



VIETNAM

OCTOBER 2013

# GENDERATION

HE/SHE/WE

## BLAZING SADDLES

An Equestrian Center  
for Horse Lovers

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## INTO THE HIGH ALTAI

Mongolia and Snow-  
Capped Mountains

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## HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Cinderella Pirouettes  
Onto the Stage

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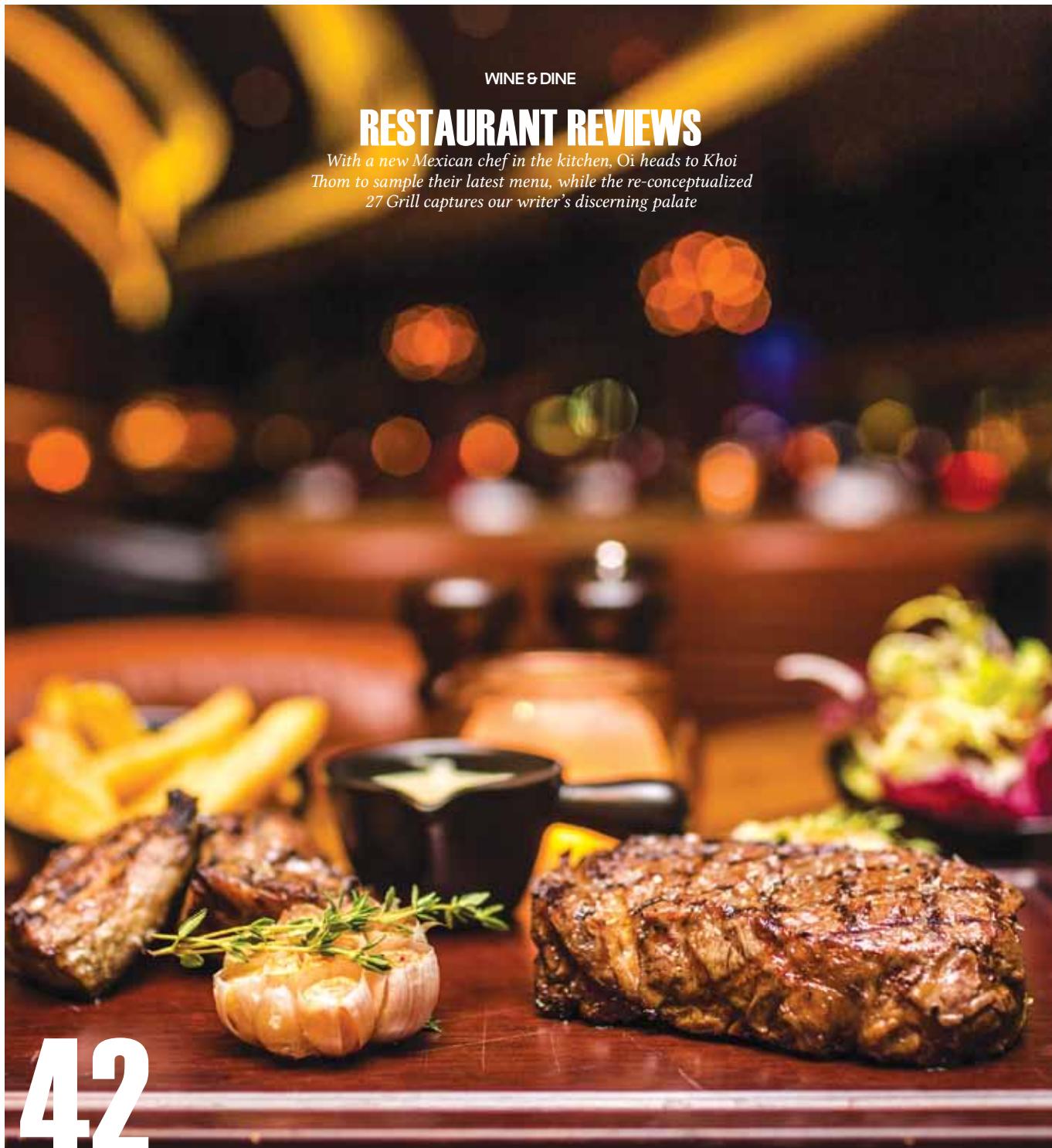
# GENDERATION

*From the birds to the bees and everything in-between*

WINE & DINE

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# Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 8  
OCTOBER 2013

## The Birds & The Bees

ACCORDING TO URBAN research legend, men think about it once every seven seconds. It's also one of the most basic of human needs along with food and sleep. So why is it then that sex is so easy to joke about but so difficult to actually talk about? This month, *Oi* is taking a measure of the country's sexual health as it were. James Pham takes a look at the state of sex education, for kids as well as adults and how East can learn from West and vice versa when it comes to all things "blankets and pillows," as the Vietnamese euphemism puts it. Michael Arnold talks to Yun Lukas, a cookbook author and fashion commentator about the joys of being a gay man in Saigon while NPD Khanh uncovers the wistful, raw side of Mimi, a transgender funeral performer. However you feel about the topic, I guarantee you'll have a visceral reaction to our cover series this month which aims to portray the educated, touching, joyful and sober sides of the issue.

As a Vietnamese-American, I have to say that I'm really proud of Vietnam for the positive, forward steps lately of opening dialogue on introducing same sex marriage laws and allowing for more visible varying lifestyles. Say what you will about life in Vietnam, but for me, this is a step in the right direction.

In our travel section, Jura Cullen takes us along on an epic trek across the wilds of Mongolia on horseback. Her article takes me back to my own trip to Mongolia several years ago. I was struck by the beautiful barrenness of the country, the frigid cold a refreshing contrast to Vietnam's tropical heat. We saw gorgeous scenery similar to what Jura describes and I'll never forget being invited into a kind old woman's yurt where she plied us with yak's cheese. It was one of the most horrible things I'd ever tasted and I ended up shoving it into my coat pocket when she wasn't looking. But the experience only endeared me more to this vast, stunning country so worth the effort of getting there.

We're also excited to start a new series where we interview interesting personalities against various Saigon backdrops. This month, over a foot massage at Spa InterContinental, James Pham talks to Duc Tuan, Vietnam's answer to Josh Groban, about the music industry, the power of reality TV and the timeless appeal of classic songs. James also sits down with two top Vietnamese ballet dancers to see how this elite art form is finding its feet in modern-day Saigon.

As a kid, my sisters and I would be tutored by our father during the summers, mainly on math. I'm not sure I could've taken his tough brand of love all year round, though. But homeschooling is very much a viable, if not sole, option for some expat parents here who find they can't afford international schools. Michael Arnold talks to a family about the ins and outs of teaching your children at home. Finally, our mythbusters asks the question of what to do in case of a fire? Are the rumors really true that you have to pay the firefighters something before they'll put out the fire? I hope you'll never need to know the answer firsthand, but read the article for the sake of preparedness.

As always, we've put our insightful correspondents to work this month to bring you a bit of culture, a bit of controversy and everything else in between. Did we hit the mark? Or did we fall short? I'd love to hear your thoughts either way. Email me at [editorial@oivietnam.com](mailto:editorial@oivietnam.com)

And since I'm a woman who loves her words, I'll leave you with this quote from Dr. Ruth which I think applies perfectly to this month's topic. "Words can be sweetly encouraging or downright dirty, but they are always a powerful aphrodisiac." ■

**CHRISTINE VAN**

Managing Editor



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# Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



**OCTOBER 11, 12, 18 & 19**

**What:** Dangerous Liaisons

**Where:** Q4 Event Space, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4; 8pm

**About:** Dangerous Liaisons is the lusty tale of seduction, betrayal and revenge set in the morally corrupt, high society world of pre-revolutionary France. Two aristocrats, who play the game of love without caring about the people they use in the process, encounter dramatic results when one of them falls in love. Dragonfly Theatre is proud to bring this guilty pleasure to Saigon, introducing characters who are as cultivated, discerning and daring as their audience.

**Contact:** Email [tickets@dragonflyvietnam.com](mailto:tickets@dragonflyvietnam.com) for tickets



**OCTOBER 12**

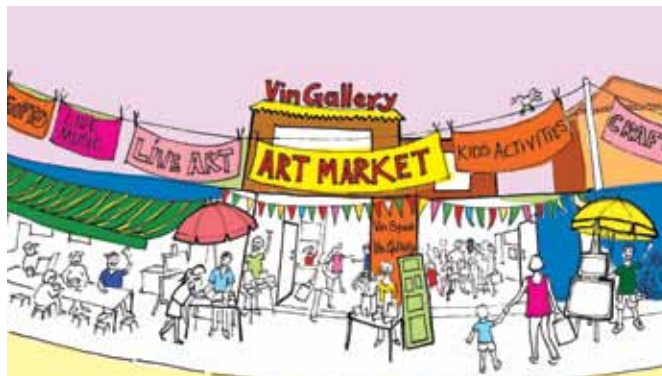
**What:** Les Siestes Electroniques Concert

**Where:** Tao Dan Park, 55C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1; 3pm – 7pm; free

**About:** After two Congolese editions and many other destinations reached, Les Siestes Electroniques has landed in Vietnam for two afternoons of free concerts in HCMC and Hanoi. Starring Nguyen Hong Giang, Vincent Moon, Laurent Jeanneau, and Jean Nipon, the concert will revolve around ethnographic and naturalistic music.

There will be a free after party at Blanchy's Tash (95 Hai Bah Trung, D1) from 9pm till 2am in collaboration with Heartbeat Saigon.

**Contact:** Email [theo@les-siestes-electroniques.com](mailto:theo@les-siestes-electroniques.com) for more info




**OCTOBER 12**

**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](http://www.vingallery.com) for more info



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**OCTOBER 14**

**What:** CanCham Thanksgiving Dinner at 6pm

**Where:** Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon, 2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1

**About:** The evening will feature a buffet menu, including roasted turkey with stuffing, cranberry sauce and giblet sauce, an auction of student artwork, supported by various international schools in HCMC. Proceeds will go to support organizations within CanCham's CSR program. Cost is VND11,000,000 for a table of 10, adult is VND1,200,000, children (from five -12) is VND500,000, and children under five is free

**Contact:** Email [hcmc@canchamvietnam.org](mailto:hcmc@canchamvietnam.org) for tickets

**OCTOBER 16**

**What:** The Hour of Power

**Where:** Jaspas Restaurant, 33 Dong Khoi, D1; 7am

**About:** Hosted by the CanCham Breakfast Club HCMC, the event will feature five speakers, five presentations of five minutes each. This event is open to the public for anyone interested in giving a presentation or for those who would like to attend and expand their networking contacts. The event comes with a buffet breakfast. Cost is VND220,000 for CanCham members, VND270,000 for non-members

**Contact:** Email [hcmc@canchamvietnam.org](mailto:hcmc@canchamvietnam.org) for details about presenting or attending



**OCTOBER 17**

**What:** Saigon Artbook Launch

**Where:** La Brasserie de Saigon, 38 Dong Du, D1; 6pm – 11pm

**About:** To launch its first edition, Saigon Artbook will host a release party where guests can view artwork and meet the three artists (Truc-Anh, Ayano Otani and Sandrine Llouquet) featured in the book, as well as receive a free copy of the book. Free food and a welcome drink will be served. The event is sponsored by RuNam Cafe, Lam, Pacorini Vietnam, La Creperie, Peroni, Oi Vietnam, AsiaLife, barcode, pose, and Saigoneer.

**Contact:** Those who want to join must register at [www.saiگونartbook.com](http://www.saiگونartbook.com) ahead of time



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**OCTOBER 20**

**What:** Red Dress Run

**Where:** Meeting point will be at the Caravelle Hotel at 2pm

**About:** Saigon Hash House Harriers will be holding their annual Red Dress Run for charity where all women, men, children and dogs are required to wear a red dress based on a global tradition held annually by hash chapters all over the world since 1988. As usual the hash will balance running and walking trails with drinking beer. All proceeds will go to Operation Smile.

**Contact:** If you would like to participate and for further details please sign up at [www.saigonhash.com](http://www.saigonhash.com)



**OCTOBER 25**

**What:** Ngo Van Sac's Solo Exhibition

**Where:** CT Gallery, 27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1

**About:** Winner of the 2012 Dogma prize for self-portraiture, Ngo Van Sac uses a unique burning technique on raw pine to create portraits and tell stories of the life of his native Hanoi.

"I started working with wood as a material about 10 years ago; but when I looked back at the paintings I created they did not really meet my expectations so I just burned them all. Then in turn when I looked at the burned paintings I saw in them a new life and a new form of work," explains Sac.

**Contact:** Visit, [www.cthomasgallery.com](http://www.cthomasgallery.com) for more info



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## NOVEMBER 1

### What: Standpoint Theories

**Where:** Cargo Bar (7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4); 7pm; entrance fee is VND100,000

**About:** Standpoint Theories is a collaboration between dancer Emily Navarra, musicians Bryon Rudd and David Haimovich known as Space Panther, media artists Daniel Long/Le Thanh Tung (a.k.a. Crazy Monkey) and poet Matt Bender. This is an evening-length, interactive dance performance which connects movement, sound and light organized by swarmed algorithms. Live entertainment before and after the performance will include The Marmalades, Hot Tzigani Project, Tastes Like Chicken and Bad Neighbour.

**Contact:** More info can be found at [www.facebook.com/events/194157197431809/](https://www.facebook.com/events/194157197431809/)



## NOVEMBER 1 & 2

### What: The Rocky Picture Horror Show Film Screening and Party

**Where:** McSorley's, 4 Thao Dien, D2

**About:** As part of their 10th anniversary, the Saigon Players are hosting a screening of the cult movie. Join them as they relive the absolute pleasure of the most popular film ever to incorporate audience participation in its screenings. Come in your fishnets and stilettos and they'll provide the props and popcorn. Film starts at 7:30pm with a party afterwards. Tickets cost VND250,000.

**Contact:** Visit, [www.saigonplayers.com](http://www.saigonplayers.com) for more info for more info



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# Troi Oi

## The country by numbers



## USD2 Million

is the cost of a weasel coffee farm that was recently built in Dalat. Lawyer Nguyen Quoc Minh left Ho Chi Minh City for Dalat to build the weasel coffee farm. He imported 14 weasels from Indonesia but half of them died because they couldn't adapt to the new climate. After further research, he decided to buy weasels closer to home in Dak Lak where the species is better adapted to the weather in Dalat. The farm currently has 120 weasels.

Minh said that his farm can supply 200 - 250 kg of weasel coffee a year, just enough to serve visitors to the farm and some domestic orders. The price for one kilogram of the coffee is VND20 million. He expects to regain the investment capital in the next few years.



## USD1.6 Million

is the amount the Hanoi People's Committee have just approved for a project on improving food safety at local restaurants in the capital. The project, which targets eating and drinking shops and stalls serving cooked or fast food, will be carried out across 176 wards in 28 districts and Son Tay Town. The news was recently released by the city's Food Safety and Hygiene Department's Deputy Director Hoang Thi Minh Thu. The project will also help raise awareness for food safety and hygiene.



## 50

iPhone 5s, the newest version of the Apple smartphone, were confiscated from a steward working for Vietnam Airlines. He was trying to bring in the phones, without declaring them, on his flight from Paris to Hanoi. A representative of Vietnam Airlines said

it will not condone any violations from its employees, and stressed that it will strictly handle any misconduct.

Each 16GB version of the iPhone 5s is currently sold for VND22 - VND28 million as local supply cannot meet the rising demand. The handset, which is officially sold at around USD649 for the same version internationally, has yet to be officially distributed in Vietnam.



## 100s

of foreign tourists have booked for tours to Son Doong Cave according to the international travel company Oxalis, which is organizing tours to the world's largest cave in Quang Binh Province. It said that more than 400 international tourists have booked for tours in 2014 at USD3,000 per head.





# 50,000

pirated CDs, VCDs and DVDs were destroyed last month by the Department of Culture, Sports

and Tourism as part of a crackdown launched at the beginning of the year on digital piracy. The Hanoi-based department also oversaw the destruction of nearly 11,000 unstamped CDs, VCDs, and DVDs plus those containing unauthorized games. To Van Dong, director of the department, said the items were seized because they violated Government Decree 75 issued in 2010 that regulates administrative fines and punishment for violations in the culture sector.



# 300,000

children under age five are suffering from obesity

according to medical experts at a seminar on nutrition for children in urban areas. This news was released at a scientific seminar held by the Institute of Social and Medical Studies last month. The obesity in children in big cities is escalating alarmingly as it is much higher than the global average rate.

At the meeting, experts said the country has more than 3.4 million children under five years of age that are suffering from malnourishment while it has around 300,000 obese toddlers.



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# The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC...



## FOOD PROMOTION

Sample **Market 39's** new extensive selection of the world's favorites on different days of the week. Daily themes are: Monday – International cheeses and charcuterie, Tuesday – Churasscuria, Wednesday – Mexican Fiesta, Thursday – Sushi and sashimi, Friday – Select cuts of meat from around the world, Saturday & Sunday – Seafood medley. Prices are VND899,000++ per person from Monday to Thursday, and VND980,000++ per person from Friday to Sunday and includes free flow of selected house wines, Tiger draught beer, soft drinks and cocktails.

At Yu Chu, Chinese dining takes on a whole new perspective. They use only the finest ingredients and meticulous preparation to create a range of traditional dishes. Do not miss their popular Peking Duck, priced at VND510,000++ per whole duck, which reflects a 50 percent discount from the regular price.

Both restaurants are located at InterContinental Asiana Saigon on the corner of Le Duan and Hai Ba Trung, DI.



## VILLA ROYALE

**Villa Royale** (8 Dang Huu Pho, D2; [www.villaroyletreasures.com](http://www.villaroyletreasures.com)) introduces antiques, art, vintage furniture, and *objets d'art* from Europe, North Africa, Argentina, Australia and the US to residents of HCMC. Items include 100-year-old clocks, vintage Louis Vuitton posters, vintage trunks, framed original paintings, sculpture, crystal chandeliers, porcelain ceramic tea sets, and dining services. Furniture items include French salon chaise lounges, marble-top commodes, French inlaid wooden dressers, Tiffany-style leadlight lamps, cowhide rugs from Argentina, and much more.

As part of their unique offering, Villa Royale also serves morning tea, lunch, and high tea furnished by luxurious artisanal tea brand TWG. Served in elegant surrounds, the villa presents a tranquil ambiance among beautiful treasures imported for sale to Vietnam by David J Campbell. The villa is complete with a tearoom, outdoor sipping salon, antiques, and collectible goods of the fine, fun and fanciful for the needs of opulent modern living with great respect for the past.

## BEN STYLE

Former Canadian bodybuilder Ben Dell is the man behind **Ben Style**. "Ben Style offers what I've eaten for years as a professional bodybuilder," says Ben. "There has never been salt or sugar or oil on my shopping list and there never will be. I have personally calculated and designed every single sandwich on the menu, because I have to count what I eat every day in order to keep fit."

Every sandwich comes wrapped with a label that displays its calories, protein, fat, and carbohydrates content. A 544-calorie cheesy tofu meatballs sandwich costs VND80,000, while a 281-calorie chicken salad sets you back VND50,000. The chicken jumbo sandwich comes with a massive 638 calories, 59 grams of protein, and 62 grams of carbohydrates, but only 16 grams of fat. Ben also offers meal plans for those who want to get fit and bulk up.

Formerly delivery-only, Ben Style has opened its first dine-in location at 302 Co Bac, D1 or call 090 691 2730.



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### THIRD ABRSM HIGH SCORERS' CONCERT

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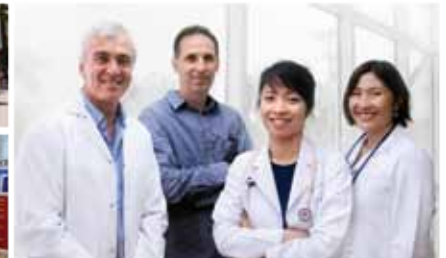


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## CHUCK'S

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Indochina Spa is centrally located near Ben Thanh Market with skilled therapists who can speak Cantonese, English, French, Japanese, and, of course, Vietnamese.



### CLUBHOUSE SAIGON

**Clubhouse Saigon** (Sang Tao Street, Tan Thuan Ward, D7) is the latest all-in-one sports, catering, and dining venue to open in District 7. The chef and owner, Christophe Oswald, comes from a French Alsatian family with a long cooking tradition behind them. In 1949, Oswald's grandfather Marcel opened the successful French restaurant Maison des Tanneurs "Gerwerstüb" in a former tannery in Strasbourg. Christophe formerly ran La Fourchette in District 1 before opening Vietnam Traiteur (Vietnam Catering Service), delivering dishes for many well-established places in town.

Located within a villa, the open-air bar and restaurant overlooks the tennis court (with a swimming pool scheduled to open soon) and serves mostly Gallic dishes that include French onion soup (VND85,000), peasant salad with poached egg, bacon and croutons (VND140,000), shank of lamb *confit* with Provençal sauce (VND350,000), and many more.





