



VIETNAM

AUGUST 2013

# BOOMTOWN OR BUST



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Rugby Wants You to  
be a Team Player

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The Story Behind the  
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## A CHAIN REACTION

Local Franchises  
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The Undiscovered  
Part of Phu Quoc

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# Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 6  
AUGUST 2013

## On the Road

IN THE NINE and a half years I've been in Saigon, it's undergone an incredible transformation. When I first arrived, I remember empty streets because there weren't many cars and surprisingly taxis weren't around then. I know some of you have been here much longer and can attest to the huge strides this city has made. As if any more proof was needed, just in this past month, McDonald's has announced that it'll be opening up shop here in the near future and The Grand Ho Tram Strip, one of the most ambitious building projects the country has ever seen, had a preview party where *Oi* got a sneak peek into the massive but gorgeous property. It's undeniable that over the last few years, Vietnam has been booming, and Saigon most of all.

So we thought it would be fun to take a look at boomtowns around the world, places that experienced a sudden surge in population and economy. Some have sustained that dynamism and have become multicultural, thriving societies. Even though the Gold Rush that brought people to Melbourne in the 1800s is long over, the original gold diggers paved the way for what is now one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Colleen Khachatourians takes us on her foodie tour through Melbourne's ethnic enclaves in *Marvelous Melbourne* bouncing from Chinatown to Little Italy to the Lebanese quarter, all in one deliciously glorious day. Another feel good example is Black Rock City in the arid Nevada desert, better known as Burning Man. This annual festival draws in tens of thousands who come to escape the "default world" and seek to find a better, freer version of themselves. Then they pack up and leave, adhering to the principle of "leave no trace." If that's not a boomtown, I don't know what is. Heather Hall carries on the theme of how one incoming population can have a long-lasting effect on the existing one in her article *A Unique Blend*, telling the story of a new cuisine born of a mixture of Chinese, Singaporean and Malaysian roots. On the other hand, Salton City in the California desert is a striking example of a boomtown that went bust. Giselle Whiteaker takes

us on a fascinating tour of this city that once was but is no more, other than a few resilient souls committed to living off the grid in a place that time forgot in *The Accidental Sea*.

Travel has always been in my blood. And when I can't travel, I love surrounding myself with it, through books and blogs and Pinterest daydreams. I remember two years ago, my friends taking me to this oddly surreal cafe in Tan Binh where we spent the afternoon playing board games under the wing of a decrepit Boeing jetliner and thinking it was the coolest thing ever. When we were checking out locations for our cover shoot, I was dismayed to discover it had recently closed. But NDP Khanh retells its mysterious history in *Grounded for Life*. Also in our Travel Section, Mike Wakely further stirs our spirit of adventure in *The Other Side*, a call to explore the unspoiled side of Phu Quoc before it experiences its own inevitable boom and becomes the next Phuket or Bali.

While I love Vietnamese food, sometimes I hanker for something new and different. Other times, I crave something from back home. Michael Arnold talks to Bui Vien's newest entrepreneur in *Meat the Maker*, a Vietnamese-Canadian determined to bring some of mom's home-cooked meatballs to Saigon. And when I read James Pham's *Secret Supper Club* about Saigon's first clandestine kitchen, I immediately knew that I wanted to go. Innovative cuisine that requires a password? I'm in!

I know many of you are traveling or coming back from holidays this month. There really is no better way to learn about others and ourselves. One of my favorite quotes is from the Dalai Lama who said, "Once a year, go someplace you've never been before." Words to live by. So here's to your own adventures, whether far-flung or somewhere closer to home, to a place you've never been before. ■

**CHRISTINE VAN**

Managing Editor

**BooMarang**  
Bistro Saigon

## AUGUST SPORT

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CRICKET ENGLAND V AUSTRALIA  
1<sup>ST</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
9<sup>TH</sup> - 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
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# Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



**AUGUST 4**

**What:** Peter Pan and the Lost Boys Workshop

**Where:** Saigon Outcast, 188/1 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

**About:** The first in a series of workshops to brainstorm adaptations to the classic children's story as well as choosing their desirable roles. Open to all ages and nationalities, including actors, script writers, dancers, costume designers, etc.

**Contact:** Visit [www.facebook.com/SaigonOucast](http://www.facebook.com/SaigonOucast)



**AUGUST 16-22**

**What:** Annual Festival Autumn Melodies by the Ho Chi Minh City Ballet Symphony Orchestra and Opera

**Where:** Saigon Opera House

**About:** A series of concerts and performances celebrating the accomplishments of Vietnamese artists who have studied abroad. Vietnamese and foreign performing artists will contribute to the classical music concerts, choral performances and ballet.



**AUGUST 10**

**What:** Pets in the City – A.R.C. Annual Fundraiser, 6pm-9pm

**Where:** Blanchy's Tash, 95 Hai Ba Trung, D1

**About:** A.R.C. (Animal Rescue & Care) was founded in 2010 to directly address the plight of abused and abandoned animals. In addition to their rescue and adoption work, A.R.C run a trap, neuter and release scheme and educational programs at schools throughout the city. A.R.C is reliant on donations from the community to fund their work. Each year they host an annual event to help raise funds to support the work they do to increase awareness of responsible animal ownership and issues of animal welfare.

Ticket price is VND200,000 with one happy hour drink of your choice. All proceeds go to A.R.C. DJ Bao will be spinning tunes.

**Contact:** For more info on their adoption program or to become a volunteer, email [arcpets@gmail.com](mailto:arcpets@gmail.com)

**AUGUST 23-25**

**What:** Saigon Hash House Harriers' 1,200th run

**Where:** Hash in the countryside, party in the city

**About:** The "drinking club with a running problem" celebrates their 1,200th run and 23 years of hashing in their usual style with a registration party on Friday, Saturday afternoon run and dinner, and Sunday morning run and lunch all for VND1.5 million including a goody bag.

**Contact:** For more info and to register for the event, log onto [www.saigonhash.com](http://www.saigonhash.com)

**SEPTEMBER 21**

**What:** AusCham Intergalactic Ball

**Where:** InterContinental Asiana Saigon

**About:** A five-star space-tacular experience including dinner, drinks and dancing. A live band and DJ will be on hand to keep the crowd moving until the early hours. There will also be a charitable aspect to the evening with proceeds from an auction to be donated to a nominated charity. Costumes or sparkly/shiny black tie is preferred for the event. Tickets are VND3,165,000 per person.

**Contact:** [events@auschamvn.org](mailto:events@auschamvn.org) or 3832 9912



# Troi Oi

The city by the numbers



## VND8 MILLION

is the new going rate to obtain a B2 automobile driver's license without having to actually take the exam or the road test. Last month the Road General Department implemented a new written exam that consists of 450 questions, up by 45 from before. The written motorbike test has been increased to 150 questions, 30 more than the previous.

USD4 - USD5.6  
MILLION

is how much the construction of the Long Thanh international airport in southern Dong Nai Province will cost. The project is expected to be built on 5,000 hectares of land in Long Thanh District. The total investment in the project will be USD4 billion if the airport is designed to have only one runway and a terminal, but will increase to USD5.6 billion if it is larger.

Upon completion, the airport will be able to serve 80 - 100 million passengers and handle five million tons of cargo per year. The airport is scheduled to become operational by 2020.

## VND65 BILLION

will be spent to preserve a traditional form of folk music called *quan ho* (love duet singing) and *ca tru* (ceremonial singing) in the northern province of Bac Ninh as part of a 2013 - 2020 project. It is one of the province's important tasks to continue implementing its commitments to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to protect a cultural singing heritage.

21kg

of ivory products were smuggled into Vietnam last month. A Vietnamese national, identified only as N.P.K., was caught at Tan Son Nhat International Airport with the contraband in his suitcase. He was coming from France. They are thought to be made from African elephants' tusks, and banned in Vietnam.

The 178-member Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, named Vietnam as a main transit point and one of eight primary source, transit, and import countries in the international ivory trade.

The other seven countries are China, Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, and Uganda.

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HOT

What's Hot & What's Not

NOT

**HOT**  
The battle for the 'real' burger gains another player as McDonald's is set to join Burger King, Lotteria and Jollibee as Vietnam's next international chain. The US fast food king will open a HCMC outlet in early 2014 after awarding the local franchise partnership rights to the Prime Minister's son-in-law.



**NOT**  
The minimal fine of VND20m to Vo Hoang Giang, the ringleader of a group that admitted to selling around 1,000 cases of fake Heineken mixed with Saigon Beer around the HCMC area.

**HOT**  
Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has demanded that three local websites immediately remove uploaded copies of Hollywood films in violation of copyrights owned by the Motion Picture Association of America.



**NOT**  
Controversy in the television show **The Voice Vietnam** when singer Nguyen Dinh Thanh Tam accused the show of allowing two contestants to perform his song *Chay Mua* without his permission.

**HOT**  
Vietnam is trialing a pilot program at 400 schools to replace traditional textbooks with digital ones loaded on computer tablets, equipped with more than 20 academic applications at the cost of VND4.8 million per unit.



**NOT**  
Apple is set to be sued by actress-singer Le Kieu Nhu, author of the book *Soi xich (The Chain)*, for selling the book without her consent on its App Store. The book was originally published in March 2010 but its 2,000 copies were withdrawn a few days later, panned for its crude sex and poor writing.

**HOT**  
Vietnam gets its first ever woman police Major General. Bui Tuyet Minh, 51, is the first Vietnamese woman to attain the rank and, earlier, was also the first to be Director of a city or province police department.



**NOT**  
Beauty queen used her looks and title to charge high prices for sex. Vo Thi My Xuan, 30, and five others were sentenced for running a prostitution ring that involved models, singers, and actresses who charged wealthy clients up to USD7,000.



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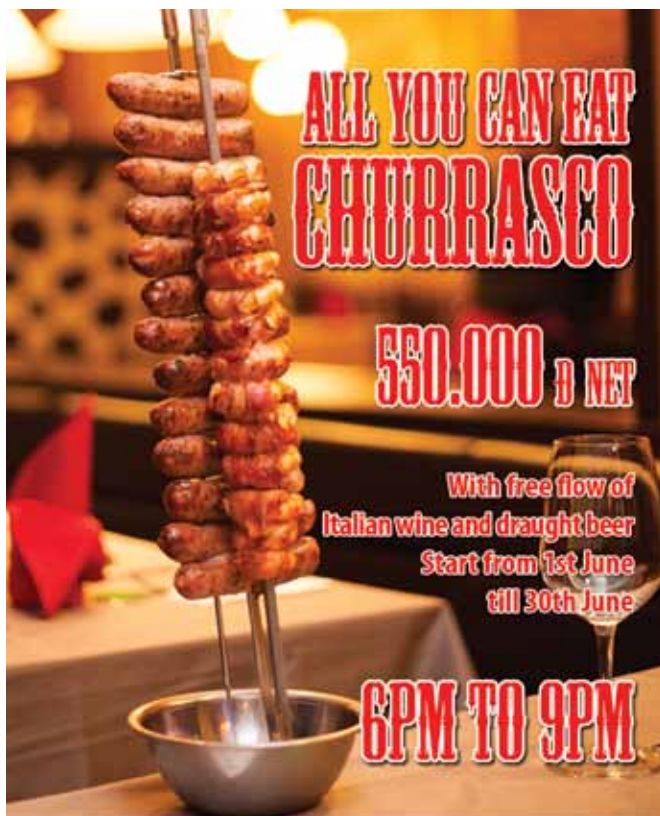
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# The Bulletin

Promotions and New in HCMC...



## EATING FOR A CAUSE

For a limited time only, from August 11 – 14, Japanese restaurant **Robata Dining An** (15C Le Thanh Ton, D1; [robata-an.com](http://robata-an.com)) will be offering Sapporo beer for only VND9,999 - a perfect complement to its menu of fresh sushi, sashimi and Japanese specialties.

Also this month, Robata Dining An is participating in a charity initiative called Table For Two, one of Japan's fastest-growing nonprofit organizations. Table For Two tackles the opposing issues of malnutrition in developing countries and overconsumption in the rich world through a unique "calorie transfer" program. The concept is relatively simple: the restaurant agrees to provide a range of low-calorie meals approved by Table for Two. The sum of 25 cents from the price of each meal is distributed to schools in East Africa, enough to buy a nutritious meal of 1,200 calories for a hungry child.



## FISH COLLECTION

The newest additions to the **Anupa** (9 Dong Du, D1; [anupa.net](http://anupa.net)) sustainable leather collection are items made from tilapia fish leather. The Kaoru clutch (VND4.6 million) is designed to be spacious enough to carry all your evening must-haves with a wrist strap making it easier to hold. In the first series of this clutch they have used the fish leather as the main signature piece. The Zoey belt series (VND2.5 million each) is sewn together with strips of fish leather using a durable stitching technique and is lined with cow hide leather.

## JUST DESSERTS

**Star Kitchen** (2nd Floor, 8/15 Le Thanh Ton, above Pizza 4P's, D1) may not be the first Japanese cooking class in town, but it turns out some of the prettiest sweets around. Focusing on the art of fine Japanese baking, the studio hosts baking classes and sells an assortment of pre-ordered cakes as well as hard-to-find baking ingredients. Classes run throughout the day from Tuesday - Sunday and feature Japanese treats like *mochi* cream, *matcha nama choco* (green tea chocolate) and green tea and red bean cake. There are also Japanese takes on European classics like the Tokyo cheesecake and the Star Tiramisu. The two-hour classes start at VND350,000 with multi-class discounts available. For more information, visit [www.star-kitchen.jp](http://www.star-kitchen.jp).

## FUSION SUSHI

HCMC certainly has no shortage of fine sushi restaurants but **Doraku Sushi** ([dorakusushi.com](http://dorakusushi.com)) presents a unique and refreshing twist to traditional Japanese cuisine with subtle hints of Latin American and Southeast Asian flavors.

HCMC is the fourth international location for this contemporary fusion sushi bar, which has its roots in Miami, created by Kevin Aoki, son of famous restaurateur Rocky Aoki. As a result, you'll find some Cuban-influenced fusion dishes on the mostly-traditional sushi menu that are as exceptional as they are unique, like the Arctic Salmon Roll (salmon, shrimp and avocado with massago, spicy aoli and salmon roe).

Located on 124 Le Thanh Ton in District 1, it has three levels of dining spaces complemented by warm dark wood furniture and floors for an intimate dining atmosphere. Watch out for the Japanese lanterns and traditional earthenware for spices and sake, which complete the perfect ambiance.

## FREE KICKS

In August and September **Saigon Karate** ([saigonkarate.blogspot.com](http://saigonkarate.blogspot.com)) is offering free classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at DanCenter in An Phu. Classes teaching the basis of traditional karate are open to beginners: young adults (over 15), adults, boys and girls.



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## EDIBLE FOREST

**White Forest** (14bis Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1; [whiteforest.com.vn](http://whiteforest.com.vn)) is the latest café and tapas restaurant to grace the dining scene. International dishes like beetroot salad with honey dressing and goat cheese (VND90,000), and duck breast with orange and prune sauce (VND155,000) dominate the menu.

## WAG THE DOG

Satisfy your hot dog and sausage cravings at **Lucky Dog**, which features an international array of sausages to suit your taste from the Traditional American classic Home Run Hot Dog (with yellow mustard, pickle relish and ketchup), to the Kaiser Smoked German (with sauerkraut and whole grain mustard) to more creative combinations like the Chorizo Slaw Dog (lined with coleslaw) to the British Bull Dog (which comes with a slather of HP Sauce and creamy horseradish). Lucky Dog currently delivers throughout Ho Chi Minh City and caters. Prices start at VND59,000. Order at [www.deliver.vn.com/lucky-dog-r56-q0.html](http://www.deliver.vn.com/lucky-dog-r56-q0.html)

## MID-AUTUMN FEAST

As the moon shines at its fullest on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, the Mid-Autumn Festival begins. On Sept. 18 and 19, diners can enjoy authentic traditional cuisine created especially for the occasion at Yu Chu and Market 39 at **InterContinental Asiana Saigon** (cnr of Le Duan & Hai Ba Trung). Market 39's buffet starts from VND350,000D++ per child aged 6-12. For children under 6 or whose birthday falls on either one of the two dates, the meal is complimentary if accompanied by an adult.

The hotel is also taking vegetarian cooking to the highest level with a fine selection of both traditional and creative vegetarian cuisine during August at Market 39, Yu Chu and Basilico.

## ON THE MARKET

Taking a cue from their select inventory of conceptual independent designers, Singaporean boutique Black Market's newly formed sister shop **blackmarket No. 3** has opened on 267/2 Dien Bien Phu, D3. Run by Filipino video artist Quincy Teofisto and motion graphics designer Jasmine Tuan—who is also a driving force behind fashion label FrüFrü & Tigerlily—the duo's eye for catching good talent early on is all part of Black Market's bigger plan as a major force in the fashion scene.

## THE GRAND

More than 600 of Vietnam's glitterati assembled for the opening of the buzzworthy The Grand Ho Tram Strip, a spectacular 541 room integrated resort which includes live table and electronic gaming facilities, thirteen bars and restaurants, three swimming pools and a Greg Norman designed golf course which will open later this year.

Work is underway on a second tower which when complete will bring the resort to a total of 1,100 rooms. A total of five 5-star resorts are planned for the 2.2 kilometer stretch of beach-front located around 2.5 hours from Ho Chi Minh City. Opening promotions available now until December at [www.thegrandhotramstrip.com](http://www.thegrandhotramstrip.com)

## LUXURY IN NHA TRANG

**InterContinental Nha Trang** will be opening soon and will feature 277 luxury guest rooms and suites with panoramic views of Nha Trang Bay. Each room will be fitted with a modern in-room entertainment system, rain showers, ergonomic work space and high speed internet, just to name a few. The hotel is located in the heart of Nha Trang City, 35 km from Cam Ranh International Airport, close to the city's attractions, entertainment areas and shopping centers.



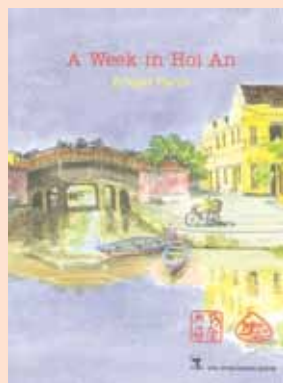
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## A WEEK IN HOI AN

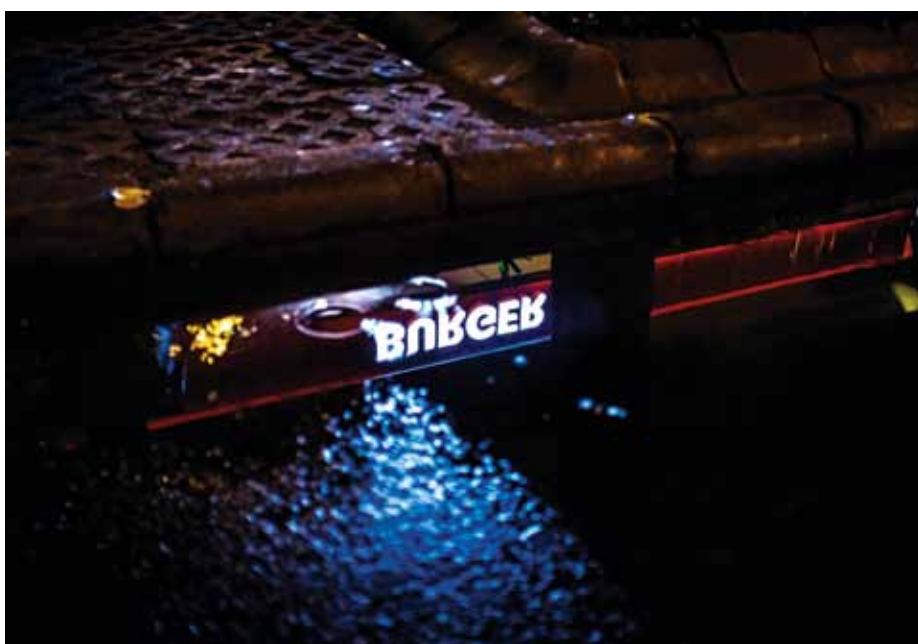
Oi's very own *Postcards in Vietnam* columnist, Bridget March, launches her new book, **A Week in Hoi An**, an artist's guide to the beautiful World Heritage Town. There are over 60 drawings and watercolor sketches plus notes about its history and culture. Available at [www.bridgetmarch.com](http://www.bridgetmarch.com).

# Rain Check

It beats on our rooftops. It makes us wear silly pink polka dot ponchos. It creates puddles on the sidewalk and wreaks havoc with our schedule. Rain can be dramatic or it can be subtle. But as the rest of us run for cover during sudden downpours our photographer takes the opportunity to capture some beautiful, albeit, wet moments.

**IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

















# Join the Union

Rugby is a sport, a passion, a disease you catch.  
There is nothing like it on or off the field

TEXT BY **MIKE WAKELY** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **SAIGON GECKO'S**

THE NORMALLY PEACEFUL and manicured playing fields of the RMIT campus are slowly beginning to reverberate, gently shuddering in time to what sounds strangely like the distant stampede of cattle, perhaps marauding their way relentlessly over Nguyen Van Linh. Students are lazing on the grass in the afternoon sun, children are chasing footballs and picnic blankets are tucked into corners of precious shade, all apparently unperturbed by the disturbance. Indeed, most are avidly watching the source of the noise – which turns out not to be bovines but 15 or 20 very powerfully built men charging around a pitch

chasing an oval shaped ball. These are the Geckos, Saigon's only rugby union team.

Put simply, the aim of rugby is to carry the ball and touch it down in the opposition's goal area at the end of the pitch. This apparently 'simple' act is complicated by the rule that the ball can only be thrown backwards (but can be kicked forwards) and the presence of 15 extremely large people on the other team doing (almost) anything to stop you. It is this physical confrontation, combined with the fleet feet and creative flair required to escape it, which make rugby such a popular global sport. Last month's British and Irish Lions tour

of Australia was watched by a global audience of tens of millions, but likely passed by the Vietnamese population without fanfare.

It would be fair to say that rugby union is not a particularly popular, or well-known sport, in Vietnam. It languishes a long way down the list of sports that the local Vietnamese are most likely to participate in, but for a huge part of the expatriate community rugby is their national sport. For the Welsh (I'll admit that includes me) there is no other sport. Each weekend in every village across Wales, whole communities make their way to rugby clubs, laden with cakes,





sandwiches and beer... lots of beer, to watch their team play and to exchange gossip and news. The games, and the club itself, are the heart of the community.

"In many ways it's almost a social club. It's more about what happens off the pitch than on it," says Chris Paget, the Club Secretary of the Saigon Geckos. "People come here to mix with different types of people of all ages. Saigon can be a stressful city and I see the rugby club as a release."

### Punted Into Touch

Started in 1993, the club has about 100 members, with a high percentage of women and 14 different nationalities represented. As annual fees go, it's relatively cheap to join (VND750,000/person/year or VND1 million for a couple, and includes a club polo shirt that entitles members to discounts and free beer and soft drinks after practice). The club runs both touch and contact rugby sessions each week. Touch rugby (as the name suggest) is a non-contact version of the full game where the player with the ball must stop running when someone on the opposite team 'tackles' them by placing both of their hands on them. By removing the physical aspect it makes the game more accessible for beginners.

"In some ways we are a touch rugby club, with a contact section," explains Chris. "Anyone can play touch - boys, girls, all ages."

The Club Captain Simon Robson agrees: "If you've never played rugby before you can start with touch, get a feel for the game and then begin to slowly introduce the rules and the physical contact."

Touch rugby has also proved to be a more successful way to get local Vietnamese to participate in a sport where the physicality can sometimes be initially intimidating. "We have Vietnamese members, and twice a year we hold touch rugby tournaments with entirely Vietnamese teams involved," adds Simon. "But the physical side can be challenging for them."

This means that very few Vietnamese ever move on to playing full contact rugby, but this is something that Simon hopes he can change by getting more people, particularly locals, to join. "We want to get the word out and get the club more involved with the local community in order to make people feel that the Geckos are something that they can be part of."

While it's clear that the social side of the club is important, it would be wrong to assume the Geckos don't take their rugby

seriously. They went unbeaten in all games for two and half years, and although there is only one other club in Vietnam, the Hanoi Dragons, the Geckos still play as many as 20 games a season as part of the Southeast Asia Cup against teams from Cambodia, Manila, Bangkok, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur. Saigon is also a popular stop for touring teams.

"It's a great experience for the visiting teams and we can give them a good, competitive game. We get lots of offers or invitations from touring teams to play us, and we play a few each year, but we struggle to fit them all in. The city of Saigon definitely attracts them over," says Chris.

The club is growing and Simon is cautious but ambitious about the future. "We'd like to win the Asian Cup, maybe this year or next year. We are a good team but to get to that level in a very competitive league we need an increase in members and community involvement and support to push us on."

The next home match is against a touring New Zealand team - the Manurewa Druids - on August 24.

You can try touch rugby for free at 4pm on Saturdays (RMIT Campus), or contact the Saigon Geckos at [saigonrugbyfootballclub@yahoo.com](mailto:saigonrugbyfootballclub@yahoo.com) for more details. ■



# Meat the Maker

A Canadian expat opens a sidewalk food cart selling meatballs

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







WITH ALL THE late-night clamor and bustle of Bui Vien, you might walk straight past **Nana Marie's** (60 Bui Vien, D1), tucked away against the side of a wee souvenir shop a short bitumen waltz away from the Crazy Buffalo. It's the simplest of start-ups; a cart, a few sidewalk stools retired from a local preschool, a stovetop, a fridge – and presiding over all of these, a fairly decent-looking brand-new sign. For Colin Coats, these elements are all he needs to make the smooth transition from seven years of English teaching, with all its cruisy hours and late mornings, to the adventure of entrepreneurship.

It's been a rough start – business was knocked out for a month just after opening when the stall's premium bread supplier renovated without warning – but the fledgling gourmet meatball sub business is finally on track. "I already have regulars," says Colin. "And at least half of them come back once a week. You'd be surprised how many of them finish their sub and then immediately buy another one to take home."

Colin has been scoping out the backpacker location for some time. "I didn't want to be another hamburger/hot dog guy. I've seen the stands come and go. They didn't really do well here. There's been a lot of curiosity about Nana

Marie's so far, but most of the sales rely on the split-second decision of hungry passers-by."

"My stand isn't exactly about fast food. It's gourmet fast food. I cook the chicken fresh on the pan right here, with butter and herbs. It's a good, spicy chicken. Even my fries are seasoned fries. The point is just to make good food," he adds. "I understand the backpackers are looking for their dollar meals. I'm offering a great two or three dollar meal instead."

#### Who is Nana Marie?

Colin is no stranger to rough starts. Taken from his birth family at a very young age and used by his abductor to gain entry to a Malaysian refugee camp after the war, he was physically scarred from the experience by the time he was adopted by Canadian parents. Marie, his adopted mother, was his inspiration to return to Vietnam as an adult to find his roots, and the cart is opened in her memory.

"It was my Mom's signature dish. She'd buy meatballs at the store and jazz them up with her own sweet and sour sauce. Whenever we did family reunions or weddings, that was her thing."

His own meatballs, however, are made from scratch. "I've always been good at making hamburger patties, and the technique's more or less the same. The secret is not to work the

meat too much. You don't want it to be too dense, or it won't feel as good on the tongue. This kind of food has to be easy to digest, easy to chew."

