about five minutes by taxi from downtown. Pool, gym, supermarket and dining facilities all on site.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
38219999

Saigon Skygarden

A 15-storey building located in the Saigonese Little Tokyo on Le Thanh Ton, offering 172 international-standard Serviced Apartments for lease.

20 Le Thanh Ton, D 1

38220002

Saigon View Residences

Saigon View Residences offer a range of Deluxe, Superior, and Executive room types in distinctive one and two bedroom apartments.

117, Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh
38404966

Sedona Suites

With a fantastic location in District 1 and rooms offering all of the comforts of home, this award winning serviced apartment complex caters to businessmen and families alike.

65 Le Loi, D 1
38229666

Sherwood Residence

Serviced apartments available for short or long term bookings, located in Pasteur, within walking distance of downtown Ho Chi Minh City, international schools, shopping centres, etc. Pool, sauna, gym, mini-cinema onsite.

127 Pasteur, D 3
38232288

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1
3822 8899

www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
38229197

V-Star Apartment

Good proximity to the Saigon River and FV International Hospital, as well as international schools and the Tan Thuan export zone.

Go O Moi, Phu Thuan, D 7
37733151

travel agencies

Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.

92-96 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1358

Aquarius Booking Office

With access to a global network of

leading travel specialists, Aquarius is a domestic & international air ticketing agency committed to offering low-cost flights, travel insurance, and accommodation.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1905

Amazing Thailand Tourism Office

Funded by the Thai tourism board, this office is loaded up with travel resources and advice for travellers to Thailand, an invaluable source of help for travelers on their way to the land of smiles. Travel resources and advice for travelers to Thailand.

5th Floor, Empire Tower, 26-28 Ham Nghi, D1
6291 3887

Ben Thanh Tourist

One of the better-known tour agencies in the city, Ben Thanh Tourist is 20 years old and specializes in domestic and foreign travel, MICE, tourist transportation, and air ticketing.

51 Dong Khoi, D1
3914 3921
090 611 1121

Clé Voyages - Xuan Viet Travel

Xuan Viet Travel has been providing travel services and advice for nearly two decades.

Unit 1105, Harbour View Tower, 35 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 4942

Fiditour

Fiditour offers a wide range of tours to the southeast Asian region, including unique cultural trips, adventure trips, beach holidays, cruises, and culinary trips.

129 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 1414

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Hoi An Express

Preferred by many five-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh city such as Windsor Plaza Hotel, Duxton Hotel, Legend Hotel Saigon, and Equatorial Hotel, this privately owned travel agency offers a wide range of services.

94 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3939 0135
090 803 9699

Inside Asia Travel

Inside Asia Travel is a boutique luxury travel provider of tailor made travel arrangements for English speaking expats and travelers through Southeast Asia. Guests enjoy highly personalized, bespoke travel arrangements suited to individual tastes and budget.

www.insideasiatravel.com
team@insideasiatravel.com
3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

Refine Asia

Representing class, creativity, and absolute professionalism in Asian corporate and luxury travel services, Refine Asia is the first-class and luxury arm of the well-known regular travel services operator Focus Asia.

138 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ward 6, D3
3932 0732

Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1
6290 9410

Sinh Cafe

Sinh Cafe started out as a coffee shop, but later expanded to cater to the needs of tourists and travelers. This unique travel agency offers tours within Vietnam, and also to Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

246-248 De Tham, D1

Viet Journey

Viet Journey was founded by dedicated travelers of the southeast Asian region, and they strive to provide quality, time-efficient service for travelers from around the world.

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 7152

bowling

The Bowling Center

The Bowling Centre is a smaller venue with 12 lanes located in the International Club.

285B Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
3864 3784

Bowling Pacific Garden

Small bowling alley at the Pacific Garden apartments complex, ideal for a more private game away from the crowds of teenagers.

8 Bis Ba Thang Hai, D10
3863 7944

Diamond Superbowl

An electrifying bowling experience featuring a 32 lane centrally-located bowling alley with fluorescent bowling balls and high-tech scoring.

4th Floor, 34 Le Duan, Ben Nghe, D1

PowerBowl 388

This is a 10 lane, 10 pin bowling alley with a games section attached, located on the 4th floor of the Parkson Saigon Plaza building.

Level 4, 35 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Powerbowl Hung Vuong

12 lane 10 pin AMF bowling alley with a games section located on the 3rd floor of the Parkson Hung Vuong Plaza building - a Bud's ice-cream station

awaits indoors.

126 Hong Bang, D5

Saigon Superbowl

Formerly the coolest venue in HCMC and opened to great aplomb in the early noughties, this tired old complex in the wrong part of town still retains its international-standard huge bowling alley.

43A Truong Son, Tan Binh
3848 8888

charities

Education For Development Vietnam

An international organization that works with Vietnamese partners to improve and expand their educational services for disadvantaged children and youth.

305/30 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 6033

International Organization For Migration

The organization is concerned with the welfare and quality of life of the Vietnamese people, particularly migrant and mobile populations.

1B Pham Ngoc Thach, D1
3822 2057

Loreto Vietnam Australia

Dedicated to the reduction of poverty through beneficial, qualitative and responsive educational opportunities for underprivileged and disabled students.

17c Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3910 6364

Mekong Quilts

Founded in 2001, Mekong Quilts employs women in communities northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, to create high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, accessories and gift wares. All profits from the sale of the quilts are reinvested into the community through the NGO Mekong Plus.

1st Floor, 35-37 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
2210 3110
mekong.quilts.creations.hcmtdt@gmail.com
517- Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758

Saigon Children's Charity

Saigon Children's Charity was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged Vietnamese children to get an education and a fairer start in life. Their programs aim to help the most disadvantaged children of Vietnam to escape from poverty through education and training.

59 Tran Quoc Thao, D3
3930 0503

The Little Rose Shelter

The Little Rose Shelter is a refuge for young girls who have been sexually abused or trafficked for the purpose of labor or sexual exploitation. It offers psychological rehabilitation, opportunities to go to school, free healthcare and a supportive, loving environment to grow.

Hem 30, 55/2 Bis Lam Van Ben, D7
3872 0308

Unicef Vietnam

UNICEF Vietnam provides support in policy development, legal reform, and improving social services. Following reunification in 1975, the charity launched a nationwide programme to meet the basic needs of Vietnam's girls and boys.

Unit 1406, Suh Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1

Waifs Of War Foundation

The Waifs of War Foundation was established in March 2004 by a

group of individuals concerned with improving the lives of the children born to Vietnamese mothers and American War servicemen fathers.

24 Le Loi, D1
3913 0439

cinemas & theatres

The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

Ho Chi Minh City's local classical music venue with regular programs & performances.

212 Nguyen Trai, D1

Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3823 1652

CT Plaza Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex on the 7th floor with 3D theatres and VIP room.

Level 10, 60A Truong Son, Tan Binh
6297 1981

Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films.

116 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 8533
230 Nguyen Trai, D1
3920 6688
246 Nguyen Hong Dao, Tan Binh
3849 4567

Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement.

55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3840 4027
098 937 9873 (Mr. Lam)

Ho Chi Minh Conservatory Of Music

One of three conservatories in Vietnam, offering world class musical education and performances.

Concerts at the local Ho Chi Minh City Music School.

112 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 5841

Hung Vuong Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex in the CT Plaza building with 3D theatres and VIP room.

126 Hong Bang, D5
3222 0388

IDECAF Drama Theatre

IDECAF is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1
38295451

Le Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre.

25 Phan Phu Tien, D5
2242 4622

Lotte Cinema Diamond

Fine cinema complex in one of the most iconic department store buildings in town. Ride up the elevator to the top floor to catch a flick.

13th Floor, 34 Le Duan, D1

Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece,

the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety.

7 Lam Son Square, D1
3825 1563

The Soul of Vietnam

The Soul of Vietnam showcases traditional Vietnamese music shows with voice and traditional instruments. Be sure to check out the three-part Legend of the Trung Sisters' with accompaniment of stone musical instruments, gongs and two lifelike elephants.

7 Lam Son Square, D1
2229 9414

gyms

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

0902271830
personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the-art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5
3222 0299

28-30-32 Le Lai, D1
6291 5999

5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4
3826 0999

Get Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4
6261 6169

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
091 833 7111

Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3825 8560

Rex Health Club

This spa was designed for both men & women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1814

Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 9009

Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym

is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh 3514 0255

museums

Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City

With a collection housing more than 21,000 pieces in various displays, the Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City highlights traditional and modern works of HCMC artists as well as other artists from the south of Vietnam.

97A Pho Duc Chinh, D1

Geological Museum

A fittingly dull-looking building at the corner of Nguyen Binh Khiem and Nguyen Huu Canh, the museum has over 20,000 samples of interesting rocks.

2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1

Ho Chi Minh Campaign Museum

Small military museum dedicated to the Ho Chi Minh Campaign that led to communist victory over southern Vietnam.

2 Le Duan, D1

Ho Chi Minh City Museum

An old French Colonial palace, the museum has a wide and varied collection and some interesting modern history of its own.

65 Ly Tu Trong, D1

Ho Chi Minh Museum

Three stories dedicated to Ho Chi Minh, the museum features an assortment of artifacts from his personal life, including a radio, sandals and clothes. After exploring the more than 3,000 Ho Chi Minh portraits, take a walk in the lovely gardens around the old building nicknamed the Dragon House' for its ornate roof and hybrid Franco-Chinese architecture.

1 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women

The Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women has become a place of interest for both locals and tourists alike. The museum was set up in order to educate future generations of women about patriotism and the national traditions of Vietnamese women.

202 Vo Thi Sau, D3

Reunification Palace

Formerly known as the Independence Palace, the Reunification Palace marked the end of the Vietnam War, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its main gates. Roped-off showrooms, exactly as they were in 1975, include the presidential office, bedroom, and reception.

135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

Vietnam History Museum

This long-running historical museum offers a chronological display of many items and artefacts, and has been showered with multiple awards by the local administration.

2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1 3829 8146

Vietnamese Traditional Medicine Museum

The Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine contains nearly 3,000 items informing guests about the subject dating all the way back to the Stone Age.

41 Hoang Du Khuong, D10 3862 7812

War Remnants Museum

Attracting more than 500,000 visitors a year, the War Remnants Museum shows the grim reality of war, focusing mainly on the American phase of

the Vietnam War. The multi-building museum includes a courtyard with military equipment including a "Huey" helicopter, an M48 Patton tank and an F-5A fighter.

28 Vo Van Tan, D3 3930 6325

parks

Cong Vien Van Hoa Park

This former French recreational space has been converted into one of the city's favorite sports parks.

115 Nguyen Du, D1

Dam Sen Park

This beautiful park was constructed on reclaimed marshland and is widely considered to be Vietnam's most exciting cultural theme park.

3 Hoa Binh, D11

Ky Hoa Park

Large tourist area in the inner suburbs with many lakeside entertainment activities.

12 Ba Thang Hai, D10

Le Thi Rieng Park

A large park in D10, Le Thi Rieng park is a well-known spot for casual exercise, a friendly game of badminton and early morning birdwatching.

875 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10

Phu Lam Park

Gentle park on a small lake amidst busy back streets of outer Cholon, popular with locals for fishing and exercise.

121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6

September 23 Park

One of the largest parks in the city center. It's a great place to exercise, see free music performances, attend public events, and enjoy food from street vendors.

Pham Ngu Lao, Pham Ngu Lao, D1

Suoi Tien Theme Park 🐉 *Or's Pick*

Enormous amusement park on the outskirts of the city with multiple themed attractions demonstrating Vietnamese culture.

Xa Lo Ha Noi, D9

Van Thanh Park

This expansive park located on the banks of the Thi Nghe River offers myriad culinary options in addition to stunning views and natural atmosphere.

48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Zoo and Botanical Gardens

One of the world's oldest zoos, with a modest collection of animals and a botanical garden, with many rare orchids, ornamental plants, and over a hundred species of mammals, reptiles and birds.

2B Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1

places of worship

Ba Chuong Church of St Dominic

Ba Chuong Church was redesigned in 2003, and now this visually stunning house of worship features a blend of traditional oriental and western architecture.

190 Le Van Sy, Phu Nhuan 3844 8206

Bac Ha Church

Built in 2008. The name Bac Ha is the combination between the two names of their original dioceses, Bac Ninh and Ha Noi. The church has two bell towers at 42m high, and there's a room dedicated to looking after kids to let their parents join the mass.

419 Ly Thai To, D10 3839 1032

Central Mosque

Built by South Indian Muslims in

1935 on the site of an earlier mosque, this was originally constructed for worshippers from southern India then-resident in Saigon. Now Muslims from all over the world come here to worship.

66 Dong Du, D1

3824 2903

Cha Tam Church

Cha Tam Church is an old catholic church built in 1900. The church was named for priest Cha Tam in honor of his great sermons and contributions to the community.

25 Hoc Lac, D5 3829 8914

Cho Quan Church

An old church built on the foundations of earlier churches that have stood here for centuries, Cho Quan Church was constructed in 1887 in the Gothic tradition, with large stone pillars and a red tiled roof. The massive bell tower consists of three floors and provides stunning views.

120 Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cholon Mosque

Built by Muslims from South India in 1932, the Cholon Mosque Serves Cholon's Muslim community, including Malaysian, Indonesian as well as South Asian worshippers.

641 Nguyen Trai, D5 3855 5350

Dieu Phap

Almost half a century after Dieu Phap pagoda was founded, it has continued to provide a home and food for the poor, helpless, and homeless elderly people.