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# Blazing Saddles

A crazy horse lady builds the city's first equestrian center

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **BACH MA**

FOR A SELF-PROCLAIMED equestrian center and farm, Bach Ma is as weird as it gets. One, it doesn't accept passing guests. Two, it has been around for the last six years, but is only known to about a couple dozen people plus 200 Facebookers who may or may not count. Three, it has no marketing department and it doesn't seem to want one. And four, while its website is full of photos of horses with reports on their condition, there is not a scrap of information on membership prices.

For all intents and purposes, Bach Ma Equestrian Farms appears either a poorly managed business destined for financial failure or a secret society open to only the most extreme horse fanatics.

The truth is neither. As far as membership pool and exposure go, business is doing well. Morale is high among the staff and nobody looks to be given the sack due to failing business in the foreseeable future. And while a lot of its members consider themselves crazy about horses, one going so far as to say "horses are God's gift to mankind," its existence has never been a secret. In fact, within a few months, it will host the first ever equestrian grand prix in Vietnam.

As strange as it sounds, while Bach Ma still sees itself more or less a business, it is not out for money. For the past six years, it has not seen one dong of profit, yet it is still going strong, now more than ever. The woman





## **"There's space here for them. There's no disturbance, no pollution. It's a way away from the city"**

that has made all this possible, its owner and single source of investment, refuses to even give her name or let her photos be taken.

"I do not want people to know about me personally," Ms. O, as she prefers to be called, explains. "If people want to know about me, I prefer that they know me only through my work here."

Ms. O works 14 hours a day on average at her farm and has been at it for the last six years. Some would call her crazy. "They are right. I'm totally crazy - crazy about horses."

Her accomplishment so far is what any hardened professional horse rider would call the first ever proper equestrian center in Vietnam. Bach Ma sits on a five hectare patch of land roughly an hour and a half ride from the city, with three hectares reserved exclusively for a herd of 26 horses. It has every facility and process required for a proper state of the art equestrian farm - 10 stable hands man the farm 24/7, working under the motto of "We have Tet, but the horses need grass during Tet too."

The only thing that comes close within Saigon is a pony club for children in District 2.

### **Horse Power**

Bach Ma started out six years ago with one crazy horse lady, 13 horses, and their base in the middle of Song Be Golf Resort. However, the golf resort eventually proved uninhabitable for the horses.

"They didn't like golf balls flying at them," says Ms. O. "So we go wherever they go. This is as good as it gets. There's space here for them. There's no disturbance, no pollution. It's a way away from the city, but in a few years they will enact the new law banning large animals in Saigon. We will be the closest horse farm to the city then."

"The horses have changed since then. They are a lot happier now, some had babies," she adds, speaking about them as if they were her children. She personally named all 26.

When asked why Bach Ma rarely allows single-day visitors, her reply was: "Our horses are not things for people to prod, take pictures

with or ride for a few hours. If (people) are not committed to horsemanship, we will not take them. You cannot get to know a horse in just one day. We usually only take single-day visitors if they are foreigners who know at least a bit about horsemanship and do not live in Vietnam. Otherwise, it is dangerous for both the horse and for the rider. We have one-year membership and life membership. We want to do it the proper way."

What Ms. O does at her farm is considered an anomaly by a majority of her fellow countrymen. Vietnam is a country where a horse is seen as a beast of burden, used mostly by farmers or people offering joy rides to tourists for a couple of dollars. They are in parks or beside tourist attractions. They are docile, timid, beaten-down things that are more machine within vaguely horse-looking skin rather than the real deal.

Ms. O's 'children', on the other hand, are the exact opposite. They are majestic, proud creatures who won't let just about anyone climb onto their backs. "Your horse is your partner. You need to get to know your horse, get used to them. Not one of them is the same as the others."

"In the future, we will make this place even bigger. Five hectares is just the beginning. We will make this place into a 50 hectare farm. It won't happen all at once of course, but it will happen. People won't be able to cross the farm on foot. The only way for them to do so then is on horseback."

For more info, visit [www.bachma-equestrian.com.vn](http://www.bachma-equestrian.com.vn) ■

# Wherefore Art Thou?

'Art promoter' Alex McMillan wants to propel the art movement to the forefront with his latest project

INTERVIEW BY **CHRISTINE VAN** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **ALEX MCMILLAN**



Aya 2 by Ayano Otani



Happy Birthday by Sandrine Llouquet

**Alex, tell us about yourself.**

**AM:** Since I was 12 I was interested in audio production. I used to have a Tascam 4-Track in my bedroom on which I would record tracks of me howling and playing my guitar. I made music up until the point when I moved to Tokyo, as it was difficult for me to carry audio equipment with me overseas.

For the last seven years I've been interested in photography, as it allows me to be an artist while living abroad. I started with small point and shoot cameras and have worked myself up to being a professional.

**So how did you go from photographer to art promoter?**

**AM:** I wouldn't use the word art promoter. I would say that I'm more interested in the idea of celebrating art. I want to create cool things for Saigon that impact the culture in such ways that change it for the better. More or less, I'm seeking to encourage people to place value behind art with the Saigon Artbook.

I felt that Saigon was missing cool art events that were accessible to normal people. I hate the idea of high art.

**Tell us about the book and what you hope to do with it?**

**AM:** The concept is this: we take an entire art exhibition of three artists, and we put everything in the book. Everyone can own the art and take it home with them in a beautiful, high quality book. We also want to encourage people to collect them to watch how the Saigon art scene develops. In a larger sense, we hope to encourage people to appreciate the local art that is happening around them right here, right now.

**How do you choose who goes in the book?**

**AM:** First, the artist has to have a body of work that is print-friendly or can be photographed (sorry, musicians). Second, they must have a collection of 12 pieces that are cohesive. Third, they should be innovative and creative. Our team wants to avoid anything cliché (e.g. pastoral scene of a girl on a bicycle). We are really open to new artists and are looking for our next artists for edition two.





Mines are Here by Truc Anh

### How will your events be different from gallery exhibitions?

**AM:** It isn't entirely different other than that you can come to the party, have food, a welcome drink, and a book. You can be a student and still walk away with a piece of cool culture. People can sign up for our party on our website, [saigonartbook.com](http://saigonartbook.com), or by invitation. If you couldn't make it to our party, our venue for the first edition, La Brasserie De Saigon (38 Dong Du, D1) will be our sole distribution point. If you want to get a copy, stop by their beautiful restaurant.

### VinGallery, San Art, Galerie Quynh, and CT Gallery regularly host exhibitions that are open to the public and very accessible. Can you explain what you mean by "missing cool art events that were accessible to normal people"?

**AM:** There can be a certain academic air to the galleries and exhibitions that I've seen in the past in Saigon that is off-putting. I don't want to put anyone down. So I'll just say that I want to make art accessible by making it free and available rather than lofty and unattainable.

### Besides living in Saigon, how do the three artists in the book represent the art scene in Saigon?

**AM:** This is a tricky question. Some of our artists are inspired by Saigon. But this is why we have the party: you can meet them and find out what makes them tick.

The real answer to your question is that we want to show foreign and local artists what's happening in our community right now. It just so happened that the most patient people

that believed in us from the beginning were all foreigners. We definitely want to show more local people in the future though.

### Your first book only has expat artists in it, no Vietnamese ones. Is this an indication that the art scene here is driven by foreigners and not locals?

**AM:** The art scene isn't driven by foreigners. The people who believed in the first edition were foreign, but we definitely want to have locals appear in the future. We have been talking to several for Edition 2 in January.

If both the art book and the event parties that promote it are free, how do you make money?

Who said that we were making money?

### You mentioned that there was "cool underground stuff happening here." Can you explain what they are?

**AM:** Underground, as I'm sure you know, is merely an expression as it applies to Saigon. From what I have seen in my time here, there are some people who need a platform to promote their name and work. We hope to be such a venue. That being said, our focus is really putting the art in people's hands and influencing the community to find value in art by keeping it, and cherishing it in a beautiful book that shows a slice of the times.

Finally, we hope that by creating this book and sharing each edition online, not only locals will see the art scene in Saigon, but also people from around the world. This will give greater exposure to the art scene here and thereby encourage it to grow further.

*The launch of the first edition will take place on October 17, check out our Datebook page for more info. ■*

**"We hope that by creating this book and sharing each edition online, not only locals will see the art scene in Saigon, but also people from around the world. This will give greater exposure to the art scene here and thereby encourage it to grow further"**



# Home Schooled

Teaching kids at home is a growing trend in HCMC as costs of international schools rise and families consider more choices

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



WHEN MOLLY AND Grant Wyatt arrived in Ho Chi Minh City back in 2007, their sons Logan and Grayson were only four and two, so schooling wasn't yet the first thing on their minds. Here to assist locally-based relatives start a small business, they didn't imagine that decent schooling would be beyond what they could justifiably afford.

"Quite honestly, we were surprised by the cost," says Molly. "We'd always intended to enroll our kids in an international school, but when we started Logan in kindergarten, the fees were around USD10,000. We were here on a budget, and it wasn't sustainable. When we went back to Illinois to reassess our options for the long term, finding a solution to the schooling problem was a deciding factor in whether or not it was going to work out."

Determined to make a life here work, the Wyatts investigated homeschooling. "We decided to try it," says Molly. "If it didn't work, we'd have to move back to the States permanently. I'd worked in a school setting for nine years, so I was familiar with the teaching

environment. Grant did a lot of research online and we decided on a curriculum, which we bought over there. We got all the stuff and brought it back with us."

Part of the reason why it was important to source materials from home is that many homeschooling courses direct children to the local library for research. "That's not possible here," says Molly. "We bought as many books as we could possibly bring over."

## Pros and Cons

Homeschooling has been mildly controversial for years in the West, but support for a system in which parents take responsibility for what their kids learn seems to be on the rise even in countries where relatively good schools are very affordable or free – largely in resistance to increasing secularism or a perceived poor academic focus in schools.

Passionate proponents of elective homeschooling have been around since the Early Childhood Education movement of the 1960s, pointing out that many children

in the Western world already have a secure family environment, and claiming that formal schooling is inferior to learning in a stable and loving family home. Schools, it claimed by some supporters, can actually damage family bonds and emotional development – elements that an institutional setting can neither replace nor remedy once broken.

Those opposed to homeschooling generally point to the reclusive nature of sheltering children at home for the period of their academic development, citing its potential to block perspectives not shared by parent instructors; breeding zealotry out of religious and morality-based curricula; and strongly reducing children's sense of civic engagement. Put simply, homeschoolers can be accused of raising fanatical, socially awkward kids.

This doesn't appear to be the case with families who homeschool their children here. Although Molly and Grant's kids were initially disappointed not to be attending the high-quality international schools the family couldn't afford, they soon discovered that in



their situation there were more pros than cons. The family could set their own schedule – they run an intensive four day study week to give themselves more family time on the extended weekend, and regularly fit in travel breaks as long as there's no impact on the studies. Teaming up with other homeschoolers, they were also able to improvise. "I'm not much of an artist," says Molly, "so for the art lessons we split the cost of hiring a private art teacher with another family and ran the classes together."

The curriculum the Wyatts use, called My Father's World, does have a biblical focus, although the freedom to teach a faith-centered course was more of a bonus than a motivation. "We didn't have a problem with the secular nature of the schools here," says Molly. "We're used to that in the States. It's quite the opposite – we actually did want to send our kids to an international school. Because we opted for homeschooling, however, we thought, why not incorporate what we believe into what we teach?"

### Networking for Kids

The Wyatts are members of an informal support group founded by Linda Woodring, formerly a teacher at local international schools. There are around 15 homeschooling families who meet regularly, sharing support, experiences, and expertise. According to its current custodian, "of the families I know in the homeschooler group, all of them do it a little differently." Molly teaches her children's course materials herself, but knows of one family who hire a private Filipino teacher for the lessons. A similar group in Laos rent a house together and run their own de facto school, with every parent contributing their skills in different areas.

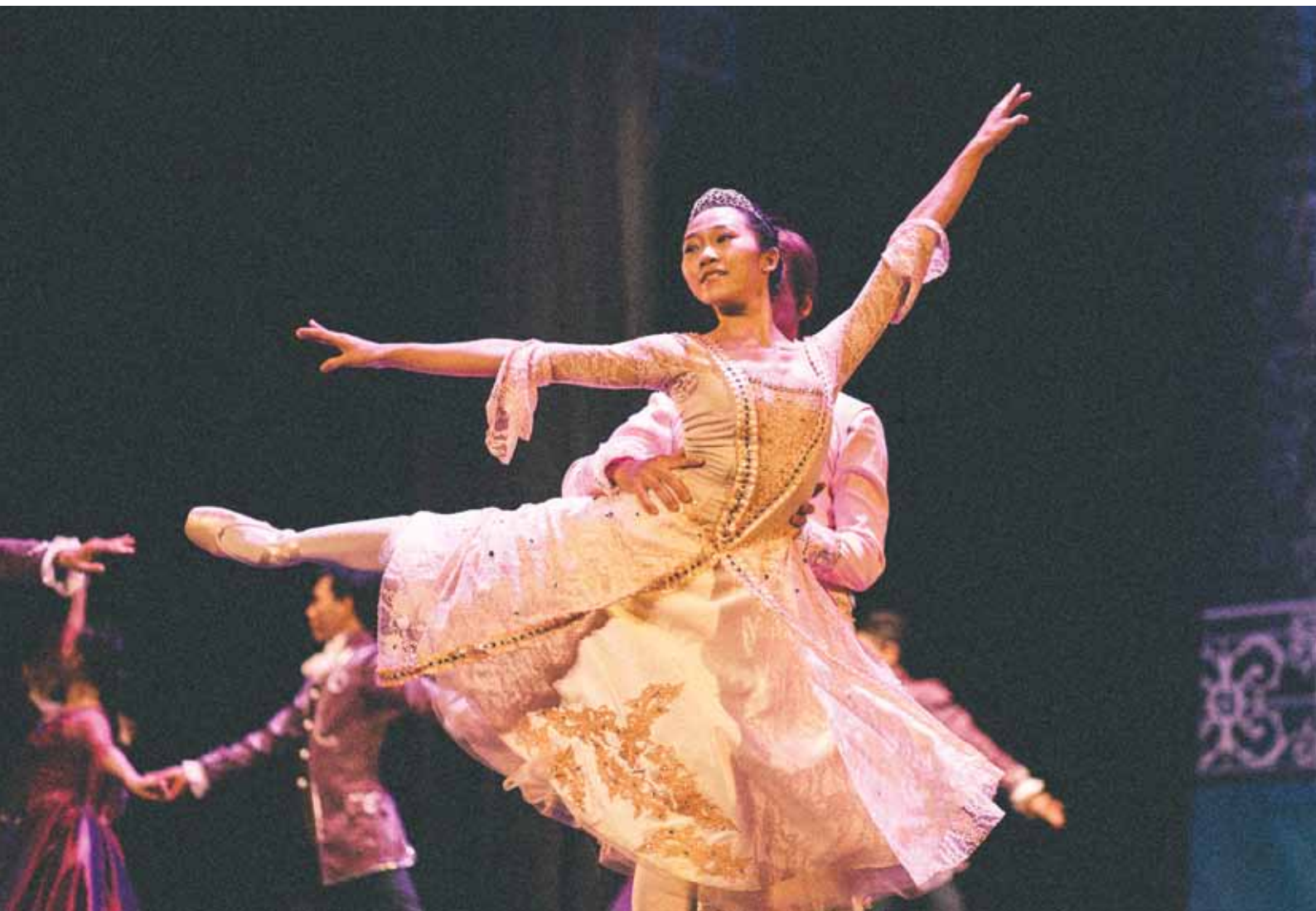
Is socialization an issue? "I'm concerned, but not that concerned," says Molly. "You just have to be a lot more intentional in the way you go about it. Fortunately, we were able to reconnect with a lot of Logan's old classmates from his first year. We make sure they still get out together, and we hold regular sleepovers and so on. The boys participate in a lot of sports activities and in kids' activities run by our church. You just can't be lazy in getting the kids out of the house."

"Networking helps a lot," she adds. "There are a lot more people reaching out to each other now. It's just frustrating for the boys knowing they have to wait for the other kids to get out of school."

The results of the homeschooling experience thus far have been positive. In order to get an external assessment of how well their kids were doing, the Wyatts joined AERC, the Asia Education Research Consortium based out of Thailand. "We took the kids there to sit a standard American test," says Molly, "and they scored well above average in everything they were doing."

The real litmus test, however, is the question of whether the Wyatts would send their kids to school if the means became available. Molly's answer is a little hesitant. "Probably not, although it would be nice. The thing is, I know more about my kids doing this than I thought I would. I know where they're struggling and where they're excelling. We can adjust the pace. In a formal school, you're at the mercy of the classroom." ■





# Happily Ever After

Ballet through the eyes of Cinderella and Prince Charming

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN

THE STAGE LIGHTS cast an eerie blue glow over the performers as they stretch and go through their paces - strong, quick, practiced movements - in preparation for the evening's performance of *Cinderella*, part of the HCMC Ballet Symphony Orchestra and Opera's (HBSO) Gala Autumn Melodies series.

During the seven hour rehearsal, where long breaks for lighting, fiddling with ropes and props and last minute choreography notes are interspersed with actual dancing, the performers sprawl across the stage in various positions of repose, toes perpetually pointed as if that were their natural state. Dancers land with a loud thud on the wooden stage, an almost superhuman amount of hang time allowing them to complete multiple

rotations with effortless grace as though they were on an ice rink. Others idle about on their phones while dressed in ornate period costumes, staving off ennui. From somewhere in the audience, one of the directors calls out, "I can see the stubble on your face!" to the wicked stepmother, to a chorus of laughter. In a throwback to Shakespearean times, muscled bodies in frilly dresses of Cinderella's stepmother and stepsister are revealed to be male danseurs, tattoos and large hands and feet giving away their secret. Welcome to the world of ballet in HCMC.

In a rare interview, *Oi* sat down with Minh Tu, 21, and Duc Nhuan, 27, who play Cinderella and Prince Charming (and who also happen to be real life sweethearts), to

talk about the highs and lows of being a ballet dancer in Vietnam.

**When was the first time you ever saw ballet?**

**MT:** When I was small, my parents worked at the Saigon Opera House, so I often saw performers practicing. One of the experienced ballerinas suggested to my mother that I should take lessons. I'm not going to say I was talented, but even in kindergarten, I loved to dance. So when the opportunity came to take free lessons, I was eager to learn, mesmerized by the teacher.

**DN:** For me, I think it was destiny. When I





was 13-years-old, an uncle from Hanoi came to visit me in my hometown and invited me to come back to Hanoi to audition for the Vietnam Dance College. I had no experience whatsoever with dance. But they played music to see if I could walk and clap in tune. I actually failed but because there were too few boys who auditioned that year, I got in. At first I didn't like it. Into my second year, I viewed it as something to do just for fun. I never thought it would turn into a career.

#### **What type of training does a professional Vietnamese ballet dancer go through?**

**MT:** The Hanoi dance school is different from the HCMC school. In HCMC, we also had to go to regular school during the day and only did actual dance in the evening. I still had to get good grades so my parents would let me continue. In Hanoi, everything is done at the dance school. There are school fees, but they aren't too expensive. Some students are state-sponsored and there are scholarships. In the West, ballet dancers concentrate only on ballet, but in Vietnam, we train in all areas including character dance

(foreign dances like flamenco or Russian national dance), contemporary and traditional Vietnamese. If your teacher recognized you had talent in a certain area, she would give you extra attention and encouragement. In Vietnam, though, there aren't a lot of professional dancers, so there isn't the extreme competition like in other countries. But especially for Vietnamese at the soloist level, their devotion and passion is no less than dancers in other countries.

#### **What do family and friends think of your career?**

**MT:** When I meet new people, they're always surprised to hear I dance ballet. People still don't know a lot about ballet or they think it's too hoity-toity. They often think I'm a backup dancer for some pop singer.

