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5-2017

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NHÀ XUẤT BẢN THANH NIÊN
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This Month's Cover

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Photo: **Courtesy of Multimedia JSC**

OI VIETNAM
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Have you heard? Noise can effect learning!



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Datebook

What's on this month...



MAY 25

What: Network Girls Evening Event

Where: Merci Nails and Café (17/A6 Le Thanh Ton, D1)

About: Network Girls returns for an evening of drinks and canapés, alongside complimentary manicures, massages and some featured fashions from local designers. Come to enjoy meeting new friends and getting to know what's current in the city. Extended to all females living and working in Saigon. 6:30pm-9:00pm free flow.

Contact: RSVP required, email networkgirlshcmc@gmail.com

MAY 18-21

What: 15th International Jewelry + Watch Vietnam

Where: SECC (799 Nguyen Van Linh, D7)

About: It's a perfect-timed event for all industry players and public visitors to source the wide range of international-quality and great value gold ornaments, diamonds, gemstones, fine jewelry and watches collections during the wedding season in Vietnam.

Contact: Visit www.jewelrytradefair.com for more info

MAY 19

What: Heart Beat Presents Xhin

Where: The Observatory (5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4); free until 11pm, VND150,000 after

About: Xhin (pronounced "sheen") has been crafting cutting-edge electronic music since 1997. His identical rhythmic structure and compositional techniques, which incorporate elements of techno, tight sub bass, ambient and IDM, delivers a hint of chaotic soundscape amidst artistry. A Singaporean by birth and residence, he independently released *Xycle*, a self-promotional EP in early 2003. He then followed with his debut album *Supersonicstate* the following year.

An active DJ in the Singapore club culture he has played extensively in a number of clubs and various events like ZoukOut, Good Vibrations, Gilles Peterson's Worldwide Festival, Singapore Fashion Festival and for fashion label Woods & Woods runways. In 2009, Xhin joined Berlin's new techno label Stroboscopic Artefacts to release his dark, intense and experimental sounds.

Contact: Visit www.heartbeatsaigon.com for more info

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MAY 19

What: Touching The Past

Where: Saigon Opera House (7 Lam Son Square, D1); 8pm;
VND200,000

About: The symphony *Saigon-City Of My Childhood* of musician Vinh Lai presents beautiful memories and of Old Saigon at Tet. With works in various fields—song, chamber music, symphony, film soundtrack, theater—Vinh Lai was awarded with an award from the Vietnam Musicians Association and the State Prize for Literature - Art. The night will also include a contemporary performance from choreographers Nguyen Phuc Hai and Nguyen Phuc Hung. "Touching the Past" is a successful dance work created in 2013 and is appreciated by professionals and audiences for its innovative, inspirational expression and profound meaning.

Contact: Call 3823 7295 for tickets



MAY 28

What: The Art of Chamber Music

Where: Saigon Opera House (7 Lam Son Square, D1); 8pm;
VND200,000

About: Chamber music is a showcase of outstanding artists in HCMC in the field of symphony orchestra. This performance will bring new styles of music, which are more or less dissimilar to the classical music of the late 18th and early 19th century. The chamber music of famous composers of the Romantic era: G. Bizet, D. Shostakovich, F. Lizst, S. Rachmaninov, A. Dvorak. Two representatives of 20th century music: A. Schnittke (Russia), G. Pierné (France). The evening will introduce the works of two famous contemporary Japanese composers, K. Hirao and Shin - Ichiro Ikebe. The program also has the participation of HBSO string orchestra artists.

Contact: Call 3823 7295 for tickets



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MAY 19

What: Why Doing Good is Good for Business

Where: Caravelle (19-23 Lam Son Square, D1); 8am-1pm

About: The session aims to expose companies, large and small, to the concept of shared value by introducing different ways a business can add value to a community while also supporting their bottom line. The panel will introduce unique approaches that different companies in Vietnam are undertaking today to make a positive social, economic, and/or environmental impact in a way that relates to their business strategy to drive growth, profitability, and competitive advantage. The moderator will provide context for the panel, introducing the difference between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and creating shared value (CSV), the difference between charity and development initiatives and recent trends and practices in Vietnam.

Contact: Email info-hcm@eurochamvn.org for more info



MAY 27

What: Color Me Run

Where: District 2

About: Color Me Run is the most colorful running event in Vietnam. By joining the event, you can expect to fully experience colorful jogging, walking or running and enjoy being doused head to toe in different colors at each kilometer. This event will bring an unforgettable weekend by creating a festival atmosphere, from start to finish line.

Contact: Visit colormerun.vn for more info

MAY 27&28

What: Soul Carnivale - Music & Arts Festival

Where: Saigon Outcast (1 88/1 Nguyen Van Huong, D2); VND60,000 one-day pass, VND100,000 two-day pass

About: A two-day community festival and workshop program that showcases the very best of local, regional and international arts and culture in a comprehensive program of art, theater, dance, music, circus, spoken word, street performance, visual arts and more. Soul Carnivale combines a multitude of events in the same space, featuring two stages, bringing together both local and international acts, with the goal of giving artists as much exposure as possible.

Contact: Visit www.saiگونoutcast.com for more info

JUNE 1-3

What: Coffee Expo

Where: SECC (799 Nguyen Van Linh, D7)

About: This three-day event showcases products and various opportunities for brand exposure through recruiting participants and class promotion. Additionally, it is possible to increase the familiarity with products by experiencing them in the bakery & confectionery, business services, food & beverage industries.

Contact: Visit vietcoffeeair.com for more info

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The Bulletin

Promotions and news in HCMC and beyond...

Bonsai Cruise Launches

Bonsai Cruise is a boutique style dinner and event cruising in Saigon. From the moment you board this grand beauty of the river you will be swept away and amazed by the hand-carved details of the boat, the innovative buffet setting, the native music instruments played and the service of the crew. Their open kitchen and interactive dining stations enhance guests' experience. The creative mind behind the menu is Steven Long, runner up of *Top Chef Vietnam* in 2014. Through the night entertainment is performed by a six member Vietnamese and Filipino band. Visit www.bonsaicruise.com.vn for more info.



Health Benefits

The Landmark Health Club (5B Ton Duc Thang, D1; thelandmarkvietnam.com) is offering a promotion on long-term memberships: join for 6-months, get 1-month free (total VND12.5 million); join for 12-months, get 2-months free (total VND21.4 million). Both includes access to all facilities and classes during operational hours; includes VAT, service charges, etc. No hidden blocks or fees. The Health Club (Located on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark) features a fully-equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, yoga studio with weekly classes and the only squash court in the city center.



Canon Launches Photography Competition

From May to July 2017, Canon is launching a monthly photo challenge. The challenge is open to the public to top the leadership board. With a different theme announced each month, participants are required to incorporate the themes into their photos and the winner of each theme stands to win an EOS M10 kit (EF-M15-45mm) along with a Pikachu Shoulder Plush or Limited Edition Pokémon key chains. At the end of each month, the top three best photos on the leader board will stand a chance to be the grand winner for the month. One grand prize winner will be selected out of the 3 by a professional photographer. The remaining two consolation prize winners will win limited edition Pokémon key chains. #ToyTravel is the art of photography where toys imitate life. Spontaneous and fun, it can be anything from a selfie of you and a figurine chilling by the pool to a jump shot with your favorite plush toy on top of the mountain. The possibilities are endless. For more details, visit <https://snapshot.canon-asia.com/article/en/we-just-made-your-perfect-travel-companion-even-better>.



I'm a Legend

American children's book author, Curtis Norris, has introduced two new services for Saigon's young readers. "I'm a Legend" books are personalized stories for children. "A child is more than a name," says the author. "I do not simply cut and paste a child's name into a pre-written story. I craft a unique story from scratch for each child based on their personality dreams, and likes. No two children get the same story." The service provides many options for parents, including original illustrations and quality hardcover copies.

Saigon Saturday Stories Club is a subscription-based story service for all the children. A 12-week subscription costs VND1.2 million. A new story is sent to the parent's email every Saturday, ready to enjoy over the weekend and read again and again. Parents receive the stories no matter where they happen to be in the world. The club has already launched on April 22, but parents can join anytime to start receiving all 12 stories. For more info on both, email c_norris@hotmail.com.



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TROI OI!

The country in numbers



300

NEW STREET PARKING LOTS will open in Hanoi because current parking facilities only meet up to 10 percent of the demand; 90-92% of vehicles are kept at parking lots of apartment buildings or shopping centers. In the department's traffic management report, Hanoi has over 720 parking places that cover 145,000sqm on the streets and pavements, on wide medians and under flyovers, 74 of them are unregistered or have expired licenses. In addition, there are 174 parking spots placed inside schools. The department has carried out various measures including odd-even days parking on Da Tuong and Nguyen Gia Thieu streets, using new technology in public parking places and automatic toll collecting system on Tran Hung Dao and Ly Thuong Kiet streets. The odd-even day parking method will also be applied on other streets this year.

150

REMAINS OF SOLDIERS, believed to be Vietnamese soldiers that died in 1968 during the American War, have been found at an airport in the southern province of Dong Nai. The remains were detected at a grave situated at Bien Hoa Airport after a search that lasted for nearly one month with the co-operation from two American veterans Bob Connor and Martin E. Strones who fought in a battle at the airport. Dong Nai Province's army forces also found some objects of the soldiers such as pieces of cloth or shoes.



1000

PIGS DIED DUE TO SMOKE inhalation during a fire at a farm in Gia Lai. Ia Pa District's Chu Rang Commune People's Committee chairman Pham Quoc Cuong said the fire started at around 4am at a pig farm belonging to Dinh Duc Vinh in Boong Boong 2 Village. The fire was put out soon after and no human casualties were reported, however, the blaze damaged the air ventilation system of the farm, resulting in the pigs' death. According to the Ia Pa District Police, the farm began operation just about a month ago prior. Preliminary investigation revealed that a circuit failure may have caused the fire. Local authorities are helping the farm's owner dispose of the dead pigs in the correct manner to avoid polluting the environment.

126

KARAOKE SHOPS IN HANOI suspended, and 530 others have been asked to close temporarily, following an overall inspection of all karaoke establishments. The 530 shops can reopen by the end of this year if they address the violations. Deputy director of the Ha Noi Department of Fire Prevention and Control said following a fire at a karaoke last year, which killed 13 people, the police conducted an overall inspection of all karaoke places. The police checked more than 1,500 karaoke shops and imposed administrative fines on 353 shops, worth VND871 million. Common violations included lack of fire prevention and control measures because the shops were located in small alleys, limited water sources and large advertisements that hindered an emergency exit in case of a fire.





~136

AT-RISK BABIES HAVE RECEIVED milk (totaling 60 liters) over a two-month period from 46 donor mothers from the country's first human milk bank at the Da Nang Hospital for Women and Children. Since 2015, the Da Nang Department of Health and the Da Nang Hospital for Women and Children have been working with PATH and Alive & Thrive to highlight the importance of human

milk and the ability of human milk banks to offer a solution for optimal growth and development for at-risk children. As a result of this partnership, Vietnam's first human milk bank opened on February 6, 2017. The hospital has trained health staff across departments to provide breastfeeding support for all mothers and infants to ensure infants receive the best nutrition possible. Donor mothers must pass strict hygiene and safety testing.

46

"SMALL" STREETS IN DISTRICTS 1 and 3 in HCMC will have their overhead electricity and telecommunication cables buried underground as a form to improve the quality of life for locals. Between 2011 and 2015, 104 projects were carried out on 62 main streets, with 358km of medium-voltage and 620km of low-voltage cables buried underground. The city authority plans to bury another 650 km of medium-voltage and 1,150 km of

low-voltage cables, focusing on main streets in Districts 1 and 3 between 2016 and 2020. Though it is important to bury all cables on main streets, thousands of small streets are in need of cable burial as well. Among the 46 streets planned, eight would be in District 1's Da Kao, Ben Thanh, and Nguyen Thai Binh wards, while the rest would be in District 3. In addition to burying cables underground, authorities will carry out small street expansion projects.



0,000s

OF PEOPLE IN VIETNAM COMMIT SUICIDE every year. Dr. Nguyen Doan Phuong, Head of the Institute of Mental Health under the Hanoi-based Bach Mai Hospital, said that more Vietnamese people, particularly young people, are suffering from depression. According to Dr. Phuong, people

aged between 18 and 45, in which, women account for the majority. People who are divorced or unemployed make up a high rate among those suffering from depression in Vietnam. He added that only a small number of Vietnamese people with depression are provided with treatment following medical check-ups. The National Institute of Mental Health receives around 50 people who come for treatment every day on average.

INVESTMENTS IN THE FUTURE WITH SNA

SNA - AMERICAN STANDARD IN VIETNAM

The International Schools of North America (SNA)'s total land area is 8,500 m². The campus has 80 spacious and fully-equipped classrooms, which includes a digital library, canteen, swimming pool, sports hall, multipurpose hall and robocon room to best serve the needs of teaching and learning STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). From their design and construction work to interior furnishing and functional rooms, SNA had them all tested to ensure they satisfied the highest standards of accreditation by Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).



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Nguyen Hoang Group Commences INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF NORTH AMERICA (SNA)'S NEW CAMPUS

On April 23, Nguyen Hoang Group (NHG) officially commenced the International Schools of North America's new campus at Street No. 20, Him Lam Residential Area, Binh Chanh District, HCMC.

Text and Images Provided by SNA

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA (SNA) was established in 2005, the first and only international school in Vietnam which teaches the US Program of California Common Core State Standards, undertaken by US teachers. This program is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), one of US first accrediting agencies, and is recognized by the US Department of Education. Upon graduation, students will obtain degrees from both Vietnam and the US. With such a solid foundation, SNA students will integrate easily into any Vietnamese university environments and those in other countries around the world.

In 2017, with NHG investment, SNA officially initiated building works on its new campus to satisfy the increasing demands of Vietnamese as well as expatriates who are living and working in Vietnam.

According to an NHG source, SNA new campus area covers 8,500 m², of which the floor area is of 17,000 m², and greenery accounts for 50% of the total. This feature creates a fresh and

cool space for students. In addition to investing in facilities for teaching and learning purposes under international standards, the school has also designed a unique dormitory that only this school's students can experience to the fullest.

In particular, during the construction stage of the new campus, SNA has introduced the "Investment Opportunities for the Future" program to parents, with 150 tuition investment packages available at preferential rates. Children of parents who participate in an investment package are exempted from tuition fees from grades 1 to 12 at the school.

From 2017, with the investment of Nguyen Hoang Education Group, the International School of North America has officially commenced work on its new campus to satisfy the increasing demands of Vietnamese as well as foreigners who are living and working in Vietnam; including the comprehensive curriculum from Pre-School through grade 12.

WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) is a world renowned accrediting agency founded in 1962, certified by US Department of Education, headquartered in California, USA. There are more than 4,600 WASC-accredited schools around the world. These schools are of the same quality and training standards as in the United States regardless of what countries they are located in.

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7. Inspirational teachers, self-discovery, creative and constantly learning students.
8. Weekly Student Report to parents for a Parent-School closely communication.
9. Friendly and safe environment that respects personal development.
10. The uniquely-experienced SNA dormitory helps students to grow independently and comprehensively.





Stay, Boy, Stay

A house designed specifically for man's best friend

Interview by **Christine Van**
Images by **Ngoc Tran**

Who is Saiga and tell us about the people behind Saiga's House (SH)?

The people behind Saiga's House are me, Jef Song, and my wife, Thea Do. We are both Americans living in Saigon, raising our husky pup. It was in Seattle that our love for dogs started to grow. My mom has a poodle-yorkie mix named Coco. We took Coco everywhere – camping, water-rafting, hiking, kayaking, etc. We shared many fun and memorable experiences that we missed greatly after we moved countries.

Before SH, Thea was working in marketing and social media, but she often found herself missing Coco and our previous dog-lifestyle. So we adopted Saiga, our now 2-year-old Siberian husky. It's actually a nickname, his full name is Tessaiga, which comes from the Japanese comic series *Inuyasha*. Tessaiga is the name of the main character's sword and is meant to represent an "Iron Fang." As fans of the series, we thought it would be an awesome name for a strong-looking dog.

What inspired you to open a dog hotel?

One of the great challenges we often faced was a lack of clean boarding facilities for our dog. As avid travelers, Thea and I even rode to nearby provinces just to find a kennel where we wouldn't have to worry every day during our out-of-town trips. Sadly, there are few options for larger dogs, such as Huskies, and even fewer that are clean. The majority of the kennels we visited kept their dogs in the hot weather with no ac and did not supervise their play.

We often took care of our friend's dogs while they were away because they too could not find a trustworthy boarding facility. We loved their dogs and were always happy to spend time with them. In caring for several dogs at a time, Thea and I realized that we really could open a dog-care facility and be happy doing it.

On our recent trips back to Seattle, we decided to check out a few dog day-care centers and we were amazed at the quality of care and facilities that were offered. This was a turning point

in our thoughts on opening a dog hotel. We really believe that bringing similar services to Saigon would help solve some of the problems we faced in dog care.

Thea decided to leave her marketing job and dedicate her time to caring for and playing with dogs, especially Saiga. To fund our vision, I am still working full-time, but as soon as I'm off the clock, I'm on my way to Saiga's House.

SH is a purposely-built dog hotel, how did you come up with the design?

Every part of SH is with the comfort and needs of dogs in mind. We specifically hired an interior designer/architect who is not only a fellow dog-owner, but one of Saiga's friends who we would often meet at the park.

Our upstairs area is completely dedicated to the dog hotel, equipped with gated play areas, large crates, grooming and bathing stations. Another issue we had with many other boarding facilities were the tiny crates, not suitable for larger dogs or even multiple dogs that want to sleep together. Often owners request that their two dogs sleep in the same space. To accommodate this, we design extra-large crates, dogs are only in here overnight. We designed them with glass, to help alleviate any claustrophobia in the dogs. Each crate has large open gaps to allow the a/c to circulate throughout the room.

We opted to tear out the carpet and lay down some fresh, sanded concrete. We found this material would be best for cleaning and sanitizing the play areas.

Tell us about your “fully-trained pet guardians.”

Our pet guardians are people we’ve met on our daily dog walks. They are fellow dog-owners who we’ve observed raise their own dogs with the same kind of attention and patience that we would for ours. We created chat groups where we discussed and shared our experiences. We’ve learned how to deal with aggressive strays, dog fights and general dog behavior.

Our main guardians are Nam Quoc Nam and Quynh Nhu. Even before they adopted their own dog, we always ran into them walking their friends’ dogs. When the time was right, they were able to adopt their own dog. Now, they have a 1.5-year-old Husky named Maru. We have at least one of our guardians spending the night anytime there are dogs overnight.

How do you ensure the animals are protected from communicable diseases like kennel cough and parasites like ticks and fleas?

We sanitize our entire facility every day, sometimes multiple times a day if it’s busy. This includes the crate, play areas, grooming station and every open space. The dogs are always supervised,

not just to ensure safe-play, but to clean up any accidental messes. If a dog poops or pees indoors, the mess is cleaned up immediately.