188 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh 3553 3267

Hoa Khanh Temple

A tall, colorful, and oddly out-of-place temple, sticking up prominently from the homes and businesses that surround it.

215 Phan Van Tri, Binh Thanh 3843 1699

www.chuaoakhanh.com

Hung Phuoc Pagoda

Quiet and unassuming active Buddhist pagoda situated behind the Saigon Railway Station.

540/23 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3 3993 4113

095 806 3311

Huyen Sy Church

One of Saigon's oldest churches convenient to the backpacker district, and built by the grandfather-in-law of the last king of Vietnam.

1 Ton That Tung, D1 3882 3858

Jamiul Islamiyah Mosque

Highly stylistic Mosque near the central police station, servicing a sizeable local Muslim community, it is also known as the Nancy Mosque.

459B Tran Hung Dao, D1 3920 3325

Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber

In stark contrast with the pagodas and temples that dot the city landscape, Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber is a place dedicated to seeking inner peace and the study of Buddhism. A colorful D6 pagoda with resident monks, daily devotional instruction, and a free traditional medical healer on Thursdays and Sundays from 8-11am.

121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6 3875 1155

093 868 0935

Mariamman Temple

This small Hindu temple is frequented by both Saigon's tiny Hindu population along with residential Vietnamese.

The temple was built in the late 19th century by traders from Tamil Nadu

and is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Mariamman.

45 Truong Dinh, D1

Nga Sau Church / Saint Jeanne d'Arc Church

Dedicated to St. Joan of Arc, this salmon-pink church is built on the site of a former Chinese cemetery.

116B Hung Vuong, D5

Quan Am Pagoda

An impressive pagoda dedicated to the popular Goddess of Mercy, with a beautiful interior and large fish and turtle pond.

12 Lao Tu, D5

Quoc Tu Pagoda

Prominent seven storied pagoda with colorful statuary in D10, the main complex of the pagoda spans seven stories with the first two open to the public.

Ba Thang Hai, D10

Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica

Ho Chi Minh City's foremost tourist attraction, this beautiful cathedral dates from the 1860s and is built with bricks from Marseille. In front of the cathedral stands a Virgin Mary statue, which is said to have been shed tears in 2005, causing thousands of people to stop around the Basilica.

1 Cong Xa Paris, D1

Subramaniam Swami Temple

One among the city's only two South Indian Hindu temples, it was the first Hindu temple ever built in Ho Chi Minh City and the largest. Located a mere five minutes' walk from Ben Thanh Market.

98 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

Tan Dinh Church

Built by French colonists in the late 19th century, Tan Dinh Church is renowned for its distinctive pink facade and decorative designs. A popular photography subject for visitors to Ho Chi Minh City regardless of their religion.

289 Hai Ba Trung, D3 3829 0093

THE WELL International Church

The Well is a registered English speaking, evangelical Protestant church for Ho Chi Minh City's expatriate community meeting each Sunday at 11am.

Khanh Hoi Church, 98 Le Quoc Hung, D4 0976 285 610

www.thewellvn.org

Thien Hau Pagoda

One of Cholon's most popular pagodas, this temple was originally built as an expression of gratitude by 19th century Chinese immigrants for Thien Hau's protection during their initial trip to Saigon by sea. Its many hanging incense coils make for superb photographs.

710 Nguyen Trai, D5

Tran Hung Dao Temple

One among a series of temples and pagodas dedicated to the Vietnamese folk hero Tran Hung Dao, who freed ancient Vietnamese people from the Mongolians in the 13th century.

36 Vo Thi Sau, D1

Vinh Nghiem Pagoda

Sitting next to the canal at the end of Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, this structure draws its inspiration from traditional Vietnamese culture and a touch of the Japanese architectural style. The largest and most impressive Mahayana Buddhist pagoda in the city.

339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3 3843 9901

Xa Loi Pagoda

The largest pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City and known for a brutal 1963 raid, Xa Loi was built in 1956 following the

drawings of the architects Nguyen Van Duong and Do Ba Vinh for worshipping Buddhist relics.

89 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 0679

social clubs

Brogolf Bar Wars

Group of barflies who meet regularly for golf, open to new members. First Saturday of each month, breakfast, brunch, and 18 holes with a caddy.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1
090 927 3997

Dat Nam Friendly Club

While it may ring of a bingo association, this is a fairly well-respected venue for entertainment and cultural exchange amongst foreigners and entrepreneurs - a very casual networking opportunity.

Basement Level, 116 Nguyen Du, D1
5404 3618

International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from 10am- noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (127 Pasteur, D3) Cost for coffee and snacks is VND130,000. Membership is VND700,000 per year. Open to all ladies

Latin Street Dance

Geisha's was funky enough without the addition of this new meet-up for Latin fans yearning for something a little grittier than salsa.

Geisha Tea House, 85 Pasteur, D1

Overland Club

Overland Club is a 100 percent foreign-owned Japanese company that organizes cultural classes including pottery (from basic to intermediate

level, as well as painting unglazed pottery) and cooking classes (Japanese and Vietnamese). The Overland Club also hosts various events. Past events include noodle making, soap carving, and kids' cooking.

36bis Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1
3820 9734

Saigon Swing Cats

Saigon Swing Cats organizes dance classes, workshops and events at various venues around HCMC including restaurants, lounges and dance studios. Dance styles include the Lindy, Shim Sham and Tranky Doo.

Petrohouse Tower- caffe molinari,
5 Le Duan, D1

sports

Green Bamboo Club

Pleasant tennis club with several courts just a short hop over the bridge from District 1 into Binh Thanh.

50/3 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh
3898 6504

Lan Anh International Tennis Court

Popular international sports club facility with advanced sporting equipment, courts, gym, and restaurant. This sports club also hosts tennis tournaments and other events.

291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
3862 7144

Kimdo Recreation Centre

Situated in downtown Saigon, Kim Do Recreational Centre provides a wide variety of services: restaurant, karaoke, live music cafe, bar, dancing, massage, steam bath and hairdressing.

129A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 5914

swimming pools

Great World Pool

Popular public pool known for its high standard of cleanliness, this indoor pool is shallow at both ends and deep in the middle to ensure safety for non-swimmers.

600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6
3853 7867

Ky Dong Swimming Pool

Great D3 outdoor family pool, ideal for the kids.

40 Ky Dong, D3
2241 5322

Lam Son Swimming Club

Olympic-sized swimming pool with designated lanes (one exclusively for women) and a reputation for cleanliness.

242 Tran Binh Trong, D5
3835 8028

Lan Anh Swimming Club Pool

The popular Lan Anh club is a well-situated sports area with a clean, quiet pool and jacuzzi. A bar serves drinks and towels by the water. There are various areas with different depths from 1.4m to 2m, suitable for adults. Swimming lessons are available at the club.

291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3
3932 5508

Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favored by younger people and recreational swimmers.

48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh
2219 5487

Yet Kieu Swimming Pool

A long-standing swimming club that's become the standard for competition, clean water, and inexpensive prices, Yet Kieu is a well-managed complex of pools for the family - and it also has its

own gym.

1 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
0839101542

classes

Cetana PSB Intellis International College

PSB College is the first and only Singapore licensed college in Vietnam. Provides students easier accessibility in gaining knowledge and skills beyond the usual classroom study. PSB College offers a suite of internationally-recognized diploma programs from business, marketing, hospitality to finance.

144-146-148 Le Lai, D1
3926 2233
www.psbcollege.edu.vn

Saigon Cooking Class

Classes can include a market tour to buy the day's ingredients followed by a hands-on cooking class, organized twice a day from Tuesday till Sunday (US\$39.50 to 45.50). Team building programs also available.

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 8485

Vietnam Cookery Centre Oi's Pick

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.

26 Ly Tu Trong, 4th floor, Ste 45, D1
3827 0349/ 3823 8085

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

4th floor, CMARD2 Building, 45 Dinh Tien Hoang, D1
3910 0168



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BANGKOK LANGSUAN

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Fashion

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



Dress | **Ha Nhat Tien**
(inquire in store)

Belt | **Little Paris**
VND125,000

Shoes | **Nine West**
VND3,487,000

Necklace | **Little Paris**
(not for sale)

Mid Century

Mid century shapes are everywhere this season and the key is to go big. Voluminous skirts, layered cocktail dresses and fitted day dresses are all iconic looks of the time, and can be found all the way over here in Saigon. We have rounded up some of our favorite mid-century looks, designed here in Vietnam.

STYLIST: JAMES ALLEN

MAKEUP AND HAIR: KENNY LIEU

PHOTOGRAPHER: QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

MODEL: TOKKI

ASSISTANT STYLIST: DANNY ST. LOUIS

LOCATION: CAFÉ PALPITATION 29 DIEN BIEN PHU, D1





Dress | Little Paris
VND750,000

Earrings | MD Mansion
VND20,000



Dress | Lam Boutique
VND3,900,000

Belt | Bonjour
(inquire in store)

Earrings | MD Mansion
VND40,000



Dress | Little Paris
VND890,000

Earrings | MD Mansion
VND40,000



Dress | Ngan Private Collection
VND1,188,000

Necklace | Little Paris
(not for sale)

ADDRESSES

Ha Nhat Tien

380 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan

Little Paris

12H Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

Nine West

F1 - 20621, Saigon Centre
65 Le Loi, D1

Ngan Private Collection

24/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, D1

MD Mansion

56/4B Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1
091 744 8773

Lam Boutique

76A Le Loi, D1

Bonjour

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

Buckle Down

Our month of mid century fashion wouldn't be complete without a selection of slim belts, perfect to enhance the hour glass shape this period is famous for. There are countless colors available from the florescent to the subdued.

COMPILED BY JAMES ALLEN

Bonjour
VND220,000



Bonjour
(inquire in store)



Little Paris
VND60,000



Little Paris
VND125,000



Nine West
VND1,519,000



>>The List Fashion



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents - website launching 2013

eyewear

Dilusso

Selling many famous eyewear brands under Italian manufacturers such as Dolce & Gabbana, RayBan, Versace and Bvlgari. Provides high-quality products at an affordable price.

29A Dong Khoi, DI
3824 6469
090 921 0192

Eyewear Hut

Eyewear Hut offers prescription glasses, contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses and other devices. They also stock popular brands such as Luxottica, DeRigo, Charmant, Marcolin, Dolce & Gabbana, D & G, Tom Ford, Salvatore Ferragamo and more. Also caters to kids.

135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 1695

Eyewear Plaza

The largest shopping center for eyewear in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 1,000 products including sunglasses and prescription glasses.

33 Nguyen Du, DI
3829 5051

Oakley

Decades of Oakley innovation have led to a full array of market-leading products including performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics. The company continues to build on its heritage of authenticity by reinventing products from scratch to achieve superior quality and genuine innovation that delivers the unexpected.

28 Ton That Thiep, DI
3821 5712

Sunwear Boutique

With many locations around the city, this luxury eyewear store supplies many designer brands, including Burberry, Vogue, Blue Bay, and many others.

89-91 Nguyen Du, DI
3824 4397

ladieswear

Anupa Eco Boutique

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, DI
www.anupa.net / facebook: anupaluxury

Axara Paris - Saigon Center

Axara may have seduced the whole world, but its 2010 launch in Vietnam at the Vincom Centre is still making headway with modern young Vietnamese women entranced by its romantic, glamorous designs.

65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7655

Banana Shop

Banana Shop provides everything a girl needs to be noticed in Ho Chi Minh City. Whether it be undergarments, shoes, bags, or jewelry, Banana Shop delivers with unique products from

Hong Kong and the United States.
128 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3829 0061

Bebe

The shop sells its brand of women's clothing and apparel, dresses, jumpsuits, shoes and bags.

1st floor, Saigon center, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 4011

Cao Vinh Fashion

Specializes in formal Western-style shirts, Cao Vinh is distinctive if for nothing else than its simple, intriguing website allowing customers to specify design elements.

69 Pasteur, DI
3824 5645
090 817 9129

Cashew

Fashion shop chain with 4 boutiques in HCMC. Specializes in women clothes and accessories. Designed by their own designers. Familiar brand in HCMC catwalk and Vietnam fashion industry.

38 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6683 9669

Diva Silk Boutique

Diva is all about silk, oriental glamour, luxury, and a feminine charm to match. The products in this little shop comprise both locally-woven first-grade silk garments and those imported from Thailand.

146 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 7153

Esprit

Hong Kong-based lifestyle apparel brand offering affordable casual streetwear from a two-story shop in the heart of downtown HCMC.

58 Dong Khoi, DI
3827 6085

Eva Gopa

Office fashion, street-style fashion, and evening dresses for women.

11E Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3910 3877

Fit

Caters to women in their 20s.
44 Luu Van Lang, DI

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, DI
3925 1495

Kelly Bui

Launched in April 2010, the shop sells the most recent collections by the brand. The collections shown on the website are the same as those in-store.

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3936 9386

Khai Silk

Khai Silk is a favorite among local celebrities for its high quality tailoring, fabrics and service.

81 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 2856

Kiwi Fashion

Kiwi offers contemporary designs at an affordable price. It was founded by former Vietnamese model Kim Hong Phung and houses the latest

fashion trends exclusively designed by Josephine Geralda, one of the leading designers in London.

74C-74/I Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 8214
3822 1191

La Bella

A Vietnamese fashion shop that carries dresses, skirts, tops and a large selection of bags and purses.

58-87 Pasteur, DI
3823 0172
9am - 9pm
Lyn Around

This is the Saigon branch of the international high-class fashion label Lyn Around. It is famous for its girly girl and street style.

1st Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 6575

L'Usine

The central retail space offers famous fashion brands from around the world with full rotating stock.

