

Ơi

VIETNAM

DECEMBER 2015

Christmas — GIFTS —

STEPS IN TIME

Join Us for a Historic
Walk in Cho Lon
PAGE 22

BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE

Meet Grammy-nominated
Musician Ha Okio
PAGE 28

TAKING THE LEAD

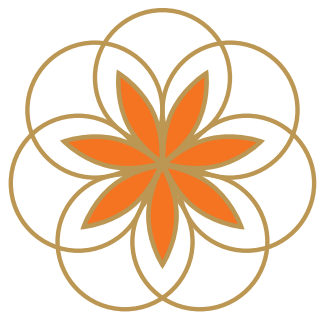
Award-winning Actress
and Producer Hong Anh
PAGE 32

BUEN PROVENCHO!

The City's First
Cuban Restaurant
PAGE 58



NHÀ XUẤT BẢN THANH NIÊN



EUROPEAN

International School Ho Chi Minh City

A NOBEL TALENT SCHOOL



Early Years Centre (Age 2-5) • Primary School (Age 6-10) • Secondary School (Age 11-18)



730 Le Van Mien | Thao Dien | District 2 | Ho Chi Minh City | Vietnam
Tel: (+848) 7300 7257 | Email: info@eishcmc.com

www.eishcmc.com





The star of
any holiday party

—  —
Give Beautifully



EVERYWHERE YOU GO

Director **XUAN TRAN**

Managing Director **JIMMY VAN DER KLOET**
jimmy@oivietnam.com

Managing Editor **CHRISTINE VAN**
christine@oivietnam.com

Deputy Editor **JAMES PHAM**
jpham@oivietnam.com

Associate Publisher **KHANH NGUYEN**
khanh@oivietnam.com

Editorial Intern **ALEX GREEN**

Graphic Artist **KEVIN NGUYEN**
kevin@oivietnam.com

Staff Photographer **NGOC TRAN**
ngoc@oivietnam.com

For advertising please contact:

NGAN NGUYEN 
ngan@oivietnam.com
090 279 7951

CHAU NGUYEN 
chau@oivietnam.com
091 440 0302

HANH (JESSIE) LE 
jessie@oivietnam.com
098 747 4183

HUY NGUYEN 
huy@oivietnam.com
0164 356 3709

General **advertising@oivietnam.com**

Inquiries **info@oivietnam.com**



This Month's Cover

Model: **Ha Anh Vu**

Image provided by **Ipa-Nima**
(Ipa-Nima bags are designed, handmade and embellished in Vietnam by Christina Yu. The new collection is available in Hanoi (5 Nha Tho, Hang Trong) and Saigon (77-79 Dong Khoi, DI). For more info, visit their Facebook: Ipa-Nima. Online order at www.ipa-nima.com)

ƠI VIỆT NAM

NHÀ XUẤT BẢN THANH NIÊN

Chịu trách nhiệm xuất bản:

Giám đốc, Tổng biên tập

Nguyễn Xuân Trường

Biên tập: Quang Huy - Quang Hùng

Thực hiện liên kết xuất bản:

Metro Advertising Co., Ltd

48 Hoàng Diệu, Phường 12, Quận 4

In lần thứ ba mươi ba, số lượng 6000 cuốn,
khổ 21cm x 29,7cm

Đăng ký KHXB: 2633 -2015/CXB/19-135/TN
QĐXB số: 452/QĐ-TN

Chế bản và in tại Nhà in Gia Định
Nộp lưu chiếu tháng 12/2015

Website: www.oivietnam.com

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Located on Dong Khoi street with balcony view to the Opera House.
Signature homemade banana cake and Catina noodle.



Welcome in. Make your self at home. | Opening hours: 8 AM - 8 PM
151/6 Dong Khoi St., D1, HCMC – Tel: 08 3827 5555
www.facebook.com/cafecatina

Contents

WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

From creative burgers and surf & turf to Cuban food and Pan Asian cuisine, this month's gastronomic journey is sure to satiate all appetites



IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

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

P20 TROI OI

Find out why an ao dai, garbage and the 2021 SEA Games made it into our list

P22 STEPS IN TIME

A historic walk around Saigon's Chinatown

P26 WELCOME TO THE THIRD DIMENSION

Local artist adds a unique Vietnamese touch to three-dimensional resin art

P28 BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE

Ha Okio opens up about rap, rhythm and his father

P30 A RECIPE FOR NATURAL BEAUTY

Learn how to make your own lipstick and soap

P32 TAKING THE LEAD

Hear actress and producer Hong Anh talk about her rise to fame

P38 PRESS PRINT

A café that serves coffee while you wait to print out your 3D figurine

P40 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

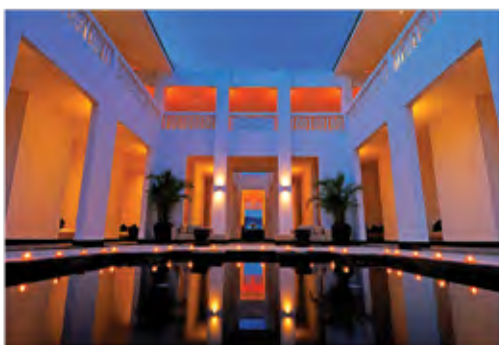
Celebrity chef Luke Nguyen on food trends and breaking away from traditional Vietnamese cuisine



PRINCESS D'ANNAM
RESORT & SPA

ESCAPE

TO A ROYAL SANCTUARY



+84 062 368 2222

www.princessdannam.com



HON LAN, TAN THANH COMMUNE, HAM THUAN NAM DISTRICT, BINH THUAN PROVINCE, KÊ GÀ, VIETNAM

COVER STORY

CHRISTMAS GIFTS*Get the perfect present this year for your family and friends*

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

P42 MY LIFE AS...*A xe ba gac driver***P80 LA ISLA BONITA***Find out why Boracay is the Philippines' must-go beach destination***P92 WEAR YOUR BABY***Slings in Saigon, the low-down on local Attachment Parenting*

COLUMNS

P35 LEGAL EASE*How to deal with a bad neighbor***P44 MONEY TALK***Creating a trust for your loved ones***P64 CHEERS!***Chilean wine is in the spotlight this month***P65 CHUC AN NGON!***A slow and delicious recipe for braised short ribs***P94 TELL TAIL SIGNS***Tips on how to find a good, reliable pet-sitter***P95 HIGHER LEARNING***The importance of computational thinking at an early age*

Festive Season Getaways.

(22/12/2015 – 2/1/2016)

15% off of a minimum three-night stay

Complimentary Christmas Eve or New Year Eve dinner per guest

A bottle of sparkling wine & chocolates on arrival

Pullman Danang Beach Resort.

Vo Nguyen Giap Street, Khue My Ward, Ngu Hanh Son District, Danang City | T. +84 (0)5 11 395 8888 | Info@pullman-danang.com

Book now at pullman-danang.com

DESIGN YOUR JOURNEY.

pullman
HOTELS AND RESORTS

Paris . Sao Paulo . London . Shanghai . Dubai . Bangkok . Sydney . Hanoi . Danang . Ho Chi Minh City

LE CLUB **ACCOR**
HOTELS

JOIN OUR GLOBAL LOYALTY PROGRAM AT ACCORHOTELS.COM

PULLMANHOTELS.COM

*TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY.

Datebook

What's on this month...



**DEC
3-6**

What: Ho Tram Open

Where: The Bluffs

Ho Tram Strip

(www.thebluffshotram.com)

About: The Ho Tram Open will bring the world's best golfers to Vietnam, all chasing the huge prize of USD1.5 million. Sergio Garcia, Darren Clarke, Geoff Ogilvy, Thomas Bjorn, Robert Rock, Michael Tran, and many more will compete. Spectators can obtain free tickets to watch the golf at www.hotramopen.com, and a week of entertainment will also be running in conjunction with the championship. The resort will host a Poolside Groove party every evening of the championship and former member of Westlife, Brian McFadden will close the week with a performance.

Contact: For more info, email sonia.mai@thebluffshotram.com or visit www.hotramopen.com



Casa Italia
Restaurant & Pizzeria



VIETNAM EATS
Where Eats Meets West

Hotline for Delivery & Table Reservations

08 38 244 286



▶ LOCATED AT:

- 1) 86 Le Loi, D1
- 2) 82 Le Van Thiem, PMH, D7
- 3) 82 Xuan Thuy, D2
- 4) 98J Le Lai, D1

www.casaitalia.com.vn | info@casaitalia.com.vn

Enjoy the convivial atmosphere and experience that is 'Casa'



DECEMBER 4-5

What: Sounds for the Season: Carols at St. Paul's

Where: St Paul's Convent Chapel (4 Ton Duc Thang, D1); 7:30pm

About: Sounds for the Season is an annual Christmas concert performed by the International Choir and Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City. Each year, the choir and orchestra perform a number of traditional Christmas carols and pieces of classical music, and this year is no exception. Their repertoire includes works by Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Vivaldi, and many other famous composers, alongside traditional pieces and songs from musicals. For Sounds of the Season, the group will draw upon this extensive repertoire, particularly the traditional carols, and will also perform Pergolesi/Durante's joyful *Magnificat*. For the first time, however, the group will also perform a Vietnamese-language carol, originally composed during the 1940s. No tickets are required, entry is by donation only and seating is on a first come first served basis. All proceeds go towards Loreto Australia and Poussières de Vie.

Contact: Visit www.icohcmc.com for more info

DECEMBER 5

What: Christmas BISzaar

Where: British International School An Phu Secondary Campus (246 Nguyen Van Huong, D2) 9am-2pm

About: To get you in the mood for Christmas, the An Phu Secondary Parent Teacher Group are again hosting their annual Christmas BISzaar. With a wide assortment of vendors selling gifts and handicrafts, fun activities for children, a range of delicious food and beverages, backed by Christmas carols performed by BIS students, the BISzaar starts the festive season in style. A raffle draw is also taking place, with tickets currently on sale at all three BIS campuses. There will even be a visit from Santa Claus.

Contact: Visit www.bisvietnam.com/blog/christmas-biszaar-2015 for more info



THE OCEAN VILLAS



A SUBLIME BEACH HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE

Sunkissed seascapes. Pristine shores ringed by mountainous jungle. A perfect address. Located between the charming heritage town of Hoi An and Danang city on Vietnam's central coast, The Ocean Villas offer every opportunity conceivable to holidaymakers. Relax. Play. Celebrate. Partake in a uniquely Vietnamese experience. Or ensconce yourself in your very own private paradise. Fine dining, a world-class Greg Norman-designed golf course, spectacular beach and an array of top resort facilities are at the very doorstep of your villa.

AREA: Da Nang
NUMBER OF POOL VILLAS: 40
YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2011

VILLAS	SIZE
Two-Bedroom Pool Villa	275 sq.meter
Three-Bedroom Pool Villa	373 sq.meter
Four-Bedroom Pool Villa	433 sq.meter
Four-Bedroom Beach Front Pool Villa	821 sq.meter
Five-Bedroom Beach Front Pool Villa	924 sq.meter
(King size bedding in all master bedrooms)	



The Ocean Villas at Da Nang Beach Resort
Son Tra – Dien Ngoc Coastal Street,
Hoa Hai Ward, Ngu Hanh Son Dist.,
Da Nang City, Vietnam

T: +84.511 396 7094 • F: +84.511 399 7095
E: reservations@theoceanvillas.com.vn
W: www.theoceanvillas.com.vn



UNTIL DEC
9

What: *In Opposite* solo exhibition

Where: CT Gallery (27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1)

About: Hanoi-based artist Ngo Van Sac, a graduate of the Vietnam Fine Arts University, is best known for his distinctive wood-burning pictures, but his artwork has taken a bold new direction in this

exhibition. Sac has chosen to work in the medium of collage and mixed media, while retaining the organic nature of his earlier pieces. Born in a rural village on the outskirts of Hanoi, Sac has witnessed a constant encroachment of urban development into what was once a pastoral idyll.

In Opposite is his attempt to find a symbiosis between human construction and the natural world. "The Earth's components have always had close ties with each other... the relationships between human beings and the natural world is no exception. In creating this series I wanted to highlight the interesting contrasts between the experiences of people and nature."

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

DEC
9

What: Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells

Where: Australian International School Sports Arena (45 Thao Dien, D2) 5pm-7pm

What: The school will create a winter wonderland in

Thao Dien, inviting children and parents to come and celebrate the Christmas festivities. The event will feature a Christmas choir, Christmas performances, a fun quiz and raffle with exciting prizes to be won, a magic show, and the chance for children to meet Santa. Registration for the event is free.

Contact: Visit www.aisvietnam.com/jinglebells to register





W|www.acc.vn E|acc@acc.vn

ACC
AMERICAN CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC

Effective treatment of chronic and acute pain, sport injuries, childhood spinal and foot problems.

Relief from pain without drugs or surgery

Flat feet & Foot problems

Elbow injuries

Wrist pain

Sport injuries

Headaches, etc.

We treat

Disk syndrome

Back pain & Neck pain

Knee pain & Ankle pain

Shoulder pain & injuries

Ho Chi Minh City

A | 161 Hai Ba Trung, Dist 3
T | (84-8) 3939 3930
M | +84 946 74 00 66

Ha Noi

A | 44 Nguyen Du, Hai Ba Trung Dist
T | (84-4) 32 656 888
M | +84 9656 888 28



Tandoor
Indian Cuisine



39A-39B Ngo Duc Ke street, Dist 1, HCMC

Tel: (+84 8) 39304839 / 39302468

Email: tandoor@tandoorvietnam.com

Open hour: from 11:00AM to 11:00PM

www.tandoorvietnam.com

DECEMBER 10

What: Winter Fair 2015

Where: Renaissance International Saigon School (74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7); 4pm until late

About: The school's annual winter fair aims to tighten the bonds between pupils, teachers and the wider community, as well as help parents get in that last minute Christmas shopping. The fair features booths run by local businesses, artisans and pupils. All products are high quality; many are created and sold just for the fair, at a special discount. Throughout the evening, school musicians will help provide a cheery festive atmosphere. The fair will also help to raise money to help under-privileged pupils across Vietnam.

Contact: To register to attend, email mydvk@renaissance.edu.vn



DEC
12

What: Jingle Bells Joy Ride

Where: The Bike Shop (250 Nguyen Van Huong, D2) 7pm

About: Celebrate the joy of riding in Christmas style with their annual Xmas Joy Ride. Enjoy a gentle cruise around District 2, ending at Container Pub on Street 15 in An Phu for a festive drink. Bring a light, helmet and most importantly bring your best Santa outfit. Prizes will be awarded for the best-dressed Pères Noël. Bike rentals are available, and the ride follows a 15km route, appropriate for adult and teen riders of all levels. As it is an evening event, and riders will be sharing the road, riders under the age of 12 are not permitted.

Contact: Contact thebikeshopvn@gmail.com for more info



DEC
11-13

What: Hansel and Gretel

Where: VistaWalk (3rd Floor, 628C Hanoi Highway, D2); 6:30pm December 11, 2pm and 6:30pm December 12 and 2pm December 13

About: Saigon Players present *Hansel and Gretel* in the traditional British pantomime style. The Christmas panto is a well-loved British tradition, in which topical comedy is combined with a popular fairy tale. The pantomime is an event for the whole family, and audience participation is encouraged, with songs, slapstick and friendly heckling helping the on-stage heroes complete their quest. The recommended age is four and up.

Contact: Contact saigonplayertickets@gmail.com to reserve tickets

CAFÉ-RESTAURANT
HO CHI MINH CITY

GRAND SUNDAY ROAST

BEEF, PORK RIB,
LAMB, CHICKEN,
FISH SERVED
WITH ALL
THE TRIMMINGS,
MASH, MARKET
VEGGIES,
GRAVY & DESSERT

LOVINGLY
SERVED
11AM-5PM

All you can
drink bloody
mary bar & gin
tonic trolley
a devilish
clever way to
spend your
Sunday.

Roast 400,000 VND p.p.,
Bar 400,000 VND p.p.
OH AND KIDS (-12)
EAT FREE!...

dine@crhcmc.com,
1ST FLOOR
171 CALMETTE,
DISTRICT 1, HCMC



DEC
13

What: The Beat of Celebration Featuring Tiesto

Where: Saigon Exhibition and Conference Center, D7

About: A show for EDM lovers. The night kick starts with a set from Vietnamese EDM wizard Tuan Kruse, before four Vietnamese DJs face off in a battle. International EDM legend Tiesto headlines the festival, closing the night with his massive mix of trance tunes and dance anthems. Tickets start at VND550,000.

Contact: For more details visit www.ticketbox.vn/budweiserfestival/en

UNTIL DECEMBER 15

What: 2015 Teddy Bear Festival

Where: Crescent Lake Area (Ton Dat Tien, D7)

About: The festival features 35 giant teddy bears, standing between 1.68 and 1.73 meters tall. The event also features a series of activities and entertainment, such as street music performances by bands from the UK, the Philippines and Vietnam, outdoor film screenings, picnics and a Teddy Fair with 50 booths.

Contact: Visit the [Teddy Bear Festival 2015 Facebook page](#) for more info



Health Insurance
Travel Insurance
Employee Benefits



www.bluecross.com.vn | 1800 577770

What: 1972-2015: Works by Hoang Duong Cam and Trong Gia Nguyen

Where: Galerie Quynh (151/3 Dong Khoi, D1); 10am-7pm

About: This two-person exhibition celebrates the work of two of Vietnam's most daring conceptual artists. Hoang Duong Cam has participated in numerous exhibitions worldwide, and in 2009 held a residency at the acclaimed Tokyo Wonder Site. Hoang's work transcends style. For many of his pieces, he reshoots existing photographs with a pinhole camera, before repainting them in monochrome and dotting them with mental abstractions of puzzled color. Hoang's atmospheric paintings focus on the period around 1972 in Vietnam. Trong Gia Nguyen is a multi-disciplinary artist of international acclaim and has recently returned to Vietnam after a residency with the Museum of Arts & Design, New York. For this exhibition, Nguyen has created numerous sculptures, often playfully touching upon the absurd.

Contact: Visit www.galeriequynh.com for more info

UNTIL DEC
19



ALLIED PICKFORDS
The Careful Movers™



Scan this for more info

Trust Allied Pickfords to
make your move simpler,
seamless and stress-free.
Relax, we carry the load.



Allied Pickfords Vietnam

HANOI: Room 302, 3rd floor, 12A Ho Xuan Huong street
Office: +84 4 3943 1511

HCMC: 8th floor, Miss Ao Dai Building, 21 Nguyen Trung Ngan street, D1
Office: +84 8 3910 1220

www.alliedpickfords.com.vn



ENJOY THE COZY & EXCITING ATMOSPHERE
AT CENTURY RIVERSIDE HUE
FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR FESTIVES !

CHRISTMAS PACKAGE

VND 2.810.000 net per couple

VND 1.930.000 net per person in a single

With 1 - night accomodation in Deluxe Riverview room and Gala Buffet dinner on 24 Dec 2015

NEW YEAR PACKAGE

VND 2.102.000 net per couple

VND 1.576.000 net per person in a single

With 1- night accomodation in Deluxe Riverview room and Special Western 5 - courses set Dinner on 31 Dec 2015

Extra night at VND 950.000 net Single or Double

Discount 50% for Children (05-12 years old)

Packages include: Daily breakfast, Entertainment show and A ticket for lucky draw prizes (only for Gala dinner), welcome drink, Taxes and service charge!



Add: 49 Le Loi street, Hue city, Viet Nam
Email: res@centuryriversidehue.com

Tel: 84-054-3823390 | Fax: 84-054-3823394
Website: www.centuryriversidehue.com



STAMFORD SKIN CENTRE
LASER DERMATOLOGY CLINIC



BOTOX
Dysport
Restylane
Juvederm
Uma Jeunesse
for treating beauty

**WANT TO LOOK YOUNGER?
SEE OUR DERMATOLOGISTS TODAY!**

WE SPECIALIZE IN

- Aesthetic Dermatology**
(Acne, Wrinkles, Hypertrophic (and Keloid) scars, Botox (and Restylane) injections)
- Laser treatment**
(Toe Nail Fungal Infection, Warts...)
- General Dermatology**
(Eczema, Psoriasis, Rosacea, Skin infections...)
- Hair and Nail Disorders**
- Laser Dermatology**
(Acne Scars, Melasma, Freckles, Facial Rejuvenation, Spider Wines, Hair Removal...)
- Skin Cancer Evaluation, Treatment and Removal**
- STD screening and treatment**
- Hepatitis B, C, and HIV treatment**

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, District 1, HCMC
info@stamfordskin.com

(08) 3925 1990
www.stamfordskin.com

**LE MERIDIEN
SAIGON**

3C Ton Duc Thang
Street, District 1,
Ho Chi Minh City,
Vietnam
lemeridien.com/saigon



Le **MERIDIEN**

**UNLOCK
FESTIVE TREATS AT
LE MERIDIEN SAIGON**

Celebrate this greetings season in style and treat your loved ones to a range of festive activities they will remember.

Let us bring you the sparkling Tree lighting ceremony, sumptuous Buffet choices, lush Fireworks countdown party, and so much more.

For reservation or more information, please contact
+84 8 6263 6688 or lemeridien.saigon@lemeridien.com

spg*
Starwood
Preferred
Guest

©2014 Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.
All Rights Reserved. Preferred Guest, SPG, Le Méridien and their logos are the trademarks of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., or its affiliates.

The Bulletin

Promotions and news in HCMC and beyond...

X-CHAMPS SERIES KITE BOARDING TOUR AT NINH CHU BAY BEACH CLUB

Professional kiteboarding is returning to Vietnam for the first time in three years, with the exciting new X-Champs Series tour, run by Kite Board Tour Asia, taking place from February 24-28, 2016 at Ninh Chu Bay Beach Club. The X-Champs Series features a range of competitions across multiple disciplines in both men's and women's kiteboarding. General Director of Ninh Chu Bay Beach Club, Mark Gwyther, spoke of his excitement: "We have been open for less than a year, and our selection by Kite Board Tour Asia demonstrates tremendous confidence in us and confirms our belief that Ninh Chu Bay will become one of Asia's premier wind and adventure sport tourism destinations." Ninh Chu Bay Beach Club is set on 400 meters of private beach and offers day-use cabanas, beachside massages, a selection of cocktails and drinks, and an excellent grill cooking up the freshest local seafood.



courier4u.vn

"Your **fastest** and
most reliable
messenger service in HCMC"



*Average delivery time: 40 minutes

Tel: 0988 80 30 50 / 1900 64 54

www.courier4u.vn

INTERCONTINENTAL NHA TRANG CELEBRATES THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

InterContinental Nha Trang offers a season of festive feasts and celebrations for all the family. Throughout the season, Christmas High Tea is available at the Lobby Bar, priced at VND300,000 for finger sandwiches, creamy hot chocolate and Christmas treats. Christmas Eve begins a frenzied week of celebration. At the Cookbook Café at 6pm, a decadent six-course meal accompanied by a live jazz performance provides the backdrop for the evening's entertainment, and a visit from Santa will delight younger guests. Prices start at VND1.9 million, including a complimentary glass of sparkling wine, but free flow wine, beer, and soft drinks can be had for an additional VND500,000 per person, with infinite champagne pour available for an additional VND1 million. At the Grand Ballroom, from 6pm on Christmas Eve a buffet dinner will be offered at VND1,900,000 per adult and VND950,000 per child. After all the celebrations on Christmas Eve, a Christmas buffet offers a selection of traditional cold cuts, an artisan carving station, chef's specialty Peking duck and a range of BBQ favorites for VND1,388,000 per adult and VND694,000 per child. Free flow wine, beer, soft drinks and Bloody Mary cocktails are available for an extra VND500,000, with free flow champagne an extra VND1 million. On New Year's Eve, enjoy a six-course meal at the Cookbook Café for VND2,588,000 per person including free flow beer, wine, and soft drinks, with free flow Veuve Clicquot available for an extra VND500,000. New Year's Eve begins at 6pm in the Grand Ballroom. Food and entertainment includes a live Filipino band followed by a DJ show, lucky draws and a kids' corner, while the New Year will be celebrated with a balloon drop and a massive fireworks display. Reservations are required and cost VND2,588,000 per person, which includes beer, wines, and soft drinks, and free flow champagne is available for an additional VND500,000.

BEVERAGE PROMOTION

To celebrate the opening of their new store at 99 Nguyen Hue in District 1, The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf are offering two promotions on December 12 and 13. In the first promotion, buy a regular-sized White Chocolate Ice Blended drink and get a small coffee or iced/hot tea for free. In the second promotion, the first 100 customers each day on December 12 and 13 with a bill over VND250,000 will receive a free bag of Chai tea.

MEKONG+ SECOND ANNUAL SALE

Mekong+, a non-profit organization that works to create sustainable employment for under-privileged women in rural Vietnam and Cambodia, is having a sale throughout December. Expect up to 70 percent off selected quilts and accessories and up to 40 percent off selected bamboo bikes. With great gifts that support local communities, stock runs out fast, and once it's gone, it's gone! Mekong+ have stores in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Hoi An, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, details of which can be found at their website, www.mekong-plus.com.

TURKEY TAKE-AWAY A LA BRAZIL

Au Lac do Brazil (238 Pasteur, D3) once again gears up for the festive season, offering a turkey take-away package until December 31, keeping you covered for Christmas celebrations. For VND2,450,000 they will deliver a whole roast turkey with all the trimmings and a bottle of house wine. It is recommended to order two days in advance.

CELEBRATE THE FESTIVE SEASON AT INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON

InterContinental Asiana Saigon is hosting a succession of festive feasts. Market 39 opens proceedings with a Christmas Eve dinner buffet. Entry is VND1,988,000 per adult, and includes champagne, house wine, cocktails, soft drinks, and tea & coffee. On the big day itself Market 39 host a Bubbly Festive Brunch, which includes the drinks listed above for the price of VND2.1 million per person. On December 31, Market 39 hosts a New Year's Eve dinner with the same format at a price of VND2,388,000. New Year's Day features a brunch and a dinner, with both costing VND1,688,000 per adult and with the latter half priced for children between 6-12 and free for children under 12. Italian Restaurant Basilico offers a choice of two 6-course menus. Their Christmas Eve dinner costs VND1,499,999 and includes free flow Prosecco, wines, beers, soft drinks, and water. Basilico's New Year's Eve dinner follows the same format, costing VND1,499,000. To ring in the New Year, head to Purple Jade Bar & Lounge, which hosts a countdown party from 6pm-2am. Entry is VND388,000 per person, and includes a welcome drink.



IPC & English primary curriculum
Experienced UK trained teachers
Maximum 16 children per class
Green environment



SAIGON STAR
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, District 2, HCMC
(08) 3742 3222, (08) 3742 STAR
enroll@saigonstarschool.edu.vn
www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn



Located perfectly in the heart of Nha Trang Bay, Best Western Premier Havana Nha Trang is the ideal destination for your luxury getaway. Inspired by the beautiful harmony of Western and Asian styles, the hotel features a uniquely modern charming design concept, leaving you a warm welcome from the moment you enter the Hotel Lobby through to different rooms and suites.

- * 41-storey building with 1.000 ocean-view guest rooms.
- * Ideal location in Nha Trang center, only 40 minutes from Cam Ranh Airport.
- * Private underground tunnel leading from the hotel to the beach.
- * Infinity swimming pool with panoramic ocean view.
- * Impressive dining experience with wide selection of cuisines.
- * Skylight 360° is the roof of Nha Trang where you can view the overall landscape of the ocean.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year





**Greek Style
Strained Yogurt - 1kg**



**Greek Style
Strained Yogurt - 170gr**



**Greek Style
Yogurt - 170gr**



GREEK FETA TELEME & GREEK STYLE YOGURT

164 Cong Quynh st., Pham Ngu Lao ward, D1
08.38373248 - 08.38373253

www.zeusdairyprod.com - zeusgreekfeta.com

info@zeusdairyprod.com - sales@zeusdairyprod.com



**Greek Feta
Teleme - 200gr**



**Greek Feta
Teleme - 1kg**

***Specializing in manufacturing and
trading Greek style
Feta & Yogurt under natural
fermentation methods.***

***The products are **100%**
fresh pasteurized milk,
they do not contain any additives
nor preservatives.***



SANCTUARY

BEACH RESORT • HO TRAM

Ho Tram Hamlet, Xuyen Moc District, Ba Ria Vung Tau, Vietnam

T: +(84) 64 3 781631 info@sanctuary.com.vn

Christmas in the sand

Enjoy two nights with all meals included in any of our villas starting at 26,000,000 VND for up to 9 adults.