We require that all dogs staying at SH are properly vaccinated. Customers must provide proof in valid documents or health books. Additionally, we run a quick inspection to check for fleas, ticks, rashes, or any other visible conditions. After this, we introduce the dogs to the main facility and the other dogs in the store, observing their behavior and attitude. Should we deem a dog too aggressive, we’d have to turn them away.

We regularly inspect all of the dogs for fleas and watch their stools for any signs of sickness. It’s something that comes naturally when you’re a dog owner. Should we notice anything unusual, such as a rash or bugs, we immediately treat with our in-house medications. It is our priority to keep all dogs clean and healthy. We’ve had some experiences in the past at other facilities, where Saiga would come home with fleas... that is something we would actively prevent at SH and one of the issues we hope to solve in our efforts.

How about dogs that haven’t been neutered or spayed?

Dogs that haven’t been neutered or

spayed are watched very carefully. We have had many experiences with dogs that haven’t been fixed—as many are not here in Saigon. In these situations, the females will be separated from the males. However, if we just have a few intact dogs, then we will judge on a case-by-case basis. Certain dogs will need to be separated, while others will be okay under our supervision.

We have two separated play areas to keep certain dogs apart. In addition to this, we also have a small “time-out” area, which is gated and visible, but separated from the main play areas. We will utilize these three separate areas to ensure all dogs remain comfortable.

If an owner requested a grooming service that was harmful (for example, shaving the dog hairless because that can cause sunburn) to the dog, what would you do?

We’d like to promote healthy and positive dog-care. It is too often that we’ve seen unhealthy dogs roaming with their owners around the park. There are many new dog owners in the area, but due to lack of resources, many are unaware of what kinds of behavior can actually be detrimental to a dog’s health. We like to carry only

Left to right: Thea, their two guests, Saiga and Jef





Image Provided by SH

products and toys that are safe for dogs. Similarly, we will only offer services that we deem safe for the dogs. If a customer wanted to do anything dangerous, not only would we refuse, but we'd try to explain how certain haircuts, feeding habits, or behaviors are hazardous and unacceptable at SH.

However, there are instances where shaving certain areas of a dog are necessary because of a medical condition. Some dogs have hair that tangles (from lack of proper care), while others have skin conditions. Should a dog-owner request a shaving within valid reason, we would oblige.

There are critics that say owning a husky in a tropical country is irresponsible and cruel to the breed,

how do you respond to that?

Ah yes. It's a common thought among many people that we've come across and I understand where they are coming from. I'd even agree with them to a certain extent. There are many husky owners who leave their dogs outside during the day, shave their hair short, or even run them on the hot pavement. That is irresponsible and definitely cruel to the breed. Those are the kinds of behaviors we are against. Locals who have lived here most of the life don't realize how hot Saigon is compared to other places in the world. In conversations, we've discovered many believe that a fan is sufficient for a double-coated dog, such as huskies, Alaskan malamutes, or Samoyed, but that is simply not the case. These type of dogs absolutely need a/c running 24/7,

even if you aren't home.

With Saiga, we never take him out during the day, it's just too hot. Instead, we walk him at 5am, and again around 7pm or 8pm as it's cooling off. Our walks last a couple hours (four hours on the weekends) and we've stuck to this schedule his entire life—every single day. We play, run and walk him to ensure he gets enough exercise so that he can comfortably rest during the daytime. We've even trained Saiga to enjoy running on the treadmill should he show any signs of restlessness at home. However, if you come by SH, you'll notice Saiga is always well exercised and very quiet during the day. He gets restless around closing time, if you'd rather see him running circles around the park.

So I guess my response is, in most cases, it is definitely irresponsible. If you are unable to accommodate to the strict needs of a breed that is sensitive to the heat, then you should look into other kinds of breeds. If you are unwilling to wake up in the early mornings, walk for hours multiple times a day, or run a/c 24/7, then a husky is not for you. Unfortunately, these kinds of dogs are very popular in Vietnam, and most do not receive an adequate amount of care or attention from their owners.

This is probably one of the reasons why we always had such a hard time finding a good boarding facility for Saiga. You'll also find an iced water fountain for the dogs and many frozen treats in our freezer. Let's face it, it's hot in Saigon, but there are certainly responsible measures we can take to ensure our pups are living a comfortable life.

Saiga's House (18 Duong P, Panorama, D7; www.saigashouse.com) ■

ANAN Saigon

Chef Peter Cuong Franklin brings a hip, new Vietnamese culinary experience to the Saigon dining scene

Portrait by **Ngoc Tran**

AFTER MANY YEARS ABROAD in New York, London and Hong Kong, award-winning Chef Peter Cuong Franklin returns to his home country to introduce his “Cuisine Moi,” or New Vietnamese Cuisine, at ANAN Saigon.

“Moi” in Vietnamese means “new, fresh and modern.” This new cuisine is about food that is modern and yet has a story and reference points to traditional techniques and local ingredients. The street-style pizza is based on a regional dish from his hometown in Dalat in the central highlands of Vietnam. The pizza is made with local artisanal cheese, pork sausage products from an expert French charcutier based in Dalat, and the pizza is topped with a bouquet of local fresh herbs, a distinctive feature of Vietnamese gastronomy. The Da Lat-Style Pizza and Cha Ca A La Meunière are two examples of the New Vietnamese style of cooking on offer at ANAN Saigon. Other ANAN signature dishes include: Pho Bo Roll grilled beef (steamed rice roll, bean sprouts, pickled carrot, basil, sawtooth), Cobia Sashimi (shiso, lemongrass oil, Nha Trang green chili sauce), and Banh Xeo Taco (prawns, pork, bean sprouts, herbs, mustard greens).

An acknowledged expert in Vietnamese and Asian cuisine, Chef Peter re-interprets the country’s fresh and vibrant street food culture and incorporates French technique and quality market fresh ingredients to create a focused menu of locally sourced charcuterie and cheeses, flavorsome street food-inspired small plates, and specialties from a custom grill with coconut charcoal flavors.

ANAN Vietnamese-inspired cocktails bring the tropical flavors of fresh local ingredients to new life. Signature cocktails include the House Signature (dark rum, pandan, ginger, soy milk and house-made fresh tofu), the Cho Cu Mai Tai (gold rum, Malibu, cucumber, pineapple, lime, sesame oil), the Spiced Phojito (rum, sugar, herbs and lime, the Mulberry Clover Club - gin, Dalat mulberry, apple vinegar, Angostura bitters, egg white) and, last but not least, the Black Tea Tra Da (tequila blanco, agave syrup, *com ruou* rice wine, lychee and lime).

The ANAN Saigon experience includes the restaurant on the ground and first floor, an outdoor deck area with *bia hoi* and street food vibe, and a sophisticated rooftop bar on the 6th

floor with spectacular views of Bitexco Financial Tower against the panoramic Saigon skyline.

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ANAN Saigon is a partner with Speed JSC, the preeminent POS, PMS, and Retail solution provider in Vietnam since 2007. ■



Banh Xeo Taco



Escape

LIM KHIM KA TY'S PASSION for her work and her dedication to continuing to evolve and develop her artistic practice continue to surprise and delight. Ka Ty graduated from the HCMC Fine Arts University in 2003. Her first solo gallery exhibition was in 2005 at

Craig Thomas Gallery and she has since exhibited widely internationally.

Along with Ka Ty's newest works, the Craig Thomas Gallery (27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1) currently displays works by many other fine Saigon- and Hanoi-based artists. ■





The Rich



Self Enquiry Meditation



Dr. Eugene has worked as a veterinarian around Southeast Asia for the last four years, from the Philippines and Thailand to Malaysia and now Vietnam. He is driven by a desire to provide the best care for his patients and has a wide range of experience in all aspects of veterinary medicine, and a special interest in surgery and intensive care. Dr. Eugene provides both first and second opinions on all manners of companion animal cases while also overseeing the provision of clinical care for Animal Doctors International in Ho Chi Minh City.

PICA CHEW

What to do when your pet ingests a foreign body

“PICA” IS THE TERM FOR the indiscriminate eating and swallowing of things—from toys and stones to dirt and even feces—by your dog or cat. There are numerous causes to this, ranging from behavioral, such as boredom, through to medical pathologies. This habit can also lead to very serious problems when ingesting an abnormal object, collectively known as “foreign bodies.”

At Animal Doctors International, we see many dogs and cats come to us with anorexia, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea and enlarged or painful abdomens. The first thing we need to rule out is whether the pet has a foreign body somewhere in their abdomen. From children’s toys to hairbands and metal, it’s sometimes surprising what our pets can eat! Recently, we have had to remove rubber balls in the stomach, mango pips in the intestine and bones stuck in the esophagus.

These foreign bodies can be lodged anywhere in the abdomen, most commonly in the stomach or the small intestines. These objects block the normal passage of food, cause ulcerations, pain and, in severe cases, perforation and peritonitis.

While our pets are usually excellent at handling small foreign objects that they pick up through scavenging, however, once it becomes a problem then swift intervention is needed to prevent more serious, and often fatal, consequences. In most cases, there is only one way to handle these objects—surgical removal. While this can seem a daunting prospect to owners, we find that early intervention leads to a positive outcome in over

99 percent of cases and the animal is back to normal within just a few days.

Suspect a Foreign Body?

If you’re ‘lucky’ enough to observe your pet swallowing something that it shouldn’t then the best action is to take them to the vet immediately, once we know what we are dealing with then any more serious complications can be pre-empted. If the time-period is less than four hours then we may even be able to remove the object without surgery.

Most of the time the initial signs we see are vomiting and abdominal discomfort, although this is not always the case. In gold-standard veterinary medicine, all vomiting and painful dogs would undergo investigation to rule out the ‘ticking time bomb’ of a foreign body.

Diagnostic Procedures

The vet will perform a thorough physical examination, looking at heart and respiration rate, blood perfusion, areas of pain, the oral cavity and any other indicators. The next step is to determine the underlying causes of the symptoms that we see—the basic diagnostic work-up usually includes a full blood test, abdominal x-rays and ultrasound. With an x-ray we can see ‘dense’ foreign bodies and their location, but some foreign bodies are invisible on these images. Ultrasound helps on locating the foreign body and can find objects that aren’t visible on the x-rays while also providing ‘real-time’ information on the movement and health of the intestines and stomach. In some cases, we can be highly suspicious of a foreign object,

but it’s just not visible, therefore, in these cases we carry out a ‘barium study’ where contrast can highlight and ‘stick’ to areas of interest while also showing us the normal function of the intestines.

Treatment Options

While treatment depends on the location and what kind of foreign body your pet has, exploratory laparotomy (surgically opening the abdomen then removing the foreign body) is the both the most common treatment and the most successful. After the surgery, your pet can usually go home the same day, with some oral medications and reduced activity, and then go on to a full recovery in a few days.

Sometimes we use treatment regimens that include laxatives and induced vomiting, these are limited to when we can define the type of object, the time period from ingestion and rule out a serious blockage. One particular example is a dog that swallowed a pair of earrings that were seen in the small intestine. Laxative helped and the earrings were excreted after two days.

Our dogs and cats are part of our family. They give us joy and happiness through their companionship and loyalty. As with any member of our family, ensuring that they are eating well and healthily and don’t have access to dangerous or ‘tempting’ objects will go a long way in maintaining the health of their digestive tract. One small action we can all do is to *never* feed cooked bones to our pets! The moment that there is an early sign of pica, or question over the final destination of a missing sock, -a trip to the veterinarian should always be a priority. ■



A member of the Paris Bar, **Antoine Logeay** has been practicing law first in France, mainly in litigation and arbitration, then in Vietnam for three years as an associate of Audier & Partners based at its Hanoi office. Audier & Partners is an international law firm with presence in Vietnam, Myanmar and Mongolia, providing advice to foreign investors on a broad range of legal issues.

(Un)Conscious Un-Coupling

Honey, we need to talk...

Dear Antoine,

A Vietnamese friend married an Australian in 2014 and the former is now filing for divorce, citing irreconcilable differences. He now resides in Australia while she is in her native Vietnam. She already has a divorce application, her ID and family book—there are no divisions of assets or children—are there any other documents that we need to effectively file for divorce?

ACCORDING TO VIETNAMESE LAW, there are two kinds of divorce: a divorce by mutual consent or a divorce by single request. Both have to be approved or pronounced by a court so consider the ground for each before filing. The former implies that both spouses agree to the divorce, while the single request covers cases where only one of the spouses is willing to divorce—with this procedure the court will pronounce the divorce only in cases of infringements of the spouse's rights and obligations, meaning the couple can no longer live together and marriage purposes are unachievable. Such infringements are usually understood as, for instance, separation, unreasonable behavior or adultery.

Because your friend is Vietnamese and her husband is a foreigner, the legal proceeding is a little bit different than ones between locals. However, the provincial people's court where your friend resides or works has jurisdiction to settle the case, even if she married abroad.

When there is no division of assets nor issues about child custody, the spouses might prefer the mutual consent procedure because it is easier and quicker than the single request one. However, if your friend's husband is unwilling to divorce, or if he does not want to cooperate, your friend will need to follow the single request procedure.

For both procedures, the preliminary step is to gather all the documents required for the application. In the mutual consent procedure, both spouses' signatures are required while an application for single request only needs the signature of the spouse that makes the request.

In both procedures, the dossier must contain, besides her ID card and family book, the original marriage registration certificate and other documents such as title documents for assets (if any) or those proving ownership of cars or bank accounts. A copy of her husband's passport or other form of identity is also needed. Keep in mind that the court may require submission of papers that belong to the husband and that may not be available to your friend for that reason.

The procedure for delivering documents raises a notable matter—clarification of the husband's details. Let's take his current address as an example of required information for proceeding purposes, as the court will send him different documents, such as the notification of the opening of the divorce procedure. Your friend may provide to the court authentic evidence proving her spouse's address, but if she is not able to provide any such evidence, she can ask the court to request it from foreign competent authorities.

Another frequent issue at this first step is certified translation and legalization procedure for documents issued by foreign public authorities. If the marriage certificate was issued by a foreign authority it must be first legalized and then submitted for record in the Civil Status Book at the local provincial Department of Justice before any divorce request can be made.

When this preliminary step is done, she may file a petition in front of the court for recognition of mutual consent divorce or, in case of lack of mutual consent, she must file a single request. A judge is assigned to decide whether a court can hear her case. If yes, she'll

receive a notice on acceptance of case within 10 working days starting from the day of submission. Then a "court session," in which three judges will rule on her case, will be set up within 12 months. In case of single request, evidence to prove her spouse's breach of rights and obligations will be requested by the court.

Before any court session, your friend should be aware that mediation is compulsory for each divorce request. This mediation meeting is first held by local authorities and then by the provincial court. However, as her personal circumstance could fall into a specific exception to the mediation procedure—when the involved parties cannot take part in the mediation for plausible reasons—the meeting could not be held. Each spouse is supposed to attend the court session in person. For both mutual consent and single request procedure, in case of absence, it is possible for your friend's husband to submit to the court a petition for conducting the hearing in his absence.

The last issue that we would like to highlight is the outcome and follow-up of this court session. For the mutual consent procedure, the court session aims to recognize—or not—the agreement concluded by the spouses about the divorce settlement. Recognition of such agreement by the court may not be appealed. The single request procedure is, strictly speaking, a judicial proceeding: at the end of the court session, judges issue a judgment that cannot be appealed.

Divorce procedure in Vietnam, particularly when it involves foreign parties living abroad, may be long and complicated. We hope this summary will help your friend through it. ■

Dance for All

Linh Rateau shares with us how over 10 years, Dancenter has become one of the highest quality establishments for dance education in Ho Chi Minh City.

Images Provided by **Dancenter**

Back to 2007, what was your motivation to start Dancenter? How did you start? What was the dance industry like at that time?

My first motivation was simply to share my passion for dance. When I arrived in Vietnam 16 years ago, I was looking for a place where I could keep dancing, keep learning and meet other dancers. However, with the exception of the respectable Dance Conservatory, which teaches ballet and folk dance, the choice was pretty limited.

After a few years of teaching dance at several places, and having learnt more about Vietnamese culture and business culture, I felt it was time to open a “home” where all my students

could share and practice together, a home where professional dancers, dance teachers and choreographers from Vietnam and overseas could meet and exchange together.

Surrounded by fantastic people, I started the adventure with a strong team who gave me the energy and the confidence to do it. At that time, Dancenter was the first place of its kind in Vietnam, offering many dance styles for all ages and levels under one roof.

Today Dancenter welcomes more than 800 students. What do you think are the keys of your success?

Quality was and always will be our



Linh Rateau





dancing at a more mature age, shared with us how their weekly dance classes bring them so much happiness. Dance is more than a physical activity, it's learning to appreciate the capabilities of your own body and how to express yourself through movement.

Our team of teachers are experienced, dedicated and above all passionate. They have joined Dancenter from France, England, Canada, Denmark, Switzerland and, of course, Vietnam. Among them is John Huy Tran, who has been with us since day one and has become a major influence in Vietnam's dance scene.

Tell us more about UDG, your professional dance company? UDG has a solid reputation in Vietnam. What makes them unique?

UDG was founded in 2009 under the direction of John Huy Tran. From many different dance backgrounds, this group of 15 young and talented dancers train together daily in our studio in all aspects of contemporary, jazz and hip hop. UDG are fortunate to work with international professionals to expand their knowledge and push the limits of not only dance but art in all of its forms.

Amongst countless collaborations with other artists, directors and organizations, UDG have produced four of their own shows including the most recent production *Between Us*, which, due to its incredible success, will be performed again at The Factory on December 1 & 2, 2017.

Since its inception, UDG continue to inspire audiences through stage performances, film and international festivals making them one of the major dance influences in Vietnam.

How will Dancenter celebrate its 10th anniversary?

For this special occasion we will hold three events over three days. On May 28, our students will present not one, but three incredible shows. Dancenter will bring you a true theatrical experience, with passionate dancers performing all dance styles from ballet to hip hop.

Following this, Dancenter will host two events where all are welcome to celebrate with us. On June 3rd we will throw an Evening Dance Party and we invite you and your family to celebrate with us at our fun Afternoon Party on June 4th.

To find out more about Dancenter's 10th year events, visit their website www.dancentervn.com or join them on Facebook: Dancenter Vietnam ■



number one priority. We offer different levels from Beginner to Advanced to suit every student's ability. Also the number of students per class is limited. Our professional team of teachers can focus on each student, nurturing their capabilities and making sure they accomplish realistic goals and feel proud of themselves.

Trained in France, my objective was to introduce the pedagogy I learned which respects each individual student

and their own body and skills without forcing them into an unrealistic, and in most cases unachievable "perfect dancer."

Dancenter's ambition is to offer "dance for all." From kids to adults, absolute beginners to advanced and professionals, our wonderful team of teachers encourage all students to challenge themselves at their own pace in a warm caring atmosphere.