First Floor, 151 Dong Khoi, DI
6674 3565

Maison de Bunga

Maison de Bunga is a specialty women's clothing store specializing in designers with floral motifs, hats, bags, and other accessories.

81 Pasteur, DI
3943 0990

Mango

Mango is a Spanish fashion design company with over 2,000 stores around the world. Ho Chi Minh City is home to several of its branches. Mango sells fashion clothing for women including dresses, skirts, tops and accessories.

Unit 2F-II, 2nd floor, Icon 68, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6266 2111
1st Floor, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7464

Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke ao dais.

67 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3829 4007
098 330 0469

Ngan Private Collection

A collection of multi-brand fashion labels created by one of Vietnam's highly recognized fashion designers. Dedicated personal styling consultant available for those in need of their own stylist.

23 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6290 9391

Phuong My

A ready-to-wear fashion designer currently working from Ho Chi Minh City, producing feminine pieces using high quality fabric such as silk organza and lace using expert tailoring and construction which has earned her frequent coverage in the country's top fashion magazines.

81 Le Thanh Ton, DI
09 7271 7788

Shin

Vintage style ladies fashion, clothes and accessories by local designers.

122 Ly Tu Trong, DI
090 935 2369

Sifa Fashion

Known for selling office wear for

women.

192 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3825 0618

Song - Valerie Gregori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophisticated women.

75 Pasteur, DI
3824 6986

Sophilita

A simple Italian fashion brand with several branches in Vietnam, Sophilita mainly sells office, street, and casual, womenswear.

15C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
6275 9019

Suite Blanco

Suite Blanco is a Spanish company specialized in the design, production, distribution and sale of all types of accessories and clothing for the modern woman and man looking for the latest trends at affordable prices. The chain now has 240 shops spread in 15 different countries including Vietnam.

Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, DI

Thuy Design House

A popular Vietnamese ready-to-wear designer creating seasonal collections using high quality materials with a minimalist design aesthetic. Thuy's friendly boutique carries a range of shapes and silhouettes that are often worn by the city's fashion conscious.

151/6 Dong Khoi, DI
www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse

Umbrella

This fashion label caters to a higher end market with tailored bags to accessories.

35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6276 2730
www.umbrella-fashion.com

Valenciani 🍷 Oi's Pick

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

1F/12 Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 2788
090 785 5788

menswear

Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, DI
6675 4013

An Phuoc

An Phuoc Garment Manufacturing was established in 1992 with 50 workers and 40 sewing machines, specializing in manufacturing for exporting enterprises. Now it has transformed itself into a garment export company featuring handmade clothing and shoes.

182 Hai Ba Trung, DI

Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an

exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

Maschio Shop

Colorful retro men's fashions, one of the quirkiest fine-quality local fashion stores in the central area.

**168 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3829 2975**

Mizada

Since its inception in 2004, Mizada has become one of the leading luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. Mizada caters to both women and women with products such as T-shirts, jeans, coats, scarves, and much more.

**105 Le Thanh Ton, D1
6673 4199**

San Sciario Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

**1st Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3864 0800
090 316 6364**

Santo Nero

Centrally-located purveyors of international Santo Nero brand "Italian gents wear".

23 Ly Tu Trong, D1

Veston Huy Hoang

Men's tailored fashions, specialising in suits. Expect to Pay: \$200 and upward for a suit, fabric included. Obviously, the better the quality of fabric, the higher the price. 70% of customers are foreigners.

**65 Pasteur, D1
3822 4609
090 865 4988**



U.S. POLO ASSN.

U.S. POLO ASSN. is an American fashion brand that carries trendy and cool polo style clothing for men. Their high quality items are ideal for casual wear as well as for a game of golfing or any other sports.

**138 Nguyen Trai, D1
6291 3282
uspolo.hcm@gmail.com
www.uspoloassn.com
090 399 9551**



shoes & accessories

Accessorize

Accessorize is devoted to bringing customers eclectic products with its own in-house design team. Accessorize is focused on sourcing globally in an effort to find well priced and good quality collections of fashion accessories following seasonal themes.

Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Adidas Performance Store

Sells running shoes and sportswear by the famous German brand.

**2nd Floor Bitexco Tower, 135 Nguyen
Hue, D1**

3821 2894

**66 Le Loi, D1
3824 1455**

Asian Fish

Serves made-to-order classic souvenirs, original ao dai designs, and is highly popular with Japanese customers. Also sells bags, sunglasses and clothing.

**39/9 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 1839**

Avocado

Airy and spacious shop for handbags and accessories.

**117 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
0123 999 9099**

Bam Skate Shop - VVT

Bam Skate Shop stocks a wide range of international brands for those in search of skating equipment and apparel.

**228 Vo Van Tan, D3
090 878 9820**

Cara Diamond & Jewelry Vincom

One of the better-appointed jewelry counters at Vincom B, Cara sells boldly-designed pieces at reasonable rates.

Shop B28, First Floor, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Charles & Keith

Singapore-based fashion retailer specialising in shoes, handbags and accessories at a mid range price point.

17-18 Nguyen Trai, D1

Compa Jewelry store

Compa Jewelry Store specializes in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds from the finest quality of raw materials that meet international standards. Compa Jewelry is also a manufacturer and importer of gemstones and fashion jewelry.

**135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3915 2151**

Doc Martens

Small central-city outlet of the popular international Doc Marten brand with an extensive stock of the latest styles.

**39 Le Loi, D1
3821 4931**

Hong Anh Collections - LTT

Using fabrics such as silk and taffeta, the brand caters to a younger crowd. Stocks clothing, handbags, jewelry and neckties.

**75 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3542**

Ice Accessories

ICE and ICE Accessories are the newest brands from Duy Anh Trading Co., Ltd. under the creative direction of Adrian Anh Tuan. This high end fashion hub is now open at the Saigon Centre.

Each ICE collection offers 100 types of fashionable designs and colors.

Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1

3521 0881

Ipa-Nima

With a focus on handbags and a design-first philosophy, Hong Kong expat Christina Yu's Ipa-Nima brand translates fashion trends into edgy accessories, steeped in soul.

**77-79 Dong Khoi, D1
3515 3980**

ITALY Shoes Shop

Modest Italian-style mens shoes at local prices in the central area.

**186 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3827 9813**

Kim Ngoc Jewelry

A counter in Tax building that buys and sells jewelry made from gold and gemstones.

**A37-A39 Counter, Saigon Tax Trade
Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4874**

Kimseng

An open storefront that sells gold and gold-related jewelry

**50 Le Loi, D1
3823 4414
090 821 3245**

Kita Diamonds

Quality diamonds specialist with a professional showroom.

**82 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 1510**

Lam Boutique

The shop sells clothing for women only and most of the items on offer are European casual vintage style with a touch of street chic. The clothes are made by the shop and has become quite popular among Vietnamese celebrities.

**1st Floor, 71 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
090 671 2309**

Lo Hang Crystal Jewellery

With almost 20 years of experience in the design field, Lo Hang's experienced group of staff create jewelry from fragments of Swarovski crystals.

**101 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 3596**

Lua Exclusive Boutique

Prestige shop that sells exclusive Vietnamese silks.

**83 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3822 5292**

Nine West

Originating in the U.S. Nine West has a built a name for itself by quickly translating runway trends into styles attainable on the high street, and in the case of Vietnam, the malls of district one. Collections found in store now include a wider range of accessories such as bags, belts and other lines of accessories.

**Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1
Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**

Pandora

Pandora designs, manufactures and markets hand-finished and modern jewelry made from genuine materials such as sterling silver, pearls and gemstones at affordable prices.

**6 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3241**

PNJ Nguyen Hue

PNJ was the first local jewelry company exporting products overseas. Since 1995, PNJ jewelry products have been introduced in Hong Kong Jewelry Fair, as well as exported to Denmark, Germany, US, Australia and is now entering the Dubai market.

**Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4854**

Puma

One of a network of Puma shops around town, this has a far more limited range than some of the other outlets, but scores on its convenient location.

**1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 7464**

Saigon Jewelry Company Ltd

Formerly known as the Saigon Jewelry Holding Company, SJC specializes in manufacturing and trading gold and jewels. The brand is well-recognized throughout Vietnam as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.

**1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8844**

Sapa Shop

Certainly one of the grooviest souvenir shops on Le Loi, much of the stock comprises ethnic handicrafts brought down direct from breathtaking Sapa.

76 Le Loi, D1

Shoes Hanoi

Cheap, centrally-located shoe store with babywear boutique at the doorway. Since 1929, they've been making and selling shoes for both men and women.

**107 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5753**

Steve Madden

Considered the fashion footwear mogul of the 21st century, Madden has been responsible for the design and marketing of the company's trendsetting shoes for the past two decades. His collections are aimed at fashion forward men and women, and also include bags and other accessories.

Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Sophia Jewellery

Fine jewelry sold in an annex to the lobby of the Oscar Saigon Hotel.

**68A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 8513**

Tran Quoc Lan

Custom-makes shoes and sells shoes of all kinds.

**97 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5453**

Tuyet Lan

Tuyet Lan's tailor will help you design your own garment or choose from a colorful selection of exquisite hand-embroidered pieces.

**91 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3827 7038
090 392 6286**

Viet Thanh

People still hunt Mekong crocodiles for their fine leather, and there's a healthy home-grown crocodile leather industry with this venue being one of the more upper-class of these establishments. Sells wallets, belts, handbags, keychains, and other small leather goods.

**137 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 2735**

tailors

ANH SILK

A little fashion shop near the Sheraton hotel selling both men's and women's clothing and with a fast turnaround tailoring service for silk garments.

**151 Dong Khoi, D1
2211 9116**

Cao Minh

Founded by Mr. Ly Minh in 1948, who dedicated his entire life to custom-tailoring works. Cao Minh Garment Private Enterprise was the first in Vietnam to successfully export its suits to Japan.

**77 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3824 2547**

Kim Dung Embroidery Tailor

Tailored outfits and specializing in Asian garments as well as Western suits and dresses for both domestic and foreign customers.

**129 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 2077
012 7773 8146**

Lam Tailor's

Considered the tailor of choice in the diplomatic community here, it had the honor to tailor a suit for President George W Bush when he was in Vietnam several years ago. They import their fabrics from England and Italy.

158C Dong Khoi, D1

3824 3830

Lam Vy

A small tailor shop near Ben Thanh market. Female tailor who specializes in shorts, skirts, business shirts and

dresses.
217 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5087

Minh Doan Tailors Shop

Specializes in suits for men and women.
120 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1687

Phuong Anh

The shop stocks fine embroideries and brocade, with a 24 hour turnover tailoring service.

B4, 2nd Floor Tax Building,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
38213115
090 380 9758

Tailors Nhut

Well-known tailor for men's business and event suits as well as ladies' business wear. Pre-tailored products are available in-store.

232 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5338

Viet Tien Garment Company

The company was established in 1976, and has been successfully manufacturing garment, textiles and accessories for fashion industry.

178 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 4350

watches

D & D

Purveyors of fine watches on Saigon's central strip - one place to go to avoid questionable merchandise.

68 Nguyen Hue, D1
093 847 1846

Luu Hung Phat

There's no shortage of vendors of watches in this part of town, but not many that can afford a plum spot on the central district's richest shopping strip.

56 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 4777
090 380 8909

Rhythm Showroom

An authorized importer and distributor of the Japanese Rhythm brand into Vietnam. Rhythm has 16 stores in HCMC; this Tax Building showroom is known as Shop Dang Nghi.

Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3891

Swiss Watch

Straightforward, quality swiss watch products for the discerning Dong Khoi shopper.

41 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 6126
091 392 5212

Tan Tan Watch

Luxury watch retailers selling from a shop within the Kimdo Hotel foyer. Selling luxury branded watches such as Citizen, Movado, Enicar, Raymond Weil, Frederique Constant, Alfex, Mido, and Tissot - Swiss.

Kimdo Hotel, 133 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8297

Thanh Phat Watch

Thanh Phat Watch is a famous long-standing wholesaler and retailer with many watch stores throughout the city. They specialize in selling high-end watches from Switzerland and Japan, such as Rado, Longines, Montblanc, and many more.

Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3231

Topten

Topten has been an exclusive distributor of the luxurious Swiss watch brand Tissot since 2006. This outlet is a

luxury watch showroom in the foyer of the Sunwah building.

Ground Floor, Sunwah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9279

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

8 Trung Dinh, D3
3930 6667

Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10
3834 9941

Center Medical International

Center Medical International is an outpatient clinic fully-equipped to provide international standard comprehensive and specialized medical services. All physicians are either French or Vietnamese.

1 Han Thuyen, D1
3827 2365

Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.

8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
3823 8454

Diag Center International

Situated in Ho Chi Minh City, Diag Center International is a diagnostic testing center, which consists of a team of thirty Vietnamese staff, and operates under French medical biologists and assisted by a group of Vietnamese medical technicians trained in France.

146 An Binh, D5
3838 1551

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 1860

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 5954

Lotus Clinic

Lotus Clinic was established in 2007 as the first Japanese medical clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lancaster Bldg, 22 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 0000

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic

is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551

Perfect Skin lab

More than just a spa, this District 1 venue is a genuine skin lab that caters to each customer's unique characteristics and needs. The lab is the latest concept developed by Dermal Essentials, the elite distributor for Dermalogica, a skin care system researched and developed by The International Dermal Institute in Vietnam.

1st floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 0372

Stamford Skin Center

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.

254 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3932 1090
090 845 3338

Uc Chau Cosmetic Surgery

This central clinic performs straightforward cosmetic treatments, including enhancing the nose bridge, breast enlargement, eyelid folds, and wrinkle removal.