"I love to cook, so I know what flavors are good with beef and pork. I have a good pasta sauce that I make, which I changed a little to complement the meatballs. I use ingredients like wine and bacon in it to keep it rich like a Bolognese. I don't like local meatballs, like those giant pork balls they have here with the *com tam*. The pork's so fatty and they use too much filler. I went and bought some meatballs not far from here that were so dense and garlicky. I could taste the garlic three hours after I ate them. Mine, they're very fresh, the right firmness, and they're cooked in the sauce – that helps the meatballs to absorb some of the moisture."

Looking at Colin, however, there's no obvious signs of the panic or concern you'd expect from a first-time business owner who's just lost a month of trading. By contrast, Colin's down-to-earth, casual manner seems a perfect fit for Bui Vien.

"I don't have any plans to go back home quite yet," he says. "I'd really like to have a life here. I just love doing this."

For more info and delivery options (available mid-August), visit [www.nanamaries.com](http://www.nanamaries.com) ■



# State of the Art

The second half of our two part series where *Oi* features local galleries and the homegrown artists they are helping to nurture

INTERVIEWED BY **CHRISTINE VAN** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

**"A lot of people may think that putting on an exhibition is simply hanging the work but in fact a huge amount of effort goes into it"**

## Galerie Quynh

65 De Tham, D1; Level 2, 151/3 Dong Khoi, D1;  
www.galeriequynh.com

## Quynh Pham, Director

**I've noticed that the industry is dominated by mostly men, why is that?**

**QP:** The art business is like most other businesses where men hold great power. However, in Vietnam, the first important contemporary art space in Saigon was run by Tran Thi Huynh Nga and in Hanoi by Natasha Kraevskaia.

**What does curating an exhibition entail?**

**QP:** A lot of people may think that putting on an exhibition is simply hanging the work but in fact a huge amount of effort goes into it. When I curate a show, what is most important is working closely with the artist(s) to decide

which works are good enough to show and rejecting works that are below par or don't really fit or illustrate a particular concept the artist wants to address. Then it is a question of deciding on the best placement for the pieces given the space limits so that the exhibition is cohesive and makes sense. You want to give the works space to live by themselves so often we will end up not showing a number of initially selected works rather than overcrowd the walls. These works are then kept in our climate-controlled storage so they can be pulled out and shown upon request.

With all shows, marketing and promotion is important. A press release and essays on the work are written by respected critics, curators, academics or other art professionals and distributed through our local and international networks which include collectors, curators, museums, academic publications, art and design publications and such. All the works need to be professionally photographed for promotional and archival purposes. Sometimes





Nguyen Manh Hung



I've Been Here



Bring the Limit to Life

**"The conflicts between people in this society inspired me on every idea of my works"**

a bilingual publication will be realized as well. We also try to organize artist talks to accompany our exhibitions as we feel it is important to make the work we present accessible to the community, especially here in Vietnam where there is very little infrastructure to support the arts.

**Where do you go online or in HCMC for good art resources, whether to find a new artist, or to see what is going on in the art world both here and abroad?**

**QP:** San Art, Vietnam's most active non-profit art space has a great reading room. The artist and lecturer Rich Streitmatter-Tran also has an extensive library of art resources at his studio and residency space dia/projects in District 7. I get a lot of information on new art and shows online as well as through travel and trade shows. I love *e-flux.com* which basically highlights some of the most interesting art events/news around the world. I also read the

usual glossy, established magazines like *Frieze*, *Art Forum*, *Art Asia Pacific* as well as various blogs. I check out the online journal *Guernica* from time to time.

#### **The Artist: Nguyen Manh Hung**

*Raised and educated in Hanoi, Hung's practice reflects the comical situations arising from the rapid yet fragmentary processes of urbanization and modernization. As the son of a fighter jet pilot, his work often betrays an overriding preoccupation with militaristic images. Hung draws on the personal in his paintings of aircraft and ground vehicles, depicting military planes laden down with oversized grocery items or else soaring across the sky with bushels from the rice harvest.*

**What has been the standout moment of your career so far?**

**NMH:** The opportunity to show my work at APT7 at Queensland Art Gallery recently.

#### **What motivates you to create?**

**NMH:** The conflicts between people in this society inspired me on every idea of my works.

**You paint, create large-scale installations, and make experimental music. Of the three, which is your favorite medium and why?**

**NMH:** The making of installations inspires me every time. I prefer to do it because it brings to the audience and artist the feeling of living together with this object in the same environment. Paintings are not accessible for people to be inside the space itself.

**Has your style changed at all through the years?**

**NMH:** No, I don't think it has changed. I think it has developed together with other elements such as media, materials, etc. ■

## THE MYTH:

### Vietnamese coffee has a slightly odd taste. Is it true that it's roasted in fish sauce?

THIS IS UNFORTUNATELY not only true, it's considered *de rigueur* within the Vietnamese coffee industry, and it has been for some time. Back in the old days when locally-based Chinese traders started to realize that this new 'coffee' thing that the French were growing on their plantations was something not unlike tea and could potentially catch on, they felt that it needed a bit of refinement to give it a more 'East-Asian kick'. This involved pan-roasting the beans with a whole range of ingredients, amongst which fish sauce was thought to add a certain boldness. Chinese ingenuity – or at least, whatever it is that causes the inscrutable Asian mind to think that fish and coffee are a pretty neat combination – also introduced chicken fat (for glossier beans and because coffee that tastes like chicken has to be awesome), alcohol (for fortification – actually, maybe this is okay), and burned-to-a-crisp corn in order to enhance the color, perhaps hoping that the fish and chicken would mask the "bitter charcoal" element that it inevitably introduced. Maybe it does.

It's probably the latter amongst these ingredients that's mostly to blame for that subtle, weird intensity you get from a Vietnamese roast. Just this March, *Tuoi Tre* carried an outrageous statement by the Deputy General Director of Vinacafe Bien Hoa, Nguyen Thanh Tung, claiming that 90 percents of all coffee products sold in Vietnam aren't made of coffee at all, but rather chemical agents mixed in with soy and charred corn to produce a jet-black, coffee-flavored water that many producers claim is actually preferred by Vietnamese drinkers.

As bold as such a statement may be, he may well be right. Although Vietnam exports more coffee than anywhere else on the planet, what's left for the domestic market is actually not cheap. Enthusiastic local coffee producers, already well-accustomed to adding a little bit of this and that into the roaster, seem to have realized that there's virtually no limit to the quantity of cheap, burned corn that can be added to the bushel – so much so that there's little need for the humble coffee bean to show up at all.

Last year, *Thanh Nien* news exposed Thong Phat coffee company for

producing little more than a "black mixture of unknown chemicals" in which not a single granule of coffee was involved. Many other local coffee producers quite candidly acknowledged this rarity of the genuine article in their product, justifying their manufacturing process by claiming that Vietnamese people are unused to the caffeine content, and would prefer to pay less cash for a sticky, black corn drink than

shell out top dollar for a true *arabica* roast.

For those less inclined towards a wash of chemistry and soot for their morning cuppa, it's good practice to visually verify the product at the point of purchase. Buy actual coffee beans, and grind them yourself. Of course, this won't take away the *eau de la fish sauce* – the only foolproof way to avoid that is to purchase an imported blend.

- **Jeremy McCaughey** ■



ILLUSTRATION BY QUAN NGUYEN





# Secret Supper Club

Saigon's first anti-restaurant brings foodies together

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM  
IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

IT'S KNOWN BY MANY NAMES - speakeasies, underground restaurants, guerrilla dining, clandestine kitchens. But in essence, it's a meal served in someone's home to paying customers, making it something in between a restaurant and a dinner party.

Secret supper clubs have been around for decades, most notably in Latin America (known as *paladares* in Cuba) and in Hong Kong starting in the early 2000s, an economical alternative to opening a restaurant with accompanying overhead costs. More recently, though, closed door restaurants have burst onto the foodie scene as an outlet for ambitious home cooks or even trained chefs in between jobs. The most exclusive are by invitation only, although sites like *gusta.com* (founded by two former Airbnb employees) list more than 300 food events in cities from Krakow to Kansas City with names like "I think, therefore, I lamb."

Saigon now has its first supper club organized by Tasty Inc., a new partnership between Fredrick Wilson and Chad Kubanoff, hosting dinner parties several times a week in their minimalist D4 apartment, where guests must disclose a password to enter. "We just think the password idea is cool. This is not a restaurant. It's us having fun, being creative, exploring food, trying new things. We want there to be a little bit of intrigue, mystery, excitement," the best friends say.

The two met while attending the Culinary Institute of America before going on to work in restaurants around the US. Fredrick trained for a time under Stephanie Izard, the winner of Top Chef Season 4, and leans towards Italian cuisine. Chad worked in restaurants in Chicago and

New York, refining his classical French techniques before arriving in Vietnam five years ago to start Back of the Bike Tours. Both now gravitate towards modern American cuisine and the ever popular farm-to-table movement.

"That's one of the things I love about living here," says Fredrick. "We're talking to people who are doing unique things with food, like French-style oysters in Nha Trang, 4P's making mozzarella, some Dalat guys making everything from jalapeños. I love the idea of a farmer coming to the back door of a restaurant in muddy boots, with a basket of things that he grew."

Chad adds: "We're looking for people doing things well and highlighting their product. I don't care if it's just a carrot or whatever. We'd love to work with local farmers. I'm tired of going to the market and trying to figure out whether this product came from China or Vietnam."

## Table Talk

Back in their living room, two tables are pushed together to provide seating for 12.

Only a few things let on that this is not your average kitchen: a knife rack with more knives than any one family would need, two large fridges, and a cabinet full of canisters neatly stacked and filled with powders used for molecular gastronomy. With only two burners, a toaster oven and a few other appliances, the duo turn out the evening's 5-course menu which includes roasted squash with soy sauce cured pork belly, chicken confit in an onion soup with vinegar gel and *rau ram* bubbles and a crab croquette with dijon leather and pickled mustard seeds.

The diners gather around the open kitchen, watching the two plate up the dishes in what feels like a private episode of Top Chef. Tonight's disparate group of food lovers includes a real estate investor, a bakery owner, an IT guru, an environmental worker and an architect. In no time, though, a common fixation with food has everyone laughing and talking over a unique take on braised pork tongue with homemade scrapple. "I think it's weird in a good way to sit with a bunch of strangers over dinner because it can be great to do something different from what you would normally gravitate towards. You get a chance to really engage in conversation, which can be more difficult at bars and clubs where people typically go to meet new people," posits fellow diner Anh Thu.

"When you get everyone lined up at a table, good things are going to happen," says Frederick. Just don't forget your password.

For reservations, visit [www.tastyinc.net](http://www.tastyinc.net)  
Would your club like to be featured in Oi?  
Email us at [editorial@oivietnam.com](mailto:editorial@oivietnam.com)



# Grounded for Life

The rise and fall of arguably the city's most unique cafe

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

CAFE BOEING (*Café May Bay* or Airplane Cafe) on 117 Hong Ha Street closed down permanently three months ago when its lease expired. In a strange turn of events, the reason for its closure was also what made the café so popular. In the last two years, the cafe had been heavily featured in the Vietnamese press because smack dab in the middle of it was the first and only Boeing 707 (also called VN-A394) in Vietnam, the star attraction at this unique cafe for almost three decades. Customers could have a *ca phe sua da* under the wing of a 145-foot long derelict jetliner. Even the mile high club couldn't beat that for novelty.

However, the onslaught of social media coverage resulting in a large numbers of visitors did not bode well for Pham Duc, the owner.

"I can't afford her anymore," says Duc over a phone interview. "We had been selling cups at street price for the past 10 years, but the

rent kept rising. We were getting too popular for our own good." Cafe Boeing had been a local favorite since its debut in the mid 1980s.

"Most came for the airplane, not the coffee. We didn't actually make much from it, but it looked like we were raking in cash. So they decided to raise the rent. Many cafes also opened up on this street and sold at half my price. Of course they didn't have to pay the rent rate I did. Eventually I had to give her up."

"It's kind of ironic," he adds. "I started my cafe with her, and now she's the one who ended it. Thirty years. Just like that."

The history of the airplane itself is shrouded in mystery. Few know with complete certainty just where it came from and exactly what happened to it. According to Phan Tuong, former president of Southern Vietnam Air, the VN-A394 was the property

of Pan Am before 1975 and was stranded in Hong Kong during the period of the American War. After failed attempts at trying to retrieve the plane in 1975, a three-way agreement between the US, Vietnam and Pan Am was reached. Vietnam was to open its airspace to American civilian flights in return for Pan Am ceasing its recollection attempts on the VN-A394. The plane was then flown from Hong Kong to Hanoi, and then from Hanoi to Saigon. That became its last flight as it quickly became apparent that the maintenance of the VN-A394 was too costly.

The VN-A394 eventually fell into disuse and was taken out of operation. It was then gutted for the machinery inside and the chassis towed to the HCMC Flight Training Center yard. To maximize the plane's usage, the center's management office decided to rent it out to Duc as a cafeteria and instant photo service.

Other accounts claim that the VN-A394 had been in Vietnam well before 1975, was damaged during the reunification period and was found abandoned halfway out of a flight track in Tan Son Nhat airport where it was then towed to the HCMC Flight Training Center yard.

The airplane's future is still unknown. There have been talks of restoring it to its original condition and turning it into a tourist attraction. It still sits where it has been for the past 30 years and can now only be seen from outside the fence. But one thing is certain, this bird will never fly again. ■





# *BOOMTOWN OR* **BUST**

Our cover series revolves around the concept of boomtowns. The four cities featured this month have all been boomtowns in their past. Melbourne's historic gold rush led to a diversity of culture that today gives the city its vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyle. While the Salton Sea is an example of a poorly managed population influx that, even though has become an abandoned desolate town, remains mysterious and unique in itself. We've also discovered that a mass pocket of Chinese emigrants have changed the culinary landscape of Singaporean-Malay food by marrying their own traditional cooking style with their newfound home country's exotic cuisine. And sometimes a magical utopian town blooms overnight somewhere in the Nevada desert.

Join us as we revisit and revive these glorious boomtowns.





# THE ACCIDENTAL SEA

The Salton Sea, in the middle of the Californian desert, is an engineering disaster and a failed resort, but it has its own brand of attractions and art galleries. Be ready for the bizarre

TEXT AND IMAGES BY GISELLE WHITEAKER

IT'S 113°F (45°C) as I step out of the car I hired in Los Angeles. I have driven 170 miles through largely uninspiring landscapes to arrive here, around 40 miles south of Palm Springs. And I am wondering where I am. The fishing and general store squatting on the sand by the side of the road is the first retail outlet I have seen in miles. It has a forlorn air, out-of-date flyers and "For Sale" signs stuck to the barred windows, ripped and baked by the harsh Californian sun.

The door groans in protest as I enter, parched and overheated, the jeans I wore on my overnight flight clinging heavily to my frame. The wiry middle-aged woman inside gives me a weary look. She is wearing denim shorts, a cut-off shirt, and a gun. I collect a gallon jug of water and ask if I can use the bathroom. As she hears my Australian accent, she breaks into a welcoming smile. "Sure you can. Where ya from?" she drawls as she directs me through the back storeroom.

Changed into a temperature-appropriate

outfit I stop for a chat. Barbara was born and raised here by the Salton Sea. Her father owned the store during the Salton Sea's heyday in the 1950s. When he passed away a few years ago she moved back to run the business. She can't afford to leave, but she doesn't want to die here.

## A LOW SPOT ON EARTH

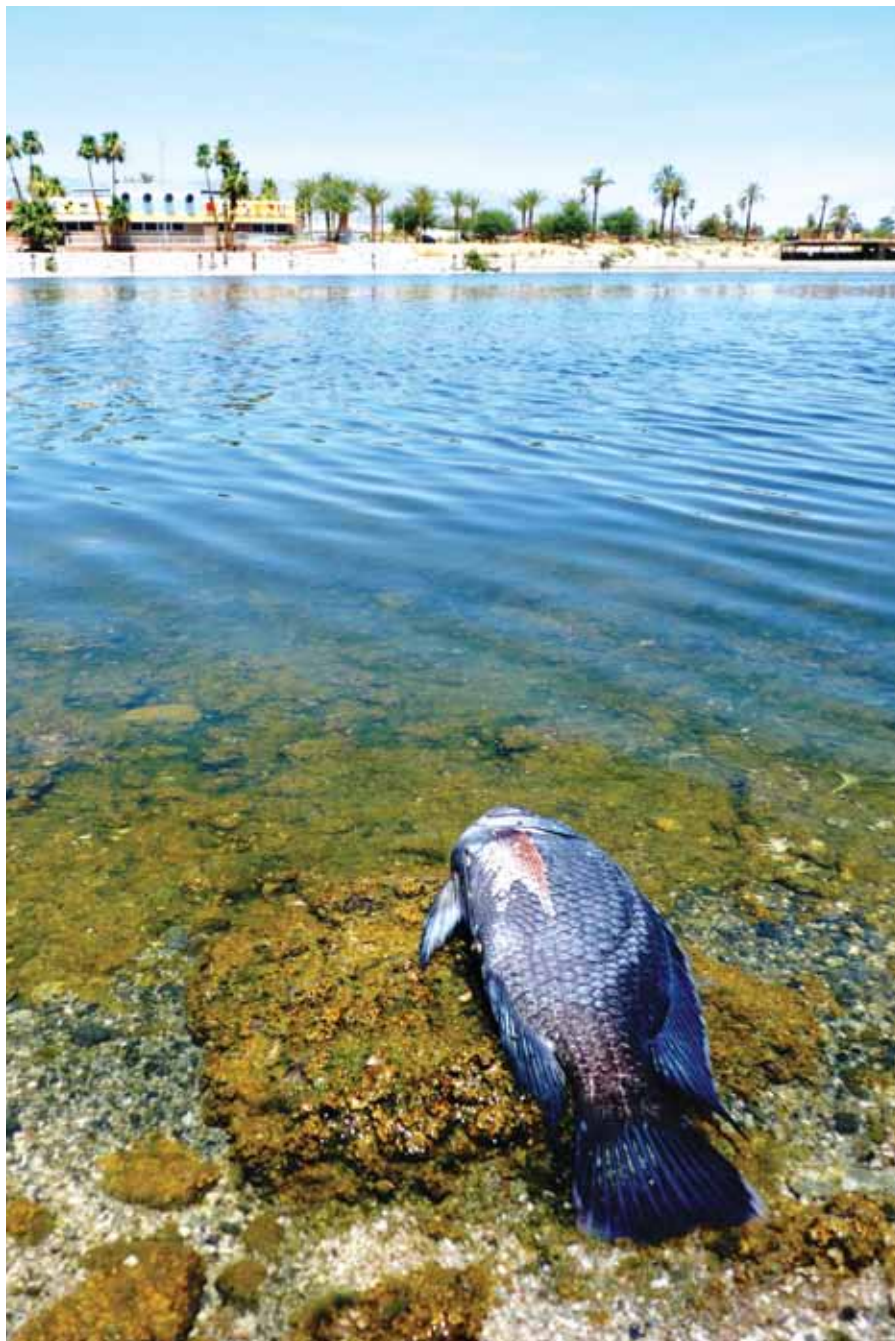
The Salton Sea is one of the world's largest inland seas as well as being one of the lowest spots on Earth at 227 feet below sea level. It is also an accident. In 1900, the California Development Company began creating irrigation canals to divert water from the Colorado River into the area, allowing farmers to plant crops. In 1905 a combination of silt, heavy rainfall, and melting snow caused an engineering mishap. The canal gates crashed and for the next 18 months the entire volume of the Colorado River rushed downward into the Salton Trough. By the time the engineers halted the flood, the Salton Sea had been

born - 45 miles long and 20 miles wide with around 130 miles of shoreline.

Contrary to the widely held view that the sea would evaporate in the harsh desert climate, it stayed put. Development began and by the 1950s, the accidental sea was well on its way to being a resort area, cities springing up along the shores. The future looked bright as the waterfront playground began to attract the rich and famous. Roads were plotted, construction began, and "the Riviera of the West" as it was marketed, came into being. Salton City, the largest town, enjoyed a boom that lasted well into the 1960s.

As I drive past an abandoned real estate office it is hard to imagine this place booming. Faded signs advertise neighborhoods that no longer exist or never came into being. Roads end abruptly in piles of sand and a boarded up building is decorated with ominous graffiti, the only sign of life. One message reads "Live free or die," while another scrawled in black paint





is a harsh statement: “Desolation.” I pull into the parking lot of the recently restored North Shore Beach and Yacht Club, now the Salton Sea History Museum. It’s closed.

I walk down to the deep blue water of the sea, the sand scrunching and popping under my feet. It doesn’t feel right. I bend down to pick up a handful of sand and find it is not the pure white sand created from granulated rock worn down over millennia. The chunky grains are fish vertebrae, bones, and crushed shells; the remnants of the marine life that once thrived here.

Being a basin, the Salton Sea has no outlet. Fed largely by agricultural run-off, the water was contaminated with salts and chemicals. Soon the fresh water sea became salt water, now boasting around 25 percent higher salinity than the Pacific Ocean, increasing one percent every year. The salinity levels, fertilizer run-offs and algal blooms elevate bacteria levels, making the water inhospitable to most marine life. Only the hardy tilapia fish have shown an ability to survive, albeit tenuously. Every few meters along the shoreline a dead fish lies on the wet sand. Higher up the fish are baked into crusty corpses slowly disintegrating into the sandy graveyard.

Despite the toxic environment, the Salton Sea is an important bird migration path. A large band of pelicans congregates on a rocky outcrop. The Salton Sea supports 30 percent of the remaining population of the American white pelican and is a major resting stop on the Pacific Flyway. Conservation efforts have been proposed, but have stalled with the slowing economy.

#### FAILING TOWNS

The towns are also failing. In the first community I find, around a third of the buildings are clearly abandoned, vandalized and forsaken. Many of the homes are trailers, made permanent with timber porches rigged onto the sides. Children’s toys lay scattered as if left mid-play, the children long gone. Caravan doors lay open, allowing access to uninviting interiors torn to pieces. Sofas are separated from their stuffing, and the skeleton of an outhouse still contains its porcelain fixture. A further third of the community appears inhabited, neat and tidy with gates locked and bolted, likely owned by migrant laborers. The final third sit on the fence, tattered and unkempt, but not confirmed empty.

In Niland, several functioning shops lie scattered amongst the shells of failed businesses. Here the houses are solid, made of brick and concrete. One row of conjoined properties appears complete despite boarded up windows. At the back of the structure the entire back wall is missing, allowing a dollhouse view into the former homes set up with lounge room furniture. The swimming pool is drained, covered in childish scrawl. In the final room of the row, a man sits on a semi-intact sofa, a beer in his hand. “Do you live here?” I ask. “I exist here,” is his enigmatic reply.

Three miles along a dirt road heading into the desert, a colorful spectacle rises from the sands. Made of adobe, straw, and thousands of gallons of paint, Salvation Mountain was created by Leonard Knight, to express his beliefs and share the message - “God is Love.” Leonard will be the first to tell you he is not an artist, and many would look at Salvation Mountain and agree. But there





**SOME OF THE  
"SLABBERS" LIVE  
ON GOVERNMENT  
CHECKS; OTHERS  
CHOOSE TO LIVE OFF  
THE GRID. THE SITE IS  
DECOMMISSIONED AND  
UNCONTROLLED, THE  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
CONSTANTLY SEEKING  
WAYS TO SHUT IT DOWN**

is no denying that in a desert of beige, the colorful monument stands out from the surrounding sands.

Leonard lived in a truck on the grounds until his failing health forced him into a care home. The project of a lifetime will never be complete, but a team of volunteers maintain the area and visitors donate paint, brushes, and time, to make it live on. Today in the scorching midday summer temperatures no work can be done. I leave my paint cans in one of the unlocked cars permanently on site and move on.

#### **LIVING OFF THE GRID**

Further down the road sits Slab City. Once Camp Dunlap Marine Training Facility, the 640-acre compound ceased operations in 1946. The buildings were removed and sold and the base abandoned, leaving only the cement foundations of the buildings - the slabs. RV campers began to occupy the area during winter to take advantage of the rent-free parking. Attendance grew over the years, and now thousands of visitors return every winter. A hardy segment of the population stays year-round.

Some of the "Slabbers" live on government checks; others choose to live off the grid. The site is decommissioned and uncontrolled, the State of California constantly seeking ways to shut it down. The camp has no electricity, no running water, no sewers, no toilets, and no rubbish collection service. It takes a special kind of person to live here. Many are artists, others are not.

I am not sure how I will be welcomed by the permanent population, but those I speak to are warm and friendly. One man is working on an art car left when someone drifted out of the community. He is also renovating a disused caravan to turn it into a community art project. Inside the caravan tinned food

remains in the cupboards, swelling in the heat. The mirrors are surrounded by toy cameras and feather boas. Hundreds of small dusty plastic bags crunch on the floor. I wipe the dust away and find a candy inside in the shape of a grinning shark.

In a remote location two water tanks have been painted with extensive murals. Behind one sits an open suitcase containing several empty photo albums. In the still air I wonder if this is rubbish left behind, or a work of art I don't understand. In a nearby piece of scrub, a large canister has been painted to look like a spacecraft. An alien dummy dangles next to a sign that reads, "Alien Crash Site." Slab sense of humor.

There are no signposts here, only dirt tracks. Unmarked on the furthest edge of the community sits East Jesus, population 1. East Jesus is an art park, all of the works constructed from found objects. Dozens of plaster ducks swim in the sand in one corner, and in another the sculpture of a weary man slumps in a chair. A woolly mammoth made from strips of blown truck tires looms next to a house sinking into the sand. A mini van contains the "First church of the chocolate martini," while a bank of broken televisions extols a more political message.

As I drive away from the sea I feel strangely unsettled. A million questions run around my head that will remain unanswered, the main one being, "Why?" I leave dehydrated, baffled, and intrigued in equal measure. I'll come back in winter to use my paint.

**BIO:** *Giselle is the editor of two lifestyle and property magazines, Exclusive Home Worldwide and Property Scene and is the group deputy editor of Etihad Airways' in-flight magazines amongst others. See [giselleweebly.com](http://giselleweebly.com) for more of her work.* ■









# MARVELOUS MELBOURNE

This city owes its culinary diversity to the influx of immigrants throughout its history

TEXT BY COLLEEN KHACHATOURIANS  
IMAGES BY JOANA FOCKING

IN 1851, EDWARD Hargraves discovered a grain of gold in a waterhole in New South Wales, Australia. Wanting to capitalize on the burgeoning gold rush, the Governor of Victoria offered up a reward of GBP200 to anyone who found gold within 200 miles of Melbourne. It worked. In just two years, the state's population grew from 77,000 to 540,000, who with their fellow gold diggers unearthed more than GBP100 million worth of gold in the 1850s, permanently transforming this penal settlement into a sought-after destination.

While the gold rush fizzled out by the end of the 1860s, "Marvellous Melbourne" has experienced a modern-day boom, being Australia's fastest growing city over the past 11 years.

Much of this population surge is due in part to recent immigration, with approximately a quarter of Victoria's residents having been born overseas, leading to large ethnic communities within this leafy, sophisticated city. Glance around the faces on the street or fellow riders on the tram and you'll find it's visibly the most ethnically diverse and integrated city in all of Australia.

Melbourne's immigrant legacy makes it a haven for the foodie traveler, a worthwhile stop even in the chilly southern hemisphere winter. Luckily, the city's full of soul-warming comfort food to satisfy any craving, so we set off one drizzly Monday to a few of the city's ethnic enclaves in search of our favorites.