Master a new dish with our Vietnamese cooking class and enjoy a BBQ dinner cooked by our chef in your villa.

This is the perfect opportunity to relax with family and friends and let us take care of everything.

Deluxe Riverfront

3 Bedrooms, 7 adults, up to 3
children under 12 years old

26,000,000 VND

Premium Riverfront

3 Bedrooms, 7 adults, up to 3
children under 12 years old

34,000,000 VND

Premium Beachfront

4 Bedrooms, 9 adults, up to 4
children under 12 years old

55,000,000 VND

If you wish to extend the offer, 50% of the package rate applies per day. Valid for stays until 24 December 2015. Additional 3,000,000 VND for adults, 1,500,000 VND for children. An extra charge will be applied for bookings including Saturday: 4,000,000 VND for Deluxe Riverfront & Premium Riverfront and 5,000,000 VND for Premium Beachfront. Not available with any other discount or package. All prices include service charge and taxes

Troi Oi

The country in numbers

1,900

pound naval shell was defused after being unearthed from a garden in Quang Tri Province. Quang Tri was heavily bombed during the American War, and locals find as many as 100 pieces of unexploded ordnance every day. The shell was buried about a meter underground and was discovered by a family who were leveling their garden with an excavator. At 1.3 meters in length and 0.4 meters in diameter, the shell is the largest piece of unexploded ordnance discovered in Quang Tri so far. Officers from the UK-based Mines Advisory Group successfully defused the bomb two days after it was discovered.



birth mother in case of surrogacy. In case of adoption, one of the adoptive parents will get paid leave until the baby is six months old. Spain gives new fathers two weeks of fully paid leave while the UK gives them as much time but with a fifth of their salary. South Korea and Japan provide the longest period of leave - as long as one year with part salary - followed by Western European countries.

14

days of paternity leave are now granted to men in Vietnam, effective January 2016. They will be entitled to paid

leave of five to 14 days depending on whether it is a single child and a natural birth or C-section. The International Labor Organization has been urging Vietnam to provide paternity leave, which 78 countries do, to recognize men's right to parenthood and their responsibility to share unpaid care and household work to promote greater gender equality. Vietnam's 2012 Labor Code increased maternity leave from four to six months, which is among the longest in Asia. It also applies to the

A festive background for a Wine Embassy advertisement featuring champagne bottles, glasses of bubbly, and a sparkling firework effect. The text 'Wine Embassy wishes you a Merry Christmas' is overlaid in a white serif font.

Wine Embassy
wishes you a Merry Christmas

900

new vehicles are registered in Ho Chi Minh City every day, and cars are beginning to catch up to motorbikes as the preferred mode of transport. According to the City Transport Department, 41,774 cars

were registered between January and the end of October, with an average of 139 cars per day - a 39 percent increase on last year's average figures. The number of motorbikes registered daily has fallen by 25 percent from last year, to around 750. This trend will only be accelerated by a planned cut to tariffs and luxury taxes that could see car prices fall 42 percent by 2019. The government initiative seeks to encourage the purchase of smaller, more economical cars, while luxury cars with larger engines will be more heavily taxed.

USD78 MILLION

will be spent by Vietnam should the country be successful in its bid to host the 2021 Southeast Asian Games. According to the plan submitted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the sum will go towards repairing and upgrading current facilities in Hanoi and the surrounding area, as well as organizational fees. In addition to traditional athletic and swimming events, Vietnam also proposes to hold competitions in chess, pencak silat, vovinam, sepak takraw and petanque. Vietnam last hosted the games in 2003. The next two events will be held in Malaysia in 2017, and in the Philippines in 2019.

**Wine Embassy has selected
a large gift promotion up to 35% off**

- Champagne Gift Box
- New Glassware collection
- Trio Christmas dinner
- Tailor-made wine dinner selection

*Our passionate sommelier will assist you
with your private or corporate Christmas party and gift*

**Hotline: 08 62 96 05 52
41 Quoc Huong Street, District 2**

60 percent of companies in Vietnam are not making any profit and most of them are too small to keep the economy stable, said Vu Tien Loc, Chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Industry and Commerce (VCCI), which represents thousands of businesses in the country. Vietnam is expected to see an economic growth of over 6.5 percent this year, the quickest since 2010. But Loc said the macroeconomy does not reflect the poor health of the business community. More than 54,000 businesses went bankrupt, shut down or were suspended this year, down from previous years but still "pretty high," he said. Loc said he supports the government's plan to provide further tax incentives to businesses, like aborting the penalties for late tax payment. Vietnam is charging a corporate tax of 22 percent. "Many companies have been in difficult situation and they cannot afford to pay taxes. So all measures to delay, reduce or waive taxes are necessary."

13 metric tons of garbage is dumped into the Nhieu Loc-Thi Nghe canal every day. The 10km-long waterway, once considered one of the prettiest canals in Vietnam, runs through Districts 1, 3, Phu Nhuan, Binh Thanh and Tan Binh in Ho Chi Minh City. The recent pollution of the waterway has led to fish dying en masse as the canal is suffocated by refuse. The canal has had recurrent pollution problems and the last major cleanup and regeneration operation, which started in 2002 and continued until 2012, cost USD316.79 million. The Ho Chi Minh City Urban Environment Company has deployed 20 boats to collect floating detritus to combat the problem.

~3,000

colonial houses and villas in HCMC are facing demolition, but architects and historians have said that many of these historic structures should be restored. Of the total number, about 168 are under State management and receive funds for repair and preservation. Most of the historic buildings were built during the French period. They include the HCMC People's Court (built in 1881), Gia Long King's Palace or Revolutionary Museum (1885), Majestic Hotel and Notre Dame Cathedral (1887), Saigon Post Office (1886-1891), HCM City People's Committee (1907), Opera House (1900) and Ben Thanh Market (1912-1914). Many old villas have been renovated and now house schools, restaurants and coffee shops. They are mostly located on Tu Xuong, Vo Van Tan, Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Le Quy Don and Tran Quoc Thao streets. Recently, two villas on Nguyen Thong and Nguyen Thi Minh Khai in District 3 were demolished because of structural deterioration.



USD60,000

ao dai breaks Vietnamese record for the "largest golden phoenix." The ao dai, handmade by 30 artisans from Phu Nhuan Jewelry Company, took 240 hours to complete. The deep blue-black fabric is inlaid with over 2,000 details in 24-carat gold, with the image of a phoenix emblazoned across the torso. The phoenix is said to represent the dignity of Vietnamese womanhood.



No.62, Duong So 65, Tan Phong,
D7 (Near Lotte Mart), HCMC

Restaurant: 0837 751 219
Peter: 01234 60 2200
Kim: 0909 60 1127

www.dutchrestaurant.vn
info@dutchrestaurant.vn

Steps in Time

Walking Saigon's Cho Lon

TEXT BY **JAMES PHAM AND TIM DOLING**
IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN AND JAMES PHAM**

IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE that Vietnam was occupied by the Chinese for a thousand years. However, their influence was mainly felt in the north during the first millennium, whereas Saigon was influenced by a separate wave of Chinese settlers hundreds of years later. Walking through the narrow streets of present-day Cho Lon offers a look back in time when Chinese merchants wielded power and Vietnamese, French and Chinese cultures fused into a unique society.

After China's Ming Dynasty collapsed in the 1670s, hordes of Ming loyalists began to arrive on the shores of Vietnam. Some were offered land in Hoi An, where others were encouraged by Lord Nguyen Phuc Tan to settle new territories in Bien Hoa (just north of present-day Saigon) and in the



Minh Huong Gia Thanh Communal House

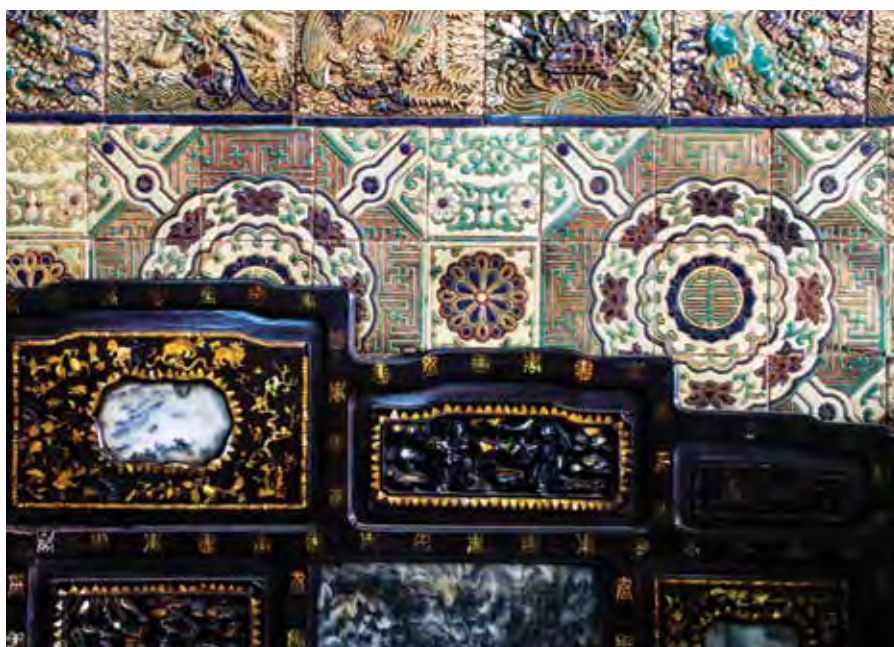
Nghia Nhuan Assembly Hall

Mekong Delta. Known as the Minh Huong ("Ming Homeland"), the Chinese quickly established their superior merchant skills, dominating the processing and shipping of rice and other agricultural produce from the Mekong Delta and were entrusted with port operations. Since these early settlers were unable to return to China, now under the Qing Dynasty, they stayed and forged new lives for themselves, intermarrying with local Vietnamese and Khmer women, evolving into a mixed race community with their own ethno-cultural identity.

As the Minh Huong settled in Vietnam, their everyday activities were largely self-governed by community leaders in communal houses. Under both Vietnamese and then French rule, the government seemed happy to manage the Chinese diaspora at arm's length while collecting large tax contributions from their prosperous trading. Based on Chinese dialect and / or province of origin, these communal houses or assembly halls doubled both as social centers and places of worship. The **Minh Huong Gia Thanh Communal House** (380 Tran Hung Dao, D5) is one of the city's oldest, built between 1789 and 1797. From the outside, look for its traditional red tiled roof with ornate ceramic dragons, fish and other motifs crafted by skilled Chinese artisans. As with many Chinese buildings of the time, the hall is divided into three main areas: a performance hall where classical Chinese opera was once performed, a main sanctuary and a rear hall. Elegantly faded floor tiles and ornately carved wooden furnishings also add interesting architectural elements to the building. In fact, the various assembly halls serve as keepers of the artistic skills the Chinese brought with them, setting up five ceramic kilns in the south. The Minh Huong artisans even aided representatives from Limoges in setting up the Bien Hoa School of Ceramics leading to distinctive *bleu de Bien-Hoa* ceramic tiles which came into vogue in the 1920s. Check out the rear of the main hall of the beautiful **Nghia Nhuan Assembly Hall** (27 Phan Van Khoe) to see these tapestry-like tiles juxtaposed against finely carved furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Big Market

A second wave of migrants arrived in Vietnam in the mid-to-late 18th century, this time from the Fujian province and settling in the western part of what is now Cho Lon. An orderly system of self-governance emerged, with community groups being led by a *bang truong*, or community leader, endorsed by the Vietnamese lords in Hue. These groups looked after their own in a big way, setting up their own schools and medical facilities. It's said that at one point, there were 30 schools and 20 hospitals in Cho Lon as opposed to only 10 schools and 2 hospitals serving the indigenous Vietnamese in the area now known as Saigon. If you walk past the Tran Boi Co Secondary School, you can still see the words "Ecole de





Ecole de Foukien



French architecture

Foukien” over the doors, next to the **Nhi Phu Temple** (264 Hai Thuong Lan Ong), one of the community halls of the Fujian settlers.

The Chinese proved themselves adept at business, with the Minh Huong controlling the port and dominating the internal rice trade, while the Fujians focused on import and export. Both groups generated sizeable revenue and paid handsomely to the ruling Vietnamese Nguyen Lords, earning them special protection and privileges including exemption from military service, the ability to buy and sell land and significant autonomy of movement. The Chinese community suffered a setback in 1778, however, when the peasant rebellion known as Tay Son moved against the Nguyen Lords in the south, and massacred the Chinese for their loyal support of the Nguyen Dynasty. When the survivors rebuilt the town, they deepened the waterways and added high embankments, leading to a new name — Tai Ngon (“embankment” in Cantonese). The town was separate from the Vietnamese city of Ben Nghe (what is now the downtown area of present-day Ho Chi Minh City), with 11 km of swampland between the two. However, when the French arrived, they

appropriated the name “Tai Ngon” (which became “Saigon”) for the Vietnamese city while the Chinese settlement simply became “Cho Lon,” or “Big Market.” The two were linked by steam tramways with Saigon becoming the political and administrative capital of Cochinchina, while Cho Lon was its economic capital.

As the Chinese accumulated economic wealth under the colonial powers, their Sino-French houses became symbols of luxury. If you squint, you can almost see the ornate shophouses with wrought iron balconies and decorative moldings in all their glory lined up along the now filled in canals that crisscrossed the city. During his 1822 visit, Scottish traveler and naturalist George Finlayson commented: “The bazaars of Saigon [Tay Ngon] contain in greater abundance all that is to be found in those of Bingeh [Ben Nghe]. Course China and Tonquin crepes, silks and satins, Chinese fans, porcelain etc are the more common wares in the shops. The streets are straight, wide and convenient.” To this day, many colonial shophouse buildings have survived the tumultuous period of the mid-to-late 20th century relatively intact, to the point that the exterior of number 7 **Phu Dinh** was used in the film version of Marguerite

Duras’ *The Lover* portraying events which took place in the 1930s. Their survival is due in part because they were continuously occupied by multiple families or because they were de facto landmarks housing well-known medicine shops. It’s the type of place where a serendipitous walk up a non-descript set of decrepit stairs might lead to a beautifully mosaic archway hidden behind some drying laundry or an unremarkable storefront at street level is topped by faded plantation shutters on the second floor and a century-old Chinese logo on the third.

While Saigon’s Cho Lon has modernized with the times, there remain wonderful vestiges of the past in the form of faded tiles, delicate architecture and ornate temples. So come for the dim sum, but stay for the history.

This article was largely based on research conducted by local historian Tim Doling, as presented in his excellent book “Exploring Ho Chi Minh City” (available at select Fahasa book stores) as well as his Cho Lon Heritage Tour (available at www.historicvietnam.com) where vintage photos and historical maps help bring the past to life along a fascinating walk through the area. ■

BEAUTIFUL HANDCRAFTED QUILTS & ACCESSORIES



Mekong+

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

Merger of



Mekong Quilts



Mekong Quilts and Mekong Creations have joined together to create a unified identity, Mekong+. The Not-For-Profit organisation specialises in high-quality, hand-crafted quilts and accessories using sustainable raw materials.

Working with dis-advantaged women from rural Vietnam and Cambodia, Mekong+ has engaged over 340 women in full-time employment as well as contributed to community development initiatives within their communities.



HCMC

1st Floor, 68 Le Loi, D.1
+84(0)8 2210 3110

HANOI

58 Hang Trong, Hoan Kiem
+84(0)4 3824 4607

13 Hang Bac, Hoan Kiem
+84(0)4 3926 4831

HOI AN

136 Tran Phu, Hoi An
+84(510) 386 1531

www.mekong-plus.com



Welcome to the Third Dimension

Combining fantasy and reality to create dramatic illusions

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

A BUCKET SEEMS to be filled with fast-moving goldfish, two turtles compete for space in a small white bowl and an octopus rests in shallow water. However, it is only on closer inspection that it becomes clear that these are clever optical illusions. Ever since Japanese artist Riusuke Fukahori's 3D resin creations gained international fame several years ago, this 20th century art form has steadily gained followers and practitioners. Fukahori uses a complex process of poured resin to build his canvas. First, he pours a layer of resin, lets it dry, and then paints a small portion of the fish on top it, allows that to dry, and then pours another layer of resin, repeating this process until he makes a lifelike three-dimensional goldfish. With the clear resin looking exactly like still water, the end product is a stunning piece of hyperrealism

that can easily fool viewers into thinking that they are looking at a real bowl with one or multiple goldfish swimming in it.

In Ho Chi Minh City, **Choi Choi Studio** (1st Floor, 7 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3), composed of three young artists, is attempting to both honor and branch away from Fukahori aesthetics by focusing on graphics and applied arts. Instead of Japanese wooden bowls, Nguyen Ba Thong uses traditional Vietnamese glazed porcelain bowls. Using the same technique popularized by Fukahori, they create paintings of underwater fish and forests. However, unlike Fukahori, Thong's paintings are a unique blending of reality and fantasy - the use of bold colors and free-flowing lines gives the artwork the vibrant beauty of a traditional oil painting.

"We adore Fukahori. Like other resin artists, our first encounter with modern resin art was through his works. We learn from him and more often than not measure the quality of our works against his. There's no 3D resin artist that does not know Riusuke Fukahori's name. That said, however, we also want to escape his shadow as artists of a younger generation. Three-dimensional resin art is a medium and discipline - it does not necessarily have to follow Fukahori's hyper-realistic aesthetics," says Thong, a graduate of the University of Architecture and lead resin artist at the studio. The trio's works are garnering attention amongst independent art collectors for their refreshing creativity and originality.

Thong encountered the medium after graduating from university a year ago.



"I was bewitched," he shares. "There's this interplay between the real and the imagined. Because of its extra dimension, a piece of resin art can look incredibly lifelike... and yet it has the same creative potential as any abstract artwork. It can be as crazy as you want it to be, or it can be ordinary like a photo. Every artist renders the world of their imagination into their works, but resin art has that extra dimension that makes it so much closer to the world in our imagination. Every time I create a piece of resin art, it feels like I'm rendering a tiny world into existence."

While working at a marketing company to support himself, Thong practiced resin art in the evenings, painting slowly and meticulously, leaving the paint to dry

overnight before resuming work on it the next day. Each creation can take anywhere from two to four weeks to complete. Depending on the scale and level of detail, they can retail from VND2 to VN4 million.

According to Thong, the art form is not as hard as it seems. "The clear resin medium is new, but 3D painting is a technique I have learnt well in school. It's demanding, but straightforward. The materials are not expensive even on a student's budget, and can be bought at any art supply stores near the University of Architecture or the University of Arts. If you have gone through art universities, chances are you can teach yourself the technique fairly easily." The tricky part, he says, is that the artist needs to develop

an eye for three-dimensional images. "Many traditionally-trained artists can't think in three-dimensions. They have trained all their lives on two-dimensional mediums like paper and canvas, so when they attempt resin art, it just looks like a particularly thick painting. They lack that third dimension, that depth."

Recently, Thong quit his job at the marketing firm to concentrate on his passion full time. He's been told his work has potential. "I've only just found my footing as a young artist," he says. "It's scary and exciting, but I think I can make it."

In the near future, Thong and Choi Choi Studio hope to organize workshops to meet and connect with like-minded artists and collectors. ■

Best Pop Solo Performance

Meet Ha Okio, the first Vietnamese singer to make the first rounds for a Grammy Award

TEXT BY **PATRICK CARPENTER** IMAGE BY **NGOC TRAN**

HA OKIO WALKS in, sits down, and politely takes control of the situation. He moves with purpose, like a man with a list of things to do and a plane to catch. He settles in and, unusual for someone in the entertainment industry, takes off his sunglasses so we can have eye contact. When the photographer points out he is sitting in bad light, he — again unusual for someone in the entertainment industry — says, clearly but politely, that he prefers to stay where he is but will be happy to switch after the conversation. His drink comes, but it's not quite right and he explains, clearly and politely, to the waitress what is missing, and it comes back fine. And with that, he focuses intently on the interview. The rest of the room fades to black.

The point of all this is that within the first four minutes of meeting him, you can



already see his confidence and why he has achieved what he has. And why you can believe him when he tells you that when he performed in front of an audience of 50,000 it felt “natural, because I knew I would get there once I started.” This could sound cocky coming from someone with less conviction. From 34-year-old Ha Okio, it just sounds honest. Same with when you ask where he learned to play his musical instruments and he says, “YouTube.” Or when he tells you he started with rap because he “didn’t know then how really to sing, and rap and hip hop aren’t about singing or about melodies, they’re about beats.” This is not only a frank and honest description of his early abilities; it is a frank and honest description of a multi-million dollar music industry.

For someone who knew where he was going, the one surprising thing is he can’t

recall who exactly started him on that path. Yes, his father bought him Abba and the Bee Gees tapes which he enjoyed, but not to the point that his life’s mission was decided. And maybe it started in high school when he was asked to sing at a school party and a friend decided to tell a producer about him. But to hear him tell it, “It started with a producer calling and asking if I would be willing to be featured with some other singers. At the time, I had no intention of actually being in music, no desire to make it a business. But the call came and I said yes.”

Rap and hip-hop were just getting big here in Vietnam with people his age. Ha Okio would write hip-hop on guitar, but always try to make his songs more melodic. The goal was to write lyrics that could be rapped or sung – and not limited to one category or the other. He was just starting to make his mark, but already he was showing signs of an independent spirit.

“Yes, I had ambition, but not to achieve something at all costs and to lose myself in the process. I wanted to do it clean: to rely on my own feelings, my own talent and training and without obligations to others that could lead to compromise. Because the product is only one part of life, and it is not worth it if it sacrifices your character. So I dug in and I struggled, but I was always happy to be doing what I wanted to do.”

Growing Mental Disease

For those doubting the power of positive thinking, Ha Okio serves as strong example of how it can help you along. His words are full of references to believing in oneself, and the strength of the mind. Most musicians and singers will quote you song lyrics from their idols; Ha Okio peppers the conversation with quotes from Henry Ford (“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t – you are right.”), from the Laws of Attraction (“You can do anything if you put your mind to it.”) and other, broader mantras: “Thought is energy, and energy attracts similar energy.” This rock-solid belief in oneself is hard to argue against, especially when it is complemented by his gratitude for his parents and their role in his career.

“My father was less afraid of my career choice than my mother, but they both wanted me to be happy. When they saw me, early on, struggling to learn the guitar, maybe they were concerned, but they also saw me enjoying it and that was what was important to them. I admire them greatly because they came to Ho Chi Minh City with nothing, and they worked hard to make something out of nothing, and to then give me the support for this career instead of pushing something more secure or traditional is a gift I will always love them for.”

Adding: “My father’s father excelled at languages and my family has always loved poetry and the written word, so perhaps that is one reason why my father could be so supportive: maybe he could sense that I also had the passion for putting emotions

into words and the words into songs.”

You can see the influence of his father on more than his music. “After my father died, I took a look at my lifestyle and saw where I could change. I wanted to develop what I refer to as soft-skills: cultivating emotional, spiritual and mental well-being. Focusing on living well.”

These soft skills have been recognized by international organizations like PETA and 350.org, and have likely found their way into one of his top songs, *Noi Ai* (This Place). “I wrote that song as if I were playing the role of someone living overseas trying to remember and recreate the feeling of that one special place everyone has. It’s the idea of ‘home’ but also home in the heart. No matter where you are or how far you go, there is a place you can get back to where you love and are loved. It’s a universal idea: one day you will come back.”

“In my industry, and every industry really, you can really see a growing mental disease of people wanting to make money just to make money. They want to make money too fast, just to watch the numbers climb. They believe it can change everything. My wish instead would be for people to spend time with themselves really thinking about what it is they need to do to find happiness. I am trying to put this into music, but I do not want to teach – and people do not want to be taught, either.”

Lately, it’s not the lyrics that are the challenge. It’s the music. Ha Okio’s turned to Soul, Rhythm and Blues, Motown – music that is not so popular in Vietnam today. When he goes into the studio to cut a song, it can end up being an education. “These musicians – Chuck Berry, B.B. King, Nina Simone – they touch my heart. And their sound was amazing! They were the true Kings and Queens of Soul, and they made such deep sounds without all the technology we have today. But when I get to the recording studio and I try and communicate the Motown sound, or the soulfulness of the Blues, sometimes it can be a real process.”

For his audience as well. “I find my audience is often divided. Some expect a certain performance: these songs, these dances... it’s a very rigid expectation. Others are willing to let me explore my artistry and enjoy what I can bring to the table. It’s very important to me to be genuine, to be natural. I cannot imagine being in this profession if I have to pretend every night. I would not do it. It has to be real, and I hope the feedback from the audience will be real, will be genuine, too.”

So it is not about filling 50,000-seat venues, or being nominated for Grammys. “Look, I am grateful for both. And I was surprised, but not exactly surprised because each was a destination along the long path I had put myself on. Don’t get me wrong – I am fully aware I have had my miracles and I feel blessed to get there. But each one was not *the* goal, it was an extension of the process, the support, the work, the heart.” ■



A Recipe for Natural Beauty

Ditch the toxins in your personal care products
and make your own

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**



AROUND THE CENTRAL mixing table at the Savon de Saigon (180/58 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh, www.savondesaigon.com) laboratory, Julien and Thao gather the class together. We had only two hours of class time and Julien Robellet, co-founder of Savon de Saigon, was determined to cram in at least two or three items for each of us to make. There were five of us in total and we were here to learn how to make different kinds of beauty products. Body lotion, skin serum and a scrub were on my to-do list while my classmates chose a combination of lotions, scrubs, lipsticks and soaps. We started out with the body lotion first because it needed some rest time before the final two steps. The basic two components that make a lotion are water and oil. Julien explained that Savon doesn't stock body lotion in its lineup because, at best, natural lotion lasts for only about three to four weeks if properly refrigerated, so it wasn't suitable for retail. He further

elaborated that body lotions found in supermarkets are made of mostly water and preservatives, and some only contain ten percent oil - the main ingredient that provides the benefits.

Julien walked us through the two types of oils: carrier (they have five to six varieties) and essential (the lab houses 25 different ones). The names of the carrier oils are buzzwords cosmetics companies like to name-drop like jojoba, argan, sweet almond and, of course the Vietnamese favorite, coconut oil. The essential oils are far more extensive. Julien handed out sheets with a brief summaries of each and their benefits, which oil combinations complement each other and ones to avoid if you have certain skin conditions.

While I was busy experimenting like a mad scientist, Julien's wife and co-founder Nguyen Thi Hong Thao coached the other students on how to make lipstick. "You mix up some shea butter and rose oil in a flask,

add in some magic and extra ingredients and put it in a lipstick tube," she said. "It's like cooking or baking, only much more fun." A fairly simple process, just a base of butter, oil and food coloring — however, the color mixing process takes a lot of trial and error. It's a little messy, but fun.

Thao, who is a trained biochemist, also advised us on matching colors with skin tones. One student immediately went for a classic red while the other opted for pink. The red turned out to be a great success, being incredibly pigmented with a color that easily accentuated most skin tones. The pink one was a little trickier because it turns out that pink can't easily wash out Asian skin tones with its cold, blue undertone. The pink lipstick took several tries where we mixed a color, tested it on our arms and lips and then remixed. Thao was surprisingly patient with the multiple remix attempts. Since the lipsticks were made out of shea butter and beeswax, the texture was smooth and creamy. If it



weren't for the short lasting time on your lips, I would say the handmade lipsticks we made in class could stand head-to-head with MAC lipsticks and the like.

Next up on Julien's part was the soap and skin serum. The skin serum is a tiny concoction of base oils, vitamin E oils and essential oils. Julien coached us on how to tailor the serum for our exact skin condition. Mine was made out of a base of sweet almond, vitamin E, argan, rosehip and joboba oils. Out of all the items on the class agenda, I was looking forward to this one the most. Beauty oil is a big international trend right now, and anyone who follows the news knows that the average bottle of beauty oil costs an exorbitant amount, especially if it comes from a brand name — for example a Josie Maran pure Argan oil costs USD48 for

1.7oz of oil.

The soap making is where it got interesting. This is the only time in the class when Julien reached for a chemical. He explained that a bar of soap was a chemical reaction at its base, so there was no getting around that core chemical. Then he went on to explain that Savon's chemical use in soap making is minimal. The chemical — sodium hydroxide — would evaporate after reacting with coconut oil, leaving only a trace amount in the soap. The soap bars we made were 99 percent natural and gentle enough that they could be used for cleansing the face. "The so-called 'natural' label on many personal care products sometimes doesn't really mean what you think it means. 'Natural' is a vague descriptor. If you don't work in chemistry, biochemistry or related fields, chances are you won't be able to

tell if some concoction is natural or not," explained Thao.