Several shy students who started

Fields of Dreams

The grace Vietnam's female farmers bring to the rice fields in their traditional *ao ba ba* inspired Nguyen Cong Tri's Collection no.09. The simple, loose polonaise with raglan sleeves, scooped neck lines and padded front pockets evolved to offer some comfort to days filled with toil. Glossy black, deep earth tones and goldenrod yellow provide the hallmarks of this collection, which seeks to highlight Vietnam's unique Lanh My A silk--a traditional, labor-intensive fabric that gets its color from the *mac nua* fruit. The difficulty of harvesting the fruit and the months of dip-squeeze-drying have elevated the fabric to a national treasure. Cong Tri made great use of interlacing, weaving, fringing, embroidery, embellishing and appliqué to offer a collection that honors cherished national traditions with a contemporary Western aesthetic.







Creative Director/Photographer: Duc Ngo
(www.ducngostudio.com)
Model: Lilly Nguyen
Makeup and Hair: Quang Hien
Fashion: Cong Tri collection no.9



A Question of Health

Health is a personal quality. It is unique to each person. At the same time, health is a universal quality. In Webster's Dictionary, health is defined as "the condition of being sound in mind, body and spirit... freedom from physical disease or pain." The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Definitions of "health" have evolved over the years, centuries.

Health no longer means the absence of illness, now we are more likely to define it as "the energy to do the things I care about." Wellness is a relatively new term reflecting the positive emphasis on health, it encompasses more than physical health, it is a state of being with several interrelated dimensions.



WHEREVER YOU ARE IN SAIGON, chances are a massage of some sort can be found nearby. There's an endless variety of offerings, from high-end spa packages promising an experience of the utmost serenity to the shady, back-alley operations promising something a little different. You name it, you can find it in this city.

Many styles of massage have become common knowledge, such as the pressure point-focused shiatsu or the forceful, sometimes pain-inducing, Thai-style. Yet, down a quiet Thao Dien lane, one will

Smoke Signals

From moxibustion to pinch and pull therapeutic massages, traditional Chinese medicine practitioner Antoine Tran can help balance your energy

Text by **Wes Grover**
Images by **Ngoc Tran**

find a holistic healer with a wholly unique, and rather obscure, skillset.

His name is Antoine Tran and the majority of his life has been devoted to a swath of traditional Chinese medicine techniques, studying the connection of mind and body through the power of human touch. Standing somewhere between massage therapist, medicine man and philosopher, his expertise range from acupuncture to more unknown practices like moxibustion (smoke fume therapy) and Qi Gong Tui Na (pronounced *chee-kung twee-na*), a Taoist healing technique placing an emphasis on one's Qi, or energy.

"I believe that the practice of massage brings out a good side of humans in those moments because they let go of ideas and it comes down to the basics of who you are and the warmth that you have in you," Antoine shares as we sit over coffee in the villa where he lives and practices. With a wiry build and hair resting in a ponytail

on the back of his neck, he gives the impression of one who has an old soul.

Born in Vietnam, Antoine was adopted by a French family when he was four years old and spent his formative years in Europe, though he always felt a connection to his birth country. In his youth, he began practicing martial arts and it was at this time that he was first introduced to massage as a way of healing sprains, torn muscles and ligaments and cramps.

At 24 years old, he jumped at the chance to return to Vietnam, fulfilling an internship working with the blind. Helping the disabled and disadvantaged would remain a recurring theme throughout his life, though it was also at this time that he began to hone his massage technique and study its healing effects.

"In 1995, I met a man who practiced massage on the beach in Nha Trang,"

Antoine recalls. “He had acquired skills from different countries: Thailand, Indonesia, many places. I asked him to teach me certain techniques and that’s when I started to practice, mainly with friends and acquaintances.”

Over the years, his skills have been learned through various means, from becoming a certified acupuncturist to more unofficial understudying with traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. It’s a trade that, by nature, is often learned in backrooms, due to resistance from the Western medical establishment for not necessarily being quantifiable and also because that’s simply how it has been passed on for thousands of years in far corners of the earth. It is an alternative to the mainstream system and thus cannot exactly be regulated by the mainstream system.

The Emotions That You Don’t Let Out In Antoine’s arsenal of ancient

methods is Tui Na, which he acknowledges is closely related to what is referred to as Reiki in Japan and Magnetism in France. “The focus of Tui Na is on finding certain planes of energy in the body,” he shares. “This could be practiced without even touching a person. By keeping your hands close to the body but not actually touching it, the practitioner can find meridian points in the body and achieve a transfer of energy from the earth to those points.”

Based in Taoism, Antoine explains that this technique maintains the belief that there are five elements associated with organs: the liver is wood, the spleen is earth, the lungs are air, the kidneys are water, and the heart is fire. “So when you work with this, you can transfer or balance the energy from different meridians in the body. Sometimes energy might be building up in one place, rather than balanced out. The important distinction here is finding those points

of energy and transferring it between different meridians, rather than focusing on a physical, stereotypical type of massage. This is more inside the body.”

What fundamentally separates traditional Chinese medicine from Western medicine is the belief of the body’s interconnectivity. As Antoine notes, in Western medicine, “If you have a problem with your eyes, you see an eye doctor. If you have a problem with your ears, you see an ear doctor. If you have a problem with your stomach, you see another doctor... You should never cut up a body into different pieces, so to speak, because it’s one whole.”

With his patients, he finds that the cause of physical discomfort can often be rooted in the mind, pointing to someone who doesn’t express their emotions as an example. “At a certain point in time, the emotions that you don’t let out will accumulate inside your body, be it in the stomach or the intestines, and that will result in certain physical pains. You have to be very conscious of the fact that a pain in a specific organ does not necessarily mean that organ has a problem.”

Rather than prescribing something to cover up a symptom, his job is to help patients find the cause of their condition and in doing so a bond is often formed. “There’s an intimate side to it. There’s a side you could almost say that’s confessional, that people share when getting to their underlying problems... I need to show them that a lot of the underlying problems are based off today’s society where everyone tends to want to control their worlds.”

“People pay more attention to productivity and efficiency in today’s society,” he opines, delving into a philosophical mood. “People quantify everything. Time is perceived as money. Everybody tends to think in those terms, rather than thinking about inner values. For me, massage can function as a bridge that brings out these values. It’s not just about the exterior of the body, but it reaches inside—into someone’s energy. By doing that, I believe it can bring out the essence and kindness of human beings. It’s very different from the capitalistic approach that most people maintain in their daily lives.”

He is, to say the least, not your typical masseuse in Saigon. A session with Antoine (Tel: 094 568 4053; tonhotran@gmail.com) can last anywhere from two hours to over four—however long it takes, because healing is not quantified in time. What’s clear talking with him is that he has chosen this path because he truly believes in its power to help people, though he remains open to exploring different treatment techniques.

“I don’t know if I will continue doing this work forever. I might learn another form of medicine at some point,” he speculates on the future. “Continuing to learn is extremely important. You have to always be willing to learn and keep an open mind to new thoughts and ideas.” ■



HOW TO LOSE A FAT GUY IN 30 DAYS

Just because you're not a contestant on *The Biggest Loser* doesn't mean you can't win your own weight-loss battle at home

Text by **James Pham**

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A LOVE-HATE relationship with food. I love it. It hates my waist. Prior to my thirties, I could eat obscene amounts of anything and still be rail thin, gleefully throwing it in the faces of my weight-conscious friends. After the big 3-0, my metabolism did a 180, adding on the lbs with every late night feeding or second helping of dessert. Don't get me wrong—I've never been an unhealthy eater. I get a decent amount of exercise and drink very little soda, don't indulge in a lot of sweets, or have any other food vices. It's just that I love the taste of food (and have never met a buffet I didn't like), accepting the accompanying weight gain as an inconvenient side effect. I've read about (and haughtily discarded) all the trendy diets—eating like a caveman, werewolf or Mediterranean—and have always been the jerk who moans extra loud while eating chocolate cake in front of dieting friends. Of course, I'd love to lose weight just like everyone else and look better in (or out of) nice clothes; I just don't want to change my lifestyle to do it. I once asked a fitness-minded friend how I could burn calories with the least amount of effort. After thinking for a while, he told me to drink very cold water which would cause my body to



(The Full package, which includes 3 meals a day, provides ~1500 kcl.)

expend calories warming it up to body temperature. And that, my friends, is the closest I've ever gotten to dieting. So when I heard of FitMeal VN, a service that delivers ready-made, 500 calorie-portioned meals, I decided to try it for lunch and dinner for 30 days. And just for kicks, I vowed to read every "health" related article that popped up in my news feed as an extra form of fat penance. This is my diary.

Day 1
179 lbs

Crockpot Beef with Rich Gravy

The delivery guy came right on schedule with two little black boxes of food. My first meal was a beef stew, surprisingly full-flavored and very Western tasting. Too bad there was only eight spoonfuls of it. I counted. This is what I would normally eat as a midnight snack, lovingly referred to as Second Dinner, and certainly not as a full meal. A friend told me that a human stomach is only the size of a fist, so that amount of food looked about right. I feel like this is going to be a long and very hangry month. What have I gotten myself into?

Day 2
179 lbs

Grilled Beef with Demi-glace Sauce

Today's health article is about Viva Mayr, a five-star health spa on the southern shores of Lake Wörth in Austria, where a week will set you back about USD4,000. I read all about the whacky fix-its (Organic Liver Tea! Epsom salts and baking soda mixed with water! Abdominal massages!) What catches my eye, though, is the stale bread which everyone has to eat as a "chewing trainer" on the way to chewing each bite of food 30 times before swallowing. I practice mindful chewing with my cubes of grilled beef and slurp up all the gravy. The portion still feels small but after waiting another 10 minutes, I'm feeling kind of full. Could there be something to these controlled portions?

Day 4
180 lbs

Broccoli Cheddar Quinoa Egg Muffins

I dust off the scale thinking that the gnawing hunger I've been feeling will translate into a loss of at least five pounds. Me feeling hungry is akin to Superman seeing his blood for the first time—it just doesn't happen. But I've stuck to the FitMeal schedule, endured the hunger and now it's time for my reward. WHAT. THE. FRICK. I've gained a pound. How is that even possible when I can basically feel my body eating away at all my fat? I try to make sense of the world as I down Broccoli Cheddar Quinoa Egg Muffins. Well, not so much a muffin as a square, but anything with quinoa sounds healthy. Plus "quinoa" is just so fun to say. With most FitMeals, there's a sauce that comes on the side so you can decide how much of it to put on. I, of course, empty the whole container of the creamy cheese sauce (and lick the sides). Luckily, today's health article features a study from the University College of Dublin that says eating cheese may make you slimmer. Yay, cheese! As an aside, I am an avowed carnivore, but was surprisingly satisfied with this vegetarian meal. I think it's how the quinoa approximated the spongy texture of meat, or meat-likeness. Plus, CHEESE.

Day 8
178 lbs

Grilled Pork with Mushroom Sauce

The first week under my belt and I've come to realize that while I usually don't eat unhealthy foods per se, I am eating too much food in general. I put today's Grilled Pork with Mushroom Sauce and Green Beans into a rice bowl and it's only filled two-thirds of the way. Normally, I would down twice that amount, but it seems my stomach is adjusting to the smaller portions because I honestly don't feel as hungry as before. At the weekend, I went over to a friend's place for a fried chicken dinner. I hardly ate any rice, had lots of salad and just one piece of chicken, and even though I ate way less than I normally would have, I felt overstuffed. What is happening to me?



Day 11
175 lbs

Beef Steak with BBQ Sauce

I've been feeling different lately. My shirt collars feel slightly looser and I don't feel ready to pass out just bending over. I do a double take when the scale, normally a vengeful Cyclops, says I've lost four pounds. At my foot massage today, I experience another pleasant surprise. Where normally I'm greeted with "You look fatter today!", in that irritatingly straightforward way most Vietnamese have of blurting out the most unflattering statement possible based on appearance, my masseur asks me out of the blue if I'd been exercising more (I hadn't). "Your body feels firmer," he says. I stifle a tear. It's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.





Day 16
175 lbs
French Onion Soup

Ever since reading an article entitled *5 Strategies to Stop Late-Night Snacking*, I've been mindful of what I've been putting into my body after dinner. Instead of a second bowl of spaghetti while binge watching my favorite shows, it's now carrot sticks or fruit which I've cut up earlier in the day LIKE A BOSS. The article pointed out that we tend to gravitate towards ultra-processed, sugary or salty snacks at night, a time of the day when our bodies metabolize foods differently. Instead, it encourages eating regular meals and snacks during the day, setting a cutoff time of about 8 or 9pm, and giving yourself a 15-minute breather before raiding the refrigerator to allow the cravings to pass. While I've been doing well with pre-preparing healthy snacks, there are only so many cucumber sticks a man can eat. So I was thrilled to hear that FitMeal VN was introducing snacks as an optional add-on. Today's was French Onion Soup with a hint of cinnamon and with almonds and walnuts as the protein (alas, no cheesy croutons), a much tastier alternative to my own unimaginative snacks.



Day 18
175 lbs
Vegetable Squid Rolls

Ah, celebrities. They're just like us. Except when they aren't. Today's article is about the Goop, none other than celebrity diet queen, Gwyneth Paltrow. Apparently, she's on a week-long goat's milk cleanse and won't eat octopus because "they're too smart to be food." "Octopus (sic) are too smart to be food," she told her staff. "They have more neurons in their brains than we do." While that's not true (octopuses have around 500 million neurons, while humans possess closer to 100 billion), I decide I need all the extra neurons I can get as I happily munch on today's lunch, a vegetable bouquet held together by a ring of squid.

Day 20
174 lbs

Today is a Saturday and I'm having dinner at friend's house. Among the guests, one person isn't having the curry and pita bread we all are, but has brought his own grapefruit to eat. I silently pray that I'm never going to be "that guy." FitMeals only cover weekdays, so weekends are a chance to cheat or to continue the pattern of healthy eating. I continually surprise myself with my choices—just a small bowl of curry and a quarter piece of toasted pita. I still enjoy the taste of food, just not the feeling of being overly full afterwards.

Day 30
173 lbs
Sheet Pan Swedish Meatballs

It's been 30 days and I've lost 6 lbs. It doesn't even feel like I've deprived myself very much. Today's health article quotes Christmas Abbott, author of *The Badass Body Diet* who says that "food is your foundation, and fitness is the accessory." She advocates embracing the macronutrient trifecta of proteins, carbs, and healthy fats to reduce overall body fat instead of entirely cutting out certain types of food. I feel like the past month has taught me to be much more mindful of what and how much I eat, a habit that I can see as potentially life-changing. Having restaurant-quality meals delivered straight to my door and not having to decide what to eat every day has been equally liberating. But it's time for my final test. I'm going to get a haircut and my barber is the Regina George of Saigon, the original Mean Girl who always quips that I look fatter/darker/have more gray hair than usual. But today, he simply blurts out: "Have you been exercising? You look slimmer." I just shake my head with a smile.

FitMeal VN (facebook.com/fitmealvn) offers packages ranging from 1 meal per day to 3 meals plus a snack, starting at about VND60,000 per meal. Find out more at www.fitmeal.vn



Mini Lasagne cups, vegetable squid rolls with brown rice, apple pectan and feta salad, cauliflower rice sushi rolls.

Starting Point

Mandala Wellness takes an integrative approach to the promotion of well-being and the restoration of balance

By **Wes Grover**

Images Provided by **Mandala Wellness**



I HAVE NEVER TRIED acupuncture before. It's not that I have an aversion to needles, but electively having somebody poke me with them never really seemed like a must-do, particularly in the name of reducing stress.

Yet, here I am at the **Mandala Wellness** (41 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2; www.mandala-wellness.com.vn), located in a villa in District 2, waiting for a lovely acupuncturist named Johanna to stick a bunch of needles in me. She uses a new, disposable set for each session,

and as Johanna opens the package I am surprised to see that the needles look more like a wispy strand of hair than what we are accustomed to seeing in a typical doctor's office.

There are no particular risks associated with acupuncture, she informs me, and the benefits can address a wide range of ailments, from addiction to reproductive issues. Without a specific illness to treat, my visit falls under the preventative medicine category, promising to promote emotional and

physical well-being.

Relaxing music plays in the background as I lie down on a table and Johanna begins needling my body: one in each ankle, one near each knee, one in each wrist and another in the chest. At the very most, there's a slight pinching sensation when the needles are inserted, but at no point would it be described as painful. She leaves me lying there, eyes covered and an aromatherapy oil wafting in the air, for perhaps 20 minutes as the needles stimulate my nervous system,





releasing chemicals in the brain, spinal cord, and muscles.

Like most forms of alternative medicine, the effectiveness of acupuncture has been widely debated, though speaking solely from my firsthand experience, I can say that a quick session left me feeling an unprecedented sense of calmness throughout the day.

Acupuncture, however, is really just the tip of the iceberg at Mandala Wellness center.

Goal of Living Well

It started out as a small idea, a passion project of sorts, when two new mothers in the midst of their respective careers, one working in finance, the other in architecture, found themselves increasingly focused on the importance of living healthy and balanced lives. Like many others who are awakening to the concerns surrounding overall well-being in Saigon, from food safety to air pollution, co-founders Huynh Buu Tran and Rosanne Lee saw a need for alternative options, and, pivoting their careers, decided to take action.

First, it was cold pressed juices—the type of broccoli and kale-based concoctions that make you feel like you’ve done something productive simply by consuming—that spawned the Mandala brand, and from there it quickly snowballed into a comprehensive lifestyle platform.

“It was more like a hobby with your friends and then all this happened,” says

Tran, as we sit within the newly opened villa-turned-wellness center, occupied by osteopaths, nutritionists, reiki healers, and the like. “We thought, ‘it can’t just be the juice, we want to do something more.’ We know we can’t be the experts on everything, but the idea was to create a platform that brings everyone together and create awareness in Vietnam.”

In addition to the juice, which they continue to crank out in small batches from the center’s kitchen, today, the main points of emphasis under the Mandala Wellness umbrella are holistic healing, educational workshops and fitness. While the latter is one of Vietnam’s hottest industries, with health club chains popping up across the country, Rosanne and Tran see ample opportunity to differentiate themselves from the product offered at mega gyms.

Yoga, for instance, continues to grow in popularity, but Rosanne points out that they concentrate on filling the need for less prevalent types, such as Iyengar, Ashtanga, and soon Baptiste. “the market has predominately Hatha or Vinyasa yoga... The market at the moment is very much focused on a certain type and there’s very little of the other kinds. Our whole mission is to try to offer different things. What we’ve been working on is getting as many different types of yoga that are available and introducing them to people.”

“There are a lot of yoga teachers here in Vietnam and the competition is great,” adds Tran, “but there are many places that just ramp up the students and drop down

the fees and you’re not sure how qualified those teachers are.”

Providing the uncommon is a motif that carries over into their event space, as well, where practitioners, homeopathic doctors and health experts of all sorts from around the world come to share their knowledge.

“We officially launched in February with a biotherapist visiting from Bangkok. His work is based on the biomagnetic field of the human body and he uses that to heal,” Rosanne shares, noting even they were surprised by the turnout, which was split roughly in half between foreigners and Vietnamese. “When he came, we had guests from all walks of life come in. We had little kids, elderly, and everyone in between looking for help with a whole gamut of issues.”