## BEING BEIJING

Our first stop is in a narrow laneway between Bourke Street and Little Bourke, where the spicy note of star anise tells us we've arrived in the heart of Chinatown. Established in the 1850s with the first wave of Chinese immigrants during the gold rush, the area's still full of Chinese shops, little storefronts selling bean paste-filled pastries, elegant eateries serving cuisines from Sichuan, Shandong, and Canton, and traditional medicine vendors with bins of dried roots, leaves, and mushrooms. We turn a corner, beyond the ornate welcoming gates and red lanterns of Little Bourke, into a laneway vaguely reminiscent of Beijing's *hutongs*, which is where we find Hutong Dumpling Bar (14-16 Market Lane).

Walk in and you're greeted by manager Patrick Liu's wide smile and some of the most authentic dumplings in the city. Their secret? "We make them fresh, every time," he says, pointing to the dumpling masters rolling, stuffing, and crimping behind the large glass viewing window that separates the dining room from the kitchen.

We order tea and an assortment from the homemade dim sum menu, *xiao long bao*, duck dumplings, and pork wontons in chili oil that take me back to a nippy autumn afternoon in Chengdu - perfectly thin wrapping with a soft meat center glistening in a shallow pool of red chili oil and crushed Sichuan peppercorns that wake (or numb) your mouth with their liveliness. But unlike the busy street shops in Chengdu, the décor here is classic Melbourne chic, exposed brick walls and modern black lacquered dining sets, the atmosphere subdued.

## EATALY

Still in need of our morning coffee, we head over to Lygon Street in the Carlton District. This is Little Italy and a sure bet for the best coffee around, although after weeks





in Melbourne I have yet to drink a bad cup in the entire city. General consensus has it that is because of the city's Italian influence, mainly post-WWII.

Wide awnings stretch across the sidewalks and the smell of coffee and fresh baked bread envelops us. We're lured into multiple eateries by signs advertising homemade gnocchi and cakes with attractive meringue crowns displayed in front windows, but none holds our attention like Lygon Food Store (263 Lygon Street). While most storefronts have expanded, making them feel impersonal, Lygon FS is still in its original cozy shop, a deli-café with just a few coveted seats. There are a handful of baked goods and lunch items here, made fresh on site, and the *zeppole* with custard peeking attractively out of its fried doughy home catches my eye. One of the owners, Pasquale Coco, makes our coffee himself.

My fellow foodie for the day, Joana, has intuitively scouted out the oldest Italian deli in Melbourne. The shop's been around for 65 years, Australia's first importer of Italian foods, including espresso. An Italian couple from Adelaide sitting at the table next to ours assures us there's nowhere better. This is their compulsory food stop in Melbourne, the husband tells us. "We come here to eat every time, then we go shopping."

#### LIVING LEBANESE

The rain's picking up and it's time for lunch. My Armenian roots pull me to the Lebanese enclave, a 20-minute tram ride off the tourist map into the Brunswick neighborhood. The cultures have similar foods and it's been a while since I've had a taste of something like home. We pass a shop hazy with shisha smoke, an Afghani kabab shop with spits of rotating lamb in the window, pass the bewildering concentration of bridal shops, and walk into A1 Market and Bakery (645 Sydney Road).

This café, grocery, and bakery-in-one has been open since 1991 and is now run by Elias Farah and his wife Nadia. Melbourne's Lebanese community has been building steadily since the first immigrants in the 1880s, with more recent waves coming to find respite from war and political unrest. The community has a long history of contribution in the area, one of its most visible being Victoria's Premier Steve Bracks, who served

from 1999-2007.

A1 is something of a community institution, the tables in the front filled with both regulars and curious foodies. There is a small but well-stocked grocery store and two food counters, one in the bakery and one selling coffee and sweets. Breads and savory pastries are pulled out of the oven daily. I'm after *lahmajun*, a round thin flatbread topped with a paste of spiced minced meat, herbs and tomato, and at A1 they make it fresh, a rare find. The posted coffee menu is standard; ask for traditional style and you're in for a treat. Super fine espresso grounds are whisked with water in a stovetop vessel called a *jazzve*. The *jazzve* and two tumbler-sized porcelain cups are brought to the table for us to serve ourselves. A colorful mosaic-patterned plate holds our baklava and rose-water nougat candies. The coffee is a warming jolt. I leave mine black, as my grandfather would, alternating the bitterness of each sip with a bite of syrupy sweet dessert.

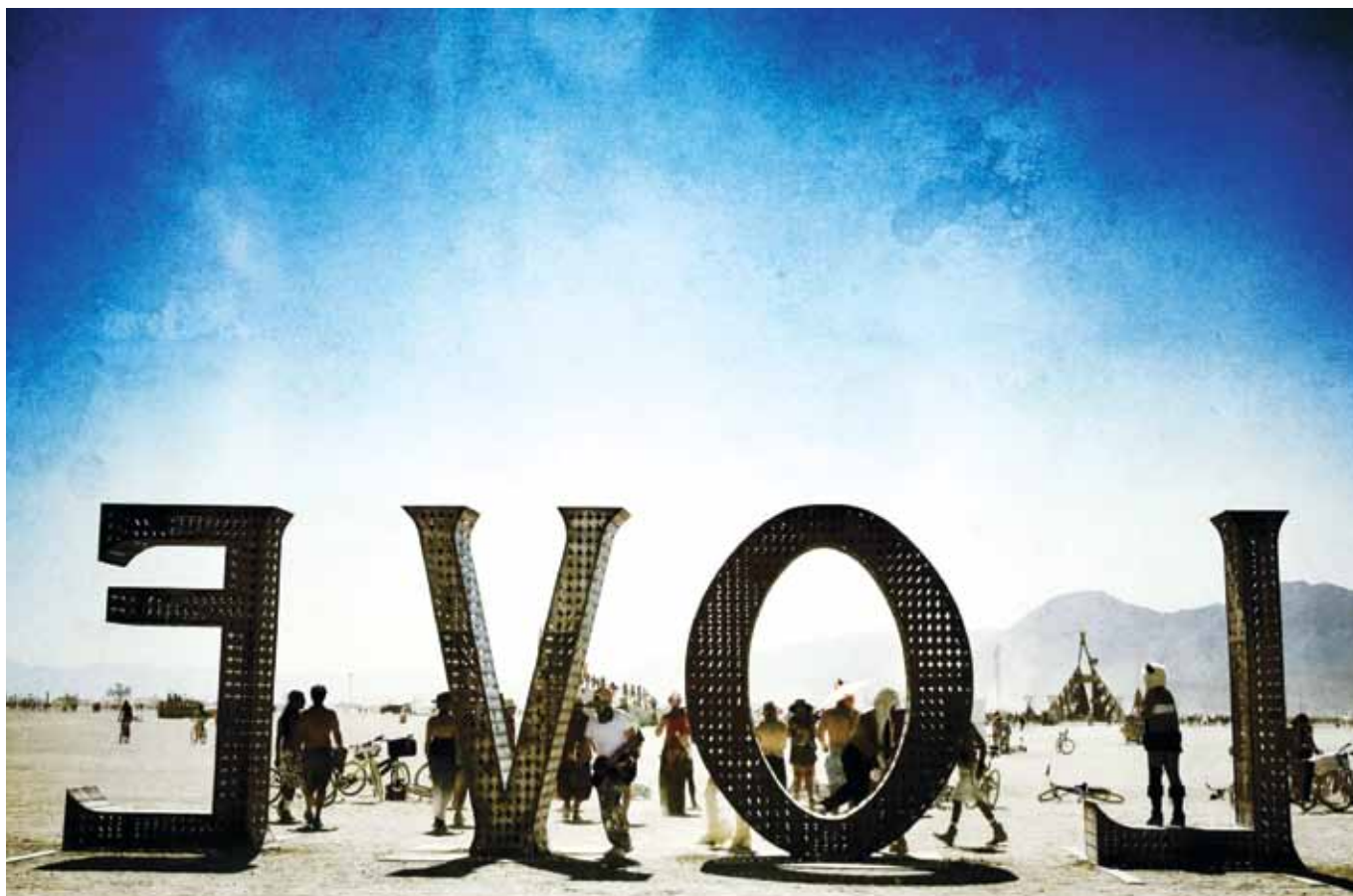
We turn over our cups to read our fortunes in the runoff from the coffee grounds when there's a knock from outside the window. A man simultaneously smoking and sipping coffee outside (who later introduces himself as Jimmy from Morocco), smiles and gives us two thumbs up, craning his neck as if to check our destiny inside the cups.

Our foodie tour today has given us a glimpse of Melbourne's famed diversity. As the city's immigrant areas become more integrated so do its eateries. On Lygon Street we pass Thai, Indian, and Nepalese restaurants. In Chinatown you'll find a Taiwanese dessert shop, sushi, *pho*, hipster cocktail bars and traditional Australian minced meat pie shops side by side. Taking its place alongside the globe's great melting-pot cities of New York, London and Singapore, Melbourne's ethnic neighborhoods ensure you won't have to venture far to find the world on a plate.

**BIO:** A nomadic homebody, **Colleen Khachatourians** is a writer with a flight addiction currently working on fiction. Her diverse interests have led her to the classrooms of inner city Los Angeles and the hiking trails of small-town Oregon. She's danced in a wedding procession in Azerbaijan and led sea kayaking tours in Thailand. Follow her travel musings at [www.colleengetslost.com](http://www.colleengetslost.com). ■







# WITHOUT A TRACE

Once a year tens of thousands of people descend onto the Nevada desert to build a utopian society, and then disappear

TEXT BY JULIAN AJELLO

IMAGES BY RYAN JESENA

IMAGINE A CITY where the only practical limitation is your own imagination. A place where you are free to invent, or reinvent, yourself on a daily, or even hourly, basis; a place where you can indulge in the taboo, or participate in anything from the sublime to the silly. A culture where being some combination of artful, fun, erotic, rebellious, generous, or original is the only currency, as money and commoditization don't exist.

About 100 miles outside the northern Nevada city of Reno lies the Black Rock Desert. It is an arid region of lava beds and alkali flats, or playa, which stretches from either side of the mountain range that shares its name. It is there, one of earth's most inhospitable landscapes, that Black Rock City calls home, a city unique unto all others.

"The playa is a vast empty canvas. It's hot. It's dusty. It's barren. There are no animals. No bugs. The winds can reach hurricane speeds. It's extremely dry," Rand Pate, a 12-year veteran of Burning Man describes. "And yet, for one week out of the year it is one of the most magical places you can imagine.

Strike that, it is the collaborative effort of the imagination of many which builds a city you cannot imagine on your own."

The lore surrounding Burning Man is as colorful as the denizens of the desert city itself. Conceived originally as an impromptu gathering on San Francisco's Baker Beach in 1986 by Larry Harvey, it moved to its present location in 1990 as part of the infamous Cacophony Society's Zone Trip #4. It was attended by less than 100 souls over a three-day period in September of that year. The early days of Burning Man were virtually lawless and anarchic as attendees made up their own rules, which is to say there weren't any, and treated themselves to hot springs and drive-by shooting ranges. Over the years it grew and expanded and, as with any growing society, rules were needed to maintain some semblance of order and safety.

## PRINCIPLE LAWS

Burning Man is guided by 10 core principles, an ethos, that includes the concepts of radical inclusion, radical self-expression, radical





self-reliance, decommodification, gifting, leave no trace, and participation, amongst others. Furthermore, because it takes place on federal land, there is interaction with various government bureaus and law enforcement agencies that involve permitting and a presence during the event. Then there are the Black Rock City Rangers, a volunteer group that helps with any number of issues that arise by seeking to resolve them without involving law enforcement.

The ensuing quarter century has seen enormous change. The event grew steadily over the years. However, with the advent of social media, the word has certainly spread and Black Rock City nearly doubled between 2001 and 2008. It now attracts over 55,000 people for one week at the end of August and the beginning of September. It has all the characteristics and amenities of a city: bars, nightclubs, restaurants, roller rinks, hotels, a post office, even an airport. And it has things that might be harder to come by in any other city on the planet, such as domes for combat and orgies (sometimes both at the same time), fire breathing octopi roaming freely, city buses turned into pirate ships, phone booths from which you can call God, and art as far as the eye can see.

The festival runs from Monday to Monday and climaxes on Saturday night with the burning of a wooden man, sometimes as tall as 80 feet, in effigy. The ritual is mass catharsis for revelers - called Burners - who release a year's worth of energy and begin anew. For Burners it's New Year's Eve, Christmas, and the Fourth of July rolled into one.

Zin Chiang, who lives in Berlin, describes herself as a "typical creative laborer" who has her fingers in several pies including photojournalism, game development, and

digital film and music development. "I stumbled into the Burning Man community right as it was experiencing an anticipated/dreaded 'boom' in 2006," she explains. "In my opinion, the mainstream boom that it is going through is not commercialization as many perceive it to be, but a sign that what used to be the niche ideals of a minority is no longer exclusive to the few who value the freedom that the 10 principles provide. These values have become increasingly visible and urgently needed as we experience massive changes in society and environment across the globe."

#### TRANSFORMATIVE POWERS

Many of the folks who make the pilgrimage to Black Rock City speak about its transformative powers. People attribute this to the focused creativity and openness that seems to strip away the programming that we all adapt to in order to function in our everyday lives in what is referred to as the 'default world'. By breaking free of this programming people allow themselves to lead a life, if only for a short time, that feels more authentic and true to whom they wish to be. The goal is to bring these experiences back from the desert and into the default world; to live the principles every day of one's life and in that way help transform society into a place that is a more rewarding, more human experience.

"It's the one place on Earth, a temporary environment unique in human culture, where an adult can access their inner child for one week a year and be fully expressed," says Tinkerbell, a Black Rock City Ranger who preferred not to use her real name. "It's where your faith in humanity gets a jumpstart and you begin to give from your soul, because so many others are doing it around you, even if it's just

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FOR ONE WEEK A  
YEAR AND BE FULLY  
EXPRESSED"**

giving away an Otter Pop right when someone needs one!"

Black Rock City is a petri dish in which sustainable living, community, and social responsibility have been experimented with for more than a quarter century. It appears when pilgrims arrive and build it out of nothingness, shed the dictates of society, and live as authentically and free as they dare for a week before tearing it down and burning it, leaving no trace that it was ever there.

To find out more about Burning Man, visit [www.burningman.com](http://www.burningman.com). ■

# A UNIQUE BLEND

How a surge in the Chinese population influenced Singaporean-Malay cuisine

TEXT BY HEATHER HALL

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

WHAT DO SAN Francisco and Dongguan have in common? Both are major worldwide boomtowns, but chances are you've never heard of the second one, whose population is already 10 times that of San Francisco. There are dozens of Chinese cities with populations of over one million people and more crop up every year. Shanghai, the largest in China, boasts nearly 24 million permanent residents, not counting the millions of unregistered migrant workers there. That makes Shanghai roughly more populous than all of Australia.

While mainland China is experiencing its own super growth, over the past century and a half, the Chinese have notably contributed to boomtowns around the world. Millions of Chinese migrated to sundry distant lands, often seeking better lives and opportunities for their families. Boomtowns during the 19th century Gold Rush period drew many thousands to America and Australia to work in the mines and to help build the US Transcontinental Railroad. Others became merchants, farmers and restaurateurs, introducing for the first time the exotic flavors of the Far East to the New World. Traditional Chinese dishes underwent significant changes along the way, due to the limited availability of key ingredients and persnickety local palates. General Tso's chicken and fortune cookies, for example, are considered characteristically Chinese in the West but are practically unheard of in mainland China.

Elsewhere, new cuisines developed which fuse elements of seemingly incompatible cooking styles. Many Chinese also migrated to tropical Southeast Asian locales such as Penang and Singapore, which became major trading ports under British rule during the 19th century, to work as coolies on the docks. Here Chinese cuisine mingled more easily as the Malay population was already accustomed to spicy food. As first generation Chinese immigrants married indigenous Malays, their children became known as Peranakan, a Malay word meaning "locally born." A distinct ethnic group with its own unique customs eventually developed from the blending of Malaysian and Chinese cultures.

## AUNTIE'S HOME COOKING

Peranakan cuisine, also known as Nonya cuisine (Nonya being a term of endearment for Malay women similar to "Auntie"), marries Chinese cooking techniques and ingredients such as wok frying and pork to Malaysian and Indonesian spices and flavors like tamarind, ginger and lemongrass. Chilies feature prominently, as do coconut milk and *belacan*, or dried shrimp paste. Combinations of these ingredients are ground into a fragrant paste to form the base of the cuisine's zesty dishes which are enhanced by exotic leaves such as



pandan, laksa and kaffir lime.

Keen to sample Peranakan cooking while in Singapore, I headed to Blue Ginger (97 Tanjong Pagar Road, Chinatown) a restaurant located in a colorfully restored shophouse deep in the city's Chinatown. Touted as serving some of the best Peranakan food in Singapore, Blue Ginger has the simple goal of recreating meals from the owners' childhoods.

The unique flavor combinations of the various dishes tantalized me. Chinese five-spice gave a hint of sweetness to the *Ngo Heong*, which were deep-fried rolls of minced pork and shrimp. Blue Ginger's tiger prawns cooked in savory gravy, *Udang Nonya*, was pleasantly tangy thanks to the juicy chunks of pineapple cooked into the dish. *Ayam Panggang*, the house roast chicken specialty, was drenched with a stunning coconut milk, tamarind juice and ginger sauce that celebrated the classic Peranakan flavors.

The showstopper was *Ikan Goreng Cili Garam*, deep-fried sea bass smothered in fiery chili and tomato chutney and a generous

handful of cilantro. The whole fish was presented, with fins spread and mouth open as though it were a flying fish bursting forth from the ocean in escape from a predator. Intimidating to behold, the dish was a culinary tour de force. Not having grown up in a Peranakan household, I don't have much experience by which to judge the meal, but by the time I was finished, I wanted to find a Peranakan grandmother to adopt me!

Given their number, it's not surprising that the Chinese have played an important role building boomtowns across the globe. But as in the example of Singapore, the boomtown dynamism can sometimes be the result of two cultures meeting to create something entirely new.

In HCMC, try Peranakan cuisine at **Nyonya Restaurant** on 58 Dong Du, D1

**BIO:** Shanghai-based **Heather Hall** has discovered a particular fondness for the climate, cuisines, and friendly people of Southeast Asia. Read more about her adventures at [www.ferretinthefun.com](http://www.ferretinthefun.com) ■



# Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY NAM QUAN



# A Chain Reaction

With big names like Starbucks, Burger King and McDonald's dominating local headlines, *Oi* decided it was time to shine the spotlight on homegrown franchises that you may not have heard about, but should

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

## Startup Coffee

"We obviously can't take Starbucks head on, so guerilla warfare is the way to go," Mai Truong Giang, Founder and CEO of Startup Café, states. "Besides, what I want to do is not try to be a cheap knockoff but rather to create a place where young, ambitious entrepreneurs can come together and share ideas and experiences. The homage to Starbucks is just one more way to get people to pay attention."

Unlike many of his peers, the 28-year-old is hardly a stranger to the franchising business. His first is Chewy Junior, a hugely successful dessert franchise in the city. Startup Coffee is his second attempt, and the concept is hardly original (coffee and snacks on the go). And in an industry rife with fierce competition from both international and local brands alike, Startup Coffee seemed destined to a fate of obscurity had it not been for a strategic opening move made by Giang 10 months ago. He imitated the world's most popular coffee chain - Starbucks.

Startup Cafe debuted to a lawsuit from Starbucks. To any observer, the similarities in the names and logos are undeniable. The suit would have been a sure loss for them if not for the fact Startup Cafe opened before Starbucks ever did in Vietnam. As it stands right now, with a minimum of at least 18 months of litigation in court before any verdict is made, there is little Starbucks can do aside from giving Startup Coffee more free exposure. This explosive debut gave Startup Coffee its much needed push to experiment and build on its 'own' brand image.

64 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1

38 Tran Hung Dao, D1

271 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh

[www.startupcoffee.vn](http://www.startupcoffee.vn)

## Durio

Until a year ago, durian hot pies were practically unheard of among the locals but that changed with the birth of Durio, the first and as of yet, only Vietnamese durian hot pie brand. Durio sells two types of durian hot pies and crepes and serves an average of 500 -700 customers per day at each of its kiosks.

"When I was staying in Singapore, I saw that durian hot pies sold like, well, hot cakes. So I thought, Vietnamese love durian even more than Singaporeans do," says Tran Minh Phang, Founder and CEO of Durio. "Durian is like a drug for us, but at the time we had nothing like durian hot pies. Our market is bigger, our costs are lower, and our ingredients are fresher so I thought I couldn't lose. When I finished my degree, I went back to Vietnam and opened my first Durio stand."

Phang came up with the idea when he chanced upon a long line of Singaporeans waiting to buy something that wasn't the next Apple product. His curiosity piqued, he joined the queue and patiently waited to see what they were selling. When he found out that it was just an ordinary crispy hot pie stuffed with fresh durian, he started paying more attention and became convinced that he too could duplicate



Startup Coffee



Durio





their success on his home front.

Phang now owns three Durio stands within HCMC and is planning to open another one as well as adding two more durian-based dishes to his menu.

174 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Kiot Le Thi Rieng Park, 875 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10

### Xoi La Chuoi

At first glance, Xoi La Chuoi's (Sticky Rice Banana Leaf) concept resembles countless sticky rice carts all around the city with the only difference being that instead of being sold in styrofoam boxes, the sticky rice is wrapped in layers of fresh banana leaves. This tiny deviation is the reason behind the franchise's success.

"People grew tired of eating sticky rice in toxic foam boxes. In one sentence, Xoi La Chuoi is a return to the classic Vietnamese dish in its original form," says Hang, a long time employee.

Owner and founder Ngo Thi Quynh Mai, like many other rural immigrants to Saigon, disliked the taste and packaging of the urban version of sticky rice. During her college years, she started creating her own version with traditional ingredients wrapped in fresh banana leaves. Much to her surprise, her homemade sticky rice grew popular. When Mai finished her degree in 2010, she decided to take the leap and opened her first Xoi La Chuoi stand.

The first one was small and sold only a handful of sticky rice dishes with prices aimed mainly at college students and laborers. It was the start of the hugely popular authentic Vietnamese brand. Eventually, the menu grew to several more types of sticky rice and soups. The chain currently has over 30 stands and restaurants.

114 Chau Van Liem, D5

220 Phan Dinh Phung, Phu Nhuan

379 Hoang Van Thu, Tan Binh

### Urban Station

Two months ago in June 2013, Urban Station celebrated its second birthday to the fanfare of its many loyal customers. As its name suggests, it bills itself as a cafe for young and busy urbanites, a stopover caffeine fueling station on the side of fast moving lanes. It is known for its trendy design and a moderate menu of Italian coffee, sodas, and smoothies. The prices run around VND15,000 – VND25,000 which, coupled with friendly service, make it an attractive hangout.

"We saw that there was nothing out there for young people who simply wanted a cheap, regular place to hang out," explains Nguyen Hai Ninh, Co-founder and CEO of Urban Station. "The usual garden or boutique cafes were too expensive and didn't really cater to us specifically. It used to be that young Vietnamese would only go out once in a while. The market was completely empty. We wanted to create something different."

The story of how Urban Station came to be is a classic rags to riches tale. The idea was bounced around by five Vietnamese college students and the startup fund was scraped together from part-time job earnings and personal savings. In the first year, losses and mismanagement from a lack of experience saw the departure of three of the original five. The two who stayed learned from their mistakes and adjusted accordingly and Urban Station persevered and grew.

Urban Station is now among the top five fastest developing cafe brands in the country. It has 15 branches in HCMC, Vung Tau and Da Lat and is set to establish a countrywide network.

79 Tran Hung Dao, D5

27 Hoa Su, Phu Nhuan

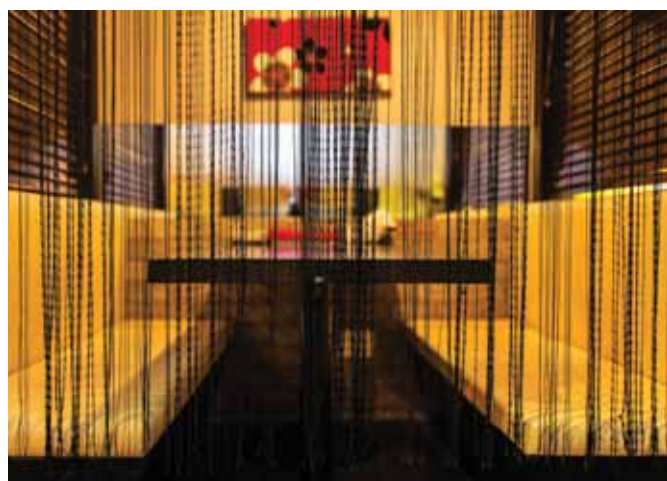
229 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh

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



Urban Station









# Food with A Difference

A Japanese woman is fulfilling a dream of bringing Japanese food with a difference to Saigon

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

FUJI AYAKO CAME to Ho Chi Minh City from Japan two years ago to help launch a Japanese restaurant, overseeing staff training, customer service and operations. It wasn't long before she recognized an opportunity for something different.

"Here there are many Japanese restaurants, but I felt they were old fashioned," she tells *Oi*. "If I was in Tokyo, I would not go to those restaurants."

So she set about planning a restaurant that merged Japanese seasonings with Western foods and flavors - fusion food which pays homage to Japan's staple ingredients, yet satisfies Western cravings for the likes of steak and pasta. She wanted to stand out from the estimated 250 Japanese eateries dotted about the city.

With business partner Hiroyuki Sogo, Ayako created Achaya Cafe, a modern two story restaurant a stone's throw from Ben Thanh Market, which opened its doors last December. Downstairs is a bustling cafe environment with an exposed kitchen and doors permanently open onto the street. Upstairs is a more intimate affair with semi private, traditional Japanese seating areas for small groups, and hip decor mixing dark timber with light walls and full height glass windows looking onto the street below and offering a perfectly framed view of the Bitexco Tower soaring above the bustle. There are small tables with armchairs for couples and communal tables with colorful decorations.

Ayako says her restaurant has proven popular with young Vietnamese women in particular and a steadily growing number of Japanese living here. Given its close proximity to Ben Thanh Market, a lot of tourists passing by are lured by the lively open street level dining area and the accessibility and uniqueness of fusion food.

The menu is a little confusing to newcomers - currently comprising at least five different laminated sheets, but soon to be compressed into a single, spiral bound document which should streamline the customer's selection process.

Taking into account the cafe nature of the venue, there are dishes of every size, for the light snacker through to the seriously hungry diner. Roasted nuts and edamame on the snack list aptly illustrate the desire to bridge the cultural divide.

There is a broad range of *sushi* and *sashimi*,

*kimuchi* (*kimchi*) in homage to Koreans' favorite food, the popular Japanese dish *Chawanmushi*, and steak served with soy bean-based brown sauce. Some dishes have an obvious Italian inspiration: Japanese style fried chicken served with bolognese style sauce, for example. "We like to mix it up," explains Ayako.

Most dishes at Achaya range in price from VND50,000 to VND120,000.

In true fusion style, Achaya offers a surprisingly comprehensive range of drinks. A well-considered wine list includes drops from South Africa, Chile, Australia and France sold by the glass or bottle, a rarity in Japanese restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City, in *Oi*'s experience. There is a promotional offer of three glasses of wine for VND230,000.

Achaya also offers *shochu* and *shochu* cocktails, *sake* and - for the ladies - *umeshu*, plum wine with a sweeter taste than *sake*. And we're told the non-alcoholic options are sturdy thirst-quenching alternatives, too.