25 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
2212 3396
2212 3398

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.

79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.

Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0758

dental

2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.

125 Le Thi Rieng, D1
3925 6501

Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.

34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh
3903 6636

Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.

R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2276

Elite Dental

With an atmosphere more reminiscent of a luxury hotel, this is one of the largest high-quality dental clinics in HCMC, established to answer expat demands for superb dental techniques and professional staff.

57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
3933 3737

German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.

1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 3777

Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.

Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9446

Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.

199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1
3925 3399

Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.

50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3835 6159

Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.

173 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6635

Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.

2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485

hairdressers

Art Hair

A small-time local Korean community hairdresser's with a highly-regarded service, presenting an ideal opportunity to be styled after the fashion of the most glamorous country in Asia.

R4-1 Hung Phuoc Villas, D7
5410 3154
090 663 2580

Hair Salon Nguyen The Hien

Nguyen The Hien is an upscale Vietnamese hair salon catering to both men and women. Named after its award-winning hairdresser and designer, the salon is decked out in stylish, modern décor.

102 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 2275

Hairlab

Hair salon without a hint of Asia, bright & clean with all the proper hair-tech on the first floor of the Saigon Center.

1st floor, unit 9-10, Saigon center,
65 Le Loi, DI
3910 4576
093 799 0880

His Salon - Gentleman's Barbershop

Popular men's salon with very good service and complimentary beer.

29 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3829 9455

Hung Pasteur

This salon offers a complete range of beauty treatments and services using quality imported products, drawing in a host of local celebrities and wannabes.

182 Pasteur, DI
3823 1118
090 391 9375
Just Men

A full-service salon for men. A spa and salon specializing in the unique styling and maintenance needs of men only. Masculine all-wood interior and dark brown Mercedes-style chairs. Specialising in hair, facial, massage, and relaxation for men.

40 Ton That Thiep, DI
3914 1407

Kim Hair Salon

An affordable hair salon in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. The range of services is focused on different hair treatments, but also includes manicures and pedicures.

2B Chu Manh Trinh, DI
3825 8643
090 823 9011

Masa hair

Beauty salon, make up, facial care and hair services – hair treatments and restoring damaged hair.

111 Ham Nghi, DI
3821 1282 / 093 777 5862

My Duyen

Cutting, perms, combs, hair washing, and dyeing - full services out of trendy Thai Van Lung.

20 Thai Van Lung, DI
091 927 7126

The Salon

Prominent ladies' salon & sanctuary - the sister venue to the well-known His Salon with its touts out on Ton That Thiep. Services include hairstyling, shampoo, hair removal, manicures, and pedicures.

Ladies' hair & bodycare sanctuary.
64 Ton That Thiep, DI
3914 3999

Vamp Hairline

Vamp Hair Line is a high-class Japanese hair salon offering quality hair care services.

9th Floor LANT Building,
56-58-60, Hai Ba Trung, DI
7303 3330
012 2768 8614

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5
090 588 6086

Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350

nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5
3855 4137

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh
3803 0677

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3930 0828

FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 3334

Hoan My Hospital

Private hospital with a wide range of specialist areas, running for 15 years on Phan Xich Long.

Private owned hospital, has been run for 15 years
60-60A Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan
3990 2468
3995 9862

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.

63 Bui Thi Xuan, DI
3925 3620

Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 6579

Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, DI
5404 2829

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3989 4989

nails

118 Nail & Beauty

118 Nail & Beauty is a salon and spa providing full services including oil, hot stone, foot and body massages, along with skin/nail care.

118 Pasteur, DI
3821 5313
090 372 8338

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, DI
6291 5477
012 2805 6789

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, DI
2211 4956

pharmacies

Curewel International

Involved in marketing and distribution of pharmaceuticals, as well as personal healthcare products, throughout Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius.

49/3 Bis, Tran Quang Khai, DI
38484493

Pharmacy Nguyen Hue

Small western medical pharmacy right in the central city CBD area, selling both domestic and imported medicines.

81 Nguyen Hue, DI
3829 3058

spas



Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanliness environment, Indochine spa provides your senses with natural energy. Indulge yourself for a unique and amazing experience.
69 Thu Khoa Huan st., D. 1, HCM
3827 7188
indochinespa@gmail.com
www.indochine-spa.com.vn
Open: 10:00-22:00

An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, DI
3825 1250

Dermal Essentials

Dermalogica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermalogica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.

108 Pasteur, DI
3910 2038

Eden Spa

Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.

19-25 Nguyen Hue, DI

3821 3815
097 810 6868



Flamingo Spa

Flamingo Spa is an authentic Thai spa where all ingredients used are imported from Thailand. Guests arrive in a clean and friendly atmosphere for an optimal relaxing experience. Men, women and couples are welcome, and they offer a wide range of massages along with a sauna, jacuzzi facilities & VIP rooms.



13B Le Thanh Ton, DI
3822 1074
091 243 9601
FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com

Glow

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, guests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options.

Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, DI
3823 8368

Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully-featured massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung. Various salt scrubs, and high-end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

15 Thai Van Lung, DI
3822 1515

HP Oxygen Spa

A safe haven from the dust and smoke of the city offering an array of body/skin treatment options, including advanced skin care, an eye lightening process, body massages, hair care, and foot care.

Ground Floor, Yoco Building,
41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3822 1286
093 800 2322

Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan
3842 2218
090 395 1902

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, DI
3827 2737

Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, DI
3822 1515

L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638

La Cochinchine Spa

Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a

swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

**6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1812
info@lacochinchine.net
www.lacochinchine-hcm.net
12pm-10:30pm**

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

**64A Truong Dinh, D3
3932 5181
100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 2158
1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638**

MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events – and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

**32 Dong Khoi, D1
090 387 6666**

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

**4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609**



Moe Huong Spa

Moe Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being less.

**9C Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 7118**



Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

**1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507
1st & 2nd Floor, 92 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507**

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

**1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1
6650 4806**

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

**54 Dong Du, D1
6299 0964**

Thann

Thann provide a range of natural hair

and skincare products formulated from botanicals derived by combining the art of natural therapy with modern dermatological science.

**Level 2, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
098 362 4497**

Thalgo La Beaute Marine

Thalgo is on the cutting edge of spa treatments, and is renowned for its products and skilled therapists.

**40C Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 4990
090 360 6366**

The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

**87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 5318**

The Prime – Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with imported machines from Europe. The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy – and a Prime special service package.

**192 Le Lai, D1
3925 5743**

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

**76C Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 2554**

Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom – Mai, Bamboo, and more.

**2 Lam Son Square, D1
3824 1234**

Yuan

Despite being labeled as a foot massage establishment, Yuan actually has a full range of services. Customers usually make appointments. Yuan is especially geared towards Japanese expats.

**1588 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0795**

Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

**16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8782**

Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

**60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
6291 6835**

art & crafts

Art Arcade

Art Arcade displays a wide range of original Vietnamese artwork in a charming passageway off of Dong Khoi.

**151 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 4076**

Beeline

Small shop with cute stuffs. Special traditional hand-embroidered bags, shoes, clothes, and souvenirs.

**60-62 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 2364
155 Dong Khoi, D1**



Blue Dragon

Oh's Pick

Blue Dragon designs 'recycled' fashion and décor. Eco-friendly bags, jewelry, and home accessories made of feed-sacks, rubber, billboard and paper.

**1B Bui Vien, D1
2210 2084
9am - 10pm**

Cao Lien Huong

Artistic & traditional handicrafts on Saigon's heritage street.

**49 Dong Khoi, D1
3521 0445
091 806 0608**

CD Paragon Leather - Caodong Boutique 2

Attractive leather souvenirs & handicrafts

**Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, D1
3915 1778**

Chon Nhan Production & Trading

Chon Nhan Production & Trading specializes in making high grade fine art, especially bamboo works, oil paintings, lacquering, and carved furniture. They have experience in interior design and handmade crafts.

**70D Nguyen Hue, D1
3667 0341
090 383 8355**

Du Du

One of Saigon's higher-class souvenir shops.

**78 Dong Khoi, D1
38276128**

Em Em

Bright, unusual souvenir shop with high-quality ethnic fashion accessories unavailable elsewhere. Special figurines and a tailoring service are also available.

**38 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4408**

Em Oi

Funky souvenir shop with a twist, selling original designer T-shirts, handmade jewelry, recycled bags, and hand-crafted leather products.

124d Le Loi, D1

Ethnic Folk Art Anh

Fine ethnic folk products, mostly hand-made embroidered cloths, accessories and statues carved from horns and bones.

**Lot B1-C11-C12 2nd Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3716
090 360 7527**

Fatima Shop

Fatima shop is manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of customer handicrafts, lacquerware, embroidery goods, and silverware souvenirs.

**3 Ton That Thiep, D1
3914 2403**

Gia Gia

One of Vietnam's leading manufacturer and distributor of products made from precious stones. Range includes paintings, jewelry, precious stones used for medicinal purposes and fashion products.

**135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 5384**

Hai Yen

Sells fully-rigged model ships and

boats, situated next to the Oscar Hotel. Fine model ships & boats

**68 Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 0280**

Huong Nga Fine Art

Huong Nga designs, manufactures and sells high quality arts and crafts products in Vietnam and around the world.

**41 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 8356**

Loang Xoang

Owned by a husband and wife glasswork artist team, they mainly sell their creations through their website, Facebook page, and at the monthly handicrafts fair.

**232/8/6 Ba Hat, D10
090 855 6665**



MEKONG QUILTS

They produce high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, baby quilts, accessories and giftware.

**1st floor, 68 Le Loi, D1
517-Sky Garden I,
Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758
www.mekong-quilts.org
9am-7pm**



MH Craft

The shop has a collection of fine handicrafts, artworks, furniture, and all kinds of knick-knacks made from Vietnamese traditional materials such as egg shells, buffalo horns, bamboo, white clay, lacquer, and more.

**33 Ton That Thiep, D1
3915 2913
090 382 7471**

Ngan Quang Wooden Boats

Sells model-size wooden boats.

**74/1 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 1814
091 822 9272**

Nguyen Freres - Fine Furnishing

Spacious furniture establishment selling handmade goods of silk, mother-of-pearl, stone, brick, bronze, silver, indigo, wood, lacquer along with Buddha figurines, carved wooden screens, ceramic decorations, red lacquered boxes, water puppets, and lacquered statues.

**2 Dong Khoi, D1
3823 9459**

Nhu Y Oriental Lacquerwares

Nhu y provides coasters, tissue boxes, wine bottle holders and boxes, cabinets, frames, plates, trays, vases, and many other items with unusual designs spattered with lacquer dots.

**22 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1
3829 6138**

Paper Paradise

Funky little retailer selling just about anything relating to paper and paper arts.

**19 Do Quang Dau, D1
091 597 8896**

Phuong Mai Gallery

Phuong Mai Art Gallery focuses on the contemporary art works of both up & coming and established artists from across Vietnam. The real deal in a

district of mass-produced art retailers.
129B Le Thanh Ton, DI
3823 3181

Saigon Kitsch

Historic socialist pop-art culture is printed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, coasters and a raft of other goodies creating cool gifts for folks back home - or expats home in HCMC.
43 Ton That Thiep, DI
093 590 5675

Sapa Crafts & Fashion

Established in 1996, the shop sells clothes and bags reflecting the style of the picturesque village in the northern region of Vietnam after which it is named.
7 Ton That Thiep, DI
090 244 1256

SoCoLa Boutique

Unique souvenir items and crafts in an off-beat retail space. Highly unusual trinkets.
39/4 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3822 1839

books & magazines

Cua Hang Van Phong Pham

Large stationery shop with paints and supplies for artists, this is the place to come for art paper, easels, paints and brushes.
54 Le Loi, DI

Fahasa

One of the largest book distributors in Vietnam with 35 years of operations, Fahasa provides a wide range of books - including English titles - from local to translated editions, as well as CDs, videos, puzzles and stationery.
40 Nguyen Hue, DI
60-62 Le Loi, DI

Nam Phong bookstore

A second-hand bookstore specializing in French literature, selling mainly novels and nonfiction titles with a selection of second-hand folio editions. The website is in French only, with a built-in searchable database of all titles available.
94 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3914 7859

Parker & Waterman

A specialist luxury pens counter in the foyer of the Bitexco Financial Tower, This Parker & Waterman outlet sells precision-crafted pens with gold & platinum finishes.
Ground Floor Bitexco Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6291 8739

Phuong Nam Book

With a chain of over 30 bookstores in Ho Chi Minh City, PNB sells & publishes hundreds of foreign-language titles. The Saigon Center store also has a wide range of children's books.
Level 2, Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, DI
3915 1475

electronics & camera

Bose Showroom

Something of a connoisseur's choice, a look through this showroom in the Tax Building will demonstrate some fairly impressive speaker and sound system equipment.
Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 5944

Canon Vinh Hung

Canon Vinh Hung has over 15 years of experience providing the citizens of Saigon with quality Canon cameras and

other products such as photocopiers, fax machines, and photo printers.
103 Tran Hung Dao, DI
3837 1066

Lia Electrics & Electronics

Hardware mart for power components, electrical appliances, and lighting systems. LiOA has more than 20 years of experience as the largest automatic stabilizer manufacturer in Vietnam.
138 Yersin, DI

Saigon Photo Center

Saigon Photo Center has been providing an extensive range of photography services since 1991. They offer services such as photo printing, digital inkjets, equipment trading, camera sale, and equipment rental.
114 bis Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI
3825 8735