Last on the list were two varieties of scrubs: salt and coffee. The former was made using a simple mixture of salt plus essential oils, various powders such as green tea, and dried flowers. The coffee scrub had ground coffee added in and less salt. Out of all the items we made, the scrub is the one that will last the longest. If properly kept, natural scrubs can last for a year.

We didn't get to learn how to make mineral makeup (foundation, bronzer) since that is an advanced class. It sounded fun though. Class instruction was very detailed and we received personal coaching from both teachers but they were also quite open when it came to our personal preferences and skin conditions. ■

Taking the Lead

Award-winning actress Hong Anh opens up about women in films, the indie cinema scene in Vietnam and her rise to fame

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



IT'S SOMETHING THAT veteran Vietnamese actress Hong Anh may be reluctant to admit – and it takes a long time to get her to say the words – but there's no escaping the fact that she's one of those rare natural actresses. It's something to do with her presence, her bearing as she makes her graceful, easy movements, the rough, rich way she pitches her voice like a woman in love. In her acting career, she has repeatedly been cast in deeply emotional, melodramatic roles – women scorned or completely lost to the heart – and watching the gentle gravity of her own unguarded expressions, it's hard to escape the conclusion that she was born to play such parts.

That observation, however, may be a tad unfair. Hong Anh is a proud method actress who has adopted a particularly determined work ethic. Her career spans twenty years in dancing, acting, and now film production, and her dedication to the craft cannot be denied – but even after much discussion about her technique, the hard work she does to get into character, and the ways in which she studiously works with film directors to put the most accurate expression into her performances on screen, she eventually smiles, shyly shifts her gaze, and lightly concedes what her fans and colleagues have been saying all along: “Yes, I think there is something of a natural inside of me.”

Hong Anh has a refreshingly unpretentious candor for someone with such a distinguished public image, which is probably the key to understanding the one thing that doesn't make sense about her career – the fact that she seems to have gotten it all completely backwards. Working as a producer of indie movies is something fresh film-school graduates get into before making their big break in commercial cinema, whereas Hong Anh has now made the rather curious choice of essentially giving up the red carpet and getting into short films for arthouse audiences instead.

Last month, her company Blue Productions held a test screening of a virtually unknown masterpiece by French *Viet Kieu* director Pham Van Nhan. *Hai The Gioi* was filmed in France in 1953; 62 years after the fact, Hong Anh has just picked up distribution rights – other firms had passed on it, feeling that there was essentially no audience for such a work. Hong Anh's no stranger to investing in quality where she sees it regardless of any marketing concerns – not long ago, she blew VND6 billion on a young Australian VK director's first feature film *The Race* – which was eschewed by local audiences in favor of the kinds of movies she now flatly turns down roles in. That film too was a fine piece of work – and she has no regrets.

There's only one explanation that makes sense as to why Hong Anh has decided to reverse track, and it's clearly the same, simple reason for everything she's done in her life. Hong Anh is a woman who resolutely follows her passions, and she obviously needs no other excuse for

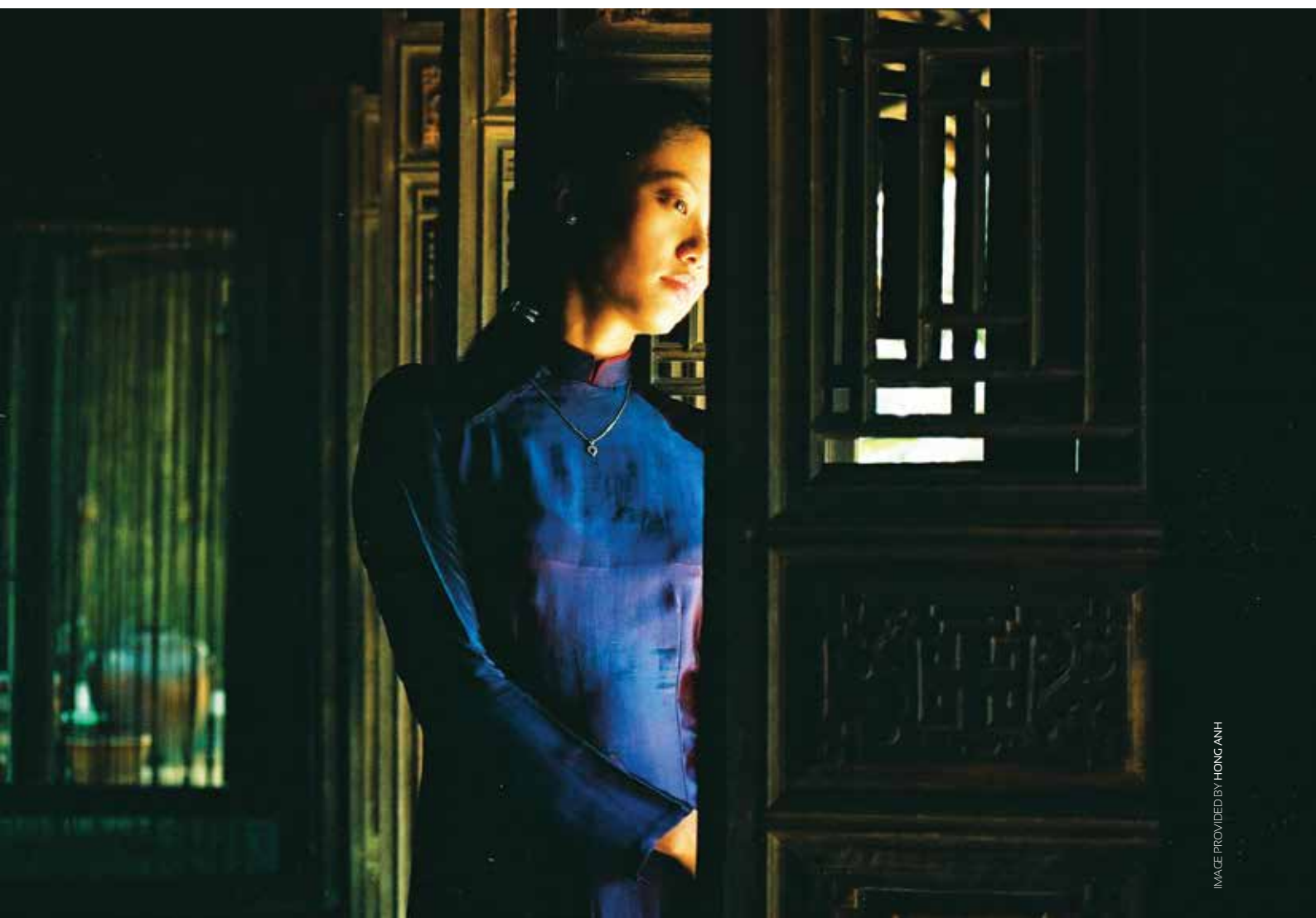


IMAGE PROVIDED BY HONG ANH

anything she chooses to do.

“The Vietnamese cinema industry, I think it’s still a bit slow to keep up with modern life,” she says in an attempt to justify why she has suddenly turned away from the commercial cinema that made her a household name in Vietnam. “Indie movies are different. Young Vietnamese moviemakers can produce films that correctly reflect reality. They can express LGBT love, triangle love, multidimensional characters – but what a pity, it’s just a small flow, an underground trend. It might take five years for it to develop before it can influence and change Vietnamese cinema. That’s why I’ve been cooperating with young directors, in many projects and campaigns, to help encourage them, from short movie festivals and competitions to online movie-making projects. I’ve seen their potential, and I want to help them.”

There’s another reason that Hong Anh seems disappointed in the commercial cinema scene, and that’s the sense in which all this celebrityhood seems rather beneath a person who is so fundamentally down-to-earth. She’ll be the first to admit that she wasn’t at all expecting to set out on a career in the entertainment business when she first enrolled in the HCMC School of Dance. “I loved dancing, and I often watched TV,

just watching the dancers,” she remembers. “My parents were against it, but finally they changed their mind and let me take the entrance exam. The judges gave me a piece of music and I had to dance to it. That was how they evaluated your potential if you had no dancing knowledge. During the test, they asked me: ‘Why did you dance like that?’ and I said I didn’t know. I just followed my feelings. Honestly, I still don’t know why I passed the test, because I told the judges that the real reason I wanted to learn dance was that I was actually hoping to lose weight.”

Whatever potential the school saw in Hong Anh was picked up on again at a talent contest some time later, when she won an award not for technique, but for her elegance. That event was attended by well-established director Le Cung Bac, and he was so impressed with the young Hong Anh that he decided to cast her in a pivotal role in a new television drama called *The Beauty of Tay Do* that launched her career on-screen.

“I was chosen to play Bach Van, who became a very famous TV character at that time,” she says. “I had no training in acting, actually. I just followed my instinct and passion. I built the character based on how I felt about her, and so I didn’t even

understand why she was popular with audiences – there were so many things that I didn’t get. I acted following the instruction of the director. I read the script and sympathized with the character. I cried during her tough times, and even when the director said ‘cut’, I just couldn’t stop crying.”

The popularity of her character on TV very quickly led to roles on film – and shortly thereafter, her first leading role in the award-winning *Hai Nguyet*, for which she received a Golden Kite for “Young Potential Actress.” She was soon typecast as playing women from the countryside, developing a reputation for her dramatic portrayals of young Mekong women – on one occasion preparing for a part by living and working in the fields, experiencing the hardship of rural women first-hand as her back ached and her skin darkened alongside the other laborers under the raw sunlight.

She loved the experience. Such roles hearken back to Hong Anh’s family background in the small Mekong city of Tra Vinh. “I was influenced a lot by Tra Vinh culture,” she says, “and that helped me to portray Southwestern women. Even though I grew up here in Saigon, I often visited Tra Vinh in the summer when I was young. My parents didn’t force me to study like my



IMAGES PROVIDED BY HONG ANH

friends did. I had the freedom to explore everything. I love it there, so I don't feel that I belong to the luxurious world, to the red carpet and long dresses. I would go to the festivals or film premier events because I had to, but I always felt awkward there."

The Tragic Woman

As her career developed, so too did her awareness of the conflicts inherent in playing traditional female roles in contemporary times – and it was at this point that she began to perceive the distance between her characters on screen and those more true to life.

"Many directors have tended to invite me to portray tragic women who have to struggle with life, to endure their low and difficult social positions," she says. "A part of it is because of Asian culture, where women are expected to be that way. A lot of movies try to reflect that as a way to illuminate the stereotype. They've shown how women have lived from the period after the war to modern times. But to be honest, Vietnamese movies are kind of old, and still far behind modern life. In some ways, Vietnamese movies still use an outdated image of Vietnamese women.

Those that do portray modern women are mostly comedies, which attract audiences but are nowhere near deep enough."

"There's a hint of change," she notes. "In movies that express life as it was a long time ago, women didn't fight for themselves. But in some of my movies, they start to fight back, sometimes silently, to hold on to their love. I often hope that it will change how people think. That as a wife, a woman has to endure bad behavior while men can have wives and a mistress. Men have started to face criticism for that. But there are few movies that are good enough to express this."

Making a stand for the suffering of women is a complex issue for Hong Anh, who has faced harsh public criticism in her personal life for following the dictates of her own heart. Some years after the fact, she remains philosophical as to whether or not she can remain a role model to the women of Vietnam. "I still work to inspire women to change," she says. "My fans still love my characters. Most of my audience are middle-aged women. When they see my movies, in which my character devotes herself to her family while her husband cheats on her, they do sympathize. For

example, when I played a woman who divorced her husband because he cheated, the audiences agreed with the solution, they agreed that she didn't have to tolerate that kind of situation. But it depends on the audience. When my mother saw me in that movie, she asked why I chose that character, because I was a wife and a wife should not divorce her husband. She thought that when you choose to marry a man, that's your choice and you have to agree with him, in all cases, even when he is bad. Divorce is a terrible thing to her."

"But I think my audience will not choose me as a role model," she says somewhat sadly. "I don't know much about entertaining young women nowadays. I don't know many coffee shops, I don't like to go there. Maybe in working, I can be a role model. I work hard. I love helping the community. I've joined campaigns. But to have a lifestyle like mine, maybe no. My friends always say I'm too boring."

With the world of acting now behind her for the time being, Hong Anh has refocused all her energies on Blue Productions and her work with charities and environmental groups. She recently partnered with Marcus Cuong of YxineFF, an online short film project, both in indie movie production and in the Wildfest initiative to promote public awareness of the cruelty of rhino horn use – which she hopes will shame local buyers of rhino horn under the scrutiny of international audiences. She speaks with marked enthusiasm about these projects, but for all her mastery of acting, she can't hide a certain poignancy when she speaks of the performance career that she has, however temporarily, left behind.

"I love experiencing the lives of my characters," she smiles wistfully, "getting to understand situations and people, especially those things related to human behavior. I don't know why I'm interested in those characters who are far different from me, who have struggled so much in life. But whenever I'm introduced to those characters, I'm eager to dig into their thoughts and their feelings, to totally understand them and express them."

"Besides, to me, acting is not as difficult as dancing," she sighs. "Dancing requires me to express myself so much more, since I'm not allowed to speak. I have to use my face and my body to express my feelings through the music. Many directors said that it was good that I started my career as a dancer, because dancing required me to have good facial expression. They even said that I was good at acting with my eyes. It gave me my figure, it gave me light and flowing movements."

It may be unfair, but it is difficult to believe that all these graces came to Hong Anh through her studies of acting and dance. There is something dramatic in her every breath; there's rich expression in the most casual of her gestures. It's hard indeed to escape the conclusion that, for all her activities in the several years since turning her focus away from her performing career, Hong Anh remains an actress to the core – it's something, after all, that comes from within her. ■

Bad Neighbors

What to do when your neighbors are a nuisance?



After having obtained legal experience in his home country the Netherlands and in Cambodia, **Marijn Sprokkereef** is currently an associate of **Audier & Partners**. Audier & Partners is an international law firm with presence in Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi), Myanmar and Mongolia, providing advice to foreign investors on a broad range of legal issues.

Dear Marijn,
I'm an Australian engineer and I've been living in HCMC with my wife and two kids for about a year now. Our life has been peaceful and happy until we recently moved to a new apartment. It turns out that our new neighbors are probably the most antisocial people in the whole city. They fight with each other all the time, host late night parties with extremely loud music almost every weekend and, if that was not enough already, they have also adopted a new dog that is keeping me and my family awake the entire night! I have already tried once to reason with them, but without success; the man practically threw me out of his house. Now they have started calling my wife and kids names when they see us. This is a very uncomfortable situation, what can I do?

NEIGHBORS ARE A part of our everyday life. But clearly, there are limits to how much one can (and should) tolerate from his neighbors. Let's have a look at what the law says about this.

Let's start at the highest level in the legal hierarchy. The right to your physical inviolability and to have your health, honor and dignity protected by law is a fundamental right of every citizen under Vietnam's constitution. The same is echoed in the Civil Code of Vietnam, which provides that the honor, dignity and reputation of each individual shall be respected, and shall be protected by law.

In regards to your situation, the Decree of the Government of 2013, for example, deals with administrative violations of social security, order and safety, as well as with the prevention and fighting of fire, social evils and domestic violence. According to this decree, individuals and organizations making or causing loud noise in residential areas or public places between 10pm and 6am shall receive either a caution or a fine of between VND100,000 and VND300,000. The same sanction applies to causing disorder in residential areas and to making gestures and/or using words that are rude, provocative, teasing or insulting to the honor and dignity of others.

In addition to that, the government has also issued detailed regulations about noise in a Circular of 2010. This document prescribes the maximum noise

limits – measured in decibel (dB) – for areas where humans live and work. For residential areas, one is not allowed to create more than 70 dB between 6am and 9pm, and not more than 55 dB between 9pm and 6am.

Based on the above, it is clear that your neighbors may be in violation of the law when they play loud music during the night and when they are insulting you and your family. But knowing about your rights and obligations is only the first step. The more difficult step is enforcing those rights.

Before discussing the legal remedies that may be available to you in a situation like this one, I would recommend you try at least one more time to find an amicable solution with your neighbors. Perhaps this time you could ask your landlord for help because it is in their interest to keep you happy as a lessee. And sometimes it helps to let someone who is less emotionally involved do the talking.

If the second talk doesn't improve the situation you can reach out to the authorities who have the power to impose a sanction on your neighbors. This means going to the local People's Committee in the ward (*phuong*) where you live. Legally, you are entitled to file an official complaint with them. It is their responsibility to listen to you, to record your complaint and to take action: either by explaining your options to you or by taking immediate action to stop your neighbors' behavior, for example by imposing an administrative penalty

on them.

If you are still not satisfied and don't want to look for another apartment, then you may consider taking legal action. Before going to court, however, there is one more option for you to think about: the so-called "grassroots conciliation." This mechanism, which is encouraged by the government, is generally advertised as being a potentially faster and cheaper way to settle a dispute without further worsening the relationship between the parties involved. Instead of having to face each other in court, a conciliator will sit down with the parties in order to try and reach a solution that is mutually acceptable.

As a final resort, you can initiate court proceedings and claim compensation for any damages that your neighbor has caused. Regardless of what this would mean for the atmosphere in your neighborhood, please keep in mind that court proceedings in Vietnam often take a (very) long time and that it may be difficult for you to prove the damages that you would be claiming.

I wish you and your family the best of luck and I hope that you will be able to find an amicable solution to this difficult situation, perhaps with the help of a third party.

Every month, Marijn Sprokkereef answers legal questions from Oi readers. If you have any legal question you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com. ■

Christmas By The Sea

Unwrapping the holiday spirit at
InterContinental Nha Trang

TEXT BY **MICHAEL ARNOLD**
IMAGES PROVIDED BY **INTERCONTINENTAL NHA TRANG**



Gingerbread House Cooking Class

IT MAY NOT snow in Vietnam, but all it takes is a short stroll along the beach at Nha Trang to convince anyone that it doesn't need to. Even those families yearning for the white Christmases of home – if that's what you're used to – may find the white sands and surf of Nha Trang a perfectly adequate stand-in for a winter wonderland. There are certainly few better places to spend the holiday season with loved ones than this, one of the most scintillating bays in the whole of the country.

It's welcome news, then, that the spirit of Christmas will light up **InterContinental Nha Trang** (www.nhatrang.intercontinental.com) this year. The hotel is making a special effort over the festive season to mark the delights of Christmas and the New Year with the classic and conventional celebrations of the Western world. Those missing the yuletide cheer will take great comfort in the distinctive events, holiday menus, and promotions planned to give adults and children alike a sense of the magic of the Christmas holiday period.

With so many festivities and such a broad range of Christmas & New Year's menus, guests at the InterContinental Nha Trang will have an experience that goes beyond simply enjoying the holiday – and they won't feel as if their stay in Vietnam has cost them the opportunity to spend a traditional Christmas at home. Nha Trang may be an unforgettable vacation destination for families in any season, but Christmas is an especially unique time for fellowship and kin, and so it's this cozy family atmosphere that the hotel has brought to the forefront during the holiday period.

The InterContinental Nha Trang will be transformed throughout the month of December and into New Year's Day with a warm yet wintry atmosphere. Twinkling lights and dazzling displays will feature an assortment of gingerbread houses (delighted kids will get the chance to learn how to make their own during their stay if they're here for the special class on the 19th at VND300,000++ per child) and Santa himself will be making a surprise guest appearance to enchant both naughty and nice. Other activities planned especially for the kids include joyful Christmas carols as well as the Planet Trekkers' Kids Club to keep them entertained and give parents a break too.

The hotel's Executive Chef Dennis Barton has a full schedule of traditional treats in store for lucky guests at the hotel starting from December 5. Favorite holiday food and drinks specialties are all set to tantalize those visitors yearning for familiar fare. "We're all for breaking with convention and trying something new on special occasions," says Chef Dennis, "but sometimes only classic dishes will do on Christmas Day. We've put together a menu of our favorite traditional festive recipes for inspiration." Daily treats will be on offer between 2pm-5pm at Christmas High Tea served in the Lobby Bar (VND300,000++

per person), featuring the chef's specialty sandwiches, eggnog tart, Christmas sweets, mulled wine, and creamy Hershey's hot chocolate with marshmallows for the kids.

The delicious Christmas Eve buffet dinner (VND1,900,000++ adults/VND950,000++ kids) will be one of the highlights of the entire holiday period at the hotel, reflecting many signature dishes and drinks of the European/American Christmas fare with an emphasis on Nha Trang's premium seafood ingredients. Held in the fairy-lit Grand Ballroom, diners will indulge in the likes of roast turkey with cranberry sauce, honey bourbon glazed leg of ham, and apple strudel with cinnamon anglaise for dessert. Parents may enjoy the feast at their leisure while children play in the supervised

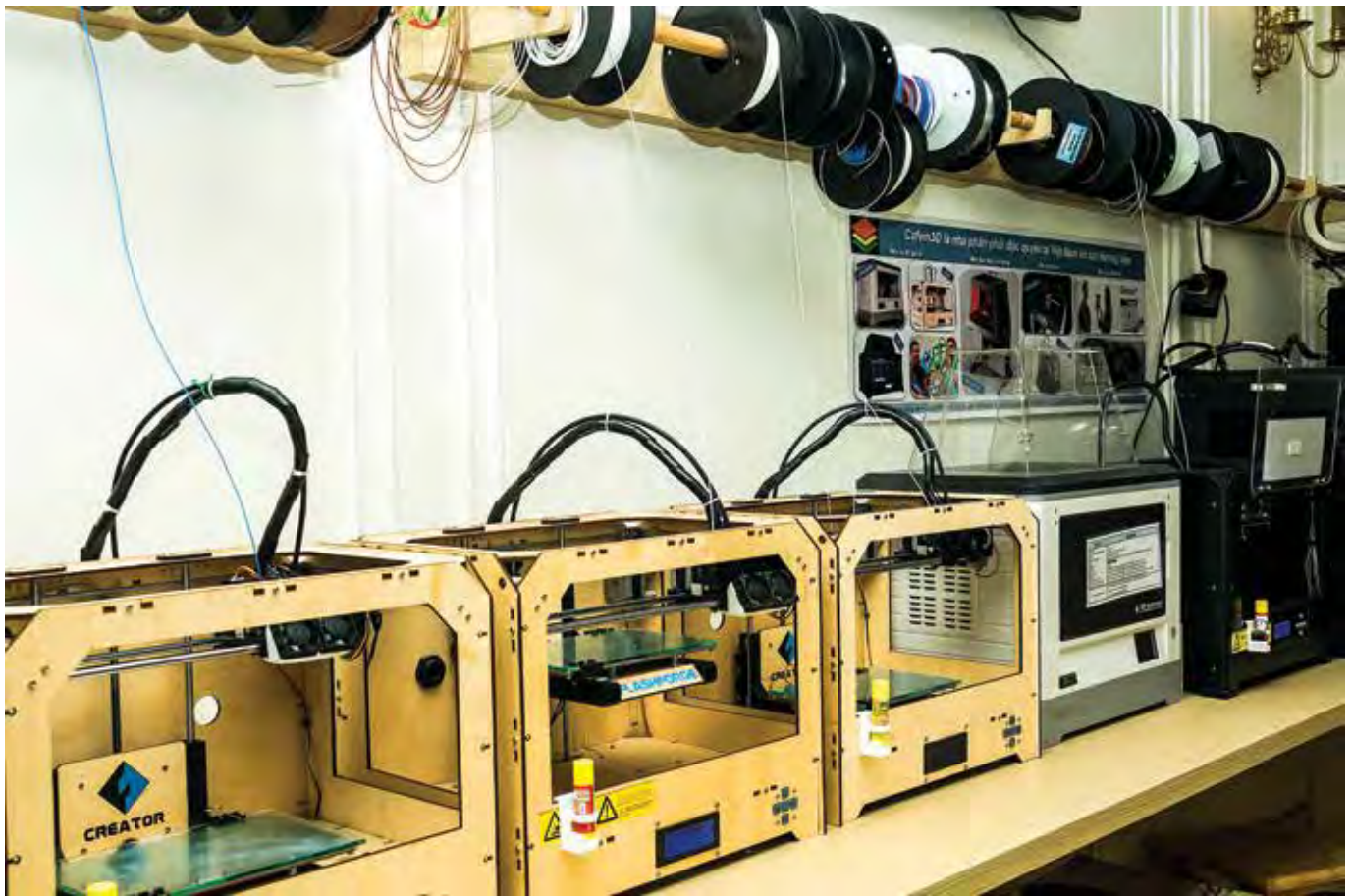
kids' area – although you may like to see the looks on their faces as you accompany them to the desserts corner. If you prefer, there's also a set dinner (VND1,900,000++ per person) available on Christmas Eve, held in the Cookbook Café – and those who'd like to enjoy a separate buffet meal on Christmas day itself can join the special Christmas brunch (VND1,388,000++ adults, VND694,000++ kids) with traditional cold cuts and grills.

Stay on to New Year's Eve, and you'll be in prime position for a sumptuous six-course set dinner (VND2,588,000++ per person) where diners can be treated to fresh Nha Trang lobster or venison loin with Chianti red wine poached pear and onion soubise. If you're in the mood to see out 2015 in

real style, however, then the New Year's Eve Countdown Party will be the last and best night of the year with a gourmet buffet featuring Australian black angus rib eye steak, local lobster with lemon garlic butter, BBQ Hong Kong suckling pig and Beijing roast duck. The entertainment will be non-stop throughout the evening, with lucky draws, live performances, a balloon drop, a kids' corner, top DJs, and plenty of dining & dancing. Watch as the Grand Ballroom is transformed, indulge in the free-flow Veuve Cliquot Champagne (VND500,000++ per person) and spend the last moments of this eventful year in joyful celebration with those nearest and dearest – in one of Vietnam's most alluring destinations at Intercontinental Nha Trang. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Honey Glazed Ham of Xmas Buffet; Cookbook Café; and Chef Dennis



Press Print

Now you can design and manufacture a coffee cup and fill it with coffee in the same place

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

CAFEIN3D (www.cafein3d.com) looks nothing like your typical café in Saigon: there are no sofas to lounge on, no coffee counters or loud music blasting from the speakers. Instead, the space is lined with rows of complex-looking machines and it's completely quiet. This is the first 3D printing café in Vietnam. "At the beginning of this year, we started out first as importer of 3D printers," says Nguyen Dinh Ha, co-founder and manager of the café. "For such a little-known technology [in Vietnam], the printer has many fans with deep pockets here. We were fellow enthusiasts who happened to know the importing and handling process. The importing business is also fairly profitable so, by chance, we became the first big importer of 3D printers in Vietnam."

However, their job as importers didn't stop once the transaction was completed. Buyers often needed help in assembling the printer and training on how to use

it. Along with a career in mechanics, Ha was in the perfect position to help. "We'd often hold training sessions that lasted for hours. During training, I'd offer the buyers drinks or snacks as a courtesy. The training sessions are also very casual. Sometimes one or several customers would call and stop by for drinks to chat about technical issues or just watch the machine work. Some would bring friends who wanted to see what a 3D printer looks like, and from that point on my office became a café."