## Our Meal

*Oi*'s reviewers have been dining in a range of Japanese restaurants across Saigon in recent months - and have considerable experience in different international variations of Japanese food in Asia, the US, Australasia and Japan itself. So we were keen to try more unusual offers on Achaya's menu to see if the fusion really worked. And it did.

From the simple Californian inspired avocado salad - a small, delicately flavored dish mixing greens with smooth chunks of avocado and fresh seafood to the ambitious fried chicken and bolognese sauce. The chicken was tender with a light crunchy crumb batter - traditionally Japanese - and the sauce was a surprisingly good match, with a full tomato flavor and just a hint of spice.

We also tried the grilled salmon *konnyaku* served with arm root paste, soft tender fish lightly cooked, the sauce moorish enough we wanted a second serving!

Equally moorish were the rice balls - triangular shaped pockets of rice with different fillings inside. The plum one is especially recommended.

There may be many Japanese restaurants in this city - some would argue too many - but if you dare to be different, there will always be a market. Achaya Cafe is living proof of that.

Achaya Cafe, 90 Le Loi, D1 ■





# Not Just for Sundays

Eat to your heart's content

TEXT BY JULIAN AJELLO IMAGES BY NAM QUAN

THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL about the phrase 'all-you-can-eat buffet'. Even the most sedate individuals display the sort of exuberance reserved for the proverbial kid in a candy store. I light up with joy at the prospect of piling my favorite foods on a plate as high as I can knowing I get to do it as many times as my belly will allow.

Here in Ho Chi Minh City the all-you-can-eat option is normally reserved for Sunday brunch and a few eateries that focus their menus on those willing to be gluttonous.

**Market 39** (InterContinental Asiana Saigon, cnr of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan) is well-known for its Sunday brunch but what many may not be aware of is that it offers the same all-you-can-eat buffet weekdays - but with a twist. Every day boasts a new theme with a bevy of thematic culinary delights that accompany the standards and favorites to tickle the taste buds.

Living in Vietnam poses a challenge for a serious cheese lover like me, so I opted to review Market 39 on a Monday when its specialty is international cheeses and charcuterie. An assortment of delectable cheeses of all types and nationalities sprawls out over wooden cutting boards awaiting the cheese knife. I found all the usual suspects - brie, camembert, Swiss, gouda, cheddar, smoked cheeses, hard cheeses, soft cheeses, and all in endless supply to satisfy even the most ravenous turophile.

The fun doesn't stop there, however. Before digging in I was compelled to saunter over to the day's co-headliner, charcuterie. Sliced mortadella, salami, saucisson, chorizo, ham, and other mouth-watering meats lured me with their salted, cured siren's song. Once

again, this table has no limit, and I ate to my gastronomic delight.

Of course, there were a slew of other tastes and aromas waiting once I moved past the cheese and charcuterie. I stopped by the sushi station where tuna, salmon, and a variety of rolls were on display. Just a wasabi ball's throw from there was a cold bar where salads and oysters on the half shell sat, chilling on ice beds. However, by this point I was in the mood for some hot food.

The smell of grilled meats and fish wafted through the air and lit up my senses as white clad grill men ply their skills with an array of chicken, beef, pork, and fish including octopi and squid. For those desiring heartier fare, the hot food station offers dishes that will stick to your ribs, like boeuf bourguignon. There are also stations for Asian favorites including huge pots of steaming soups and noodles. And for the most insatiable among us, the dessert bar plays host to sinful delights including an assortment of cheesecakes, flans, ice cream, and a pistachio chocolate mousse that was so creamy I experienced a moment of Zen.

Delivering top tier quality and service for value is what made Market 39 popular as a Sunday morning destination. They have combined that ethos with the promise of variety throughout the week.

*Prices are VND840,000++ from Monday to Thursday, and VND950,000++ from Friday to Sunday. Daily themes are: Monday – International cheeses and charcuterie, Tuesday – Churasscuria, Wednesday – Mexican Fiesta, Thursday – Sushi and sashimi, Friday – Select cuts of meat from around the world, Saturday & Sunday – Seafood medley* ■



**"The smell of grilled meats and fish wafted through the air and lit up my senses"**



# Melts in Your Mouth

"All you need is love, but a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt," said Charles M Schultz, creator of Charlie Brown



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

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

FINDING A PRODUCT'S provenance is a growing trend. Being in the food business for the last 20-odd years, and coming from an agricultural family, I've always thought it important to know where my food and drinks come from. Take wine for instance: anyone who imbibes of it now and again knows that where the grapes were grown (and what type of grapes were grown where) are key quality indicators. Many highly regarded wines come from a single vineyard. Knowing that a particular grower cared for the vines, and that a particular winemaker produced the wine lets the drinker know that love and care were given when seeing the label.

This same holds true for chocolate. Sourcing the right cacao beans, from the best places, from the most caring farmers, and handling them with the utmost respect and appreciation is what Vincent Mourou and Samuel Maruta do best. They produce five different dark chocolates from five distinct locations (Dong Nai, Tien Giang, Lam Dong, Ba Ria - Vung Tau and Ben Tre), all right here in southern Vietnam. Each single origin chocolate has a different percentage of pure cacao (from 70-78 percent) depending on the best expression of the beans from each different region.

## A Quest for Quality

Vincent and Samuel started Marou Chocolate in 2011 and took nine months to refine the process before they sold their first bar. Their first export was delivered in 2012 and they now export to more than a dozen different countries.

Their big break came in 2012 when they were invited to join the Salon du Chocolat, the world's oldest and largest chocolate exposition held annually in Paris, France. It was here that Marou was discovered, and the brand is now considered a premium international product.

Vincent notes that they still take great pride in ensuring that those who live in Vietnam have access to their world-class product. Marou Chocolate makes a great "consumable souvenir," he says.

The duo believes in fair trade pricing, thereby motivating farmers to produce the best cacao from their land. The beans are selected, bag by burlap bag, personally by

Vincent and Samuel, who says they are the only buyers in Vietnam whose number one and final decision is "predicated by taste."

## Translating Terroir

They wholeheartedly understand that without the best cacao, it is impossible to produce the best chocolate. This type of chocolate is one that is true to its natural environs, or what wine producers refer to as "terroir." This natural expression of the plant's environment gives the final product (in this case chocolate), a definitive sense of character and place.

Marou uses a "simple, and authentic method to make the chocolate". This minimal intervention method accentuates the particular character of each unique region, reflecting the sunlight, temperature, soil and other environmental characteristics which give each area its distinct flavors and expressions.

One important part of the process that the company is not involved in is the fermentation process, when the raw beans are harvested from big pods and allowed to naturally ferment for a few days, allowing natural yeasts to grow, developing complex flavors. If this isn't done correctly, then the quality of the beans (and the chocolate) will suffer. Sensing a need to upgrade this part

of the process the men have now conceived an idea to build their own drying and fermentation plant with the public's help. Controlling this sensitive step will allow them greater quality control, as they put it, "from bean to bar".

## New Horizons

Their current focus is on building their own drying and fermentation facility. This is being done with the help of a website called [www.reservoirfunds.com](http://www.reservoirfunds.com). To pledge your support, simply go to the website and make a contribution before the exercise ends on August 17. Locally based contributors will be invited for a tour of the finished Dong Nai facility, a trek in nearby Cat Lai National Park, and of course, will be treated to the increasingly famous, single origin Marou Chocolate. The new facility will not only ensure a more consistent supply of properly fermented beans, but will also allow them to purchase more beans from the farmers. Now that's something any chocolate lover can get behind. All it takes is love... and a whole lot of chocolate.

For more information about their project, visit [www.reservoirfunds.com/projet/marou-faiseurs-de-chocolat-au-vietnam](http://www.reservoirfunds.com/projet/marou-faiseurs-de-chocolat-au-vietnam), or check out [www.marouchocolate.com](http://www.marouchocolate.com) ■



# >>The List

# Wine & Dine



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

## bakeries

### Bread Talk

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

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
3930 3181

### Brodard Bakery

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

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

### Cakewalk Cupcakes

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

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

### Givral

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

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

### Gourmand Shop

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

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

### Harvest Baking

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

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

### Kinh Do Bakery

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

128A Hai Ba Trung, D1

3829 6552  
kinhdobakery.vn  
6am - 10.30pm

### La Doree

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

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

### Nhu Lan Bakery

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

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

### Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

### Pat'a Chou

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

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

### Savoure Bakery

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

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

### Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

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

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

### Tous Les Jours

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

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

## bars

### Allez Boo

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

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

### Alto Heli Bar

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

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

### Bernie's Bar & Grill

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

19 Thai Van Lung, D1  
3822 1720

### Blue Gecko

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

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

### Bootleg DJ Café

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

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

### Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1  
6656 6338

### Broma Saigon Bar

Famously known for 'not being a bar' Broma is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most popular hangouts with prices ranging from VND300,000 - VND500,000. Broma is a more upscale option for those wishing to escape the cheap drinks in The Pham.

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

### Carmen Bar

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

8 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3829 7699

### Charm Bar

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

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

### Boudoir Lounge

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

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

### Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

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

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

### Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 OI's Pick

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

104 Ho Tung Mau, D1  
09 8376 3372  
nfi291182@yahoo.com  
4pm-4am

### Chu Bar

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

158 Dong Khoi, D1  
3822 3907  
7am - Midnight

### Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

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

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

### Ginger 60

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

60 Ton That Thiep, D1  
093 772 1011

### Go2

Go2 is a popular nightspot in the



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

187 De Tham, DI  
3836 9575

### Hard Rock Café

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

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

### Heaven Bar Saigon

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

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

### Ice Blue

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

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

### Kim's Tavern

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

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

### Last Call

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

59 Dong Du, DI  
3823 3122

### Le Pub

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

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

### Lindo

Cozy sports bar with big screen TVs and restaurant quality meals. The Sunday afternoon "Sausage Sizzle" and other weeknight events make this an appealing venue for expats any day of the week.

149 Ton That Dam, DI  
3915 3149

### Long Phi

One of the staples in the backpacker

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

207 Bui Vien, DI  
3837 2704  
6pm to very late, Tuesday - Sunday

### Lush

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

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

### M52 Bar

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

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

### Miss Saigon

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

8A/ICI Thai Van Lung, DI

### MTV

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

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

### Number Five Bar

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

44 Pasteur, DI  
3915 3150  
heinzv@gmail.com  
3pm - 1am

### O'Brien's

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

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

### Phatty's

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

46-48 Ton That Thiep, DI

### Purple Jade

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

First floor- InterContinental Asiana Saigon  
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan

3520 9099  
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

### Red Bar & Restaurant

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

3rd Floor, 70-72 Ngo Duc Ke, DI

2229 7017

### Ryan's Pub 'Banter Bar' @ Stella

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

First Floor, 119 - 121 Bui Vien, DI  
090 000 0042  
www.stellacafe@yahoo.com

### Saigon Saigon Bar

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

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

### Saigon Retro

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

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

### Sheridan's Irish Pub

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

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

### Slate

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

3rd Floor, Moevenpick Hotel, 253 Nguyen

Van Troi, Phu Nhuan  
3844 9222  
5pm - 11pm

### Spotted Cow

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

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

### Storm P

Storm P restaurant and bar is named after the famous Danish cartoonist Robert Storm Petersen, and it's the only Danish restaurant in Vietnam.

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

### Vasco's

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

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

## cafés

### Achaya Cafe

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

90 Le Loi, DI

093 897 2050

11am - 10:30pm

### Aisha Lounge

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

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



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A premium offline matchmaking service for successful, serious men and women in Vietnam. Private, discreet and risk free

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

## AQ Coffee

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

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

## Angel-in-us Coffee

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

145 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3827 8588  
facebook.com/angelinuscoffeevn

## Blue Cafe

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

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

## Bobby Brewer's

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

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

## Boulevard Cafe

This Parisian-style cafe has a fine, white tone and a warm ambiance that attempts a look of luxury with its plush sofas and chandeliers.

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

## Bukafe - Cafe

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

43 Nguyen Huu Cau, D1  
090 265 2635  
bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com

## Café Ban Sonate

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

53 Dang Dung, D1  
3290 6004

## Caffe Fresco

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

121 Le Loi, D1  
3821 1009  
www.fresco.com.vn

## Café Terrace

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

Ground Floor & First Floor, Saigon Centre,  
65 Le Loi, D1

## Cafe Vuon Kieng

Cafe Vuon Kieng is a quiet, casual cafe near the banks of the Saigon River, boasting relaxing views and refreshing

breezes. This riverside cafe offers jasmine tea, coffee, ice cream, beer, even cocktails.

10B Ton Duc Thang, D1  
3823 3279

## Cake Durian Duiro

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

Kiosk in Le Thi Rieng Park, 875 Cach Mang Thang 8, D10  
093 333 9365  
www.banhhsaurieng.com

## Centrofarms Coffee

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

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

## Chi's Cafe

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

40/31 Bui Vien, D1  
3836 7622

## Ciao Cafe

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

74-76 Nguyen Hue, D1  
40 Ngo Duc Ke, D1

## Cosmo Lounge

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

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3823 5848

## Cooku's Nest

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

13 Tu Xuong, D3  
2241 2043

## Crêperie & Café

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

5 Han Thuyen, D1

## DeJa Vu Cafe

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

314/2 Dien Bien Phu, D10  
6276 6966  
info@dejavu.vn

## Elle Cafe

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

Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 45  
Ngo Duc Ke, D1  
6291 8766

## Geisha's Coffee and Tea House

Experience a funky, relaxed atmosphere with a refreshing drinks & delicious snack

at Geisha Coffee and Tea House. A retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the streets of Saigon.

85 Pasteur, D1  
3829 4004  
www.geishacafe.com



## Hatvala

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

44 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3824 1534  
8am - 11pm  
hatvalavietnam@gmail.com  
www.hatvala.com  
www.facebook.com/hatvala

## Hi-End Coffee

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

126 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1  
3824 1004  
Open to 10pm

## Gloria Jean's

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

2 bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3  
www.gloriajeanscoffees.com/vn

## Highlands Coffee

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

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1

## i-Box Cafe

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

135 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3825 6718

## ID Café

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, D1

## Imagine Coffee shop

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

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan  
090 956 0105  
www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop  
09 0956 0105  
nguyenmai.huan@gmail.com  
8am - 10pm

## Kebab Cafe

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

538/2/8 Doan Van Bo, D4  
01648 805 915  
contact@kebab-cafe.com  
www.kebab-cafe.com  
10am - 10pm

## Kem My

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

11 Duong 41, D4  
093730 3030  
www.kemmy.vn  
3.30pm - 11pm

## Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
keserakesera.com

## Kita Coffee

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

39-41 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3914 0683  
kitacoffee@gmail.com  
7.30am - 10pm

## Kopi Beans

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

## L'amour

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

24 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3520 8180  
www.lamourbakery.com

## L'Anmien Dining Cafe

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

76A Le Lai, D1  
38212718

## LightBox Cafe

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

179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan  
3517 6668  
www.lightbox.vn

## L'Usine

L'Usine is a retail, café and gallery space occupying two locations in the center of D1. Its retail space is dedicated to Vietnamese designers and more established brands from abroad as well as stocking a wide range of stationary and home ware items. The café in both locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.

151/1 Dong Khoi, D1  
70B Le Loi, D1



info@lusinespace.com | www.lusinespace.com  
tumblr.com  
9am – 9pm

### Le Tokyo Baum

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

### May Coffee

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

### Minhu Coffee

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

### MTV Cafe

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

### NYDC

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

3822 9992  
www.nydc.com.vn

### Onset Cafe

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

### Paris Deli

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

### Passio Coffee to Go

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

### Phuong Cac Cafe

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

### Phuc Minh Coffee

Phuc Minh coffee is an airy, clean environment providing a varied menu and delicious coffee. The staff is attentive and quick with a friendly approach. Prices start around VN 25,000 for this simple cafe.

51 Hung Phuoc 4, D7  
www.quancafe.vn/phucminh.1

### Princess and the Pea

A fairytale-themed venue for the dreamers of Ho Chi Minh City, hidden away in a tiny alleyway off Pasteur. Discover it if you can.  
63/18 Pasteur, D1

### Regina Coffee

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

### Soho Coffee

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

### Starbucks Coffee

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

### Stella Restaurant & Cafe

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

### The Blue Cafe

A spacious cafe divided into two different

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

### The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

### The Library

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

### The Living Room

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



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## Tram Coffee ☑️ Oi's Pick

A unique romantic cafe experience hidden well off the beaten track, but close to District 1 in neighbouring Phu Nhuan District. Sip a coffee, juice or beer or indulge in good cafe food over candlelight in a dark, intimate environment hidden amongst trees and trickling streams. Relax in an air conditioned room or dine alfresco amongst the greenery. The perfect spot to impress a date with your local knowledge.  
**100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan**  
**2240 5306**

## The Myth Cafe

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

## Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

## The Serenata Cafe

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

## Windows

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

## Zoom Cafe ☑️ Oi's Pick

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

## chinese

## Dragon Court

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

## Dynasty

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

## Hung Ky Mi Gia

Hung Ky Mi Gia is a famous and long-standing restaurant with more than 13 years of operation. It serves traditional Chinese cuisine with authentic dishes such as roasted chicken, duck, and pork.  
**20 Le Anh Xuan, D1**  
**3822 2673**

## Kabin

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

## Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

## Ming Court

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

## Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

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

## Shang Palace Restaurant

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

## Shi-Fu Dim sum

Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant specializing in dim sum, with modern Chinese décor and over 68 dim sum dishes.  
**139A Nguyen Trai, D1**  
**3925 1111**  
[www.dimsomhouse.vn](http://www.dimsomhouse.vn)

## Yu Chu

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

## french

## Alibi Restaurant and Bar

Centrally located a stone's-throw from the Opera House in downtown D1, this is a warm, appealing lounge environment with modest prices.  
**5 Nguyen Sieu, D1**  
**3825 6257**

## Au Manoir de Khai

Au Manoir de Khai is an authentic, first class French restaurant. Guests can enjoy traditional French cuisine in this classic 100 year old villa. Their menu is extensive and features dishes like Kobe beef, foie gras, red grouper, and truffle mushrooms.  
**251 Dien Bien Phu, D3**  
**3930 3394**

## Bon Appetit

A small French-Vietnamese fusion bistro on Pham Ngoc Thach with a simplistic charm enhanced by a fine selection of old-style French music.  
**78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3**  
**090 789 8345**

## Bonjour Restaurant

Bonjour serves up international dishes with a French flair. The large menu of main courses feature roast duck, salmon, lamb and steak with specialties being ostrich and venison.  
**150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1**  
**3926 0699**

## Cordon Blue

A unique French venue decorated with blue and green shades serving high-quality French cuisine on the outskirts of the inner city.  
**38 Mac Dinh Chi, D1**  
**3822 5216**  
[www.cordonblue.vn](http://www.cordonblue.vn)

## La Brasserie de Saigon

Set in a trendy space featuring art nouveau décor and intricate iron spiral staircases, La brasserie de Saigon presents authentic French cuisine with Parisian brasserie service experience.  
**38 Dong Du, D1**  
**0862913657**  
[contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com](http://contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com)  
[www.labrasseriendesaigon.com](http://www.labrasseriendesaigon.com)  
**11.30pm - 2.30pm; 6pm - 12am**

## La Camargue

Known for its high food quality, reasonable prices and a fine selection of wine, the long running La Camargue serves up home-style French cuisine in an open plan 1st-floor terrace.  
**74/17 Hai Ba Trung, D1**



## La Creperie

La Creperie is the first authentic Brittany French restaurant that serves savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and the best apple cider in Saigon.  
**17/7 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3824 7070**  
[infosgn@lacreperie.com](mailto:infosgn@lacreperie.com)  
**Mon-Sun 11am-11pm**



## La Cuisine

This ultra-fine little bistro is an exercise in minimalism with its twenty seats and bare, chic-rustic interior of wooden furnishings and black & white photographs on whitewashed walls. Its warm lighting and clean atmosphere belies a certain sophistication, however, and the price of the fare is significantly damaging enough to make this a rare treat for those not in the restaurant's fabulously wealthy target market.  
**48 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**2229 8882**  
[www.lacuisine.com.vn](http://www.lacuisine.com.vn)

## La Doree

La Doree provides its patrons with over 50 varieties of cakes, as well as a rich sandwich menu. They are located in the heart of District 1 in a building with a luxurious French design. In addition to sweets and snacks, this eatery also serves coffee, cocktails, and their specialty: green tea tiramisu.  
**216 Ly Tu Trong, D1**  
**08 3822 1718**  
[www.ladoree.com](http://www.ladoree.com)

## La Fourchette

Small and cozy, La Fourchette is a favorite amongst the French expat community. The vintage posters and wood paneling add to the charm of this French eatery located downtown, a stone's throw from the Saigon River.  
**9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1**  
**3829 8143**  
[www.lafourchette.com.vn](http://www.lafourchette.com.vn)

## La Nicoise

A small, friendly French bistro with about a dozen tables, La Nicoise serves up typical French dishes under the watchful eye of its French-Vietnamese owners.  
**56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1**  
**3821 3056**

## L'essentiel

A recent arrival to the growing ranks of authentic French dining experiences in HCMC, L'essentiel offers a quiet intimate dining experience downstairs with space for private functions and alfresco dining on an upper floor. The menu changes weekly, the food is fresh and the wine list carefully collated.  
**98 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**0948 415 646**

## Le Bordeaux

Set in a French colonial-style mansion, Le Bordeaux serves southwestern French cuisine in a beautiful setting. Known for its foie gras and large selection of wines, Le Bordeaux is worth the trip to Binh Thanh district.  
**72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh**  
**3899 9831**  
[restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn](http://restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn)  
**11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm**

## Le Bouchon De Saigon

Red and white checked tablecloths and closely set tables make Le bouchon de Saigon the place to go for a casual, classic French bistro experience under the eye of iron chef Vietnam winner David Thai.  
**40 Thai Van Lung, D1**  
[www.lebouchonsaigon.com](http://www.lebouchonsaigon.com)

## Le Jardin

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



the place is like a Stargate direct to France.  
31D Thai Van Lung, D1  
3825 8465

### L'Olivier

L'Olivier is a restaurant serving authentic Mediterranean cuisines, located on the 2nd floor of the Hotel Sofitel.  
Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1  
3824 1555  
www.sofitel.com

### The Refinery

This Parisian bistro hidden away in its enclave on Hai Ba Trung is an exceptional venue, making for an elegant reparation of the sins of the past. It was here in French Colonial days that opium was manufactured, bringing ruin to the people of Asia; it is here that a far softer side of the French culture now exercises its influence over present-day Saigon, serving modern European cuisine in its tastefully decorated dining area and airy outdoor patio.  
74 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3825 7667  
www.therefinerysaigon.com

### Ty Coz

An unpretentious venue focused only on serving great cuisine. Ty Coz provides a fine balcony view of the cathedral, intimate atmosphere, and affordable prices.  
178/4 Pasteur, D1  
3822 2457  
www.tycozsaigon.com

### Vatel Saigon Restaurant

This is a fine, well-managed, and even luxurious dining venue serving authentic French cuisine in a Franco-Viet design space. There's red carpet along the

entrance way, gallery-standard art on the walls, and an overall atmosphere of refinement and good service.

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

## indian

### Baba's Kitchen

Baba's Kitchen, also known as the best Indian restaurant on Bui Vien, is familiar among expats and locals alike, rating 4.5 out of five stars on Trip Advisor. Their vindaloo is a must try.  
164 Bui Vien, D1  
3838 6661  
www.babaskitchen.in  
11am - 11pm

### Bombay Indian Restaurant

Located in D1 near the Ben Thanh Market area, serving Indian & Halal cuisine. The ambiance is relaxed thanks to Bombay's easy-going, family kitchen vibe.  
57-59 Ham Nghi, D1  
9am - 10.30pm

### Ganesh

Ganesh serves authentic northern Indian tandooris & rotis along with the hottest curries, dandas, and vada from the southern region.  
1584 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
8223 0173  
www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com

### Indus Indian

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

2G Thi Sach, D1  
3521 0324

### Mumtaz

With bona-fide Indian owners and chefs, authenticity at Mumtaz is guaranteed. While the service and setting is relatively basic, the food is amongst the best of its type in the city in terms of taste alone. The brand has a second branch in Da Nang city if you're ever on holiday and missing your curries.  
226 Bui Vien, D1  
3837 1767

### The Punjabi

Authentic North Indian cuisine prepared in a home-made tandoori oven makes Punjabi a popular spot for budget conscious eaters who crave Indian standbys like spinach naan and chicken tandoori.  
40/3 Bui Vien, D1  
3508 3777

## italian

### Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.  
Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, D1  
3520 9099  
6.30am - 10.30pm

### Capricciosa

You'll find the standards here – pizza, pasta, soups, salads, with a few special

dishes such as calamari and onion in squid ink sauce. They're all prepared according to strict Japanese standards, and the result is actually really good.

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

### Casa Italia

Italian owned & run, Casa Italia's menu ranges from home-style cooking that includes steaks, seafood, a large variety of homemade pastas, jumbo salads, appetizers and the best pizzas.  
86 Le Loi, D1  
3824 4286  
www.casaitalia.com.vn



### Ciao Bella

Hearty home-style Italian food served with flair and excellent service. An extensive menu is complemented with daily specials. Arriving guests are greeted with a free glass of Prosecco. Diners sit in a cozy setting upstairs or on the ground floor for people watching. Big groups should book in advance.  
11 Dong Du, D1  
3822 3329  
tonyfox56@hotmail.com  
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



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

## Good Morning Vietnam



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

197 De Tham, DI  
3837 1894

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

## La Hostaria



Designed with an intimate atmosphere 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, DI  
3823 1080  
[www.lahostaria.com](http://www.lahostaria.com)

## Lucca 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

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

## Margherita



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

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, DI  
3837 0760

## Opera Restaurant



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

1st floor Park Hyatt Hotel,  
2 Lam Son Square, DI  
3824 1234  
[www.saijon.park.hyatt.com](http://www.saijon.park.hyatt.com)  
6am - 11pm

## Pizza 4P's 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

8/15 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
012 0789 4444  
[www.pizza4ps.com](http://www.pizza4ps.com)

## Pomodoro



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

79 Hai Ba Trung, DI  
3823 8998  
[www.pomodoro-vietnam.com](http://www.pomodoro-vietnam.com)

## Sarpino's Pizzeria



Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet

ingredients.

125 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
[www.sarpinos.vn](http://www.sarpinos.vn)

## japanese

## Aka Taiyo



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

74B Hai Ba Trung, DI  
3824 4295

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

## Ajisen Ramen



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

120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI  
3822 0522

## Aki Japanese Restaurant



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

15/9 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3827 9083

## Blanchy Street 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI  
3823 8793

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

*\* Reviewed by Oi in April 2013*

## Cam On Restaurant



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

30 Thai Van Lung, DI  
3823 3955  
[www.cam-on.asia](http://www.cam-on.asia)

## Dragon Hotpot



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

122-124 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
3825 8842

## Dragon Noodle



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

29 Dong Du, DI  
3521 0008  
[www.ramen.vn](http://www.ramen.vn)

## Dragon Steak



A striking Japanese restaurant tucked

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

138 Ton That Dam, DI  
3821 0288  
[www.steak.vn](http://www.steak.vn)

## Ebisu



Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles – made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes.