Maydocsach eBook Readers

Vietnamese distributors of Kindle and Nook eBook readers, including e-ink screen and color LCD versions. Providing free Vietnamese language eBooks.
149/2 Le Thi Rieng, DI
6678 4542

Son Ha

They sell products such as TVs, Karaoke and stage systems, soundproofing, MP3 players, refrigeration, and appliances.
41 Huynh Thuc Khang, DI
3923 1938

home & furnishings

AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.
219 Nguyen Van Thu, DI
3823 0940

AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.
91-93 Nguyen Hue, DI
3915 3491

Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.
71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3823 8811

Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.
158 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3822 3430

Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.
15C Thi Sach, DI
3823 9394

JB Oriental Heritage

Unique Kashmiri products stocked in a plush retail space in the Saigon Center, JB Oriental Heritage sells fine imported Asian products, including carpets and exotic rugs, handicrafts, and objets d'art.
Unit 20, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 2892

Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 3553

Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.
Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, DI
3821 7233

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.
77 Pasteur, DI
3824 7504

Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.
31A Le Thanh Ton, DI
3825 8672

SB Furniture

SB Furniture is an award-winning furniture store with a reputation for excellent service and attention to detail. They specialize in products made with artificial wood, and cabinets for apartments and villas.
Unit 8-10, 1st Floor, Saigon Centre,
65, Le Loi, DI

markets

An Dong Market

This boisterous wet market beneath the Caesar Hotel. Customers can find food carts, bulk raw ingredients, shoes, sandals, jeans, shirts, and many other goods.
36 An Duong Vuong, D5

Ba Chieu Market

An old market hosting nearly 800 independent businesses in central Binh Thanh district, famous throughout the city for its rich and diverse commodities. Fresh Food, groceries, crockery, household appliances, textiles, and apparel. Second hand clothing available at cheap rates.
40 Dien Hong, Binh Thanh

Ben Thanh Market

Saigon's most iconic tourist attraction, this Vietnamese souvenir bazaar is busy, hot, and full of most everything you'll need to pick up to prove you've been to Vietnam - you can also stock up on your entire quota of presents for family and friends here.
Quach Thi Trang Square, DI

Binh Tay (Cholon) Market

Binh Tay Market is the largest market in Saigon located in an elegant building of Chinese design in Cho Lon. The market caters mostly to wholesale trade, but also offers household items, makeup, and beauty products.
Le Tan Ke, Ward 2, D6

Tan Binh Market

Products here are targeted towards the locals, so don't expect to see luxurious or high-end products. The prices can't be beaten though. Bargain to your heart's content.
Le Minh Xuan, Ward 8, Tan Binh

Tan Dinh Market

Tan Dinh Market has been providing Saigon with a thriving market

experience for decades. Customers can choose from food carts, clothing services, textiles, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Busy old-style market with impressive architecture, selling a great selection of fabrics and seafood.

48 Ma Lo, Tan Dinh, District 1

War Surplus Market (Dan Sinh Market) 🇺🇸 Oi's Pick

Dan Sinh is known as the army surplus market. Located just 5 minutes from the backpacker area and city center, it specializes in selling war surplus and military style clothing and items. It is also a good market for electronics and other types of imported industrial machinery.
104 Yersin, DI

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. Features a deli café serving coffee, wine and foods. Regular shoppers can benefit from a loyalty card program.
16-18 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3822 9391

Sieu Thi Tax Supermarket

General supermarket in the centrally-located Tax Building.
1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, DI

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

Bacchus imports from most of the world's wine regions and supplies wholesale and retail customers. It encourages wine tasting in its Pasteur store using the unique Enomatic system, and staff are skilled in advising on wine matches with food.
158D Pasteur, DI
3829 3306

Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.
94-96 Le Lai, DI
091 816 6809

Boutique Cellar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.
11 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.
54 Ham Nghi, DI
3821 5398

The Warehouse

A premium wine importer, distributor, and retailer supplying wines from all over the world, the Warehouse also offers spirits, wine accessories, glassware and refrigeration to complement their customers' choices.
178 Pasteur, DI
3824 6629
090 921 0014

Vinifera

Established in 2002, Vinifera is one of the most reliable wine distribution companies in Vietnam. Offering prestigious wines from around the world at a great value.
15C7 Thi Sach, DI
3822 1141

Business & Tech

IMAGE BY LEE STARNES



Dear Hadrien,

I recently bought a new HD television in a big electronics store. At home, I installed it and watched a DVD. But after two hours, the screen went black and I couldn't get it to work again. When I found out that not only the TV, but now also my DVD player is defective, I went back to the store. However, they told me that they would not give me a refund and I could not complain because the invoice clearly states that the shop shall not be liable for any damage from the use of their products. Is that really true? The TV cost me almost VND18 million!



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

A member of the Paris Bar, **Hadrien Wolff** has been practicing law in Vietnam for six years, currently as a partner of **Audier & Partners**. He specializes in banking and corporate law, regularly advising major foreign banks and assisting foreign investors in setting up joint venture companies with Vietnamese partners in sensitive sectors such as media, power and natural resources

IN VIETNAM, CONSUMERS are protected under the law on protection of consumers' rights of 2010. This law covers a broad range of issues, such as the protection of consumer information and the obligations of the State relating to consumer rights' protection. It also includes a list of prohibited behavior of organizations and individuals towards consumers and it contains some detailed provisions on dispute resolution.

Under this law, a "consumer" is "a person who purchases or uses goods and/or services for personal use, family use or for the use of organizations," the electronics shop where you bought your TV would qualify as an "organization trading goods for profit on the Vietnamese market". Finally, a "defective good," which is an important term in your case, is defined as "a good that does not ensure safety to consumers and that is likely to cause damage to lives, health and property of consumers even though such goods are manufactured in accordance with current technical standard norms, with no defects being detected at the time the goods were supplied to the consumer".

The law on protection of consumers' rights makes it clear that a trading organization, such as the store where you bought your TV, shall be liable for damages in case any defective good supplied by them causes damage to life, health and property. It doesn't matter whether or not the store knew about the defect or whether or not the defect was caused by them. Only if they can prove that the defect of the good could not be detected with scientific and technical knowledge at the time of selling the product to you, could they be exempted from the obligation to pay damages.

From your question, it seems that the store is trying to use its general trading conditions to reject your claim for compensation and to send you back home empty-handed. Again, the law is very clear about this. According to Article 16, general trading conditions that exclude liability of trading organizations towards consumers

or that restrict or exclude the consumer's right to complain are invalid. So even if the store's invoice contains such a clause, it has no merit.

Now that you know about your rights as a consumer in Vietnam, the next question is how to enforce those rights when the other party isn't cooperative. The law provides for a dispute resolution procedure, including a few different options. The first, most informal, option is negotiation. As a consumer, you have the right to request the store to enter into negotiations with you about your complaint and the store shall be legally obliged to receive you and to negotiate with you for a maximum of seven days after your request. The second option involves the assistance of a mediator to be selected upon the agreement of both parties. These first two options shall not be open to you in case the dispute causes damage to the interest of the State, the interest of many consumers or to the public interest. Further, you may opt for arbitration in accordance with the Vietnamese Law on Commercial Arbitration. The final and most formal way to resolve the dispute would be to start a civil case in court. Often, when a consumer takes this final step to start

court proceedings, a simplified civil procedure can be followed in which the burden of proof rests largely with the trader and in which the consumer shall not be obliged to pay the court charges and fees in advance.

In practice, the last option may not seem very attractive to you. Indeed, the material and financial damage that you suffered may not be worth the costs and especially the time that it would take to start arbitration or court proceedings. My advice would therefore be to try one more time to get in touch with the store where you bought your TV. Make an appointment with the manager or write him a letter. Explain clearly what happened, what you expect from him and, if you feel this is appropriate and needed, share your knowledge about your rights as a consumer in Vietnam. Good chance they will suddenly be much more willing to work with you towards a possible solution. Another option, which you may have already tried, is to see whether your TV is still under manufacturer's warranty. Good luck!

If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com ■



Pay it Forward

Taking mobile payment in Vietnam to the next level



Anh-Minh Do is the editor at TechInAsia.com for Vietnam focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh also organizes events at Evecoo.vn



WITH SMARTPHONES ON the rise and the digital payment platform still a black hole, will 1Pay become the PayPal of Asia? 1Pay from Vietnam seems to think so. The startup, formed earlier this year, is focused on making payments for digital goods using your smartphone a reality here.

The basic idea is that merchants can go to the 1Pay's website (<https://1pay.vn/>), create an account, thus giving them access to the API key and SDK to integrate payment via mobile for their games, content, or mobile apps. It allows customers to pay by SMS, online, and through prepaid cards for purchases through their mobile. Basically, you can buy things on your smartphone in Vietnam now with 1Pay, and merchants can check and collect all their sales in a dashboard provided by 1Pay.

It's one of the first startups in this sector, where most other payment startups like Payoo, NganLuong, 123pay, OnePay, and Mobivi just focus mainly on online

payments for either utilities or e-commerce related goods. 1Pay saw the need for people to buy things (both digital and non) through their smartphones.

Don't Cash It In Yet

There are several problems that 1Pay is facing as it tackles this new market. These include: the mobile market is still not as big as the overall market, telcos still take a hefty cut out of mobile payments, and there aren't that many digital goods yet (the pot is small). But Nguyen Minh Quang, overseas business director and co-founder at 1Pay, technically a subsidiary of mWork, one of Vietnam's biggest mobile game affiliate networks, is optimistic.

"We focus on supporting our merchant to sell digital contents like games, apps, music, etc. The volume of this market in Vietnam is huge and we want to be the pioneer in providing telco payments for this through our online and automatic platform," he says.

With the telco's cut – sometimes telcos take up to a 40 percent cut on mobile purchases – Quang also thinks 1Pay can leverage. "1Pay aims to provide telco payment with some special connection then merchants can receive more, compared to the current ratio for prepaid cards, merchant can receive 85 percent in the near future. 1Pay can provide SMS charging where merchants can get 55 percent, compared to the 45 percent currently."

It's not clear yet how 1Pay plans to do that, but with its background in affiliate mobile games, it's possible. The company, founded in early 2011, has over 25,000 media networks, and works with over 25 local mobile game studios. In one day, mWorks ships over one million downloads, and has over 50,000 successful installs. 1Pay plans to reach USD15 million in billing in 2015. Suffice it to say, mWork has the resources to push 1Pay forward.

Despite the above stats, they are still going to have a hard time. Since they're first to market, they'll have to educate customers, provide guidelines, demo codes, and a sandbox for merchants. They also partner up with companies like Appota, one of Vietnam's hottest mobile distribution platforms.

1Pay may also free up markets for companies like Biitbook.vn (mobile ebook distribution), Terrabook (mobile education platform), and other young or large startups that are working on bringing mobile content to users. Up until now, a lack of options to pay for digital goods has generally held back growth in Vietnam's digital goods industry. For e-commerce, and daily deals, the infrastructure is already there for shipping and cash-on-delivery, but if I want to start an education platform like Udemy, the only way to pay is through a bank transfer or credit card, both modes slow to rise in Vietnam.

Ultimately, time will tell how 1Pay meets these challenges and expands its platform. Quang says it's looking at "both domestic and overseas, to do business on mobile and get back their money".

"We also want to contribute to the rise of mobile digital industry in Vietnam to facilitate the best payment solution for developers and content providers." ■

Dear Afonso,

I'm an expat living here and plan to retire here as well. I've been working in Vietnam for the past 10 years but want to know how I can put money away for retirement when I hit 65. Is there a private pension plan in Vietnam and if so how does it work? I'm 36 now.



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Afonso Vieira is an investment manager and financial planner. He is licensed by the Financial Planning Association of Singapore.



CONGRATULATIONS FOR HAVING a clear vision of where you will be in the year 2042. Most people, especially expats, have no idea where they will be at the end of 2014, let alone in three decades.

Regarding private pension plans in Vietnam, I assume you are using the same definition as me - a type of retirement plan wherein an employer and/or an employee makes contributions towards a pool of funds set aside for the employee's future benefit. The funds are then invested on the employee's behalf (investment/risk decisions taken by the employee and/or the employer), allowing the employee to receive benefits upon retirement at a pre-set age.

The straight answer is that there aren't any private pension plans in Vietnam. But in the past three years several companies have developed insurance related products that are sometimes commercialized as private pension plans. There are mainly two: whole life insurance, and unit-linked

insurance.

Take for instance the whole life insurance sold by HSBC Vietnam, in partnership with BaoViet insurance, called Whole Life Universal. It is a contract that has two components: investment and insurance. The insurance coverage of the contract holder is for almost his/her entire life. Unlike term life insurance, which covers the contract holder until a specified age limit, a whole life policy almost never runs out (in this specific case, until the 90th birthday of the contract holder, or later). Upon the inevitable death of the contract holder, the insurance payout is made to the contract's beneficiaries. This policy also includes an investment component, which accumulates a cash value that the policyholder can withdraw or borrow against.

The advantage of whole life is the insurance component. It can be used to protect your husband/wife/kids if the worst happens to you. The disadvantages

are several: the contract is in dong only; the minimum guaranteed return is five percent per year, below the seven percent you can get in a simple risk-free term-deposit; investment performance is entirely dependent on one single investment manager performance, BaoViet Fund; investments are not diversified (100 percent Vietnam); it is expensive (four percent per year and above); it is not protected against fraud and/or bankruptcy by the State Bank of Vietnam; part of the money (the life insurance component) cannot be used until you reach the 90 years of age minimum; it is a long-term contract, if your circumstances change and you need to withdraw part of the money there are penalties.