A testament to the local rise in health awareness, it affirms that the goal of living well, and the ability to achieve it, goes beyond diet and exercise for Saigon’s active community. While it’s easy to get distracted by the grandeur of the Mandala Wellness center, with its immaculate grounds and sparkling swimming pool, more importantly, there’s substance beneath the façade, connecting the health-conscious to a global consortium of well-being professionals.

“This is home for us and we want to give back,” says Tran. “We see what’s happening here in terms of food, diet, and everything else. We want to make sure we can help people to be informed, do research and find alternatives.” ■

Experimenting With Drugs

When the symptoms are your own, self-diagnosis via the Internet—or anywhere but a doctor's office—can lead to inaccurate, worst-case scenarios

Text by **NPD Khanh**

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THIS story before, or maybe you yourself have had the misfortune to experience it—your stomach aches, you sense a fever coming and your head hurts. It's time to go to the doctor, except you dread visiting a hospital in Vietnam because of the crowded, stuffy hallways, the frustration of hospital bureaucracy, the encumbering language barrier and, most of all, the hospital bills that may or may not be covered by your health insurance.

Unwilling to put yourself against such daunting obstacles, you figure you should just take a shortcut, go to the nearest pharmacy and get something for your problems. It's cheaper, quicker, and the pharmacist attending the drugstore counter is a lot less intimidating than the line of hospital receptionists, nurses, doctors and cashiers you will have to face if you go the other route. After all, this is hardly the first time you've felt under the weather. You have always been healthy and for all you know, a little headache, tummy ache or fever seem simple enough

and easily dealt with if given the right pills. For something this simple, you are certain the pharmacist can fix you up with something quick and cheap.

At *Oi* we decided to do an experiment. We feigned the scenario above and visited two pharmacists (one public and one private) to see what kind of pills they would prescribe to us, and then we consulted a doctor at Centre Medical International (CMI) to provide us with an insight to what the pills were.

After telling Nguyen Binh Thanh, a Vietnamese pharmacist at Minh Duc, a privately-owned pharmacy, our symptoms, he sold us a bag (VND80,000) filled with unlabeled pills and capsules. No instructions were given, no questions asked, and even when we tried to push for an explanation in our broken Vietnamese, he didn't seem interested in trying to answer. Now we were left with a bag filled with mysterious pills that would supposedly solve our medical problems. What was in this bag of pills?

He gave us three types of medicine:

1. Paracetamol: According to Thanh this is a simple pain reliever that most pharmaceutical companies carry. They look different simply because they are produced by different pharmaceutical companies. This is for our headache.
2. Spasmaverine: "A muscle relaxant that should take care of your stomach ache," says Thanh. "It can also be used to treat period cramps for women."
3. Maxdotyl Sulpiride: "This one is for your headache," says Thanh again. This one, unlike the other two, requires a prescription from a doctor, but he has seen many doctors prescribing this same drug for people with headache or vertigo, so he's sure it's fine.

Opting for a second opinion, we visited Thuy, a pharmacist at V-Phano, a chain drugstore, and described to her the same symptoms. While Thuy gave us the same prescriptions as Thanh, she asked for more details on our symptoms and advised us to visit a doctor for an examination.



A Third Opinion

Provided with the information above as well as the bags of medicine from both pharmacies, Dr. Nicolas Lague, Medical Director at CMI, gave us his expert opinion. "I cannot identify many of these medicines. There are no names here and no shell with which to identify them. I am not sure if those are Paracetamol. Spasmaverine is an OK choice. It does treat stomachache and does not leave any harmful effects.

"This one [Maxdotyl Sulpiride] is used to treat schizophrenia. In France, we never prescribe this one for vertigo or headache. It is a huge surprise for me when I came to Vietnam and found out that many Vietnamese doctors prescribed Maxdotyl for patients without mental issues. It is true that Maxdotyl does have an effect on vertigo and headache, however, it is a drug specific to those with

mental issues and in France it is mainly prescribed by a psychiatrist; GP rarely prescribe this drug except to renew prescriptions already done, for a long term treatment." Normal doctors do not prescribe this drug. Besides, while it does and can treat vertigo and headache, it also has many side effects."

Dr. Lague adds: "In France, medical professors always teach their students that 90 percent of the time, an accurate diagnosis can be achieved simply by asking a lot of detailed questions. However, the leftover 10 percent requires careful examination. None of the two pharmacists asked the required questions."

According to Vietnamese Pharmaceutical Law Reg # 34/2005/QH11, while the owner of a private drugstore needs a university degree in pharmacy, the pharmacist attending the counter who does the actual selling

is only required to have a diploma in pharmacy, which can be acquired directly after high school and takes two years to finish. By law, these druggists are only allowed to sell and manage pharmaceutical stocks and cannot consult.

"While these symptoms do not appear particularly serious and, in most cases, are not life threatening, there is always a chance that they hide much more dangerous conditions that can only be revealed by thorough examination and blood testing," says Dr. Lague. "For the frugal patients or those without time, I would advise that if after two to three days of taking the medicine from these pharmacies, the symptoms still do not abate then they should visit a doctor. Going by the dose in these bags, which are just enough for two to three days, I think that's exactly what these pharmacists are trying to tell their expat customers. ■



Wine & Dine

THE HUE HOUSE / IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN





Eat Like an Emperor

A slice of Hue in Saigon at The Hue House

Text by **James Pham**

Images by **Ngoc Tran**

VIETNAM'S CULINARY HERITAGE owes much to the insatiable appetite of the Hue lords. Known for their excesses in all things of the flesh, the Hue emperors were notorious for having hundreds of wives and concubines and demanding new dishes every day with some banquets said to have up to 300 dishes. This forced the royal cooks to come up with innovative cuisine, by some accounts leaving a legacy of up to fifty percent of all Vietnamese dishes.

Sadly, other than the ubiquitous spicy *bun bo Hue* noodle soup and some cheap rice flour-based cakes sold street side, the breadth and beauty of Hue cuisine hasn't been well represented in Saigon. Enter **The Hue House** (Rooftop Master Building, 41-43 Tran Cao Van, D3), the newest in the collection of restaurateur Huy Tran, best known for his Saigon rooftop hotspots as well as Isaan-inspired Somtum Der.

Located on the 10th floor roof of the Master Building, Hue House opens up to a breezy space with surprisingly green views over the city, a feature shared with sister restaurants Secret Garden and Mountain Retreat. The décor is likewise simple yet elegant—bird cages repurposed into lamps, bonsai centerpieces in pretty ceramic bowls and lots of greenery to offset the surrounding cityscape. The space is anchored by a wooden pillared house with ornate wood carving, meticulously transported from Hue and rebuilt to house the bar and indoor seating area and providing a rustic contrast to the neighboring high rises.

Our meal began with a few appetizers including the *Banh thap cam* assorted platter of rice cakes (VND250,000), a

giant plate of rice flour-based cakes, some steamed in banana leaf, meant to be shared between two. While all the usual suspects were present, it was the *banh ram it* that stood out, a dumpling stuffed with shrimp and pork set atop a ball of fried dough that was itself stuffed with a savory filling and topped with caramelized shallots, dried shrimp and scallion oil. Also unique was the *Banh da tom chay* (VND80,000) which looked like a Vietnamese version of pizza—a crispy, homemade rice cracker base topped with a layer of steamed rice

flour crepe for a delicious contrast of textures along with shredded dried shrimp and a pile of fresh herbs, all to be dipped in a pungent fermented shrimp sauce. For as many dishes as you order, each one will likely come with a different sauce, all made in-house, adding a joyous element of discovery for the more adventurous eater willing to live life beyond *nuoc mam*. Another winning sauce came with the *Cuon diep* (VND95,000), a quartet of beautifully wrapped lettuce rolls filled with shrimp and pork. The simple freshness

(clockwise from below: *Banh thap cam*, *Cuon diep*, BBQ-ed spare ribs)





Va tron, Banh canh ca loc

of the rolls provided a nice vehicle for the gritty, flavorful sauce made with ground chicken livers, pork and peanuts.

Other dishes on the menu highlight unique ingredients only found in Hue, like the *Va tron* fig salad (VND95,000) with shrimp and pork. While usually boiled, here the green figs are finely sliced and quick pickled for a refreshingly sweet-tart effect. While not yet on the menu, the BBQ-ed spare ribs (VND95,000) are a must-try (just ask your waiter for them). Thick and meaty, the sate-marinated ribs come with a plate of crunchy greens and mixed rice, originally grown by minority groups in the Central Highlands. Another spicy hit was the Hue-style BBQ beef (VND125,000) which packed a punch

thanks to a potent marinade of sate, chili and tiny bulbs of *hanh tam*, a pungent onion in the chive family, all served with rice noodles, crunchy pickles, plantains, star fruit and more sate sauce.

The Hue House sticks with the winning recipe of its sister restaurants—modestly sized portions at even more modest prices, encouraging diners to sample and share, which is why we ordered two more dishes that sounded too good to pass up—the Rice with seafood in clay pot (VND115,000), a treat for the eyes and the stomach with its seafood medley over tender rice boiled in chicken stock and flavored with turmeric, and the *Banh canh ca loc* (VND85,000), a hearty bowl of house made noodles, short and thick, like a souped-up version of

udon. Where the snakehead fish is usually steamed in similar versions served in the Mekong Delta, here it's stir-fried with fish sauce and spices, making the meat chewier, which stood up well to the earthy, flavorsome broth.

Curiously, the menu doesn't include desserts, but there's usually a dessert of the day on offer. When we visited, it was *che bot loc*, little rice balls in an iced ginger syrup with coconut and peanut which provided a light, refreshing end to the evening.

Despite opening just a little over a month ago, The Hue House already has some buzz to it—almost filled to capacity on a recent Wednesday night when we visited, a delightful slice of Hue in downtown Saigon. ■

Hungry Like The Wolf

Tap into Saigon's newest go-to place for fine wine, craft beers and delicious food

Text by **Michael Arnold**
Images by **Ngoc Tran**



SO MUCH ABOUT INTERNATIONAL-STYLE dining venues is often lost in translation. It's not unusual for a Vietnamese reboot of a standard Western restaurant concept or drinking establishment to end up missing the mark entirely—and while such experiments can turn out to be refreshing takes through a new cultural lens, at worst they can be disconcerting and awkward renditions that fail to win over any target market.

Soi & Meo Taproom's (33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1) somewhat low-key attempt at an American-style taproom is an example of a good translation. Modeled on the casual, after-work watering holes known overseas for their relaxed, unpretentious atmosphere, this new venue carries off the right mood by underplaying the décor with clean, easy tones to make any class of patron feel welcome. Set up by a returned Vietnamese proprietress determined to make the experience of enjoying quality alcoholic beverages (with a special emphasis on craft beers and fine wines) available even to young local customers, Soi & Meo (the name meaning wolf & cat in Vietnamese) succeeds in knowing what it is and doing it well.

Being a taproom, Soi & Meo's best and freshest drinks are on tap—and for such a casual venue, the pouring technology evident behind the bar is a distinct

surprise. Good wine is prominently stored in a special chilled dispenser that draws from open bottles while keeping them sealed, preserving drinkability for weeks after opening. There are multiple taps for draft beer, and even one for cold brew coffee (again a particularly preservable form of the beverage, incidentally known for its low acidity). Soi & Meo's capacity to serve its best drinks in tasting-serve sizes represents its primary focus as an affordable, high-quality and easygoing gathering space optimized for after-work drinks. An intimate balcony on the second level lit by moody traffic-light lanterns as a stage for live music with performances held on Thursdays and Fridays every week.

On the night of our visit, Soi & Meo was gearing up for a special promotion on its selection of Sauvignon Blanc wines—they stock a fine range from France, Spain, Italy and New Zealand—so we took the chance to enjoy a taster set of all four paired with a platter of fresh oysters from around the region. This starter turned out to be quite an enlightening experiment in chemistry and biology: the wines (each of which is available separately by the 93/150 ml glass at VND80,000-VND170,000 each) stood in easily-discernible contrast to each other, their varied intensities nicely balanced



with those of the oysters (a selection from Quang Ninh, Nha Trang, Vung Tau and Can Gio at VND270,000), which were strikingly ranged in terms of size and sweetness—with those from Nha Trang easily presiding over the others.

(clockwise: Left to right: oysters and wine, craft beers and salmon bruschetta, wine bar, balcony view, crispy calamari, pork belly)



Following the oysters, we transitioned into a second platter of snacks coupled by a further selection of drinks in taster glasses—this time sampling Soi & Meo's craft beer. The taproom serves a number of Saigon's breakout popular brands, serves of which can be purchased at VND95,000 per glass (or just VND75,000 for Fuzzy Logic's Pale Ale); we tried a bold and bitter Kurtz Insane from Heart of Darkness, a fragrant Silk Road Jasmine by Pasteur Street, and an earthy Little Lava Red from Lac Brewing along with a plate of crispy calamari (VND155,000) and Salmon bruschetta (VND132,000). This is where the strengths of Soi & Meo came into their own—while they insist on casual



dining, the quality of the snack food was first-class and easily a notch above regular bar food elsewhere. While the calamari was surprisingly tender, the crusty bruschetta was excitingly flavorful, with no cause for disappointment in either item. It's refreshing to enjoy food at an establishment that openly targets young local communities without finding any compromise in terms of the quality of the cuisine.

Soi & Meo offers few meal-sized servings, but to round off the evening we did try one of its signature items—a superb slow-cooked beef flank in red wine with mushrooms and baked potatoes (VND230,000) that capped off a series of tasters to complete an unexpectedly fine meal. It's curious, but Soi & Meo perhaps unintentionally manages to pull off a star-class restaurant experience in a laid-back bar setting, indicating this as a fine restaurant choice for dinners as well as for its superb set lunches (available from 11am–2:30pm). Come here with friends to explore a range of great drinks, but don't hesitate to stay for the full meal. ■



Start The Weekend Here

Oi speaks with Robert Conte, Le Méridien Saigon's Hotel Manager, about their new After-Work Series that's designed for those that want to wind down their workday with great food, drink and music

Images Provided by **Le Méridien Saigon**

Tell us about the Le Méridien After-Work Series?

By offering something different on each night, such as our Wine and Cheese on Thursday, Craft Beer Bash on Friday and our Tapas@9 on Saturday, there is definitely an attraction here for anyone who is looking to get a head start on their weekend.

How did your team come up with the different food and drink pairings?

When conceptualizing these three distinct happenings, our food and beverage team went back to basics and considered natural pairings. Wine and cheese has been a classic pairing for decades while good beer, beef and chicken wings remains a definitive pairing in many restaurants around the world. Both of these happenings take place in our Latitude 10 Lounge + Bar. Tapas@9 takes place on the 9th floor, beside our swimming pool and adjacent to Bamboo Chic restaurant, and is a unique blend of modern Cantonese tapas, free flow beer, wine, 4 styles of mojitos set amongst a spectacular view of the Saigon River and emerging skyline of District 2. The pairings naturally pull basic flavors of

food and beverage together while at the same time allow each individual event be its own unique experience as they are all so different from one another.

Describe the Wine & Cheese Buffet on Thursdays.

The selection of cheese generally does not vary from week to week as we have selected a minimum variety of 9 international varieties that are suitable with a broad collection of white and red wines. We do, however, play with the wine selection and will change some labels weekly depending on the feedback we get from our guests. We have a selection of 4 reds and 4 whites to choose from and most of our regular guests have their favorites so we tend not to rotate those labels. In addition to the wine and cheese, we offer a selection of sangria as well as cold cuts, house made terrines, bread and dips. Perhaps one of the best parts of the evening is that our guests have the opportunity to pour their own wine and help themselves to the selection of cheese throughout the night.

Are Fridays' Craft Beer Bash inspired by craft beer's recent

popularity in Saigon? Everyone knows that beers and chicken wings go hand-in-hand, how has LM made this combo different? And at VND550,000 for free flow along with roasted Australian sirloin, house-made pretzels, and chicken wings, how did you manage to keep it affordable?

We decided to place craft beer in Latitude 10 as the first of 3 craft initiatives for the lounge. Yes, the craft beer movement is rapidly emerging in Saigon so it was only natural to support the local craft brewers as well as import a few alternative craft beer labels from overseas to give our guests several different styles of craft beer to choose from. Craft coffee, coffee roasting and mixology will soon be a part of the craft experience in Latitude 10, that will differentiate the lounge from others in the city and we will certainly be letting everyone know when we begin these exciting programs.

We wish to have all of our initiatives here at Le Méridien accessible to everyone. We price in such a way that it not only creates an initial interest to come and take part in one of our LM After-Work Series but also gives our returning guests

Wine + Cheese, Craft Beer Bash



*Clockwise from right: Craft Beer Bash,
Tapas@9 Drunken Fruit, Banh Bao*

an honest value and a sense that they are returning to their favorite neighborhood lounge.

What kind of tapas can we expect from Bamboo Chic? Is the swimming pool usage included?

Our Tapas@9 is truly sensational! Along with the view I mentioned earlier, our guests are most certainly welcomed to use the pool as they are treated to innovative Cantonese and Japanese tapas, such as smoked crispy pork belly and kim chi, Japanese oysters prepared several different ways, and a variety of pot stickers...just to name a few. These go great with our “drunken fruit” and cocktail infused misters that are passed around throughout the evening.

Tell us about the entertainment for the After-Work Series?

We have live music programing for each of the events: Thursday Wine and Cheese is complemented by a three-piece acoustic band that performs popular music hits; every Friday, our Craft Beer Bash features a rotation of bands that have a slightly bluesy approach to classic rock music; while our Tapas@9 features the music of our house DJ. ■



**Le Méridien After-Work Series
Thursdays: Wine + Cheese**

Enjoy an endless flow of selected wine from around the world, accompanied by an assortment of artisan cheese, house-made bread, paté, terrine and imported charcuteries while taking in live acoustic music. Priced at VND500,000++ per person, from 6pm-9pm.

Fridays: Craft Beer Bash

Treat yourself to a free flow of Anderson Valley and Pasteur Street beers pairing with freshly carved roasted Australian sirloin, house-made pretzels and chicken wings while listening to acoustic music. Priced at VND550,000++ per person, from 6pm-9pm. *Wine + Cheese and Craft Beer Bash are held at Latitude 10 – G Floor*

Saturdays: Tapas@9

Enjoy the creative Cantonese Tapas by Bamboo Chic Restaurant, sip and chill on an eclectic Cocktail selection by Le Méridien Saigon and sway the night away to deep house tunes. Priced at VND650,000++ per person, from 7:30pm-10:30pm *Bamboo Chic – Level 9*

Le Méridien Saigon
3C Ton Duc Thang, D1 / 6263 6688
www.lemeridienhosaigon.com

Endless Parade of Meats

A Brazilian steakhouse that gives you all the delicious meats you can handle

Text by **Wes Grover**
Images by **Ngoc Tran**



WE ALL KNOW SAIGON IS a food town, but a good piece of meat can be tough to find. And sometimes, one piece of meat just isn't going to satisfy. So if you have a hankering for a place serving up quality *meats* (plural), the type of place where overindulgence is seemingly encouraged and will leave you in a self-induced food coma, perhaps **Rio Churrascaria** (10AB Thai Van Lung, D1) is the place for you.