Also, my house is really small, so growing up I had no space to practice. But even while doing homework, I would practice small hand movements or prop myself against a window to practice. When my parents saw that I liked it and was improving every year, they let me keep at it. When I had some recitals at

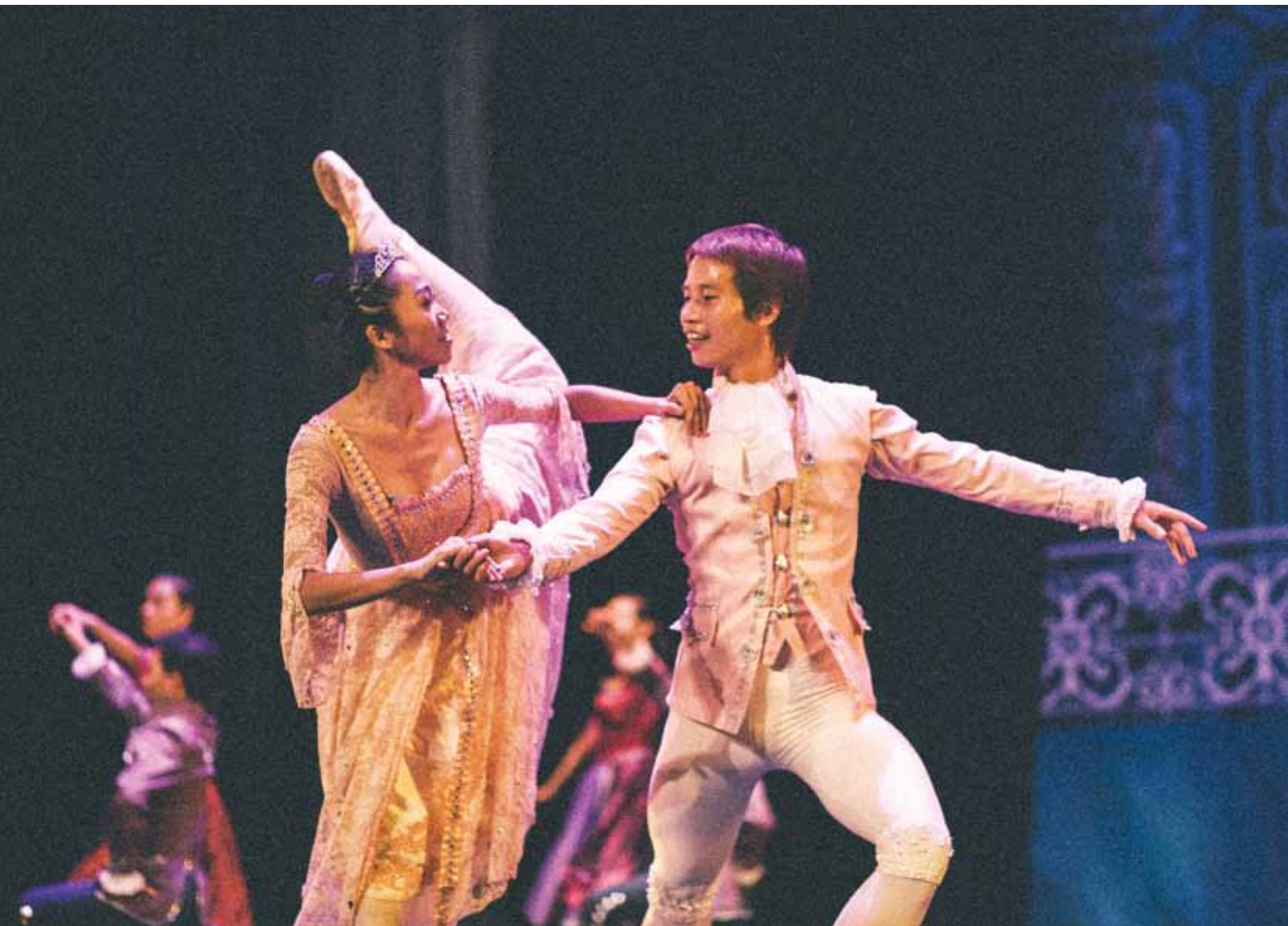
the Opera House, my parents realized that their daughter could actually have a career in dance if I put my all into it.

**DN:** My parents are not artsy people. They're farmers. But when they saw me doing ballet as a kid, they were happy to have an artistic son. When I finished dance school, I moved to HCMC. So my parents have only ever seen me dance professionally on TV. They've never seen me dance live.

#### **What is a typical day like for you?**

**DN:** My day starts out with an 8:30am ballet class at the Ho Chi Minh City Dance School. There's a space dedicated to dancers for the HBSO. Then we'll practice for upcoming performances. In the afternoon, I sometimes dance at private functions. I've done banking seminars, doing modern dance, whatever the clients want.

**MT:** I don't have as much time as Duc Nhuan to do outside work. I teach at the dance school and in the afternoons, we often put on performances for the students or visiting



dancers from Malaysia, Singapore or Korea. In the evening, I teach class.

### Is ballet a viable career option?

**DN:** Well, for private functions, after costume rentals and expenses, we each earn about VND600,000 per song. Everyone has to do work on the side like that. Not many boys study the six to seven years it takes to become a ballet dancer.

**MT:** A lot of people get distracted, they study other things as well and then go on to university and end up pursuing a different career. It all depends on your talent and lifestyle. In my class, most have stayed in dance, working in small private dance troupes. In life, you have to eat and play. I make enough through ballet only to eat. But I live with my parents still, so I don't go out that much.

### Please explain why two hulking men are playing the role of the stepmother and stepsister.

**MT:** Our [Norwegian] choreographer explained it to us that the stepmother and stepsister are not beautiful people. They're ugly and uncouth, both in body and mannerisms. You just can't find Vietnamese

girls like that! We're feminine, slim and beautiful. There just aren't any Vietnamese girls with big hands and feet. It's also for comedic value.

### Describe the feeling of coming out on stage, dancing in front of hundreds of people.

**ND:** Joy.

**MT:** My first few steps, I try not to look at the audience too soon. I need to concentrate on the character, becoming Cinderella. I'm not normally nice and demure so when I'm in that role, I have to change the way I act. I only really notice the audience during the final bow. The stage lights are shining, emotions are brimming, and everyone is looking at me and congratulating me for overcoming every obstacle to become the character. It's pure happiness. It tells me that all my efforts have been worth it.

### What can be done to popularize ballet in Vietnam?

**DN:** In Europe, there's an upper class. In Vietnam, it's mostly agricultural, so people don't know much about ballet. That said, the art scene is much better in HCMC. If this performance happened in Hanoi, you

wouldn't be able to sell tickets like here. Even if you gave tickets away, it would be hard to get people to come. In Hanoi, it's more traditional, old school. In HCMC, people like the arts culture having gone through the French and the Americans.

### What is it about ballet that fuels you and what has ballet given you in return?

**MT:** It's a difficult discipline so I like it. It's a little like figure skating or artistic gymnastics; it's not just technical, how many turns you can do, or how high or how strong or how beautiful you are. It's telling a story with your body. Ballet has given me so much: a career, a goal in life, a living. I want to show Vietnamese people that ballet has a place in life and to foreigners, that Vietnam also has ballet.

**DN:** Ballet chose me; I didn't choose ballet. Ballet has given me a different life. If I wasn't a dancer, I don't know what I would've been...

**MT:** Probably a farmer. [both laugh]

*Minh Tu and Duc Nhuan will reprise their roles in performances of Cinderella on October 13 and 14 at the Saigon Opera House. For info and tickets, visit [www.hbso.org.vn](http://www.hbso.org.vn) ■*



## THE MYTH:

# How does firefighting work here? Is it true that you have to pay them first before they will put out the fire for you? If so, how much?

THERE ARE LOTS of rumors on firefighting practices in Vietnam and whether or not firefighting is under the 'money-first-service-later' procedure that is an all too common practice here.

I've actually never thought of it myself or what I would need to do should I ever encounter a fire. So, upon some desk research and talking to people who went through actual fires, here is what should be expected.

First, dial 114 to report the fire. It could take the fire brigade up to half an hour to arrive, depending on the traffic and distance. After the fire is put out, the police from your district will investigate what caused the fire. Regardless of whether the fire was accidental or intentional, a fine will be imposed on the culprit based on the severity of the fire. So even if you accidentally leave your iron unattended and start a fire, and you are the one who suffered the physical loss and mental trauma, you will still be fined. The post-fire investigation is done by the district police office, not the firefighters.

All the people I asked, "Do you need to pay first before the firefighters will put out the fire?" answered unanimously, "No." Residents and companies do not have to pay any fee when they report a fire hazard with 114 and/or for any firefighting services. However, I followed a discussion on one forum and there were quite a few comments about "prevention." They say neighboring houses to the one on fire tend to tip the firefighters to help

take precautionary actions so as to prevent the fire from spreading to their house. How true this claim is, I am not sure and I cannot verify it. It may be just the very few people who do so and it is not a common practice. But if you do think of doing this if your neighbor's house happens to catch on fire, feel free to do so as I am sure the firefighters will accept the tip and work extra hard to prevent your house from suffering the same fate.

As an unwritten rule, all of the people I talked to, and even people on the forums, mention that you should tip the firefighters after their work is done. How much to

tip depends on how big your pocket is. The corporate HSE manager who I sought information from in order to bust this myth emphasized greatly the post-fire tipping 'courtesy' as part of a wider culture of rewarding good work.

So to sum up, you do not have to pay the firefighters upfront for them to put out a fire for you. But it is advisable to tip them afterwards. And precautions go a long way so if you happen to be in the proverbial hot seat, do think of doing what the locals greatly believe in – "money upfront is wise money." - Clara Phuoc Nguyen ■





# All the World's a Stage

...and all the (expat and Vietnamese) men and women are merely players

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH**

SAIGON PLAYERS, THE oldest and most loved English speaking theater group in Saigon, began 10 years ago with a couple of beers, a handful of enthusiastically tipsy expat friends and a dollop of sheer boredom. At some point, love and passion for theatrical arts were also involved. It's hard to tell when exactly though, especially when it got to the point where hands started swinging excitedly, accompanied by exclamations of, "You call your friends. I'll call mine!"

Sounds strange? Not according to Emily Huckson, the group's resident "Bossy Betty" director and Saigon expat for the last 18 years. Emily has seen it from the start and her accounts of Saigon dates back to a time when the city's expats had little to busy themselves with except to sit at home and watch TV or go out to bars... or settle down with friends to plot births of countless expat interest clubs.

"Back in 2003, all kinds of clubs were starting up just like that. There were rugby, darts, hockey, all kinds of stuff. You know, since the field was completely empty, we were at expat Ground Zero. Saigon Players was one of those. It was

literally just these guys meeting each other and saying, 'Yeah, we like theaters, oh I like theaters too and what do we do,'" explains Emily. "It was a very humble, simple beginning with people saying let's just do it instead of doing nothing."

So from five members, none of whom had more than rudimentary knowledge of theatrical arts, was born 10 years of productions, both large and small. The first year, according to its original member, entailed a lot of experimenting and effort powered by sheer enthusiasm. For this young group of passionate thespians, there were many problems to bypass, chief among them funding.

Because it was a non-profit community theater, Saigon Players had to figure out a way to operate on minimum donation budget to maximum effect. It didn't help that theater was not one with legions of fans back in 2003.

"That was our biggest issue. People just didn't see the point," says Emily.

Eventually, the group made its debut with a one-act play named *A Dog's Life* on their regular club night meetings, earning them a wider fan base. In 2004 Emily came

on, bringing her knowledge and years of experience as a drama teacher. "At that time they were one-year-old, just starting to blossom and trying to move forward but didn't quite know how. They approached me with looking for a bossy Betty. I said yes, I can do that."

Since then, while the club has had its ups and downs, fan feedback has been consistently positive. Fast forward 10 years and Saigon Players is now the undisputed oldest and most established English theater group in the city. Membership has ballooned from five to 20 regulars, and scores of 'irregulars', some Vietnamese, others expats. A few are English teachers and students, some consummate theater people, a couple office workers. The one thing they share in common is an unconditional love of acting.

Saigon Players is a community group, and while it does charge an entry fee to shows, any profit goes to local charity groups. As Emily puts it, nobody here is out to make money. "Every single one of them is here for love."

For more info, visit [www.saigonplayers.com](http://www.saigonplayers.com) ■



FROM MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CERTAIN POSITIONS PREVENTING  
PREGNANCY TO BLURRED LINES ON GENDER DEFINITION, THIS MONTH  
WE EXPLORE SOCIETY'S MOST INTERESTING TOPIC – SEX.

# GENDER ATION





# LET'S TALK ABOUT BLANKETS & PILLOWS

SALACIOUS OR EDUCATIONAL, IT'S WHAT EVERYONE'S (NOT) TALKING ABOUT

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM AND S.C.

IN AN ERA where Miley Cyrus twerks with abandon at a live awards show aimed at a young audience and *Fifty Shades of Grey* sets records for the fastest-selling paperback of all-time beating out the likes of JK Rowling and Oprah Winfrey, it's difficult to imagine a time when people *weren't* talking about sex.

But it wasn't all that long ago that schools were banning critically acclaimed books like *The Color Purple* for supposedly racy content, MTV refused to air Madonna's 1990 *Justify My Love* video and Michael Jackson's crotch-grabbing dance sequence got censored in his 1991 *Black or White* video. That very reluctance to talk openly about sex led to Salt-n-Pepa's social commentary disguised as a hip-hop rap released that same year, *Let's Talk About Sex*.

*"Let's talk about sex for now to the people at home or in the crowd / It keeps coming up anyhow / Don't decoy, avoid, or make void the topic / Cuz that ain't gonna stop it / Let's tell it how it is, and how it could be / How it was, and of course, how it should be,"* they rapped.

Around that time, the number of reported AIDS cases in the United States topped 100,000 for the first time, Freddie Mercury died of AIDS-related causes and Magic Johnson announced to the world that he was HIV-positive. So despite what now looks like prudish behavior on the part of those in charge, it wasn't surprising that people were ready to talk about sex. What was surprising was that it would be an all-girl hip-hop group best known for skin tight lycra and the brazen smash hit cum anthem to sex

*Push It* who would turn out to be the catalyst for social dialog.

Fast forward two decades and 10,000 miles to present-day Vietnam where people are still reluctant to talk about the most taboo of subjects. In English, euphemisms like "the birds and the bees" and matters of the "boudoir" are considered antiquated, almost Victorian. In Vietnamese, talk of "blankets and pillows", "clouds and rain" and "doing a puzzle" as the kids are calling it (think of the tabs and slots of two interlocking jigsaw puzzle pieces), is still considered verboten.

"In my family, we rarely ever talked about sex," remembers Thang, a 29-year-old IT tech. "My parents never explained anything about it. They were afraid that I would start thinking about it too much and it would affect my schoolwork."

Quyen, a young accountant, agrees. "School and family clearly influence how young people treat sex. Vietnamese people don't talk much about it, but the less they talk, the more young people are curious about it and want to try it."

The question then arises: Whose responsibility is it to educate and open dialog about sex in Vietnam? And is it a matter of what you *don't* know that can hurt you?

## SEX ED 101

Sex education in Western countries varies greatly from school to school, ranging from an abstinence-only approach coupled with a clinical presentation of biological facts along with requisite, graphic "scare tactic" photos

# "THE BOYS LIKED IT BUT THE GIRLS WERE MORTIFIED. WHAT THEY TOLD US ABOUT, EVERYONE ALREADY KNEW. THERE WERE THINGS WE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BUT EVERYONE WAS TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK"

of various sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to the infamous banana lesson to teach teenagers how to use condoms correctly followed by a distribution of contraceptives.

While sex education is common, even compulsory, in some Western schools, starting as early as kindergarten in the case of Chicago (US) public schools in 2013, in Vietnam, remaining sensitive to the culture means that sex education is addressed quite differently — if at all.

Typically, Vietnamese public schools have a form of sex education in middle school, often two to three sessions as a part of biology class. "The kids didn't take it very seriously," remembers Phu, a high school student in Go Vap. "A guest speaker came for a morning and afternoon session, but it wasn't compulsory. And not everyone attended. A few got selected from each class. She talked about STIs and HIV / AIDS but didn't get into any details. Some students never came back for the afternoon class and no one seemed to care."

Trang, a young professional, recalls, "The boys liked it but the girls were mortified. What they told us about, everyone already knew. There were things we wanted to know about but everyone was too embarrassed to ask."

A handful of international schools are also stepping in to provide sex education. The Saigon South International School (SSIS) teaches it as part of the Health curriculum, "a factual based curriculum, without judgments," for grades 6-10, according to Tina Fossgreen, Curriculum Director. Topics include puberty, STIs, and drugs and alcohol (risks involved with their use including sexual risks and choices). The British International School (BIS) also conducts Sex and Relationships Education as part of a wider program of Personal, Social and Health Education, addressing issues such as safe sex practices, contraception, peer pressure, and body image. "The program is comprehensive and age appropriate. Some topics are covered with 17-year-olds that wouldn't be addressed with 11-year-olds," says Secondary Head Teacher, Richard Dyer.

An anonymous survey conducted by Oi of 31 Vietnamese teenagers attending both international and local secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City found that whatever the means of delivery, the message hadn't quite gotten through to the city's youth. When asked, "What do you understand by the phrase 'safe sex'?", one student replied: "It's to protect us from temptation". While the majority of students mentioned using protection to avoid pregnancy, only a few teens added that safe sex should be practiced

to avoid contracting STIs. Similarly, the survey showed that many teenagers didn't know where they could access contraception. One student commented, "I know I can go to the drug store but I think grown-ups won't let me buy these things".

The prevailing view "if we don't talk about it, it doesn't exist" is still very much a part of Vietnamese culture. Nguyet, a 24-year-old saleswoman, recalls: "My parents just told me to 'be careful'. But careful of what? That part they never explained. I just remember them falling over themselves trying to grab the remote to change the channel any time a kissing scene came on. And that was until I was 15 or 16."

Stacey, a Health teacher at SSIS, says: "At parent-teacher conferences I've had parents thank me for having these difficult conversations with their children so they don't need to."

With local schools mainly focusing on the biology of sex and parents shying away from the issue altogether, youths are often left to their own devices when it comes to sex education. "Young people today usually just get information from friends or the internet. It's available anywhere, even in the rurals," says Quyen. However, while Oi's poll revealed that students relied on the internet as their primary source of information about sex, Dr. Thien Vu Pham with the Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP) cautions that "there is so much information on the web, but it's not complete, accurate or appropriate, especially when Vietnam's mass media passes along so much misinformation causing youths to go away with the wrong idea".

Phan Huong Giang, Program Development Manager with Marie Stopes, a leading international NGO in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), adds: "Although the internet has dramatically changed [the level of knowledge on sexual health] over recent years, especially in urban areas, in Vietnamese culture, pre-marital sexual intercourse remains a sensitive issue. Many people, especially young and unmarried women, still do not seek or delay seeking SRH and family planning information and services before they are sexually active."

Statistics seem to highlight the need for more to be done in the area of educating the nation's youth. Vietnam's approximately 300,000 annual teen abortion cases represent the highest adolescent abortion rate in Southeast Asia and the fifth highest in the world. Some news sources cite a number as high as 20 percent of Vietnamese teens having unwanted pregnancies. These numbers

come on the heels of the 2010 Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth which revealed the mean age at first sex among youths 14-25 had decreased to 18.1 years compared with 19.6 years in a similar survey conducted four years prior.

At a meeting to mark the World Population Day earlier this year, Deputy Minister of Health Nguyen Viet Tien cited limited knowledge of reproductive health and an increase in premarital sex as factors contributing towards an increase in the rate of unwanted pregnancy among teens.

## MINDING THE GAP

Undoubtedly, Vietnam's conservative culture when it comes to sex is one of the obstacles to promoting open dialog. "There is a saying in Vietnam that sex is easy to joke about but hard to talk about, and I think this describes the situation in the country. Everyone enjoys sex but most people are embarrassed to talk about it just like elsewhere," notes Ian Bromage of the Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV), an INGO that supports a network of women and children living with HIV in the north of the Vietnam.

This reluctance to address the issues has led to a host of misconceptions about sex. Giang of Marie Stopes lists some of the most common misconceptions she's come across: abortion reduces fertility; some types of contraception reduce fertility or cause infertility; pregnancy can be avoided by not having an orgasm during sex, avoiding certain positions, using the withdrawal method or douching after sex; and a woman cannot become pregnant following first-time sexual intercourse or during menstruation.

Ian of MCNV adds: "There is still a widespread belief that homosexuality is an illness, or that people living with disability should not have children. Everyone should be able to enjoy healthy and pleasurable sex lives and have the right to raise a family, so it is important that these misconceptions are challenged."

According to Giang, other obstacles to promoting reproductive health include gender issues (where husbands/partners and sometimes entire families are involved in decisions regarding a woman's SRH), geography (with very poor and isolated areas experiencing the greatest need) and quality of information and SRH care is inconsistent across the private sector.

According to Marie Stopes, some of the main issues which both government and non-government organizations are trying to overcome involve: a lack of contraception methods due to traditional donors of





contraception having pulled out of Vietnam since the nation achieved middle-income status; combating the reluctance to paying for contraception and family planning services which were provided by donors over the last three decades; poor/lack of provision of family planning counseling, particularly post abortion; and limited choice in long-acting family planning methods, with the IUD being the most popular.

But with the combined efforts of government, NGOs and other organizations, there is reason for optimism. "Currently the Law on Family and Marriage is going through a consultative process; the changes proposed to this law are very progressive. What will be important is that people are made aware of their sexual and reproductive rights and how to exercise them. This will require communication and education campaigns, in a variety of different places such as schools, universities, the workplace and village meeting houses. Organizations such as the Women's Union can play a key role in such campaigns, but it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that their knowledge is up to date," says Ian. To this end, CCIHP maintains a website aimed at youths ([www.tamsubantre.org](http://www.tamsubantre.org)) where readers can write in with questions. Recent posts have addressed anal sex, unwanted pregnancy, chat sex and premature ejaculation.