The second product that has been developed is unit-linked insurance. Similar to whole life insurance, it is a type of insurance vehicle that allows for the coverage of an insurance policy, and provides the option to invest in any number of qualified investments, such as mutual funds. Let's look at Manulife Vietnam's unit-link product. The advantages and disadvantages are similar to HSBC/BaoViet's whole life universal. The main points to note are that Manulife's Regular Premium Unit Linked doesn't have a minimum guaranteed return, and that there are three choices of mutual funds with different risk levels.

Now, a personal story. At present I work in three countries (Vietnam, Singapore and China) and that should not change during this decade. I am 40 this month, married to a mainland Chinese, one young Chinese born son. Most probably we will spend our retirement years in the south of France, Italy, Spain or Portugal (and in case we can't afford Europe, Southeast Asia it will be). Where do I have my retirement savings? In the UK. And I can tell you with 100 percent certainty that I will not retire in the UK.

My recommendation is to start thinking that the country you will spend your retirement years may not be the same country where you have your retirement savings. ■

>>The List Business



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents - website launching 2013

banks

Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
39290999

Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9949

Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3824 2267
094 801 6318

Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 1525
012 1861 8695

HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3724 7247

Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8260

Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 0000

Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3829 1581

Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 4797
www.vietcombank.com.vn

concierge

Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.
7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)
service@giup.me
www.giup.me

consulates

Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3521 8100
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2
6281 8001
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 2751
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 9899
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1
3910 2903

China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 5009
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1142
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 7350
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9373
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3520 6819
www.consulfrance-hcm.org

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www.ho-chi-minh-stadt.diplo.de
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3829 0130

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3823 7050
www.india-consulate.org.vn
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3825 1888
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08 3933 3520
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3827 0555
kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com
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3829 7667
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3829 9023
malhcmnh@kln.gov.my
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3844 5520
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5449 2425
www.gmas.com.vn
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www.nordcham.com

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3822 1696
norcons@hcm.fpt.vn
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The Outer Districts

IMAGE BY JAMES PHAM



The Simple Life

Across the river but in another world, life is simpler in Thanh Da

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM



THANH DA IS to locals what Thao Dien is to expats - an oasis of greenery cooled by river breezes, an escape from the urban reality that is Ho Chi Minh City.

Set on more than 1,200 acres (500 hectares), Thanh Da is actually an island (but usually referred to as a "peninsula" by most Vietnamese) located in Binh Thanh District to the northeast of the city, with Thu Duc across the river to the north and Thao Dien to the south. Other than at the Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences where many of the long-term tenants travel to work in D1 by speedboat, foreigners are rarely seen here.

Currently connected to the rest of the city by a singular, newly constructed bridge, the island, sometimes called the "lung of the city" is an anomaly. The four lane road lined

with the usual restaurants (including duck rice porridge for which Thanh Da is known), beauty salons and the one lonely KFC, quickly turns into two narrow lanes where shops are just as likely to sell simple bamboo poles, hooks and floats as they are more traditional household goods. Other than the apartment blocks to either side as you cross over into Thanh Da, most of the houses are only one or two-story, in contrast to the high-rises visible on the other side of the river that hugs three sides of the island.

Maps usually show the one main road, Binh Quoi, but only a small fraction of the labyrinthine unnamed paths that make up the interior of the island, some concreted to about the size of a large sidewalk, where traffic jams are most likely caused by pigs and ducks,

but most still dirt paths leading to simple dwellings surrounded by lush green fields. To the uninitiated, it's mind bending to find rice paddies and fish ponds just five miles from the city center.

Mekong Delta Doppelganger

It is in fact this surreal bilocation that brings the locals to Thanh Da. For instance, if you can't make it out to the Cao Dai Holy See in Tay Ninh, famously described by Graham Greene in *The Quiet American* as "Christ and Buddha looking down from the roof of a cathedral on a Walt Disney Fantasia of the East, dragons and snakes in Technicolor," there is a small Cao Dai temple about halfway down the main road that has served the area's faithful for more than 40 years. Men



and women take separate winding staircases up to see the colorful room dedicated to God the Father, or pay homage to the Mother Buddha in an adjoining building. Visitors are welcome to any of the four daily services, but especially on the first of January, July and October, when a vegetarian feast is prepared and up to 200 local devotees show up.

"Cao Dai combines the best of all religions," says Hong, this branch's treasurer. "People sometimes don't do right by their religion, but in essence, all religion is good," she says by way of explaining the syncretic aspect of Vietnam's largest homegrown religion which combines the teachings of Jesus, Confucius and Buddha, all presided over by the Divine Eye.

But the most obvious comparisons are drawn between Thanh Da and the Mekong Delta. Here, it is a case of water, water, everywhere. Besides the every-shade-of-green carpets of rice fields that checker the island, many houses maintain ponds stocked with fish for home use or for pleasure fishing. Some of the canals are even wide enough to accommodate large boats. Area businesses have been quick to jump on the eco bandwagon, many with variations of *nha la* (grass hut) in their names. The three government-owned Binh Quoi Tourist Villages unabashedly embrace every country stereotype onto their well-manicured properties, ranging from water wheels and thatched shacks to monkey bridges and handicraft stalls, making them a magnet for *Viet Kieus* seeking to revive their country roots and couples posing for wedding photos. But the real beauty of Thanh Da lies off the main road and in the many unmarked paths towards the island's interior.

Gone Fishing

It shouldn't come as a surprise that fishing is Thanh Da's most popular pastime. On both sides of the main road, man-made ponds and pools beckon anglers looking to catch butterfish, tilapia and carp. Shrimp fishing in oxygenated one meter deep pools, surrounded by plastic chairs with poles at the ready, is also popular. Prices vary but average around VND100,000 per hour for shrimp and VND20,000 to VND100,000 for fish depending on how well stocked the pond is. All prices allow for keeping whatever you catch, either to be brought home or cooked to order on site.

Deeper into the island are larger fishing ponds in more natural surrounds. One of the biggest is A Xay, four acres of pond ringed by thatched huts and hammocks. On a Monday afternoon, Minh, 58, is one of only four fishermen with positions staked out around the enormous pond. Delivery man by morning, Minh spends seven days out of seven fishing in various spots around the city.

"Thanh Da is really peaceful during the week," he says. "On the weekends, there's a lot of city people, families, teens, so it gets too busy. On weekends, I'm normally tournament



"Everyone knows everyone here. We may not know the house numbers, but if you tell me someone's name or who their father is or what their job is, I'll point you straight to their house"

fishing anyway."

Many of these fishing ponds arrange weekend competitions to boost attendance, with a buy-in of as little as VND100,000. Whoever catches the biggest fish by the end of the session walks away with a VND1.1 million cash prize.

"Some of the larger places even award prizes every hour as well as at the end of the day," says Minh as he carefully molds three balls of putrid rice onto a leader. "This is my secret recipe. It's rice that has gone bad, but mixed with Knorr seasoning, Laughing Cow cheese and coconut powder. These fish are picky eaters and you'd think this would smell bad, but after it's all mixed up, it actually smells pretty good!"

Minh has a couple of dozen variations on his recipe depending on the fish he's after and whether he's fishing in still or moving water. He postulates that because pond owners typically feed their fish leftover rice and *pho* gathered from restaurants around the city, they've grown accustomed to the taste of rotting rice.

As we talk, he suddenly hooks a 2kg catfish. When asked if he'll have it for dinner, he grimaces. "I am so sick of eating fish. My fridge is full of them. Just looking at it, I feel like I'm going to turn into a catfish." Instead, he sells whatever he catches to his neighbors, to lottery ticket sellers and whoever else wanders past his house. "In the market,



catfish goes for VND40,000 a kilo. I sell it to them for VND20,000 or to restaurants for VND25,000. I just need enough money to go fishing again tomorrow."

Living Off the Land

Hanh typifies the families of Thanh Da who have a palpable salt of the earth quality to them. One of 15 children, his family has been here for three generations. "Each of us has our own plot," he says of his 12 remaining brothers and sisters. A driver by day, he tends to his rice paddy on his off days. "We grow enough for our family to eat throughout the year. We also raise chicken and ducks," he says as his son tosses bread into the small pond by his home that is fed by the Saigon River. The family catches their own fish whenever they want and raise fish for market in the small pond across the dirt path.

We walk past his fruit trees - mango, jackfruit, grapefruit - to his house in the back, a modest one story affair with just enough rooms for him, his wife and two boys. While he lives simply, he lives with the ease of a man who owns his own land. There's a koi pond out back and the largest room in the house is dedicated to ancestor worship. "That's pretty common here. Everyone has one. It's not like in the city where people go to court if their neighbor encroaches on their land by a few centimeters. We have a lot of room to move around."

His corner of Thanh Da is a place where everyone has an address, but no one really pays much attention to it. "Everyone knows everyone here. We may not know the house numbers, but if you tell me someone's name or who their father is or what their job is, I'll point you straight to their house."

A Last Refuge

Thanh Da has changed a lot in the last couple of decades. Nguyet, a real estate prospector and 20-year resident recalls that Thanh Da used to be a Wild West of sorts, known for seedy *bia om* (beer garden) joints and after-dark activities.

"You wouldn't dare go out on the streets after 8pm," she remembers. "But it's been cleaned up now. Cafes have replaced the *bia om* places. Families have come in. It's become gentrified. Years ago, when the government decided to privatize state-owned apartments, you could buy a small flat for just over VND20 million. Now a 40-year-old, 67 square meter apartment goes for more than VND2 billion."

Thanh Da's future remains unknown, though. There has been talk for years of investors making high-rises out of the more than two dozen apartment blocks in the area. Flashy plans of a multi-billion dollar supercity surface every few years complete with ambitious talk of universities, exhibition space and entertainment facilities.

Locals wonder whether three more bridges connecting Thanh Da to Thu Duc, Thao Dien and Rach Gia in D2 will ever materialize.

"I've heard that talk for the last 20-30 years," says Hang, a long-time Thanh Da resident. "That's why it's so hard for us to build anything. That just means the government will have to compensate people more if they ever decide to develop this land. So now we have to build surreptitiously. If the police see you carting in a load of bricks, they'll come asking questions, for sure. We're in construction limbo. Grown children who get married can't build on their parents' land. Even if we spend two to three years getting the right paperwork to build, we don't know if we'll be compensated fairly for it if they ever take over the island."

Nguyet agrees. "I only deal with buying and selling apartments because with the interior of the island, you never know what's going to happen."

Hanh, for one, hopes that day never comes. "We've lived here since forever. I can't imagine living anywhere else."

Thanh Da's extensive network of small, flat paved paths with very little traffic makes it an ideal area to explore by bicycle. Friendly locals can always point you back to the main road. A leisurely 10km biking tour covering some of the spots mentioned here can be booked through Exotissimo by visiting www.exotissimo.com. ■

The Pygmalion Effect, Part 1

The obstacles to developing a savvy English speaking Vietnamese youth



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

Lauralynn Goetz, B.A., M.M.Ed. US, is the director of an early childhood education center in Vietnam



LAST MONTH THANH Nien News published an article stating “English language proficiency will be dependent upon private sector tutoring”. I discovered it referred to the Pygmalion Effect or Rosenthal – Jacobsen Study (1968) in which the greater the expectation placed upon people, the better they perform. This was never clearly explained in the article. Wishful thinking or pre-conditioned bias as to results? I wasn’t able to discern the value of this theory, but it appears to be an influential concept driving the expectations and policies of the Vietnamese government.

The article goes on to say that “86,000 English teachers across Vietnam were taking European standard exams aimed at gauging if they are competent enough to churn out an English savvy young workforce by 2020.”

This goal is being criticized as being unrealistic by a number of foreign consultants including myself after a personal experience at the National Teachers College in HCMC. After investing over four and a half hours a week for 15 weeks, the 100 children and seven teachers I taught resulted in a dead-end experiment. The teachers decided that it was me as

a foreign teacher, not the curricula, that resulted in remarkable gains on the part of the 100 three-to-five-year-old students.

We are here to assist, often on a pro-bono basis, but as Dennis Berg, who has worked as an education consultant in Vietnam for over 20 years, is quoted in the article: “Without faculty development and changes in teacher training programs, the project will never reach its goals.”

The project that he refers to has a budget of USD443 million, approved in 2008, which envisions that by 2020 “most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication.”

My personal concern is based upon the criteria that government mandate has established that “English will become a compulsory subject at the third grade onward.” It may not conceivably become reality under that current government edict.

As an early childhood educator, I strongly support Nguyen Vinh Hien, the Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Education and Training, when he said that “early childhood from birth to eight years of age is the most critical period in human development, so early care and education

for millions of children in the country should be a priority.”

“Parents were too busy earning a living to have time for interactive activities with their children. Many wrongly assumed that eating and sleeping were enough for their children,” said Ta Thuy Hanh, from Save the Children foundation.

This recent comment from a foreign educator posted on the Your Two Cents forum on *ThanhNienNews.com* stated: “My oldest friend in Vietnam has held contracts at universities from Hanoi to Phan Thiet to train the faculty on doing a better job of teaching English. He has been invariably thwarted from fulfilling his contract by administrators who ask him to teach English to undergraduates instead of teaching Vietnamese English teachers how to do a better job.”

So how can Vietnam solve the challenge of teaching “competent enough English teachers to churn out an English savvy young workforce by 2020”?