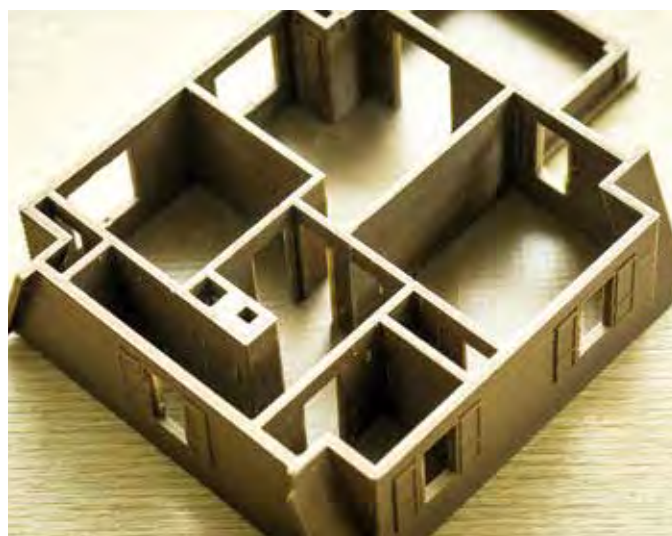
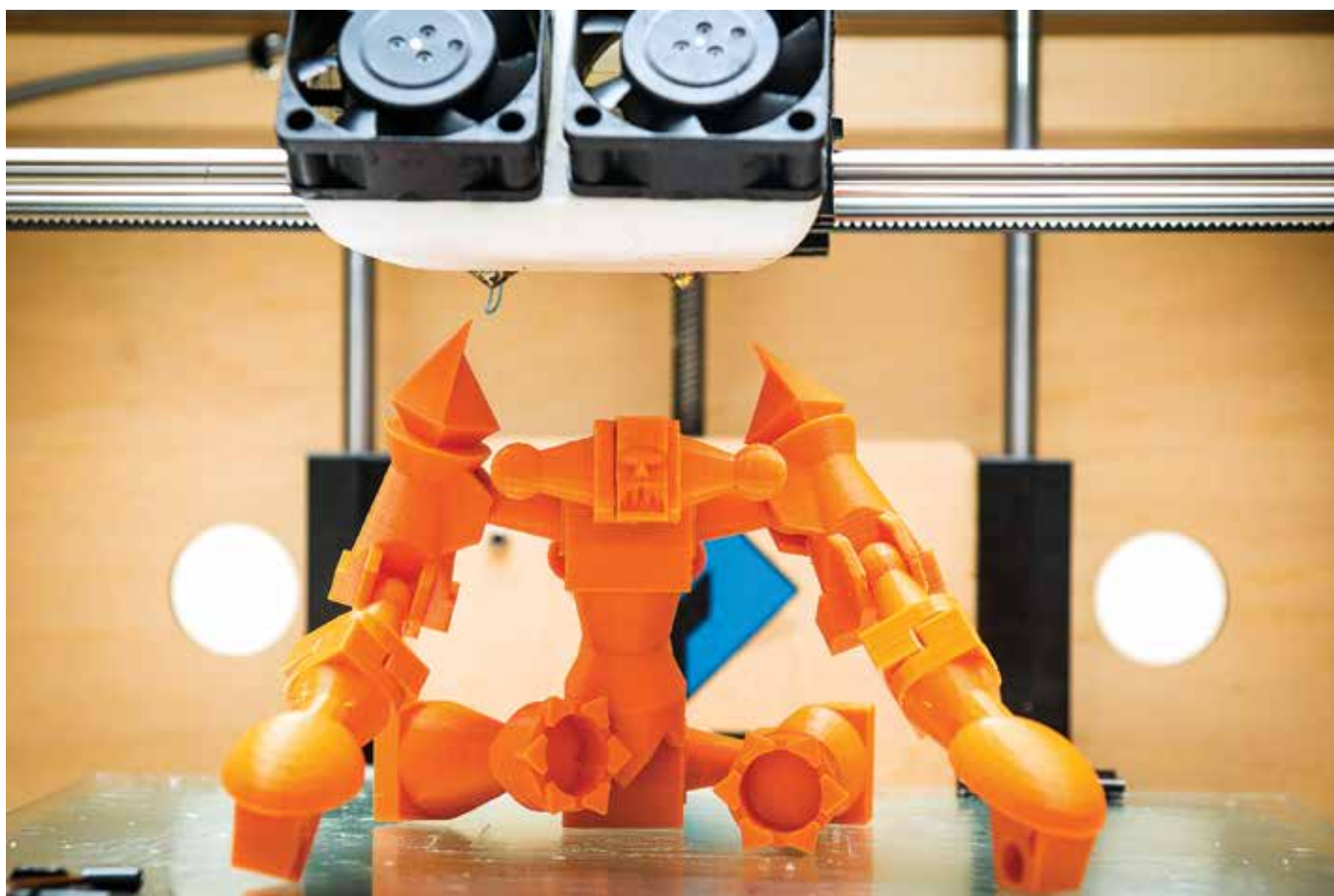
The café houses a range of printers, from the Micro 3D (VND13 million) to the top-of-the-line MCor Iris (VND1.25 billion) that can print in color. Recently, the café has even imported the Choc Creator 2.0 Plus, a USD4,000 printer famous for printing with chocolate. Don't be deterred by their price tags — as part of the café's service, each is available for rent for VND50,000 an hour. Aside from printer rental, the café also offers a bevy of other services including

training, consulting, 3D printing similar to brick and mortar photocopying shops and, of course, coffee and other beverages.

"Our printing service is very popular," says Ha. "We've printed game or movie character figurines for college students, jewelry molds for jewelers, mockup models of buildings and construction projects for real estate companies, even functioning prosthetics for medical-based charity groups." Ha believes the inexpensive print rates (starting at VND200,000 for a small figurine), the abundance of free shared 3D models online and free consultation are the reasons for the café's popularity.

"People used to say that 3D printing isn't feasible or sustainable in Vietnam for another decade, but I think accessibility and affordability really changed the game. Without seeing the technology in action, without gaining something from the use of this technology, most regarded it as something only available to the rich. Once people see they too can easily make use of this technology, that is when we can really push for mass application and its development in Vietnam. In the end, that is what we want to do with this café. We want to make the technology easily available to anyone and everyone here."

While the first Cafein3D only opened in January this year, Ha and his co-founder Brian Tong have already opened a second one in Go Vap. They are now looking for more partners with the end goal of turning the café into a local franchising business model. ■



Nguyen Dinh Ha, co-founder

Food for Thought

An interview with Vietnamese-Australian celebrity chef Luke Nguyen

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



LUKE NGUYEN IS everywhere. The Vietnamese-Australian chef has had three television series, multiple cookbooks, runs two restaurants (in Sydney and Brisbane), makes appearances on *MasterChef Australia* and *MasterChef Vietnam*, leads culinary tours, is a cheffing ambassador for a luxury cruise line, and has opened a cooking studio in Ho Chi Minh City. Oh, and he's the recent father of twin boys.

Born in a Thai refugee camp, Luke grew up in Australia, helping out with his parents' *pho* restaurant as a kid before joining the restaurant business himself. Along the way came books, TV and popularity in the vein of mainstream Asian chefs like Martin Yan and Jack Lee, but whatever you do, don't call him a celebrity. "I kind of go ewwww when people call me a celebrity," says Luke. "I cook at home. I cook in a restaurant. And sometimes I cook in front of a camera. That's it. Maybe it's the down-to-earth Aussie in me. But I'd rather be teaching people how to cook or taking people to eat street food than to always be in the spotlight." That's not to say Luke doesn't enjoy using his influence to further his mission of helping Vietnamese cuisine take its rightful place on the world food scene.

There are stories of you working pretty hard as a kid at your parents' restaurant. How did that shape who you are today?

It was hard. No kid wants to work 24/7, but I learned a lot from it. Coming from a refugee boat family, we worked hard. My parents didn't have anything. They had to have multiple businesses to survive. That's why I'm doing so many different things now because my work ethic is strong. Also, when my parents sent me out to shop and I came back with pretty average ingredients, they'd go back to the seller and say, "Why did you sell my son these bad ingredients?" [laughs] From that, I learned every day to seek the best of the best of the best. My parents taught me about the best produce, the balance of Vietnamese flavors and about hard work.

Vietnamese food isn't viewed on the same level as Japanese, Thai or even Chinese around the world. Why do you think that is?

Yeah, it's seen as a cheap meal. My parents' generation had their \$5 *pho* restaurant, but if we all continue to open that kind of restaurant, [Vietnamese food] isn't going to get anywhere. I had a struggle when I opened Red Lantern [Luke's acclaimed Sydney restaurant], using premium products like Australian wagyu and organic produce to bring Vietnamese food to another level where people could match food with wine and take Vietnamese cuisine seriously.

Unfortunately, Vietnamese food was always perceived as being cheap, and people were asking, "Why should I pay \$17

for a plate of Vietnamese food?” That’s the perception I want to change. It starts with paying for and using good ingredients to get a better product.

Is that the challenge? Changing people’s misconception about Vietnamese food?

It’s not even a misconception, but that they have no idea what Vietnamese food is. For example, people will eat a lotus stem salad and go, “Jeez, this is so bloody good” but have no idea what’s in it. I’ll have to explain that it’s the stem, not the root, combined with all these different herbs, then explain what those herbs are good for, their medicinal qualities. Then talk about what goes into the dressing and what fish sauce is, how it’s made and what makes for a good fish sauce. People will walk into GRAIN at 9 am and see fish sauce in test tubes for them to taste. We do taste tests for olive oil and wines, so why not fish sauce? An Italian cook will pay \$20 a bottle for extra virgin olive oil, so people also need to understand why they should pay for the good fish sauce and how to use it. That’s demystifying Vietnamese cuisine – helping people understand the ingredients and what makes Vietnamese food great.

What’s your favorite food trend at the moment?

I love what’s happening with food now. People are understanding regions of cuisine. Instead of saying, “Let’s have Chinese food,” people are wanting to try Sichuan or Shanghainese or Yunnanese. That’s happening in Vietnam, too, which I really like. Also, people are getting down to the simplicity of food and the stories behind it. A dish might not just taste good but it’s been perfected for 40 years and there’s a history behind it as well as who’s cooking it. It’s about the vendor and his or her story.

In Luke Nguyen’s Vietnam, you talk a lot about the stories behind Vietnamese food. Do you ever get backlash from local Vietnamese for trying to teach them about their own food?

I’m really lucky that I’ve never had that issue. Food is such a big part of the culture here that people embrace it. What I love about Vietnam is that if you have a passion for food, there’s an instant connection. If you have that love, drive and interest, local cooks and street vendors are willing to share. To be honest, though, I’ve traveled more of Vietnam than any Vietnamese I’ve met. I’ve done 15 years of research and documented all those regional dishes in my books.

What’s been your biggest takeaway from studying Vietnamese food?

For me, Vietnamese food is the product of a thousand years of Chinese rule and almost 100 years of French colonization. We have



big culinary countries as neighbors in Thailand, China, Burma and Laos, so it’s a fantastic melting pot of flavors. Throughout the years, we’ve refined our cuisine which is elegant, light, fresh and extremely well-balanced. Thai food is big, bold, spicy and punchy. Vietnamese food has all those elements but toned down a little bit. I think Vietnamese food is the most refined of Southeast Asian cuisines, so it’s open to many palates around the world.

Your dishes don’t always stick to the traditional methods, though.

Some people will eat my food and say, “That’s not traditional grandmother-style.”

No, it’s not. I think it’s up to the next generation, our generation, to take that tradition, that authenticity and use our personality, our upbringing to change it a bit while keeping the fundamentals of Vietnamese cuisine. For instance, *banh xeo* is normally fried in oil in a wok. I cut that oil factor out by making it in a French crepe pan with no oil, making it healthier. Sure, that’s not how they do it, but why not try to make it better?

GRAIN by Luke (www.grainbyluke.com) holds daily cooking classes. Luke spends three to four months of the year in Vietnam where he leads private cooking sessions and holds culinary events. ■



My life as... **a *xe ba gac* driver**

TEXT BY ALEX GREEN IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

"I'VE BEEN DRIVING a *xe ba gac* since reunification," says 59-year-old Ut. "I used to work for a company contracted by the government; I made saw blades that were used to cut down trees. The pay was good, but I had to move around a lot, living wherever there was work, and I didn't like it, and eventually the work dried up too. There was nothing else for me to do after the war, and my brother had a homemade *xe lam* (a smaller version of the *xe ba gac*, based on a scooter rather than a motorbike). I borrowed it until I was able to earn the money to buy it from him, and I have been riding up and down Vietnam ever since."

It is a quiet morning for Ut, and he sits reading the sports newspaper with an ice tea, chatting with Sang, another *xe ba gac* driver who is tinkering with his machine. There is a friendly rivalry between the



“Sometimes I will ride all day to take a load up north and ride back during the night. It can be dangerous and it is very tiring, but the pay is good”

“We have enough problems with the police already.” The vehicles display their names and phone numbers - a wise decision.

“I do this work because the pay is quite good. I’m not going to get rich, but it provides for my family and me. My wife works as a housekeeper which helps too, and the children do little jobs when they aren’t at school,” says Ut. He generally works in Saigon, but customers often require him to transport goods over far longer distances. “Quite often people want me to help them move house, or take furniture down to the coast. Sometimes they hand me a mystery box and a destination and I just keep quiet and do my job!”

It can take seven or more hours to drive to the coast, but Ut and Sang have the patience of true workmen, and are content to sit astride their machines for the long haul. “Sometimes I will ride all day to take a load up north and ride back during the night. It can be dangerous and it is very tiring, but the pay is good,” he adds.

Many of Vietnam’s traffic fatalities happen on the winding, unlit roads that connect Vietnam’s smaller towns, but Ut trusts his 40 years’ experience of driving across the country to keep him safe.

“Sometimes, if it’s a customer we know, we will travel even farther. We have moved goods up to Hue, and that is a very long drive. For journeys like that we will set off in the early morning and arrive quite late at night. Then we’ll stay over at a motel or even sleep in the back of our *xe ba gac* before driving back the next day.”

Ut can’t see himself doing anything else, but is unsure if there is a future for the profession. “The government regulates us more and more, and I think *xe ba gacs* may eventually be replaced. I will stay in the same job though, and just drive something else. People will always need help moving.”

“Would I let my children do this job?”

Ut and Sang laugh, glancing at each other, “No, no, they are young now and still in school. Education is the most important thing, and when they grow up they will have better opportunities. I don’t want them to have to deal with the police every day.” ■

drivers. “It’s normal, there’s competition and you want to do well, but you make friends in this job. The group of us here, we’re all friends, and we generally meet here when we’re waiting for work. We have another corner, but the police seem to like that spot too!”

“I have a new bike now,” says Ut, gesturing at one of the blue Fushima vehicles parked on the street corner. “I bought it from a friend for VND40 million.” Home-made and converted three-wheelers have been banned in Vietnam since 2010 because the government considered them unsafe. Now drivers have to pay more for imported Chinese brands, and almost every *xe ba gac* you see is either a Jingpin or a Fushima, customized only for the driver’s comfort.

Ut’s problems don’t stop there. Recently, traffic cops have started pulling over three-

wheeled vehicles because they are believed to cause traffic jams. “It’s at its worst in the mornings. Very often I can’t do any work because the police would stop me. If you get stopped by the police you have to pay a fine, normally VND100-VND150,000. It is a lot of money, and you don’t want to be losing that every day.” Despite the rivalry between competing groups of drivers, police presence brings the camaraderie of the profession to the forefront. “We warn one another by phone of where the police are and if they’re stopping us or focusing on the smaller motorbike transports. Nobody likes to be stopped and we aren’t out to get one another.”

Sang agrees: “It is hard work, but we can make up to VND300,000 a day doing it, as long as the police don’t take their share.” The pair laughs and declines when I suggest taking a photo of them and their vehicles.

Don't Worry, You Can Trust Me

Trusts as a financial planning tool



Sven Roering is a partner and financial planner at Total Wealth Management PTE. Ltd (www.t-wm.com). He holds an Economics Degree from Rhodes University in South Africa, and is a candidate in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) program, having successfully completed level 1 and is currently working towards the level 2 exam.

Dear Sven,

I'm a keen investor who's been living in Vietnam for six years now. I have a few property investments abroad, and I own a small stock portfolio. I have a son who is six years old and is about to start his first year of school. I would like to set aside the majority of my investments to finance his university education when he comes of age. I am worried that if I happen to pass away while living in Vietnam that my estates may fall victim to disputes among my family members after I am gone and that my son might run the risk of not receiving what he is due. Also, I would not want the funds intended to finance his education to be exposed to excessive taxation upon my death. I've been told that setting up a trust might solve my problem. Could you explain how a trust works in more detail?

THERE ARE TWO things that are guaranteed in life: 1) you will pay taxes and 2) you will die. Obviously the fact that you have dependents and your thoughts on your own mortality make you a little anxious about your son's future and the future of your personal estate.

Trusts used to be reserved for the aristocracy as a mechanism to transfer wealth across generations. Large corporations like Standard Oil and JP Morgan were even referred to as "trusts" in the early 20th century. Nowadays, a trust is available to anybody. The trick is to find a suitable person to act as trustee.

In layman's terms, a trust allows you to hand over your assets to a professional who holds them for the benefit of a third party. The person who you would hand your assets over to would be known as the trustee, which could be a person or a company. As the primary contributor of the assets, you would be known as the settlor. In this case, the third party would be your son, who is known as a

beneficiary under the agreement.

The above structure is akin to having the portion of your assets run as a separate company. You might think that handing over your assets to a third party is a crazy idea, especially if you are considering appointing your estranged, bipolar brother-in-law as the trustee. The good news is that there are many companies who specialize as trustees. A great example is Sovereign Trust in Hong Kong who could set you up via your independent financial advisor in Vietnam. The bad news is that if you would like a company to act as your trustee, the value of your assets would have to be extremely high.

What are the main benefits of a trust? The main benefit is that you would be assured that the assets held within the trust would be distributed to your intended beneficiary upon your death, without the hassle, delays and legal proceedings of having your estate split up via your will. The legal agreement is also very concrete. If you were to pass away when your son is 16 years old

and he receives his inheritance straight away, it's possible that he would run away from home and spend all the money, as any teenager might. However, with the trust you could stipulate that he would only be able to receive a portion of the funds when he reaches a certain age. Secondly, your inheritance tax situation. Trusts can heavily mitigate inheritance taxes. However, certain jurisdictions, like the US and UK are changing laws to allow trusts to be taxed more heavily. Therefore, jurisdictions like the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey would be most efficient.

For a trust to be most effective you would have to have no beneficial interest in the assets held within the trust, so you can kiss that "Mediterranean holiday you were planning after selling that house you had held in the trust" goodbye. Luckily your death will ironically benefit many because you managed to protect your assets from your squabbling relatives through your shrewd judgment of using the trust. ■



Christmas

— GIFTS —

THE CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN IS ON, AND NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO GET INTO THE FESTIVE SPIRIT AND KICKSTART YOUR GIFT SHOPPING. FINDING THE IDEAL PRESENT CAN BE SUPER STRESSFUL, SO WE'VE COMPILED A SELECTION OF GREAT GIFTS GUARANTEED TO PUT A SMILE ON ANYONE'S FACE COME CHRISTMAS DAY. CHECK OUT OUR INSPIRED GIFTS, WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.



Clothes

— MAKE THE MAN —



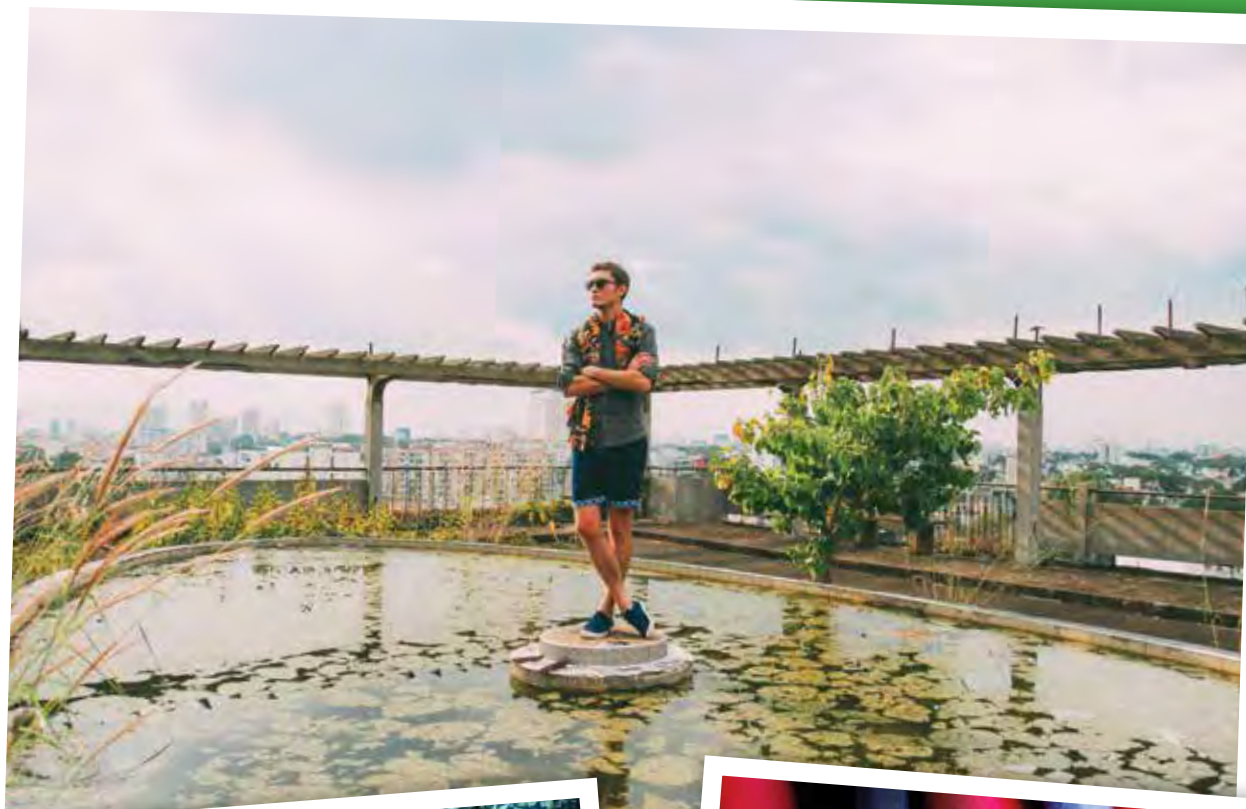
IT'S BEEN SAID that today's stylish man only needs about 20 items in his wardrobe built on timeless principles: classic colors, patterns and styles paired with a good fit for master interchangeability. Alice Lehoux, the creative designer behind Leo, is out to dress today's Modern Man with her "ready-to-wear plus" line featuring a marriage of French design and Vietnamese craftsmanship.

Arriving in Vietnam in 2013, Alice noticed that there was a gap in the market for well-made yet reasonably priced menswear. "People couldn't find anywhere to buy a pair of nice chinos," the young designer remarked in her sunny D3 workroom. Back in her native France, Alice earned a Masters in Textiles and spent eight years in the industry developing fabrics,

working with raw materials in the factory and accessorizing. After falling in love with Saigon, she worked with a French company to execute their designs using Vietnamese-made textiles before deciding to strike out on her own. "I thought that I'd like to make my own stuff, something really nice. After all, I love seeing a guy really stylishly dressed." With the help of flatmates, friends and new acquaintances, Alice launched her first collection last year, comprising of casual t-shirts and shorts and work-chic button-down shirts and fitted pants in a combination of linens and cottons. Alice describes the Leo aesthetic as "chic, comfortable and basic." But "basic isn't negative," she clarifies. "It's a piece you can keep for a long time and can mix and match."

The desire to dress guys well in what Alice terms 'slow fashion' was the impetus behind the brand. "I want people to know where their clothes came from, both in terms of production and the people behind the clothes. If you have fabric made in Italy or the US then produced somewhere else then shipped to a third country, what's the point? It just wastes time and causes pollution."

To that end, Leo incorporates fabrics made in Vietnam and other Asian countries, and is sewn in Vietnam, all with a certain French flair. "At the beginning, everyone told me I'd never find good Vietnamese fabric," says Alice. "Denim, canvas and linen were being made in Cambodia, China or Hong Kong before being shipped to Vietnam. But I think the Vietnamese realize



the potential they have to make their own fabric. More and more machines are coming here and I'm excited to see what it'll be like in 10 years".

On any given day, Alice and her design team will scour the city's cramped markets searching for the perfect fabric, trying to trace the textiles back to their local manufacturers. "Researching fabric is like a game," she says. "Sometimes it's really hot and you're really tired, but when you find [the perfect fabric], it's like Christmas!"

According to Alice, sourcing local textiles and craftsmanship benefits everyone. "The Vietnamese are very good at patternmaking, shaping and volume. I can show them what I want and technically, they're very good. For me, the most important advantage is being here and working directly with the artisans,

tailors and seamstresses. I give them my style, they give me their craftsmanship. It's a win-win!" Consumers also reap the benefits of sourcing local with no item in the Leo 2016 collection costing more than VND1 million. Beautifully made pants come in at just VND700,000, linen shirts are around VND500,000 with scarves and other accessories even less.

"The goal of the brand is to produce clothing that is stylish, smart and comfortable, but also affordable for most people here. Originally, we designed for expats, but we've widened our target to include local Vietnamese men." The Leo aesthetic is known for being basic but daring, pairing bold, colorful prints with more traditionally-cut styles – perhaps a flash of color in a pocket lining or a bold pattern on an inside cuff. Alice says her

second collection is more "calm" than her first. She said au revoir to the bright, floral shorts, but last year's pink linen shirt is staying, along with the addition of a few new items like a long-sleeved linen shirt with a Mao collar and a paisley print in the inside collar. "Some Vietnamese were scared when they saw all the prints. But then they saw foreigners and Viet-Kieus wearing it well, so they thought, 'Why not me?' The Leo man needs to be just a little daring."

The 2016 Leo Collection launches on December 2 and brings back all the well-loved basics with Alice's trademark pops of color. The more fashion forward can opt for the oversized cotton scarves with names like "Exotic" and "Peacock." Leo is currently available at Kokois (24 Thao Dien, D2) and at www.leo-part.net. – James Pham ▲

Redesigning

— TRADITION —



MOTTAINAI IS A Japanese word that refers to that feeling of regret when something is wasted. It is this spirit that drives Clare Smith, the creator and designer behind **Moniko** (The Closet on 81 Xuan Thuy, D2; Facebook: *TheClosetd2*), to create beautiful clutches and accessories out of vintage kimonos and obis (the sash worn around the waist). Her first introduction to Japan and its culture was in 2008 while visiting Kyoto with a friend. The two experienced a geisha makeover and during the trip Clare became intrigued by the precision and attitude of the Japanese culture to design and presentation.

"I come from a design background and have collected numerous textile articles, from sarees to carpets, while on my travels," she explains. "In the following years I bought several vintage kimonos, hung them round my home. For years I often walked around in them, and generally adored them a great deal. But it was in 2011, when I was feeling particularly brave, that I decided to remodel one of these beautiful kimonos and introduce it to my sewing machine. The result was not especially beautiful, but after a few attempts, and after becoming re-acquainted with the art of sewing, the results began to flourish like the first sakura cherry blossom of spring."

To make a clutch or purse, Clare first carefully selects kimono fabrics for their design and heritage. "For example, the patterns used are highly significant and were used to indicate the wearer's age, wealth or social status. It was also believed that the symbols on the garment could bring good fortune. Many designs would feature scenes inspired by nature, with flora, fauna and seasonal motifs being especially popular. Others featured traditional emblems or family crests that would have been passed down through the generations. Highly regarded objects, such as fans, or drums, were also often incorporated into fabric designs." Every Moniko bag is fashioned from the traditional garment, or from the accompanying obi.



IMAGE PROVIDED BY MONIKO



IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

Most kimonos currently available date from the 1980s, while the obis tend to be around a decade older. Clare has found older examples, dating back to the 1920s, but is often apprehensive about cutting these up. "Sometimes the older fabrics can be too fragile to use, and some are simply so beautiful that they must be appreciated as a whole."

Since 2012 the company has entered into partnerships with social projects in

Southeast Asia. "It is very rewarding, it allows Moniko to increase capacity and grow as a business while supporting groups with particular social and physical difficulties." In Cambodia, the company works with disabled individuals affected by polio or land mines, while in Malaysia they partner with local groups that aim to empower low-income women."

— Alex Green ▲



IMAGE PROVIDED BY NOBI LIGHTING

Lightweight



BINH AN FIRST began to design lamps a little over a year ago. “Business in my old coffee shop was quite slow so I started to design in my spare time. I’ve always been passionate about lighting and how it affects your mood. I wanted to create something that expressed my style, and that could make people happy and comfortable.” It was only by chance that the hobby became a profession. “My friend’s birthday was coming up and I wanted to make him something special, so I created a homemade lamp. Fortunately he really liked it.” That friend was Hoai Thuc, who is now An’s business partner and fellow designer at **NOBI Lighting** (425/16 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3). Neither have any formal background in art and design, but both share a passion for vintage aesthetics.

Recently relocated, their new space houses a studio on the ground floor while a cluttered workshop with salvaged wood, discarded plumbing, motorbike chains, drills and metalworking tools is located on the rooftop. “I spend a lot of time walking

around flea markets looking for inspiration and things to base a new design on, but quite often I also get lucky when people throw things away, I can often see potential in the things other people see as broken,” says An.