35bis Mac Dinh Chi, DI  
3822 6971  
[ductm@incubation-vn.com](mailto:ductm@incubation-vn.com)  
[ebisu-vn.asia](http://ebisu-vn.asia)

## Fuji Restaurant



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

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

## Hanayuki



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

21C Ton Duc Thang, DI  
3824 2754

## Inaho Restaurant



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

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

## Kabuto Tokyo



One of the more exuberant Japanese venues in this city, Kabuto Tokyo on Mac Thi Buoi specialises in both traditional and fusion fresh Japanese seafood cuisine. It's a vibrant venue with its manga murals, carp lanterns, giant samurai warrior, and large aquarium – and in the evening it becomes a respectable upmarket bar. For a quirky beverage there, try a sake served in a bamboo tube.

45 Mac Thi Buoi, DI  
3822 2351  
[kabuto.com.vn](http://kabuto.com.vn)

## K Cafe



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

74A4 Hai Ba Trung, DI  
38245355  
[www.yakatabune-saigon.com](http://www.yakatabune-saigon.com)  
11am - 2pm, 5pm - 11pm

## Kokokokko Pandora



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

4th Floor Pandora, I/1 Truong Chinh, Tan Phu  
3849 6840  
[www.rokekoko.com.vn](http://www.rokekoko.com.vn)

## La Fenetre Soleil



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

44 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
3824 5994

## Mus Mus



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

117 Vo Van Tan, DI  
3930 9185  
[info@musmus.net](mailto:info@musmus.net)  
[www.musmus.net](http://www.musmus.net)

## Osaka Ramen



Traditional Japanese noodle restaurant offering traditional Ramen dishes as well as Japanese/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.

67 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI  
10am - 10pm

## Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant



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

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI  
6291 1036  
[sakurasaku.vn](http://sakurasaku.vn)  
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

## Sumo BBQ



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

300 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh  
3991 4757  
[sumobbq.com.vn](http://sumobbq.com.vn)  
10.30am - 10.30pm

## Sushi Bar



There are plenty of dining spaces – large and small rooms, floor-level Japanese dining on tatami mats, private areas, and the eponymous large sushi bar on the ground level.

2 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3823 8042  
[www.sushibar-vn.com](http://www.sushibar-vn.com)

## Sushi Dining Aoi



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

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, DI  
3930 0039  
[www.sushidingaioi.com](http://www.sushidingaioi.com)

## Sushi World



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



traditional Japanese style with tatami matting.

**28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI**  
3911 0147  
[www.sushimworld.com.vn](http://www.sushimworld.com.vn)

## Tokyo Deli



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

**240 Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
5404 2244  
[tokyodeli.com.vn](http://tokyodeli.com.vn)  
11am - 11pm

## Uraetai BBQ Restaurant



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

6673 9373

## Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ



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

**42 Le Anh Xuan, DI**  
3823 3232  
[vickis.com.vn](http://vickis.com.vn)  
10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm

## Yoshino



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

**2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, DI**  
3823 3333

## Yuki



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

**99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, DI**  
3824 2754  
10am - 2pm; 4pm - 10pm

## korean

## Dae Jang Gum

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

**1st Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza**  
39 Le Duan, DI  
3825 7974  
[www.daejanggum.vn](http://www.daejanggum.vn)

## Hana Restaurant



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

**8 Cao Ba Quat, DI**  
3829 5588  
9am - 10pm

## Kimsine



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

**8A/5D2 Thai Van Lung, DI**  
7306 4045  
094 467 2281  
[jymimill@hanmail.net](mailto:jymimill@hanmail.net)  
10am - 3am

## Mi Han Quoc



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

**92 Ham Nghi, DI**  
3914 1565  
[www.mihanquocvn.com](http://www.mihanquocvn.com)  
8am - 11pm

## Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof



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

**20 Ho Huan Nghiep, DI**  
3823 9000  
9am-11pm

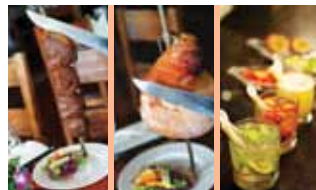
## Seoul House



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

**33 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
3829 4297  
7am - 10pm

## steakhouses



## Au Lac do Brazil



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

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

[www.aulacdobrazil.com](http://www.aulacdobrazil.com)  
[www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil](https://www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil)

## Corso Steakhouse and Bar



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

**117 Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
3829 5368  
[www.norfolkhotel.com.vn](http://www.norfolkhotel.com.vn)  
6pm - 11pm

## Dragon Steak



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

**138 Ton That Dam, DI**  
3821 0288  
[www.steak.vn](http://www.steak.vn)  
11am - late

## El Gaucho 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

**5D Nguyen Sieu, DI**  
38251879  
[www.elgaucho.asia](http://www.elgaucho.asia)

## New York Steakhouse



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

**25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI**  
3823 7373  
[contact@steakhouse.com.vn](mailto:contact@steakhouse.com.vn)  
[www.steakhouse.com.vn](http://www.steakhouse.com.vn)

## Pho 99 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

**139 Nguyen Trai, DI**  
3925 2791  
6am - 2.30am

## Samba Brazilian Steakhouse



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

**10C Thai Van Lung, DI**  
3822 0079  
[www.samba.vnnhahang.com](http://www.samba.vnnhahang.com)

## Wild Horse Salon



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

**8A/1DI Thai Van Lung, DI**

3825 1901

10am - 2pm; 4pm - 11.30pm

## thai

## Coriander



A small Thai joint pleasingly decked out in natural materials with cork walls and sedge-lined floors. The resulting ambience is nicely authentic, and the same goes for the cuisine – try the green shrimp curry, the fried noodles in Thai

style, or the squid vermicelli for a taste of the Gulf of Thailand. The restaurant is also known for its almost embarrassingly cheap beer.

**16 Bui Vien, DI**  
3837 1311

## Golden Elephant



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

**34 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
3822 8554  
11am - 10pm

## Jasmine Thai



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

**85 Quoc Huong, D2**  
35190038  
5pm - 9.30pm Tue-Sun

## Koh Thai



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

**1st floor, 39 Le Duan, DI**  
3823 4423  
091 233 9138  
[www.kohthai.com.vn](http://www.kohthai.com.vn)  
11am - 10pm Daily

## Lac Thai



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

**71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
3823 7506  
9am - 9pm

## Mai Thai



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

**13 Ton That Thiep, DI**  
3821 2920  
11am - 2pm, 5pm - 10pm

## Malee Thai



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

**37 Dong Du, DI**  
3829 3029  
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

## Spice



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

**27C Le Quy Don, D3**  
3930 7873  
[www.spicevn.com](http://www.spicevn.com)  
11am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10pm

## Thai Express



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

atmosphere.  
**8A Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
**6299 1338**  
[www.thaiaexpress.com.vn](http://www.thaiaexpress.com.vn)  
 10.30am - 10pm

## vietnamese

### 3T Quan Nuong

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

**Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, DI**  
**3821 1631**

### An Khue Quan

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

**92B Le Lai, DI**  
**3925 9583**

### An Vietnamese Bistro

An Restaurant offers exquisite dishes from the North, Central, and South of Vietnam, served by well-trained waiters and waitresses dressed in traditional Southern clothing.

**71/5-6 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
**3825 8275**

### Banh Xeo 46A

Although known for a wide range of Vietnamese specialties, the local pancake stuffed with herbs and prawns is its tastiest dish.

**46A Dinh Cong Trang, DI**  
**3824 1110**

### Banh Xeo An La Ghien

The fare on offer is traditional Vietnamese, specialising in the Banh Xeo filled egg pancake, a favourite with foreigners with its light crispy shell and fragrant herbs and meats inside the pancake pocket.

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

### Barbecue Garden

The venue features all open-air dining and the atmosphere is distinctly festival-like, relaxing, and casual, becoming congenially boisterous in the evenings. The restaurant specializes in Western-Vietnamese fusion dishes such as beef with cheese, 5-spices beef, squid with satay sauce, and shrimp kebabs.

**135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI**  
**3833 3340**  
[www.barbecuegarden.com](http://www.barbecuegarden.com)

### Beefsteak Nam Son

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

**188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI**  
**3930 3917**  
[www.namsonsteak.com](http://www.namsonsteak.com)

### Bo Ne Le Hong

Bo Ne Le Hong is a popular Vietnamese restaurant specializing in beefsteak. It has a rich, diverse menu, and also offer fresh fruit juices.

**489/27/39 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan**  
**3990 5106**

### Bun Sai Gon

This franchise positions itself firmly in

the local market with the slogan 'the bun noodles of the Vietnamese people' – indicating a concerted dedication to the authenticity of its noodle soup staples.

**6276 2609**  
[www.bunsaigon.com.vn](http://www.bunsaigon.com.vn)

### Cha Ca La Vong

This venue only serves Cha Ca, a traditional Hanoian dish. Cha Ca is a salad made out of pieces of fish and spring onion stir-fried in a hotpot.

**36 Ton That Thiep, DI**  
**3915 3343**

### Cuc Gach Quan

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

**10 Dang Tat, DI**  
**3848 0144**

### Ganh

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

**58/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, DI**  
**3829 5243**  
[www.nemnuongganh.com](http://www.nemnuongganh.com)

### Gold Fish

Gold Fish offers a slice of authentic Vietnam with a genuinely rural cuisine.

**73 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
**3822 5229**  
[www.goldfish.vn](http://www.goldfish.vn)

### Highway 4

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

**101 Vo Van Tan, DI**  
**3602 2069**  
[www.highway4.com](http://www.highway4.com)

### Hoa Tuc

Set in what used to be Saigon's opium refinery, Hoa Tuc serves up contemporary Vietnamese cuisine in a Parisian, art-deco atmosphere.

**74 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
**3825 1676**  
[www.hoatuc.com](http://www.hoatuc.com)

### Hoang Yen

A venue for those who are looking for high-quality Vietnamese cuisine. Try some of the country's delicacies in a modern yet inviting atmosphere. The eatery's various clay pots are flavorful; some feature mam, a delicious fermented fish paste. While the restaurant's cuisine is light and healthy overall, those with a penchant for green veggies should definitely order one of Hoang Yen's assortment of edible 'flowers' – especially the sautéed hoa thien ly. It is recommended to order a few dishes and share them all.

**7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, DI**  
**148 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
**Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5**  
**CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
[www.hoangyencuisine.com](http://www.hoangyencuisine.com)

### Lemongrass

The vibe aims at a harmony between modern styling and the Vietnamese traditional arts, and the dining room with its tile floors and wooded wainscoting effects a comforting natural environment.

**4 Nguyen Thiep, DI**  
**3822 0496**

### Luong Son

Exotic beer garden style eatery famous for its barbecue beef. Luong Son also serves fear factor items such as scorpions, grubs, ostrich meat and crickets.

**31 Ly Tu Trong, DI**  
**3825 1330**  
[www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan](http://www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan)

### Nam Phat Restaurant

A Vietnamese restaurant that specializes in hosting social events such as weddings and business conferences. Traditional Vietnamese cuisine is the specialty with prices ranging from VND100,000 - VND300,000. The setting is of an elegant banquet hall.

**21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, DI**  
**3910 6488**  
[nahangnamphat@gmail.com](mailto:nahangnamphat@gmail.com)

### Marina Saigon

Marina Saigon is one of the leading seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.

**172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI**  
**3930 2379**

### Maxim's Nam An

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

**13-15-17 Dong Khoi, DI**

### Nghi Xuan

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

**5/9 Nguyen Sieu, DI**  
**3823 0699**  
[nghixuanrestaurant.com](http://nghixuanrestaurant.com)

### Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.

**160 Pasteur, DI**  
**3827 7131**  
[www.quananngon.com.vn](http://www.quananngon.com.vn)  
 8am - 10pm

### Papaya Restaurant 🍌 Oi's Pick

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

**68 Pham Viet Chan, Binh Thanh**  
**6258 1508**  
[papaya@chi-nghia.com](mailto:papaya@chi-nghia.com)  
[www.chi-nghia.com](http://www.chi-nghia.com)

### Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.

**4 Phan Chu Trinh, DI**  
**3822 2788**  
 6am - 10pm

### Pho 24

PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.

**71-73 Dong Khoi, DI**  
**3825 7505**



### Quan Bui - Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

A new 4 floor up-market restaurant located in downtown Saigon with a popular roof garden and bar. The interior is exotic chic and the extensive menu offer dishes such as chicken breast in a satay sauce, and healthy smoothies like beetroot and ginger. A good place to relax and dine with excellent service. Has a second location on 8 Nguyen Van Nguyen, DI.

**17a Ngo Van Nam, DI**  
**3829 1515**  
[www.quanbui.vn](http://www.quanbui.vn)

### Royal Revolving Restaurant

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

**3823 2232**

### Saigon Vegan

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

**378/3 Vo Van Tan, DI**  
**3834 4473**

### SH Garden restaurant

Established in the 1930s, the Terrace restaurant is located at the corner of two of the oldest boulevards of Saigon, Nguyen Hue and Le Loi, where romantic memories of Saigon float around. This restaurant offers a variety of delicious traditional Vietnamese dishes.

**4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, DI**  
**6680 0188**  
[shgarden.com.vn](http://shgarden.com.vn)

### Song Ngu

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

**70 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI**  
**3832 5017**

### Temple Club

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

**29-31 Ton That Thiep, DI**  
**3829 9244**  
[templeclub.com.vn](http://templeclub.com.vn)

### Thanh Nien Restaurant

With its attractive home-style layout, pretty garden for outdoor dining, and warm, yellow-toned interior for the buffet, it's a charming venue for tourists and a familiar favourite for long-timers. It's intentionally



decorated like a private home, walls decorated with floral artworks, and the garden surrounded by bamboo.  
**11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1**  
**3822 5909**  
[www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien](http://www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien)

### Tib Restaurant

This fine Vietnamese Hue-style restaurant looks almost like a temple, and it's considered one of the city's premier settings serving imperial cuisine.  
**187 Hai Ba Trung, D3**  
**3829 7242**  
[www.tibrestaurant.com.vn](http://www.tibrestaurant.com.vn)

### Tin Nghia

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

### Vietnam House

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

## (other) asian

### Lion City

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

### Long Monaco 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

## western/international

### Al Fresco's

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

### Annam Gourmet

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

### Au Parc

It's only fitting that this Mediterranean-styled restored villa with its original tiles, old window frames, plush cushions, and opium-themed art collection sits in one of the most gorgeous streets of central

Saigon. Au Parc is an unforgettable venue with a décor that manages to simultaneously capture the grace of the old Colonial architecture and the mood of west-Asian exoticism that transfixed Europe in the Romantic period.  
**23 Han Thuyen, D1**  
**3829 2772**



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

### Beirut Shisha Bar

The Beirut Shisha bar offers fine Middle Eastern cuisine with imported meat to guarantee impeccable flavor. Shisha is the perfect way to relax after a long day in the city.  
**74/13D Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**38222188**  
[beirutbar.com](http://beirutbar.com)

### Black Cat Restaurant

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

### Blu Bar and Grill

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

### Bobby Chinn's 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

### The Burger Corner

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

### The Elbow Room

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

**3821 4327**  
[www.elbowroom.com.vn](http://www.elbowroom.com.vn)

### Hog's Breath Café

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

### Jaspas Wine & Grill 🍷 Oi's Pick

Jaspas Wine and Grill provides an extensive wine list along with many "reinvented" Jaspas dishes, new creations, and mouthwatering steaks. Japas also offers a wide array of delectable dessert options.  
**74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3827 0931**  
[alfrescosgroup.com](http://alfrescosgroup.com)

### Khoi Thom

Khoi Thom, which translates to "fragrant smoke" features bright, colorful, Latin-American decoration inspired by renowned Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta. This unique eatery offers a hybrid of Vietnamese and Mexican flavors.  
**29 Ngo Thai Nhiem, D3**  
**3930 0233**  
**khoithom.com**  
**10am - 11pm**

### La Habana

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

### Ly Club

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

### Margherita

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

### Market 39

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

### Mogambo Bar & Grill

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

### Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

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

### Parkview Restaurant

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

### Pasha

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

### Shri Restaurant and Lounge

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

### Skewers

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

### Subway

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

### Strata

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

### Warda

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

### Xu Restaurant Lounge

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

### Zoom Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick

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



# HL Shipping Co., Ltd.

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# Travel & Leisure

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■ IMAGE BY MIKE WAKELY









# The Other Side

Experience the lesser known and unspoiled side of Phu Quoc before it becomes a tourism boomtown

TEXT & IMAGES BY **MIKE WAKELY**

AS THE ANCIENT bamboo bridge across the ravine began to creak under the weight of the scooter, I started to regret promising my riding companion "an adventure in Vietnam". To be honest, we probably should have turned around after he had crashed. But with his words of "never go back" echoing in our ears we nervously pressed on. And two hours later we were definitely glad we did.

First, let's rewind to the beginning. As we fly into the airport outside the capital Duong Dong (DD to the locals), it feels like the pilot has alarmingly overshot the entire island, before the plane banks steeply, turns around and descends over the ocean towards the runway. While slightly unnerving, it is a maneuver that thoughtfully gives passengers a breathtaking view of a forested paradise island in a turquoise sea.

Arriving at the new airport gives you

the first sense that Phu Quoc has grand ambitions. It has been built to accommodate international flights from across the globe, bringing larger numbers of tourists that will be the catalyst for an undoubted period of growth. The island lies 45 km off the western coast of Vietnam in the Gulf of Thailand - only a 55-minute flight from HCMC or a two and a half hour ferry ride from Rach Gia if you're feeling adventurous. An island of beaches, seafood and waterfalls, it remains relatively undeveloped and is still a part of Vietnam comparatively untouched by the mainstream tourism of other areas like Nha Trang and Mui Ne.

However, Phu Quoc is currently an island of two halves. Most tourists stay in the string of hotels south of DD on the west coast, relaxing on the long sandy beach and swimming in the warm ocean. The days

are lazy - this is classic beach tourism - but luckily the majority of places to stay at are still small scale and with personality. The nights invariably consist of a trip to DD's night market to gorge on a dazzling array of cheap, fresh seafood.

The night market sparks into life at about 5pm as the BBQs are lit and the numerous stalls start laying out the day's catch, everything from whelks and snails, through to lobster and prawns the size of... well lobsters. Everyone sells the same thing and it can be a little overwhelming the first time to choose somewhere to eat. Try Quan Cat restaurant about half way down on the right-hand side if you're heading in from the roundabout. The owner speaks good English and is more than happy to suggest what to try, encouraging you to maybe step outside your seafood comfort zone, which I promise





you won't regret. Opt for a whole fish simply grilled with garlic and chili, or for the more adventurous, start with the scallops dusted with peanuts and follow-up with the crab in tamarind sauce (ask for napkins!)

Now, there is nothing wrong with spending a week lounging on the west coast of Phu Quoc dedicating your evenings to stuffing your face with seafood (trust me, I've done it more than once and it's a joy). Most people don't venture further than that, but the rest of the island is one of the few remaining gloriously undeveloped and untouched parts of the world - and it won't remain that way for long.

With an 18-hole golf course under construction on the northeast coast, a huge resort planned to follow and a nearly completed main road dissecting the length of the island, it is only a matter of time before the tourist money overwhelms the sleepy traditional fishing villages and deserted beaches. So go before it's too late if you want to see the unspoiled side of Phu Quoc. Rent a scooter, pack water and some snacks and head east!

### Uncharted Waters

Heading out of DD on the road to Ham Ninh, you'll soon find yourself on dusty red roads

through the rainforest accompanied by the distinctive smell of fish sauce and pepper. Along the way stop and join the locals enjoying a picnic at the Tranh Stream waterfalls. The more adventurous can cool off by jumping from the bridge into the river below.

Continue on to Ham Ninh jetty. Stop for a cold beer, resist liberating the seahorses in tanks before they get deep fried and take a walk along the jetty from where ferries leave for Cambodia. If you're lucky the boat will be arriving or leaving - perfect for people watching and admiring scooter skills as heavily laden bikes speed up and down the narrow jetty at breakneck speeds.

Refreshed, scoot north along the local dusty track (left just before the jetty) and you quickly find yourself tootling through fishing villages running parallel to the coast with regular glimpses of the sea through the palms. Keep following the road and you'll eventually see a little guesthouse on the right hand side called Coconut Tiki Grove Beach. Stop. My riding companion and I spent a couple of hours here, drinking cold beers and swimming with the owner's dogs on a completely deserted beach before making the fateful decision to carry on north. It is places like this that make the east coast so wonderful, and it's places like this that will

slowly be swallowed up by the onward march of tourism.

From here there are two choices - head back to DD, or (if you are an experienced rider) keep heading north. The second option is not for the faint-hearted and shouldn't be attempted during rainy season or bad weather as the road hugs the coast and you need to traverse at least seven ravines, which are slippery, bumpy and frequently require you to cross bamboo bridges that require a little leap of faith. That said, you'll obviously be passed in both directions by the usual array of locals on scooters laden with half of Lotte Mart who make it look easy. For mere mortals, this is a real taste of adventure scootering, and an experience that reveals a part of Vietnam that would otherwise pass most of us by.

One (gentle) crash, four near misses, a lifetime of incredible scenery and a lot of adrenaline later we emerged unscathed and exhilarated at Thom beach near the north of the island. We stopped at a deserted bar, pulled up a hammock and drank a toast to the other side of Phu Quoc and the road less travelled before heading home on the significantly easier big new road. Vietnam is changing quickly, so go out and explore before the smell of fish sauce is permanently replaced by the smell of tarmac. ■



# The Lowdown on Solo Travel: Part 2

Alone doesn't mean lonely



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

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



IT SEEMS LIKE the movies are finally catching up to reality. Inspiring films like *Eat Pray Love* and *Under the Tuscan Sun* (or even the apocalyptic thriller *The Book of Eli*) about solo travelers having life-changing experiences on the road reflect the growing reality that more and more people are traveling alone. But this isn't the Hollywood version. A recent poll conducted by US-based travel insurance provider Travel Guard, found that practical factors such as "life changes" (being widowed or divorced) followed by "wanting to follow your own schedule" or "pursuing a special interest" were actually the main reasons why people are traveling solo, with the more ethereal "a visit to an unusual destination" or to "reconnect with themselves" accounting for only 10 percent of the motivation.

Whatever your reason for traveling alone, you're in good company as this niche sector has been steadily growing over the past decade or so. On average, the number of one-person households account for 35 percent of all households in developed countries. This trend has even spawned categories like single-solos (live alone and travel alone) and collective-solos (live in a multi-person

household, but travel alone), coined in a study by the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland).

While it's probably more fun to travel with friends, solo travel definitely has its perks. The obvious ones are being able to set your own pace, not having to compromise over where to eat and what to see. On a trip to London with my sister, I remember us squabbling like cats and dogs on what we wanted out of the few days we were there. She was happy going to things I wanted to see as long as I accompanied her to her things. I, on the other hand, was happy for each of us to do our own thing, meeting up just for dinner.

Other benefits that solo travelers often talk about are: making connections out on the road that probably would've been missed because you were too focused on your traveling companions, being able to take out chunks of time to just sit and people watch or wander the streets with a camera without feeling like you're impeding on someone else's time, and even tasting your food more because you weren't engrossed in conversation. Then there's just the freedom to have totally

random, unpredictable experiences that are often the most memorable despite not being on any itinerary.

I remember being in the back alleys of a Cairo neighborhood when an old man spotted me checking my map. Despite his broken English and my non-existent Arabic, he took me on a guided tour of the area, pointing out mosques and shops and hidden fountains that I would never have seen on my own. We ended up at his tiny shack having very strong Egyptian coffee. Sure, I wasn't absolutely positive that I wouldn't be the next victim of a serial killer (though I had one foot firmly planted by the door, propping it open to passersby) but in the end, it was just a very nice man offering up fabled Middle Eastern hospitality. Would that have happened if I had been traveling in a group?

The three most common deterrents to solo travel are: cost, loneliness and safety. I discussed ways to minimize single supplements in last month's column. Now let's talk about the other two factors.

## Alone Doesn't Mean Lonely

While most of us enjoy alone time, even the



most devoted solo occasionally craves a bit of social interaction. Certain types of travel lend themselves to joining singles together, like adventure travel. Camping and meals paid out of a shared kitty make for more flexible sleeping arrangements. That was the case on a two month African overlanding trip I did with a friend. After the first leg, she went home as planned and I continued on with a tent of my own and no single supplement but still kept the social factor of traveling in a group where we shared chores and campfire meals. The group was diverse, more so than I would've naturally gravitated to, but ended up being really fun.

In addition, choosing a hostel over a hotel, with shared public spaces like kitchens and TV rooms, can also be a good way to meet fellow travelers and swap stories of the road. Hang out there just before dinner and you're likely to be invited by your fellow hostellers for a night out. I've also found taking classes to be a great way of meeting people on the road as you're sharing not only an interest but an activity, like cooking or sports. *Couchsurfing.org* is a great resource. Even if you're not interested in staying with a stranger, there are often meet-ups scheduled where you can join the locals for a drink and a chat to get an insider's take on the best things to do in a foreign city. New on the block is *mealsharing.com*,

a site that aims to hook travelers up with hosts for home-cooked meals. Founder Jay Savsani spoke to *Oi* about the concept.

"I'm in Berlin right now and I've used the site to connect with people I don't know. I've already shared three meals this week. Meal sharing takes interacting to a level of intimacy because you have to interact, you have to engage. I've hosted people through hospitality exchange sites as well and if I've been busy with work or been out, I didn't have to interact if I didn't want to," he explains. "With meal sharing, I'm here to learn about you and we're going to talk and we're going to connect. It's a very high burst of intimacy very quickly. Meal sharing also attracts a different demeanor. With accommodation exchanges, someone may be looking to save a few bucks, not really interested much in the culture. We don't have the same price point motivation so we attract a lot of intellectuals and liberals who are there for conversation, not to save a few dollars."

Though it's relatively new, *mealsharing.com* is already up and running in over 250 cities worldwide.

Online forums have also made meeting fellow travelers pre-trip so much easier. Sites like Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree are a great resource for either gathering info or getting an impromptu group together. Dyanne, a Dalat resident, recently took a trip to Mongolia and

wanted to visit the Gobi Desert. Within a week of posting on a travel forum, she had gotten a group of five together to share the trip, and therefore expenses, turning what would've been a very expensive solo endeavor to a mere USD420 for the week, traveling more than 1,600 miles. I similarly use the "Roll Call" forum on *Cruisecritic.com* to hook up with fellow passengers on a specific sailing looking to put shore excursions together for ports where independent trips (like hiring a car and driver for ports far from public transportation) would be cost prohibitive.

Lots of unique websites are joining the fray. A few months ago, *easynest.com* started operating, with the aim of pairing up solo travelers to share hotel rooms, with each paying 50 percent of the best available price, theoretically providing access to better hotels and locations. Interesting concept, but not sure I'm ready for that level of intimacy.

### Tech and Safety

Making the most of solo travel often requires additional research. After all, you're booking travel outside the 'norm.' Thankfully, the internet has responded with apps, websites and resources for single travelers (even *CNN Travel* and the *Guardian Travel* have posts and pages dedicated to the subject) focusing both on convenience and safety.

According to the Travel Guard survey, 73 percent of agents polled noted that more female travelers embark on solo trips than their male counterparts. For single female travelers, safety is often a concern, and rightly so. Planning ahead on securing accommodation close to public transportation is smart. June, unfortunately, saw two high profile rapes of single travelers in India, with one occurring at night when a traveler hopped into a truck with three men because she couldn't find a taxi back to her hotel.