I will present my suggestions next month, but invite *Oi* readers, many of whom are most certainly competent English teachers, to present your opinions and suggestions. Email us at education@oivietnam.com ■



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9 Dong Du, D1

BMV pub

38 Quoc Huong, D2

Charm Bar

58 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1

Endovina Tower

146 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1

Awesome Coffee (D2 - 21)

My Toan 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Boathouse

36 Thao Dien. D2

Chaya Cafe

90 Le Loi, D1

Hog's Breath

2 Hai Trieu, D1

Baba's Kitchen

164 Bui Vien, D1

Boomarang

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7


Chilli Pub

104 Ho Tung Mau, D1

ICE

Saigon Centre, Le Loi, D1



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WAR
WILDLIFE AT RISK

Wildlife At Risk (WAR) is a non-profit organisation based in Ho Chi Minh City
Tel: +84 3899 7314 Fax: +84 3899 7316 Email: info@wildlifeatrisk.org
www.wildlifeatrisk.org

Follow the Money

Find out why international schools are so expensive



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Katie Rigney-Zimmermann B.S, M.B.A, M. Sec. Ed, is director of Admissions and Marketing at Saigon South International School in Phu My Hung.



I OFTEN HEAR parents comment on the high price tag of sending their children to international schools. Many times these parents are expats coming directly from their home countries where their children attended public schools for free. The concept of paying for schooling, except through taxes, is foreign to them. So naturally they ask where the money goes, what it is used for and how does that benefit their child.

A good rule of thumb for established international schools is that 70 to 75 percent of the budget is dedicated to salaries and benefits. Highly qualified teachers with many years of experience need to be fairly compensated for their experience and education. Schools in HCMC compete at international hiring fairs with schools within the region for the same teachers. Many teachers want to work in Asia but are not necessarily concerned about whether or not the job is in Vietnam or Malaysia, therefore a more attractive package helps

to lure the teachers to HCMC. There is an old expression, "If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys". Researchers in the US use Value-Added matrixes to determine the long-term effects of having good teachers. They discovered that students with better teachers were more likely to get higher test scores, go to university and even earn more as adults. In today's competitive global marketplace these are advantages every parent hopes to give their child.

The field of education is developing and just like in many other jobs there are new innovations and new research which demonstrate better ways to reach all students. In order to ensure that their teachers are learning about these innovations or best practices schools need to bring in outside consultants or send their teachers to courses or seminars outside of school. This is called professional development and good schools will invest upwards of three percent of their budget in it. Not only does the teacher who directly

attends the workshops benefit but they bring that knowledge back to the school and share it with their colleagues. This then has a school wide effect on the learning of all students.

Budgeting for the Future

Having great teachers, and ensuring that they are up-to-date with best practices only goes so far if the teachers do not have the proper instructional materials, teaching supplies or books in the classrooms and libraries. It is a difficult and lengthy process to source quality foreign language resources in Vietnam so many schools are forced to go overseas to obtain them. This can sometimes double the price.

International schools often reach beyond the scope of just classroom education and provide students with a multitude of co- and extracurricular activities. This means that schools are required to be equipped with gyms, libraries, computer labs, swimming pools, playgrounds, etc. These facilities need to be constructed and maintained. Operational and maintenance costs are on average between five to 10 percent.

In light of the difficult economic situation in Vietnam today many schools will build a reserve as protection from downturns and decreases in enrolment. Because of recent changes in the laws, foreign-owned international schools are heavily dependent on expat students and so if the local economy does not attract foreign investment the enrollments can be negatively affected.

The final piece used for determining the tuition is whether or not a school is for profit or not. For-profit schools, just like businesses, need to pay dividends or share profits with their investors. The amount or percentage paid out varies by school. Not-for-profit schools reinvest all of their surpluses back into the school.

Many schools share this budgetary information with their communities through things like their Annual Report. Parents looking to enroll their children in an international school should ask about the budget as part of the initial school visit. ■

For the Love of Boats

Tripping along the river



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

A professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*, **Bridget March** specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and small town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget holds drawing classes for beginners and improves in Saigon. For more of Bridget's work including her new book, see BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com

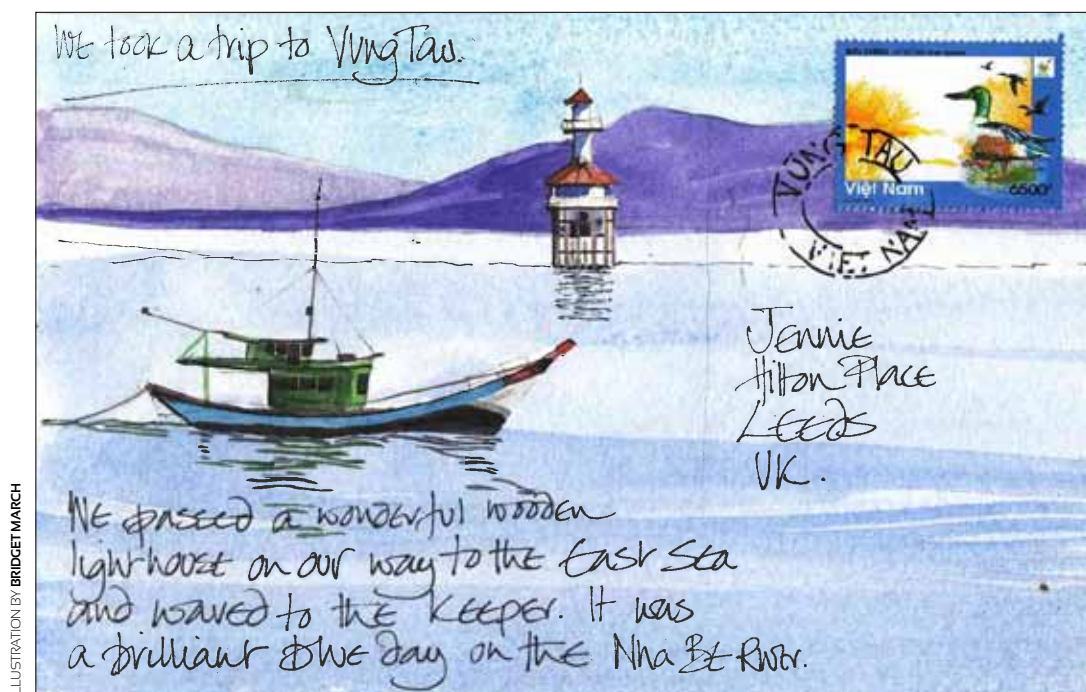


ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

I AM PASSIONATE about boats. I love to draw them and back home in England I even lived on one for 10 years. I can sit and watch boats bob about in a harbor for hours. Just listening to the slap of ropes on masts and watching fishermen mend nets and wind ropes fill me with delight. One of the joys of living near the water (river or coast) in Vietnam is being able to enjoy a seemingly endless parade of traditional wooden boats and ships of all colors and sizes that move gracefully along the canals and rivers and gather in harbors along the coast.

I reckon I was born with some salt water in my veins because my mother's family were seafarers in the north of England. I can just about remember wooden sailing boats coming and going in their hometown but sadly the fishing industry is almost extinct in the UK, which is a sad loss.

Here in Vietnam, however, boats still form a major part of the transport

system internationally, nationally and locally. Whether you want to ship rice to Australia or take your chickens to market, boats are often the best way from A to B. Many communities in rural areas are only accessible by boat so the rhythms of the tides, the winds and the rain are the factors that set the pace of life.

Whenever I can, I make my way down to the water. In Hoi An, I love taking a little wooden boat down the river at the end of the afternoon and return to the quayside by the market just as the sun is beginning to set. The low afternoon sun casts a warm glow over the ancient town and paints beautiful reflections in the silken waters of the river.

In Phan Thiet, a truly evocative sight is the estuary, which is jammed with traditional, wooden fishing boats moored so close together you could almost walk from one end of the town to the other across their decks. Teams of fishermen work on their boats and the women ferry

supplies (and people) from ship to shore in coracles and small wooden tenders. The sight from the bridge over the Ca Ty River reminds me of old paintings of the fishing ports of England a hundred years ago, a piece of living history.

For a more modern ride, the trip to Vung Tau via hydrofoil is a great way to experience the open wildness of the river with its backdrop of blue and purple hills in the distance. Go speeding past the crotchety fishing boats with their double and triple tiered wheelhouses and wave to the lighthouse keeper as you pass by.

Closer to home, the thrill of taking a speedboat up the Saigon River to Cu Chi is hard to beat as a way to spend a morning. Weaving through the floating islands of water hyacinths, leaving a sparkling white wake behind you is truly exhilarating.

I will never tire of the variety of craft and their activities in the backwaters and rivers of Vietnam. I guess I am just a romantic fool when it comes to boats. ■

>>The List District 2



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents - website launching 2013

food & drink

BAKERIES

Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate
39 Thao Dien, D2
6296 0066
voelker-vietnam.com

BARS

Mcsorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.
4 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4659
www.mcsorleys.vn

Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.
18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
6252 1333

Buddha Bar

One of the long standing bars in the area, it has a pool table, darts, big screen tvs along with cheap beers and bar food.
7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080

CAFES

Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

At Agnes Cafe they offer fresh coffee, smoothies and juices along with a delicious breakfast and lunch menu. This quaint and cozy cafe is a perfect place to meet up with friends or just relax to get away from the bustling traffic outside. They offer free delivery.
11A-B Thao Dien, D2
agnescafe@agnescoffee.vn
6281 9772
facebook.com/pages/Agnes-Cafe

restaurants

FRENCH

Gastrohome

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service.
100 Xuan Thuy, D2. 6281 9830

La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day. Set amongst the flowers and with a ring of the lost charm of the Colonial era, this is an appealing and impressive venue for An Phu's high-profile community.
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn
*Reviewed in Oi March 2013

Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.
18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3744 4585

ITALIAN

Pendolasco – Thao Dien

Expect excellent classic Italian cuisine – wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu – cooked with a focus on fresh flavours and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy.
36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
62532888
www.pendolasco.vn

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.
43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132

JAPANESE

Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

Bottles of sake fill shelves along the wall behind the sushi bar, and unique Japanese paintings add a nice visual touch. Since opening four months ago, the restaurant has attracted a diverse clientele, from locals to expats.
14E1 Thao Dien, D2
3744 6782

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308

THAI

Baan Thai

Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs. Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.
55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453
www.baanthai-anphu.com

Jasmine Thai

Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.
85 Quoc Huong, D2
3519 0038

VIETNAMESE

Banien Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant. Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse 🍷 Oi's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.
40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790
www.boathouse.com.vn

Mekong Merchant 🍷 Oi's Pick

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.
23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713

Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and

restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, football, and more. Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large open-plan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie screenings.
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
35194532
www.snap.com.vn

The Deck

Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.
38 Nguyen U Di, D2
www.thedecksaigon.com

Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.
NO.1, Street 2nd, D2
www.vinovietnam.com

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.
41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630
SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3263 / 5412 3264
www.annam-gourmet.com

An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more
43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.
No. 17, Street 12, D2
3740 7105
www.classicfinefoods.com

Metro

Wholesale suppliers of foodstuff, office supplies, furniture, clothes and more. Entry is reserved for business owners only but foreigners can obtain a one-day pass by showing their passports.
Residential An Phu, An Khanh Ward 2

business

LAW FIRMS

Nguyen Giap Law Firm

14 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7812
www.hangluatnguyengiap.com
8am - 5pm

Dang Khuong

26 Street 44, D2
8224 09726

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

Industrial Design Asia

Offers design engineering and innovation consultancy for plastics, consumer products, electronics, metal parts. Dutch industrial designers with over 10 years of working experience in Asia. Contact them to get a free quotation.

VILLA B,12A Street Number 12, D2
3740 6388

Thanh Tung

Prints digital, cuts decal, LED signs, Braille and stainless neon materials to ensure compliance with quality.
373 Luong Dinh Cua, D2
090 952 1411

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Namhouse

Provides rental properties for home and office use, focusing in the District 2 area.
48A Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
www.namhouse.com.vn

Snap Café

Has an extensive list of property rentals in District 2.
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
3519 4282
www.snap.com.vn

health & beauty

DENTISTS

European Dental Clinic

Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.
17-17A Le Van Mien, D2
091 874 9204 or 090 955 1916
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.
96 Tran Nao, D2
6674 4255
8am to 8pm

Nu Cuoi Hoan My (Perfect Smile)

14-16 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7470
hoanmysmile@gmail.com
8am to 8pm

Dental Truong Thanh

276 Tran Nao, D2
5402 3009
www.nhakhoatruongthanh.com

FITNESS

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.
APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2549
www.aisportscentre.com

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs. Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326
www.cyril-and-you.com

NTFQ2

Besides an excellent weights and cardio area, the facility runs group classes including power yoga, pilates, circuit training, martial arts and spinning.
34 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2
www.nutrifort.com

Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool

751 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0012

X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
www.xrockclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2
3897 6786

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2
www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2
6660 6602
www.dakhaoanphu.com

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2000
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

SALONS & SPAS

J Hair Salon

Experienced stylist Jimmy Le provides modern styling, healthy and fashionable hair care, along with professional blonde highlighting treatments.

33A Thao Dien, D2
090 934 2022

Saigon Dep

The clinic treats various skin diseases and offers skin care protection and prevention packages.

79 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0448
www.saigondep.net

The Royal Spa And Salon

Services include acrylic nails, facials, hair salons and massages

14E14 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4873

shopping

HOME INTERIORS

Austin Home

Furniture shop that stocks art deco pieces, cushions, fabrics and wooden ornaments for the home

20 Thao Dien, D2
3519 0023

Click Clac Sofa

Sells sofas that double up as beds in various sizes and wood

327F Luong Dinh Cua, D2
5402 7434
www.clickclacsofa.com

education

SCHOOLS

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).
Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)
APSC Compound

36 Thao Dien, D2
Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)
East-West Highway, D2
3742 4040
www.aivietnam.com

British International School

Offers pre-school to secondary education under the English national curriculum.