For a recent design, where the bulb is housed by a metal cube crisscrossed by wires and set upon a wooden base, the inspiration came from a children’s game similar to snakes and ladders. Another design celebrates an iconic aspect of Saigon’s character – the motorbike. “When Hoai or I have an idea, we tend to take some scrap metal and wood and just give it a try upstairs. Normally it takes three or four attempts at least before we get a result we are happy with.” The two have collected a number of broken motorcycle chains and drive systems to be cleaned, coated in matte black paint and turned into a celebration of what keeps Saigon moving. The bike chain lamps are priced at VND500,000.

Most of the smaller lamps, starting at

VND200,000, are based on reclaimed wood from the Mekong. The wood is ossified by wind and water, creating a dense base with intricate textural patterns. Another eye-catching feature of the lamps are the bulbs. They come in a variety of shapes and styles, that can be customized by the buyer, and house an intricate low-wattage filament that gives off a soft yellow glow. “Ambience is very important, we want to help create the best atmosphere, and all our lamps come with a dimmer switch to account for mood and time of day.” The bulbs last for up to 3,000 hours, and replacements can be bought from NOBI.

To further accent the bulbs, An can also paint designs on them for an additional cost. She often paints simple floral designs, but has also done a bride and groom lit up from within to commemorate a couple’s wedding. “I’ll do whatever the customer asks really. It’s another thing that started as a hobby, and I really glad I can make it part of my work.” – Alex Green ▲

It's a

— SMALL WORLD —



IT IS OFTEN said that the best things come in small packages so, with this in mind, VinGallery hosts its third annual **Small Things** (VinGallery, 6 Le Van Mien, D2) art collection. All the works displayed are USD500 or less and 50x50cm or smaller, and have been produced by 22 Saigon-based international artists in a range of mediums.

Coming just in time for the Christmas period, Small Things is a great way to support Saigon's buzzing local art scene and get your hands on exclusive artwork. As you walk into the gallery, you are immediately greeted by contrast, as monochrome lacquer work hang alongside vibrant explosions of acrylic paint and pastel-shaded prints. "Chiaroscuro" is the term used in the artistic community to describe the contrast between light and dark and, at a small stretch, is a fitting description of the collection as a whole, where the bright and playful is contrasted

by the cool noir of black and white photography. The term can certainly be applied to a series of three portraits by English artist Will Whitehouse, who has worked with oil on tile to give a haunting impression of a shadowed man, replete with intriguing brushwork and a veiled gaze.

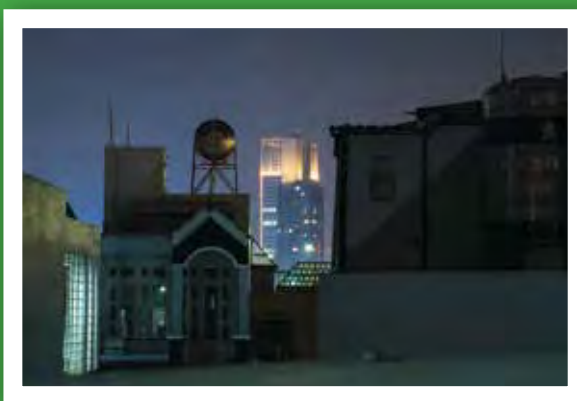
Jurgen Buhre, a German artist, has contributed three one-off pieces for the exhibition. His work is acrylic on canvas and is richly textured, creating abstract, modern images that always leave the eye finding something new. Alongside this sits the work of young Vietnamese artist Dinh Con Tang, whose pieces show all the energy and vibrancy of the contemporary local art scene. A professional illustrator who also works on the Saigon Art Book project (a biannual publication that celebrates the work of young local artists), Tang brings to life a stylistic celebration of the stilt villages that line the banks of the

Saigon River. Another young Vietnamese artist is Thuy Duong, whose abstract work in acrylic is a joyful celebration of color and form.

Next to this sits a collection of etchings, by Tom Robinson, that appear to show images from a microscope slide. However, the images were actually produced by allowing the etching plate to slowly degrade in an acid bath used in the etching process. The results are both organic and scientific, and the collection of around 30 plates is fascinating, giving the impression of water, the inside of a cell, flowing hair, and all manner of intangible images.

More recognizably, Saigon's skyline is lovingly captured by one of the gallery's resident artists, Jim Cowan. The use of light and focus is truly remarkable in these images, which at first glance suggest that they must have been heavily edited. Jim, however, has simply captured all of the intricacies of Saigon at sunrise in two images emblematic of the particularly enchanting nature of the city. The collection also hosts work by Bridget March, who has produced limited edition prints of two of her most popular paintings, one of Sapa's cascading rice paddies, the other a bustling street scene. Printed in England on quality cotton paper and guaranteed by the Fine Arts Guild, all the rich colors of Bridget's illustrations are vividly reproduced to best celebrate the vivacity of Vietnam.

In addition to the work produced specially for the show, VinGallery also has a range of posters, small books, prints, postcards, and some small ceramic pieces, all of which are available for purchase. *Small Things* runs until January 16, and the collection will evolve as works are purchased, so get there early before you miss out on a masterpiece. – Alex Green ▲



IMAGES PROVIDED VINGALLERY



IMAGES BY PATRICK CARPENTER

The

RINGMASTER



IN A ROOM near the stairs on the second floor above the traffic on Pasteur, there is a man describing the cuff links he wants to have made to a young salesgirl. It is a small boutique called *Made by Mun* (Room 201, Second Floor, 130 Pasteur, D1); half the walls display women's fashion, and half are draped in necklaces, charms, rings, earrings, pendants, bracelets, and other pieces for decorating the body. Splitting the store in two is a shining floor-to-ceiling steel pole. Next to the salesgirl stands a piano teacher, a banker, a pole dancer and a jewelry maker. This would be a crowded house if it weren't for the fact that the banker, piano teacher, pole dancer and jewelry maker were one person.

Doan Le Thao Vy has always had more

than one job. She also clearly has more than one passion. The constant is the piano: it has always been at the center of her life, and teaching takes up the bulk of her mornings and afternoons. Banking is in the past and fading ever faster. Between the piano lessons she's designing, cutting, carving and hammering precious metals into one-of-a-kind pieces.

Seven years ago, in a friend's jewelry store, Vy was allowed to sit in a corner and explore. She was given pieces of copper and bronze. Left alone, she learned how to cut, create and take an idea and translate it from paper to bronze. Her first piece took more than a month to create. Fast forward to 2014. After years of wearing and not selling her own pieces, Vy caved in and

opened her store selling bespoke pieces. She quickly became known as someone happy to work with a customer in creating their own design. "What I enjoy most is being a part of someone's story. I have made many wedding rings where the man comes in without even knowing the size of his girlfriend's ring finger. Or even worse, he has bought a ring double the size of her finger. He needs the ring in three days, and it has to have an inscription in it, maybe also some special pattern or drawing. He is starting to panic a little. So I suggest a few ways to measure her finger without her suspecting anything, or I transform the huge ring down to her size – most stores would refuse to do this – and then we work on how the ring should look and what he wants it to say. It's a challenge to do all this very quickly, but it seems a lot of men tend to wait until the last minute to make up their minds. I love the challenge!"

"I recently had to draw the outline of a mountainscape along with a special message for a man who was going to give the ring to his girlfriend when they had climbed up to where she could see the same mountains that were on the inside of the ring," Vy adds. "I liked this idea very much and it made me happy to be a part of it – to know that my ring was traveling up the mountain secretly, to be given to her at a specific place, a specific moment."

The store suddenly fills up with a mix of Vietnamese and Korean women, arriving separately. They are all timid at first, but only at first. Soon they are trying on various pieces, and then trying on dresses that go with the various pieces. Vy moves in between both groups, taking ideas and orders. – Patrick Carpenter ▲



IMAGE PROVIDED BY MBA ART TILES

From Floor

TO WALL



ENCAUSTIC TILE IS nothing new. They've been around since medieval times, but they're currently enjoying a bit of a moment. Whether in intricate curlicues or modern geometric patterns, they always have a certain 'been here forever' rustic charm. Quynh and her family certainly understand the tile's 'forever' charm - they come from a long tradition of tile making in Vietnam. "**M&A Art Tiles** (61 Xuan Thuy, D2) started out a little over a year ago in Saigon, but have a much longer history. It is a family business going back three generations. My grandparents started making tiles in the 1960s in a factory in Da Nang, and it has been in the family ever since," she says. The factory has since moved to Hue, but not much else has changed. "Almost all of the production process is by hand; the only automation is the hydraulic press. We use a machine for this because it helps to ensure consistent quality so the color

won't fade or be uneven."

Quynh stocks a range of tiles, created by in-house artists and designers, which are available for immediate purchase, in addition to the custom designs (though this requires an order of 10 square meters and take a longer period to create). For bespoke patterns, the artwork is first traced onto paper then metalworkers bend strips of metal to form a mold, carefully following the original drawing. The mold is vital in creating the matte finish. While normal patterned tiles are lacquered or glazed, the design and color in encaustic tiles is built up using pigmented cement that is pressed into the surface of the tile. Because of this, the tiles do not need to be fired, creating the rustic look.

The tiles can also be backed by wood to create wall hangings or purchased singularly as statement pieces - great gifts for any budding interior designer.

In addition to the larger tiles, they also produce smaller ceramic ones that can be combined in a variety of ways to add color to any room. The 10x10cm tiles (VND70,000 each) make for a funky coaster set. The larger 15x15cm tiles (VND150,000 each) can also feature as part of a place setting, as well as being purely decorative. Like the rectangular tiles (VND350,000 each) they feature rich colors and raised and recessed details that draw the eye.

The ceramic wall hangings (VND850,000 - VND1.5 million) are great gifts for art lovers. Reminiscent of classical mosaics, the hangings are entirely customizable. They come in two sizes and are assembled from various sizes and designs, capable of being tailored to individual taste. Don't worry, you don't need to completely redesign your home to enjoy these cool art tiles, though it is always tempting to give yourself a grandiose Christmas gift! - Alex Green ▲

A Stroll

— DOWN MEMORY LANE —



SAIGON'S STREETS ARE difficult to navigate whether on foot, two, three or four wheels, and a strong memory is a must in order to get from point A to B without getting lost. The Saigon Memory Game comes to the rescue with a variation on the familiar and simple matching pairs memory game. Creators Pauline Portheine and Baja van Huls have compiled 20 images of everyday Saigon life in a game that tests the memory and celebrates the vibrancy of the city.

It is not the first city they've turned into a game, according to Pauline. "The first city was Shanghai in 2007. My friend Baja, a photographer, was struggling to learn Chinese. She realized that images are, for her, the best way to learn." Surrounded by overwhelming sights of Shanghai, Baja began taking photos across the city and the idea of turning the images into a game soon followed. "She didn't take photos like a tourist would, but as an expat. She focused on her own memories and experiences of living in the city." After her success in Shanghai, Baja continued the project in Beijing and Bangkok.

In Saigon, she partnered with Pauline, using the latter's inside knowledge of the city to map out key images to capture. The city was so photogenic it was difficult to limit the photos to a reasonable number. "We chose photographs that are appealing to expats and tourists, so obviously we include all the famous landmarks, but we also tried to catch the essence of Vietnam, taking photos at all different times of day and all across the city," says Pauline. "The whole project took two to three months. It was quite quick as the idea was already there. Getting the photographs took around a month." — Alex Green

The game costs VND400,000 and is available at l'Usine (70 Le Loi, D1), Kokois (24 Thao Dien, D2), Gingko Concept (254 De Tham, D1) and Duy Tan (76a Le Loi, D1). ▲



IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY NGUYEN HUU DUC ANH





The Deck Bar

Destination Deck

The much-loved Deck Saigon gets a modern makeover

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

WHEN **THE DECK** (38 Nguyen U Di, D2) opened in 2008, a glitzier sister to Thao Dien's cozy Mekong Merchant, it quickly evolved into a Saigon institution. The Deck represented everything good about comfortable living in Saigon – river breezes, a taste of home, reliably good service and lazily expansive views, all wrapped up in a beach house chic vibe. Against the backdrop of the occasional well-heeled diners arriving by private boat, every Deck outing promised to be a exercise in escapism.

The Deck was one of those rare restaurants that drew reliably steady crowds every night of the week, enjoying a golden ratio of wealthy Vietnamese and comfortable expats with a smattering of tourists who were inclined to make the trek out to Thao Dien.

Despite its obvious success, The Deck is out to reinvent itself with its newest addition of The Deck Bar. Set on an adjoining plot of land, The Deck Bar effectively doubles the size of the restaurant anchored by a large oval bar

under tented cover for a hip, futuristic vibe. “In D2, everyone goes to D1 for a good night out. You don’t want to leave, but you do,” notes Geoffrey Deschamps, The Deck Saigon restaurant manager. “We were known for our river views, but there was no place to sit by the river and have a drink. Now you don’t have to leave D2 to go out to a nice bar,” he says of the large space housing Zen water features, minimalist décor and seating for up to 150 at long tables and oversized sofas in the lounge area (or accommodating up to 300 for cocktail receptions). Still in its soft opening period, The Deck Bar has already hosted a wedding, corporate functions and private parties. On a recent Tuesday evening, over a sweet Deck Delight (vodka, lychee, watermelon, raspberry, lime and lemongrass) and a refreshingly sour Sea Breeze (vodka, grapefruit, cranberry, lime juice, both VND195,000) the vibe at The Deck Bar definitely felt familiar yet different. “We’re a dining experience now,” says recently hired General Manager Albert Van Der Westhuizen. “The guest journey has changed. When you arrive, you’re brought through The Deck Bar where guests either have a welcome drink or go straight through to The Deck if their table is ready. We’ve seen guests come an hour before their reservation just to hang out. The journey ends with après-dinner drinks back at The Deck Bar. We’re a complete destination now.”

Bringing on Van Der Westhuizen, with his experience in the luxury yachting industry as well as over 10 years working in London hospitality, is a sure sign that The Deck is not satisfied to rest on its laurels. Regulars should brace for a sleeker, more sophisticated overall Deck experience, starting with a revamped website (www.thedecksaiagon.com) and a more focused menu, moving away from the fusion catch-all that saw pastas in heavy cream sauces sharing space with mashed potatoes and curried lentils. While many of the signature favorites remain, the dinner menu especially gravitates towards contemporary Pan Asian cuisine, with many dishes designed to be shared.

On the (Hot) Rocks

To experience the new concept, we opted for the “Lang Man” tasting menu (the least expensive of three at VND995,000 per person with table minimums; all dishes also available a la carte) that started out with a complimentary hors d’oeuvre of warm rice crackers with a tuna mousse and spicy *sambal*, followed by five appetizers and two mains. Marinated Tuna Spring Rolls supplied a light opening to the meal — delicately raw tuna rolled in rice paper with a thin layer of bean thread. With a few herbs, the lightly marinated tuna was fresh and barely needed the thick *nuoc mam* dipping sauce. The Spicy Chicken Salad on Crispy Wonton was elegant in its simplicity, working as a tapas-sized explosion of crispy tostada-like wonton skin, topped with a crunchy salad of cucumber, tomatoes, shallots and



chicken with a pop of flavor coming from the Thai-style tangy vinaigrette dressing and toasted black sesame seeds. The Roast Duck with Watermelon and Cashew Nuts Salad was the ideal complement for the salubrious location. The sweetness of the watermelon, the earthiness of the cashews, the meatiness of the duck and the freshness of the cilantro with a sprinkling of cress sprouts made for a light, healthy dish with a peppery kick. The Shrimp Tempura was as light and sweet as you'd expect, but slivers of lime leaves and a tangy tamarind sauce added unexpected bursts of flavor. While all the appetizers were outstanding, we found the Chicken Foie Gras Siu Mai the

best example of The Deck's new Pan Asian concept, stripped down and refined with a surprising twist. While looking much like its dim sum staple cousin, the steamed minced chicken with a shiitake mushroom filling served with a side of teriyaki sauce was a wow dish both in texture and taste largely due to the morsel of foie gras in the center.

The Sirloin on Hot Rocks remains a reliably great Deck signature dish, benefitting from equal parts presentation and flavor. Slices of tender sirloin come sizzling on hot rocks, allowing diners to either enjoy it rare immediately or allow it to cook. Topped with crispy garlic

chips, expect a Pavlovian response to the heavenly aroma wafting from the dish as it cooks. The Caramelised Norwegian Salmon might have been the most "Vietnamese" of all the dishes we tried, with a sweet caramel glaze over a bed of sautéed bean sprouts and chives, a nice introduction to upgraded local fare.

If you haven't been to The Deck in the last few months, you're in for a treat. While we hear the kitchen keeps a stash of Béarnaise sauce for those who simply can't let it go, most others will enjoy the sleeker, more focused tweaks to the menu, its first in six years. Welcome to the new and improved Deck destination. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Deck Delight and Sea Breeze; Marinated Tuna Spring Rolls; Spicy Chicken Salad on Crispy Wonton; Roast Duck with Watermelon and Cashew Nuts; Sirloin on Hot Rocks; and Caramelised Norwegian Salmon

Buen Provencho!

Saigon's singular must-try Cuban restaurant

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO**
IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

CHARLES LECOMPTE AND Ruben Fahmestock surveyed the cuisine scene in Saigon and asked themselves one very simple question: "What's missing?" They were enthusiastic and in unison with their decision: a terrific Cuban restaurant. Charles, a former wine distributor, and Ruben, a 12-year veteran of kitchens whose last stop was La Cucina in D7, quit their jobs and went all in, booking a trip to Cuba to seek their inspiration.

They meandered around the Caribbean nation for a month sampling various dishes and libations when they met Alex Moreno, a chef in Havana with 18 years of experience. They pitched him their idea to open a Cuban eatery in Saigon and asked if he wanted to come along on the journey; Alex readily accepted. Now with their chef, and an assortment of ornaments and other Cuban flourishes in tow, they set off for the bustle of Saigon with a clear vision of what they wanted.

That vision is expressed in ***Cuba la Casa del Mojito*** on 91 Pasteur in District 1. When you saunter in, the warm, tropical hues, imported sconces, and Cuban music titillate the senses leaving one wanting to drink and dance as much as sit and eat. With live music and a party most every night, Cuba la Casa is already attracting a following that includes the Cuban consulate as regulars.

We were led to our table where we immediately ordered up a pair of classic mojitos (VND100,000) made with Havana Club rum and settled in to take a gander at the menu. The fare on offer is kept simple as they test the waters, but they look to add more every few months as they see what becomes popular. We started with an order of ceviche made from fresh fish, clams, and prawns (VND95,000). It's a solid representation of the dish and a pleasant way to begin. We also ordered up their Habanera salad (VND145,000) that is a very hearty serving of mixed greens, chicken, eggs, and potatoes in a balsamic vinegar and pineapple dressing. This is a perfect item to share for people who want a salad, but don't want to fill up on it.

The *bistec en cazuela* is a pork dish



Ceviche





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Habanera salad; Bistec en cazuela; Arroz Moro; Ropa vieja; Bistec Grilla; and Flan

made with garlic and onion in a red wine rosemary sauce (VND295,000) which we paired with *arroz moro* (VND55,000 a la carte), which is black beans and rice with garlic, onion, and bacon and proved to be a spectacular side. The *bistec en cazuela* has fantastic flavor and a generous cut of pork to keep even the ravenous content. Their most popular dish is *ropa vieja*, which means “old clothes” and is named for its appearance as a lot of old rags. The *ropa vieja* comes in either personal or sharing sizes (VND220,000/VND350,000) and is a combination of stewed beef, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and flambéed plantains with a side of yucca (VND35,000 a la carte) which was soft, creamy, and an ideal accompaniment. The two are a perfect

representation of Cuban cuisine and I can’t recommend them highly enough. For those who aren’t too sure about Cuban fare, or want to play it safe, they can opt for the *bistec grilla* (VND395,000) which is a 250g US ribeye steak that can be paired with black beans stewed in garlic and onion. The obvious downside is its decided lack of Cuban-ness. We finished up the meal with an order of classic flan (VND65,000) and pumpkin flan (VND75,000). Both are sure to please, but the pumpkin is a novel and fun expression of a dessert that’s already quite popular here in Vietnam.

For those with the yearning to make an evening of it, stick around after dinner and wait for the live music to begin and you can dance the night away fueled by mojitos and

terrific beats provided by one of the local Cuban bands. If you prefer something a tad more sedate, there’s a wonderful lounge all the way in the back where you can enjoy sipping on whiskeys and smoking imported Cuban cigars. For those who want to partake but aren’t willing to shell out for the pricier imports, you’re in luck. They have a hand-rolled cigar station where you can have one made for you for about VND300,000.

Cuba la Casa del Mojito is a colorful menagerie of cocktails, cuisine, cigars, and music where the line between virtue and vice is blurred to the extent that you won’t mind which side you find yourself. If you find that you do, the best advice is to have another mojito. ■



Pho Burger

No Bun Intended

Not all burgers are created equally

TEXT BY JOEL ZORILLA IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

CONSIDERING THE FIERCE competition found in Saigon when it comes to burgers, **Relish & Sons** (44 Dong Du, D1) tries and succeeds at being a hip burger joint attracting a wide array of clientele from young, modern Vietnamese to homesick expats in need of a break from the local cuisine. The décor boasts a clean and modern interior, mixing whites, browns and blacks accented with a dangerously clever wall of real knives - adding a bit of edge to the overall surrounds. However, the talking centerpiece soon faded into the background when I bit into their mouthwatering Blue Vein burger (VND170,000). This was no ordinary burger; this was a masterpiece

consisting of perfectly-cooked medium rare beef patty together with blue cheese, caramelized onions and, of course, the relish of your choice. The combination of sweet and savory resulting from our choice of sweet chutney relish with the blue cheese and juicy patty was succulent. Accompanied by a glass of Weston English Cider draught (VND100,000), it was an all around amazing comfort lunch.

We also had to order one of the most talked about burgers on the menu, as well as one of the most revolutionary, the Pho Burger (VND190,000 for the combo meal). The chef has taken a bowl of *pho*, compressed it while keeping true to its

original parts, into a hamburger. With buns comprised of a woven nest of grilled noodles, it features a thin layer of shredded beef, a fried egg and all the toppings that accompany a traditional *pho bo*: mint leaves, lettuce, chili sauce and, of course, a little cup of soup broth to complement the burger. It truly tastes like a bowl of *pho bo*. This creation will leave every *pho bo* seller shaking their head and every culinary adventurer relishing in wonder. It was done well and with a great amount of class. I recommend having it with a glass of fresh draught beer (VND95,000) from Pasteur Street Brewery available on tap.

All burgers and sandwiches can be ordered with one of the restaurant's namesake relishes — made on the spot and wildly creative, the list includes tomato chili, pineapple and chili chutney, bourbon onion, red wine shallot, rosemary and garlic aioli, and spicy BBQ. We tried the pineapple and chilli chutney on the Blue Vein adding a sweet yet acidic taste to the meaty, cheesy decadence, and we chose the rosemary and garlic aioli which not only served as a delicious layer for the burger, but was also a great dipping sauce for the onion rings.

For a healthy kick we ordered the Bulgur salad (VND100,000), a great culinary mix of



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: Bulgur Salad; Cheesecake with passionfruit; and Blue Vein Burger

both sides of the Mediterranean with apple slices and feta cheese tossed with bulgur wheat and chickpeas in a citrus-sweet dressing – a light and tasty side note to our burgers. To satiate our sweet tooth we ordered the Cheesecake with passionfruit (VND85,000), a creamy and airy dessert with a wonderfully tangy aftertaste from the passionfruit and a fitting grand finale for a rich and flavor-packed lunch.

Relish & Sons offers a great combo meal that's hard to beat, for VND190,000 choose any sandwich or burger, choice of french fries or onion rings (I recommend the latter) and a drink (draught beer and cider included). ■



Where the Land Meets the Sea

A dining trifecta – seafood, steak and wine

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



LE MERIDIEN SAIGON may be a newcomer to the city's luxury accommodation category, but it hasn't lost any time in making its mark on the local fine dining scene. The hotel is home to a number of distinct venues, each a variation on the modern design-focused chic that the brand is known for worldwide. In the case of **Latest Recipe** (Mezzanine, Le Méridien Saigon, 3C Ton Duc Thang, D1), a classic contemporary dining area nestled comfortably on one of the lower levels of the hotel just up from the lobby, guests can expect a refreshingly spacious restaurant floor with an elegant international design and a cuisine to match. With the bright graces of the décor – breezy and angular with a broad, open kitchen area – and a calming view over the river just across from the hotel front, the venue is ideally pitched as an inspiring spot for fashionable

dining, and it's a perfect showcase for the virtuosity of the hotel's cheffing staff.

Our visit to Latest Recipe coincided with the presentation of one of the hotel's ambitious new buffet concepts, and F&B Director Robert Conte was on hand to elaborate on the culinary trend that has inspired the bold choice of menu. You may or may not be familiar with 'surf & turf' – outside of North America, the term generally refers to any dish or meal that serves both meat and seafood. Pure American-style surf & turf, however, really implies a pairing of the ultimate in both categories: beef and lobster.

It's hard to make a real statement in the buffet category in this town, but if the idea is to latch on to a combination that will be popularly received by both local and international clientele, then Le Méridien Saigon is onto a winner. Building

on a premium surf & turf concept, Latest Recipe is now serving a full surf & turf buffet almost entirely based on beef and lobster dishes. Beginning last month and now extending into December, from 6pm to 10pm on Friday and Saturday nights diners at the venue can select at their leisure from a range of delicacies based on the finest imported ingredients in the category.

"For the beef part of it, what we have here is prime rib," says Robert, proudly showing off an enormous rack of beef that looks like it came straight out of *The Flintstones*. "In terms of preference, I feel that with people and steak, it's very personal. But this is simply one of the best cuts you can get. It's prime rib – kind of the best of the best."

The restaurant's use of choice Australian beef over the local carabeef is easily understandable, but Robert is particularly



enthusiastic about the decision to use Canadian lobster for the surf menu items. “It’s actually because of where the lobster comes from,” he explains. “It comes from the Atlantic, which has much colder water than what we have here in Asia, so the meat tends to be a little bit sweeter – so that’s why it’s really good. What we do is, we’ve got it whole, we’ve got it baked, stuffed, poached – and you can ask for it to be done in any way.”

We enter into our exploration of the buffet with a plate of fresh French oysters from off of the ice rack – with a full, salty flavor unmatched by local varieties – as well as various other shellfish items, lightly fried in the Vietnamese style on request by kitchen staff on hand. The buffet has a fine selection of sushi also, but we only lightly dabble in the ginger & wasabi fare before

moving on quickly to the main attraction – the Australian prime rib of beef, still juicy & bloody after a six-hour roast, sided with a fine lobster thermidor, full stuffed half-lobsters in the French style. Land does meet sea in the sense that both meats are tender and moist, although what makes the pairing work is the contrast between the *umami* of the beef and the rich creaminess and fragrance of the lobster. We find ourselves tending towards the latter, as the beef is quickly filling; we sample a variety of dishes involving lobster meat, including a fine salad, and we succumb to the temptations of the baked oysters with bacon and cheese. A number of other buffet standards are available, with pizza, a selection of breads and cheeses, and an unusually complete desserts counter with a full chest of ice cream and an irresistible

chocolate fondue.

The buffet category in general is a popular but rarely impressive class in fine dining – Latest Recipe’s innovative take is a standout of its kind, and comes highly recommended for bringing something unique to the play. Do check it out this month, as the concept may run its course before the year’s out – but in any case, keep an eye on this venue for further challenges to the norms of buffet dining; in terms of creativity, it’s unlikely that this place is running out of ideas any time soon.

The Surf & Turf buffet night (only Fridays and Saturdays) is priced at VND1,290,000++ per person including free flow wine and soft drinks. To make a reservation, call 6263 6688 or email 03529.latestrecipe@lemeridien.com ■

Just Chile

Discovering wine from South America



Alfredo de la Casa has been organizing wine tastings for over 20 years and published three wine books, including the Gourmand award winner for best wine education book. You can reach him at www.wineinvietnam.com.



CHILE IS THE largest exporter of wine to the US; around two thirds of all Chilean wine produced is exported. Chile occupies most of South America's Pacific Coast, with vineyards squeezed in between the ocean and the Andes, creating the perfect conditions for the vines to grow and produce great wines. These same conditions work as a barrier to help protect Chilean vines and ensure that diseases like Phylloxera will never reach the country – and in fact, some of the vines are the same or direct descendants from those brought over from Europe – mostly from Bordeaux – centuries ago.