The Help Call app (*helpcallapp.com*) is great for solo travelers, auto-detecting international police, fire department and ambulance phone numbers in 126 countries. There's even a shake feature which calls an emergency number for when you're having trouble seeing or physically can't touch the appropriate button on your screen. *Wandermates.com* lets you post your trip itinerary or a single activity plan to find a buddy. *Inviteforabite.com* aims to match women up for meals, addressing the "love to travel alone but hate to eat alone" dilemma. Users create an invite, nominate a place to eat (or an activity) and then open it up to the public or to specific users.

Whether you travel solo by choice or circumstance, just remember that traveling alone doesn't mean traveling lonely (or even expensively). With some research, a bit of initiative and a few good gadgets (see "Carry On" on the following page), you're good to go out and make new friends, create lasting memories unfiltered by anyone else's perspective and explore the world at your own pace! ■



# Carry On

What savvy solo travelers are packing

COMPILED BY JAMES PHAM

1 The BMW of travel bags, my **Tumi Alpha Lightweight Trip Packing Case** accompanies me on longer trips while my **Alpha Bravo Lemoore Wheeled Backpack** 2 travels with me the rest of the time. The last thing I want to do while journeying solo is attract attention by flaunting electronics, jewelry or cash. The same goes for luggage. Understated and supremely durable, when you need to quickly hop on and off trains and planes with no one to help you, having a light, maneuverable bag is key. 3 Leave your laptop at home and take the **Apple Wireless Keyboard** and your iPad instead. Work and play just about anywhere. 4 A **Retractable Cable Lock** is great for securing your gear to an out-of-sight luggage rack on the train or while catching some sleep on a long layover. It won't stop someone with serious intent but it's a good deterrent against a crime of opportunity. 5 Get great above-the-crowd shots and avoid the dreaded selfies with your arms awkwardly held out with the **XShot Camera Extender** which works with iPhones and compact cameras to make it look like someone else took a photo of you. If the picture comes out badly, you only have yourself to blame. 6 **Noise-canceling headphones** make any form of transportation that much more bearable, leaving you feeling less tired when you arrive. Also great for tuning out that talkative seatmate. 7 Still stashing pocket money and your phone under your towel in the sand when you want to take a quick swim? Enter **Adventure Underwear**, superfine merino wool underwear with two hidden waterproof pockets. Sounds awkward, but they're surprisingly comfortable. Why has no one thought of this before? ■

1  
4-wheel Case | TUMI  
VND23,520,000



2  
Wheeled Backpack | TUMI  
VND17,380,000



3  
Wireless Keyboard | APPLE  
VND1,990,000



7  
Adventure Underwear  
USD39 per pair



4  
Cable Lock | PACSAFE  
USD18



6  
Noise-canceling Headphones | SONY  
VND3,990,000



5  
Camera Extender 2.0 | XSHOT  
USD35



## WHERE TO BUY

**Tumi**  
Vincom Center A, 171  
Dong Khoi, DI

**Pacsafe.com**  
**Xshot.com**

**F.Studio**  
Vincom Center B,  
70-72 Le Thanh  
Ton, DI

**Sony Center**  
131-133 Dong Khoi, DI  
**AdventureUnderwear.com**

## airlines

**Air China**

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

**Air France**

130 Dong Khoi, D1  
3829 0981  
mail.hcm@airfrance.fr  
www.airfrance.com.vn

**Asiana Airlines**

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

**Air Asia**

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

**Cathay Pacific Airlines**

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

**China Southern**

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

**Emirates**

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

**Etihad**

etihadairways.com

**EVA Airlines**

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

**JAL Japan Airlines**

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

**Jetstar**

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

**Korean Air**

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

**Lufthansa**

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

**Malaysia Airlines**

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

**Qantas Airways**

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3910 5373

**Qatar**

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

**Singapore Airlines**

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

**Thai**

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

**Turkish**

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

**United Airlines**

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

**Vietnam Airlines**

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

**Vietjet**

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

## hotels

## HO CHI MINH CITY

## TWO STAR

**Bali Hotel**

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

**Calmette Hotel**

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

**Cat Huy Hotel**

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

Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D1  
39208717

**Ken Hotel**

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

**Little Saigon Boutique Hotel**

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

## THREE STAR

**A&EM Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung**

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

**Blue Diamond Hotel**

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

**Bong Sen Hotel**

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

**Catina Saigon**

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

**Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa - Nguyen An Ninh**

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

## FOUR STAR

**Hotel Continental Saigon**

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

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

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

**Kimdo Royal City Hotel**

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

**Liberty Central Hotel**

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

**Norfolk Hotel**

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

**Novotel Saigon Centre**

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

167 Hai Ba Trung, D1

38224866  
www.novotel.com

**Oscar Saigon Hotel**

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

**Palace Hotel Saigon**

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

**Park Royal Saigon Hotel**

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

**Thao Dien Boutique Hotel**

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



## FIVE STAR

### Caravelle Hotel

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

### Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

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

### InterContinental Asiana

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

### Legend Hotel

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


### Majestic Saigon

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

### Moevenpick Hotel Saigon

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

### New World Saigon Hotel

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

### Nikko Saigon

\*\*\*\*\*  
One of the city's newest

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

### Park Hyatt Saigon

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

### Rex Hotel Saigon

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

### Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

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

### Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

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

### Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

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

### Windsor Plaza

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

## CON DAO ISLAND

### Six Senses Con Dao

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

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

## DALAT

### Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

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

### Sofitel Dalat Palace

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

## DANANG

### Furama Resort Danang

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

### Fusion Maia

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

## Life Resort Danang

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

## HALONG BAY

### Novotel Halong Bay

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

### TUAN CHAU RESORT

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

## HANOI

### Hilton Hanoi Opera

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

### Intercontinental Westlake

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



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

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

### Sheraton Hanoi

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

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

### The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

\*\*\*\*\* **👉 Oi's Pick**  
 Located at the heart of Hanoi since 1901, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi has a long history as a luxurious place for prestigious events and popular rendezvous. Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.  
**15 Ngo Quyen, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi**  
**04 3826 6919**  
**h1555@sofitel.com**

## HOI AN

### Life Heritage Resort Hoi An

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Rooms are designed along Japanese themes, each having a personal porch with couches for reading and relaxing. Spacious bathrooms feature stand-alone showers or recessed baths, and many bathrooms enjoy views of a private garden. Ideal for events where participants will be enjoying the colourful ancient town area.  
**1 Pham Hong Thai, Hoi An Town, Quang Nam**  
**051 0391 4555**

### The Nam Hai

\*\*\*\*\*  
 A stunning all-villa resort located on the pristine China Beach featuring 60 one-bedroom retreats as well as 40 privately-owned two-to-five bedroom residences each with a private infinity pool.  
**Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam**  
**051 0394 0000**  
**reservations@thenamhai.com**



### Palm Garden Resort

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Set on five hectares of landscaped tropical garden with over 400 species of palm trees and plants right along the beach and near the World Heritage Hoi An Ancient Town.  
**Lac Long Quan, Cua Dai beach, Hoi An**  
**0510 3927 927**  
**www.palmgardenresort.com.vn**

## HUE

### Ana Mandara Hue

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

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

### La Residence Hotel & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
 This former French Governor's residence dates to 1930 and is a masterpiece of art deco design. Its incredible location overlooking the Citadel and the Perfume River brings this 122-room hotel a total and serene tranquillity. The hotel features a 40m outdoor salt swimming pool at river height giving the illusion of merging into the Perfume River. Ideal for executive retreats and exotic incentives programmes.  
**5 Le Loi, Hue**  
**05 4383 7475**

### Pilgrimage Village

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Pilgrimage Village offers the harmony of a soothing natural environment and fascinating local culture. Delicious meals, sound sleep, and the peaceful life of the quiet countryside refresh the spirit.  
**130 Minh Mang, Truong An, Hue**  
**05 4388 5461**

## NHA TRANG

### Evason Ana Mandara

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The exclusive location affords city-centre access to Nha Trang's only beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.  
**Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang**  
**05 8352 2222**

### Six Senses Hideaway Ninh Van Bay

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The resort is one of Asia's most exclusive and intimate beach escapes, sitting on dramatic Ninh Van Bay, with its impressive rock formations overlooking the South China Sea, white sand beach and towering mountains behind.  
**Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa**  
**05 8372 8222**

### Sheraton Nha Trang

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa offers ten categories of accommodation – from spacious, deluxe rooms to 70m2 executive suites and a huge presidential suite. With exemplary conference facilities, this is the number-one MICE resort in the region.  
**26-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang**  
**05 8388 0000**

## PHAN THIET

### Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

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

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

**Mui Ne**  
**06 2374 1888**  
**muine@anantara.com**

### Princess d'Annam

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The look of the resort is classical, bright, and impeccably clean and private. The two Empress Suites are the pinnacle of luxury accommodation in Vietnam – they are mini millionaire's mansions in themselves, fully-equipped, bright and spacious, and possessing of the same ethereal design quality that pervades this whole resort. Set in the remote Ke Ga Bay, wordlessly beautiful.  
**Hon Lan, Binh Thuan**  
**06 2368 2222**  
**info@princessannam.com**

### Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel

Located in the resort capital of Vietnam – Mui Ne Bay, Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel offers an intimate setting for guests to enjoy a getaway on the beach to its fullest. The hotel is home to 24 cozy deluxe rooms with services and sophistication that are expected from a beach boutique hotel.  
**76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne (Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969**  
**www.windflowermuine.com**

## PHU QUOC ISLAND

### Chen Sea Resort & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers. The resort was born from a long and passionate study in order to be integrated and to respect the uncontaminated nature of the bay and of the coastal zone.  
**Bai Xep, Phu Quoc**  
**07 7399 5895**

### Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Located on a hill of coconut palm trees, Saigon Phu Quoc is a beautiful, quiet seaside resort with plenty of sunshine. Just 10 minutes from the airport, the resort is an ideal haven for relaxing, fishing, trekking, snorkeling, and scuba diving.  
**62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc**  
**07 7384 6999**  
**sgphuquocresort@hcm.vnn.vn**

### La Veranda

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The most distinguished of Phu Quoc Island's hotels and guesthouses, La Veranda sports paddle fans, butterfly exteriors, whitewashed louvers, and tropical gardens recalling a colonial plantation. Freestanding deluxe villas are notable for their sea-facing porches, spacious bathrooms, and cathedral ceilings.  
**Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc**  
**07 7398 2988**

## QUY NHON

### Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

\*\*\*\*\*  
 A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam. This resort was awarded Best Wellness Resort in Vietnam in 2005, 2006 and 2007 by the Vietnam Economic Times.  
**Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh**  
**05 6384 0132**  
**quynhon@life-resorts.com**

## Bai Tram Resort and Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.  
**Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen**  
**05 7372 2563**

## serviced apartments

### Avila Serviced Apartment

These serviced apartments combine an excellent location with luxurious amenities.  
**20-20bis Thi Sach, D I**  
**35218365**

### Bella Serviced Apartments

Affordable, classy apartment living in a tidy alleyway residence styled with white classical flourishes, Bella offers good living and proximity to the city without succumbing to the lures of the expat bubble. Facilities include a small but well-equipped gym on the top floor and pleasant terraces on front-facing apartments.  
**56/4 Nguyen Thong, D3**  
**3526 0020**

### Cantavil Daewon Apartment

High-luxury complex with libraries, research center, and cultural information center on site. Also features an outdoor swimming pool. One of the most luxurious towers in the central area.  
**600A Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh**

### Central Garden Apartment

These luxurious apartments offer stunning views of downtown Saigon along with western style accommodations and excellent location.  
 Clean, inner-city luxury compound close to the Ben Nghe River.  
**225 Ben Chuong Duong, D I**  
**091 654 2598 / 093 347 6556**

### City View

Located in the prime business and residential district, only minutes away by car from downtown area, City View is the perfect place for home and/or business in Ho Chi Minh City.  
**12 Mac Dinh Chi, D I**  
**38221111**

### Hung Vuong Plaza Apartment

Huong Vuong Plaza apartments above the D5 Parkson are comprised of two 29 floor buildings with many luxurious apartments in bustling Cho Lon.  
**126 Hong Bang, D 5**

### Jasmine Court Serviced Apartment

A boutique property with only 12 apartments, comprised of one and two-bedroom suites of various sizes. All apartments are designed in a fresh contemporary style and finished in a pleasing neutral colour scheme.  
**307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh**  
**38446639**

### Lancaster Serviced Apartments

Lancaster Serviced Apartments Le Thanh Ton enjoys a commanding position over the nightlife, culture, and business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, offering a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window.  
**22 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D I**  
**38246666**

### The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.  
**58 Ton Duc Thang, D I**  
**38222098**



### Mai Ha Lan II Serviced Apartments

Mai Ha Lan II offers a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window. It offers 33 luxurious and graciously furnished apartments with studio and two bedroom options.

8A/1C Thai Van Lung, D 1  
62990992 0909868052

### Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.

17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1  
38226111

### Saigon Court

Since its opening in 1998, Saigon Court has become well-known amongst the expatriate community for exceptional standards of service. This 12 storey building is among the highest in the area, offering its tenants commanding views of other parts of the city.

149 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D 3  
39306466

### Saigon Pearl Apartment

Ho Chi Minh City's largest five star apartment complex, Saigon Pearl comprises six 37-story residential towers located on the banks of the Saigon River in Binh Thanh District, about five minutes by taxi from downtown. Pool, gym, supermarket and dining facilities all on site.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
38219999

### Saigon Skygarden

A 15-storey building located in the Saigonesse Little Tokyo on Le Thanh Ton, offering 172 international-standard Serviced Apartments for lease.

20 Le Thanh Ton, D 1  
38220002

### Saigon View Residences

Saigon View Residences offer a range of Deluxe, Superior, and Executive room types in distinctive one and two bedroom apartments.

117, Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh  
38404966

### Sedona Suites

With a fantastic location in District 1 and rooms offering all of the comforts of home, this award winning serviced apartment complex caters to businessmen and families alike.

65 Le Loi, D 1  
38229666

### Sherwood Residence

Serviced apartments available for short or long term bookings, located in Pasteur, within walking distance of downtown Ho Chi Minh City, international schools, shopping centres, etc. Pool, sauna, gym, mini-cinema onsite.

127 Pasteur, D 3  
38232288

### Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Kiem, D1  
3822 8899

[www.somerset.com/vietnam](http://www.somerset.com/vietnam)

### Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and

a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1  
38229197

### V-Star Apartment

Good proximity to the Saigon River and FV International Hospital, as well as international schools and the Tan Thuan export zone.

Go O Moi, Phu Thuan, D 7  
37733151

## travel agencies

### Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.

92-96 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3825 1358

### Aquarius Booking Office

With access to a global network of leading travel specialists, Aquarius is a domestic & international air ticketing agency committed to offering low-cost flights, travel insurance, and accommodation.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3823 1905

### Amazing Thailand Tourism Office

Funded by the Thai tourism board, this office is loaded up with travel resources and advice for travellers to Thailand, an invaluable source of help for travelers on their way to the land of smiles. Travel resources and advice for travelers to Thailand.

5th Floor, Empire Tower, 26-28 Ham Nghi, D1  
6291 3887

### Ben Thanh Tourist

One of the better-known tour agencies in the city, Ben Thanh Tourist is 20 years old and specializes in domestic and foreign travel, MICE, tourist transportation, and air ticketing.

51 Dong Khoi, D1  
3914 3921  
090 611 1121

### Clé Voyages - Xuan Viet Travel

Xuan Viet Travel has been providing travel services and advice for nearly two decades.

Unit 1105, Harbour View Tower,  
35 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 4942

### Fiditour

Fiditour offers a wide range of tours to the southeast Asian region, including unique cultural trips, adventure trips, beach holidays, cruises, and culinary trips.

129 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3914 1414

### Hoi An Express

Preferred by many five-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh city such as Windsor Plaza Hotel, Duxton Hotel, Legend Hotel Saigon, and Equatorial Hotel, this privately owned travel agency offers a wide range of services.

94 Mac Thi Buoi, D1  
3939 0135  
090 803 9699

### Inside Asia Travel

Inside Asia Travel is a boutique luxury travel provider of tailor made travel arrangements for English speaking expats and travelers through Southeast Asia. Guests enjoy highly personalized, bespoke travel arrangements suited to individual tastes and budget.

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



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[windflowermuine@gmail.com](mailto:windflowermuine@gmail.com) | [+84 62] 374 3969

## Refine Asia

Representing class, creativity, and absolute professionalism in Asian corporate and luxury travel services, Refine Asia is the first-class and luxury arm of the well-known regular travel services operator Focus Asia.

138 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ward 6, D3  
3932 0732

## Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1  
6290 9410

## Sinh Cafe

Sinh Cafe started out as a coffee shop, but later expanded to cater to the needs of tourists and travelers. This unique travel agency offers tours within Vietnam, and also to Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

246-248 De Tham, D1

## Viet Journey

Viet Journey was founded by dedicated travelers of the southeast Asian region, and they strive to provide quality, time-efficient service for travelers from around the world.

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, D1  
3823 7152

## bowling

### The Bowling Center

The Bowling Centre is a smaller venue with 12 lanes located in the International Club.

285B Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10  
3864 3784

### Bowling Pacific Garden

Small bowling alley at the Pacific Garden apartments complex, ideal for a more private game away from the crowds of teenagers.

8 Bis Ba Thang Hai, D10  
3863 7944

### Diamond Superbowl

An electrifying bowling experience featuring a 32 lane centrally-located bowling alley with fluorescent bowling balls and high-tech scoring.

4th Floor, 34 Le Duan, Ben Nghe, D1

### PowerBowl 388

This is a 10 lane, 10 pin bowling alley with a games section attached, located on the 4th floor of the Parkson Saigon Plaza building.

Level 4, 35 Le Thanh Ton, D1

### Powerbowl Hung Vuong

12 lane 10 pin AMF bowling alley with a games section located on the 3rd floor of the Parkson Hung Vuong Plaza building - a Bud's ice-cream station awaits indoors.

126 Hong Bang, D5

### Saigon Superbowl

Formerly the coolest venue in HCMC and opened to great aplomb in the early noughties, this tired old complex in the wrong part of town still retains its international-standard huge bowling alley.

43A Truong Son, Tan Binh  
3848 8888

## charities

### Education For Development Vietnam

An international organization that works with Vietnamese partners to improve and expand their educational services for disadvantaged children and youth.

305/30 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh  
3991 6033

## International Organization For Migration

The organization is concerned with the welfare and quality of life of the Vietnamese people, particularly migrant and mobile populations.

1B Pham Ngoc Thach, D1  
3822 2057

## Loreto Vietnam Australia

Dedicated to the reduction of poverty through beneficial, qualitative and responsive educational opportunities for underprivileged and disabled students.

17c Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3910 6364

## Mekong Quilts

Founded in 2001, Mekong Quilts employs women in communities northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, to create high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, accessories and gift wares. All profits from the sale of the quilts are reinvested into the community through the NGO Mekong Plus.

1st Floor, 35-37 Ngo Duc Ke, D1  
2210 3110

mekong.quilts.creations.hcmddl@gmail.com

517- Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
6271 7758

## Saigon Children's Charity

Saigon Children's Charity was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged Vietnamese children to get an education and a fairer start in life.

Their programs aim to help the most disadvantaged children of Vietnam to escape from poverty through education and training.

59 Tran Quoc Thao, D3  
3930 0503

## The Little Rose Shelter

The Little Rose Shelter is a refuge for young girls who have been sexually abused or trafficked for the purpose of labor or sexual exploitation. It offers psychological rehabilitation, opportunities to go to school, free healthcare and a supportive, loving environment to grow.

Hem 30, 55/2 Bis Lam Van Ben, D7  
3872 0308

## Unicef Vietnam

UNICEF Vietnam provides support in policy development, legal reform, and improving social services. Following reunification in 1975, the charity launched a nationwide programme to meet the basic needs of Vietnam's girls and boys.

Unit 1406, Suh Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1

## Waifs Of War Foundation

The Waifs of War Foundation was established in March 2004 by a group of individuals concerned with improving the lives of the children born to Vietnamese mothers and American War servicemen fathers.

24 Le Loi, D1  
3913 0439

## cinemas & theatres

### The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

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

212 Nguyen Trai, D1

### Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi, D1  
3823 1652

## CT Plaza Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex on the 7th floor with 3D theatres and VIP room.

Level 10, 60A Truong Son, Tan Binh  
6297 1981

## Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films.

116 Nguyen Du, D1  
3822 8533

230 Nguyen Trai, D1  
3920 6688

246 Nguyen Hong Dao, Tan Binh  
3849 4567

## Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement.

55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3840 4027

098 937 9873 (Mr. Lam)

## Ho Chi Minh Conservatory Of Music

One of three conservatories in Vietnam, offering world class musical education and performances.

Concerts at the local Ho Chi Minh City Music School.

112 Nguyen Du, D1  
3822 5841

## Hung Vuong Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex in the CT Plaza building with 3D theatres and VIP room.

126 Hong Bang, D5  
3222 0388

## IDECAF Drama Theatre

IDECAF is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1  
38295451

## Lo Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre.

25 Phan Phu Tien, D5  
2242 4622

## Lotte Cinema Diamond

Fine cinema complex in one of the most iconic department store buildings in town. Ride up the elevator to the top floor to catch a flick.

13th Floor, 34 Le Duan, D1

## Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece, the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety.

7 Lam Son Square, D1  
3825 1563

## The Soul of Vietnam

The Soul of Vietnam showcases traditional Vietnamese music shows with voice and traditional instruments.

Be sure to check out the three-part Legend of the Trung Sisters' with accompaniment of stone musical instruments, gongs and two lifelike elephants.

7 Lam Son Square, D1  
2229 9414

## gyms

### Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at

clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

0902271830

personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

## California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the-art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5

3222 0299

28-30-32 Le Lai, D1

6291 5999

5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

3826 0999

## Get Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4  
6261 6169

## K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7  
091 833 7111

## Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1  
3825 8560

## Rex Health Club

This spa was designed for both men & women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3825 1814

## Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
3514 9009

## Star Fitness Bítexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
3514 0255

## museums

### Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City

With a collection housing more than 21,000 pieces in various displays, the Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City highlights traditional and modern works of HCMC artists as well as other artists from the south of Vietnam.

97A Pho Duc Chinh, D1

### Geological Museum

A fittingly dull-looking building at the corner of Nguyen Binh Khiem and Nguyen Huu Canh, the museum has over 20,000 samples of interesting rocks.

2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1

### Ho Chi Minh Campaign Museum

Small military museum dedicated to



the Ho Chi Minh Campaign that led to communist victory over southern Vietnam.

**2 Le Duan, D1**

### Ho Chi Minh City Museum

An old French Colonial palace, the museum has a wide and varied collection and some interesting modern history of its own.

**65 Ly Tu Trong, D1**

### Ho Chi Minh Museum

Three stories dedicated to Ho Chi Minh, the museum features an assortment of artifacts from his personal life, including a radio, sandals and clothes. After exploring the more than 3,000 Ho Chi Minh portraits, take a walk in the lovely gardens around the old building nicknamed the Dragon House' for its ornate roof and hybrid Franco-Chinese architecture.

**1 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4**

### Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women

The Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women has become a place of interest for both locals and tourists alike. The museum was set up in order to educate future generations of women about patriotism and the national traditions of Vietnamese women.

**202 Vo Thi Sau, D3**

### Reunification Palace

Formerly known as the Independence Palace, the Reunification Palace marked the end of the Vietnam War, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its main gates. Roped-off showrooms, exactly as they were in 1975, include the presidential office, bedroom, and reception.

**135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1**

### Vietnam History Museum

This long-running historical museum offers a chronological display of many items and artefacts, and has been showered with multiple awards by the local administration.

**2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1  
3829 8146**

### Vietnamese Traditional Medicine Museum

The Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine contains nearly 3,000 items informing guests about the subject dating all the way back to the Stone Age.

**41 Hoang Du Khuong, D10  
3862 7812**

### War Remnants Museum

Attracting more than 500,000 visitors a year, the War Remnants Museum shows the grim reality of war, focusing mainly on the American phase of the Vietnam War. The multi-building museum includes a courtyard with military equipment including a "Huey" helicopter, an M48 Patton tank and an F-5A fighter.

**28 Vo Van Tan, D3  
3930 6325**

## parks

### Cong Vien Van Hoa Park

This former French recreational space has been converted into one of the city's favorite sports parks.

**115 Nguyen Du, D1**

### Dam Sen Park

This beautiful park was constructed on reclaimed marshland and is widely considered to be Vietnam's most exciting cultural theme park.

**3 Hoa Binh, D11**

### Ky Hoa Park

Large tourist area in the inner suburbs with many lakeside entertainment activities.

**12 Ba Thang Hai, D10**

### Lo Thi Rieng Park

A large park in D10, Le Thi Rieng park is a well-known spot for casual exercise, a friendly game of badminton and early morning birdwatching.

**875 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10**

### Phu Lam Park

Gentle park on a small lake amidst busy back streets of outer Cholon, popular with locals for fishing and exercise.

**121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6**

### September 23 Park

One of the largest parks in the city center. It's a great place to exercise, see free music performances, attend public events, and enjoy food from street vendors.

**Pham Ngu Lao, Pham Ngu Lao, D1**

### Suoi Tien Theme Park 🎡 *Or's Pick*

Enormous amusement park on the outskirts of the city with multiple themed attractions demonstrating Vietnamese culture.

**Xa Lo Ha Noi, D9**

### Van Thanh Park

This expansive park located on the banks of the Thi Nghe River offers myriad culinary options in addition to stunning views and natural atmosphere.

**48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh**

### Zoo and Botanical Gardens

One of the world's oldest zoos, with a modest collection of animals and a botanical garden, with many rare orchids, ornamental plants, and over a hundred species of mammals, reptiles and birds.

**2B Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1**

## places of worship

### Ba Chuong Church of St Dominic

Ba Chuong Church was redesigned in 2003, and now this visually stunning house of worship features a blend of traditional oriental and western architecture.

**190 Le Van Sy, Phu Nhuan  
3844 8206**

### Bac Ha Church

Built in 2008. The name Bac Ha is the combination between the two names of their original dioceses, Bac Ninh and Ha Noi. The church has two bell towers at 42m high, and there's a room dedicated to looking after kids to let their parents join the mass.

**419 Ly Thai To, D10  
3839 1032**

### Central Mosque

Built by South Indian Muslims in 1935 on the site of an earlier mosque, this was originally constructed for worshippers from southern India then-resident in Saigon. Now Muslims from all over the world come here to worship.

**66 Dong Du, D1  
3824 2903**

### Cha Tam Church

Cha Tam Church is an old catholic church built in 1900. The church was named for priest Cha Tam in honor of his great sermons and contributions to the community.

**25 Hoc Lac, D5  
3829 8914**

### Cho Quan Church

An old church built on the foundations of earlier churches that have stood here for centuries, Cho Quan Church was constructed in 1887 in the Gothic tradition, with large stone pillars and a red tiled roof. The massive bell tower consists of three floors and provides stunning views.

**120 Tran Binh Trong, D5**

### Cholon Mosque

Built by Muslims from South India

in 1932, the Cholon Mosque Serves Cholon's Muslim community, including Malaysian, Indonesian as well as South Asian worshippers.

**641 Nguyen Trai, D5  
3855 5350**

### Dieu Phap

Almost half a century after Dieu Phap pagoda was founded, it has continued to provide a home and food for the poor, helpless, and homeless elderly people.

**188 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh  
3553 3267**

### Giac Lam Pagoda

Probably Ho Chi Minh City's oldest pagoda, Giac Lam features a rare bodhi tree and seven-storied stupa containing Buddhist relics. The 32 metre-high stupa, facing East, is one of the most distinguished towers of the city.