Upon arrival, the sleek décor sets an upscale tone, making it an enjoyable setting to wind down and take your time feasting. Overlooking the corner of Thai Van Lung and Le Than Thonh, this Brazilian steakhouse delivers dramatic flair that starts with the *passadores*, or trained meat waiters, on the constant prowl with giant slabs of beef, ready to fill your plate. The Brazilian chefs here boast extensive experience cooking churrasco-style barbecue in their home country, which is immediately evident with the first bite.

Of course, the main event on the menu is the Buffet + Meats (VND689,000)—an all-you-can-eat extravaganza. If you're a vegetarian, or simply looking for a lighter meal, you can opt solely for the Buffet Counter (VND380,000), and children ages 7-14 can enjoy everything for VND350,000.

Starting with a round of stiff caipirinhas (VND120,000), we took a minute to process the frenzy of meats circulating before jumping into the fun. Proper decorum would have entailed starting with a fresh salad from the loaded buffet counter, but we didn't have the discipline. The first *passadore* came around with a dripping beef rump steak and the feast began. Lightly salted and available cooked to different degrees, a bite of this seriously savory cut and we knew we were in for the real deal.

Before we knew it, our plates were filled with beef ribs, chicken breast wrapped in bacon, and sweet, caramelized pineapple that proved the perfect palate cleanser. If you're looking to spice things up, a variety of fixings, including homemade chili sauce, mushroom sauce and pepper sauce, garnish the table, though we didn't feel the need to add





anything to these flavorful offerings.

Once we cleared the first round, we made our way to the buffet, where they have 22 dishes that are changed daily. In addition to a widespread assortment of greens, we found such dishes as farofa, stuffed eggplant, black beans and a particularly pleasing pumpkin puree, forcing us to walk a fine line so as not to fill up and miss out on the many more meats to come.

The *passadores* kept making the rounds and suddenly our plates were overloaded yet again, this time with tasty little chicken hearts, juicy beef tenderloin with garlic, and a spicy pork sausage packing a punch of flavor.

By this point, things started getting blurry. We were slipping into the aforementioned food coma, but we had to push on for the sake of our readers. We topped ourselves off with beef hump, beef rump top side and lamb shoulder. It was becoming borderline self-destructive behavior as each piece melted in our mouths, sending us further and further into a state of fullness that our doctors would most likely advise against.

We're not positive, but we're pretty sure we ordered dessert before tapping out. If memory serves correctly, we opted for a moist Brazilian chocolate cake (VND99,000) and passionfruit mousse (VND99,000). This final round of food, while decadent and delectable, pushed us right over the edge.

Loosening our belts as we rolled out onto the street, we had definitively overdone it and we don't regret it. ■



PHO ABROAD

Vibrant, fresh and bursting with flavors, Vietnamese food has hit London in a big way

Text by **Sam Sinha**



Pho/Cay Tre Soho

VIETNAMESE FOOD IS GROWING IN popularity in London and as the demand grows, the quality and authenticity of restaurants and street food outlets is getting better and better.

London's Vietnamese population didn't have an easy start in the UK. It was predictably difficult to settle in a foreign land half-way across the world, and many of the first generation of immigrants had little education and problems learning the language. The government policy of spreading the immigrants across the country robbed them of mutual support, making it even harder to integrate and lay roots, but most gravitated towards larger cities, settling in London in places like Lewisham, Southwark in the South and Hackney to the East, where there are still large Vietnamese communities today.

There are now estimated to be around 30,000 Vietnamese in London. The new generation are more settled and generally speak excellent English. They are thriving at school and more and more

enterprising individuals are opening restaurants, serving their much loved cuisine to Londoners. The consequence being that Vietnamese food is getting better and more widely available in more areas of the capital.

There are hundreds of Vietnamese restaurants in London, from street food outlets and casual "*ca phes*" to modern fine-dining restaurants and everything in between. Some are cooking classic dishes as they would be served back in Vietnam, others serve a Western-friendly version. Ubiquitous of course, is the presence of *pho* on the menu and Sriracha sauce on the table. Many of these restaurants can be found in Shoreditch, the infamously trendy area of East London. You won't find anything else but Vietnamese restaurants on this 200m stretch of Kingsland Road, ranging from worn out frontages with handwritten menus taped to the windows to huge double fronted establishments with neon signs, displaying their well-respected names and accomplishments.

This is where people come for reasonably priced Vietnamese food in London, the bonus being that most of the restaurants are "BYOB" meaning "Bring your own booze", as they don't hold alcohol licenses. The higher-end establishments sell wine and beer and tend to serve up the most authentic dishes as well.

The familiar names are Song Que and Mien Tay, serving up all the classics you would expect: *pho*, summer rolls, *banh mi*. The problem is which to choose but it is always a good idea to go with the busiest. One such restaurant is **BunBunBun** (134B Kingsland Rd, London E2 8DY, UK) which specializes in *bun cha*. A dish from Hanoi's Old Quarter, it consists of grilled meats served in fish sauce-laden broth, alongside a mountain of noodles, lettuce, herbs and crunchy vegetables, which you can add the broth and slurp it all up together. They also serve excellent prawn rolls, with a deliciously spicy and sour sauce. The rolls are wrapped up in rice



Baby squid stuffed with confit duck/Cay Tre Soho

paper making them much lighter than their deep-fried cousins, and are filled with fresh herbs, crisp veggies and grilled prawns.

Recently many Vietnamese restaurants have started appearing in Soho, the heart of London's restaurant scene. It now houses the high-end of the market and as well as the mid-level chain restaurants, which focus more on pumping out large volumes of food than on the quality of authenticity.

The best *pho* you can find in Soho is from **Cay Tre** (42-43 Dean St, Soho, London W1D 4PZ, UK), in the newest of its three London branches. The salubrious broth is crystal clear and packed with exotic herbs, slices of tender beef and fresh vegetables. The balance of fish sauce, lime, and savory meatiness is sublime, and transports me back to Saigon's famous *pho bo vien thap cam* (pho with beef ball and the works) where I first learnt what *pho* is supposed to taste like.

Cay Tre also excels in delivering modern fusions of flavors, the baby squid stuffed with confit duck being a delicious example. Interaction with the staff was part of the charm here, sizzling cast iron pots of meaty stew ignited our anticipation, while table-griddled beef, which we were shown how to wrap, provided excitement and satisfaction. The flavors were fantastic and offered welcome surprises. This, coupled with the entertainment, made for an unforgettable experience.

One of the most popular street food dishes in Vietnam, which you can find on virtually every corner in Hanoi or Saigon, is *banh mi*, and Londoners are starting to catch on. It is a classic example of the fusion of influences seen in Vietnamese cooking; chicken liver paté and the baguette from the French and barbecue pork and spices from China and other parts of Asia. Plus the tang of crunchy pickled vegetables, loads of fresh herbs and the prevalence of fish sauce as a seasoning, all classic Vietnamese touches.

Delicious Balance

A range of excellent *banh mi* can be found at **KEU** (332 Old St, London, EC1V 9DR, UK), which has delis across the city. They contain all the key ingredients, proper pate, strips of delicious, tender pork, crunchy daikon and delicious sauces. The Keu Classic includes slices of flavor some mortadella, the meaty Italian sausage working surprisingly well with the classic *banh*

mi flavors. All the *banh mi* at Keu are packed full of fresh herbs, which I'm told, they fly in from Vietnam to ensure the flavors are authentic.

"We keep our food authentic in London by using fresh, traditional Vietnamese ingredients. We have ingredients flown into London twice a week from Saigon including our freshly hand cut noodles and Vietnamese herbs. People want to try something different,



*Fried soft shell crab,
Saigon Saigon*



and reminded me of a wonderful banana leaf salad which I ate at Chim Sao in Hanoi. The fish sauce, lime and vinegar spiked dressing was so good it had to be slurped from the bowl, and the crunchy peanut topping provided excellent texture to the dish while sweetness came from papaya and carrot.

They do an excellent *pho* and *bun cha*, very authentic to the classics, the rich smokiness of the grilled pork, cut by vinegar, garlic and chili in a delicious balancing act. A mountain of fresh herbs accompanied the dish and freshened everything up. The consistency of quality was excellent, everything was well balanced and seasoned to perfection and the meat had a wonderful chargrilled flavor reminiscent of the street side barbecues of Vietnam.

From simple authentic dishes to modern twists and table side cooking, London has the whole range of Vietnamese offerings covered, albeit without the atmosphere that comes with dining on a plastic chair on a motorcycle-laden side street. You won't find the variety of exotic herbs that you would in Vietnam, the best restaurants make up the difference in other areas and if you look in the right places you can find an eating experience reminiscent of the real thing.

The best restaurants are able to find that delicious balance between smoky grilled meats and flavorsome broths; sharp and tangy sauces and fresh, crunchy herbs and vegetables that are the staples of Vietnamese cuisine.

Vietnamese food in London is certainly on the up, and it's not surprising given that it's healthy, fresh and delicious. Restaurants are adding more twists to liven up classic dishes while authenticity can also be found. A wide range is available so you can be satisfied whether it's a hearty bowl of *pho* you want, or a fresh and satisfying *banh mi* on the go. ■



taste new cuisines and the *banh mi* brings a new type of taste and aroma to the classic sandwich," says the owner.

The bread was also excellent and reminded me of my favorite *banh mi* stall in Hanoi, *Banh Mi 25*, served from a cart in a bustling side street. This is no coincidence: "We have our own bespoke bread made to imitate the traditional baguettes used in Vietnam. Its crispy shell ensures we can fill it with as much filling as possible, using traditional pates, pickled vegetables and herbs with a choice of meat, fish or vegetable."

One of the best all-round Vietnamese restaurants in London is not found in Shoreditch or Lewisham, but West London's Hammersmith. **Saigon Saigon** (313-317 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9NH) bucks the trend in terms of location and in quality it is hard to beat. They serve an extensive menu of classics and also add a few twists to make the food unique.

Fried soft shell crab was crispy and delicious, served with a hot and sour dip. The lotus leaf salad was a standout dish



Cay Tre (below), KEU (above)

Banh mi/KEU

Spice Up Your Life

Spice Viet Restaurant opens in Hue featuring farm-to-table freshness

Text by **James Pham**
Images Provided by **TMG**



OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, one of the hottest trends in the food world has been the farm-to-table movement. Discerning diners have begun to return to clean, green eating—wanting to know where their food comes from. More so in Vietnam, where tainted food scandals and dubious hygiene practices are the norm, having access to fresh, locally produced food is the culinary version of the Holy Grail.

Based on that concept, Spice Viet Restaurant opened its first location in Hue last month, where literally minutes from the ancient citadel are endless emerald green rice fields, still within the city proper. Together with the seafood-rich waters of the Perfume River, the Tam Giang Lagoons and the East Sea, Hue is a chef's dream pantry.

"Hue cuisine is highlighted by the uniqueness of our ingredients," says Chef Tran Van Tuan, formerly of fine kitchens the likes of InterContinental Danang and Ana Mandara Hue. Born and raised in Hue, he speaks lovingly of the area's unique terroir, a distinct combination of soil and climate, that produces herbs and produce available nowhere else in Vietnam, like green figs used in the Green fig salad with river shrimp.

Chef Tuan talks excitedly about a visit to a nearby poultry farm where the chickens are raised using no chemicals and fed only produce grown right on the farm. The chicken stars in dishes like Sautéed free-range chicken with kaffir limes and Raw honey roasted chicken, found on the

menus. Diners can also order a la carte with iconic dishes that span the length of Vietnam like Hanoi's chargrilled pork belly and pork patties over rice noodles and Hoi An's shredded free-range chicken over turmeric-flavored rice pilaf. Foodies looking for more adventurous flavors might go for the Pan-fried fish marinated with turmeric and galangal or the Bac Ha green tea-smoked duck breast. Hue specialties are also represented, like in the recommended Assorted Platter for Two comprised of a medley of Chargrilled shrimp paste on sugarcane, lemongrass pork skewers, chargrilled beef in fragrant *la lot* leaves, fresh spring rolls and banana blossom salad.

When in Hue, visit Spice Viet Restaurant for some of the freshest Vietnamese cuisine you'll find anywhere, using organic, locally-grown produce within a radius of just 30km of the restaurant where possible.

Spice Viet Restaurant Hue (15 Ly Thuong Kiet) features indoor and outdoor seating for 100, including a VIP Room. Set menus are available for groups of 10 or more with at least 4 hours notice, making the venue an excellent choice for tour groups as well as independent diners. Spice Viet Restaurant Hue is operated by the Thien Minh Group (TMG) whose portfolio includes well-known brands such as Victoria Hotels & Resorts, ÉMM Hotels & Resorts and Buffalo Tours. Other locations throughout Vietnam will be announced in the upcoming months. Find out more at www.eatspiceviet.com ■





Cao Lau

Serves 4
Ingredients

HOI AN'S LEGENDARY CAO LAU is shrouded in mystery. Amazingly, despite being the signature noodle dish of Vietnam's hippest heritage town, both its origins and essential ingredients are unknown to almost everyone. The sweet and smoky broth shows more than a hint of Chinese-style flavoring and the name is rumored to be derived from Chinese words. Yet, the preferred story of origin is that Japanese traders brought it with them when they settled in Hoi An during the 16th and 17th centuries. It's certainly

a believable tale given that the springy, chewy, rice noodles in this dish show similarities to Japanese udon-noodles.

Guidebooks and Hoi An natives will tell you the dish can only be made with water from the ancient Ba Le well in Hoi An, one of dozens of centuries-old wells dotting the Old Town; that only lye ash from a tree grown on the nearby Cham Islands can be used in the making of the noodle dough; and that only one family closely guards the secret recipe and are so protective they won't allow outsiders to watch their covert noodle-making.

- Pork tenderloin 400g
- Cao Lau 500g
(can substitute with udon noodles)
- Bean sprouts 100g
- Herbs 200g
- Garlic 100g
- Salt, brown sugar, Chinese enough five-spice powder, soy sauce, seasoning
- Crispy corn chips handful





With an eye for visual beauty as well as a discerning palate, Ngoc Tran has undertaken to collect and present *Easy To Cook: 40 Delicious Vietnamese Dishes As Listed By CNN*. Ngoc has personally traveled around her native Vietnam in search of the most outstanding variety of every recipe featured in her book. Find her book at all Phuong Nam bookstores (nhasachphuongnam.com) or on Kindle at Amazon



1. Gently break the *cao lau* apart.



2. Immerse *cao lau* in boiling water. Drain.



3. Immerse bean sprouts in boiling water. Drain.



4. Coat the pork with salt, brown sugar, Chinese five-spice powder, soy sauce and garlic. Marinate for 1-2h. Remove pork from marinade, retaining the marinade. Fry pork in hot oil until brown on both sides. Add the remaining marinade, cover and cook over low heat for 1h. Extract the gravy from the mixture, then cook until pork is cooked through.

5. Let the pork cool down, then slice thinly.



6. Combine noodles, bean sprouts, pork and vegetables in a serving bowl. Pour the gravy over the noodles.



7. Top noodles with chili powder and crispy corn chips. Serve with chili, soy sauce and lemon.



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

Red Wine with Fish?

A food and wine pairing that
breaks the rules



I RECENTLY LED A WINE training session to a restaurant team, most of whom were young and had formal qualification in hospitality. Before I started, I asked each of them to write down what they knew about wine. I was very happy to see that everyone had more than a basic knowledge of wine—a good start. Almost everyone told me that red wine must go with meat and white wine with fish. Eek!

This is one of the most common misconceptions around. Although in general, light and medium white wines tend to go with white fish, however, it is not always the case that white wine goes with fish or that red wine has to go with meat. It all depends on many factors.

When pairing food and wine, we need to start with the main objective of why we are pairing the two, so that the experience of having both together is better than having them separately or, in other words, they enhance each

other. For this, we need to first look at the ‘weight’ of both the food and the wine, and I don’t mean putting them on a scale. A light wine, red or white, is likely to pair better with light food, let’s say a pinot gris with a green salad. White wine, if you pair it with a heavy dish, like a lamb roast, which is rather heavy, then the food will overpower and likely kill the wine. Likewise, a heavy wine, let’s say a shiraz from Barossa, paired with a green salad would kill the dish.

Once the ‘weight’ is right, we should aim to have a dish and a wine that either are similar or in contrast. Wine flavors come from specific components: sugar, acid, fruit, tannin and alcohol level. Different dishes also have flavor components: fat, acid, salt, sugar, umami and bitter. The best food and wine pairings feature complementary components, weight and textures.

For example, a grilled steak will be

ideally paired with a heavy and tannic wine like a cabernet sauvignon, a malbec or an aged tempranillo. As the fat and umami (protein) on the steak will balance the tannins of the wine. A lobster thermidor goes well with an oaked chardonnay, where the buttery flavors of the chardonnay match those of the creamy sauce served with the lobster.

However, sauces are usually the forgotten element of pairing when it should actually be a priority because it can change not only the taste of the dish, but also the weight. For example, one of my crazy pairings—to which I have won many bets against food and wine experts—is pairing tuna with a Crianza Rioja aged for two years or more. If you serve the tuna raw with a marinade of soya sauce and wasabi, (which is one of my favorite dishes) a nice aged red rioja pairs fantastically with it. And so, here we have fish with red wine. ■

Wine & Dine

ROOFTOP BARS

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



Liquid Sky Bar

A casual destination to escape and unwind in the sun. In the evening, the space transforms into a rooftop lounge where guests and locals will come to socialize, dance or just let loose. On the mezzanine level, comfortable lounges and a flow of cocktails create a casual and fun atmosphere. It is the perfect spot to watch the sunset over the horizon.

21F - Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1 / 3822 0033



Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar

Set on the fifth floor, Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar makes up for its modest height with breath-taking views of Vietnam's French colonial structures such as Saigon Opera House and People's Committee Hall. Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar is also fitted with an elevated stage and dancefloor, hosting live Latino bands and salsa performances at 20:00 onwards.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1



Thao Dien

Tropicana

Tropicana is the first and only rooftop bar in Thao Dien, District 2. The venue, with its sweeping views, looks over the Saigon River and Thao Dien, with an exciting selection of beverages, including signature cocktails, an extensive wine list and liqueurs. The bar is based on a Latin concept with live music and a Latin food menu.

Tuesday to Sundays: 5PM till late
41 Street 41, Thao Dien, District 2, Ho Chi Minh City
info@tropicanasaigon.com
Phone: (+84) 165 424 3972

SUNDAY BRUNCHES



Hotel Equatorial

Indulge in extravagance with the freshest seafood, roasted meats, international dishes, all-day breakfast favourites, and decadent desserts. A family brunch your kids will love. Complimentary for children below 6 years old. Prices: VND790,000 ++ per adult, VND395,000 ++ per child (12 years and under. VND990,000++ includes house wine, and beer VND1,390,000++ includes champagne, craft cocktails, wine, and beer

11.30am - 2.30pm
242 Tran Binh Trong, D5
3839 7777
www.hochiminhcity.equatorial.com



Indulgent Sundays @ Nineteen

A legendary buffet in the Heart of Saigon. Sensational cooking and an intimate, lively atmosphere are guaranteed. Authentic cuisine from around the globe, prepared by award-winning chefs, with fresh seafood as the highlight of the brunch. From noon to 3pm, with options from VND 890,000++ without drinks to VND 1,490,000++ with a free flow of Champagne, cocktails, house wine, and beer.