#### BRIDGING THE CULTURAL DIVIDE

While Vietnam has a way to go to being as blasé about sex as most Western countries,

there does seem to be a trend towards openness. The 2010 Survey Assessment of Vietnamese youth found that 44 percent of those aged 14–25 had "modern attitudes" about premarital sex compared with 36 percent in the previous survey.

"The newer generation of young people is beginning to open up and follow the trend of its Western neighbors, in part due to the Western influence in pop culture and the development of societal growth and understanding in the subject of sex and intimacy. For example, things which used to be considered as extreme taboo, such as casual sex, are starting to be more common. People of this generation are no longer restricted by what their parents used to abide by," notices Evan, a Californian now living in Vietnam.

On the other hand, many Vietnamese simply aren't ready for this Western-centric level of openness. "Westerners are more permissive when it comes to sex. On TV and in films, they're always kissing and hugging in public. Westerners also dress more 'sexily' and revealing than Vietnamese. They're the opposite of Vietnamese when it comes to premarital sex, the importance of virginity and just talking about sex," says Thang.

Truong, a Vietnamese man married to an Australian woman says, "Most Vietnamese people think that Westerners having casual sex is just like a type of exercise, something with no strings attached. Vietnamese people also think that Westerners have a higher sex drive."

On the issue of Western students being

more comfortable talking about sexual health than their Vietnamese counterparts, Richard Dyer of BIS disagrees, saying: "That is an unsubstantiated assumption. There are differences but they don't necessarily fall along the lines of culture. There is a huge range, from the comfortable to the embarrassed, from the naive to the well-informed. The challenge is sensitivity, but not *cultural* sensitivity per se."

Experts in the field, though, are encouraged by slow but positive movement. "Although Vietnam is [still] a very conservative country, I think people now find it easier to talk about sex and reproductive health. One of the things that I've noticed change during my time in Vietnam is that the debate has moved on from the 'mechanics' of sexual and reproductive health such as how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, to discussions about more controversial topics such as different sexualities, the prevention of gender based violence and abortion," says Ian. Giang agrees: "Urban Vietnamese seem to be less embarrassed to talk about sex and reproductive health. Urban youth, especially unmarried youth, are definitely more comfortable seeking SRH information and services than they were 10 years ago."

Being able to speak frankly on the most taboo of subjects is viewed by most as a step in the right direction. "The biggest obstacle is overcoming people's reluctance to talk about sex," says Ian. "If we can overcome that then everything becomes easier. So let's get talking!" ■

# THE HAPPY BAKER

A LOCAL SPEAKS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE COMING OUT IN VIETNAMESE SOCIETY

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD

CHATTING WITH YUN Lukas, one gets the impression that life couldn't be better, but not for the reasons you might expect. Yun is an increasingly respected fashion & lifestyle commentator who rubs shoulders with models, celebrities, and prominent designers – and yet he completely fails to mention this during our discussion, besides making a brief passing comment that he writes for such titles as *Elle* and *Fame*. Softly-spoken, charming, and somehow deservingly baby-faced, Yun has that look of someone who's fallen in love.

In fact, it hasn't been all that long since he broke up with someone – just as he was getting ready to immortalize his affection in print. Yun is probably best-known in Vietnam for his writing and teaching about baking, and when he was approached by publishers with a cookbook deal, he took it as a chance to celebrate everything he was grateful for in life. The book has now been published nationwide, but with very little mention of the love story that was going to be central to the final section.

It's a sensitive topic. "Every recipe has a story," he says. "From when I was a child to when I grew up to finding love in Japan. At the time I wrote that last part, I was already breaking up with him. There's not as much of the love story in there as I intended."

Yun's Vietnamese-language "mookbook" – a cookbook of moods – is a pure distillation of its author's sense of joy. "Anyone who reads that book will really know a lot about me," he says. "The Chinese cakes my parents made, the snacks that used to be sold outside my school, the lamingtons I enjoyed while staying with family in Australia. For Japan, I was there in the springtime. It was all sakura flowers. That's what ended up in the book instead of him."

With his growing media platform, Yun could be described as well-positioned to champion a cause. With regards to his sexuality, however, it seems as if Yun has nothing to prove or fight for – because there's nothing at all about being gay that makes him unhappy. Essentially, Yun leads a charmed life – virtually untouched by discrimination of any sort, he lives in a state of freedom that would probably satisfy anyone.

"To me, there's nothing negative at all about being gay," he says. "My family accepts it, everyone in my social circles knows about it, my company knows about it, and they all support me. I'm very happy. So far, I've had no trouble at all."

"When I was 16, I found it a little uncomfortable to understand myself as a gay man. But by the time I was 22 in university, I felt totally free. I decided that life is too short, so it's best to just live it the way I want to."

## MARRYING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

These days, Yun finds Ho Chi Minh City surprisingly

accepting. "I don't mind holding hands or kissing a man on the streets here," he says. "Saigon is more open. Most things come to Saigon first. New trends and new things come here before anywhere else. Life is too fast, so they have no time to judge people. In Hanoi, it's a little different. They have more time for that there."

"Definitely the younger generation of gay men have more opportunities," he adds. "They can go overseas, and they're better educated. They have the power to enjoy their lives. Gay men here are a very talented social group. They all have some kind of special creativity – florists, artists, models, designers. They wear fashionable clothes. They smell good. They're always clean. Well-groomed. They catch trends and follow them well. They enjoy their lives, enjoy traveling, enjoy eating their dinner. That's what I see in my friends."

This city, of course, hasn't always been so accepting. "My older friends had to get married and bear their family responsibility," he notes. "They had to marry a woman and have a kid, even though they didn't want to." In Yun's case, close family bonds still carry their share of responsibility, but with the implicit acceptance of his parents, this takes a different form.

"I was a good kid from the start. My education was good, my job's good, nothing I did ever hurt my parents. I work hard to earn my money and I take care of my parents really, really well. They see the positive side of me, and they've made it very comfortable for me to live my life. My parents are happy. Maybe I can't give them children and so on, but I try to make them happy in my own way."

Yun Lukas may be very lucky in terms of his warm support network, but the only hint of melancholy about him concerns that part of life that probably affects us all at one point or another – the search for love.

"I'm really a lovable guy," he insists. "I really focus on the one I love. I take care of him well. I pamper him. Give him a lot of love. And of course, I feed him up with my cakes."

Lukas is philosophical. "Maybe I met the wrong guy. But every time I start again, I fall in love the same way. People tend to get hurt and then love less, but I don't work like that. I always give more. And I always hurt more."

Being resolutely out of the closet is visibly uplifting for Yun, who is now working on a follow-up book to his *Nhung Ngon Tay Vani*. He's blessed to be able to focus on his passions, both in love and in the kitchen.

"Everything God gives you is a gift," he enthuses. "Both bad and good. Everything is an experience. Everything is a gift from God. I never reject anything. But being gay is certainly a very positive thing for me." ■







# MY LIFE AS...

## A TRANSGENDER FUNERAL PERFORMER

RETOLD BY NPD KHANH WITH PERMISSION OF MIMI - DISTRICT 4

CALL ME MIMI, Mimi as in Mimi Doraemi, the robotic cat in the Japanese anime series.

I was born a man, but now I am a woman by choice. My work as a transgender funeral performer is... to be honest, even to this day I'm not quite sure whether it was more by chance or by sheer necessity. Nevertheless, this is what I am now.

Here is how a day in my life goes. It starts when others' are ending. I wake up as the sun goes down, tired and groggy from singing and drinking into the wee hours of the morning the night before. Funeral performers work the graveyard shift if you didn't know that. I wait till nightfall, doing nothing that would bring me out of my cramped District 4 apartment. I wait for a funeral. When the reception ends, the waiting period passes and the coffin is closed, people will want to hear singing, they will want their sadness soothed and blotted out with some sort of entertainment. That's where I

come in. I am the entertainment. I am the singer, the performer, the clown, and sometimes, the stripper. I have been a prostitute a few times too, but if I have a choice, I would rather not.

My life revolves around those few hours in the night when people are too inebriated with either alcohol or sadness to care about propriety. The show, if it can be called that, is my life. My nights revolve around it. Other than that, there's nothing else worthy of note. I eat and live. I have the bare necessities for survival. Beyond that I can't afford. Hormone injections are expensive enough.

### AVERTED EYES

Are you surprised? Did you envision a more colorful lifestyle for Vietnamese transgender funeral performers? I can tell you it is not nearly as eventful as many make it out to be. We are not the same as the glamorous folks of the Pattaya Alcazar show.

The business that we deal in is one even my fellow Vietnamese find hard to grasp. Ask any of your Vietnamese friends about us and watch their faces contort in shame and wariness. They will not want to talk about us. They will laugh and try to divert the conversation. Some of them will proclaim that we are a cultural shame, a social vice, a step away from criminals.

Those claims are true, not of all of us, but enough.

The moniker "transgender funeral performer" is given to us by our foreign friends, not our fellow countrymen. In the Vietnamese language, we are "the singing Trans," not respectable singers and performers. We invite ourselves into funerals like vultures going after fresh corpses. People do not hire us, though they are bound by funeral etiquette to provide something in return for the free entertainment we give. In the past, mourners were once obliged by societal behavior to take in and feed any strangers that happen to pass by. Even the beggars and the diseased.

For me, the pay usually isn't much - a hot meal, a drink, and a couple of hundred thousand dong. Sometimes, there is no payment at all. Several times I've been chased away by screaming relatives of the deceased. Other times, the pay is good. And when drunken hands wander, then it is even better.

To foreigners, the Vietnamese funeral must be a bizarre thing. They see Vietnamese mourning their dead by drinking and whoring as easily as by wailing and praying. To that I can only say people react differently to grief. Saigonese, especially the people in District 4, mourn their dead with a tired, jaded grief I've come to know well. Many of them, whose life is a cycle of inescapable poverty and a stifling urban rat race, no longer want to hear sad songs, even at a funeral. To them, a funeral in the neighborhood is another chance to be entertained. They'll take whatever they can get.

I started out, I guess, because I had no other choice at the time. In a country where homosexuality is still seen as a disease by the majority, there is little opportunity for an overt transgendered person. For years I stumbled from job to job, none of which I managed to hold for more than a few months. Eventually, I came in for a show and found that I wanted to stay.

There's a new coffin in an alley off Xom Chieu tonight. I put on my short skirt and my red lipstick. I am going. The coupling of excitement and nervousness is familiar to me.

Life as a transgender is one with a constant thirst of living in ill-fitting skin. My namesake traded in her beautiful voice for the beautiful skin she wanted. I envy that her fairy came to her and not to me. What I would give to peel this ill-fitting skin off my bones and flesh to trade it in for something that reflects me for who I am.

But instead, what I have is this. The show. When I walk the streets in broad daylight, people avert their eyes or stare at me with brief wonder and disgust. Tonight, with all normal social constraints absent, they are free to feast their eyes on me.

The music plays for me. The light is on me. Men call my name as I sing and dance. Tonight, I am the show, the center of attention, the clown.

They will not turn their eyes away from me. ■



# Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY







# Revamped Eating

With a new menu focusing on steaks and pork, 27 Grill is carving out a place within the dining scene

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

ROOFTOP BARS ARE sprouting up all over Ho Chi Minh City, but there is no arguing that Chill Sky Bar has, for nearly two years, enjoyed a reputation as the trendiest - just check out the queues that form Friday and Saturday nights. However, less well-known is its associated restaurant another floor higher - 27 Grill (27th Floor Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1) - and part of the broader Chill experience. The dining destination reopened in July of this year after a major makeover and is now under the creative control of Executive Chef Casper Gustafsen and Sous Chef Camilla Bailey, both from Denmark.

Approaching the second anniversary of Chill, the restaurant has had a revamp with a deliberate move away from fine dining to a more accessible cuisine and a heavy focus on steak and pork. The upmarket environment stays (not to mention that killer view) but not

the price tag.

27 Grill sits above the bar in an enclosed area where you're sheltered from the DJ's music below, and the crowds of Saigonese wanting to be seen in the hippest joint in town.

Access from ground level is by dedicated lift after you check-in for your reservation in the lobby. On *Oi's* night to test out the new offer, we were treated like royalty, greeted by name when the lift arrived at the top and shown to a table in a quiet corner with a great view of the open kitchen. Chill Sky Bar is trendy, hip and modern, while 27 Grill is modern and elegant with dark wood tones contrasting huge plate glass windows, sumptuous red leather booth-style chairs, matte polished wooden dining tables and Scandinavian-style cutlery and crockery.

Given it's attached to a well-run bar, it

should come as no surprise 27 Grill has a complex array of cocktails and spirits on offer, along with one of the broadest wine lists in town, including at least three bubbly available by the glass for a romantic toast before dining. When a restaurant offers Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2012 from the Margaret River province of Western Australia as a house red, you know the management knows its wine.

Once seated, we were served bread to munch on while we considered the menu. Not the usual bread, but a soft, flavoursome homemade focaccia bread with a thin crunchy crust, served with butter blended with salt flakes. The bread was so addictive it was impossible to leave any behind.

## The Meal

The night we stopped the restaurant was serving a special dish suitable for sharing as





**"We felt the service was amongst the highest standard we have experienced in Saigon. From arrival to departure, the staff's attention to detail yet unobtrusive presence was impressive"**

an entree or large enough for a main in itself - Burrata cheese with Parma ham and rocket lettuce (VND365,000). The soft cheese, made from mozzarella and cream with its firm 'shell' was flown in from Italy and served laid on a bed of fresh salad greens and thinly sliced, lean Parma ham, with halved baby tomatoes around the outside. Not only did it look stunning and taste divine, its arrival at the table involved a little theatre: the waitress carefully cuts the case to let the soft centre ooze out, and offers a dash of olive oil on top.

Diets be damned, this cheese is so soft and creamy one simply craves more. It's not rich and filling like a high-end blue, rather smooth and silky with delicate flavor which is complemented by the smoky meat and crisp salad, with crunchy chunks of peppercorn for a little zest.

Burrata is made by pouring still-hot mozzarella cheese into a pouch, with scraps of leftover mozzarella and with fresh cream added before closing. Served at room temperature it has a truly unique taste, but it is not sweet. As an appetizer it is certainly enough for two but its uniqueness made it a memorable meal in its own right.

The regular starters menu includes Smoked salmon with cream cheese and cucumber, Oysters with lemon and vinaigrette, Grilled tiger

prawns or *Foie gras* terrine with apple chutney.

27 Grill is predominantly a steakhouse format, so we both opted for meat mains. There are three grades of beef on the menu - Australian Wagyu, the ultimate in taste and tenderness from grain-fed beef, MSA Angus from Western Australia and grain-fed USA Choice. Expect to pay VND1 million for a 250gm Wagyu ribeye and VND520,000 for a 200gm USA Choice tenderloin. We opted for the mid-ranking 200gm MSA Angus tenderloin for VND690,000, matched with blue cheese topping and blue cheese sauce (a welcome recommendation from our waitress). They also import Spanish Iberian pork - 'Presa' shoulderloin (200gm) and 'Secreto' marinated pork (180gm). We chose the Secreto (VND620,000) with a garlic and pepper rub and bordelaise red wine sauce.

Sauces and toppings for meats from the grill are included in the price. But it's advisable to order vegetables to accompany your mains so we opted for Fries with aioli and Grilled king mushrooms. Other options include Macaroni and cheese, Creamy spinach, Corn sauté and Chilli fries - all side dishes are the same price, VND65,000.

The steak was served beautifully presented with the sauce in a tiny crockery serving pan and a whole clove of garlic with a sprig of herbs

resting on top. We ordered medium and it was tender, just as pink as it should be and full of flavor as you'd expect from this grade of meat.

The pork was served in similar fashion. The meat was a gastronomic adventure in itself. Thanks to the marinade the pork had a full texture and a dark pink hue, and the garlic and pepper rub gave it a slight kick on the tastebuds. The red wine sauce proved the perfect accompaniment, all the herbaceous spiced of the condiments complementing rather than drowning the delicate smokiness of the meat.

Full of delicious Burrata cheese, divine pork and delicious beef steak we left satisfied and have earmarked 27 Grill as an ideal destination for a romantic dinner for two or a venue to impress clients.

We felt the service was amongst the highest standard we have experienced in Saigon. From arrival to departure, the staff's attention to detail yet unobtrusive presence was impressive. They all conversed easily in English and there were no awkward moments if the conversation or ordering process veered from the expected course.

After its revamp, 27 Grill is now starting to draw increasing customers as word of mouth spreads about the new format and menu. Our expectation is it will soon leap to the top of the Trip Advisor rankings, and deservedly so. ■

# Muy Delicioso

Saigon can thank Cupid's intervention for finally bringing authentic Mexican food to town

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



MEXICAN RESTAURANT **Khoi Thom** (29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3) has been tucked away on the quiet cafe street of Ngo Thoi Nhiem in District 3 for 18 months, but it's a destination we would unreservedly recommend.

When it opened, Khoi Thom adopted a hybrid 'Viet-Mex' style menu - in part due to the Vietnamese population of the neighborhood, and also because the owners found it hard locating a chef with sufficient experience in cooking Mexican food. But now it has evolved into an authentic Mexican style cantina with a new Mexican chef preparing similar dishes to those his mother made when he was a child.

With bright colored furniture and wall decorations, a large breezy outdoor deck with an open bar and a long street frontage, Khoi Thom quickly earned a place in the style sections of local media for its adventurous hues and style after it opened.

Co-owner, Noelle Carr-Ellison, said the goal of the Viet-Mex approach was to slowly introduce Vietnamese to the joys of Mexican

flavors. "Essentially there are many similarities between the two cuisines. Both use rice and black beans and chili. Mexicans use avocado in guacamole, Vietnamese drink avocado shakes. Vietnamese eat red beans in sweets, Mexicans eat red beans in savory dishes."

But while the Viet-Mex worked slowly on the Vietnamese palate, Westerners were slow to adopt the somewhat less authentic offer. All that has changed with the appointment of Alejandro Torres in April.

Like every foreigner who finds themselves in Vietnam for other than career reasons, Alejandro has his own story to tell. From San Luis Potosi, located between the central and northern regions of Mexico, he went to Oregon in the US to further his studies in restaurant management. It was there he fell for another student, My, from Vietnam. Romance blossomed and when the studies were complete he followed her to Vietnam where they recently married. After completing a contract with French restaurant La Villa in District 2, he joined the Khoi Thom

team and set about building a Mexican menu that is "authentic and original."

"I cook all mum's flavors - all the things I grew up eating at home," says Alejandro.

The new menu was introduced in early September after much trial with customers. His challenge was - and still is - hunting down the right ingredients in a land so far from Mexico.

"One of the hardest parts of my job is trying to create the same flavor. Back home we have 100 types of chili and in some Mexican dishes we use five chilis that go together in one dish. I have to play around with flavors and go to the markets to find the right flavors. It's never going to be the same. If you eat French food in New Zealand or Japan, it's never going to be the same as eating it in Lyon or Paris."

## Our Meal

Our friendly and attentive waitress was happy to recommend her favorite dishes so, with little experience in Mexican food outside



**"Back home we have 100 types of chili and in some Mexican dishes we use five chilis that go together in one dish."**

some fairly ordinary California chains, we took the advice and were rewarded with some moorish fare we are already telling friends and colleagues about.

For starters, our guide recommended Chicken & cheddar taquitos, (VND75,000, grilled chicken with cheddar cheese and roasted vegetables, rolled in a tortilla and baked crisp). These are best described as the Mexican answer to Vietnamese fried spring rolls. Tasty and nourishing, quickly fried so they do not retain too much oil and served standing with a creamy dipping sauce.

We were also encouraged to try the Chori-Queso (VND85,000) - and conceded it did sound unusual for a Mexican dish. What sounded like Mexico's version of a cheese fondue was actually a shallow bowl of melted cheese with chunks of delicious chorizo sausage mixed inside and topped with a dollop of guacamole. The best way to eat it is to spoon the semi-melted cheese onto a tortilla and wrap into a roll. Fondue is probably a misnomer, but it was a deliciously chewy and addictive pleasure for those with an addiction to cheese and avocado.

For mains we opted for the Beef fajitas (VND165,000), served sizzling on a cast iron platter. This was perhaps the spiciest dish we ventured with bell peppers and onions giving the beef a definite bite, but it was not too hot for those who struggle with chili. The fajitas dishes are served with homemade tortillas and four dips, from spicy to mild, encouraging you to wrap the beef and dip it, mixing and matching and experimenting with the taste.