For example, the Carmenere grape, Chile's flagship grape, originated from France but has all but disappeared from its home country. The Carmenere grape

produces Baron Philippe de Rothschild Camernere Reserva, an amazing wine full of pepper notes, and is inexpensive. The Central Valley (with famous sub regions like Maipo, Rapel, Curico and Maule) in Chile produces around 80 percent of all Chilean wine. However, other areas like Aconcagua or Limari Valley in Coquimbo produce excellent wines too.

Chilean wines are perhaps some of the most famous wines globally, although not for their Chateaus as in Bordeaux, but because they are widely available and offer great value for money - Chilean wines are among the cheapest on the market. Having said that, there are some Chilean wineries that have decided to change this trend by making absolutely amazing wines, which although not as cheap as people expect when they buy

wine from Chile, are still well below the prices of similar Old World wines. An example of this is Montes. Although it is priced higher than most Chilean wines, the quality rivals that of much more expensive wineries from the Old World. Montes produces icons like Purple Angel, which is absolutely fantastic. Another example is Bouchon winery in Maule Valley with its iconic wine Mingre, a Bordeaux blend that is simply amazing.

Chilean wines are great, and if you spend a little bit more rather than going for the entry level labels, you are likely to be positively surprised for both their quality and value.

Find Chilean wines at Wine Embassy (13 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 & 41 Quoc Huong, Thao Dien, D2; 090 281 0523) ■

The Long and Short of It



Vietnamese chef **Jack Lee** (www.chefjacklee.com) has served a host of Hollywood A-listers from Angelina Jolie to Barbra Streisand, and recently returned to chef for Acacia Veranda Dining (149-151 Nguyen Du, DI). His biography by *Oi* writer NPD Khanh will be released next year.

IT HAS TO be one of my favorite dishes of all time – braised short ribs, American comfort food for the soul. This is something I just love making at home for my family, and its rich flavor is perfect for the winter. Of course, now that I live in Saigon, I follow the local tradition of making braised dishes for the rainy season – and I use lotus seed puree instead of mashed potatoes.

I learned this recipe from Chef Douglas Dodd and Chef Humberto

Contreras during my employment at the Hotel Bel-Air. At first, I had such a hard time cooking the ribs to the right internal temperatures. The trick I picked up there is that by cooking it for a long duration at a moderate temperature in the oven until the internal temperature reaches 287 degrees Fahrenheit, the ribs get to the point where the meat and tendons just fall off the bone.

Once you get that trick in your head, this is a such an easy dish to make –

I truly believe anyone can cook up this short ribs dish without too much trouble. If you can't find American short ribs or Australian beef ribs, you can substitute local short ribs, but the flavor profile won't be the same as the US variety as the ribs have a much richer flavor due to the high content of marbling fats in the muscle.

As the winter season is approaching in Ho Chi Minh City, I invite all *Oi* readers to try cooking up some short ribs using this recipe. ■



BRAISED SHORT RIBS WITH CREAMY LOTUS (SUON BO QUANH LUA HONG)

Serves 2

Ingredients:

Beef short ribs 600 gm
Lotus seed 100 gm
Potato 50 gm
Asparagus 100 gm
Red pepper 1
Yellow pepper 1
Purple taro 1
Guava 2
Celery 50 gm
Onion 1
Carrot 2

Tomato paste 1 tbsp
Red wine ½ cup
Black vinegar 2 tbsp
Honey 1 tbsp
Thyme 1 tsp
Cilantro 1 tbsp

Season the short ribs on both sides with salt and pepper and sear all sides. Put in a pressure cooker with onion, celery, carrot, guava, thyme, cilantro, red wine, black vinegar, tomato paste, honey, and chicken stock. Cook in the pressure cooker for 45 minutes.

Boil salted water with lotus seed and potato until soft, drain & then run through a food mill. Mix in 2 tbsp butter and 2 tbsp of milk and season to taste.

In a separate pot, blanch asparagus and taro until done. Sauté asparagus, taro, rainbow peppers with ½ tsp of butter and season to taste.

Once short ribs are done, remove beef and run the remaining juice through a chinois and reduce to sauce consistency.

>>The List

Wine & Dine

BARS



Chu Bar

At this 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



Harry Casual

This sports pub has five floors including inside/outside area on the ground floor, a lounge area, 4 pool tables, 6 dart boards and a rooftop bar. Along with good selection of 70s, 80s and 90s hits with attentive staff and pub grub.

R1/49 Hung Gia 3, PMH, D7



Last Call

Saigon's king of cool, Last Call is renowned for the finest cocktails in the mellowest of settings. Slink your way back to the Seventies in the velvety interior or watch over the passing crowds from the laid-back terrace. Funky (and even sexy) to the core, this classy establishment is fittingly close to the Sheraton.

59 Dong Du, D1
3823 3122



O'Brien's

Two-storey Irish-themed bar and restaurant that offers a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. Known for its excellent food menu, this is a fun place to socialize while shooting pool or playing darts. They occasionally have live music.

74/A3 Hai Ba Trung, D1



The Deck Bar

The Deck Group is proud to announce the opening of The Deck Bar, right next to its famous pan-Asian sister restaurant The Deck Saigon in Thao Dien, District 2.

38 Nguyen U Di, Thao Dien, An Phu, D2
info@thedecksaigon.com
3744 6632



The Fan Club

The largest sports bar in Saigon, with all the live sports available on 12 large HD screens, an exciting place to watch your team win! A great selection of food & beverage. We also have a enclosed relaxing garden for the family.

The Vista, 628C Hanoi Highway, An Phu, D2
www.dtdentertainment.com
Facebook: The Fan Club

Also Try...

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

Chill Skybar

Offers the most stunning panoramic views of Saigon and a wide range of wines and cocktails personally prepared by Vietnam mixologist Le Thanh Tung.

Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1
3827 2372
www.chillsaigon.com

Donkey Bar

An open air, but well cooled bar in the heart of Bui Vien on the site of the once popular Stellar cafe. A cut above the regular backpacker haunts in style and offer. Downstairs is a modern bar with flat screen TVs showing sports, a huge circular bar and tables, and outdoor seating for people watching. Upstairs are air conditioned rooms, pool table and outdoor deck.

119 Bui Vien, D1

Game On

Game On is one of Saigon's biggest sports bar, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. The bar also has an extensive drinks menu including coffees, juices, beers, wines, vodkas, and more. Game On also boasts a function room for corporate meetings or private parties.

115 Ho Tung Mau, D1

onTop Bar

Located on the 20th floor of Novotel Saigon Center, onTop Bar provides views over Saigon from an expansive outdoor terrace. The venue offers a menu with over 20 cheeses, cured meats and both Vietnamese and international-inspired tapas.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D3
3822 4866

Purple Jade

Lively and cosmopolitan, Purple Jade is a must on any nightlife agenda.

The lounge offers an innovative menu of tasty snacks and signature cocktails in a sleek and chic aesthetic to complement the chilled-out vibe.

1st Floor - InterContinental Asiana Saigon
6pm until late
dine@icasianasasaigon.com

Saigon Saigon Bar

This iconic bar is a great place to watch the sun go down over the lights of the city and relax with friends. Live entertainment nightly, including their resident Cuban band, Q'vans from 9pm Wednesday to Monday.

Rooftop, 9th floor,
19-23 Lam Son Square, D1
3823 4999
11am till late
caravellehotel.com

Xu Bar

A cocktail hot spot with Coconut Martinis, Cranelo Sparkles and Passion Fruit Capriokas on offer along with a variety of tapas with DJs and drink specials throughout the week.

71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.xusaigon.com



For full review, please visit: www.oivietnam.com

CAFÉS



Bach Dang

An institute that's been around for over 30 years, Kem Bach Dang is a short walking distance from The Opera House and is a favorite dessert and cafe spot among locals and tourists. They have two locations directly across from each other serving juices, smoothies, shakes, beer and ice cream, with air conditioning on the upper levels.
26-28 Le Loi, D1



Cafe RuNam

No disappointments from this earnest local cafe consistently serving exceptional international standard coffee. Beautifully-styled and focussed on an attention to quality, Cafe RuNam is now embarking on the road to becoming a successful franchise. The venue's first floor is particularly enchanting in the late evening.
96 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
www.cafe-runam.com



Chat

A quaint cafe with a red brick wall on one side and a mural of everyday life in Saigon on the opposite. A friendly staff serves smoothies, juices, and a good array of Italian-style coffee such as cappuccinos and lattes for cheap, prices start from VND15,000.
85 Nguyen Truong To, D4



MOF Japanese Dessert Cafe

Christmas Yokoso New Menu! Welcome to Christmas brings to you the joy, fun and spirit of the festive season. Using all natural and pure ingredients source from Japan, MOF continues to captivate with unique desserts to warm the heart.
Somerset Chancellor Court, GF, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai & Mac Dinh Chi Corner, District 1, HCMC
(08) 3823 9812 / www.mof.com.vn



The Library

The Library recaptures the romance of a bygone era while offering an all-day snack menu as well as the finest tea, coffee, wine and spirits in an elegant setting.
Ground Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon,
Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9099
dine@icasianasaiagon.com



The Workshop

The cafe is located on the top floor and resembles an inner city warehouse. The best seats are by the windows where you can watch the traffic zoom by. If you prefer your coffee brewed a particular way, there are a number of brewing techniques to ask for, from Siphon to Aeropress and Chemex. Sorry, no Vietnamese *ca phe sua da* served here.
27 Ngo Duc Ke, D1

O'i's new website is here.



Our completely redesigned website has new features, responsive design and a user-friendly interface created to make your online experience more convenient and engaging.

www.oivietnam.com







EVERY SATURDAY

SAIGON SOUL POOL PARTY INTERNATIONAL DJs

NOVEMBER 28th - MAY 14th

10AM-10PM 150,000 VND Entry
Drinks 50,000 VND+

DRINK SPECIALS | FOOD VENDORS | PRIZES GALORE
SUN BEDS | TOWEL RENTALS | 5 VIP CABANAS

SAIGONSOUL.COM

2F, 76 Lê Lai, District 1,
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



NEW WORLD
SAIGON HOTEL



CHINESE



Dragon Court

The well-heeled Chinese certainly go for luxury and this venue has it in spades. Situated in a classy location just opposite the Opera House, Dragon Court features a broad selection of dishes from across the spectrum of mainland cuisines, making this an ideal a-la-carte venue as well as the perfect spot for Dim Sum.

11-13 Lam Son Square, D1
3827 2566



Dynasty

New World's own slice of Canton with a particularly fine Dim Sum selection, Dynasty is a traditional lavishly-styled Chinese venue with flawless design. Authenticity and a sense of old-world China make this one of Saigon's more refined options for the cuisine. A number of private rooms are available.

New World Hotel
76 Le Lai, D1
3822 8888
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com



Kabin

Dine Cantonese-style by the river at the Renaissance Riverside's own Chinese venue decked out with flourishes reminiscent of classical Qing period tastes. Kabin's cuisine is known for presenting new takes on traditional dishes as well as for its more exotic fare.

Renaissance Riverside Hotel,
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033



Li Bai

Thoroughly traditional Chinese venue at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers offering choice oriental delicacies against a backdrop of fine Chinese art. This opulent venue, open throughout the day, is one of the city's more beautiful restaurants in this category.

Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 2828
www.libaisaigon.com



Ming Court

The best in Chinese cuisine with a unique Taiwanese focus in a Japanese hotel, Ming Court is classy in its precision and graceful without compromise. It's certainly one of the city's most impressive venues for fans of the cuisine, and nothing is left to chance with the venue's signature exemplary service standards.

3rd floor, Nikko Saigon Hotel
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1



Ming Dynasty

Ming Dynasty serves authentic Chinese food in a setting reminiscent of an old Chinese palace. Specialties include dim sum, abalone and dishes from Guangdong.

23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7

Also Try...

Hung Ky Mi Gia

An old mainstay on the Chinese cuisine trail with well over a decade in operation, Hung Ky Mi Gia is known for its classic mainland dishes with a focus on delicious roasts. Safe and tasty Chinese food.

20 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3822 2673

Ocean Palace

A place for those who love Chinese food. The large dining room on the ground floor can accommodate up to 280 diners. Up on the first floor are six private rooms and a big ballroom that can host 350 guests.

2 Le Duan Street, D1
3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

The brainchild of an overseas Chinese/Vietnamese architect who wanted to build something extraordinary in his home town, this venue combines the architectural features of seven world heritage structures blended into one. The

cuisine is just as eclectic with representative dishes from several major Chinese traditions.

12 Duong 26, D6
3755 1577
www.7kyquan.com

Shang Palace

Renowned as one of the finest restaurants in the city, Shang Palace boasts mouth-watering Cantonese and Hong Kong cuisine served in a warm and elegant atmosphere. Whether it be an intimate dinner for two or a larger group event, Shang Palace can cater for three-hundred guests including private VIP rooms. With more than fifty Dim-Sum items and over two-hundred delectable dishes to choose from, Shang Palace is an ideal rendezvous for any dining occasion.

1st Floor, Norfolk Mansion
17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D1
3823 2221

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, popular feature.

1st Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon, Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon



SPANISH



La Habana

Cuban venue with fine Spanish cuisine, Cuban cigars and German beer. A wide range of tapas and cocktails. Great bar atmosphere and late night entertainment.

6 Cao Ba Quat, D1

www.lahabana-saigon.com



Olé

With all the warmth you'd expect from a decent venue in this category, Olé serves authentic and tasty Spanish favorites with great tapas and highly-recommended paella. Family-run venue with a passion for great food and good service without undue fuss. Feel at home.

129B Le Thanh Ton, D1

012 6529 1711



Pacharan

Ho Chi Minh City's original Spanish restaurant, Pacharan occupies a high profile corner spot on Hai Ba Trung. It offers a casual bar, two floors of dining (one which becomes a destination for live Spanish music late at night) and a rooftop terrace. Features an extensive menu of tapas, main courses, sangria and wines.

97 Hai Ba Trung, D1



Tapas Saigon

Tasty tapas at Vietnamese prices not far from the center of District 1. Fresh ingredients, broad menu with food prepared by a Spanish chef. Best washed down with authentic house sangria.

53/26B Tran Khanh Du, D1

090 930 0803



VIVA! Tapas Bar & Grill

VIVA! Tapas Bar & Grill only uses the freshest ingredients, many imported from Spain, for the most authentic tapas experience in Saigon, starting from under VND50,000/plate. Cool décor, indoors and outdoors eating areas, a well stocked bar, and great wines from VND60,000/glass (sangria just VND130,000 per HALF liter). Delivery available.

90 Cao Trieu Phat, D7



American Chinese Food

Full Menu

www.woknroll.vn

We wok hard for you!

SUPER FAST DELIVERY!

0122-690-8881

Scan for the full menu

Address: Hung Vuong 1 E006, Phu My Hung, District 7

Baba's Kitchen

164 Bui Vien, District 1

49D Xa Lo Hanoi, District 2

Phone: 083-838-6661 & 083-838-6662

Open 11am to 11pm

North & South Indian food

Halal & vegetarian dishes

Of course we can cater!

order online at vietnammm.com & eat.vn

"Baba brings India to Vietnam"

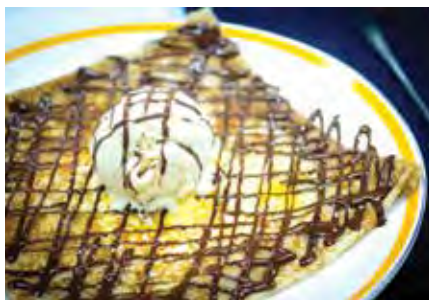
FRENCH



Augustin

Augustin is a romantic and charming French restaurant located just steps away from the Rex Hotel. Serves lunches and dinners and offers 10 percent discount on a la carte menu items.

10D Nguyen Thiep, D1
www.augustinrestaurant.com



La Creperie

The first authentic Breton French restaurant in the country, serving savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and some of the best apple cider in Saigon.

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



L'essentiel

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

98 Ho Tung Mau, D1
0948 415 646



Le Bacoulos

Le Bacoulos is a French restaurant, bar and lounge that serves French cuisine, bar food like burgers, fish and chips alongside vegetarian options like spinach soup and Greek salad. There's also a garden to unwind in with a glass of wine or enjoy a game of pool.

13 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3519 4058
www.bacoulos.com



Le Terroir

Le Terroir serves dishes such as Bouchée à la Reine duo, Pan seared salmon along with pastas, risotto and decadent desserts. The wine list here is an oenophile's dream with over 200 labels in stock from Australia, California and Chile to Italy. The restaurant is on two levels with a small terrace in the ground floor.

30 Thai Van Lung, D1



Ty Coz

This unassuming restaurant is located down an alley and up three flights of stairs. The charming French owner/chef will happily run through the entire menu in details and offer his recommendations. An accompanying wine list includes a wide range of choices.

178/4 Pasteur, D1
www.tycozsaigon.com

Also Try...

La Cuisine

A cosy restaurant just outside the main eating strip on Le Thanh Ton, La Cuisine offers quality French food in an upmarket but not overly expensive setting. Suitable for special occasions or business dinners to impress. Regular diners recommend the filet of beef.

48 Le Thanh Ton
2229 8882

La Fourchette

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

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

La Nicoise

A traditional 'neighbourhood' French restaurant, La Nicoise serves simple, filling French fare at exceptional value in the shadow of the Bitexco tower. Most popular for its steak dishes, the restaurant has an extensive menu which belies its compact size.

56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 3056

La Villa

Housed in a stunning white French villa that was originally built as a private house, La Villa features outdoor tables dotted around a swimming pool and a more formal dining room inside. Superb cuisine, with staff trained as they would be in France. Bookings are advised, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings.

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn

Le Bouchon de Saigon

Delightful, welcoming French bistro that really puts on a show of fine quality and service. With its small-village atmosphere and exotic cuisine, this is one of the more atmospheric and high-aiming venues of the genre.

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.lebouchondesaigon.com

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



For full review, please visit: www.oivietnam.com

INDIAN



Ashoka

A small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandooris.

Ashoka I

17/10 Le Thanh Ton, D1
33 Tong Huu Dinh, Thao Dien, D2



Bollywood

Known for its complete North & South Indian cuisine, Bollywood's specialty is its special chaat & tandoori dishes. Parties, events & catering services are available, with Daily Lunch Thali and set menus. Free delivery in Phu My Hung. Complete menu on Facebook.

26-A Sky Garden 2, Phu My Hung, D7
Bollywood Curry Express: Aeon Mall Celedon, Delicca section, Tan Phu dist.

41 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
22131481 - 22450096 - 66864839
www.bollywoodvietnam.com

Bollywood
Taste Of India



Ganesh

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

38 Hai Ba Trung, D1

www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com



Saigon Indian

Saigon's original Indian eatery is still going strong, located in a bright, roomy upstairs venue in the heart of District 1.

1st Floor, 73 Mac Thi Buoi, D1



Tandoor

Tandoor has recently moved to a new location. The restaurant serves authentic South and North Indian cuisine, with set lunches available, in a spacious dining area. Offers free home delivery and outside catering. Halal food.

39A - 39B Ngo Duc Ke, D1
39304839 / tandoor@tandoorvietnam.com

Tandoor



The Punjabi

Best known for its excellent tandoori cooking executed in a specialized, custom-built oven, Punjabi serves the best of genuine North Indian cuisine in a venue well within the backpacker enclave, ensuring forgiving menu prices.

40/3 Bui Vien, D1



DISCOVER OI VIETNAM ON YOUR DEVICE WITH ISSUU

You don't have to wait to pick up **Oi Vietnam** locally - you can enjoy each issue (and all previous issues) as soon as it's available, right on your phone, iPad, or other mobile device. Scan the QR code below and download the Issuu app for iOS or Android (or visit issuu.com/oivietnam on your Windows phone) and subscribe to **Oi Vietnam**.







issuu.com/oivietnam

ITALIAN



Ciao Bella

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

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

Ciao Bella



Inter Nos

Inter Nos means "between us" in Latin. Food amongst friends is exciting yet sincere. At Inter Nos, their dishes represent the appreciation they have towards guests, who they consider as family. Many of the ingredients are handmade, from the cheese to the pasta, even the milk is taken directly from the farm. The emphasis is on handcrafting special ingredients so that guests can taste the honesty in the food.

26 Le Van Mien, Thao Dien, D2
090 630 12 99
info@internos.vn
www.internos.vn
facebook.com/internossaigon



La Bettola

Chef/owner Giuseppe Amorello combines sleek decor with traditional home cooking in this two-story centrally-located Italian eatery. Expect creative dishes such as rucola e Gamberi as well as La Bettola that includes shaved porchetta, focaccia and homemade mozzarella. There's a wood-burning oven on the premises and they try to hand-make all their ingredients. They also deliver.

84 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4402
www.labettolasaigon.com



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 with a wood-fired pizza oven at its heart.

Block 07-08 CRI-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 7932



La Hostaria

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

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



LovEat

Mediterranean food meets the Italian flair at LovEat. Home made scrumptious dishes are served in exquisite setting, that embodies the métier and the spirit of a modern bistro with an atmosphere that is warm and welcoming in the heart of the city. Black mussels, slow cooked ribs, tiramisu are some of the signatures dishes of LovEat's extensive menu.

29 Hai Trieu, D1
086 260 2727
www.loveat.vn

Also Try...

Casa Italia

Filling, hearty Italian fare served with a smile in the heart of District 1. Authentic pizza and a comprehensive range of pasta, pork, chicken and beef dishes offers something for everyone. Located a stone's throw from Ben Thanh Market.

86 Le Loi, D1
3824 4286

Opera

The luxury Park Hyatt Saigon is home to Opera, an authentic Italian dining experience open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Try their famous lasagna and tiramisu. Head chef Marco Torre learned his craft in a number of Michelin-star restaurants throughout different regions of Italy during a 14 year career. Dine on the deck alfresco

or inside in air conditioned comfort.
2 Lam Son Square, D1

Pendolasco

One of the original Italian eateries in Ho Chi Minh City, Pendolasco recently reinvented itself with a new chef and menu, and spawned a sister eatery in District 2. Set off the street in a peaceful garden with indoor and outdoor eating areas, separate bar and function area, it offers a wide-ranging Italian menu and monthly movie nights.

87 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8181

Pizza 4P's

It's too late to call this Saigon's best-kept secret: the word is out. Wander up to the end of its little hem off Le Thanh Ton for the most unique pizza experience in the entire country – sublime Italian pizza pies with a Japanese twist. Toppings like you wouldn't imagine and a venue you'll be glad you took the time to seek out.

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

Pomodoro

Often unfairly mistaken as a purely tourist dining destination, Pomodoro offers an extensive range of Italian fare, especially seafood and beef dishes. The dining area is in a distinctively curved brick 'tunnel' opening into a large room at the rear, making it ideal for couples or groups.

79 Hai Ba Trung
3823 8998



JAPANESE



Achaya Café

Achaya Café has two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meetings, relaxation or parties. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, and Vietnamese food – from sandwiches, spaghetti, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.

90 Le Loi, D1
093 897 2050
11am - 10:30pm



Ebisu

Serving neither sushi nor sashimi, Ebisu's menu instead 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
www.ebisu-vn.asia



Gyumaru

Gyumaru is a quintessentially minimalist Japanese dining experience rotating around the style of meat meal Westerners would be quick to link to a gourmet burger, but without the bread. Fresh, healthy, innovative cuisine in a relaxed, cozy environment and regular specials including quality steaks.

8/3 Le Thanh Ton
3827 1618
gyumaru.LTT@gmail.com



Ichiba Sushi

Ichiba Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting. Featuring one of the most eclectic Japanese menus in the city. The current Japanese venue to see and be seen in – everyone who's anyone is there.

204 Le Lai, D1
www.ichibasushi.vn



Monde

A Japanese whisky bar and grill serving some of the best Kobe beef in the city. The menu is Japanese with a European twist. The venue is celebrity bartender Hasegawa Harumasa's first foray into Vietnam, styled after his flagship operation on Ginza's fashionable whisky bar district in the heart of Tokyo.

7 bis Han Thuyen, D1



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.

15C Le Thanh Ton, D1
www.robata-an.com

Also Try...

Blanchy Street

Inspired by London's world-famous Nobu Restaurant, Blanchy Street's Japanese/South American fusion cuisine represents modern dining at its best in the heart of downtown, a truly international dining experience in a trendy, modern and friendly setting. Great sake and wine selection.

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
11am - 10:30pm

Chiisana Washi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu.

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308



K Cafe

One of the larger Japanese restaurants in the city, this exemplary sushi venue is an ideal choice for business and friendly gatherings.

74A4 Hai Ba Trung, D1
38245355
www.yakatabune-saigon.com

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

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.sushidiningaioi.com

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, D1
3823 3333

KOREAN



Galbi Brothers

Superb casual BBQ venue focusing on every foreigner's favorite K-dish: galbi. Home of the only all-you-can-eat Korean BBQ in Saigon, GB is distinguished by its inexpensive lunch sets and unabashed enthusiasm for Korean spirits.

R1-25 Hung Phuoc 4, Pham Van Nghi – Bac, D7
5410 6210



Kang Nam Ga

An exceptionally refined style of Korean BBQ fit out with high-tech smokeless racks, Kang Nam Ga is fast becoming the Korean go-to venue for a wide-ranging and clean introduction to the cuisine. Delicious beef sets and the infamous and eminently popular ginseng chicken soup – all Kangnam style.

6B Le Quy Don, D3
3933 3589
kangnamga@gmail.com



Lee Cho

The venue may be upscale, but the service and feel of this local-style Korean restaurant is very much down-to-earth. Enjoy the pleasure of casual outdoor street-style Korean dining without worrying about the proper decorum for an international venue. Great Korean dishes at good rates.

48 Hung Phuoc 2, D7
5410 1086



Seoul House

Long-standing venue serving Korean delicacies in this city for many years, Seoul House is simple on décor and strong on taste. Specializes mainly in Korean hotpot and grills.

33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4297



Won's Cuisine

One of the city's most important Korean venues – not for reasons of authenticity, but rather for straying from the norms. The restaurant's proprietress has infused so much of her own quirky tastes into the menu she's completely ignored the conventions of the cuisine, making Won's a unique creation with an unforgettable taste.

49 Mac Thi Buoi
3820 4085



THAI



Koh Thai

Supremely chic Thai venue with all the authentic burn you need – or without if you prefer. An opulent, fashionable decor with the cuisine to match – often reported to serve dishes comparable with those of Thailand itself.

Kumho Link, Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 4423

Lac Thai

Hidden away down a narrow alley in the heart of downtown this unique Thai restaurant boasts authentic flavours and surprising character. Eat downstairs at tables in a cosy, themed environment - or be brave and climb the narrow spiral staircase to the attic and crouch on cushions in true Thai style while attentive staff serve plates to share.

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi St. D1
3823 7506

The Racha Room

Brand new fine & funky Thai venue with kooky styling and a great attitude – and some of the most finely-presented signature Thai cuisine you'll see in this city, much of it authentically spicy. Long Live the King! Reservations recommended.

12-14 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
090 879 14 12

Tuk Tuk Thai Bistro

Kitch and authentic, Tuk Tuk brings the pleasure of street-style Thai food into an elegant but friendly setting. Now a fashionable venue in its own right, Tuk Tuk's menu features some unique dishes and drinks you won't see elsewhere.

17/11 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3521 8513/ 090 688 6180

STEAKHOUSE



Corso Steakhouse & Bar

The steakhouse boasts an open kitchen with private dining areas. With an extensive wine menu, contemporary Western and Asian cuisines and a wide range of sizzling steaks cooked to your liking, this is the ideal choice for a special celebration or formal business dinner.

Ground Floor, Norfolk Hotel, 117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5368 / www.norfolkhotel.com.vn



New York Steakhouse

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, D1



Noss Steakhouse

A stylish restaurant featuring Italian cuisine and Western steaks with a wide selection of imported steaks from Australian and the US. Noss brings food and decor together to create a cozy ambiance. With an attention to bringing authentic flavors, we provide good food, good prices and good taste.

36 Pham Hong Thai, D1
www.nossa.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, D1
536-1 Bui Bang Doan, D7



Wild Horse Steakhouse

The restaurant offers grilled pork, barbecued chicken and steak dishes along with a wide selection of cocktails as well as a number of smaller dishes.

8a/1d1 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.wildhorsesteakhouse.com



foodpanda

Order food online

DOWNLOAD APP

To get

30% OFF

Voucher Code

OIMAGAZINE30

Min. Order Value: VND 170,000 | Max. Discount: VND 60,000
Only on your first order via App & online payment



VIETNAMESE



Bun Cha

Bun Cha, named after the iconic Vietnamese pork dish, offers a focused and elegant menu served up in comfortable rustic surroundings. Ordering a selection of dishes is a must; so enjoy tapas-style dining with all the freshest of Vietnamese flavors.