19-23 Lam Son Square, D1
hotel@caravellehotel.com / 3823 4999



Le Meridien

Centered around three distinctive dining venues - Latest Recipe, Bamboo Chic and Latitude 10 - Le Meridien offers three brunch packages, prices range from VND1,500,000 to VND2,500,000 and include Oriental and International cuisine.

3C Ton Duc Thang, D1
6263 6688 - ext.6930
www.lemeridiensaigon.com

BAR & CRAFT BEER BREWERIES



Acoustic Bar

A place to catch some high-quality live music in a lively atmosphere. Plus, the frequent rotation of performers means that even the most regular of patrons are kept on their toes.

E1 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3



Aperitivo

Cosy, friendly, and chic, with a quality cocktail and wine list, delicious deli sandwiches by day and night, Aperitivo is a great place to relax and unwind after work.

80b/c Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, D2.



BiaCraft

BiaCraft is renowned for its extensive selection of craft beers. The back to basics décor only serves to enhance the laidback ambience which BiaCraft prides itself on.

90 Xuan Thuy, D2

CHINESE

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



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



San Fu Lou – Cantonese Kitchen

San Fu Lou combines tradition with our Chinese kitchen and sophisticated contemporary Oriental ambience. San Fu Lou exudes colors and cozy feel of a traditional Chinese "house". Our open kitchen, which is a first in Vietnam for a Chinese restaurant, allows diners to take in a visual feast before the food is served.



THU HANG
SAN FU LOU
CANTONESE KITCHEN

SAN FU LOU 1
Ground floor, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai St., Dist 1, HCMC
(+848) 38239513
SAN FU LOU 2
195-197 Phan Xich Long St., Phu Nhuan Dist, HCMC
(+848) 35176168
SAN FU LOU 3
24 Ba Thang Hai St., Dist 10, HCMC
(+848) 38620920
24 Ba Thang Hai St., Dist 10, HCMC
(+848) 38620920

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



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



Café RuNam

No disappointments from this earnest local cafe consistently serving exceptional international standard coffee. Beautifully-styled and focussed on an attention to quality, Café 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.cafesunam.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



K.Coffee

Accented with sleek furniture and dark wood, this cozy cafe serves fresh Italian-style coffee, cold fruit juices, homemade Vietnamese food and desserts. The friendly owner and staff make this a great spot to while away the afternoon with a good book or magazine.

Opening time: 7AM- 10PM.

Sunday closed.

86 Hoang Dieu, D4
8253316 / 090 142 3103



La Rotonde Saigon

Situated in an authentic French colonial structure, this relaxed café is the perfect haven to escape the hustle and bustle of District 1. The east meets west interior décor is reminiscent of Old Saigon, and is greatly complemented by the Vietnamese fusion cuisine on offer.

77B Ham Nghi, 1st Floor, D1



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





Le Terroir

Recently opened, 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



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.

13 Tong Huu Dinh, D2

3519 4058

www.bacoulos.com



Le Jardin

This place is consistently popular with French expats seeking an escape from the busier boulevards. It has a wholesome bistro-style menu with a shaded terrace cafe in the outdoor garden of the French cultural centre, Idecaf.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1



Long Phi

French-owned, this longstanding restobar has been a favorite among late-night revelers because of its late opening hours - 4am. The menu is a combination of Vietnamese and French with pasta dishes thrown in to cater to everyone.

207 Bui Vien, 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 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

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.

39 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2

3744 4585



INDIAN

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



Ashoka

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

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



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



Natraj

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

41 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
6679 5267 - 6686 3168
www.facebook.com/natrajindiancuisine



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



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



TÊ TÊ CÓ CÒN PHÊ?

Thousands of pangolins are killed every year although there is no scientific evidence that pangolins can cure diseases.
Help us stop the poaching!
[#savethepangolin](#)

Hàng ngàn con tê tê bị giết mỗi năm dù chưa có nghiên cứu khoa học nào cho thấy tê tê chữa được bệnh.
Hãy ngăn chặn sự tàn sát vô lý này!
[#cuttete](#)

WHEN THE BUYING STOPS - THE KILLING CAN TOO

CHANGE **CỨU TRỢ HOANG DÃ WILDAID**

ITALIAN

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



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.ciaobellavietnam.com

Ciao Bella



La Forchetta

La cucina La Forchetta is located in a hotel building in Phu My Hung. Chef Gianni, who hails from Sicily, puts his passion into his food, focusing on pastas and pizzas with Italian meat and fish dishes as well delicious homemade desserts. Most of the tables are outside, so you can enjoy a relaxing outdoor dinner.

24 Hung Gia, PMH, D7
3541 1006



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



Portofino

Great place for pizza's, pasta's and interesting main dishes in a cozy setting.

15 Dong Du, D1
+84 8 3823 3597
info@portofinovieta.com
http://www.portofinovieta.com/



Pizza Logic

Nr. 1 Pizza in the World "Pizza is not meant to be tasted, but to be eaten". We aim to make pizza a more familiar dish in Vietnam. Come try our specialties, pizzas cooked in wood-fired oven, roasted chicken prepared in rotisserie oven, mouth-watering beef, or pasta dish for crab lovers.

Happy Hour 17:00 -19:00 (Mon - Fri) : Discount 50% for all drinks. 30% for wine bottles.

Lot L5-18, 5F Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi St., Dist.1, HCMC
(08) 3821 8319 - 090 675 6389
pizzalogic.hcm@gmail.com
http://pizzalogic-hcm.com/index-vn.html
Fest.vn or call 1900636997



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

Carpaccio

Often unfairly mistaken as a purely tourist dining destination, Carpaccio 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



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

JAPANESE

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



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



Kesera Bar & Restaurant

An Ideal place for your city escape and enjoying Japanese fusion foods. We have the best bagels in town, fine wine and cigars in a custom cabinet and is a must-do for anyone visiting the city.

26/3 Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe Ward, Dist 1
0838 270 443



Lavastone BBQ

Modern Japanese Yakinitu restaurant combined with a classic cocktail bar located right in the heart of buzzing Ho Chi Minh City. Juicy BBQ in the restaurant's home-made sauce to mind-blowing signature cocktails, you can find them all at Lavastone.

96B Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
6271 3786
Facebook: Lavastone BBQ



SORAE Sushi Sake Lounge

"Sorae"- Up in the sky, is one of the most spectacular Japanese restaurant and a "must go" destination at the heart of the bustling busy district of Saigon.

Located in the heart of District 1, on the 24th floor of AB Tower, it has a gorgeous 360 degree overview over to the city. Sorae can accommodate up to 368 people in a spacious 1,000 sqm elegant setting including a bar with hundreds of varieties of beverages and the finest cigar club in town. Besides offering delicious Japanese cuisine, Sorae delights its guests with great entertainment and DJ.

Level 24, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai St., Dist 1, HCMC

08 3827 2372

<http://www.soraesushi.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Soraesushi/>

Weekend Brunch at only VND 680,000

Fest.vn or call 1900636997



Sushi Dining Aoi

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

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3

3930 0039

www.sushidiningaoi.com



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

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

Chisana Hashi

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

3824 5355

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



KOREAN

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



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



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 Bui, D1
3829 4297



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 Bui St. D1
3823 7506

Thai Street

Authentic Thai Food in a fun street-food setting. All the favorites of Thailand - Tom Yum Goong, Red and Green Curries, Som Tum - prepared by their Thai chef.

26 Thao Dien Road, Thao Dien, D2
0866549525

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 Bui, D1
090 879 1412

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

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



B3 STEAKHOUSE & CRAFT BEER

Large selection of fresh New Zealand Grass-fed Beef cuts and Local Craft Beers. Decoration style is a mix of retro and contemporary street art that results in a friendly and cozy atmosphere. The restaurant is conveniently located on Nguyen Hue street, making it very suitable for after-business dinner, group hangouts or romantic date night on the terrace.

3pm-11pm
Level 1, 90 Nguyen Hue, Dist.1, HCMC
Reservation: 0166 519 9846



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



El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse

The fine dining steakhouse boasts a modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere. The authenticity of the Argentinian cuisine is strictly followed by the methods of preparation, hand-made charcoal grill serves as the focal point in the kitchen to maintain and accentuate the original flavor of the meat.

74/1 Hai Ba Trung, D1



Nossa Steakhouse

A stylish restaurant featuring Italian cuisine and Western steaks with a wide selection of imported steaks from Australian and the US. Nossa 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



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




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 vietnammmm.com & eat.vn
"Baba brings India to Vietnam"



wok n'roll American Chinese Food
Full Menu
www.woknroll.vn

0122-690-8881

Scam for the full menu

VIETNAMESE

Fest.vn
call 1900636997



Five Oysters

Five Oysters serves authentic and excellent Seafood & Vietnamese food with 5G Green beer at VND12,000 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 2014-16 from Tripadvisor and Top Choice 2015 by Lianorg.com. Recommended by VNExpress, net, Lonely Planet, Utopia and Saigoneers.
234 Bui Vien, D1



Mountain Retreat

Home style cooking from the Vietnamese north in a quiet alley off Le Loi, Mountain Retreat brings a rural vibe to busy central DI. The breezy and unassuming décor nicely contrasts the intense northern flavors ideally suited for the international palate.

**Top floor of 36 Le Loi, D1
+84 90 719 45 57**



Nhà Hàng Di Mai

Every family has an unique recipe which is handed down from generations and perfected to create that hearty comfort food. Our customers can relive having home-cooked food experience as our signature recipes are crafted with passion and tradition. Every meal is a delight in Di Mai. Explore the culinary journey of traditional authentic Vietnamese flavors set in an open kitchen, modern contemporary design.

**136 - 138 Le Thi Hong Gam St., Dist. 1, HCMC
08 3821 7786
nhahangdimai.com/
https://www.facebook.com/nhahangdimai/**



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. New Quan Bui Garden just opened in District 2.

**www.bui.restaurant
17A Ngo Van Nam, D1
First Floor, 39 Ly Tu Trong, D1
55 Ngo Quang Huy, Thao Dien, D2**



Red Door

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

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



The Hue House

Located on the 10th floor roof of the Master Building, The Hue House opens up to a breezy space with views over the city. The décor is simple yet elegant – bird cages repurposed into lamps, bonsai centerpieces in pretty ceramic bowls and lots of greenery. The menu highlight unique ingredients only found in Hue, like the Va tron fig salad with shrimp and pork, assorted platter of rice cakes meant to be shared, the sate-marinated ribs come with a plate of crunchy greens and mixed rice, originally grown by minority groups in the Central Highlands, and many more.

**Rooftop Master Building
41-43 Tran Cao Van, D3
Opening time 10am-10pm.
0909 246 156 / 0906 870 102**



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 Sach 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**

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.

**19-21 Dong Khoi, D1
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**

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**

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

INTERNATIONAL

Fest.vn
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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

For restaurant promotions go to fest.vn or Call 1900636997

BAMBOO



BoatHouse

With amazing views of the Saigon River, the restaurant's open seating plan is the ideal space for business lunches, romantic dinners and lazy weekend brunches. The menu is international with focuses on Mexican and American comfort food. There's live music almost every night of the week.

40 Lily Road, AP5C, 36 Thao Dien, D2

boathousesgn@gmail.com

+84 8 3744 6790

www.boathousesaigon.com

www.facebook.com/boathousevietnam



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



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



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

For restaurant promotions go to fest.vn or Call 1900636997

Latest Recipe



Panam - The Backroom

Panam is a cozy restaurant and pub with a friendly and chilled ambience. If you're searching for a place to meet up for happy hours after work, Panam is the perfect choice. Come and enjoy great food like falafels and kebabs with homemade sauces, cold craft beers, cocktails and board games.

12pm-1am / Tel: 0122 733 0235

91 Pasteur, D1

(in a side alley behind Cuba la Casa del Mojito)



Poke Saigon

Poke is a traditional Hawaiian dish made with fresh, cubed raw fish and toppings. Poke Saigon is the first poke restaurant in HCMC where diners create their own bowl. Located on the second floor of an apartment building, the dining space reflects the menu: fresh, fun, creative and healthy. There are many different options for your poke bowl with bases that include sushi or brown rice, including mix-in sauces like wasabi mayo and gomaes sesame and toppings such as wakame seaweed salad, crab salad and poke options: ahi tuna, salmon, shrimp and more. We are available for delivery.

Tue-Sun 10am-8pm

2nd Floor, 42 Nguyen Hue, D1

0902474388

<https://www.facebook.com/pokesaigon/>



twenty21one

A new casual dining venue with an innovative tapas menu divided into two categories: Looking East, and Looking West, with dishes such as Crispy shredded duck spring rolls and Bacon-wrapped dates stuffed with Roquefort blue cheese. There are two dining levels: an upstairs mezzanine and downstairs are tables with both private and exposed positioning (open-air streetside; and a terrace by the pool out back).

21 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

TWENTY21ONE



Villa Royale Downtown Antiques & Tea Room

Villa Royale Downtown is nestled in a charming French Colonial Villa on Ho Tung Mau Street.

Whilst browsing the vast array of collectible pieces you can sample a delicious menu of freshly prepared meals and delectable desserts.

Tea enthusiasts will delight in the 40+ flavours available from TWG.

Opening Hours 10am -10pm everyday

A Level 1, 25 Ho Tung Mau street, District 1, HCMC

Phone (84) 3821 0088

www.villaroyaledowntown.com



Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY JAMES PHAM







Himba children in Opuwo

Namibia

Images by **James Pham**

NAMIBIA IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS “Africa for beginners,” the wonders of the continent writ small. Rarely have I seen a country as diverse in both landscape and people. My journey through the country took me from Etosha National Park in the north, with many mesmerizing night time hours watching the animals around the floodlit watering holes, down past the Skeleton Coast with its rugged, windswept beaches and

through the Namib Desert, famous for its mountainous sand dunes and enormous painted sky. Despite having at least 11 major ethnic groupings, including the nomadic Himba and the Herero who still wear Victorian-era costumes, the country is one of the world’s most stable. If you only visit one country in Africa, make it Namibia. For more of my travel photography, follow me on Instagram at www.instagram.com/fly.icarus.fly.



Otjitotongwe Cheetah Park





Counter clockwise from top right: Etosha National Park, Sossusvlei, Cape Cross seal colony, zebra, Dune 45 in the Namib Desert





Sydney Bound

Beyond all its beauty lies a host of eclectic pleasures

Text by **Sarah Green**

WITH A CITY THAT ENJOYS an even climate throughout the year and mild winters, Sydney is a magnet for international visitors during all seasons. From winter temperature around 15c, New South Wales (NSW) has the unique advantage of hosting multiple, ongoing indoor and outdoor attractions for tourists and business visitors alike. Yes, it does get rainy during the winter but as the air is not cold (and it's been scientifically proven that humans are waterproof) what better ways to splash in a puddle or enjoy sweater weather than in this thriving city, come the southern hemisphere's winter time.

Hosting so many attractions and eye-popping events, we've featured the crème de la crème of crowd pullers so you can plan to cross "Sydney" off your bucket wish list of travels this year. Thousands of annual festivals take place in this city and it's been a struggle to narrow down the most popular ones. But we wanted to appeal to all types, whether you're an artist in the making, or need more musical stimulation, a fitness fanatic or foodie—we have you covered. Maybe you're traveling for the first time to NSW

or returning for a repeat performance to check out events that you missed last time. Possibly you're in the city on business, looking for ways to entertain clients, or dragging the whole family along for that once in a lifetime vacation. Then there's all the flashpackers on a backpacking budget excursion around the south of the planet and are already knee-deep in cost control planning. Or finally, you're one of the great solo travelers who will just sway with the wind and let your feet do the walking.

What's the Deal with Sydney?

Here's a summary about Sydney before we give you the lowdown on where to go and what to do when you plan your trip. As the state capital of NSW, the metropolis encapsulates the globe's largest, natural harbor right up to the Blue Mountains. The locals are called 'Sydneyiders' and the city's been inhabited for at least 30 thousand years. European convicts were deported to Sydney but this ceased in the mid 19th century and was replaced by an incredible surge of urban immigrants. With nearly five million residents, one

third transplanted from overseas, the multicultural diversity of Sydney could be compared to New York. It's also one of the world's most expensive cities, attracting multinational corporations as the center for the Asia Pacific business & finance arena. As one of the world's top fifteen most visited cities, beloved fixtures are the drawing attraction including: the Opera House, Harbour Bridge, Taronga Zoo and the stunning downtown skyline...alongside a few koalas and kangaroos.

The residents are eclectic, from creating world renowned cuisine to pride on promoting native Aboriginal history, drawing in crowds to the Australian Museum and enjoying Christmas day lunches on the beach, just before a spot of surfing. And if you're a rugby fanatic, you're in excellent company as the city boasts being home and glory to nine of the sixteen teams in the NRL (National Rugby League).

You don't just drive around Sydney; you walk, bike, take advantage of the city's incredible public transportation systems and don't be surprised to see locals getting to and from work or out



Clockwise from top left: ICC Sydney at Darling Harbour, local area Harbour bridge, VIVID Sydney, half marathon

& about by ferry across the Harbour. Imagine a commute of experiencing an attraction of the downtown skyline on the way to your event or festival!

Now let's talk about the big events coming up over the next few months. They're coming in thick and fast, so it'd be advised that you check mark the ones you really want to see and then book your flight and hotel around these dates. It's more logical versus locking down flights and accommodation...and then realizing you'll be returning home the day of a massive event.

Tie Up Those Running Shoe Laces

On May 21, the Sydney Morning Herald Half Marathon takes place. With over AUD150,000 already raised in charitable funds by runners, you can enter the 21.5km race or if you're slightly new to the scene and want to build up momentum, take advantage of the 7km race or 14km relay. Millions of cash is raised for charity by the Half Marathon and obviously you'll also gain the heart healthy benefits of getting into shape, even if it's just a few weeks of pre-training. With kick off at 6:45am on the day, runners are on their marks, get set and go on College Street (by St Mary's Cathedral), with the end point at Hyde Park North. If you're not running by 7:40am, you'll not be allowed to enter and you'll miss out on this historic, scenic viewing day of sprinting. There are a multitude of drink and bathroom station facilities along the way but pace yourself on the liquids to avoid cramping.

It's advised you join a team in training in advance of the big event so you're properly guided on pacing the run. Alternatively, if you're a beginner, the option of a slow jog along the full route is feasible and you'll be encouraged by millions of bystanders who are cheering you on. The Half Marathon website is pretty information-condensed, including the full run route, signing up and fund raising, to team packages for personal or corporate runners. For the latter, this is an apt opportunity to bond with fellow colleagues or clients if you're in town on a business trip and want to make the most of a productive, charitable day.