We were advised by a regular to make sure we tested their quesadillas, so we tried the Fried chicken (VND90,000) from a selection of eight. The papaya salsa, cilantro pesto, bacon and cheddar cheese were an imaginative and sumptuous combination of sweet and savory contrasts. Next visit, it will be a tough decision deciding whether to repeat the joy or be adventurous and try one of the other quesadillas.

Khoi Thom has come of age with a new chef and a commitment to authenticity. If you are new to Mexican cuisine you can be sure of experiencing 'the real deal' here and is undoubtedly the city's most genuine Mexican dining experience. ■



# Finding the Perfect Partner

The right wine can enhance a dish to perfection



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

**Michael Kloster** grew up in the vineyard country west of Fresno, California. He has over 20 years of marketing, hospitality, and food and beverage experience. He is currently Senior Sales Executive for Magnum Wine Cellars. He can be contacted at [michael@magnumwinecellars.com](mailto:michael@magnumwinecellars.com)

There's a lot of apprehension when it comes to food and wine pairing. So I thought that this month we should chat about matching food with wine and, conversely, wine with food. On the most basic level, the only thing that you really need to worry about is whether one is overpowering the other. It's a balancing act. Here are some guidelines and a few examples of pairings around town.

## Complementary Flavors

When encountering particular flavors, it is often possible to match wine taste with the flavors of the foods. A classic pairing might be a citrusy Sauvignon Blanc paired with the lemony goodness of simply pan fried fish filet with lemon juice. Another easy pairing matches roasted chicken with mushrooms with the inherently earthy flavors of a Pinot Noir from Burgundy or beyond.

## Juxtaposition

Sweet and sour, salty and sweet, things would get boring if flavors were only complementary, so we like to juxtapose them when pairing wine and food as we do within food itself. This is why it's pleasing to our palate to have hot and spicy food with the sweet and cooling effect of an off-dry Riesling, or a sweet and spicy Gewürztraminer.

## Viscosity

Texture is also an important consideration. Heartier food pairs better with fuller bodied wines, and vice versa. Discounting taste, a relatively thin and watery wine like a Sauvignon Blanc would not really match texturally with a braised lamb shank. This holds especially true for white wines where we might be pairing a thick creamy sauce with a rich buttery viscous Chardonnay, as opposed to something more light and crisp.

## Tannins and Fats

It is also common to pair a more robust, tannic (read relatively bitter and astringent), with meats — making brawny reds like Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah great matches for well

marbled rib eye steaks, braised ox tail, or pan-seared sausages. The fats and proteins act as a mediator when they coat the palate and mellow the harsh tannins on your tongue.

## Mouth about Town

As we see in our examples, there are many different variables when we pair wine and food. Some of our examples take into consideration particular guidelines, but downplay others. At the end of the meal, it doesn't really matter why you've paired two particular tastes, but that you are happy with the result. As Shri Manager, Ashley Nichols, puts it, "Drink the wine you want with the food you want."

## Shri Restaurant and Lounge

*Centec Tower, 72 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1*  
True to his word, Ashley likes to pair Shri's imported Australian beef tenderloin with Cono Sur Reserva Pinot Noir. He likes to pair the char-grilled finish with the earthiness of this New World Pinot. He further backs up his pairing with historic precedent noting that in fact, Pinot Noir is traditionally the wine (grown in Burgundy)

that is used to create that French classic *boeuf bourgignon*.

## Boomarang Bistro Saigon

*The Crescent, Phu My Hung, D7*

Sticking with the beef theme, Boomarang Operations Director, Adam Zakharoff, likes to pair a North American red — Columbia Crest Two Vines Shiraz — with their notable sirloin steak. In addition to pairing juicy meat with juicy fruit (which just gets juicier thanks to the tannins in Shiraz), Adam likes to play with the spiciness of their house pepper sauce to match the spicy notes of the Shiraz.

## Elbow Room

*52 Pasteur, D1*

The Elbow Room's Chef/Owner Tristan Ngo likes to take unique approaches when pairing his blackened seabass. Using the smooth, juicy texture of Cono Sur Bicicleta Carmenere, he tempers the heat of the blackening spices to create a calming effect. This wouldn't work with a more intense, and tannic red, such as Cabernet Sauvignon where the tannins would accentuate the spice instead of soothing them. ■





# >>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

### Savouré 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.savourebakery.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

### 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 Café

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  
dorutdose@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  
thecharmsg@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  
fifi291182@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

### 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](http://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](http://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 bawny 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](http://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

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 café 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**  
[thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com](mailto:thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com)  
[www.mtvcafe.com.vn](http://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](mailto: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](http://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**  
**Comer of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan**  
**3520 9099**  
[www.intercontinental.com/saigon](http://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:www.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](http://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**

### 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto:aishalounge@aishalounge.com)  
[www.aishalounge.com](http://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://facebook.com/angelinuscoffeevn)

### Blue Cafe

A sprawling, unique café 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](http://www.mtvcafe.com.vn)  
**7am - 11pm**

### Bobby Brewer's

A contemporary café in the backpacker area set over three floors, the café features a large free cinema, a great place for couples.  
**45 Bui Vien, D1**  
**3920 4090**  
[www.bobbybrewers.com](http://www.bobbybrewers.com)

### Boulevard Cafe

This Parisian-style café 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 café 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, D1**  
**090 265 2635**  
[bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com](mailto:bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com)

### Café Ban Sonate

Café 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, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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, D1**

### 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, D1**

**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, D10**  
**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 Cafe 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, D1**

**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, D1**  
**40 Ngo Duc Ke, D1**

### 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, D1**  
**3823 5848**

### Cooku's Nest

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

**13 Tu Xuong, D3**  
**2241 2043**

### Crêperie & Cafe

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

**5 Han Thuyen, D1**

### 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, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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, D1**

### 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, D1**  
**3825 6718**

### ID Cafe

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, D1**

### 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, D1**  
keserakesera.com

### Kita Coffee

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

**39-41 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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

# BOOM BOOM

## BURGERS

**DELIVERY ONLY!**

Call or text orders to  
**090 953 2378**

**boomboomburgers.vn**

Scan for the full menu

traffic from a more refined vantage.  
**76A Le Lai, D1**  
**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 D1. 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, D1**  
**70B Le Loi, D1**  
**www.lusinespace.tumblr.com**  
**9am - 9pm**

### 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 cafe 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.1**

### 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 fine 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 cafe - serving gourmet Vietnamese street coffee.  
**26B-C Le Loi, D1**

### The Seronata Cafe



The Seronata 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 Thai 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 ambiance 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, DI  
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, DI**  
3925 1111  
[www.dimsunhouse.vn](http://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](http://www.intercontinental.com/saigon)

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, DI**  
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, DI**  
3822 5216  
[www.cordonblue.vn](http://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, DI**  
0862913657  
[contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com](mailto:contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com)  
[www.labrasseriendesaigon.com](http://www.labrasseriendesaigon.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, DI**



### 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, DI**  
3824 7070  
[infosgn@lacreperie.com](mailto:infosgn@lacreperie.com)  
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, DI**  
2229 8882  
[www.lacuisine.com.vn](http://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, DI**  
08 3822 1718  
[www.ladoree.com](http://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, DI**  
3829 8143  
[www.lafourchette.com.vn](http://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, DI**  
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, DI**  
0948 415 646

## french

### Alibi Restaurant and Bar



Centrally located a stone's-throw from the Opera House in downtown DI, this is a warm, appealing lounge environment with modest prices.  
**5 Nguyen Sieu, DI**  
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

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[info@hatvala.com](mailto:info@hatvala.com)  
[www.hatvala.com](http://www.hatvala.com)

## 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](http://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, DI**

[www.lebouchondesaigon.com](http://www.lebouchondesaigon.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, DI**

**3825 8465**

## L'Olivier



L'Olivier is a restaurant serving authentic Mediterranean cuisines, located on the 2nd floor of the Hotel Sofitel.

**Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, DI**

**3824 1555**

[www.sofitel.com](http://www.sofitel.com)

## The Refinery



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, DI**

**3825 7667**

[www.therefinerysaigon.com](http://www.therefinerysaigon.com)

## Ty Coz



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, DI**

**3822 2457**

[www.tycozsaigon.com](http://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, DI**

**08 5404 2220**

[vatelsaigon.com](http://vatelsaigon.com)

vindaloo is a must try.

**164 Bui Vien, DI**

**3838 6661**

[www.babaskitchen.in](http://www.babaskitchen.in)

**11am - 11pm**

## Bombay Indian Restaurant

Located in DI 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, DI**

**9am - 10.30pm**

## Ganesh



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

**1584 Le Thanh Ton, DI**

**8223 0173**

[www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com](http://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.

**2G Thi Sach, DI**

**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, DI**

**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, DI**

**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, DI**

**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, DI**

**3993 9786**

[www.capricciosa.com.vn](http://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, DI**

**3824 4286**

[www.casaitalia.com.vn](http://www.casaitalia.com.vn)

## indian

## Baba's Kitchen



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



## Ciao Bella



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, DI**

**3822 3329**

[tonyfox56@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyfox56@hotmail.com)

[www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao](http://www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao)



## Da Vinci's

Da Vinci's is an Italian-American style pizzeria delivery offering pizzas, lasagna, spaghetti, calzones, salads and desserts.

Their full menu is online at [www.davincisvietnam.com](http://www.davincisvietnam.com). Free delivery to Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and Phu My Hung.

**Open 11am - 10pm.**

**Call 083 943 4982 or**

**SMS your order to 093 328 4624**

## 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, DI**

**3837 1894**

[www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com](http://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, DI**

**3823 1080**

[www.lahostaria.com](http://www.lahostaria.com)

## Lucca



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, DI**

**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 Pham Ngu Lao, DI**

**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, DI**

**3824 1234**

[www.saigon.park.hyatt.com](http://www.saigon.park.hyatt.com)

**6am - 11pm**

## Pizza 4P's



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, DI**

**012 0789 4444**

[www.pizza4ps.com](http://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, DI**

**3823 8998**

[www.pomodoro-vietnam.com](http://www.pomodoro-vietnam.com)

## Sarpino's Pizzeria



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

**125 Ho Tung Mau, DI**

**www.sarpinos.vn**

## japanese



## 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, spaghetti, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.

**90 Le Loi, DI**

**093 897 2050**

**11am - 10.30pm**

## 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, DI**

**3824 4295**

[www.akataiyo.com](http://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

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](http://www.blanchystreet.com)

\* Reviewed by Qi 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](http://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](http://www.ramen.vn)

### Dragon Steak

A striding 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](http://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](mailto:ductm@incubation-vn.com)  
[ebisu-vn.asia](http://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](http://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](http://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, I/I Truong Chinh, Tan Phu  
3849 6840

[www.kokekokko.com.vn](http://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/Vietnamese seafood.

117 Vo Van Tan, D3  
3930 9185

[info@musmus.net](mailto:info@musmus.net)

[www.musmus.net](http://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

### Robata Dining An

The restaurant has a downstairs bar and a second floor with private rooms that have sunken tables, sliding fusuma doors and tabletop barbecues. Popular with the Japanese expats, the menu serves up healthy appetizers, rolls, sashimi and An specialty dishes like deep fried chicken with garlic salt sauce An style (VND100,000).

15C Le Thanh Ton, D1  
[www.robata-an.com](http://www.robata-an.com)

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.sushiworld.com.vn)

### Tokyo Deli

Tokyo Deli's menu consists of a wide range of distinctive and delicious meals,



**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](http://vietnammm.com) & [eat.vn](http://eat.vn)  
"Baba brings India to Vietnam"

prepared by specialists to create pure Japanese flavor. The menu is always being changed and improved.

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

### Uraetai BBQ Restaurant

Uraetai serves yakiniku grill, a variant 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**  
**vickis.com.vn**  
**10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm**

### Yoshino

The decor is straight out of the set of Shogun, with black wood, tatami mats, stencilled 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

Yulrie 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.daejanggum.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**  
**jymimill@hanmail.net**  
**10am - 3am**

### Mr 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

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

**5D 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

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.vnnahang.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/1D1 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.rohthai.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.thaiexpress.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 Buoi, 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 Chien

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 Nguyet Anh, DI**  
**3833 0534**  
[www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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**

### Canh

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](http://www.nemnuongganh.com)

### Gold Fish

Gold Fish offers a slice of authentic Vietnam with a genuinely rural cuisine.  
**73 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
**3822 5229**  
[www.goldfish.vn](http://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](http://www.grillbar.com.vn)



### Quan Bui - Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

Fabulous food in the famous old French Quarter. Each of the four floors is different – from the leafy roof garden to the chic ground floor with its open kitchen (cuisine expertly and proudly prepared from chefs from all around Vietnam – no MSG here). The menu is one of the most extensive and best valued in town. Try the ginger and beetroot smoothie – or any of the exotic food and drink combinations that this fine dining emporium offers.  
**17a Ngo Van Nam, DI**  
**3829 1515**  
[www.quanbui.vn](http://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](http://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](http://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**  
**CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
[www.hoangyencuisine.com](http://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 wood-paneled walls creates 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](http://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**  
[nhanhangnamphat@gmail.com](mailto:nhanhangnamphat@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](http://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.quanhangnong.com.vn](http://www.quanhangnong.com.vn)  
**8am - 10pm**

### Papaya Restaurant 🍌 Oi's Pick

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](mailto:papaya@chi-nghia.com)  
[www.chi-nghia.com](http://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.  
**3783/3 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](http://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 Nguyet 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 I**  
**364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh**  
[www.longmonaco.com.vn](http://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](http://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**  
**582-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
**5412 3263 / 5412 3264**  
[www.annam-gourmet.com](http://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**



**Banhja**  
  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**

### Ben Style

Every sandwich comes wrapped with a label that displays its calories, protein, fat and carbohydrates content. A 544-calorie Cheesy tofu meatballs sandwich costs VND80,000 while a 281-calorie Chicken salad sets you back VND50,000. The chicken jumbo sandwich comes with a massive 638 calories, 59 grams of protein and 62 grams of carbohydrates, but only 16 grams of fat. Ben also offers meal plans for those who want to get fit and bulk up.

**302 Co Bac, D1**  
**090 691 2730**

### 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](http://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**

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

**74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3827 0931**  
[alfrescosgroup.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.intercontinental.com/saigon)

### Mogambo Bar & Grill

Mogambo is a darts, African-styled restaurant with some of 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](mailto: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.saigon.newworldhotels.com](http://www.saigon.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](http://www.pasha.com.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.shewers-restaurant.com](http://www.shewers-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**

### 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](http://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 café.

**169A Bui Vien, D1**  
**3920 3897**  
[vscooterguy@yahoo.com](mailto:vscooterguy@yahoo.com)  
**7am - 2am daily**



# Travel & Leisure

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IMAGE BY GISELLE WHITEAKER









# Adventures on the High Seas

There's cruising, and there's sailing. Think high jinx on the high seas, instead of the blue rinse set cruising the deep blue sea

TEXT & IMAGES BY GISELLE WHITEAKER

THE FIRST THING to greet us on the deck of Star Clipper is a fruity concoction in a champagne glass. "Where's the best place on the ship?" asks Anna Langstrom, cruise director, at the end of the safety briefing. "The bar," someone yells from the back. "That's right," Anna confirms to a ripple of laughter.

Moments later *1492 – Conquest of Paradise* by Vangelis blares out across the ship's loudspeakers, signaling the raising of the sails on the main deck. Star Clipper has four masts, 16 sails and thousands of square feet of Dacron weighing around two tons, ready to capture the wind. Raising the sails is no easy process, despite being aided by several electric-powered winches. Muscle-power and heave-ho is still part of the mix and captain and crew are experienced square-rigger sailors. It is exhilarating to watch them in action. The crew work in unison while captain Peter Kaaling stands by, his gaze trained on the sea, no doubt gauging the wind, the weather, and our course as we sail away from Istanbul, the sun sinking behind the minarets of the Blue Mosque.

The 360-foot Star Clipper is a gorgeous ship. British designer Donald Starkey, known for creating the décor for many of the world's most-admired mega-yachts, is behind the ship's Edwardian interiors, enhanced with traditional nautical features. And Star Clipper is not alone. She has a slightly older twin sister, Star Flyer.

The two ships are close to identical, featuring expansive teak decks, an on-deck bar, salt water swimming pools, and an informal dining area and piano lounge. Oh, and the Tropical Bar... the best place on the ship.

Star Flyer was the first to launch, commissioned in May 1991, and followed a year later by Star Clipper. "Star Flyer and Star Clipper are actually much bigger than most clipper ships were," says Mikael Krafft, the owner of Star Clippers. "Technically, they are rigged barquentines, with a full mast square rigged and the remaining masts rigged fore and aft." This may be so, but the ships are styled on the tea clippers of the 19th Century that 'clipped' the waves as they plied the oceanic trade routes. Three years of intense research went into the making of these beauties, much of it studying original plans for ships of the mid-19th century and making design modifications to incorporate new materials and engineering innovations. Not so many clippers of old housed swimming pools on deck, but these, the first clippers to be built since 1910, combine the yore of old with contemporary comfort for their 170 pampered guests.

The fleet also encompasses a third ship, Royal Clipper, modelled on the legendary five-masted tall ship, Preussen. Royal Clipper is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's biggest square rigger. "I had always been

fascinated by Preussen," says Krafft. "I had a model of it when I was younger. I thought, 'One day, I will build that.'" So he did.

Sails raised and crew at ease, delicious aromas start drifting aft from the dining room. Guests follow their noses. Unlike a standard cruise ship, there is no assigned seating or set meal time. Guests are free to dine any time within the designated three-hour window and mingle as preferred, avoiding the horror of being stuck with a group of oil and gas engineers when you are a staunch environmentalist. This is just one of the many differences.

Consider any standard mid-range cruise liner; the daily sheet will be packed full of forced entertainment, the staff will do a hard sell on the shore excursions, and the average age is likely to be in the septuagenarian range. Hearing aids are as common as Hawaiian shirts. That's not to say there's anything wrong with this – but Star Clippers is different. There are a number of families on board, and looking around at dinner, we don't feel we are outside the age spectrum. There is a limited range of optional tours, but we're not pressured to join. Instead, in most of the ports to come, we will have transfer services into both the port-town, and a nearby beach for water sports ranging from snorkeling to wakeboarding. There are a few activities on deck, mostly nautically themed, including climbing the mast and knot-tying classes, but on





**"On the quiet side of the island, we cool off in the deliciously refreshing ocean, dipping in and out of the turquoise water. Crispy from salt and sun, we return the way we came, the street eerily deserted, as if the apocalypse has wiped it clean in our absence"**

the whole, passengers are responsible for their own entertainment. Most prefer it that way and head to - you guessed it - the bar.

### **Docking in Turkey and Greece**

Our first, and only, port in Turkey is Canakkale. This is one of the least inspiring port towns, but it gives access to Troy and Gallipoli. Troy requires some imagination, or a strong interest in archaeology, while appreciation of Gallipoli comes from an understanding of World War 1 – the Gallipoli campaign was the greatest Ottoman victory during the war and provided impetus for Turkish independence. As the first major military operation for Australia and New Zealand, it is often seen as these countries' emergence as independent nations, as well as a national tragedy, given the crushing defeat and huge number of lives lost. Being Australian, I have no choice but to pay my respects. At the troop landing site it becomes apparent how the Allies lost – surrounded by a ring of mountains it is clearly not an optimum battle site. The Lone Pine Cemetery on the ridge and the Turkish Cemetery close by, are powerful reminders that no one wins in war.

Day two brings a less somber ambience. We anchor off the island of Limnos, near the port town of Myrina in Greece. We have a full day here to explore the island, dominated by the ramparts of the Kastro. A short hike to the top provides excellent panoramic views of the port and the beaches on both sides of the island. We clamber over the crumbling structure, watched by the local mountain goats who sneer at our rock-climbing ineptitude, bleating admonishingly from a distance.

We are tempted to zip back to the ship for lunch, after all, it is included, but wandering

the alleys we cannot resist the aroma of grilled meat. Our olfactory senses lead us to a diner specializing in spit-grilling, small tables pressed into the walls of the narrow laneway. Mesmerized by the rotating racks of skewered meats we order chicken and gobble down the simple but tasty fare as if we hadn't eaten a three-course meal the night before.

Sated, we window shop along Myrina's main thoroughfare which crosses most of the island. It is crammed with locals and visitors, packed with cafes, jewelry designers, boutiques and souvenir stores. In the central square island-dwellers sip on coffee, sitting at shaded tables as they watch their young playing in the plaza.

On the quiet side of the island, we cool off in the deliciously refreshing ocean, dipping in and out of the turquoise water. Crispy from salt and sun, we return the way we came, the street eerily deserted, as if the apocalypse had wiped it clean in our absence. The shops are closed, the locals home-bound for a late afternoon siesta. Time to go back to the ship. Perhaps the bar.