**11, Lac Long Quan, Tan Binh**

### Hoà Khanh Temple

A tall, colorful, and oddly out-of-place temple, sticking up prominently from the homes and businesses that surround it.

**215 Phan Van Tri, Binh Thanh  
3843 1699**

**www.chuahokhanh.com**

### Hung Phuoc Pagoda

Quiet and unassuming active Buddhist pagoda situated behind the Saigon Railway Station.

**540/23 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3  
3993 4113  
095 806 3311**

### Huyen Sy Church

One of Saigon's oldest churches convenient to the backpacker district, and built by the grandfather-in-law of the last king of Vietnam.

**1 Ton That Tung, D1  
3882 3858**

### Jade Emperor Pagoda

An ancient temple built by the city's Cantonese Chinese community, the interiors are filled with paintings portraying Taoist and Buddhist mythical stories and sculpture depicting the ten levels of hell and the apocalypse from Chinese mythology.

**73 Mai Thi Luu, D1**

### Jamiul Islamiyah Mosque

Highly stylistic Mosque near the central police station, servicing a sizeable local Muslim community, it is also known as the Nancy Mosque.

**459B Tran Hung Dao, D1  
3920 3325**

### Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber

In stark contrast with the pagodas and temples that dot the city landscape, Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber is a place dedicated to seeking inner peace and the study of Buddhism. A colorful D6 pagoda with resident monks, daily devotional instruction, and a free traditional medical healer on Thursdays and Sundays from 8-11am.

**121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6  
3875 1155**

**093 868 0935**

### Mariamman Temple

This small Hindu temple is frequented by both Saigon's tiny Hindu population along with residential Vietnamese.

The temple was built in the late 19th century by traders from Tamil Nadu and is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Mariamman.

**45 Truong Dinh, D1**

### Nga Sau Church / Saint Jeanne d'Arc Church

Dedicated to St. Joan of Arc, this salmon-pink church is built on the site

of a former Chinese cemetery.

**116B Hung Vuong, D5**

### Quan Am Pagoda

An impressive pagoda dedicated to the popular Goddess of Mercy, with a beautiful interior and large fish and turtle pond.

**12 Lao Tu, D5**

### Quoc Tu Pagoda

Prominent seven storied pagoda with colorful statuary in D10, the main complex of the pagoda spans seven stories with the first two open to the public.

**Ba Thang Hai, D10**

### Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica

Ho Chi Minh City's foremost tourist attraction, this beautiful cathedral dates from the 1860s and is built with bricks from Marseille. In front of the cathedral stands a Virgin Mary statue, which is said to have been shed tears in 2005, causing thousands of people to stop around the Basilica.

**1 Cong Xa Paris, D1**

### St Joseph Seminary

This stunning complex of old colonial-period buildings a few blocks to the east of Notre Dame Cathedral is looking its age after significant tropical weathering, but it's slowly being restored and has been training new seminarians since 1986.

**6bis Ton Duc Thang, D1**

### Subramaniam Swami Temple

One among the city's only two South Indian Hindu temples, it was the first Hindu temple ever built in Ho Chi Minh City and the largest. Located a mere five minutes' walk from Ben Thanh Market.

**98 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1**

### Tan Dinh Church

Built by French colonists in the late 19th century, Tan Dinh Church is renowned for its distinctive pink facade and decorative designs. A popular photography subject for visitors to Ho Chi Minh City regardless of their religion.

**289 Hai Ba Trung, D3  
3829 0093**

### THE WELL International Church

The Well is a registered English speaking, evangelical Protestant church for Ho Chi Minh City's expatriate community meeting each Sunday at 11am.

**Khanh Hoi Church, 98 Le Quoc Hung, D4  
0976 285 610  
www.thewellvn.org**

### Thien Hau Pagoda

One of Cholon's most popular pagodas, this temple was originally built as an expression of gratitude by 19th century Chinese immigrants for Thien Hau's protection during their initial trip to Saigon by sea. Its many hanging incense coils make for superb photographs.

**710 Nguyen Trai, D5**

### Tran Hung Dao Temple

One among a series of temples and pagodas dedicated to the Vietnamese folk hero Tran Hung Dao, who freed ancient Vietnamese people from the Mongolians in the 13th century.

**36 Vo Thi Sau, D1**

### Vinh Nghiem Pagoda

Sitting next to the canal at the end of Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, this structure draws its inspiration from traditional Vietnamese culture and a touch of the Japanese architectural style. The largest and most impressive Mahayana Buddhist pagoda in the city.

**339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3  
3843 9901**

### Xa Loi Pagoda

The largest pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City and known for a brutal 1963 raid,

Xa Loi was built in 1956 following the drawings of the architects Nguyen Van Duong and Do Ba Vinh for worshipping Buddhist relics.

**89 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3**  
**3930 0679**

## social clubs

### Brogolf Bar Wars

Group of barflies who meet regularly for golf, open to new members. First Saturday of each month, breakfast, brunch, and 18 holes with a caddy.

**46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
**090 927 3997**

### Dat Nam Friendly Club

While it may ring of a bingo association, this is a fairly well-respected venue for entertainment and cultural exchange amongst foreigners and entrepreneurs - a very casual networking opportunity.

**Basement Level, 116 Nguyen Du, D1**  
**5404 3618**

### International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from 10am- noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (127 Pasteur, D3). Cost for coffee and snacks is VND130,000. Membership is VND700,000 per year. Open to all ladies

### Latin Street Dance

Geisha's was funky enough without the addition of this new meet-up for Latin fans yearning for something a little grittier than salsa.

**Geisha Tea House, 85 Pasteur, D1**

### Overland Club

Overland Club is a 100 percent foreign-owned Japanese company that organizes cultural classes including

pottery (from basic to intermediate level, as well as painting unglazed pottery) and cooking classes (Japanese and Vietnamese). The Overland Club also hosts various events. Past events include noodle making, soap carving, and kids' cooking.

**36bis Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1**  
**3820 9734**

### Saigon Swing Cats

Saigon Swing Cats organizes dance classes, workshops and events at various venues around HCMC including restaurants, lounges and dance studios. Dance styles include the Lindy, Shim Sham and Franky Doo.

**Petrohouse Tower- caffe molinari,**  
**5 Le Duan, D1**

## sports

### Green Bamboo Club

Pleasant tennis club with several courts just a short hop over the bridge from District 1 into Binh Thanh.

**50/3 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh**  
**3898 6504**

### Lan Anh International Tennis Court

Popular international sports club facility with advanced sporting equipment, courts, gym, and restaurant. This sports club also hosts tennis tournaments and other events.

**291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10**  
**3862 7144**

### Kimdo Recreation Centre

Situated in downtown Saigon, Kim Do Recreational Centre provides a wide variety of services: restaurant, karaoke, live music cafe, bar, dancing, massage, steam bath and hairdressing.

**129A Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3822 5914**

## swimming pools

### Great World Pool

Popular public pool known for its high standard of cleanliness, this indoor pool is shallow at both ends and deep in the middle to ensure safety for non-swimmers.

**600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6**  
**3853 7867**

### Ky Dong Swimming Pool

Great D3 outdoor family pool, ideal for the kids.

**40 Ky Dong, D3**  
**2241 5322**

### Lam Son Swimming Club

Olympic-sized swimming pool with designated lanes (one exclusively for women) and a reputation for cleanliness.

**242 Tran Binh Trong, D5**  
**3835 8028**

### Lan Anh Swimming Club Pool

The popular Lan Anh club is a well-situated sports area with a clean, quiet pool and jacuzzi. A bar serves drinks and towels by the water. There are various areas with different depths from 1.4m to 2m, suitable for adults. Swimming lessons are available at the club.

**291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3**  
**3932 5508**

### Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favored by younger people and recreational swimmers.

**48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh**  
**2219 5487**

### Yet Kieu Swimming Pool

A long-standing swimming club that's become the standard for competition, clean water, and inexpensive prices, Yet Kieu is a well-managed complex of pools for the family - and it also has its

own gym.

**1 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1**  
**0839101542**

## classes

### Cetana PSB Intellis International College

PSB College is the first and only Singapore licensed college in Vietnam. Provides students easier accessibility in gaining knowledge and skills beyond the usual classroom study. PSB College offers a suite of internationally-recognized diploma programs from business, marketing, hospitality to finance.

**144-146-148 Le Lai, D1**  
**3926 2233**  
**www.psbcollege.edu.vn**

### Saigon Cooking Class

Classes can include a market tour to buy the day's ingredients followed by a hands-on cooking class, organized twice a day from Tuesday till Sunday (US\$39.50 to 45.50). Team building programs also available.

**74 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3825 8485**

### Vietnam Cookery Centre 🍴 Oi's Pick

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.

**26 Ly Tu Trong, 4th floor, Ste 45, D1**  
**3827 0349/ 3823 8085**

### VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

**4th floor, CMARD2 Building, 45 Dinh Tien Hoang, D1**  
**3910 0168**



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- 🐾 Support food for wildlife.
- 🐾 Volunteer.
- 🐾 Shop and save.



Wildlife At Risk (WAR) is a non-profit organisation based in Ho Chi Minh City  
Tel: +84 3899 7314 Fax: +84 3899 7316 Email: info@wildlifeatrisk.org  
**www.wildlifeatrisk.org**



# Fashion

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



**KI, 24**

Designer heroes: Vivienne Westwood and Phuong My



**NGUYEN, 24**

Designer heroes: Alexander McQueen and Nguyen Cong Tri



**TOBY, 20**

Designer heroes: Joli Poli and Mai Lam



**TRANG, 21**

Designer heroes: Vera Wang and Phuong My



**THAN, 20**

Designer heroes: Marc Jacobs and Nguyen Cong Tri

Oi is kicking off Fall Winter 2013 with a unique menswear collection designed by a talented group of fashion students who are currently in their graduation year at the International Design and Art Center (ADS, 143 Ly Chinh Thang, D3; [www.adsvietnam.edu.vn](http://www.adsvietnam.edu.vn)). The collection, entitled Rock in Wonderland, is unisex, which is a popular trend this season. Although the cut is traditionally for guys, it is an easy collection for girls out there to steal and style however they like.

Each look is comprised of enough pieces to give you flexibility, a key element to the collection, along with the ability to move comfortably, thanks to the fabric choice, from work to evening wear. So if you're a young professional with fashion forward leanings, looking for something different and edgy, Rock in Wonderland is just up your hem.

**ADS**  
International Design  
& Art Center

# DO IT LIKE A DUDE

STYLIST: JAMES ALLEN

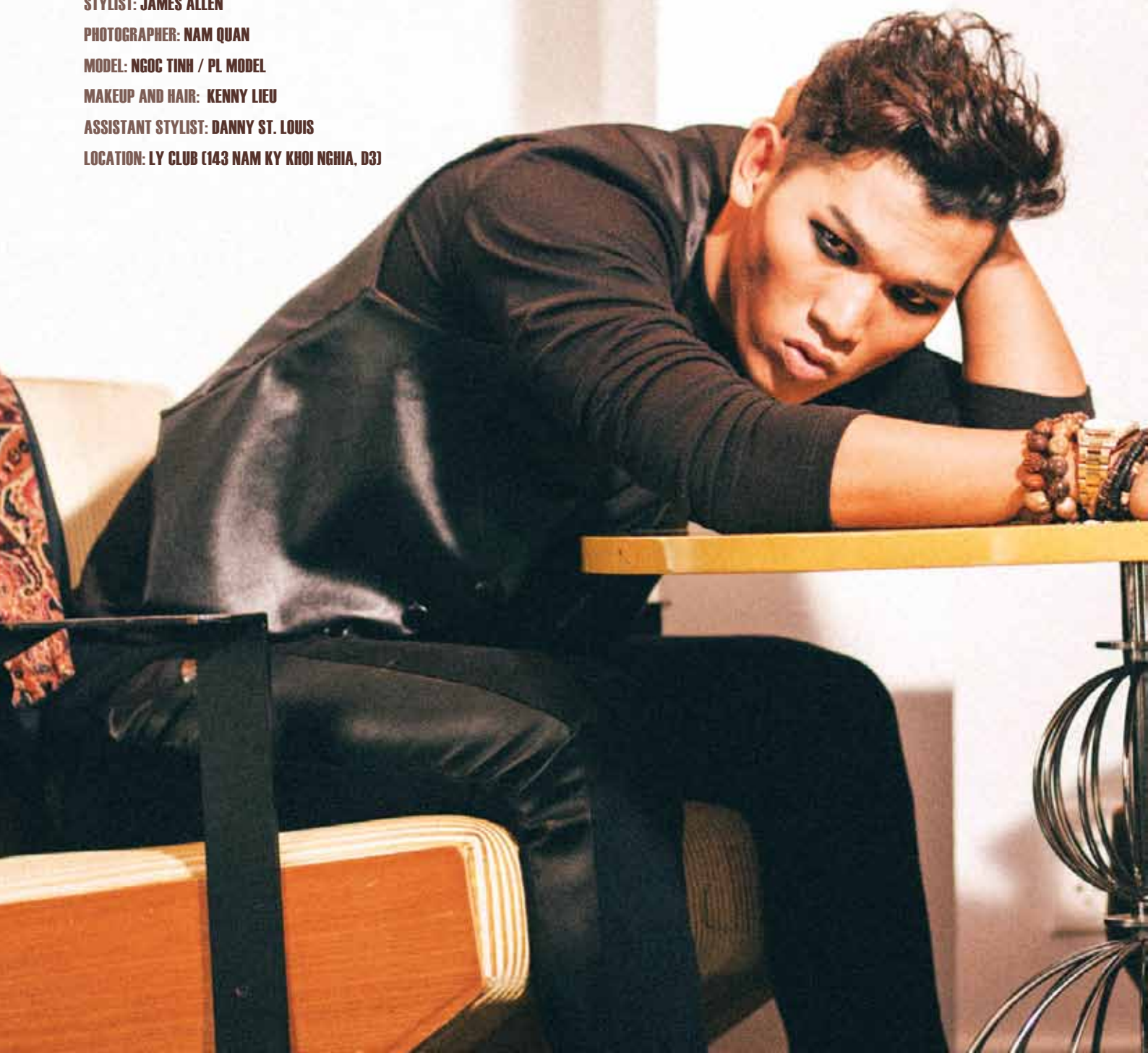
PHOTOGRAPHER: NAM QUAN

MODEL: NGOC TINH / PL MODEL

MAKEUP AND HAIR: KENNY LIEU

ASSISTANT STYLIST: DANNY ST. LOUIS

LOCATION: LY CLUB (143 NAM KY KHOI NGHIA, D3)







## TOBY

**Inspiration:**  
*Dani California*  
by Red Hot Chili Peppers

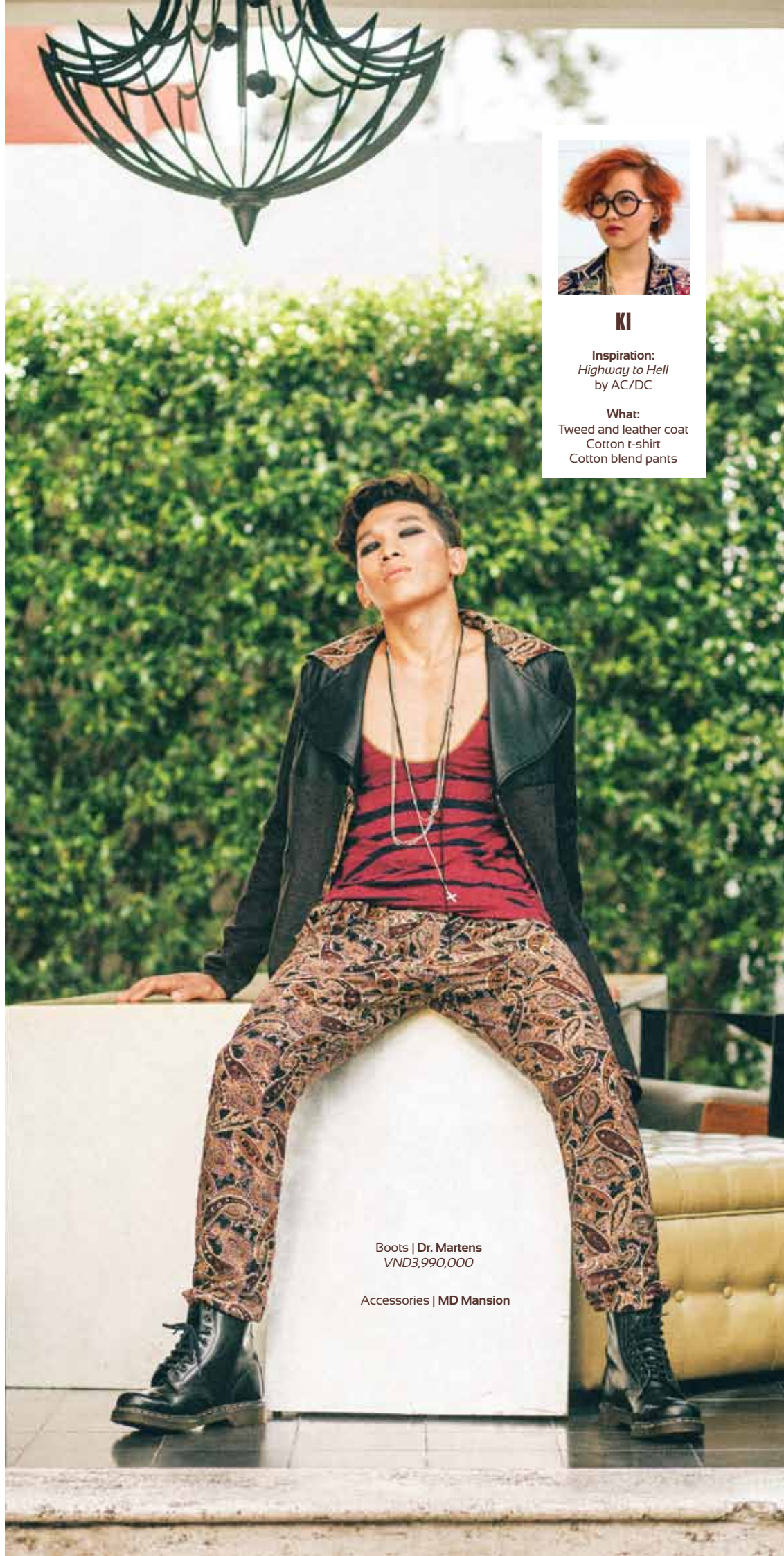
**What:**  
Tweed jacket  
Leather waistcoat  
Cotton/spandex trousers  
Cotton t-shirt



## KI

**Inspiration:**  
*Highway to Hell*  
by AC/DC

**What:**  
Tweed and leather coat  
Cotton t-shirt  
Cotton blend pants



Boots | Dr. Martens  
VND3,990,000

Accessories | MD Mansion





## TRANG

**Inspiration:**  
*Private Investigation*  
by Dire Straits

**What:**  
Tweed leather Jacket  
Stretch cotton t-shirt  
Cotton blend pants



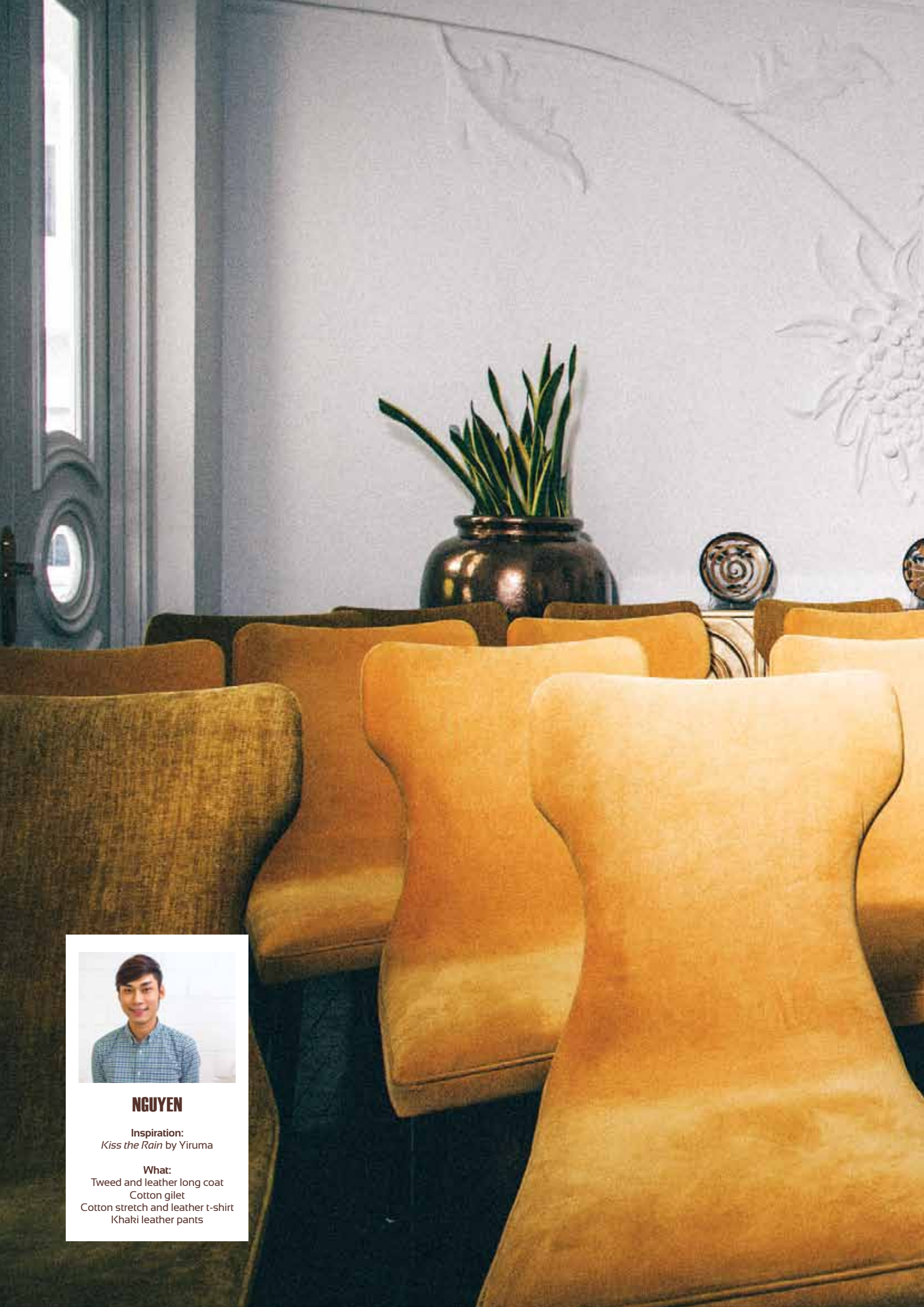




## THAN

Inspiration:  
*Michiko*  
by G Dragon

What:  
Tweed outer shirt  
Cotton inner shirt  
Leather shorts  
Cotton blend leggings



## NGUYEN

### Inspiration:

*Kiss the Rain* by Yiruma

### What:

Tweed and leather long coat  
Cotton gilet  
Cotton stretch and leather t-shirt  
Khaki leather pants





Boots | Dr. Martens  
VND4,990,000

ADDRESSES:

MD Mansion  
Upstairs at 56/4B Huynh Khuong Ninh, DI

Dr. Martens | Hoang Phuc  
Vincom B, 72 Le Thanh Ton, DI

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Fax: (+848) 3883 1672



# >>The List Fashion



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

## eyewear

### Dilusso

Selling many famous eyewear brands under Italian manufacturers such as Dolce & Gabbana, RayBan, Versace and Bvlgari. Provides high-quality products at an affordable price.

29A Dong Khoi, DI  
3824 6469  
090 921 0192

### Eyewear Hut

Eyewear Hut offers prescription glasses, contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses and other devices. They also stock popular brands such as Luxottica, DeRigo, Charmant, Marcolin, Dolce & Gabbana, D & G, Tom Ford, Salvatore Ferragamo and more. Also caters to kids.

135 Nguyen Hue, DI  
3821 1695

### Eyewear Plaza

The largest shopping center for eyewear in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 1,000 products including sunglasses and prescription glasses.

33 Nguyen Du, DI  
3829 5051

### Oakley

Decades of Oakley innovation have led to a full array of market-leading products including performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics. The company continues to build on its heritage of authenticity by reinventing products from scratch to achieve superior quality and genuine innovation that delivers the unexpected.

28 Ton That Thiep, DI  
3821 5712

### Sunwear Boutique

With many locations around the city, this luxury eyewear store supplies many designer brands, including Burberry, Vogue, Blue Bay, and many others.

89-91 Nguyen Du, DI  
3824 4397

## ladieswear

### Anupa Eco Boutique

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, DI  
www.anupa.net / facebook: anupaluxury

### Axara Paris - Saigon Center

Axara may have seduced the whole world, but its 2010 launch in Vietnam at the Vincom Centre is still making headway with modern young Vietnamese women entranced by its romantic, glamorous designs.

65 Le Loi, DI  
3914 7655

### Banana Shop

Banana Shop provides everything a girl needs to be noticed in Ho Chi Minh City. Whether it be undergarments, shoes, bags, or jewelry, Banana Shop delivers with unique products from

Hong Kong and the United States.  
128 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
3829 0061

### Bebe

The shop sells its brand of women's clothing and apparel, dresses, jumpsuits, shoes and bags.

1st floor, Saigon center, 65 Le Loi, DI  
3914 4011

### Cao Vinh Fashion

Specializes in formal Western-style shirts, Cao Vinh is distinctive if for nothing else than its simple, intriguing website allowing customers to specify design elements.

69 Pasteur, DI  
3824 5645  
090 817 9129

### Cashew

Fashion shop chain with 4 boutiques in HCMC. Specializes in women clothes and accessories. Designed by their own designers. Familiar brand in HCMC catwalk and Vietnam fashion industry.

38 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
6683 9669

### Diva Silk Boutique

Diva is all about silk, oriental glamour, luxury, and a feminine charm to match. The products in this little shop comprise both locally-woven first-grade silk garments and those imported from Thailand.

146 Dong Khoi, DI  
3822 7153

### Esprit

Hong Kong-based lifestyle apparel brand offering affordable casual streetwear from a two-story shop in the heart of downtown HCMC.

58 Dong Khoi, DI  
3827 6085

### Eva Gopa

Office fashion, street-style fashion, and evening dresses for women.

11E Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI  
3910 3877

### Fit

Caters to women in their 20s.  
44 Luu Van Lang, DI

### Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, DI  
3925 1495

### Kelly Bui

Launched in April 2010, the shop sells the most recent collections by the brand. The collections shown on the website are the same as those in-store.

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3936 9386

### Khai Silk

Khai Silk is a favorite among local celebrities for its high quality tailoring, fabrics and service.

81 Dong Khoi, DI  
3822 2856

### Kiwi Fashion

Kiwi offers contemporary designs at an affordable price. It was founded by former Vietnamese model Kim Hong Phung and houses the latest

fashion trends exclusively designed by Josephine Geralda, one of the leading designers in London.

74C-74/I Hai Ba Trung, DI  
3824 8214  
3822 1191

### La Bella

A Vietnamese fashion shop that carries dresses, skirts, tops and a large selection of bags and purses.

58-87 Pasteur, DI  
3823 0172

### Lyn Around

This is the Saigon branch of the international high-class fashion label Lyn Around. It is famous for its girly girl and street style.

1st Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI  
3821 6575

### L'Usine

The central retail space offers famous fashion brands from around the world with full rotating stock.