Zen Your Vacation with an OMMMM

From May 25-28, the ICC Sydney at Darling Harbour will be hosting the fantastic Mind Body Spirit Festival. Running from 10am-7pm daily (6pm Sunday), it is the perfect time to check out this biannual event. With the focus on spirituality, wellness, de-stress and being in the now, you can enjoy wandering around the exhibitions (over 200), be part of free inspirational seminars, treat yourself to a massage or body pampering, sit back and enjoy live performances, find your inner white light with meditation sessions, chomp away on healthy foods and maybe book yourself into a psychic reading. Yes, it's a hefty list of light hearted enjoyment for these four days and ideal for anyone who really needs to press that reset button. If you're a culinary fan, make a note to attend the Soul Kitchen cooking stage, featuring

plant based foods, super foods, gluten & dairy free and accommodating all quirky taste buds. Just in case you don't have time to absorb the full event, the organizers will be back again October 26-29 at the Sydney Olympic Park. Maybe a return trip is in order?

Drawing You into Lights, Music & Ideas

One of Australia's most famous attractions is the VIVID Sydney festival, running for a staggering duration from May 26 through to June 17. As it's fully loaded with exhibitions, installations and multiple displays scattered strategically around the full city, we've picked out a few gem events we hope you'll add to your calendar. Have you ever seen images of the Opera House lit up in fantastic, dazzling colors? Or the Harbour Bridge blazoned in rainbow lasers? If so, you can thank VIVID Sydney. Correct, this is the time of the year when the city is transformed into a magical wonderland and the public events are free! It's known as the globe's largest outdoor art gallery and it won't disappoint. Multiple local and international artists create stunning interpretations using the city's urban spaces to portray their visions. VIVID Music focuses on world renowned and local artists performing at the Opera House, small bars and large venues. VIVID Ideas objective is directed at innovation and imagination—whether it's a design installation or movie, marketing or animation, start up culture or pure visual arts. And VIVID Light encompasses the full spectrum

of sensational 'light art' installations, sculptures and serious grand scale visual projections. From using the talents by phenomenally talented designers and artists, they'll literally change the way you view the city's landmarks. Usually, VIVID hosts a theme but this year, there is no such umbrella agenda so expect to be wowed at every corner you turn. It's going to be diverse, eclectic and iPhone camera snapping worthy. Check their website for the prices of individual events. It's Sydney's glorified, visual gift to you and it is just awe inspiring.

Say Cheese to a Festival

Something to put a smile on your face in June is the Cheese Lovers Festival on the 17th and 18th. Located in Pokolbin, the Hunter Valley region in NSW, if dairy is your food vice, you're in for a massive treat. A brilliant event for the whole family, you can bond with Sydneysiders and tourists alike while you eat your way through the next 48 hours. The website is packed with nonstop tastings so while you eat, you can be walking from one attraction to the next and making

sure that weight stays off. Beginning with a three-hour dinner on the first night, hosted by Nick Haddow, celebrity chef and cheese maker, it's a perfect introduction to enjoy this stunning three course dinner with cheese in each dish, naturally. On the Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 5pm, the Kurrajong Kitchen sponsors the masterful cheeses that will have you nibbling straight through the morning to late afternoon. It starts with a classic cheese lunch on the Saturday with accompanying cheese workshops. With a limited number of available attendee tickets for a '4 Animals, 8 Cheeses' workshop on the Sunday, you'll be educated on cheeses from buffalo to goat, cows and sheep. True, buffalo do make great cheeses! Amongst a flurry of additional tasting

events including wine pairing, there's the Fancy Cheesecake Competition where you can enter to win cash prizes. For events that include a fee, we suggest you buy tickets in advance. Prices are reflected on the website, per event versus the whole weekend so you can pick and choose which to indulge in. To get to the festival, you can either drive or take a bus from multiple locations in Sydney but also account, there's a dedicated coach service available. Check the website for more details.

Where to Rest Your Weary Head

Downtown Sydney is usually the first point of searching for accommodation but we're encouraging you to venture off the beaten path. There are a couple of stunning

clockwise from bottom: Nick Haddow, Cremorne Point living room, drone image of Cremorne Point



hotels located in the city and, like a Sydneysider, you can ferry ride to landmark attractions within 15 minutes. For the budget conscious, these two affordable establishments will be well received by your credit card statement come payment time versus the overinflated chain hotels:

One of Sydney's oldest hotels, Cremorne Point Manor is located in the affluent Cremorne Point district. Not only is it situated near the famous Taronga Zoo (you may hear the lions roar at night), it also offers one of the most glorious, visual Harbour skyline spots... from your hotel room balcony. So much so that the hotel is packed during New Year's Eve as it boasts the best firework views in the city. This four-star AAA rated, 29-bedroom boutique hotel's rates start from AUD125. Maybe consider treating yourself to the 5 start Penthouse suite—with panoramic views of the city and taking up the whole top floor of the hotel. And if you're traveling with a group, Cremorne Point Manor is featuring their winter offer deals.

If you're more into the buzz of hipster lifestyles, then Glenferrie Lodge in nearby Kirribilli is going to be more up your accommodation alley. This three-star boutique hotel is in a thriving bar and restaurant district, on the same street as the Prime Minister's residence, by the sensational Admiralty House and close to Luna Park. Most rooms have shared bathrooms, hence the more affordable rates starting at AUD79. A bonus: The Lodge has a gorgeous, guest only garden to chill out in and a perfect setting to trade travel tips with other visitors. Both hotels have received consecutive Certificate of Excellence Awards by Tripadvisor, voted by the public. Glenferrie Lodge also has group winter rates available. ■



Images of Glenferrie Lodge



>>The List Travel



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www.chamvillas.com



Cham Garden Restaurant

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32 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Phan Thiet
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www.mianhatrang.com
info@mianhatrang.com



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The Island Lodge

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390 Ap Thoi Binh, Thoi Son, My Tho
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>> The List

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2253 1179



Kids & Education



Meet the Principal

Ahead of his arrival in August to take over as Head of School at **Renaissance International School Saigon** (RISS, www.renaissance.edu.vn), Peter Gittins speaks to *Oi Vietnam* about pioneering the first international school in HCMC, his decades-long career in education and... homework



Interview by **Christine Van**
Images Provided by **RISS**

Can you tell us what the international school landscape was like when you were the Founding Head of ISHCMC in 1993?

The International (Grammar) School as it was then called was the pioneer international school in the south of the country when it opened in 1993 and it remained the only international school in HCMC for many years. There was no international school infrastructure at the time and the school was a first for Vietnam and a major ideological step for the local authorities. There was, however, an enormous demand for an international school and this demand was reflected in its rapid growth—from 28 students when it opened in September 1993 to over 450 by the end of June 1996.

RISS will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, how has the school changed during this time?

The school was opened by Prince Andrew, who visited from the UK, in 2007 with just under 70 students and grew to welcome nearly 500 students this year. However, the school has stayed true to its values and continues to limit its class sizes and maintain its status as a family-orientated boutique school, where relationships are personal and there is a very closely-knit community and students are not just numbers. It is the only Round Square school in Saigon, and in the last three years, our students became Best in the World in their IGCSE exams three times. More recently, Renaissance has been accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS).

Renaissance is no longer a developing school—it is well established, highly regarded, offers a continuous education from Nursery to Year 13, and its students are graduating into highly regarded colleges and universities around the world.

What practices and ideas from your time at CIS will you be applying to RISS?

CIS asks a school to look critically at itself, to focus on its mission and, in so doing, ensure that what it says it is doing it is actually doing. It asks a school to be suitably reflective and formulate clear action plans based on a systematic analysis of its strengths and weaknesses so, in answer to your question, I believe that my focus will be three-fold: on the school defining what it is and then effectively measuring what it does, on accentuating the focus on student learning and student well-being, and on a fundamental commitment to organizational accountability and quality instruction.

Since leaving Vietnam, you've worked and lived in Sri Lanka, Germany, Australia and Switzerland to name a few, what is bringing you back to Vietnam now?

My first experience in Vietnam was nearly 25 years ago and so much has changed in the country itself, within the education sector both globally and nationally and I have grown and learnt a good deal as well. Vietnam is such an exciting place to be now and it presents a good many opportunities, especially in the education sector. The country has a proud history, a rich cultural tradition and wonderful people so it was easy to say yes when offered the job at Renaissance.

Your career has spanned both the 20th & 21st centuries, how have students changed in the way they learn? What aspects of teaching that were relevant in the 20th century are now obsolete? And what has endured and will never change?

Quite clearly, the enhanced emphasis

on technology has been a major change and this has had a profound impact on both teaching and learning. Schools are now more connected than they have ever been and this presents enormous opportunities but, also, some significant challenges. There have been substantial changes in curriculum, there is now a broader focus on how students learn as opposed to what they learn, more meaningful connections are now being made across and between subjects, and parents are now more engaged and involved, which brings with it an increased level of organizational accountability.

What has endured and will never change is the fact that good teaching will always be good teaching irrespective of the curriculum, facilities or location. Further, a good school will always be one that is constantly looking to improve, is true to its mission and is fundamentally committed to ensuring the best possible education for its students.

Is it also safe to say that educators have also changed in their approach to teaching in the past decades? With some many different methods of teaching (Montessori, Reggio Emilia, etc) how can parents know which one is best for their children?

Yes, this is obviously true. There has been an increased focus on technology, assessment, inclusivity and connectivity with teaching now more student-centered than teacher directed and more collaborative and participatory in approach. The amount of information that is available has increased dramatically and teaching and learning must focus on relevance, accuracy, purpose and authenticity.

School choice is a complex process but two good starting questions are: Is the school accredited and by whom? Are the school's programs authorized and evaluated and by whom? The answers to these questions should be straightforward but parents should listen carefully to the responses. In looking at a school, parents should reflect on the extent to which the rhetoric matches the reality, unpack the jargon and focus on



the simple question: To what extent is the school doing what it says it is doing and is this the right school for my child/ren?

Homework: Yes or no?

Yes and no actually. Homework must be an adjunct to learning. It must be both purposeful and meaningful, reinforce and enhance learning and students should be able to see value in it. Homework for the sake of homework becomes a chore and could well turn students off learning—something that must be avoided at all costs. Quite clearly a school's approach to homework should be measured and reflect what is realistic, age appropriate and have the greatest impact on student learning. So, of course, there is value in homework but I think that it is more a question of quality rather than quantity.

You've initiated a number of community service projects, including the construction of a school for child cancer patients at the National Cancer Hospital in Colombo, do you have any community service projects planned with RISS?

Authentic and sustainable community service is a passion of ours and a return to Vietnam will provide an opportunity to give something back to the community. RISS already leads on a number of excellent community initiatives through its Round Square memberships, its strong support for Habitat for Humanity Vietnam, and its ongoing engagement with the Save the Rhino campaign, to mention just a few. At this stage, my wife Kerry and I have

no idea what projects we will be involved in but there is always something to do and some way that we can help and that is an exciting prospect in itself.

Personally, what are you looking forward to when you come back to Saigon?

There is so much to look forward to about a return to Saigon. My wife and I are excited about the prospect of living in such a pulsating and dynamic city as Saigon and in a country that is now a key player in Southeast Asia. The thought of being much closer to our children—both of whom are in Australia—is a major factor as is the prospect of re-engaging with the Vietnamese culture that is both fascinating and enriching. Most important of all I think is the challenge of moving an already very good school to being an outstanding school—which is very motivating. ■



A



left to right: Thao, Juliette, Fang

Kinder Experience

Oi speaks to Thao Nguyen, Juliette Nguyen Khanh and Fang Zhang, the women behind Kinder Academy Preschool, about why nature, arts and a multicultural environment are important in education

Images by **Ngoc Tran**

Tell us how you three met and then decided to open Kinder Academy Preschool (KA).

Thao: I never thought I would have my own school, it was a dream. I worked at a kindergarten, so I knew how difficult it would be to open one, but then I met Fang. At the time, the school where we worked together in HCMC had many problems and we thought those problems could be solved, however, we were very disappointed. I wanted to give up and go back to Hanoi but Fang encouraged and persuaded me to set up a new school with her—I did it only for Fang. Yet, the more we did the more passionate we became.

Soon after that, I met Juliette and when I shared my idea she was interested and immediately set up a plan to work together. People who believed in our project are more important. We wanted to create something not the same as others. We tried to understand the requirements of both the children and parents. In our school, we expect the children to be happy here, we wanted to give the quality to children, not only by appearance, facilities and toys, but by giving children the space to express themselves in every possible mean, this is most important. We wanted to be a small school to ensure quality and affordable price accessible to most people.

You three come from different backgrounds and cultures, how have these difference

helped and challenged the school?

Thao: Yes, the most interesting thing for the school is that we have multicultural backgrounds. It helps us manage the school through flexibility and supports our concept of a multicultural education. We not only take care the children's requirements but also the family, teachers and staff. Of course, it's always challenging—there can be a “cultural conflict”—but we try to find a balanced solution suitable for all cultural backgrounds.

For example, Kinder Academy is a school of arts. But when a child goes back home with color smudges on their clothes, the school gets complaints on this issue from their parents. Instead of giving an individual answer, we strive to give holistic solutions and everybody is happy, teachers and students included.

KA uses the Reggio Emilia & STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) approach, can you tell us why you chose these methods?

Thao: It's all about educating a child in the 21st century, and then nurturing them for the next generations. Educators today explain the 4 C's of 21st century skills (Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Critical thinking), which supports children to become successful adults. It means a child should have critical thinking, self-awareness and should understand their place in the world.

As educators, we research different methods, and we formularized the following: Reggio Emilia is an emergent curriculum based on children's interests and creative expression of their learning. Process is more important than result. STEM is a discovery integrated in learning across science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Both of those methods encourage children to discover and learn through projects.

The knowledge comes from practical life such as playing with natural materials (sand, water, wire, soil, clay, etc.). They connect children with real life, nature and the community around them.

For example:

- Children express their interest and learn through drawing, writing, reading, calculating, constructing and performing
- Scientific inquiry, early literacy, and maths opportunities naturally fall into place around the children's investigations
- Clay, wire, wood and recycled materials help children to express what they know.

So, at Kinder Academy, we firstly provide a friendly and multi-cultured community. Secondly, we provide them the opportunity to explore different natural materials to do art and science experiments. We follow the children's interests and ideas until it become meaningful products. Lastly, we support the learning progress of each child through observations, documentations and conversations with parents.



KA is purposely kept small, why?

Thao: We chose to operate a small-scale, family-styled school. We want to genuinely care for every single child at our school as part of a family, that's why we design classrooms only for 8–13 children. With smaller classes, our teachers are able to give enough time and pay sufficient attention to each child.

Juliette, you developed a gardening curriculum at KA, why do you think engaging and learning about nature is so important for a child's education and development?

Juliette: Today, most people live in cities, and urbanization grants less space and little access to greenery for free play. Peoples are more sedentary, and time for nature is often replaced by screens, which are more attractive. Many studies show that lack of exposure to nature may have negative effects on children. Nature and free play are indispensable to the good development of children and to help them grow in many ways (for example, improve their self-esteem and self-confidence as well as their motor development and fine motor skills, develop creativity and imagination, learn self-awareness and empathy). Also it introduces them to respect for the environment and be accountable. For all these reasons, we think “playing with nature” is very important for it to be incorporated into our curriculum.

Fang, you have a Master of Arts from Oslo University, how did you work that into KA's curriculum?

Fang: My Master of Arts focused on the history of language, that knowledge is very useful to help parents understand the characteristics of children learning foreign languages. Some of the parents are worried that their child only knows Vietnamese, they usually ask how a child can speak well and fluently both in the mother tongue and English, and not mix two languages together. The most important thing to explain to parents is that small children have a huge ability to learn languages at a young age. They soak up language and absorb it in ways that adult learners find much more difficult. It is true that they may go through periods of mixing up words from each language or seeming to have problems separating out the grammatical rules of each, however, this is a natural process and something parents don't need to worry.

Juliette: From high school, I was very interested in art, artistic trends of the 20th century in general, and the Support-Surface movement in particular. At Kinder Academy, we show children how artists work and we test techniques together, so children can learn many ways to practice art and express themselves.

For example, last month we learned

about Jackson Pollock and his style of drip, or pour painting, which is a style of “action painting.” We applied that technique to represent stars of the universe, which were the thematic unit for the month.

Tell us about your teachers and students.

Thao: Our school has both local and foreign children. They speak with teachers in English, and use either Vietnamese or English to talk with each other. We are very happy to see that our children are able to express their opinions with confidence in different languages. We have teachers from South Africa, Denmark, India, America, Japan, Philippines, New Zealand, Australia and Vietnam.

We also give our teachers professional supports because our school has certain training programs for teachers to refresh and update their knowledge. For example, a specialist from New Zealand is regularly invited to give trainings on Reggio Emilia and child behavior management; another specialist in Australia gives mindfulness yoga training. And we also have specialists giving training on phonics and natural arts.

Kinder Academy Preschool is located at 47/11/09 Quoc Huong in District 2. Visit Facebook: “kinder.academy.vietnam” for more info. ■

THE 2017/2018 ACADEMIC SCHOOL year will see the opening of ISHCMC's long-anticipated new secondary campus, which will unfold as the next layer in a breakthrough educational approach that has already begun to transform the learning experiences—and academic results—of the school's students. In what is perhaps a radical move, the design of the entire new campus has been conceptualized by the school's educators—based on the education research and practice now being embraced by the school—before being completed by architects in a practical sense. The result will be an environment where learning can take place everywhere and all the time; where classrooms will spill into wide corridors converted into breakout spaces replete with amphitheaters, comfortable seating and walls that can be written on, all serving as hubs of constant learning.

In response to educational research and the requirements of the modern workplace, ISHCMC's secondary campus will be focusing on collaborative learning spaces, where learning can be connected in spatial as well as conceptual terms. Some lessons will start outside in the corridors and then continue elsewhere; others will start in their classrooms and then break outside, establishing a stream of learning where the corridors themselves are flow spaces rather than enclosed spaces. The aim is to liberate the students' thinking and the way that they learn, so that they will not be restricted by the traditional limitations of the classroom environment—they will be constantly outside, constantly talking, encouraged to learn dynamically rather than expected to process their knowledge alone and in silence.

Head of School Adrian Watts has high expectations for the potential of the new learning spaces to transform student understanding. "It's about trying to help them develop their ideas about what they want to do in the future," explains Mr. Watts. "We will have facilities such as makerspaces and technology rooms. We'll also have a big innovation center, where students will be able to go and crowdsource their thinking, sharing their ideas with others who will then contribute and work collaboratively to move them forward. Some of the ideas might be simple, some might be more complex. They won't all be related to traditional-curriculum education; they'll also be related to things that the students are following outside and beyond the classroom. Some people call it passions, but to me, it's an extension of who they are."