An afternoon arrival in Ouranopolis gives us time to climb the mast in the morning. The wind is gusting, but hooked on to the ropes via a harness, it is not too difficult to shimmy up the ladder to the first crow's nest. From this angle the ship is incredibly complex – a mass of ropes, sails, winches and crew. Looking out to sea as we pass the heights of Mt Athos evokes a romantic image of sailing, the wind fluttering the sails, the ship gently heeling to starboard as it cuts through the waves.

Coaxed down from my vantage point by the promise of coffee, we zip into Ouranopolis with its picturesque watchtower overlooking the beach. We sip lattes by the water and decide to transfer to the beach to try our hand at





something more active - wakeboarding. Flying over the wake, the sun warming my back, the town beckoning in the distance, a massive grin is plastered on my face. This is the life.

### **Poros, Russian Bay and the Perfect Ending**

We arrive early in Skiathos, determined to make the most of our full day in port. We rent a scooter, racing into the hills to find a peaceful hilltop monastery. Ignoring the rental attendant's advice, we ride towards Castro, the remains of a medieval town perched on a clifftop jutting into the ocean. The attendant was right. We can't get there, the steep, cobbled roads becoming impassable, but we get close. We park the motorbike and walk the final section. The extensive ruins are worth the effort, although walking back up the steep slope in the harsh afternoon sun we are far less enthusiastic.

We ride along the coast, the breeze tingling our faces as the sun sinks towards the horizon. Another sea dip revives us, but dinner lures us back to the ship. The evening meals are too good to miss. Later a Greek dancing troupe entertains us with traditional reels, the four dancers swaying and bobbing on the deck.

We arrive and leave early from Skopelos, and are happy to achieve nothing of note, instead relaxing over coffees and pastries, saving our energy for our final port - Poros. Poros is a pretty town, whitewashed buildings climbing over the hills, stacked one on top of the other. A maze of alleys and stairways leads to a series of small churches overlooking the harbor, Star Clipper the only moderately-sized ship to drop anchor here. She is captivating, her bare masts reaching to the sky as she sits surrounded by azure water, the tiny tender running back and forth between port and ship barely visible from this viewpoint.

Our time on board is drawing to a close. We spend our last few hours with the watersports team at Russian Bay, so named for the ruins of the former Russian naval station sitting smack-bang in the middle of the beach, a marked contrast to the sun-loungers and snack bar selling ice creams to pink-tinged tourists.

As we reluctantly pack our bags in the evening in preparation for our arrival in Athens, we reflect on the week on board. We've made new friends and explored distant shores, eaten far too well, and idled away time in the best place on the ship. We are relaxed, refreshed and rejuvenated - the definition of a perfect holiday.

*Star Clippers offer fully-crewed tall ship sailing voyages in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Central America and Cuba. A three night sailing on board the flag-ship Royal Clipper costs from £680pp, a seven night Greek Islands sailing on Star Clipper costs from £1470pp and a 10 night Mediterranean sailing on Royal Clipper costs from £2320pp. Prices include all meals on board and port taxes. To book, call Star Clippers on +44 845 200 6145 or visit [www.starclippers.co.uk](http://www.starclippers.co.uk).*

**Bio:** *Giselle Whiteaker, originally Australian, is an inveterate expatriate. She has lived in Japan, South Korea, the UK, and Vietnam. She now, at least temporarily, calls the United Arab Emirates home, but she travels so frequently that she sometimes forgets where she lives. Giselle is the editor of two lifestyle and property magazines, **Exclusive Home Worldwide** and **Property Scene** and Group Deputy Editor for Etihad Airways' inflight magazines. See [gisellew.weebly.com](http://gisellew.weebly.com) for more of her work. ■*











# Into the High Altai

A journey into the wide open spaces of Mongolia

TEXT & IMAGES BY JURA CULLEN

THE ADVICE ON the beer mat sounded familiar: “Time in Mongolia is an uncertain notion. Foresee some security gaps in your journey timing. Estimate distances in hours instead of kilometers.”

Others had also warned us that Mongolia could be predictably unpredictable. As we waited and waited for our connecting internal flight with a couple of Golden Gobi beers at Chinggis Khan Airport in Ulan Baatar, we realized that this had not been an exaggeration. I started to wonder whether I had made a mistake with my choice of summer holiday.

We were on our way to the far west of Mongolia, near the border with Russia and China, a land of horses, eagle hunters and the snow-capped mountains of the Altai. It is Asia at its most remote, about as far from the ocean as it is possible to get, and one of the most sparsely populated areas of a very big country. Although more than five times the size of Vietnam, it has just one-twenty-fifth of the population – so an ideal place to come to get away from it all.

After a 30 hour delay in Ulan Baatar and a three hour flight west, we landed in Bayaan Olgii Province. A quick stop for provisions and we set off into the wilderness for a further 12 hour journey in an old Russian van, having to overnight because the river in a village called Tsengel was too high to cross. The next day, we reached the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park, and were awe-struck by the scale of the landscape that surrounded us - wide plains, rushing rivers and glistening blue lakes, surrounded by snowy peaks.

We arrived at the Kazakh *ger* near Lake Khurgan where we would pick up our guides and horses. Friendly children with cheeks red from the wind ran out to greet us, watched by more cautious adults. The cursory Mongolian greetings that we had tried to learn while waiting for the plane were useless – although we were still (just) in Mongolia, this was Kazakh country. The language is wholly different, closer to Turkish than Mongolian, the people are Muslim, rather than the Buddhists found in much of the country, and the greeting “As-

*salaam aleikum*” reminded us of our time in the Middle East.

Like Mongolians, the Kazakhs also live in *gers*, though theirs are larger and more brightly decorated with beautiful embroidery. They rely on sheep, goats and yaks – so lots of mutton and many different types of cured dairy products. In the summer, the Kazakh herders move all of their possessions and animals up from the lower villages where they spend the winter, to set up their *gers* and make the most of the short grazing summer season. In our naiveté, the scene seemed idyllic, but the more time we spent with the family here, it was clear that life for the nomadic herders is very tough.

The next day our horses were ready and we began (what we thought was to be) a seven-day expedition over a pass to get to Mongolia’s only glacier. As the horses were being loaded, the guides and horsemen beckoned me over to a small huddle around a map. As we all squatted around my woefully inadequate small-scale map, our guide Baybok pointed out our first setback – we would not be able to cross the highest pass because of heavy snowfall, so we agreed to take an alternative, less familiar route and set off on our little horses.

Mongolian horses are really ponies by height classification, being 12-14 hands with short legs and disproportionately large, more horse-like heads. They were incredibly tough and sure-footed, which we found out immediately as we forded our first raging river crossing. Though the water was high enough to reach the saddles, the horses calmly plowed through, even taking the opportunity for a quick drink while at it. After a long eight-hour day in the saddle we set up our tents and tethered the horses in a sheltered dip.

## Turning Back

The next day we were once again lucky to have clear skies as we headed off into a wide valley. The terrain was smoother so we were soon galloping across the plains and racing each other while the horses deftly avoided all the ground squirrel holes that pepper the plains. Soon we started climbing gradually out



**“Although we had to turn back, we had two beautiful days riding back to the lakes, with beautiful rainbows over old sandstone Kazakh tombs”**

of the valley. The weather became colder and the wildflowers kept changing from poppies to edelweiss, and then other less familiar alpine flowers. By 6pm the path was still going up and the scenery was only getting bleaker and more windswept. I wasn't sure that our horsemen or guide had even ever been to this remote corner of the national park. Just as the light was starting to go and ominous clouds rolled in, we found a herder's winter cabin which provided shelter for the supplies and horsemen.

The next morning, black clouds were still with us and we were freezing cold at over 3,000 meters with no sun. After layering up, we thought we were ready for the rain that was clearly coming. I realized I had made a tactical error bringing a Vietnamese poncho which was now flapping loudly and scaring all the other horses. We climbed higher and higher towards the pass, thinking we could just about cope with the rain that had begun. Soon, however, the rain turned to snow – and not just a light dusting, but a blizzard, blowing horizontally. The biting, icy snow was unbearable on our faces so we just put our heads down as the tough little horses trudged on.

Our next campsite was to be a bleak lake with no protection at least six hours away. The Kazakhs were starting to get worried, and as the snow clung to the bodies of the horses, we realized it was time to turn back. We simply weren't equipped for conditions like this, unseasonable though they were at the end of June. To keep warm, and to lighten the load for the horses, we hopped off and retreated. Luckily, we made it back to a small wooden shelter where two brothers who were looking for their herd of camels were also waiting out the storm. We realised then that the route ahead was too uncertain – even if we did make it over the pass, the rivers ahead were likely to be too high to ford, and there was no way back but the route that we had come. As we melted snow for water and rubbed our hands to get warm, we agreed that the sunny valley that we had left just two days previously was a reasonable substitute for the glacier.

Although we had to turn back, we had two beautiful days riding back to the lakes, with lovely rainbows over old sandstone Kazakh tombs. It also gave us two more days to ride along the lakes, spend time with Erbolat's (the horseman) family, and enjoy the relatively warmer weather. We took the opportunity to explore around the *ger* where we had arrived the first evening.

### **A Day at the Races**

The Altai Mountains are one of the few places in the world where golden eagles are still used







**"We waited for some time and then suddenly a 100 men and boys on horseback started to gradually appear from every direction"**

for hunting. We marvelled at the beautiful bird, but were sad to learn that the sport of hunting wolves and foxes with eagles on horseback is starting to die out. Young Kazakhs, we were told, preferred football and television to spending hours in the saddle with a heavy eagle in subzero temperatures. With wolf and fox numbers down in recent years, the hunting is also not as good as in the past.

We were lucky to catch a Kazakh horse race on one of our last days. We were told to turn up at 2pm by a rock with a metal horse sign in the middle of the plain. We waited for some time and then a 100 men and boys on horseback started to suddenly appear from every direction. We watched 20 or so boys between seven and 10-years-old riding their beautiful horses bareback. The racehorses all had owl feathers tied to their forelocks for luck, giving them a fairy tale look that did not belie the race ahead.

With the jockeys heading off to the start in one direction, we had our own impromptu spectator race up the hill to the finish line, the local teens ululating as I pulled into the lead on my horse. After some minutes, the jockeys started to appear, their horses still galloping strong while the tired children clung to the horses' manes as they raced along to the finish.

Our days in the valley with Erbolat's family were an opportunity to see more of life in this far away place, and soon we forgot about the aborted trip to the glacier. We enjoyed playing with the children in the evenings, the opportunity to meet the extended family when all came to meet the prospective bridegroom for one of the sisters, and an impromptu bonfire with traditional Kazakh dancing, three generations all joining in enthusiastically. On our last evening, watching the goats play king of the rock, silhouetted against the setting sun with the mountains behind, this was as calm a scene as could be imagined, salve for the soul, and a place quite unlike any other.

*Korean Air and various Chinese airlines all fly with one stop to Ulaan Baatar from Vietnam. Best months to visit are June - September. Pack warmly and prepare for rain in the mountains. For travel to the Altai Taven Bogd National Park and internal flights I used Bek from [www.backtobektravel.com](http://www.backtobektravel.com).*

**Bio:** *Jura Cullen has been based in Hanoi for the last two years. She has also lived in Sudan, the US, France and the UK. Her blog **Hound in Hanoi** ([juraphotos.wordpress.com](http://juraphotos.wordpress.com)) includes photography from quirky things seen in Hanoi with her Nubian hound Tala, and other travels around the region and world. ■*





# An Interview with The Divo

His fans call him The Divo. Childhood friends know him as Baby Dino. To everyone else, he is simply Duc Tuan, rising crooner set to take the world by storm

**TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN**

WE'RE IN THE Lilac Room of the Spa InterContinental, a calm oasis in the middle of the city. Candles twinkle around the room which smells of soothing lemongrass and cinnamon. Rose petals are scattered throughout - in the half-filled tub and in the wooden buckets prepared for our Foot Ritual. All the trappings of calm, though, seem lost on Duc Tuan, who seems permanently, almost

physically, attached to his two phones. The artist who likens himself to classical crossover stars "Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli (in his more recent years) and Michael Buble (with less jazz)," fields calls from one phone and then the other (and occasionally from both at the same time) from industry people trying to set up an upcoming Hanoi performance to friends wanting to know about the latest

gadgets he saw on his trip through Hungary last week.

Born in Long Xuyen to an average family (his parents were both high school teachers), Duc Tuan was always the showman. "I'm a natural born singer. I can't even remember when I started singing but I know it was before kindergarten." As a teen, he moved to Saigon to pursue a degree in Foreign Trade,





but it surprised no one when he turned to a career in showbiz instead. "Even from my youth, my parents encouraged me to be independent. Though I was a good student, they let me follow my own dreams."

Duc Tuan's big break came in 2000 when he won Vietnam's biggest singing competition, *Tieng Hat Truyen Hinh*. "There wasn't a big prize, but it was the best-known singing competition back then. You could say that it was really the only one, not like now with dozens of reality singing shows. But it got me exposure and as an amateur, that was priceless. It led to performances and later making my own music." Since then, Duc Tuan has been a regular feature at concerts, shows and television, singing in Vietnamese, English, French and Italian and amassing awards like Album of the Year 2010 and Singer of the Year. He barely had time to schedule this interview with *Oi*, having

gotten back from performances in Paris and the Ukraine the day before and heading off the day after to Vung Tau, Can Tho, Da Nang, then on to Hanoi in a whirlwind of performances taking him to the end of the month.

Aside from movie star looks and a superb command of English, what sets Duc Tuan apart from his contemporaries is actually a love for the classics, "pre-war songs" as the Vietnamese call them. And while it hasn't earned him throngs of rabid fans, it has fed his old soul. "Those songs are perfect. It wasn't as much about showbiz then. It was pure. Music is now about commerce; it's a business. Back then, it was about the technique, the craft. People weren't writing songs with repetitive lyrics to become hits. It was all about beautiful melodies. My album coming out in October is a collaboration with Pham Duy [who passed away earlier this

year], indisputably the greatest composer in Vietnamese history. He brought together classical music, Vietnamese traditional music and modern music as well. His songs were full of his own emotions; he didn't write for other people. He was a master at the Vietnamese language, incorporating layers upon layers of meaning. Young people can listen to it and understand it according to young people. But the older you are, the more experienced you are in life, the more layers you see."

### **Your Parents' Music**

Over a sea salt foot rub, I talk to Duc Tuan about his devotion to the melodies of yesteryear and how it has understandably narrowed his audience. Before the interview, I asked a handful of young Vietnamese whether they had heard of Duc Tuan. They all had, but quickly added, "My parents like him." But surprisingly, that's just fine by Duc Tuan.



"I'm lucky because 100 percent of what I do is what I like. In showbiz, and even in life, there are very successful people but they may not be doing what they want. They can't be themselves. But that's a choice. Some people sacrifice themselves for fame. But I'm not interested in having a huge number of fans. I want to be true to myself and I'd rather expand the fan base I already have."

"There are more than 6 billion people on this planet. I just need one percent or half a percent to be fans. You can spend your whole life finding people who are true fans and still not find them all, so why bother changing yourself to attract those who don't like the real you?" he asks. "But in Vietnam, whether they want it or not, young or old, we're all still Vietnamese. It's still in our blood. Perhaps the youth haven't realized it yet, but sooner or later, there will be a return to the classics. Even Vietnamese born abroad gravitate towards it, because those standards are meaningful, authentically Vietnamese."

We've now moved to the massage tables, with the chirping of Vietnamese starlings as a soundtrack and the aroma of hot tea mixed from sugarcane, ginger and corn and sweetened with a touch of rock sugar and honey wafting our way. I wait for the phone calls to die down and for the spa's "full sensory experience" to kick in before broaching more delicate subjects.

We start by addressing intellectual property rights in Vietnam, with CDs bootlegged as soon as they appear, making it virtually impossible for an artist to get rich from making music. But Duc Tuan has a quick answer. "Vietnam has actually been pioneering a change in this field," he says with a laugh. "Virgin Megastores in NYC and on Paris' Champs-Elysee have closed. Selling CDs isn't the market that it used to be. In Vietnam, online downloads and ringtones are doing well. So are live performances," says Tuan, which explains his busy schedule.

### Careless Whispers

I then ask about photos of a cute baby with a full head of hair plastered all over Duc Tuan's Facebook page, although pictures of a significant other are conspicuously absent. "That's my baby," he confirms, quickly adding, "But I don't talk about my family. I protect them." In other interviews, when questioned about his sexuality, Duc Tuan has responded simply with, "I love life." Here and now, he grows somber. "Whitney Houston and Elton John are my musical idols. I love their music, the way they sing. I never care about their personal lives, just about their music. Thankfully, Vietnamese media isn't as bad as other countries with paparazzi waiting to snap photos of you changing clothes or whatever."

On his mild celebrity status in Vietnam, he simply acknowledges, "That's my life. People whisper and point, others, like my fans come up and talk and take pictures. I've met a bunch of celebrities out and about like James Blunt and I'm the same way."

Looking back on his journey, I ask him what advice he would give to his 20-year-old self, before the fame and celebrity. "Absolutely nothing. Every moment in time has its own purpose. If I had done things differently, I probably wouldn't have turned out to be the person and singer I am now. I have never regretted a single thing I've done. Everything happens for a reason. You learn from the past. Mistakes have to happen yesterday for there to be a today."

*My interview with Duc Tuan took place at the Spa InterContinental (InterContinental Asiana Saigon, corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1), a gorgeous space with five single and two double treatment rooms, completely hidden behind a sliding wood wall on the third floor of the hotel. Pressed flowers embedded into the walls and light fixtures modeled after bamboo create a return-to-nature aura. The spa's concept is to dazzle all the senses in a modern-meets-local ambiance which it achieves through thoughtful design elements as well as the handmade teas, compresses (which include cinnamon, ginger, geranium oil, sesame and star anise) used in its signature Tranquil Meditation treatment and all-in-one spacious treatment rooms, each with a changing area, washroom, sofa and massage tables. ■*



# Time to Pack Your Bags

Ideas for your next holiday from the Travel Expo



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

Having visited nearly 60 countries as a travel writer and award-winning photographer, **James Pham** blogs about his adventures at [FlyCarusFly.com](http://FlyCarusFly.com)



GOING TO A TRAVEL expo is my adult version of being a kid in a candy store. Travel expos are great for trip planning because you can access travel experts one-on-one to narrow down which destinations best fit your needs and then further pepper them with questions to craft a customized itinerary. They're also a great place to collect brochures and travel deals to compare later. Lots of companies also offer specially discounted vacation packages for these types of shows and being there in person means you can even try negotiating for a better deal (e.g. getting additional discounts or added perks thrown in).

Saigonese are lucky to have one of the region's largest travel expos happening right here, the International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City (ITE HCMC), an annual event bringing together travel agents, boards of tourism, hotels and industry-related people. September saw the ninth edition of the ITE, attracting more than 300 exhibitors from 50 destinations, catering to an estimated 18,000 domestic and overseas visitors during the three day event held at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre in D7.

While it takes some patience to navigate the throngs of people crowded around cultural dance performances, raffle contests and live music, all while

announcements blare over the loudspeaker, it's an opportunity to get an overview of what's on offer. Some of the destinations that caught my eye this year were Yen Tu, the pagoda complex near Hai Phong, the Thung Nham Bird Park in Ninh Binh and the luxe Pandaw River Cruises through Burma, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Then there were the various boards of tourism with creative angles to woo the Vietnamese market.

Bobby Alex, Marketing Manager of Sabah Tourism Board, said that "immersing in the local culture is an emerging trend for young Vietnamese travelers," highlighting the natural beauty of the northern portion of the island of Borneo. "We're promoting homestays, culture and nature, like the island of Sipidan known for its world-class diving, as well as the activities around Kota Kinabalu to the north. There are islands just 15-20 minutes from mainland. It's all about nature - the orangutans, proboscis monkeys and Mt. Kinabalu. We're targeting the youth group."

## The Spirit of Exploration

Other destinations are similarly targeting Vietnam's new, upwardly mobile 20- and 30-somethings, those who have traveled to the familiar cities of Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and are now looking for

something more exotic.

Huynh Dang Khoa of the Tourism Authority of Thailand says that Thailand is focusing on overland travel from Vietnam for those wanting to travel by caravan or touring bike. "There are now lots of rich Vietnamese who own Ducatis, Harley-Davidsons and other sport bikes. We have Bike Weeks in Phuket, Pattaya and Phitsanulok in the northeast. There are also ground operators who can organize caravans and overland travel making it through borders with no problems. There's even an option for police escort!"

For the shopaholics, Annie Buenavente, Senior Tourism Operations Officer for the Philippines Department of Tourism, says a trip to the Philippines is the perfect mix of elegant malls and superb beaches. "The Mall of Asia [a 1km shopping center in Manila] is like an airport. You need at least three hours to visit all the stores. Resorts World, a one-stop entertainment center with hotel and casino featuring concerts and entertainment, is just three minutes from airport. The Vietnamese also love the islands of Cebu and Boracay. Just a 35 minute flight from Manila, Boracay has sugary fine pinkish sand with clear water. The best time to visit is between November and February."