145 Bui Vien, D1
3837 3474



Five Oysters

Five Oysters serves authentic and excellent Seafood & Vietnamese food with draught beer at VND10,000 as well as a promo of VND10,000 per fresh oyster daily. There's also a rooftop, a great place to start or end the night! Recipient of Certificate of Excellence 2014 from TripAdvisor and Top Choice 2015 by Lianorg.com. Recommended by VNexpress.net, Lonely Planet, Utopia and Saigoneers.

234 Bui Vien, D1



Frangipani Hoa Su

Frangipani Hoa Su offers Vietnamese cuisine with a variety of dishes from different parts of Vietnam ranging from pho, bun bo Hue to mi quang. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. It also has an open space and a VIP air-conditioned room together which can hold a maximum capacity of 500 people, making it an ideal venue for different types of events and functions.

26 Le Van Mien, D2
frangipani.restobar@gmail.com



Papaya

Brightly-styled and perfectly lovely, this is a minimalist local venue with international appeal that features a menu designed by the former head chef of Hanoi's Sofitel Metropole. Refined and distinguished without a hint of being stuck-up about it and very affordable.

68 Pham Viet Chan, Binh Thanh
6258 1508
papaya@chi-nghia.com
www.chi-nghia.com



Quan Bui

Leafy green roof garden, upmarket restaurant with reasonable prices and a wide menu of choices. Open style kitchen advertises its cleanliness. Designer interior with spotlighted artwork and beautiful cushions give an oriental luxurious feeling – augmented by dishes served on earthenware crockery.

17a Ngo Van Nam, D1
3829 1515



Red Door

Red Door offers traditional Vietnamese food with a contemporary twist. The restaurant is also a platform for art talk, science talk, and social talk; where ideas and passions are shared.

400/8 Le Van Sy, D3
012 0880 5905
Facebook: "Reddoorrestaurant"

Also Try...

3T Quan Nuong

Tasty BBQ venue situated above Temple Bar. The venue has a traditional, rustic theme with old-style furniture and a quaint Vietnamese decor, making this a nicely atmospheric restaurant and a great place to dine with international friends new to the cuisine. The menu features a number of local favorites.

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1
3821 1631

Banh Xeo 46A

Fun Vietnamese-style creperie popular with locals and expats alike for its tasty, healthy prawn pancakes, along with a number of other traditional dishes.

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

Cha Ca La Vong

If you do only one thing, you'd better do it well – and this venue does precisely that, serving only traditional Hanoian Cha Ca salads stir-fried with fish and spring onion. Delicious.

36 Ton That Thiep, D1

Com Nieu

Famous for its inclusion in the Anthony Bourdain *No Reservations* program, the

venue is best known for its theatrics. Every bowl of rice is served in a terracotta bowl that is unceremoniously shattered upon serving. Unforgettable local food in a very pleasant traditionally-styled venue.

59 Ho Xuan Huong, D3
3932 6363
comnieusaigon27@yahoo.com
comnieusaigon.com.vn

Cuc Gach Quan

Deservedly one of the highest ranking Vietnamese restaurants in Saigon on Trip Advisor, this delightful restaurant serves up traditional, country-style foods and contemporary alternatives in two character-filled wooden houses located on opposite sides of the street from each other. Unique food in a unique setting and an unbelievably large menu.

10 Dang Tat, D1
3848 0144

Highway 4

The menu reflects the ambience of the north and wider Vietnam, although dishes are carefully selected to meet a more universal palate.

101 Vo Van Tan, D3
www.highway4.com

Hum

Hum is a vegetarian restaurant where food are prepared on site from various fresh beans, nuts, vegetables, flowers, and fruits. Food are complemented with special drinks mixed from fresh fruits and vegetables.

2 Thi Sach, D1
3823 8920
www.hum-vegetarian.vn

May

Fine Vietnamese fare served in a character-filled three-story rustic villa located up a narrow alley, off the beaten track. Watch the chefs prepare authentic food from a varied menu in an open kitchen.

3/5 Hoang Sa
3910 1277

Nha Hang Ngon

Possibly the best-known Vietnamese restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Hang Ngon serves up hundreds of traditional local dishes in a classy French-style mansion.

160 Pasteur, D1
3827 7131
www.quananngon.com.vn
8am - 10pm

Propaganda Bistro

Spring rolls and Vietnamese street food with a Western twist. Serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant features hand-painted wall murals in an authentic propaganda style.

21 Han Thuyen, D1
3822 9048

Temple Club

Named after the old-style Chinese temple in which the venue is located, the ancient stylings of this impressive restaurant make for an unforgettable evening spent somewhere in Saigon's colonial past. Beautiful oriental art that will please all diners and great local cuisine.

29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1
3829 9244
templeclub.com.vn

Thanh Nien

A favorite with tourists and locals for many years, Thanh Nien behind the Diamond Plaza is a buffet in a home setting, with a-la-carte dining available in the leafy garden outdoors. Relaxing, beautiful place to eat.

11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1
3822 5909

INTERNATIONAL



Bamboo Chic [®]

Bamboo Chic serves an inventive menu of Japanese and Chinese dishes and creative cocktails. Open for dinner, the contemporary space features modern velvet chairs with purple and plum pillows and dramatic beaded chandeliers inspired by the Saigon River along with live music from the house DJ.

Level 9, Le Méridien Saigon Hotel

3C Ton Duc Thang, D1

6263 6688

www.lemeridien.com/saigon

BAMBOO



Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant [®]

Brotzeit serves authentic Bavarian cuisine such as Schweinshaxe or Pork Knuckles, Nürnberger sausages, Weisswurt - Bavarian white sausages and more in a chic and contemporary setting. Brotzeit also has the widest selection of premium German beers, made according to time-honored German beer-brewing traditions. The restaurant is ideal for chilling-out, business meetings or get-togethers with friends.

Kumho Links, 1st Floor, 39 Le Duan St.,

Ben Nghe Ward, D1

(08) 3822 4206

www.brotzeit.co

brotzeit
German Bier Bar & Restaurant



Cuba la Casa del Mojito

Bienvenido a Cuba, The first Cuban Bar, Restaurant & Lounge! Come enjoy some fine Cuban Cuisine, Authentic Mojitos and flavorful Cigars! Music and Ambience will transport you to the Old Havana where Salsa never ends.

91 Pasteur, D1

3822 7099

CUBA



Dutch Restaurant [®]

Dutch Restaurant "The Bourgonnier" is a unique place where traditional, authentic cuisine and service is brought back in the modern city of Saigon. Our Chef and Staff invite you for an experience with attentive service and great food like our Signature Dishes: Chateaubriand, Bisques, Canard and Seafood

No.62, Duong So 65, Tan Phong, D7

3775 1219

www.dutchrestaurant.vn

info@dutchrestaurant.vn

The Bourgonnier
Dutch Restaurant - Tan Phong Ho Chi Minh



Eleven Café [®]

Eleven Café is located in the center of town, a 5-minute walk from Ben Thanh Market. The restaurant has a stylish vintage design with a friendly and cozy atmosphere. The Asian fusion menu combines Asian & European vegetables and spices, providing a unique and unforgettable experience.

29 Le Anh Xuan, D1

08 3822 2605

info@elevencafe.com.vn

Facebook: ElevenCafeVN



Latest Recipe [®]

Latest Recipe invites diners to an international culinary experience set against views of the Saigon River. An open kitchen is the focal point of this contemporary space, with chefs preparing an array of dishes to order. Every Sunday Latest Recipe serves an elaborate brunch buffet filled with tantalizing dishes from around the world.

Level M, Le Méridien Saigon Hotel

3C Ton Duc Thang, D1

6263 6688

www.lemeridien.com/saigon

Latest Recipe



Noir. Dining in the Dark [®]

Diners choose from a selection of set menus served up by visually impaired waiters completely in the dark. Choose from one of three set menus (East, West and Vegetarian) with four or five tasting portions per course (starter, main, dessert). Purposely, not much more information is provided.

178/180D Hai Ba Trung, D1



Saffron [®]

The first thing that will strike you when you enter Saffron is the terracotta pots mounted on the ceiling. Located on Dong Du, this restaurant offers Mediterranean food, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness. Prepare to order plates to share and don't miss the signature Cheese Saganaki! Guests are welcomed with complimentary Prosecco, fresh baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus.

51 Hai Ba Trung, D1

382 48358



Villa Royale Treasures [®]

Villa Royale specializes in antiques from Europe and Asia. Enjoy lunch or high tea while surrounded by treasures from around the world. Specializing in over 40 flavors of luxurious TWG tea.

3 Tran Ngoc Dien, Thao Dien, D2

www.villaroyaletreasures.com

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY TAYNE EPHRAIM







La Isla Bonita

Welcome to the beach capital of the Philippines

TEXT AND IMAGES BY **TAYNE EPHRAIM**

THERE'S OOHING AND ahing as the island comes into view from the windows of our twin-prop plane swooping in to land. We pass wind turbines and postcard-perfect waters. "Mate, that's beautiful, that's beautiful," comes the broad-accented affirmation from one surfer to another in the seat behind me.

Soon we're bumping down to land at the small airport adjacent to the island and garlands of beads are being draped over our necks by Cebu Pacific airline staff. Then it's from plane to boat, ferried over to the island in a catamaran with the afternoon sun glittering off the crests of the waves. The blariness of airports peels away and that island feeling takes hold. Welcome to Boracay. Our guides escort us by van down the island's main road to our beach accommodation, the Mediterranean-

themed Le Soleil de Boracay (rooms starting at USD133++).

Boracay as a tourist destination began emerging onto the scene sometime in the late 1970s with the first trickles of pale-skinned European backpackers finding their way to its unspoiled shores and bedding down in simple *nipa* huts at night with nothing but candles and kerosene lamps. Today, of course, it's another world. These days, and justly so, it's a world-class travel destination. Because of sensible ecological management and waste treatment, the waters remain pristine, and the sand retains its natural whiteness. Smoking and littering on the beach itself is, blissfully, prohibited and closely enforced. The sunsets are as majestic as ever, if not even more so, enhanced by the many intersecting sails of boats in silhouette.

But it's more than just a pretty face. Boracay is a recreationist's delight. Activities abound, from helmet diving to the bottom of the ocean to parasailing up with the gulls, both on land and at sea. EXO Travel has organized a thrilling line-up of activities for us. First up is quad biking. The trail follows the road up to the top of Mt. Lubo - Boracay's highest point - where the entire island stretches out below.

Ranked among the more surreal experiences of my life, helmet diving - the act of strapping a fishbowl helmet onto your head and descending in an upright position to the bottom of the ocean - comes as a pleasant and somewhat unnerving surprise. The preparation feels something like a dress rehearsal for *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* as you wait on a ladder up to your waist in the water for the



helmet to be placed onto your head, and the 30kg weight of it carries you straight down to the bottom like an anvil. It's a jolting experience at first, with the sudden pressure on your eardrums, the Vader-like hiss of oxygen being piped in from above and the general weirdness of being upright and breathing on the ocean floor. Shoals of tropical fish flit around us, swimming right up to our faces inviting us to reach out in a childlike sense of wonder and touch one, which is near to impossible. It's a dreamlike sensation and like nothing else you're likely to experience. Re-entry to the world above is disorienting as we're lifted back up onto the ladder by soft hands. I find myself back on the floating deck, staggering toward my companions on submarine legs in the sun.

Then, after a quick transfer onto another motorboat, we're strapping into the

harness of a bright orange parasail. From the bottom of the sea suddenly we find ourselves hoisted up above the waves, carried on warm air currents in gentle dips and glides until the boat is but a tiny speck throwing out its wake onto the blue. Looking down at our feet swinging over the seagull's kingdom, we soar high above the roving fishing boats, twisting palms, and sparkling bed of the sea sprawled out to the horizons. Reluctantly we are reeled back in again from our brief vertigo sublime, dunked gently down into the swell and then back up again until our feet touch down onto the deck.

But like a loud and brightly-colored billboard, Boracay proclaims *more, more more!* For the activity junkie the island offers hit after hit. We barely have time to recover before we're back on the water

again, this time experiencing the "Flying Fish" - a giant inflatable tube dragged over a swell at breakneck speed by a speedboat as we cling on white-knuckled for dear life, and falling off is half the fun.

When the Sun Sets

Even with all of the above there's still snorkeling, jetskiing, kiteboarding, zorbing, golfing, a small zoo and a 600-meter-long zipline still on the list to do. Activities aside, there are plenty of chances to simply relax. At night fire dancers come out, swinging glowing embers on the end of chains while moving to the latest top ten hits. Filipino reggae bands meanwhile belt out cover songs, serenading holidaymakers lounging on sofas set up on the sand.

Boracay's beaches come to life at night just as much as its waters do during the



sunlit hours, carrying the air of a summer carnival by the sea. The whole foreshore is a smorgasbord of hotels, shops and restaurants offering everything from Israeli to Indian to Italian cuisine, with a steady stream of international tourists moving from bar to bar riding the buzz.

The Regency Hotel (rooms from USD164++) is hosting its nightly buffet (USD13++) on the beach, bustling with patrons and blue-shirted waiters working the tables like a 1920s ball scene on the sand. Chinese families stack up plates of shrimp and crab claws. Dinner reaches a crescendo when the chefs, along with some suspiciously synchronized patrons, break

into a choreographed dance routine. After gorging ourselves on seafood and cold beers we have a little exploration and discover one of the island's more obscure attractions, the Hobbit Bar - staffed entirely by dwarves. We wash down dinner with Tanduay Rum as a sad-eyed troubadour belts out the blues on her guitar and little people move between tables delivering drinks.

Our last day is spent island hopping the atolls and exploring the reefs in between on our catamarans. A sun-browned lad paddles up on his board with a cargo of coconuts and a machete. He hacks the tops off while still straddling his board and passes them over to our boat, 20 pesos

apiece. Days could be whiled away like this. Lifetimes, even.

There's just enough time for some last-minute souvenir shopping in the markets around D Mall, and I end up with a bag full of name-carved key rings in the likeness of ukuleles, surfboards and palm trees. When all's said and done, it's surely the sunsets that will leave the lasting impression of Boracay. There's a good reason that it carries a reputation as a premier holiday destination.

Cebu Pacific offers daily flights to Boracay from Manila while Vietnam-based EXO Travel provides tailored tours to the island and around Southeast Asia. ■

Mercure Hoi An Royal

For a truly memorable experience in Central Vietnam, choose between a modern hotel room or a poolside suite and pamper yourself with the most comfortable accommodation in Hoi An

TEXT AND IMAGES PROVIDED BY **MERCURE HOI AN ROYAL**



MERCURE HOI AN ROYAL is ideally located between Hoi An Ancient Town and Cua Dai beach. It is only minutes away from Thu Bon River, the historic Japanese Covered Bridge, and the local markets and tailors of Hoi An. The hotel features 96 spacious rooms with 42 Standard rooms and 40 Superior rooms, respectively 30 and 34 square meters in size, and 14-50 square meter Junior suites. The elegant interiors exhibit traditional flower motifs and vivid local colors with an air of vintage chic. The 14 luxury Junior suites have private terraces with direct access to the hotel's brand new swimming pool and garden. Each spacious room is accompanied by tea and coffee making facilities, a safe, a large bathroom, a balcony, a flat-screen TV with satellite channels and complimentary Wi-Fi internet access.

Mercure Hoi An Royal was designed in a boutique style that blends in perfectly with the local ambiance. It can accommodate all types of visitors. After refurbishment, the hotel looks set to attract leisure visitors with its range of quality facilities, appealing especially to those looking for a hotel brand that they can trust.

Among other key facilities, the Royal Restaurant offers all-day buffet-style and à la carte dining with international cuisine, while the Pool Bar is an ideal place to unwind with its selection of cocktails, coffee, tea, and tasty snacks served all day.

To meet the business-traveller demand for meetings and conferences, the hotel boasts a fully equipped boutique function room ideal for private and corporate events of up to 20 attendees. It comes with technical support and a range of meeting facilities that ensure smooth event management.

Hoi An, historically known as "Phai Pho" or "Faifo", started as a small port town that developed into a significant trading port during the 16th through 18th centuries, when many Chinese, Japanese, Dutch and Indian merchants made the town their home. Hoi An is now one of Vietnam's most delightful towns, boasting well-preserved historical buildings displaying a fusion of local and foreign architectural styles. Hoi An is 30 kilometers from Danang International Airport, while Danang is an hour's flight from Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. ■



MERCURE HOI AN ROYAL

321 Cua Dai Street, Hoi An, Vietnam
Tel. +84 510 3923 777
Fax. +84 510 3923 455
reservations@mercurehoianroyal.com
accorhotels.com - mercure.com

The Spirit of Hoi An

Golden Sand Resort & Spa embraces the best of what Hoi An has to offer

TEXT BY **JAMES PHAM** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **GOLDEN SAND RESORT & SPA**



UNDENIABLY ONE OF the most charming cities in all of Vietnam, everything that made Hoi An a booming port city in the Late Middle Ages still applies: beautifully made handicrafts, a photogenic old quarter, its position directly on the Thu Bon River and its proximity to the sea.

Savvy modern-day travelers, though, know that the quaint ancient town is best appreciated in small doses - in the quiet solitude of the early morning light, walking the boutique-lined streets blissfully free from motorized vehicles, or coming back for the vibrant night life when lantern-lit streets are filled with live music and a plethora of dining options from grilled streetside eats to chic colonial-themed eateries.

When all that charm (and the crowds) begins to get wearisome, it's delightful to have an out-of-town oasis to return to. Enter Golden Sand Resort & Spa, a beautifully appointed property set on five

beachfront hectares of paradise.

Built in 2005 and upgraded just this year, Golden Sand Resort & Spa is all about feeling restful while embracing the spirit of Hoi An. Cascading pools filled with lotus flowers lead to the massive entrance hall which brings the outdoors in, floor-to-ceiling windows and doors thrown open to the ocean breezes, with decorative touches that include Cham-inspired sculptures, a gurgling stone fountain and a pleasing all-natural color scheme in shades of dark wood and creamy rattan.

The resort's 212 rooms are arranged in low-lying buildings scattered throughout the lush, beautifully landscaped property dotted with fish ponds and vegetable gardens that create a sense of spaciousness. Giant hibiscus flowers add pops of bright color to the verdant backdrop of palm and banana trees and flowers picked from the property show up throughout the resort, in guest rooms and on breakfast tables for that

tropical feel. With five room categories to choose from, honeymooners especially will want to opt for the Beach Front Pool Suite, 190 sqm of luxurious hardwood floors, marble bathrooms, separate living area and a private plunge pool. The spacious suite can also be configured to accommodate families who will enjoy the child-friendly facilities like the children's pool, mini-water park with slide and fountains and a Kid's Club with toys, games and supervised activities.

Waking up to the wonderful dilemma of where to spend the day is one of life's great joys: the resort's own private beach where kayaks, surf boards and jet skis await, or at the jewel of the property, a crystalline 150 meter-long freeform swimming pool, the longest in Central Vietnam. While you're there, grab a drink at The Infinity Pool Bar like the Golden Sand Illusion, a refreshingly strong concoction of Stolichnaya, Cointreau and Midori with a splash of lime and pineapple. Order a snack while you're at



it, with BBQ chicken wings, Hoi An-style spring rolls and golden calamari rings among others on the finger food menu. Upbeat feel-good tunes supply the musical backdrop to a gorgeous view of waves crashing against the shore and the islands in the distance while lazing in one of the many comfy sofas. Or perhaps try the Sanctuary Lobby Bar, with its sophisticated ambiance and live music on most nights of the week.

Other dining venues include the Art House Restaurant, a casual space to sample Vietnamese favorites and international dishes while enjoying views out to the pool. We tried two dishes which were both excellent: the Indonesian-style Nasi Goreng, a tasty dish of pungent fried rice served with prawns, beef satay and pickled vegetables and the Beer-battered fish fillets served with an impressively generous portion of French fries and a healthy garden salad.

For an upscale dining experience, the

Boathouse Restaurant serves up fresh seafood and signature Western dishes like Herb crusted sea bass and Australian Angus beef tenderloin in a picturesque setting literally meters from the sea. Seating is in the open-air wrap-around porch or inside the wood and stone restaurant where floor-to-ceiling glass doors let in ocean breezes while chill lounge music plays softly in the background creating the ideal romantic setting.

After a day of exploring the pedestrian-friendly streets of Hoi An, weary travelers know to head to the Serenity Spa for a vigorous Vietnamese massage which utilizes medium to strong pressure with the palm and forearms on the body's pressure points for deep-tissue relief. Also popular is the Balinese massage, a more gentle, relaxing treatment involving long strokes and essential oils like blue chamomile, bergamot and ylang ylang. Facials, wraps and scrubs using all-natural ingredients as well as salon services are also available

in the restful spa with its nine treatment rooms, some which include luxurious stone soaking tubs.

While Hoi An is rightfully known for its charming Ancient Town, the city's appeal also lies in its picturesque countryside just minutes from the city center, its clean beaches and its proximity to numerous cultural destinations like the impressive temple ruins of My Son, the imperial city of Hue and the salubrious hills of Ba Na. Set on famed Cua Dai Beach, Golden Sand Resort & Spa makes for a stylish, restful base to explore the incredible history and diversity of Hoi An and surrounds.

Doubles at Golden Sand Resort & Spa start at USD139, including an excellent buffet breakfast and complimentary shuttle transportation to Hoi An's Ancient Town multiple times daily. Visit www.goldensandhoian.com for more information, including long-stay and early bird discounts and special offers. ■

Aloha, Danang!

Heavenly Olalani Resort and Condotel brings the spirit of Hawaii to Vietnam

TEXT BY **JAMES PHAM** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **OLALANI**

THERE'S A HOST of reasons why Hawaii is one of the world's most popular destinations: picturesque beaches, easy accessibility, friendly locals, great food and a laid-back, "hang loose" vibe. Danang, on Vietnam's central coast, has recently come onto the international travel radar for being one of Southeast Asia's hottest up-and-coming destinations because it shares many of those golden qualities. Now, thanks to Olalani Resort and Condotel, it can add warm, Hawaiian hospitality to the list.

Opened in 2013 by its Vietnamese-Hawaiian architect owner, Olalani (meaning "heavenly" in Hawaiian) was conceived as Vietnam's first resort where guests could experience the genuine Hawaiian lifestyle. The 5-star resort features lushly landscaped grounds, stunning swimming pools and soothing waterfalls, but more strikingly, colorful murals, stone statues of Hawaiian dancers and tiki masks. The concept could've easily veered into the kitsch had the resort not

been so entirely well-executed. As someone who considers Hawaii almost like a second home, I literally gasped upon entering the resort with a sense of déjà vu which lingered for days – so well did it capture the essence of some of Hawaii's great hotels. Past the lobby and into the grounds, a feeling of tropical paradise pervades in the three swimming pools, complete with a lazy river and three waterfalls, a lagoon where guests are welcome to fish, and then out onto the wide stretch of powdery beach.

The resort is built in a half-moon shape, with 80 percent of the 197 hotel rooms and 88 1-3 bedroom condo rooms enjoying stunning ocean views from one of the highest resorts on Danang's famed strip of luxury hotels. Rooms are spacious, with cool stone floors, large bathrooms and digital TV. The scent of lilies and a fresh Bird of Paradise arrangement in my room were lovely touches. Two tennis courts, a large spa and a 700sqm ballroom (where weddings are organized by Danang's top wedding planner Bridal House Tu Tu) complete the facilities.

Olalani's main restaurant is the Frangipani, a softly-lit space with contemporary furnishings and a tropical vibe coming from the stylized heart-shaped and very typically Hawaiian monstera leaf motif seen in the fabric lanterns and wall decor. The a la carte menu covers well-loved international classics like Salmon Penne with a whisky cream sauce along with Asian favorites. Onolicious Hawaiian fare is also represented by the Loco Moco - a beef patty smothered in mushroom gravy topped with a fried egg, all placed over a scoop of fried rice, the ultimate in Hawaiian comfort food that brought me right back to Honolulu's iconic Rainbow Drive-In. Shoyu chicken braised in a marinade of soy sauce, brown sugar and star anise was also on the menu which led me to half expect a cone of shave ice with salty ling hi mui for dessert, but it was not to be. Instead, we settled for a delicious Lime and ginger creme brulee.

To put guests in a chill mood, the resort has three bars servicing the pool and beach, with the Tropical Bar, located between the lobby and the beach the most popular. Cocktails, mocktails and other drinks are on tap including the citrusy Olalani Special (white rum, Cointreau, orange, pineapple, mint and grenadine) and the Blue Hawaiian (naturally!). The Orchid Spa has ten treatment rooms offering Turkish-style scrubs, wraps and salon and massage services like the popular Body Massage, a combination of Thai and Swedish techniques for deep-tissue stimulation.

For fans of Hawaii or simply of paradise, Olalani Resort and Condotel's unique concept offers a blissful holiday within a holiday.

Doubles start at USD300, including buffet breakfast. See www.olalani.com for more info, including honeymoon packages and other promotions. Now until the end of the year, guests receive 50 percent off all spa and salon services. Set aside February 20, 2016 when Olalani will host an authentic Hawaiian luau! ■



The Place I Long To Be

Utopia in the heart of Nha Trang

TEXT AND IMAGES BY CHAMPA ISLAND RESORT



CHAMPA ISLAND RESORT Hotel & Spa (www.champaislandresort.vn) is a resort hidden on an island, away from the stress of daily life. Upon arriving to Champa Island, you will feel instantly at home as you take the marble steps pass the fountains, across the terrace to be greeted by our smiling staff dressed in *ao dai*.

To reach the island, you will pass the Champa Love Lock Bridge – the only love-lock bridge in Nha Trang. Lovers carved their names on locks and then lock them together and throw keys into Cai River so that nothing can ever break their eternal love.

The resort is a great base to explore the vibrant city of Nha Trang or simply to relax in. There is a children's playground, three restaurants, karaoke rooms and cooking classes to keep everyone entertained. The riverside club offers breakfast, coffee, dancing and delicious cocktails. Our boats will take you around to discover life along the river and visit famous landmarks.

Create unforgettable memories when spending time with your family at Champa Island. There are plenty of activities for kids and they also have their own rooms, which is connected to their parents'. The rooms are playfully decorated, with a huge flat screen TV and views of the stunning swimming pool, river and mountains.

Champa Spa is decorated cabana style. It is cozy, romantic and serene with the



soothing sound of the Cai River babbling along just meters away. Everything is blended together to bring you a deep sense of renewal. Champa Spa is a place where you can unwind and let your cares slip away. The kid's, meanwhile, can occupy themselves with swings, slides and a green area to explore. They will also love the animal circus on Sunday mornings. There are cooking classes catered for men who would like to learn how to cook Vietnamese food. You will visit the

local market to choose fresh ingredients while our professional chef will guide you through the process.

Dinner time, the choices are unlimited. Treat yourself to a fabulous meal at one of our fine dining Asian or European venues. Enjoy a seafood BBQ buffet while watching traditional Champa dances and a fashion show. For those who are adventurous, scuba diving or visiting local islands are must-try options.

Champa Island Resort is truly a utopia! ■

>>The List Travel



Ana Mandara Villas I Dalat

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises 17 restored French-style villas from the 1920s and 1930s, preserving the original design, décor and charm; 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. Some of the villas have been converted into 65 guest accommodations, with each villa comprising between three and five ensuite rooms. www.anamandara-resort.com



BEST WESTERN PREMIER Havana Nha Trang Hotel

Situated in the center of Nha Trang, the biggest five star hotel in Vietnam – Best Western Premier Havana Nha Trang will leave you an unforgettable experience. Spacious suites with breathtaking ocean-view, massive outdoor pool 3-faced to the sea, underground tunnel connecting to the beach from the hotel, Sky Bar on the roof of the City and more. Come and enjoy your time!

38 Tran Phu Street, Loc Tho, Nha Trang
T: (058) 388 9999 / Fax: (058) 388 9900
www.havanahotel.vn
info@havanahotel.vn



Bhaya Cruises

Bhaya combines oriental style with contemporary luxury to create an unforgettable experience cruising Halong Bay. The Bhaya fleet (Bhaya Classic, Legend Halong and The Au Co) offers a total of 178 luxury cabins and suites accommodating more than 400 passengers for Ha Long Bay cruises or hosted events (weddings, corporate retreats, incentives, meetings, and more).