225 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3744 2335
www.bisvietnam.com

Horizon International Bilingual School

A bilingual school, HIBS opened in 2005 and applies 100 percent of the Vietnamese national curriculum, MOET, as well as providing students with an intensive English program along with teaching science and math in English.

6 - 6A - 8, 44 Street, D2
hibsvietnam.com

L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

33/19 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 6844
www.latelier-anphu.com

Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3744 2639
www.montessori.edu.vn

Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2
3744 4709
noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn

Saigon Sports Academy

A multi-sports training school that teaches chess, swimming, tennis, soccer, among others.

28 Tran Nao, D2
7303 1100



Saigon Star International School

Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.

Residential Area No.5,
Thanh My Loi Ward, D2
3742 STAR / 3742 7827
www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn



Smartkids

An international childcare centre provides kindergarten and pre-school education for children between 18 months and six years old. A fun and friendly environment, the school focuses on learning through play.

1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2
3744 6076
www.smartkidsinfo.com

travel

TRAVEL AGENCIES



Exotissimo Travel

EXOTISSIMO TRAVEL Asia 20

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world! Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office.

A District 1 presence will re-open soon.
41 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4111
www.exotissimo.com
anphu@exotissimo.com

Ka Nguyen

Specializes in providing tickets for Eva Airlines, Qatar Airways, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific, American Airlines,

Singapore Air, Malaysia Airlines, Korean Airlines, Qantas Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines and many other international airlines.

6483 Xuan Thuy, D2
6674 9041

SERVICED APARTMENTS

Glenwood Serviced Apartment

A very modern property, located in the heart of the expatriate's residential area, steps away from Int'l schools and supermarket.

2483 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
0944 168 568

Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases.

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
www.riverside-apartments.com

River Garden Apartment

It is located within a 15-minute drive of downtown and provides its occupants with stunning views of the Saigon River in a resort type of environment.

170 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2

Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

628C Hanoi Highway, D2
6255 9900
www.somerset.com/vietnam

Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool ensconced by verdant gardens.

197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2
0906099180
www.villasong.com



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www.oivietnam.com

>>The List District 7



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents - website launching 2013

food & drink

BAKERIES

Savouré Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season.

Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5412 2469
www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

A spacious, attractive restobar with comfortable, lounge-style seating and a bar area, this watering hole mixes three beers on tap and a large screen for live sports with a pan-Asian curry menu.

557-1 Sky Garden 2, D7 5410 0999

Ruby Soho 🍷 Oi's Pick

A popular district 7 spot with excellent and cheap range of cocktails, good food and great music! Listen to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Ramones or Beck while downing an ice cold one.

552-1 Sky Garden 2, D7 0120 325 9138

The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 3900

CAFES

Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7 7308 3131
www.baskinrobbins.vn

Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7 3932 2778
www.budsicecream.com.vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf serves some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes.

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7 3824 4527
www.coffeebean.com.vn

FB Deli Coffee

FB Deli Coffee features a unique black and white design and signature coffee beans imported from Italy. Guests can also enjoy many varieties of homemade cakes, along with Tiramisu, muffins, and sandwiches. All cakes 50% off from 7 to 10pm.

SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7 5411 9696
8am - 10pm

The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5412 3257

MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent

Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

101 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5412 2480
www.mof.com.vn/en

NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC, The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular muddies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5413 6523

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.

SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5411 1186

restaurants

La Cucina



La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.

Reviewed in Oi April 2013
Block 07-08 CRI-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5413 7932

CHINESE

Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant



Serving China's little-known spiciest cuisine, the dishes of China's reddest province and the preferred taste of Chairman Mao, Huong Vien is well-decorated although a bit on the pricey side, with dishes averaging VND180,000.

S59-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7 5410 4368

Ming Dynasty

Ming Dynasty serves authentic Chinese food in a setting reminiscent of an old Chinese palace. Specialties include dim sum, shark fin and abalone and dishes from Quang Dong.

23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7 5411 5555

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoor.

S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 1989

Spice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any palette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood.

S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7 093 841 6551
www.namaste-india.com.vn

ITALIAN

Sarpino's



Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.

351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7 5412 2480
www.sarpinos.vn
9am - 10.30pm

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.

103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 | 5412 4848
www.saltpepper.com.vn

JAPANESE

Baby Spoon



Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.

SB 2-1 Parkview, D7 3822 3356

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.

SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7 5412 3940

THAI

Nathalie's Phu My Hung



Nathalie's Phu My Hung is situated in an ideal location on a central corner in the district 7 high-profile metropolitan area. Serving delicious Thai cuisine in charming and romantic surroundings, the restaurant has two floors with a unified, simple decor and warm colourful tones throughout.

S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7 5410 0822
www.nathaliesrestaurant.com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000 VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5415 5556
www.thaiexpress.vn

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional

Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

R1-72 Hung Gia 1, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 2027

ASIAN

Cham Charm



Cham is more like a museum than a dining venue, filled with the artefacts and sculpture of the Champa people and with gorgeous artworks and colourful hangings on the walls. The upstairs area is a wide-open terrace with plenty of tables for a more relaxing atmosphere. The cuisine is pan-Asian.

2 Phan Van Chuong, D7

WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7 3841 3883
www.boomerang.com.vn

Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.

02 Phan Van Chuong, Phu My Hung New Urban, D7 5410 9999

El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere.

Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7 3825 1879
www.elgaucho.com.vn

Scott & Binh's Restaurant 🍷 Oi's Pick

This unassuming little bistro is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike. With a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and various other international dishes, this is an ideal guilty hideaway from Vietnamese cuisine for just one meal at least.

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7 3920 8986

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. This location also features a coffee lounge.

SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

Citimart

Despite being smaller in floor size than some other supermarkets, Citimart, a large Vietnamese supermarket chain, carries a wide selection of imported goods.

SC-10 Green View, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7 B3-4, B3-5, B3-6 Ha Huy Tap, D7 S4-1 Hung Vuong 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Lotte Mart

Lotte Mart is a South Korean supermarket chain with two branches in Ho Chi Minh City carrying a very wide range of products.
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7

Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.
554-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7
5410 2613

business

BANKS

ANZ Bank

47 Phu My Hung
5410 1666
www.anz.com/vietnam/vn

HUMAN RESOURCES

Xage Consultancy

A human resource management consulting firm that develops people and organizations specializing in talent development, organizational development and outplacement.
35A-1-2, 1st Floor, Grandview C, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3402

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

Xone FM

The first independently run radio station in Vietnam, Xone FM provides the latest and hottest songs in both English and Vietnamese via 10 channels throughout the country.
100 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5413 5341

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Anh Nguyen Real Estate

Anh Nguyen specializes in rental and sales of residences in Phu My Hung.
168 Ha Huy Tap, D7
090 958 2489

Vietnam Housing

Vietnam Housing specializes in helping Vietnam's foreign community with their long- and short-term real estate rental and purchasing needs.
R1-49, Hung Gia 3, D7
5412 5979

health & beauty

DENTISTS

Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Miho.
R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
5410 3937

HOSPITALS

David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

DSCC provides Chiropractic care for patients using state of the art physiotherapy equipment imported from USA. DSCC is managed and operated by American doctors who use modern and advanced technologies techniques to ensure safe, gentle, and effective treatment.
41 Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7
5410 6242
www.saigonchiropractic.com

FV Hospital

French Hospital - Vietnam is a multi-specialty hospital equipped with modern equipment and providing a full range of medical services including medical and health advice, diagnosis and surgical treatment at a single point.
6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 3333

SALON

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the

Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.
3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

shopping

HOME & FURNISHINGS

Mekong Quilts

Mekong Quilts offers sustainable employment to women from poor rural regions of Vietnam and Cambodia who craft fashionable, quality silk quilts and home wares.
517 Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758
www.mekong-quilts.org

LADIESWEAR

Aquamarine

Aquamarine and Xuan Thu are premium swimsuit brands for men, women and children.
3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
3842 7105

Vera

Vera is an international premium lingerie brand that is designed and made in Vietnam. The line offers cutting edge lingerie and is reasonably priced.
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3822 1152
www.vera.com.vn

education

SCHOOLS

ABC International School

Providing a caring and nurturing atmosphere for all its students, the ABC International School offers a combination of both British and international educations and qualifications.
Saigon South Campus 1 (Primary & Secondary)
#2, 1E Street, Khu Dan Cu Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh
5431 1833 /34/35/36
abcintschoolss@vnn.vn
www.theabcis.com

Kids Club Saigon

Early childhood centers in Phu My Hung offering creative play-based programs for children ages 2 to 5. Known for unique facilities, experienced staff, high-quality learning resources, and small class sizes
79/7 Pham Thai Buong, D7
27/3 Ha Huy Tap, D7
5412 5944
www.kidsclubsaigon.com

Kindermusik

The center is a music, movement and English-language program for children from birth to 7 years. Each lesson promotes early literacy and English language acquisition, social skills and more. Kindermusik programs align with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary years.
Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7
www.kindermusik-vietnam.com
090 709 9480

Renaissance International School Saigon

Opened in 2008, The Renaissance International School Saigon offers programs from Early Years to secondary curriculum, founded on the International British System. The four buildings on the school's one-hectare site include a 350-seat auditorium, a computer resource centre, gymnasium and 25 m swimming pool.
74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171
www.rissaiagon.edu.vn

RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT International University Vietnam is the Asian hub of Melbourne-based University RMIT - Australia's biggest tertiary institution.

The largest offshore campus in the world, RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering.
702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 1300

Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families. SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.
78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5413 0901
www.ssis.edu.vn

Vstar School

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.
Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3821 3821

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.
R4 -28 Hung Phuoc 2, Le Van Thiem, D7
3602 6694

recreation

CINEMAS AND THEATRES

Lotte Cinema

Lotte Cinema (Nam Saigon) has 1,336 seats in 6 theaters, showing movies in English and Vietnamese.
3rd Floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2527

Megastar Cineplex

Showing movies in English and Vietnamese, and Megastar offers more cinema screens than anyone else in Vietnam. Both the Crescent Mall and Parkson Paragon locations have 8 theaters.
5th Floor, Crescent Mall, 101 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2222
5th Floor, Parkson Paragon, 3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5416 0088

GYMS & SPORTS

The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.
3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza,
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 1277

Body by Jovie

An urban boutique gym & yoga studio with a unique facility catering to the individual demanding diversity, personal attention and results. They are an alternative to the mainstream gym who strive on raw functional training, small group fitness & Yoga combined with state of the art equipment.
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence
Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5417 1946; 0120 384 0961
bodybyjovie.com
info@bodybyjovie.com

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba® Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbaAtomic®.
Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril6you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and

Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1).
093 406 0735 or 6680 7226
zumba.nutrition@gmail.com
www.zumba-saigon.com

Saigon South Golf Club

The closest golf course to HCMC's downtown area, Saigon South is a 9-hole, par 3 golf course and driving range situated behind FV hospital. There are foreign trainers to help golfers with golf skills. Equipment hire is available.
Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5411 2001

travel

HOTELS

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.
15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
5411 1008

Bizu Premier Hotel Phu My Hung

Twenty-five rooms spread over 5 floors provide modern comforts such as satellite/cable TV, bathtub, balcony/terrace, bathrobes, air conditioning.
7-9 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently located close to Phu My Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, guests can choose from 20 rooms.
R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7
5410 5941

Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.
73 Hoang Van Thai, D7
www.ibis.com

Sabena Hotel

The Sabena Hotel sits in a quiet, tree-lined street just off the major Parkway Nguyen Van Linh. The Saigon Exhibition & Convention Center, RMIT International University and The Crescent Mall are only 1km away.
24 Noi Khu Hung Gia 4, D7
5416 1000

SERVICED APARTMENTS

The Crescent

The Crescent is located along the Crescent Lake in the heart of Phu My Hung New City Centre, offering an exclusive high-class lifestyle for locals and expats. This area consists of a variety of green parks, restaurants, luxury apartments, retail shops and entertainment venues.
101 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Court

Completed in 2009, Garden Court is a luxury apartment building located close to schools, supermarkets and shopping centers and a golf course.
Garden Court, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Plaza

Garden Plaza is a high class apartment building designed after modern Singapore buildings, comprising of four inter-connected 8-storey blocks.
Garden Plaza, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Sky Garden

Sky Garden is a huge complex of apartments including 42 buildings with more than 3,000 individual apartments set on 10.4 hectares.
Sky Garden, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5410 1616

Faces & Places



Sunday Bloody Sunday

Boomarang, in partnership with Oi, held the city's first blind Bloody Mary contest and with a bevy of contestants looking to bring home the trophy the judges had their drinking cut out for them. The winners were, from first to third place, Ngan from Lucky Dog, Scott from Scott & Binh's, and Nhi from Boomarang.

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



Bright New Semester

The team at New World Saigon helped Tan Thach A School start a new school year with a repainted canteen area, three full sets of computers, 200 pieces of bed linen, 100 bath towels and 20 blankets.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY NEW WORLD SAIGON



Pride Parade

Viet Pride 2013, an event that supports the local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, took place last month. This is its second year in Vietnam. Last year it was organized only in Hanoi but has been developed nationwide in 12 cities and provinces across the country including My Tho, Thanh Hoa, Hai Phong, Vung Tau, Can Tho, Quy Nhon, Ben Tre, Da Nang and Nha Trang.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY MAGNETIC NO



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*2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 World Travel Awards.

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