Innovations in travel technology were also a recurring theme. David Tsao, Director of the Taiwan Visitors Association, was excited about the new "Tour Taiwan" app, available for free download in both Chinese and English versions, giving iOS and Android smartphone users easy access to information on events, attractions, accommodation, and transportation. The app features over 16,000 location-based services, including 42 events, perfect for independent travelers with a spirit of exploration.

"Vietnamese travelers are generally gentle people who like to enjoy food, shopping and beautiful scenery. Taiwan's bullet train on the west coast, along with hot springs, 23 amusement parks, cherry blossoms and the Taiwan Lantern Festival, ensure there is something for everyone," says David.

Whether you're a beach bum, adventure junkie or shopping maven, the ITE HCMC has got you covered.

*If you missed this year's expo, mark your calendar for September 11-13, 2014. More info available from [www.itehcmc.com](http://www.itehcmc.com)* ■

## airlines

### Air China

7th Floor, Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3823 3888  
www.airchina.com

### Air France

130 Dong Khoi, D1  
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 - Phuong 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:saigon@ihg.com)  
[www.intercontinental.com/saigon](http://www.intercontinental.com/saigon)

### Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

\*\*\*\*\*  
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](http://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](http://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](mailto:hotel.saigon@moevenpick.com)  
[www.moevenpick-hotels.com](http://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](mailto:saigon@newworldhotels.com)  
[www.saigon.newworldhotels.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:H2077@Sofitel.com)  
[www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi**  
**04 3719 9000**

## The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

\*\*\*\*\* 🏠 **Ol'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**  
**hi555@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**

## 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 a 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.thegrandhotamstrip.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. Clean, inner-city luxury compound close to the Ben Nghe River.

**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

Huong 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.

**5B 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/1C 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 Kiem, 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**

#### 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**

# VietExpat.tv

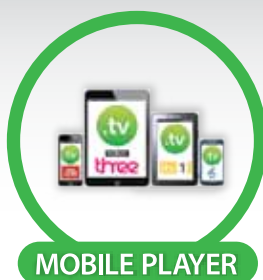
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## Inside Asia Travel

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](http://www.insideasiatravel.com)  
team@insideasiatravel.com  
3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

## 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, DI  
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, DI

## 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, DI  
3823 7152

## cinemas & theatres

### The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

Ho Chi Minh City's local classical music venue with regular programs & performances.

212 Nguyen Trai, DI

### 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, DI  
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, DI

### 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, DI  
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, DI  
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, DI  
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, DI

### 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, DI  
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, DI  
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, DI  
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.

281 Chu Manh Trinh, DI  
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, DI  
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

## social clubs & classes

### 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, DI  
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, DI  
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, DI

### 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, DI  
3820 9734

## 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, DI  
3825 8485

## 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, DI

## 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, DI  
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, DI  
3910 0168

## 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

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, DI  
0839101542



# >>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 🍷 Ol'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, Longiness, 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 specialising 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 and 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



## Classic Nails

Located near Ben Thanh Market, Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation.

4 Phan Boi Chau, DI  
3825 7047  
9am - 8pm

## 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 cleanness 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

Dermologica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermologica'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, D1**  
**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, D1**  
**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@lacoichinchine.net**  
**www.lacoichinchine-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**



### Moc Huong Spa

Moc 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.

**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

It's a 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 Huang

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**  
**S17-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, DI**  
**3823 9459**

### Paper Paradise

Funky little retailer selling just about anything relating to paper and paper arts.

**19 Do Quang Dau, DI**  
**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 system 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**

### 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**

## 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 QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



# A Box of Tricks

Technology that allows you to remotely access your work and home with an easy click

TEXT BY **KEITH HANCOCK** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **MNS**



THE PROBLEM WITH most computer devices and techie stuff these days, is that if you haven't got a degree in computer science and information technology, it all just kind of goes over your head. Well it does mine, anyway. The people selling or demonstrating it don't help either. They are generally technology savvy and the minute they start to speak, I find my eyes glazing over. It was refreshingly different to meet up with a guy who has a great product and knows exactly how to go about explaining its uses. Kevin Doan is a young man whose company, MNS, is the Vietnamese distributor for an amazing piece of Taiwanese technology called Synology.

This piece of hardware has so many uses I could fill up the magazine talking about it. It is ostensibly a web-based operating system, designed to assist you in managing all your data. It can be accessed using a PC or Mac, Apple or Android.

The great strength of Synology is the way it uses multiple discs to store the information. It puts together four terabyte hard drives in groupings from three all the way up to a staggering 106 in their top of the range model - that's a mind blowing 424 terabytes of storage space. Even more clever is the way

that it stores data on these drives, even on the lower end models. If any two of the five discs break down at the same time, no data is lost. It is all available on the three remaining discs. If the machine itself breaks down, the discs are protected.

Synology operates an intuitive web-based operating system that is specifically designed to facilitate the management of all your data. They call this system DiskStation. It helps you manage both your entertainment and business needs, seamlessly.

**Ever wish you could manage your surveillance cameras at different sites, at the same time, from any PC, laptop or hand held device?**

Synology lets you control live feeds from up to 49 channels simultaneously. The images from these cameras can be scheduled to record at any specific time. Recordings can also be archived to review at your leisure. Not just live viewing, but the cameras themselves can even be controlled from your phone, if necessary. With 360 degree fish eye cameras, high definition and multiple viewing options, this is about as good as it gets. Access from any of the cameras can be assigned to any





member of your staff, or not, as required.

### **Have you ever had issues over backing up your company's files?**

If you have multiple work stations within your organization, you can safeguard all of them by backing up automatically to your Synology box. It can even be set to act as the hard drive for all of your computers, keeping disc space free on the individual machines, to speed up their functionality. It does all this in a 'blind' way. Your operatives will not even notice the difference.

### **Do you ever have the need to use a VPN service or your own DNS Server?**

The Synology VPN server App transforms your DiskStation into a fully functioning VPN server. A VPN channel can be set up using two DiskStations to act as server and client. This allows instant access between two offices. There is no need for you to use any other physical server. You can host your own domain name services and keep track, anywhere within your organization.

**That's all well and good, but does it have**

### **domestic applications?**

Many of us have been stuck in a hotel room and wished we had access to our photographs, music or DVD collection, haven't we? Store your entire entertainment collection on your Synology box and you can access it from your laptop or even your phone, anywhere, anytime, anyplace. All your favorite photos, music tracks or movies are instantly accessible, as though they were simply on your mobile device's hard drive. Not only that but you can share your collection with friends and access theirs if they have a Synology box as well. In addition, your Synology box will record any movie or TV channel at the click of a mouse. You can even record one program while watching another. Live streaming is no problem. Watch your favorite sports team for example, live anywhere in the world. Use Synology mobile apps and you can interact with your DiskStation while you are on the go. You can tell your Synology box to record that favorite TV program then watch it when you get home. Add to this the fact that many different family members in different locations can all log in and access the data at the same time, and it's not hard to see the appeal.

### **Away on business and missing the kids?**

There's absolutely no need to. With a camera in your home you can see them on your phone. They might be enjoying Sunday lunch and you might be stuck with pot noodles, but at least you get to share a family meal with them.

There seems to be no end to the uses of this machine. Just imagine that you are a bar owner and you are away on business. You can check security cameras in your bar via your mobile phone. You can even change the music that is being played in the bar and set the TVs to watch tonight's big game.

MNS has already built up an impressive client list here in Vietnam - KFC, Moët Hennessy, Bitexco, Bobby Chinn restaurant and Chilli Pub are among customers delighted with the results.

Personally speaking, I have to say that this is one of the most amazing innovations I have come across, since the invention of the home computer. It has the capacity to completely revolutionize the way we think about our devices.

And as for that other all important question... yes, it looks cool as well.

For more info, visit [www.mns.vn/en/](http://www.mns.vn/en/) ■

Dear Hadrien,

**I have been working for a Vietnamese company for about a year under a labor contract with a two-year term. Last week, my boss told me that the company is in financial trouble and that they cannot afford paying me my full salary any longer. Now he wants to assign me a different kind of work within the same company for about 60 percent of my current salary. This is not acceptable to me and I already made this clear to the management of the company. Their reply was that I could either accept the proposal or that I would be fired! What to do? Are my rights protected under Vietnamese law?**



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



THE TWO MOST important documents stating your rights and obligations as an employee in Vietnam are the recently modified Labor Code and your labor contract. Whereas the Labor Code provides for minimum protection regarding labor standards and the rights and obligations of employers and employees, in your labor contract you should find your rights and obligations in more detail.

The principal right of an employee is the right to be paid a remuneration directly, in full and in a timely manner in accordance with the provisions set out in the labor contract. As the rights of the employee are the obligations of the employer, the latter is required to abide by the terms and conditions on payment of remuneration provided in the labor contract.

Generally speaking, the only way for your employer to change any provision of your labor contract during its term is to reach a new agreement with you. The new terms and conditions could either be effected through an addendum (or amendment) to your current contract or by

entering into a new labor contract. Failing to reach an agreement would mean that you and your employer must continue implementing the current labor contract.

Now what if the company that you work for is indeed facing a situation that objectively makes it difficult for it to keep you at your current position? Below, I will explain two ways in which your employer may unilaterally modify the terms and conditions of your labor contract.

In case of unforeseeable difficulty, for example due to a change in business and production demand, your employer may unilaterally assign you to another position. However, the Labor Code provides that such a repositioning may only last for an accumulated period of 60 days in one year unless the employee agrees to a longer period. Secondly, and this is especially relevant for your situation, when assigning you to another position, your employer may pay you a different salary. If the salary associated with your new position is less than that of your current position, your employer must pay your current salary

for the first 30 days of the period of reassignment and after that you will be entitled to a salary amounting to at least 85 percent of your current salary.

Additionally, the Labor Code provides grounds for employers to dismiss their personnel for economic reasons. Such dismissal, however, is subject to several important conditions.

First of all, if for economic reasons the employees of a company are in danger of losing their jobs, then the employer, in cooperation with the representatives of the labor collective, must formulate and implement a "labor usage plan." Such a plan must, among other things, list those employees who will continue to be employed and those who will retire, as well as those who will be assigned to part-time jobs and those whose labor contract will be terminated. When an employer is unable to offer an employee a suitable job and if the labor usage plan advises the dismissal of that employee for economic reasons, then the employer must pay an allowance to that employee. If that employee has worked for a full 12 months or more, then he or she will be entitled to receive a "normal severance allowance" of half a month's salary for each year of employment and a "severance allowance for job loss" amounting to one month's salary for each working year, with a minimum of two months.

Practically speaking, I would advise you to discuss this issue with your employer as soon as possible. Being more confident about your rights under the Vietnamese Labor Code now, you may try to negotiate a compromise, reasonable to both parties. If such negotiations prove unsuccessful, then the Labor Code provides for an official conciliation process before you or your employer may file a petition to a court to ultimately resolve the dispute. Best of luck!

*If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to [legal@oivietnam.com](mailto:legal@oivietnam.com)* ■



# To Catch a Motorbike Thief

Devices that may answer Vietnam's motorbike theft culture



Anh-Minh Do is the editor at [TechInAsia.com](http://TechInAsia.com) for Vietnam focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh also organizes events at [Evecoo.vn](http://Evecoo.vn)



HAVING YOUR MOTORBIKE stolen is most likely one of the worst (and common) things that can happen here. Having worked hard to earn the money for a motorbike and waking up one day to see it missing is painful, frustrating and disheartening.

Enter SmartLock and SmartBike, devices designed by a team of engineers at Digi-GPS who want to prevent any breakups between you and your beloved bike.

The SmartLock (VND500,000) is a Bluetooth-enabled device that basically shuts off and locks your motorbike if you walk more than 10 meters away from it. Within 30 meters, it will send a text message to your phone if anyone touches or tries to steal your motorbike. Unfortunately the downside of it is that if you're further than 30 meters away you won't be able to receive the same text. Basically, no one will be able to turn on your motorbike without your Bluetooth activated smartphone nearby. The

SmartLock is tapped into your motorbike's electrical system.

For those with additional cash to spend, the SmartBike goes for VND1.6 million and is more sophisticated. It takes all the basic features of the SmartLock, but adds a SIM card to the equation. Now you can text your motorbike (with a smartphone or 'dumbphone') to turn it off via SMS or your iOS app. In addition, you can track exactly where your motorbike is through a GPS. Basically, SmartLock is about locking while SmartBike is about tracking and locking, and both use the motorbike's honking system to sound the alarm. SmartBike ships with a manual that enables any motorbike engineer to install it.

## Who is Digi-GPS?

Digi-GPS is a company that specializes in locking and tracking cars and is now setting its site on motorbikes. The company made its money early on from selling over 2,000 blackbox units to car

manufacturers and distributors, which were mandatory by the government in order to track cars throughout the country. Although the number of cars has been increasing in Vietnam, high import tax and small streets make growth marginally whereas there are over 33.4 million motorbikes in the country and the numbers are growing rapidly.

Founder of Digi-GPS Quan Dinh sees this as a big opportunity. "We've been talking to delivery businesses about our device and they really need it. It's a clear opportunity because they have to manage so many motorbikes across the city. We're interested in selling directly to them."

The interesting thing is Quan is interested in getting more Bluetooth devices like these into homes. After motorbikes, he wants to allow Vietnamese people to control things like lights, TVs, and karaoke machines from their smartphones.

For more info, visit [www.digi-gps.vn](http://www.digi-gps.vn)



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Afonso Vieira is an investment manager and financial planner. He is licensed by the Financial Planning Association of Singapore.

**Dear Afonso,**

## **Is Vietnam considered an emerging market? What is an emerging market anyway?**

BACK IN THE early 1980s, from a political “Western” perspective the world was geo-politically divided into three main areas: the first world, mainly Western hemisphere countries - divided by the imaginary line of the Iron Curtain - which were pro-US and pro-capitalism; the second world, mainly Eastern hemisphere countries, pro-USSR and pro-socialism; and the third world, economically poor countries, mainly in the Southern hemisphere, many under dictatorships.

From an investment perspective there were only two large areas: developed countries (first world) and underdeveloped countries (third world). Fund managers trying to attract investors into their “underdeveloped countries” focus funds had many difficulties as the term has an obvious negative connotation. By 1981 the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a for-profit part of the World Bank, came up with the idea of calling these countries “emerging,” a word that almost implies guaranteed growth. Add “emerging” to an investment, and suddenly it rises in respectability and becomes more convincing as people now have the illusion of a strong causal link. Also, having a positive word for something helps spread awareness of it.

With the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the second world ceased to exist. From an investment perspective now two levels of emerging markets existed: the first level, countries with stock and bond markets with enough liquidity; the second, with or without markets and very little liquidity. In 1992 the “frontier” term was coined by the same organization - IFC.

Today, is Vietnam classified as emerging or frontier? There is no clear answer. Some fund houses choose emerging, others frontier. The main difference I have noticed was in late

2006 when Vietnam signed the World Trade Organization agreements, and most fund houses ‘promoted’ the country to the status of emerging. In 2007, legions of investors were not only hyping Vietnam as the next China but also, relatively speaking, throwing more money at it than they had ever thrown at China. At its peak in 2007, the investment (direct and indirect) produced a net inflow of USD17 billion in an USD80 billion economy – a ratio four times higher than China ever achieved. At the time the total value (shall

I say overvalued?) of the stock market was around USD25 billion.

A reality check soon arrived and by 2008 the bubble burst, proving that fund houses and investors were jumping too high, too fast. Since then foreign money fled Vietnam, which is now starved of the capital it needs to get its roads and other basic infrastructure in shape. At this stage Vietnam is realistically classified as a frontier market by many fund houses, while others still stick the emerging word on the fund name. ■





# >>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-Thur: 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  
Mon-Thur: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

### Finland Consulate

Room 501, 5/F Sailing Tower, 11A Pasteur, D1  
3827 2029

### France Consulate

27 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3520 6819  
www.consulfrance-hcm.org

### Germany Consulate

126 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3  
3829 2455  
www.ho-chi-minh-stadt.diplo.de  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 0130

### Iceland Consulate

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm

### Consulate General of India

55 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3  
3823 7050  
www.india-consulate.org.vn  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 5pm

### Indonesia Consulate

18 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3825 1888  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm

### Italy Consulate

81 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
08 6258 6473  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 4pm

### Japanese Consulate

261 Dien Bien Phu, D3  
08 3933 3520  
8.30am - 11.30am; 1.15pm - 4.45pm

### Kuwait Consulate

24 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3827 0555  
kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 4pm

### Laos Consulate

93 Pasteur, D1  
3829 7667  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1pm - 4.30pm

### Malaysia Consulate

2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1  
3829 9023  
malhcmnh@kln.gov.my  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am

### Mexico Consulate

215 A-B Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan  
3844 5520  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 3pm

### Myanmar Consulate

50 Sam Son, Tan Binh  
5449 2425  
www.gmas.com.vn  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm; Sat: 9am - 12pm

### New Zealand Consulate

235 Dong Khoi, D1  
3822 6907  
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 11.30am; 1.00pm - 5.00pm

### Nordcham

12A Floor, Bitexco Building, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 5423  
www.nordcham.com

### Norway Consulate

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3822 1696  
norcons@hcm.fpt.vn  
Mon - Fri: 08.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3825 0334  
consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn  
Mon - Fri: 9am - 5pm

### Russia Consulate

40 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3  
3930 3936  
www.russianconsulates.com

### Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1  
3822 5174  
www.mfa.gov.sg  
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

### Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3829 8888  
Thurs: 2pm - 5pm; Fri, Sat: 8.30am - 11.30pm

### South Korea Consulate

107 Nguyen Du, D1  
3822 5757  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

### Sweden Consulate

8A/11 Thai Van Lung, D1  
3823 6800  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2  
3744 6996

### Thailand Consulate

77 Tran Quoc Thao, D3  
7.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 3pm

### The Czech Republic Consulate

28 Mac Dinh Chi, D1  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 5pm Sat: 8am - 11.30am

### The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, D1  
3829 8433  
Mon-Thurs: 8.30am-12.30pm; 1.30pm - 4.45pm; Fri: 8.30am - 1pm

### U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, D1  
3520 4610  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

### Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, D1  
09 0987 5678  
Mon-Fri: 8am-11am; 1.30pm - 5pm

## insurance

### ACE Life Insurance

One of the world's largest multiline property and casualty insurers, insurance products include universal life insurance, term life, whole life, riders, and global personal accident.  
21st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3827 8989

### AIG Vietnam

AIG's presence in Vietnam dates back to the 1920s, although modern operations began back in 2005. They offer a wide range of personal and commercial insurance products.  
9th Floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1  
3914 0067

### BaoViet Insurance Corporation

BaoViet is now the leading financial insurance group in Vietnam with more than 145 branches across 63 provinces.  
23-25 Thai Van Lung, D1  
3822 0247

### BHNT Great Eastern

Life assurance & financial plans for customers of various age groups. The company's focus is on promoting health and longevity - they have the perfect incentive to do so, really.  
Level 8, 25 Bis Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
6288 6339

### Blue Cross

Blue Cross Vietnam is a Medical Insurance Administrator specializing in Health and Travel insurance in Asia. Our competitive advantage is in our design and administration of modern travel and medical insurance plans; plans built for people living and working in Vietnam.  
Level 8, River View Tower, 7A Thai Van Lung, D1  
3821 9908

### IGlobal Assist

Offers insurance programs offered by ACE, Liberty, Seven Corners and other global insurers. Free consultation and custom quotes for most lines of insurance including health, travel, home, auto, motorbike, property, liability, and personal accident.  
09 3487 4271  
jpruss@iglobalassist.com  
www.iglobalassist.com

### IF Consulting

IF Consulting has for 20 years provided advice to individuals and businesses in assessing health/accident risk and finding the best suitable solution. The company is independent and Vietnam-based.  
IBC Building, 3rd Floor, 1A Me Linh Square, D1  
3827 7362  
hcmc@insuranceinvietnam.com  
www.insuranceinvietnam.com

### Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual is a 100% US-owned general insurer licensed to provide insurance services directly to Vietnamese individuals and state-owned enterprises as well as motor insurance.  
15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1  
3812 5125

### LIG Insurance

The company provides property and casualty insurance, along with customer relations management and automobile claims support services and

long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

**Unit 809, 8th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 9968**

### McLarens Young International

McLarens Young International is a global claims service provider that helps our clients achieve timely and equitable claims resolution.

**9th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3821 3316**

### Prudential Vietnam

Prudential Vietnam is one of the leading life insurers nationwide, also providing a variety of financial solutions, with over 200 customer service centers, branch offices and general agency and business partner offices.

**Unit 25F, Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1**

## information technology

### Asia Pacific Solutions

A software development and IT support service company, services include developing all kinds of engineering systems and implementing software solutions.

**Suite 1201, 12th Floor, 111A Pasteur, D1 3825 1041**

### NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME

**11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1 3827 3646**

### Oracle Vietnam

Oracle offers an optimized and fully integrated stack of business hardware and software systems, lowering the cost and complexity of IT implementation and management.