093 344 6542
www.bhayacruises.com



Fusion Maia I Danang

A unique and exciting fusion of resort and spa where spa treatments are inclusive and a part of daily living in this beach resort. It's 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. 'Freedom' options such as spa treatments and breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store. maidadanang.fusion-resorts.com



InterContinental Nha Trang

InterContinental Nha Trang is a luxurious modern beachfront hotel where an enriching urban retreat harmonized beautifully with its surroundings. Right in the heart of Nha Trang, a 40-minute scenic drive from Cam Ranh International Airport, experience the perfect blend of local charm and nature.

32 - 34 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
(058) 388 7777
www.nhatrang.intercontinental.com



Mia

With its own private white sand beach, cliff-top ocean views and jungle clad mountains as a backdrop, Mia resort has carved out its own little piece of tropical heaven in Nha Trang. Mia features a variety of accommodation options, each with fantastic ocean views, nestled among manicured gardens. There are great dining options, a relaxing spa and gym.

Bai Dong, Cam Hai Dong, Cam Lam, Khanh Hoa
0583 989 666
www.mianhatrang.com
info@mianhatrang.com



Pullman Danang Beach Resort

Located on the stunning white sands of Danang beach, the stylish Pullman Danang Beach Resort is an oasis of activities and facilities for the modern traveler. With an idyllic setting on the silver shores of Central Vietnam, this luxury resort is perfect for a family holiday or romantic beach getaway.

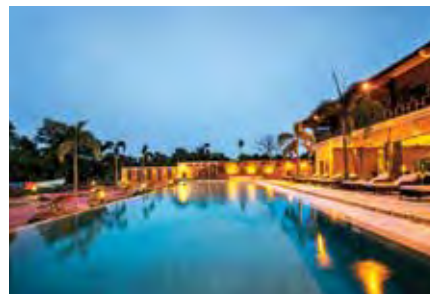
Vo Nguyen Giap, Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
0511 395 8888
www.pullman-danang.com



Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa

With 280 ocean view rooms and suites and six signature restaurants and bars, including Altitude – the highest bar in Nha Trang. Amenities include outdoor swimming pool with infinity edge and reflection pool area, Shine Spa with 9 luxurioxus treatment rooms, Sheraton Fitness with 24-hour access, Sheraton Club Lounge, Link@Sheraton, Sheraton Adventure Club, and a purpose-built Cooking School.

26 - 28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa
058 2220 000
www.sheratonnhatrang.com



The Island Lodge

Newly-opened, The Island Lodge is a 12-room Indochine-themed lodge set on Unicorn Island (Thoi Son). Mekong River view rooms and bungalows are scattered around the grounds, but the jewel is the open air restaurant/lounge fronting 50 meters of riverfront along with a French restaurant. There's also an infinity swimming pool and Jacuzzi.

390 Ap Thoi Binh, Thoi Son, My Tho
073 651 9000
www.theislandlodge.com.vn

>>The List

Health & Beauty

DENTAL



Dr. Hung & Associates Dental Center

A centrally located dental center that uses the latest modern equipment with a team of skilled specialists. Services include cosmetic, implant, braces, prosthodontics, pedodontics and more. Expect high quality service at a reasonable price.

Building 244A Cong Quynh, D1
08 3925 7526
08 3925 7527
nhakhoadrhung@gmail.com
www.nhakhoadrhung.com



Also try ...

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

Elite Dental Group

Elite Dental is an international and well-equipped clinic that provides a wide range of dental services including general dentistry, cosmetic dentistry, Implant, pediatric dentistry and orthodontics. Luxury design and their dental experts will bring you an extremely comfortable experience.

57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3

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
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

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

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

Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.

173 Ton Dat Tien, D7

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.

2Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3

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 748

SPA



Cham Nail Spa

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, five minutes from Ben Thanh Market, they offer top notch services that include acrylic, gel shellac, mani/pedi using only luxurious brands such as O.P.I., Morgan Taylor, Le Chat and more - all at an affordable price. With a modern facility, Cham Nail Spa is the latest in trendy nail treatments and therapy with a private and personalized touch.

60M Le Thi Rieng, D1
093 762 0965

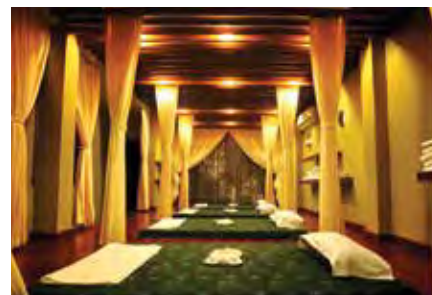
www.chamnails.com / Facebook: "chamnails"



Maison Mikio Boutique Salon

District 7's Premium Boutique Salon. Two floors providing full beauty services nestled in a quiet residential area in Phu My Hung's Garden Plaza 2 Complex. Equipped with a café, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.

Garden Plaza 2 Complex
8 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 4773



Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting in 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

Also try ...

Orient Skincare & Laser Center

The center offers non-surgery aesthetic treatments by certified dermatologists as well as pampering services for any type of problem skin. A variety of treatments includes: wrinkle removal, acne & scar treatment, rejuvenation & pigment augmenting treatment, slimming treatments, permanent hair removal and massage therapy.

244A Cong Quynh, D1
3926 0561-62-63-64

Saigon Dep Clinic and Spa

Saigon Dep offers cosmetic, acne and pigmentation treatments, as well as scar and rejuvenation services, alongside a full reflexology suite.

90 Le Lai, D1
www.saigondep.net

Sweet Spa

The spa is intimate and beautifully decorated. The staff consists of both highly-skilled men and women. Sweetspa serving you from hand to toe to give real spiritual and physical relaxation. As well as sport injury therapies. After hours of meetings or full days of working, treat yourself to a relaxing massage or soothing reflexotherapy.

204B / 12 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2
www.sweetspa.vn

Temple Leaf Spa

Temple Leaf is located in the heart of District 1, and is staffed by a multinational team of skilled masseurs. In addition to foot and full body massages, Temple Leaf also offers cleansing green tea facial care and moisturizing masks.

74, Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.templeleafspa.com

Villa Aesthetica Cosmedi Spa & Laser Center

One of HCMC's finest newly-established spa and beauty centers, Villa Aesthetica is the only venue in Vietnam to offer premium-class LPG Endermologie treatments, erasing localized fat and imperfections. Also known for their unique Turkish Hammam massage.

54 Ngo Quang Huy, Thao Dien, D2
6264 3388
www.villaaesthetica.com

YCK Beauty Spa and Hair Studio

The spa offers full relaxation massages, as well as cosmetic care such as firming and collagen treatments. YCK Beauty also offers hair coloring and styling in a relaxing ambience.

178B Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.ykcsa.com

>>The List

Business

INSURANCE



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.
4th Floor, Continental Tower, 81 - 83 - 85 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 9908



Also try ...

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

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

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.
3rd Floor, IBC Building
1A Me Linh Square, D1
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

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

RELOCATION



Allied Pickfords

For almost 400 years our name has been synonymous with high quality home moving. From the packhorses of the early seventeenth century, to the most advanced shipping and transportation methods of today, with over 600 locations in more than 40 countries Allied Pickfords has grown to become one of the largest providers of moving services.

8th Floor, Miss Ao Dai Bldg, 21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, D1
(+84) 8 3910 1220
www.alliedpickfords.com.vn



Also try ...

AGS Four Winds (Vietnam)

Global leader in international removals & relocations, with 128 offices in 78 countries, they can move you to/from any location worldwide.
5th Floor, Lafayette De Saigon,
8A Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3521 0071
ags-vietnam@agsfourwinds.com
www.agsfourwinds.com

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

CBRE

CBRE Group, Inc. is the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm. The group has been operating in Vietnam since 2003.
12th Floor, Me Linh Point Tower
2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1

Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.
7th Floor, HPL Bldg
60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

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

VISA & TRAVEL SERVICES



Vietnam Visa-on-Arrival / Private Visa Approval Letter

Planning to visit Vietnam? Tourists and travelers are now able to get a visa on arrival through our online service. Avoid long queues and high expenses, no need to send-off your passport. Receive an approval letter prior to your departure, issued by the Vietnam Immigration Department, pick-up your visa upon arrival.
0169 9161 166
www.vietnamsvisa.com
support@vietnamsvisa.com



Also try ...

eVisa

A convenient online visa application service with money back guarantee. eVisa is approved by Lonely Planet.
64 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
www.evisa.com.vn

SinhBalo Adventure Travel

SinhBalo Adventure Travel has operated for more than 20 years, specializing in Mekong Delta tours designed by a delta resident. They offer cycling tours and river cruises, in addition to destinations further afield such as Angkor Wat.
283/20 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
www.sinhbalo.com

The Sinh Tourist

The Sinh Tourist was the first travel agency in Saigon, founded

with an aim to introduce travelers to a friendly and welcoming manner. Sinh Tourist also has local offices in Da Lat, Mui Ne, Nha Trang, Hoi An, Da Nang, Hue, Hanoi and international offices in Phnom Penh and Siem Riep.
246 - 248 De Tham, D1
www.thesinhtravel.com

TNK Travel

Established in 2001, TNK has grown exponentially and has served more than 1.3 million travelers. They offer tours to all major tourist destinations in tailor-made packages.
220 De Tham, D1
www.tnktravel.com

Trails of Indochina

Trails of Indochina is one of the leaders in destination management and bespoke luxury travel throughout Southeast Asia.

They offer a number of themed tours ranging from gastronomic to architectural.

33 Le Trung Nghia, Tan Binh
www.trailsofindochina.com

Tuan Linh

Tuan Linh travel agency is a fully-licensed tour operator that supports sustainable, responsible tourism as well as offering full visa services for travelers.
Thai An 2, Nguyen Van Qua, D12
www.tuanlinhtravel.com

Phu Ngoc Viet

They offer assistance for visa application, extension and renewal.
217/2A1 Xo Viet Nghe, Binh Thanh
www.giahanvisa.net.vn

Visa4Vietnam

Visa4Vietnam offers a quick and easy online visa application service, facilitating visa application, extension and renewal, as well as offering an urgent service for those that require their visa within a few hours.
Suite 602A, 57-59 Ho Tung Mau, D1
www.visa4vietnam.com

Kids & Education



Wear Your Baby

Slings in Saigon - the low-down on local Attachment Parenting

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD

IF YOU'VE HEARD of Attachment Parenting – the movement founded on the notion that babies thrive on physical contact and closeness to their parents – you've probably heard of 'babywearing.' As parents explore natural ways to nurture their children through touch and a sense of closeness, many of them are rejecting strollers and choosing to carry their children close to the body, where they can be lulled to sleep by the sound of their parent's beating heart.

It's not something that's for everyone. Many of the precepts of Attachment Parenting have come under fire in developed countries, where it's occasionally regarded with the same kind of suspicion as crystal healing and Scientology. A number of leading health figures have openly suggested that AP practices such as co-sleeping (where parents allow babies to sleep next to them in bed rather than in a crib) are frankly dangerous. Proponents of AP are quick to dismiss criticism like this as being largely misinformed, and in any case, expat communities have for at least a decade now proved welcoming safe havens for enthusiasts of the philosophy. This is particularly true in Asia, where native parenting practices originally inspired much of the movement's development in the West.

Not so much in Saigon. In certain parts of town (I'm looking at you, Phu My Hung) there seems to be a high number of expat parents toting their tykes around in special carrier packs. But whereas in Beijing, Seoul, and Manila there are well-established communities supporting babywearing in practice, there's very little going on here. Local Facebook group *Saigon Slings* only just got off the ground last September (for the time being, they're only communicating via their Facebook page) and despite the fact that babywearing is a traditional Vietnamese practice, there's still very little awareness of its supposed benefits beyond those already long-since converted to the concept.

Expat blogger Lyra Dacio has been babywearing since first becoming a mother, having followed the rise of the Attachment Parenting movement in the Philippines, where she was an active member of a newlywed support network. "I'm not really an advocate," she admits, "but for me, it's convenient, especially here in Vietnam, where the sidewalks are not really conducive for pushing strollers. We don't have a car, so it's much easier to babywear than lug around a pushchair. So I like babywearing more."

Part of the reason why babywearing might be relatively under-developed among parenting communities here is that it's not quite as easy as it looks. "It takes a bit of practice," she says. "In the Philippines, they usually come with a CD of how to do it. With my baby sling, I already fixed it so it's snug, and I don't want to change it. I worry that if I try to adjust it, it's not going to work! Sometimes I have to throw it in the laundry, but I just leave it the same way!"

"I only use the baby sling, because I'm more comfortable with it," she explains. "The nice thing about it is that I can wear it and my husband can wear it, and because it's long, you can adjust it. Also, since there's a whole piece of cloth that's hanging out, sometimes when it's raining out and you have to rush, you can just cover the baby. It serves as an extra blanket. When you're breastfeeding it's much easier too, you can cover yourself up."

"The trouble with them is that when the baby gets bigger, the slings tend to get heavy," she says. "But what's nice about them is that you can carry the baby when it's lying down or sitting, face forward – it's versatile. It's made of cotton – and you know in Southeast Asia, it's very hot, and other brands tend to be too hot for the climate. They look comfortable, but they make the wearer sweat a lot."

It's because of the heat that Lyra only recommends wearing cotton slings over other varieties of baby carrier, avoiding the

rashes that come from straps rubbing on sweaty skin, and keeping baby cool with a fabric that breathes rather than insulates. "In Saigon, the preference is certainly for cotton, something weavable," she says. "You need something that balances well, because otherwise you get back pain." The positioning of the baby is also an important factor: "With the ring sling, my son's weight is resting on the bottom. But with the other backpack styles, you just put the baby straight in, and the weight is on the crotch. The proper way is to have the cloth tucked under the knee, and then to get the weight underneath."

New parents interested in proper babywearing here – as opposed to carrying their kids in supermarket-variety baby backpacks – have generally ordered from overseas, although Belli Blossom does stock a small selection of Boba branded carriers, including soft packs and snug wraps. If you are thinking of trying it out, whether for convenience or to foster closeness with your child, it's important to be properly instructed – not only for the safety of your baby, but also considering potential damage to your back from nonoptimal carrying postures.

"It really takes practice," says Lyra. "It wasn't easy at first even for me. But when I was traveling with my eldest son, just the two of us, I couldn't possibly bring a stroller as extra luggage, so it was much easier just to put him in a sling and walk out of planes."

"Both my kids are 'attached,' sort of", she says proudly. "I think it really helps to make them feel closer to you. At the same time, since when you're conversing with people and they're connected to you, they become more conversant, and they pick up a lot of words. So I think in that way babywearing helps a lot too."

For more advice on babywearing or to enquire about orders from the Philippines, contact Lyra Dacio via her blog at www.hello-saigon.com ■



Sit, Boy, Sit

Finding a pet-sitting service in Vietnam



With a family that includes six cats, two dogs and a couple of dozen fish, **Wayne Capriotti** is a zoo curator and, along with his wife, publishes Vietnam's first pet magazine *Me Thu Cung* (www.petmagazine.vn).

THE CONCEPT OF dog sitting, as well as pet accommodation in general for short or long-term stays, is new to Vietnam. Properly managed, professional services are hard to find and are in-demand. The development of this service industry should be encouraged as it does create a rewarding vocation and provides an essential service. However, it is a difficult business to establish here because you are at the whim of local bylaws (written and unwritten) and 'administration processes.' Some local residents and businesses vehemently despise the idea of pet accommodations in their neighborhood because of issues such as noise, odors, safety and liability. Another negative factor is the high rental fees in Saigon, as services should be located within a short distance of pet owners. Over the years, attempts have been made in building pet hotels with full services that include accommodations, retail, grooming, training and pet care monitored by veterinarians. Some never got off the drawing board while others finished construction, operated and then closed soon after.

How to find pet accommodation services in Saigon? Turn to social media – in particular Facebook's pet-related groups. These groups and their members resemble an informal 'pet-bnb' for Saigon. Embedded in the conversations are testimonials and recommendations for pet-sitting services provided by pet stores and vet clinics. A recent trend is growing where 'doggy people' are opening up their homes to occasionally pet-sit, however their services are inconsistent and require advanced planning. Post a request for pet accommodations in the "Dog-Owners Saigon" and "Dog Lovers Ho Chi Minh City" groups; also use the search function to find other conversations.

Beware of pet stores and vet clinics offering reasonably priced short- and long-term accommodations. Because of the lack of training in Vietnam, the staff may not know how to handle and care for pets. So do your research and seek out current testimonials on these businesses.

Here are some issues to go over with your potential service provider before deciding whether they should care for your pet:

Conditions of the Boarding Space

Look at the area where the dogs play communally and are kept at night if the service runs like a kennel. Hygiene is the number one issue: are food and water bowls regularly cleaned? Is there proper waste management?

Be Current with Vaccinations

Bring along your pet's 'healthcare passport' showing current vaccinations. For health and safety reasons your dogs must have current rabies, 'kennel cough' (bordetella) and canine distemper and parvovirus (DHPP) vaccinations before entering a common boarding area with other dogs. It is mandatory even when you take your dog to a local park in Vietnam.

Tick and Flea Controls

Your dog should be treated with a flea and tick control treatment. Depending on the time of year known for the outbreak of these parasites, you do not want your once flea-and-tick-free dog coming home infested with them.

Age and Sex

In Vietnam it is recommended to have your dog or cat spayed or neutered, especially if you are using a boarding service frequently. The alarming rate of some pet owners unaware of this issue, or just simply refusing to have the operation performed, is just socially irresponsible. You do not want to bring back an unwanted pregnancy.

Evaluate Behavioral Temperament

A little bit of common sense is required here. You should know your dog's temperament and he/she should be balanced and social with other dogs. Some pet owners do not really consider that the rambunctious behavior of their dog, a result of improper training, can be the cause of many problems when boarding with other dogs. Smallish 'toy dogs' like Chihuahuas and Pomeranians can create havoc in pet boarding areas if they are not balanced and social.

Contact Wayne at media@petmagazine.vn for his *Pet Yellow Pages Vietnam* to locate pet accommodation service providers in Saigon, Hanoi and Da Nang. ■



The Age of Computing

The importance of computational thinking at an early age



James Quantrill is the Assistant Deputy Head Teacher at Saigon Star International School. He moved to Vietnam in August 2014, having previously taught at an outstanding school in the UK.

WHEN YOU THINK back over the last hundred years, the technological achievements that we've accomplished have been incredible. Transport, communication and medicine - these are just a few areas that have seen considerable change. So, it begs the questions: What will we witness over the next hundred years, and how will the next generation adapt to the demands of the era?

This is a particularly difficult one to answer because the Digital Age in which we live shows no signs of slowing down. Many experts believe we are merely at the beginning of it and that it will dominate our lives for a long, long time to come. We see the demand of 3D printers gathering pace, as well as biotechnologies, commercial space aviation and, in the near future, driverless cars. Technology plays a huge role in many "best future jobs" lists. Recently, technology was rated as the #2 career path by college advisors, narrowly beaten by healthcare.

Experts forecast that the following roles are likely to be in high demand as soon as 2022:

- Software Systems Developers: People who can write the basic code that software depends on
- Computer Systems Analysts: People who can analyze and improve computer systems
- Software Applications Developers: Similar to Software Systems Developers, these people focus more on the needs of the users rather than the backend parts of computer systems
- IT Security Consultants: As internet hacking continues to proliferate, more cyber protection will be necessary. In all likelihood, there will be a greater need for online policing as well.
- Robotic Engineers: More robots will be required in the military, medical and industrial sectors. Drone controllers are already used in the military industry and may spread to civilian use.



Beyond the next 20 years is difficult for anyone to predict. Many believe that the success or failure of artificial intelligence will determine the next period in human history. How will the next generation adapt to the demands of the time period? If we think back to the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, its arrival eliminated many manual labor professions such as farming. However, it also succeeded in creating more jobs within factories too. A similar pattern can be seen with the transition into the Digital Age. Over time, technology has removed the need for many skilled white-collar jobs. Why employ a Junior Analyst when a computer algorithm somebody has written can perform it to a higher standard, repeatedly, for free?

As a result of these advancements in technology, education in the UK and elsewhere has reacted to growing concerns about the lack of computer scientists by providing a radical overhaul of its computing curriculum. Gone are the days of simply learning how to use Word, Excel or PowerPoint. Now, children as young as five and six are expected to display early signs of 'Computational Thinking.' Essentially, this means that children will not only become confident in using different software but also begin to manipulate software to do what they want it to do.

Recently, I taught a unit where

children, aged nine and ten, developed their own simple computer game. As simple as the games may have appeared to the user, hidden from view were long lines of programming that required rigorous planning and manipulation. When confronted by a problem (or bug), debugging was required. Not only did this challenge children's computational thinking, it challenged them to demonstrate resilience and adaptability. Upon completion, many of the class had a newfound appreciation for the complexities of computer science, but perhaps more importantly, had developed an understanding that we can manipulate computers to do what we want them to.

By taking on such challenges, it increases children's chances of gaining future employment within the technology sector and writing the algorithms that computers will use, instead of entering a profession where, one day, their job may become redundant due to technology acting in their place.

Obviously, employment where technology plays a minor role will always exist; however, by providing children with exposure to multiple devices, software and programming opportunities, it can only strengthen children's skill-sets as they go on to compete for jobs of the future, where possibility, potential and progression is key. ■

>>The List Education

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS



ABC International School (ABCIS)

Inspected and judged an outstanding school by British Government Inspectors (October 2013), the ABCIS is one of the few schools worldwide awarded this Department for Education rating. Progress of students puts the ABCIS among the top 8% of schools in the world. Providing education for 2-18 year olds in a supportive and friendly environment, it delivers a culturally adapted version of the British National Curriculum supported by Cambridge & AQA IGCSE and AS/A levels. Students are prepared for Universities in the UK, USA, Australia, Korea and Canada.

Foundation & Early Primary Campus:

4, 1E Street, KDC Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC

Primary & Secondary Campus:

2, 1E Street, KDC Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC

5431 1833/34/35/36

office@theabcis.com

www.theabcis.com



EtonHouse International Pre-School @ An Phu

Following an international curriculum for children aged 18 months to six years, in the early years, an Inquire-Think-Learn approach is followed, inspired by the Reggio Emilia Project of Northern Italy. It is a play-based, inquiry model in which children co-construct their learning in close, respectful collaboration with their teachers. This helps us provide an environment where children take responsibility for their own learning, allowing them a head start in life.

1st and 2nd floor, Somerset Vista, Hanoi Highway, An Phu, D2

08 6287 0804

www.etonhouse.vn/schools/hcmc

info@etonhouse.vn



EUROPEAN International School Ho Chi Minh City

The EUROPEAN International School Ho Chi Minh City is an IB World School offering an academic and supportive English language education for students aged 2-18 years. EIS is committed to educating students to become creative critical thinkers and problem solvers. Students are immersed in a multicultural learning environment which values multilingualism. Language programmes at EIS include Spanish, German, French and Vietnamese.

730 Le Van Mien, Thao Dien, District 2, HCMC

www.eishcmc.com



EUROPEAN International School HO CHI MINH CITY



International School Saigon Pearl (ISSP)

International School Saigon Pearl (ISSP) is an elementary school catering for ages 18 months to 11 years. With 90% of our teachers having master's degrees, we are able to promise a vigorous American curriculum whilst including specialist subjects such as music, art, sport and the languages. ISSP focuses on developing the whole child within a purpose built campus.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

2222 7788 / 99

www.issp.edu.vn



International School



Saigon Star International School

Saigon Star is a student focused international school offering a high quality, first class education. Specialising in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold an international teaching qualification. In our Early Years programme, a Montessori specialist works closely with the mainclass teachers to ensure a high rate of progress and attainment. The school also provides specialists for children requiring additional ESL support.

Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, D2

3742 STAR / 3742 7827

www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn



The American School

The American School (TAS) is an international school that has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 20 nationalities. TAS provides an American-based curriculum with rigorous performance standards and a variety of academic offerings including Advanced Placement courses, university credit courses through our partnership with Missouri State University, and an Intensive ESL Program for English Language Learners.

177A, 172-180 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2

08 3519 2223 / 0903 952 223

admissions@tas.edu.vn

www.tas.edu.vn





The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

The most established international school in HCMC and recently celebrating 20 years of success. ISHCMC is a fully accredited IB World School, authorized to teach all 3 programs of the International Baccalaureate curriculum to students aged 2 to 18 years. ISHCMC is fully accredited by both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), two of the most prestigious international accreditation organizations. ISHCMC has over 1000 students from over 50 different nationalities.

28 Vo Truong Toan, D2
(08) 3898 9100
admissions@ishcmc.edu.vn
www.ishcmc.com



Also...

American International School

Founded in 2006, American International School (AIS) is a private, coeducational, university-preparatory school for students from preschool to grade 12. The language of instruction is English. The school offers standard American curriculum with a complement of performing arts, visual arts, music and sport programs.

www.ais.edu.vn

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)

www.aisvietnam.com

British International School (BIS)

Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body from pre-school to Year 13. The school is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers with recent UK experience. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISIA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam.

www.bisvietnam.com

Deutsche Schule Ho Chi Minh City International German School

Deutsche Schule (IGS) offers a German curriculum from Early Years to Grade 12 which is approved and supported by the German government. IGS is staffed by native German, Vietnamese and English speakers who have many years of teaching experience.

We offer a link between Vietnamese and German culture, an international program with German standards and the immersion of German culture into everyday life.

www.igs-hcmc.de

Renaissance International School Saigon

Renaissance is an International British School offering the National Curriculum for England complemented by the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), Cambridge IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each pupil is offered an education tailored to meet their individual learning needs. It's a family school providing first-class facilities including a 350-seats theater, swimming pools, mini-pool, drama rooms, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

www.renaissance.edu.vn

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.

www.ssis.edu.vn

The French International School Saint Ange

Saint Ange welcomes children for their Kindergarten and Primary School. The school follows the program of the French Education Ministry, and includes English lessons every day. Activities and subjects such as arts, sports and school trips are also an important part of their curriculum.

www.sa-saigon.com

The Montessori International School of Vietnam

For children 6 months to 9 years old. A registered member of the American Montessori Society. Montessori uses an internationally recognized educational method which focuses on fostering the child's natural desire to learn. The aim is to create a sense of self and individuality through an encouraging and learning environment. Available are Extra-curricular Activities, Summer camp and immersion programs in Vietnamese, French and Mandarin.

www.montessori.edu.vn



DELUXE GROUP TOURS
VIETNAM

- Innovative tours
- Small group size
- Guarantee departures
- Deluxe services
- No hidden cost

09 3838 6678

www.DeluxeGroupTours.vn

Valid only for Cu Chi Tunnels & Classic Mekong Tours till 30 Sept 2016



Saigon Office: 2nd Floor, OIIC Building,
248-250 Nguyen Dinh Chieu St., Dist.3, HCMC
Email: reservation@atramelmate.com

Special Offers

-30%

Code: 30ATM666



Wonderful Festive Season Celebration

@ Boutique Hoi An Resort



CHRISTMAS EVE GALA DINNER

- 24 December 2015 -

VND 1,500,000⁺⁺ person

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA DINNER

- 31 December 2015 -

VND 1,900,000⁺⁺ person

**The prices are subject to 10% VAT & 5% service charge.
Children from 5 to 11 years old at 50% discount.*

www.boutiquehoianresort.com



BOUTIQUE
HOI AN RESORT



Inspire Achieve

Renaissance

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SAIGON

IBDP



Current Student at

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, USA
RENAISSANCE VALEDICTORIAN 2015

45/45 points IBDP

HOANG LE MINH

School Year 2014 -2015

IGCSE

**TOP IN THE WORLD, CAMBRIDGE IGCSE,
FOREIGN LANGUAGE MANDARIN CHINESE**

Examination in June 2015

YOON HAE JI, Year 10 Pupil

School Year 2015 -2016



EARLY YEARS

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

74 Nguyen Thi Thap, District 7, HCMC

(08) 3773 3171 - ext: 120/121/122

admissions@renaissance.edu.vn

www.renaissance.edu.vn





THE AMERICAN SCHOOL
Developing Academic Excellence and Strength of Character

Accredited by
**Western Association of
Schools and Colleges**



CHỢ PHIÊN GIÁNG SINH

TAS CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

SATURDAY - DEC. 12. 2015 | 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

LOCATION: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL

172 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien Ward, District 2, HCMC

FREE ENTRANCE

SIGN UP FOR BOOTHS AT: marketing@tas.edu.vn

www.tas.edu.vn

Shopping



Food Court



Fun Games



Music