Other innovations within the new

ISHCMC's New, Innovative Secondary Campus

Images Provided by ISHCMC



ISHCMC Secondary Campus,
1 Xuan Thuy, District 2

campus will include green spaces, such as a 30 x 8 meter urban garden designed to encourage students to be connected and familiar with the process of growing food. "There are many spaces that will constantly be used," says Mr. Watts, "so the aim is to create an environment where there's constant learning going on, constant provocation, where students will be able to post things on walls that are provocative to thinking. It's almost like being in a 3D twitter feed, with students tweeting and thinking—that's what we're trying to aim towards, moving away from the more traditional 'I learn in a classroom, I come out of it, and my life changes,' it's actually going to be a more constant situation where it's ebbing and flowing all the time."

While following new theoretical approaches can sometimes prove risky, ISHCMC's confidence in its stance has already been borne out by

student academic performance, with last year's graduating class breaking records in terms of scholastic achievement. Mr. Watts reports that the school's students are not only far more articulate about sociocultural issues such as international politics, but their coursework now demonstrates a deeper level of thought and understanding.

"Today's curricula," enthuses Mr. Watts, "are moving more towards concepts rather than factual information and pieces of knowledge. So it's about how you take these concepts and apply them to the real world that's really very exciting. Schools like Hi-Tech High in the U.S. are leading the way in this—and if you look at Finland, for example, which leads the world in PISA test results, they are radically reviewing their curriculum to make it totally interdisciplinary. They're actually talking about how they can blend



Information and media center, theatre, community cafe, collaborative area



have been easily demonstrated when prospective families toured the facilities and were able to see all students on task and engaged in their learning. “It’s because they’re trusted”, says Mr. Watts, “they’re engaged in a piece of work, whether it be math, or language, or arts, or their own passion projects—they’re engaged in what they’re learning, and the teacher trusts them and has released to them. The interesting thing is that students probably daydream, misbehave and are distracted more in traditional classrooms where they’re sat behind a desk listening to a teacher talk at them than they are if the teacher sets up an inquiry and releases to the students to go and inquire, research and develop. You trust them to go and do that, and they’ll go deeper—once that lid’s off the box, they’ll go as deep as they can get.”

“We want the new campus to be transformational,” he continues, “to make a statement that education is being redefined, that education is moving, and it will produce students in the future who are ready for the 21st century. Research is pointing towards the fact that our traditional education systems are not suited to the needs of the 21st century—they haven’t changed much in 200 years. For us, the new campus has to encourage this change.” ■

their subjects to make them one big school experience. In a way, we’re not at that end of the ladder yet, but that’s where we’re also going, in linking learning together, so it becomes a common experience. We’re starting by creating an environment to allow that

to take place.”

The first moves towards transforming ISHCMC’s learning environments were implemented last year when the Grades 4&5 areas of the existing campus were redesigned. The success of these improved facilities

Who am I?

Poem by Samadhi Jayasuriya



I AM A 12-YEAR-OLD Year 8 student at the Australian International School here in Ho Chi Minh City and I was inspired by the article *Two Families Apart* by James Pham in the recent issue of *Oi Vietnam* magazine (January/February 2017).

In my English class, we are currently studying the novel

Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai. This novel (told in poetic form) is also about a character whose family needed to leave Vietnam due to the American War. So, I was inspired by these two pieces of writing to write my own poem, (following the style of Thanhha Lai) about my current life here in Saigon.

Who am I?

Who am I?
A question I've asked myself,
over and over.
I am a girl.
A girl
foreign to the country I live in.
I am a girl
who people stare at,
whenever I walk pass them.
It's true though.
It creeps me.
I hold on tighter to my mother's hand
and look away.

I look like a Toothpick to my Sister

I have a confession to make.
I am as skinny as a toothpick.
My younger sister
Calls me
Toothpick Akka,
meaning Toothpick Sister.
It is embarrassing when she says it.
Especially
in front of a crowd.
What can I say.
You can't deny the truth.
But I have to admit,
it is funny sometimes.

Routines

Every morning
I wake up,
just on time to see
the sun rise
and shine it rays on
Thanh Pho Ho Chi Minh City.

Sometimes when I wake up,
all I see is a dark blue blanket
spread all across the skies.
It scares me.
What if today isn't a good day?
I tell myself,
Aal iz well. Aal iz well.
A quote from a movie.
The character Rancho explains,
This heart scares easily.
Sometimes, you have to trick it.

Every day is the same.
Sometimes I ask myself
Am I stuck in a loop?
A loop that preserves the last hundred
and sixty-eight hours?

Mondays to Fridays
I go to school and
end the day off with my ASA's.

Saturdays and Sundays
are probably the best days of the week.
I get to sit inside a car
and let my earphones block out all the
commotion.

Once I hit the PLAY button,
I have no idea what is going on around me
In the car,
or out of it.

Freedom

Freedom.
Freedom was nothing but just a chance
for me to be myself.

My idea of freedom
is
running.
Running until I come to a dead-end.
Acting.
Acting on a huge stage,
with a large crowd
in front of me.

Of course I'll have that freedom.
In my head.
For now.
Who knows?
Maybe in a decade or so,
I'll be able to
snatch that
freedom.

Cloudorian?

Confession:
I love the clouds.
Well,
I love the clouds here.
They're like
Cotton Candy.
Cotton Candy
that changes flavors
every few
minutes.

I wonder if it's edible?

Maybe I should become a Cloudorian.
Cloudorian?
Is that even a thing?
Maybe I'll be the person
who creates that profession. ■



Dr. Jonathan Halevy received his degree from the Sackler School of Medicine of Tel Aviv University, and then underwent his residency in the Pediatric Department of the Wolfson Medical Center in Israel, earning his certification as a specialist in pediatrics. He is Head of Pediatrics at Family Medical Practice, HCMC.

Counting Sheep

Why sleep is important in a child's development

WHEN IT COMES TO SLEEP, most of us aren't getting enough—far less than the recommended daily dose of 8–9 hours per night. Many of us suffer from chronic sleep deprivation. While this is a serious issue in adults (for example, it increases the risk of heart disease), it is even more detrimental in children.

Chronic sleep deprivation directly affects our cognitive functions—our ability to learn, memorize and solve problems. In teenage students, this may interfere with their academic achievements. In the developing child, it may have potentially alarming consequences on their development and behavior.

About 30 percent of children initially diagnosed with ADHD actually have a sleeping disorder, such as obstructive sleep apnea. Sleep deprivation and bad sleep quality can cause an inability to concentrate and pay attention; it may cause irritability and hyperactivity, which are symptoms similar to ADHD. In these cases, once the sleep problem is treated, the attention and hyperactivity symptoms resolve themselves.

Babies need to sleep between 12–16 hours a day. This is essential for brain development and the release of growth hormone, which mainly occurs at night, during sleep. Insufficient sleep may impair the baby's growth and development. Sleep deprivation can also cause the release of stress hormones such as cortisol, and one of its side effects is hunger. For this reason, children and adults who suffer from sleep deprivation tend to be obese.

Babies naturally have lighter sleep and tend to wake up several times during the night and fall back to sleep.

Some parents make the mistake of “intervening”—checking the baby, picking him up and trying to rock him back to sleep. This intervention interferes with the baby's ability to fall asleep independently, and creates a habit that will be very hard to break. The next time the baby wakes up, he will expect the parent to come and “intervene” again.

Parents should not “rush” to their babies when they wake up at night. They need to wait a few minutes and then quietly and briefly make sure he is fine (no picking up, no talking or interacting) and then let him fall back to sleep by himself.

By the age of four, pre-school age, children still need between 12 and 14 hours of sleep to stay healthy. The daily naptime at this age gradually shortens, and usually after four years old most children won't need it anymore. Sleeping during the day may push forward the normal sleeping time at night, and make it more difficult to fall asleep.

At age six, the amount of recommended sleep drops to between 9 and 11 hours, then falls for teenagers to between 8 and 10, and ends up at the 7 to 9 for fully-developed adults.

Keeping a “bedtime routine” is very important for babies, children and even teenagers. Having the same routine (dinner, bath, book, milk and then sleep, for example) makes it easier for little kids to adjust and fall asleep. Any screens—televisions, smartphones or tablets—should be avoided for at least two hours before going to bed, as the light from the screens inhibit the release of melatonin, the natural sleep hormone.

In Vietnam, teenagers are under

tremendous pressure to be advanced at school. This results in school-aged children having schedules that would burn out most adults. They get up at 5am to be at school at 6:30am, and they don't finish until 4pm—and then their parents often send them to extra classes, such as English and math. Once they get home, sometimes as late as 10pm, they will eat supper and then do their homework. They might get to bed by midnight or even later, get only a few hours of sleep, and wake up at 5am to another sleepless day. Parents need to know that sleep is essential for the academic success of their child. If they want him to do better in the tests, they need to make sure he sleeps better. The same way a parent will not deny his child food, he should not deny his child sleep.

Sleep deprivation is a common cause of sleeping disorders but by no means the only one. Physical and environmental conditions may cause difficulty to fall asleep or maintain sleep. Other issues such as obstructive sleep apnea may cause poor quality sleep. Common medications like cough medicines can cause sleeping problems. Even certain foods and drinks (energy drinks, caffeine etc.) may cause a child or teenager to lose sleep.

If your child seems to be tired when he wakes up, if he has difficulties concentrating or paying attention, if he has a tendency to “doze off” during the day, if it takes him longer than 30 minutes to fall asleep at night, or if he sleeps for many hours during the weekend, then he probably suffers from a sleep disorder—and he should be properly evaluated by his pediatrician. ■



Karl Perkins is a highly experienced teacher, having taught for over 20 years. He met his wife at university and, together, they have traveled the world to teach. Karl is an Upper Primary specialist with lots of experience in private sector schools. Karl loves learning and strives to pass his enthusiasm for that on to his pupils.

Sound Affects!!!!!!

Have you heard? Noise can effect learning!

KARAOKE; I AVOIDED IT LIKE the plague for years. Now it turns out that sitting around a microphone with a bunch of friends wailing out a favorite song is great fun. That life changing moment in the Quadrophonia Room off Sukhumvit in Bangkok—when I realized the error of my ways—is not necessarily a view shared by all, though I do seem to have neighbors who love it, too.

Tet, as I recall, was a particularly fruitful period for amateur singing with the lilting tones of traditional songs wafting up to the 20th floor from the street below with perfect clarity. However, my newfound interest in this art form is not always popular; we have not all seen the (flashing rope) light, so to speak.

For some, it is just another intrusion into our ears, minds and thoughts; an intrusion we could do without. And for these gentle folk there is mounting scientific evidence that they are right to reject *Bohemian Rhapsody* sung badly at 110 decibels in the street below at 1am.

Everything we hear reaches our brain unfiltered. We may not consciously acknowledge it but those gently bristling cilia of the inner ear act as a channel for every sound in our immediate environment. Recent research found that there is no filter; we don't hear selectively. Our brains process that data whether we like it or not.

This is great if we are craning our necks in a busy café; trying to catch a juicy snippet of gossip from a fellow

caffeine addict. It has huge benefits when chatting with a friend; riding side by side down a narrow road, oblivious to the traffic backing up behind.

But, in the cinema, when we need to catch the faintest whisper between lovers or a distant call for help, the ubiquitous crackle of crisp packets and low pitched crunch of popcorn annoyingly distract us from the movie. Annoying but not life changing, or so we thought.

Research is now beginning to show that the impact of background noise is far from trivial. More than that, it is proving that noise has a profound impact on our world. Recent studies show that background chatter, which is just audible, is perhaps one of the biggest sources of stress in the workplace. The brain constantly acquires and reacquires conversations as they fade in and out of our perception, like a heat seeking missile trained on a supersonic foe. The effort required to keep this up for the normal working day is grinding office workers to exhaustion and it is stressful.

The cerebral cortex is one of the areas where all this processing of sound has an impact. Stress induced by background and loud noise cause the body to release larger than normal amounts of cortisol, affecting the way the brain works. This has a direct, negative impact on working memory, episodic memory and concentration levels, making all tasks harder. This casts doubt on the efficacy of

open plan offices, where everyone subconsciously tunes in to the background chatter, gripes and groans of a normal day at work. There is a strong link between this background noise and days of absence from work.

There is other evidence which suggests that the impact is longer term, children brought up in noisy environments may suffer long term lowering of cognitive ability, partly due to the difficulty hearing over background noise but also due to the raised levels of cortisol affecting the rate at which the brain allows synapses to form connections and learning.

So, traffic, busy building yards, noisy neighbors, karaoke and air conditioning are no longer annoying, but for the most part benign annoyances; they may well be having a permanent effect on the thinking processes of our children. Chronic noise lowers IQ by up to 10 percent; that's the difference between an average child and one measurably above or below average. Studies have shown that more-able children are able to negate the effects of noise by focusing more intently, but the less able cannot. One study has shown that background noise reduces children's perception of consonants in speech by as much as 40 percent.

In conclusion, we should maximize every opportunity to find and use quiet spaces in order for our children to thrive. Search for those quiet classrooms, leafy suburbs with traffic-free streets, switch off the aircon and don't forget the ear plugs at Tet. ■



Dorota Koziel is an English as an Additional Language teacher with a B.A (Hons) Teaching English as a Foreign Language and an M.A School Counseling and Education at the International School Saigon Pearl (ISSP).

(Not) Ready To Go?

Top tips for emigrating with children

TRANSITIONING FROM ONE JOB TO another, especially if they are on two different geographical meridians, is exciting. New perspectives, new possibilities and new enticing challenges in our own eyes make everything look perfect. But, no matter how we picture and project our expectations, transitions in action are tough. And it's not only about packing, shipping and millions of emails that need to be written before the go, it's about the unknown. In expat reality, changing countries for a job is not a professional avant-garde but a necessity; a particle coded into our professional DNA. As adults we (should) know what we are getting ourselves into. But do we? I know I didn't. Not quite. Years back, before taking my first job in China, no matter how many blogs and opinions I had read all I knew was that I wanted to go. New adventure, new experience. That's all. Yes, there were frustrations, disappointments and certainly lots of entirely new experiences. Alas, no matter how much I knew about culture shock in theory, including the secret knowledge of coping strategies, I've been through all its stages. But, with all that, I always knew I had a simple choice: stay or go back. The choice that many of my students have never been granted.

Someone once told me that I should not worry about new kids in my EAL class because they will quickly adapt and forget the change. "Really? Did that work for you?" was all I wanted to say. There is no such thing as seamless, emotionless transition. It always involves stress, anxiety, resistance and, in one way or another, a broken heart. Our children are not

excluded from any of those, and the sooner we acknowledge that children experience transitions no different than we adults do, the sooner we can actually help them. How? Let's see...

The process needs to begin at home. Teachers can and do help, but it isn't them who is being transferred, it's you—the parent. Therefore, grab the bull by its horns and talk to your children about the upcoming change. The sooner, the better. Last minute "surprises" may not be a good idea. Why? Well, would you like to find out about your job transfer two days before the actual move? Children need time just as we do. They need to get used to the idea.

Hence, help them learn about your new job and responsibilities. Try to be honest, but supportive. Answer all, not only the chosen questions. Kids want and need to know about the change. Help your children learn about the new country, city, house. Try to find something that your children will become interested in and might want to explore during the first days of your move. Pyramids, museum, lake... anything might be a great distraction. Contact your child's new school and teachers and ask for a student buddy, so that your child can get in touch with and already start making new friends.

Commit to Communicate

Communicate: ask how new friendships are going, ask about the teacher. Let your child know that you care and are there, no matter how busy you might be with your professional transition. Make time and allow your child to say goodbye to those who are important to him or

her. It can be a simple goodbye card, a picture, a video, a song, a farewell class party. Anything what your child chooses and feels comfortable doing. Exchanging emails and phone numbers might be a good bridge between the old and the new world. A positive "goodbye", apology or thank you to those who deserve it gives strong foundations to a good beginning. Think forward, but ensure a proper closure.

Enroll your family for language lessons, should the country you are going to operate in a different than your lingua. Taking language lessons way before the move will pay off sooner than you think. And you will save yourself and your children a lot of unnecessary stress.

What is a good child's age to start talking about transition? I dare say, any age. Of course, you know your children best. Your newborn might not be much interested in your new job assignment, but a three-year-old might actually ask questions you would not expect to hear. The point is: keep your children in the loop.

It certainly might feel overwhelming and at times too much to handle; new job, new responsibilities, new house or having to find one, new culture, language, visa, permits... it's a lot! If at any point, dear parent, you will feel like you need help do not be afraid to ask for it. Talk to your expat friends, collaborate with your children's teachers, who I am sure will do anything to help you and your children begin a new, exciting adventure. Transitions are challenging, but can certainly be prepared for. Buckle up and enjoy your new adventure! ■

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, IE Street, KDC Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC

Primary & Secondary Campus:

2, IE Street, KDC Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC

5431 1833-34-35-36

office@theabcis.com

www.theabcis.com



Anne Hill International School

Anne Hill International School is a school for children from 18 months up till 6 years old and its curriculum incorporates the Montessori Method, Jolly Phonics and enrichment programs.

Classes are conducted in spacious, safe and well-equipped classrooms with a low student-to-teacher ratio.

Outdoor facilities include a large covered playground, covered and gated swimming-pool, built-in water-play feature, mini-trampoline, mini-golf area, tent fun area, sandpit, and eco-garden.

"Learning is a journey, not a race."

33 Giang Van Minh, An Phu Ward, HCMC

School ages: 18 months to 6 years old

Website: annehill.school

Phone: +84 906 846 939, +848 3740 4019

info@annehill.school



International School Saigon Pearl (ISSP)

Vietnam's only international school offering a U.S. curriculum for children 18 months to 11 years old within a 100% English language environment. With a library containing over 13,500 English books and more than 60% of students achieving above grade level English, ISSP graduates are well prepared for secondary school at ISHCMC or ISHCMC – American Academy.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

+84 (8) 2222 7788/99

admissions@issp.edu.vn

www.issp.edu.vn



Kinder Academy

Kinder Academy is a Reggio Emilia approach and STEM concept inspired preschool, where you can find the best integration of the above philosophies and practices.

Our Vision: "Inspire and nurture your child to be a thinker with a global mindset."

Our Mission: "Passionate about the development of your child, we provide the right environment to play, learn and grow. Our team is child centric."

47/11/09 Quoc Huong, Thao Dien, District 2
093 878 00 76



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 International School Ho Chi Minh City – American Academy

ISHCMC – American Academy is a U.S. curriculum secondary school, preparing students aged 11 to 18 years old for success at universities worldwide. Early university credits, through SUPA and AP courses, a 1:1 University Counseling Program, and an extensive EAL program sets our graduates on the road to success with 100% acceptance rate and U.S. \$1 million scholarship fund to overseas universities.

16 Vo Truong Toan, D2

+84 (8) 3898 9100

admissions@aavn.edu.vn

www.aavn.edu.vn





The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

ISHCMC is HCMC's most established international school and first IB World School authorized to teach all 3 International Baccalaureate programs for students 2 to 18 years old. ISHCMC is excited to launch a new secondary campus in 2017, featuring Vietnam's first Innovation Center, a 350-seat professional theater, NBA-sized basketball courts, 25m – 8 lane competitive swimming pool and sports field.

28 Vo Truong Toan, D2
+84 (8) 3898 9100
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www.ishcmc.com



Also...

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

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 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



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
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admissions@tas.edu.vn
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