**Suite 25 & 26, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1**

### Prism Smart IT

Prism is a foreign-owned Information and Communications Technology company that offers IT Managed Services and Total Business Solutions to companies throughout Vietnam.

**4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1**

## law firms

### Apex Law

The Apex management system represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.

**Unit 4A2, 4F Nam Han Office Building, 65 Nguyen Du, D1. 3822 2942**

### Baker & McKenzie

Baker & McKenzie is a law company with over 72 branches around the world, including offices in Australia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Canada, and the United States. Has a team of 4000 highly trained and insightful lawyers.

**12th Floor, Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1**

### J&P Law Firm

J&P Law is a full-service law firm providing the highest quality legal services to both international and domestic clients, and its widely-recognized practice areas include Corporate, M&A and Finance.

**Level 7 - Room 702, 81-85 Ham Nghi, D1**

### Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.

**Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3822 7161**

### Nishimura & Asahi

Nishimura & Asahi is one of Japan™s

premier full-service law firms, covering all aspects of domestic and international business and corporate activity.

**Unit 704, 7th Floor, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3821 4432**

### Phuoc & Partners Company

Phuoc & Partners is an independent law and consulting firm with integrated legal and tax practices. The firm enables clients to reduce their administrative overhead and focus on core business activities.

**Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3**

### PricewaterhouseCoopers

PwC boasts a thorough understanding of the transitional economy of Vietnam and a wide knowledge of policies and procedures covering investment, tax and accounting, and consulting throughout the country.

**4th Floor Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1 3825 1947**

## marketing

### Ambrij Vietnam

Specialist supplier in the concept, design, production and supply of corporate gifts and merchandise.

**14-16-18 Chu Manh Trinh, D1**

### Bates 141 Vietnam

The Vietnamese brand of a global WWP social media marketing company. Bates 141 has bases in 11 countries across Asia and counts HSBC, Unilever, Avon, and more amongst its ranks of prestigious clients.

**7th Floor, Vietnam Business Center, 57-59 Ho Tung Mau, D1**

### Edge Marketing

Particularly dynamic local marketing firm, committed to a "highly productive collision of creativity and technology". The firm's international staff bring local and foreign perspectives to each campaign.

**1Bis Ngo Van Nam, D1. 3911 1190**

### Ogilvy & Mather

An international advertising agency, O&M aims to be "the most local of the internationals and most international of the locals" in the advertising market.

**12th Floor, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3. 3821 9529**

### Purple Asia 🍷 Oi's Pick

Purple Asia stands out as one of the most unique advertising design firms in the city, with a commitment to making brands perform better on the hard-to-crack local market.

**Melody Tower, 422-424 Ung Van Khiem, Binh Thanh 3898 1005**

### Red 🍷 Oi's Pick

A branding consultancy and marketing agency team inspired to give your brand impact. Long established, red create and shape unique brand personalities to form emotional connections between people and brands. The team regularly share branding insights at red.tm/blog.

**10 Phan Ngu, D1 3820 0169 info@red.tm | www.red.tm**

### Saatchi & Saatchi - The Lovemarks Company

This world-class international advertising firm has grown from strength to strength in Vietnam, picking up some major clients and showing exponential growth in the local market.

**3 Phan Van Dat, D1. 3824 1207**

## media

### GroupM - MEC Media

The focus of GroupM is the intelligent application of physical and intellectual scale to benefit trading, innovation, and new communication services to bring

competitive advantage to clients and companies.

**Level 6, 111A Pasteur, D1. 3821 2233**

### S3 Studios

The first international calibre, full-service production house and studio in Vietnam, S3 is designed to accommodate commercial photography, film & video productions and events.

**1K Ngo Van So, D4. 3941 1179**

## real estate agencies

### Colliers International Vietnam

Globally, Colliers International is a leading commercial real estate services company offering comprehensive expertise to investors, owners and tenants around the world.

**Bitexco Office Building, 7th Floor, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3823 3529**

### Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

Their primary focus is on consultancy, brokerage, and investment across the retail, office, and hospitality sectors.

**Level 2, Pathfinder Building, 52 Dong Du, D1. 6291 4707**

### House Link

House Link offers a wide array of apartments and houses for lease all over Ho Chi Minh City.

**23 Phung Khac Khoan, D1 3824 5271**

### Realty World

Focuses on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office buildings, and villas.

**111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh. 3899 4979**

### Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.

**Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3825 8598**

### The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.

**369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9 090 319 8901**

## recruiters

### Opus Recruitment

Opus group was originally a unit under KPMG Thailand that defected to run independently, focusing on quality executive searches.

**2A Rolanno Offices, 128 Nguyen Phi Khanh, Tan Dinh, D1 3827 8209**

### Navigos Group & Vietnam Works

Navigos Group provides recruitment solutions in Vietnam. Services include VietnamWorks (which posts about 200 new jobs per day) and Navigos Search (the leading recruitment firm in Vietnam).

**130 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1 3925 5000**

### Odgers Berndtson Vietnam

A global firm specializing in the recruitment of senior level executives, the firm employs experienced professionals from specific market areas to provide discreet access to industry leaders.

**Suite 1609, 1st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3827 8777**

## relocation

### AGS Four Winds (Vietnam)

Global leader in international removals

& relocations, with 128 offices in 78 countries, they can move you to/or from any location worldwide.

**5th Floor, Lafayette De Saigon, 8A Phung Khac Khoan, D1 3521 0071 ags-vietnam@agsfourwinds.com | www.agsfourwinds.com**

### Allied Pickfords

One of the largest and most respected providers of moving services worldwide, AP assumes complete responsibility for all moving services through a single point of contact.

**District 1. 0122 5141 848**

### Asian Tigers

Pan-Asian moving firm with a perhaps unrivalled level of experience and expertise in packing, storing and moving a family's treasured belongings throughout this region and beyond.

**9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, D4. 3826 7799**

### Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.

**60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1**

### JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.

**1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4. 3826 7655**

### Logical Moves

They offer your belongings the best protection available with the latest technology, experienced staff and equipment. With door to door services, Logical Moves is all about quality service, best prices and well-arranged time. They have moved offices and household goods for many well-known international companies in Vietnam.

**3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net**

### Santa Fe Relocation Service

Door to door relocation service which promises to take the stress out of moving personal possessions from one city - or country - to another. Also offers pet relocations, records management, home search and immigration help.

**www.santaferelo.com info@santaferelo.com.vn**

## shipping

### HL Shipping

A worldwide freight forwarder offering dedicated, integral services in the international trade market providing a reliable, customer-oriented, and cost-effective coverage of all shipping needs, including a comprehensive assessment of all costs and assurance of on-time delivery for each segment. Competent service in English direct from the MD Jeff Tran.

**29 Huynh Van Banh, Ward 17, Phu Nhuan 3995 6117**

### Logitem Viet Nam

Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.

**23 Tran Nao, Binh An, D2 3744 2281**

### Sagawa Express Vietnam

A subsidiary of Sagawa Holdings Group, this firm specialises in providing solutions to general logistics issues in Vietnam, and it has a general logistics certificate unique in this country.

**160 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh 3840 9330 090 900 3649**



# The Outer Districts

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



# The Pygmalion Effect, Part 2

Learning a language begins with baby steps



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

Lauralynn Goetz, B.A., M.M.Ed. US, is the director of an early childhood education center in Vietnam



VIETNAM PROJECTS THAT by 2020 more Vietnamese students graduating from secondary vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use English in their daily communication because of an early enrollment in private English language tutorial programs. A government mandate that proposes “English will become a compulsory subject at the third grade [level] onward” is too late of a start. From birth to age seven, children are more adept at learning languages. After that, their ability starts dropping dramatically

before leveling out at age 17 or 18.

Babies’ brains are sensitive to subtle sound differences and can register how often they hear particular sounds. At six months, babies distinguish the minuscule variations in sounds that mark different languages called phonemes - speech sounds that distinguishes one word from another, for example the sounds “d” and “t” in the words “bid” and “bit.” A phoneme is the smallest phonetic unit that can carry meaning. Babies can do so for every language in the world. Search “Patricia

Kuhl Ted Talk” on YouTube to see the *Linguistic Genius of Babies* - where this is proven by measuring a baby’s brain activity when they are spoken to by a parent and then again by a person speaking a foreign language.

Dr. Patricia K. Kuhl is internationally recognized for her research on early language and brain development, and studies that show how young children can learn. Dr. Kuhl’s work has played a major role in demonstrating how early exposure to language alters the brain. It has implications for critical periods in development for bilingual education and reading readiness, for developmental disabilities involving language, and for research on computer understanding of speech.

A critical period in language development occurs between eight months and 10 months, when babies begin to focus on the sounds of a particular language and lose the ability to hear subtle sounds of other languages. That’s when Japanese babies lose the ability to hear the difference between “ra” and “la,” sounds not used in the Japanese language.

Reviewing the largest English language learning institutes does not yet reflect this newly recognized fact. Only ILA, for example, offers a Jumpstart program for children as young as 2.5-years-old. VUS offers a Smart Kids program for children from 4-years-old and Apollo English Center also offers Apollo Junior classes for 4-year-olds. The British Council offers classes for children from Grade 1, approximately 6-years-old. The only English language program currently available for babies in Vietnam is Kindermusik where classes begin at birth and continue up to 6-years-old.

So how can Vietnam solve the challenge of teaching “competent enough English teachers to churn out an English savvy young workforce by 2020”? The answer lies in convincing government and private sector educators that language programs must begin as early as possible. The methodology for teaching the youngest children a foreign language exists; it basically incorporates music, nursery rhymes and movement combined with picture cards and picture storybooks.

Meanwhile, a bilingual society in 2020 appears to be a long shot. ■





**Grab a copy of Oi  
at these locations...**

**Jaspas Restaurant**  
33 Dong Khoi, D1

**Just Men Spa**  
40 Ton That Thiep, D1

**La Brasserie de Saigon**  
38 Dong Du D1

**La Villa**  
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2

**Long Monaco Restaurant**  
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh

**Lucca Coffee**  
88 Ho Tung Mau, D1

**L'essential Restaurant**  
98 Ho Tung Mau, D1

**L'usine**  
151 Dong Khoi, D1

**McSorley's**  
D2 street, Binh Thanh

**Nathalie's**  
59 Hung Vuong, D7

**Now Zone Coffee**  
R1-73 Bui Bang Doan  
Hung Gia 3, D7

**Pacharan**  
97 Hai Ba Trung, D1

**Papaya Restaurant**  
68 Pham Viet Chanh  
Binh Thanh District

**Phatty's**  
46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

**Pizza Hut**  
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh

**Saigon Retro**  
113 Ho Tung Mau, D1

**Sala Beer**  
28-29 Le Van Thiem  
Tan Phong, D7

**Sofitel Saigon Hotel**  
17 Le Duan, D1

**Spice India Restaurant**  
56-1 Bui Bang Doan  
Hung Vuong 3, D7

**Stella**  
121D Bui Vien, D1

**The Refinery**  
74 Hai Ba Trung, D1

**The Tavern**  
R2-24 Hung Gia 3  
Bui Bang Doan, D7

**The Terrace Cafe**  
Saigon Centre  
65 Le Loi, D1

**Tokyo Deli**  
103 Ton Dat Tien  
Tan Phong, Q7

**Top Shop**  
2 Hai Trieu, D1

**Vesper Bar**  
5B Ton Duc Thang, D1

**Xu**  
71 Hai Ba Trung, D1

**Zoom Cafe**  
169A De Tham, D1

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[montessorivn@gmail.com](mailto:montessorivn@gmail.com)

# Seal of Approval

## How school accreditation works



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.

ACCREDITATION IS A stamp of approval by an outside agency. Accredited schools go through the process as a means of quality assurance. These schools adhere to a set of educational standards which pertain to the curriculum, the finances, extra-curricular programs, and governance as seen through the eyes of all of the members of the school community whether they are the administration, teachers, staff, parents or students. The type of accreditation which a school will seek is often dependent upon its curriculum. The type of accreditation a parent should look for would depend on where they want their child to go to college or university.

Vietnamese schools are accredited by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Schools offering the Vietnamese curriculum are required to send reports to the MOET on a regular basis and can expect yearly visits from the MOET.

Schools teaching a British curriculum will be accredited or authorized by the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE has established an inspection system to inform parents how the standards in the overseas schools match up with the standards for the independent schools in Britain. Inspectorates are approved by the DfE and are monitored by Ofsted. They produce reports which are to be made available to parents and prospective parents of the individual schools.

Schools teaching an American curriculum are accredited by one of the six regional accreditation associations recognized by the US Secretary of Education. These associations have visiting committees which consist of teachers from other accredited schools who conduct onsite inspections. Upon completion of the visit, schools are granted accreditation for a limited period of time. As with the DfE model, schools receive reports which are shared with all stakeholders.

Another recognized agency is the Council of International Schools (CIS) which is a non-national non-regionally affiliated association. Accreditation through CIS is often obtained in conjunction with

another accreditation or authorization.

### Accreditation vs Authorization

Some schools are authorized to offer programs such as the International Baccalaureate program or the Cambridge International Examinations but these authorizations are not the same as an accreditation. Authorization only look at the school's ability to teach a set curriculum and not at governance, philosophy or finances as accreditation does. Often schools will be accredited by one organization and then authorized by another to offer certain programs.

From a parent's perspective accreditation has some important implications. The first is that schools looking to get, keep or renew their accreditation conduct self-evaluations. These reports force schools to take a close look at their programs, their finances, their results and not just what they are doing but why they are doing it. When schools compile these studies they ask not only teachers but also include parents and students. A high

level of transparency is required.

Secondly, the visiting committee is an unbiased independent body. They are not invested in the results of their visit but rather the reputation of their accreditation organization. It is their job to ask the tough questions, evaluate the responses and results, and give recommendations for improvements. They will be returning within a set period of time to ensure that steps have been made towards improvement.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, when your child graduates from an accredited and authorized school you can be assured that the diploma will be recognized by universities around the world.

Parents should ask questions about schools' accreditation. If a school is a candidate for accreditation, it is fair to ask how long they have been candidates and when they expect to be accredited. They should go to the various accreditation agencies' websites and read about their school. ■







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# >>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

#### Gastro'home

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

#### Chiisana 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

#### Blue Crab 🍷 Oi's Pick

Blue Crab offers delicious seafood - prawns, scallops and lobster, crab, oysters, scallops and many more for rock-bottom prices. All of the seafood is sourced from the same supplier as a number of high-end hotels and

restaurants in the city, ensuring the food is fresh and high quality. For meat-lovers there's also a wide range of dishes that include pork ribs and chicken wings. They offer weekly specials as well.  
49 Quoc Huong, D2  
3744 2008  
www.bluecrabsaigon.com

#### 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, foosball, 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

#### 100%

100% Alimentation.Generale.De.Qualite is the latest high-end grocery store to grace the streets of An phu. With a rustic charm 100% provides customers with 100% safe, natural and local products all sourced and manufactured in Vietnam. The shop only offers products that reach international food safety requirements and runs food events at the store. All products are available to order online at www.100percent.vn.com.  
26b Thao dien, D2  
3519 4030

#### 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  
5B2-1 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.aissportscentre.com

### Christina Eberlin Yoga Teacher

Christina graduated from Virajati 300hr yoga teacher training in Thailand. She is offering private yoga classes and group classes. For more information you can reach her at  
Christinaeberlin@gmail.com  
or 093 849 2461.

### 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.dakhoaanphu.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

### Clic Clac Sofa

Sells sofas that double up as beds in various sizes and wood  
327F Luong Dinh Cua, D2  
5402 7434  
www.clicclacsofa.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.aisvietnam.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.smarthidsinfo.com

## travel

## TRAVEL AGENCIES



### Exotissimo Travel

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



## Ha 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.  
248A 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 enclosed by verdant gardens.  
197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2  
0906099180  
www.villasong.com

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[www.ovi Vietnam.com](http://www.ovietnam.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](http://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

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](http://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](http://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](http://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**  
[www.mof.com.vn/en](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.elgaucho.com.vn)

#### Scott & Binh's Restaurant

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

### 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 Mitko.  
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

#### Getana 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

#### 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 Residence 2, 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.rissaigon.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 location s 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, ZumbAtomic®.  
Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril&you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and Somerset (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 0001

## 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

# Grand Old Ladies

A duty to preserve the beauty of the past for future generations



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](http://BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com)

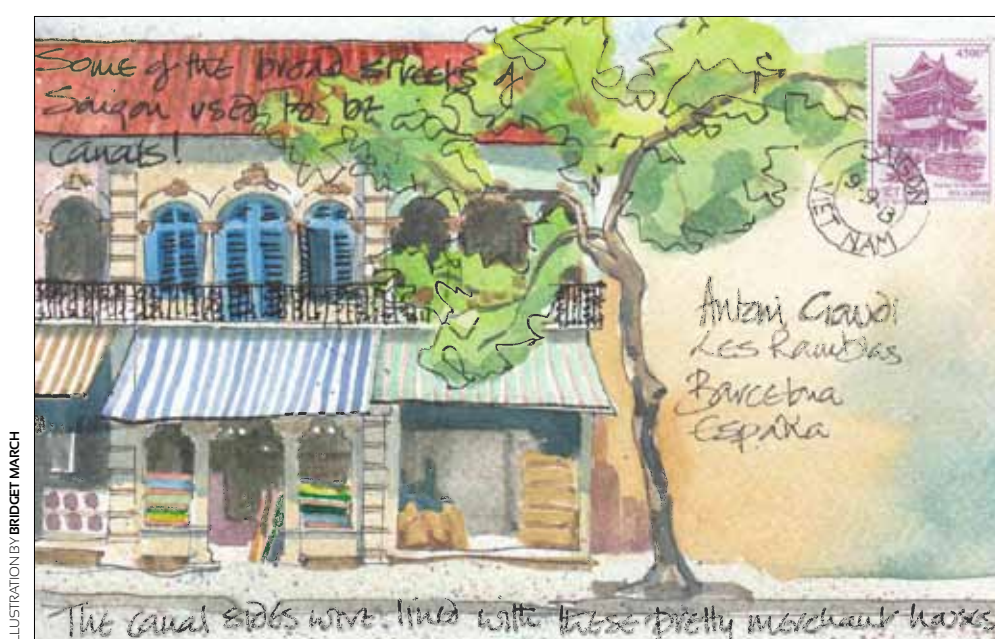


ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

YOU DON'T HAVE to look very hard to find evidence of the part France played in Vietnam's history. Many of the key buildings of state were erected by the French. But, it wasn't until a recent visit to Phnom Penh that I became aware that there is some concern about the possible loss of the architectural heritage left by the French in Southeast Asia. I read in *The Phnom Penh Post* that there are two points of view when it comes to the older buildings there. One side values the history, culture and architectural beauty, the other values the real estate and the possible financial gain from redevelopment of the large city center sites occupied by these 'grand old ladies' of architecture.

Of course, Saigon simply wouldn't have the same charm without the old Post Office, the Opera House, and the old L'Hotel de Ville that is now home to the People's Committee. Apart from the glory of their elegance that is evocative of another age, each one of these buildings has a fascinating story to tell.

But there is a less conspicuous legacy of little merchants' shophouses that give the

streets of Saigon their unique character. The oldest of these modest buildings are now 150-years-old. Some have been loved and maintained but many are suffering the ravages of time and crumbling or disappearing behind giant hoardings and modern concrete 'embellishments' and extensions. The three story shophouses adjacent to Ben Thanh Market are an example of this kind of treatment. If the advertizing companies, sign makers and property owners are allowed to continue defacing, disguising and disfiguring Saigon's architectural heritage, these buildings will be lost and the character of this iconic area will be changed forever.

As humans, we collect the memories and souvenirs of all the people and events that have influenced or changed our lives. It is the nature of people to want to hold on to some aspects of the past - it can give us a sense of belonging and it confirms our identities. For this reason, many people are unsettled by too much loss and change. Our favorite cities are just like people, they are a collection of souvenirs that represent all the different cultures, religions, political regimes,

nationalities and trends. They all leave their traces behind as they pass through. These traces remind us who we are.

Many cities in the West have suffered at the hands of careless town planners who erased neighborhoods and demolished old buildings to make way for modern, concrete shopping malls and car parks. The wounds left behind have still not healed. People can feel demoralized and lose their sense of place. Sometimes "we just don't know what we've got till it's gone".

But cities that have cherished their unique tapestry of architectural styles through the ages are warm, vibrant, welcoming and interesting to all. Those who have filled their towns with concrete are regretting the loss of history now. In Europe, properties like the old merchant houses that line the broad avenues of Saigon, are being renovated and turned into homes by young professionals. Maybe it will be a while before the young Vietnamese develop a taste for this style of living. In the meantime, it is everyone's duty to preserve this cultural and architectural heritage so it can be enjoyed by the next generation. ■



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