First Floor, 151 Dong Khoi, DI  
6674 3565

### Maison de Bunga

Maison de Bunga is a specialty women's clothing store specializing in designers with floral motifs, hats, bags, and other accessories.

81 Pasteur, DI  
3943 0990

### Mango

Mango is a Spanish fashion design company with over 2,000 stores around the world. Ho Chi Minh City is home to several of its branches. Mango sells fashion clothing for women including dresses, skirts, tops and accessories.

Unit 2F-II, 2nd floor, Icon 68, 2 Hai Trieu, DI  
6266 2111  
1st Floor, 65 Le Loi, DI  
3914 7464

### Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke ao dais.

67 Mac Thi Buoi, DI  
3829 4007  
098 330 0469

### Ngan Private Collection

A collection of multi-brand fashion labels created by one of Vietnam's highly recognized fashion designers. Dedicated personal styling consultant available for those in need of their own stylist.

23 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
6290 9391

### Phuong My

A ready-to-wear fashion designer currently working from Ho Chi Minh City, producing feminine pieces using high quality fabric such as silk organza and lace using expert tailoring and construction which has earned her frequent coverage in the country's top fashion magazines.

81 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
09 7271 7788

### Shin

Vintage style ladies fashion, clothes and accessories by local designers.

122 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
090 935 2369

### Sifa Fashion

Known for selling office wear for

women.

192 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
3825 0618

### Song - Valerie Gregori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophisticated women.

75 Pasteur, DI  
3824 6986

### Sophilita

A simple Italian fashion brand with several branches in Vietnam, Sophilita mainly sells office, street, and casual, womenswear.

15C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI  
6275 9019

### Suite Blanco

Suite Blanco is a Spanish company specialized in the design, production, distribution and sale of all types of accessories and clothing for the modern woman and man looking for the latest trends at affordable prices. The chain now has 240 shops spread in 15 different countries including Vietnam.

Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, DI

### Thuy Design House

A popular Vietnamese ready-to-wear designer creating seasonal collections using high quality materials with a minimalist design aesthetic. Thuy's friendly boutique carries a range of shapes and silhouettes that are often worn by the city's fashion conscious.

151/6 Dong Khoi, DI  
www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse

### Umbrella

This fashion label caters to a higher end market with tailored bags to accessories.

35 Ly Tu Trong, DI  
6276 2730  
www.umbrella-fashion.com

### Valenciani 🍷 Oi's Pick

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

1F/12 Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI  
3821 2788  
090 785 5788

## menswear

### Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, DI  
6675 4013

### An Phuoc

An Phuoc Garment Manufacturing was established in 1992 with 50 workers and 40 sewing machines, specializing in manufacturing for exporting enterprises. Now it has transformed itself into a garment export company featuring handmade clothing and shoes.

182 Hai Ba Trung, DI

### Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an

exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

**446 Vo Van Tan, D3**

### Maschio Shop

Colorful retro men's fashions, one of the quirkiest fine-quality local fashion stores in the central area.

**168 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3829 2975**

### Mizada

Since its inception in 2004, Mizada has become one of the leading luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. Mizada caters to both women and women with products such as T-shirts, jeans, coats, scarves, and much more.

**105 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
6673 4199**

### San Sciario Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

**1st Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135  
Nguyen Hue, D1  
3864 0800  
090 316 6364**

### Santo Nero

Centrally-located purveyors of international Santo Nero brand "Italian gents wear".

**23 Ly Tu Trong, D1**

### Veston Huy Hoang

Men's tailored fashions, specialising in suits. Expect to Pay: \$200 and upward for a suit, fabric included. Obviously, the better the quality of fabric, the higher the price. 70% of customers are foreigners.

**65 Pasteur, D1  
3822 4609  
090 865 4988**



### U.S. POLO ASSN.

U.S. POLO ASSN. is an American fashion brand that carries trendy and cool polo style clothing for men. Their high quality items are ideal for casual wear as well as for a game of golfing or any other sports.

**138 Nguyen Trai, D1  
6291 3282  
uspolo.hcm@gmail.com  
www.uspoloassn.com  
090 399 9551**



## shoes & accessories

### Accessorize

Accessorize is devoted to bringing customers eclectic products with its own in-house design team. Accessorize is focused on sourcing globally in an effort to find well priced and good quality collections of fashion accessories following seasonal themes.

**Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1**

### Adidas Performance Store

Sells running shoes and sportswear by the famous German brand.

**2nd Floor Bitexco Tower, 135 Nguyen  
Hue, D1**

**3821 2894**

**66 Le Loi, D1  
3824 1455**

### Asian Fish

Serves made-to-order classic souvenirs, original ao dai designs, and is highly popular with Japanese customers. Also sells bags, sunglasses and clothing.

**39/9 Mac Thi Buoi, D1  
3822 1839**

### Avocado

Airy and spacious shop for handbags and accessories.

**117 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1  
0123 999 9099**

### Bam Skate Shop - VVT

Bam Skate Shop stocks a wide range of international brands for those in search of skating equipment and apparel.

**228 Vo Van Tan, D3  
090 878 9820**

### Cara Diamond & Jewelry Vincom

One of the better-appointed jewelry counters at Vincom B, Cara sells boldly-designed pieces at reasonable rates.

**Shop B28, First Floor, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1**

### Charles & Keith

Singapore-based fashion retailer specialising in shoes, handbags and accessories at a mid range price point.

**17-18 Nguyen Trai, D1**

### Compa Jewelry store

Compa Jewelry Store specializes in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds from the finest quality of raw materials that meet international standards. Compa Jewelry is also a manufacturer and importer of gemstones and fashion jewelry.

**135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3915 2151**

### Doc Martens

Small central-city outlet of the popular international Doc Marten brand with an extensive stock of the latest styles.

**39 Le Loi, D1  
3821 4931**

### Hong Anh Collections - LTT

Using fabrics such as silk and taffeta, the brand caters to a younger crowd. Stocks clothing, handbags, jewelry and neckties.

**75 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3824 3542**

### Ice Accessories

ICE and ICE Accessories are the newest brands from Duy Anh Trading Co., Ltd. under the creative direction of Adrian Anh Tuan. This high end fashion hub is now open at the Saigon Centre.

Each ICE collection offers 100 types of fashionable designs and colors.

**Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**

**3521 0881**

### Ipa-Nima

With a focus on handbags and a design-first philosophy, Hong Kong expat Christina Yu's Ipa-Nima brand translates fashion trends into edgy accessories, steeped in soul.

**77-79 Dong Khoi, D1  
3515 3980**

### ITALY Shoes Shop

Modest Italian-style mens shoes at local prices in the central area.

**186 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3827 9813**

### Kim Ngoc Jewelry

A counter in Tax building that buys and sells jewelry made from gold and gemstones.

**A37-A39 Counter, Saigon Tax Trade  
Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3914 4874**

### Kimseng

An open storefront that sells gold and gold-related jewelry

**50 Le Loi, D1  
3823 4414  
090 821 3245**

### Kita Diamonds

Quality diamonds specialist with a professional showroom.

**82 Ngo Duc Ke, D1  
3821 1510**

### Lam Boutique

The shop sells clothing for women only and most of the items on offer are European casual vintage style with a touch of street chic. The clothes are made by the shop and has become quite popular among Vietnamese celebrities.

**1st Floor, 71 Mac Thi Buoi, D1  
090 671 2309**

### Lo Hang Crystal Jewellery

With almost 20 years of experience in the design field, Lo Hang's experienced group of staff create jewelry from fragments of Swarovski crystals.

**101 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3827 3596**

### Lua Exclusive Boutique

Prestige shop that sells exclusive Vietnamese silks.

**83 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3822 5292**

### Nine West

Originating in the U.S. Nine West has a built a name for itself by quickly translating runway trends into styles attainable on the high street, and in the case of Vietnam, the malls of district one. Collections found in store now include a wider range of accessories such as bags, belts and other lines of accessories.

**Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**

### Pandora

Pandora designs, manufactures and markets hand-finished and modern jewelry made from genuine materials such as sterling silver, pearls and gemstones at affordable prices.

**6 Dong Khoi, D1  
3822 3241**

### PNJ Nguyen Hue

PNJ was the first local jewelry company exporting products overseas. Since 1995, PNJ jewelry products have been introduced in Hong Kong Jewelry Fair, as well as exported to Denmark, Germany, US, Australia and is now entering the Dubai market.

**Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center,  
135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3914 4854**

### Puma

One of a network of Puma shops around town, this has a far more limited range than some of the other outlets, but scores on its convenient location.

**1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135  
Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 7464**

### Saigon Jewelry Company Ltd

Formerly known as the Saigon Jewelry Holding Company, SJC specializes in manufacturing and trading gold and jewels. The brand is well-recognized throughout Vietnam as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.

**1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135  
Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 8844**

### Sapa Shop

Certainly one of the grooviest souvenir shops on Le Loi, much of the stock comprises ethnic handicrafts brought down direct from breathtaking Sapa.

**76 Le Loi, D1**

### Shoes Hanoi

Cheap, centrally-located shoe store with babywear boutique at the doorway. Since 1929, they've been making and selling shoes for both men and women.

**107 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3829 5753**

### Steve Madden

Considered the fashion footwear mogul of the 21st century, Madden has been responsible for the design and marketing of the company's trendsetting shoes for the past two decades. His collections are aimed at fashion forward men and women, and also include bags and other accessories.

**Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1**

### Sophia Jewellery

Fine jewelry sold in an annex to the lobby of the Oscar Saigon Hotel.

**68A Nguyen Hue, D1  
3822 8513**

### Tran Quoc Lan

Custom-makes shoes and sells shoes of all kinds.

**97 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3829 5453**

### Tuyet Lan

Tuyet Lan's tailor will help you design your own garment or choose from a colorful selection of exquisite hand-embroidered pieces.

**91 Mac Thi Buoi, D1  
3827 7038  
090 392 6286**

### Viet Thanh

People still hunt Mekong crocodiles for their fine leather, and there's a healthy home-grown crocodile leather industry with this venue being one of the more upper-class of these establishments. Sells wallets, belts, handbags, keychains, and other small leather goods.

**137 Dong Khoi, D1  
3824 2735**

## tailors

### ANH SILK

A little fashion shop near the Sheraton hotel selling both men's and women's clothing and with a fast turnaround tailoring service for silk garments.

**151 Dong Khoi, D1  
2211 9116**

### Cao Minh

Founded by Mr. Ly Minh in 1948, who dedicated his entire life to custom-tailoring works. Cao Minh Garment Private Enterprise was the first in Vietnam to successfully export its suits to Japan.

**77 Mac Thi Buoi, D1  
3824 2547**

### Kim Dung Embroidery Tailor

Tailored outfits and specializing in Asian garments as well as Western suits and dresses for both domestic and foreign customers.

**129 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3823 2077  
012 7773 8146**

### Lam Tailor's

Considered the tailor of choice in the diplomatic community here, it had the honor to tailor a suit for President George W Bush when he was in Vietnam several years ago. They import their fabrics from England and Italy.

**158C Dong Khoi, D1**

**3824 3830**

### Lam Vy

A small tailor shop near Ben Thanh market. Female tailor who specializes in shorts, skirts, business shirts and



dresses.  
217 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3822 5087

### Minh Doan Tailors Shop

Specializes in suits for men and women.  
120 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3823 1687

### Phuong Anh

The shop stocks fine embroideries and brocade, with a 24 hour turnover tailoring service.

B4, 2nd Floor Tax Building,  
135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
38213115  
090 380 9758

### Tailors Nhut

Well-known tailor for men's business and event suits as well as ladies' business wear. Pre-tailored products are available in-store.

232 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3822 5338

### Viet Tien Garment Company

The company was established in 1976, and has been successfully manufacturing garment, textiles and accessories for fashion industry.

178 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3829 4350

## watches

### D & D

Purveyors of fine watches on Saigon's central strip - one place to go to avoid questionable merchandise.

68 Nguyen Hue, D1  
093 847 1846

### Luu Hung Phat

There's no shortage of vendors of watches in this part of town, but not many that can afford a plum spot on the central district's richest shopping strip.

56 Dong Khoi, D1  
3824 4777  
090 380 8909

### Rhythm Showroom

An authorized importer and distributor of the Japanese Rhythm brand into Vietnam. Rhythm has 16 stores in HCMC; this Tax Building showroom is known as Shop Dang Nghi.

Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,  
135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 3891

### Swiss Watch

Straightforward, quality swiss watch products for the discerning Dong Khoi shopper.

41 Dong Khoi, D1  
3827 6126  
091 392 5212

### Tan Tan Watch

Luxury watch retailers selling from a shop within the Kimdo Hotel foyer. Selling luxury branded watches such as Citizen, Movado, Enicar, Raymond Weil, Frederique Constant, Alfex, Mido, and Tissot - Swiss.

Kimdo Hotel, 133 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 8297

### Thanh Phat Watch

Thanh Phat Watch is a famous long-standing wholesaler and retailer with many watch stores throughout the city. They specialize in selling high-end watches from Switzerland and Japan, such as Rado, Longines, Montblanc, and many more.

Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,  
135 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 3231

### Topten

Topten has been an exclusive distributor of the luxurious Swiss watch brand Tissot since 2006. This outlet is a

luxury watch showroom in the foyer of the Sunwah building.

Ground Floor, Sunwah Tower,  
115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9279

## clinics

### American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

8 Trung Dinh, D3  
3930 6667

### Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10  
3834 9941

### Center Medical International

Center Medical International is an outpatient clinic fully-equipped to provide international standard comprehensive and specialized medical services. All physicians are either French or Vietnamese.

1 Han Thuyen, D1  
3827 2365

### Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.

8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1  
3823 8454

### Diag Center International

Situated in Ho Chi Minh City, Diag Center International is a diagnostic testing center, which consists of a team of thirty Vietnamese staff, and operates under French medical biologists and assisted by a group of Vietnamese medical technicians trained in France.

146 An Binh, D5  
3838 1551

### Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,  
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1  
3911 1860

### Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan  
3844 5954

### Lotus Clinic

Lotus Clinic was established in 2007 as the first Japanese medical clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lancaster Bldg , 22 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3827 0000

### International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic

is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3  
3829 8551

### Perfect Skin lab

More than just a spa, this District 1 venue is a genuine skin lab that caters to each customer's unique characteristics and needs. The lab is the latest concept developed by Dermal Essentials, the elite distributor for Dermalogica, a skin care system researched and developed by The International Dermal Institute in Vietnam.

1st floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center,  
65 Le Loi, D1  
3910 0372

### Stamford Skin Center

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.

254 Dien Bien Phu, D3  
3932 1090  
090 845 3338

### Uc Chau Cosmetic Surgery

This central clinic performs straightforward cosmetic treatments, including enhancing the nose bridge, breast enlargement, eyelid folds, and wrinkle removal.

25 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
2212 3396  
2212 3398

### Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.

79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

### Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.

Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
3514 0758

## dental

### 2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.

125 Le Thi Rieng, D1  
3925 6501

### Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.

34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh  
3903 6636

### Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.

R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7  
5412 2276

### Elite Dental

With an atmosphere more reminiscent of a luxury hotel, this is one of the largest high-quality dental clinics in HCMC, established to answer expat demands for superb dental techniques and professional staff.

57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3  
3933 3737

### German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.

1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
3776 3777

### Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.

Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower,  
115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9446

### Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.

199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1  
3925 3399

### Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.

50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3835 6159

### Smile Dental Center

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

173 Ton Dat Tien, D7  
5413 6635

### Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.

2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3  
3822 6222

### Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1  
3825 7485

## hairdressers

### Art Hair

A small-time local Korean community hairdresser's with a highly-regarded service, presenting an ideal opportunity to be styled after the fashion of the most glamorous country in Asia.

R4-1 Hung Phuoc Villas, D7  
5410 3154  
090 663 2580

### Hair Salon Nguyen The Hien

Nguyen The Hien is an upscale Vietnamese hair salon catering to both men and women. Named after its award-winning hairdresser and designer, the salon is decked out in stylish, modern décor.

102 Ham Nghi, D1  
3821 2275

## Hairlab

Hair salon without a hint of Asia, bright & clean with all the proper hair-tech on the first floor of the Saigon Center.

1st floor, unit 9-10, Saigon center,  
65 Le Loi, DI  
3910 4576  
093 799 0880

## His Salon - Gentleman's Barbershop

Popular men's salon with very good service and complimentary beer.

29 Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3829 9455

## Hung Pasteur

This salon offers a complete range of beauty treatments and services using quality imported products, drawing in a host of local celebrities and wannabes.

182 Pasteur, DI  
3823 1118  
090 391 9375  
**Just Men**

A full-service salon for men. A spa and salon specializing in the unique styling and maintenance needs of men only. Masculine all-wood interior and dark brown Mercedes-style chairs. Specialising in hair, facial, massage, and relaxation for men.

40 Ton That Thiep, DI  
3914 1407

## Kim Hair Salon

An affordable hair salon in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. The range of services is focused on different hair treatments, but also includes manicures and pedicures.

2B Chu Manh Trinh, DI  
3825 8643  
090 823 9011

## Masa hair

Beauty salon, make up, facial care and hair services – hair treatments and restoring damaged hair.

111 Ham Nghi, DI  
3821 1282 / 093 777 5862

## My Duyen

Cutting, perms, combs, hair washing, and dyeing - full services out of trendy Thai Van Lung.

20 Thai Van Lung, DI  
091 927 7126

## The Salon

Prominent ladies' salon & sanctuary - the sister venue to the well-known His Salon with its touts out on Ton That Thiep. Services include hairstyling, shampoo, hair removal, manicures, and pedicures.

Ladies' hair & bodycare sanctuary.

64 Ton That Thiep, DI  
3914 3999

## Vamp Hairline

Vamp Hair Line is a high-class Japanese hair salon offering quality hair care services.

9th Floor LANT Building,  
56-58-60, Hai Ba Trung, DI  
7303 3330  
012 2768 8614

## hospitals

## Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5  
090 588 6086

## Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350

nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5  
3855 4137

## Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh  
3803 0677

## DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3  
3930 0828

## FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
5411 3334

## Hoan My Hospital

Private hospital with a wide range of specialist areas, running for 15 years on Phan Xich Long.

Private owned hospital, has been run for 15 years

60-60A Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan  
3990 2468  
3995 9862

## Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.

63 Bui Thi Xuan, DI  
3925 3620

## Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3  
3932 6579

## Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, DI  
5404 2829

## Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap  
3989 4989

## nails

## 118 Nail & Beauty

118 Nail and Beauty is a salon and spa providing full services including oil, hot stone, foot and body massages, along with skin/nail care.

118 Pasteur, DI  
3821 5313  
090 372 8338

## Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, DI  
6291 5477  
012 2805 6789

## OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, DI  
2211 4956

## pharmacies

## Curewel International

Involved in marketing and distribution of pharmaceuticals, as well as personal healthcare products, throughout Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius.

49/3 Bis, Tran Quang Khai, DI  
38484493

## Pharmacy Nguyen Hue

Small western medical pharmacy right in the central city CBD area, selling both domestic and imported medicines.

81 Nguyen Hue, DI  
3829 3058

## spas

## An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, DI  
3825 1250

## Dermal Essentials

Dermalogica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermalogica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.

108 Pasteur, DI  
3910 2038

## Eden Spa

Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.

19-25 Nguyen Hue, DI  
3821 3815  
097 810 6868



## Flamingo Spa

Flamingo Spa is an authentic Thai spa where all ingredients used are imported from Thailand. Guests arrive in a clean and friendly atmosphere for an optimal relaxing experience. Men, women and couples are welcome, and they offer a wide range of massages along with a sauna, jacuzzi facilities & VIP rooms.

13B Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3822 1074  
091 243 9601  
FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com



## Glow

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, guests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options.

Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, DI  
3823 8368

## Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully-featured massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung. Various salt scrubs, and high-end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

15 Thai Van Lung, DI  
3822 1515

## HP Oxygen Spa

A safe haven from the dust and smoke of the city offering an array of body/skin treatment options, including advanced skin care, an eye lightening process, body massages, hair care, and foot care.

Ground Floor, Yoco Building,  
41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI  
3822 1286  
093 800 2322

## Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan  
3842 2218  
090 395 1902

## Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, DI  
3827 2737

## Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, DI  
3822 1515

## L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7  
5413 6638

## La Cochinchine Spa



Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, DI  
3825 1812

info@lacoichinchine.net  
www.lacoichinchine-hcm.net  
12pm-10:30pm

## La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3  
3932 5181  
100 Mac Thi Buoi, DI  
3822 2158

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7  
5413 6638

## MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding



frequent beauty events – and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

**32 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**090 387 6666**

### Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

**4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1**  
**6659 3609**

### Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

**1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3821 6469**

**090 337 0507**

**1st & 2nd Floor, 92 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**

**3821 6469**  
**090 337 0507**

### Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

**1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**6650 4806**

### Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

**54 Dong Du, D1**  
**6299 0964**

### Thann

Thann provide a range of natural hair and skincare products formulated from botanicals derived by combining the art of natural therapy with modern dermatological science.

**Level 2, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**  
**098 362 4497**

### Thalgo La Beaute Marine

Thalgo is on the cutting edge of spa treatments, and is renowned for its products and skilled therapists.

**40C Ly Tu Trong, D1**  
**3824 4990**  
**090 360 6366**

### The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

**87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3823 5318**

### The Prime – Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with imported machines from Europe.

The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy – and a Prime special service package.

**192 Le Lai, D1**  
**3925 5743**

### Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

**76C Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3823 2554**

### Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom – Mai, Bamboo, and more.

**2 Lam Son Square, D1**  
**3824 1234**

### Yuan

Despite being labeled as a foot massage establishment, Yuan actually has a full range of services. Customers usually make appointments. Yuan is especially geared towards Japanese expats.

**1588 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3825 0795**

### Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

**16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3824 8782**

### Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

**60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1**  
**6291 6835**

## art & crafts

### Art Arcade

Art Arcade displays a wide range of original Vietnamese artwork in a charming passageway off of Dong Khoi.

**151 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**3824 4076**

### Beeline

Small shop with cute stuffs. Special traditional hand-embroidered bags, shoes, clothes, and souvenirs.

**60-62 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3822 2364**  
**155 Dong Khoi, D1**



**Blue Dragon**  
It's a Pick  
Blue Dragon designs 'recycled' fashion and décor. Eco-friendly bags, jewelry, and home accessories made of feed-sacks, rubber, billboard and paper.

**1B Bui Vien, D1**  
**2210 2084**  
**9am - 10pm**

### Cao Lien Huong

Artistic & traditional handicrafts on Saigon's heritage street.

**49 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**3521 0445**  
**091 806 0608**

### CD Paragon Leather - Caodong Boutique 2

Attractive leather souvenirs & handicrafts

**Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,**  
**65 Le Loi, D1**  
**3915 1778**

### Chon Nhan Production & Trading

Chon Nhan Production & Trading specializes in making high grade fine art, especially bamboo works, oil paintings, lacquering, and carved furniture. They have experience in interior design and handmade crafts.

**70D Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3667 0341**  
**090 383 8355**

### Du Du

One of Saigon's higher-class souvenir shops.

**78 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**38276128**

### Em Em

Bright, unusual souvenir shop with high-quality ethnic fashion accessories unavailable elsewhere. Special figurines and a tailoring service are also available.

**38 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3829 4408**

### Em Oi

Funky souvenir shop with a twist, selling original designer T-shirts, handmade jewelry, recycled bags, and hand-crafted leather products.

**124d Le Loi, D1**

### Ethnic Folk Art Anh

Fine ethnic folk products, mostly hand-made embroidered cloths, accessories and statues carved from horns and bones.

**Lot B1-C11-C12 2nd Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3821 3716**  
**090 360 7527**

### Fatima Shop

Fatima shop is manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of customer handicrafts, lacquerware, embroidery goods, and silverware souvenirs.

**3 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
**3914 2403**

### Gia Gia

One of Vietnam's leading manufacturer and distributor of products made from precious stones. Range includes paintings, jewelry, precious stones used for medicinal purposes and fashion products.

**135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1**  
**3823 5384**

### Hai Yen

Sells fully-rigged model ships and boats, situated next to the Oscar Hotel. Fine model ships & boats

**68 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3822 0280**

### Huong Nga Fine Art

Huong Nga designs, manufactures and sells high quality arts and crafts products in Vietnam and around the world.

**41 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3823 8356**

### Loang Xoang

Owned by a husband and wife glasswork artist team, they mainly sell their creations through their website, Facebook page, and at the monthly handicrafts fair.

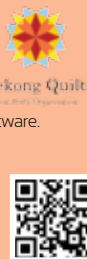
**232/8/6 Ba Hat, D10**  
**090 855 6665**



### MEKONG QUILTS

They produce high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, baby quilts, accessories and giftware.

**1st floor, 68 Le Loi, D1**  
**S17-Sky Garden 1,**  
**Nguyen Van Linh, D7**  
**6271 7758**  
**www.mekong-quilts.org**  
**9am-7pm**



Vietnamese traditional materials such as egg shells, buffalo horns, bamboo, white clay, lacquer, and more.

**33 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
**3915 2913**  
**090 382 7471**

### Na Sa Shop

Selling fine wooden sculptures from a small store at the back of a tiny retail enclave, sales staff insist that the particular wood chosen has natural medicinal properties.

**35 Le Loi, D1**  
**016 9778 8303**

### Ngan Quang Wooden Boats

Sells model-size wooden boats.

**74/1 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3829 1814**  
**091 822 9272**

### Nguyen Freres - Fine Furnishing

Spacious furniture establishment selling handmade goods of silk, mother-of-pearl, stone, brick, bronze, silver, indigo, wood, lacquer along with Buddha figurines, carved wooden screens, ceramic decorations, red lacquered boxes, water puppets, and lacquered statues.

**2 Dong Khoi, D1**  
**3823 9459**  
**098 380 3070**

### Nhu Y Oriental Lacquerwares

Nhu y provides coasters, tissue boxes, wine bottle holders and boxes, cabinets, frames, plates, trays, vases, and many other items with unusual designs spattered with lacquer dots.

**22 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1**  
**3829 6138**

### Paper Paradise

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

**19 Do Quang Dau, D1**  
**091 597 8896**

### Phuong Mai Gallery

Phuong Mai Art Gallery focuses on the contemporary art works of both up & coming and established artists from across Vietnam. The real deal in a district of mass-produced art retailers.

**129B Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3823 3181**

### Saigon Kitsch

Historic socialist pop-art culture is printed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, coasters and a raft of other goodies creating cool gifts for folks back home - or expats home in HCMC.

**43 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
**093 590 5675**

### Sapa Crafts & Fashion

Established in 1996, the shop sells clothes and bags reflecting the style of the picturesque village in the northern region of Vietnam after which it is named.

**7 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
**090 244 1256**

### SoCoLa Boutique

Unique souvenir items and crafts in an off-beat retail space. Highly unusual trinkets.

**39/4 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3822 1839**

## books & magazines

### Cua Hang Van Phong Pham

Large stationery shop with paints and supplies for artists, this is the place to come for art paper, easels, paints and brushes.

**54 Le Loi, D1**  
**3825 7986**  
**091 917 0356**

## Fahasa - Le Loi

One of Vietnam's largest book chains with 56 stores around the country, Fahasa has a good range of English titles.

**60-62 Le Loi, D1**  
**3829 6386**

## Fahasa - Nguyen Hue

One of the largest book distributors in Vietnam with 35 years of operations, Fahasa provides a wide range of books – including English titles – from local to translated editions, as well as CDs, videos, puzzles and stationery.

**40 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3822 5796**

## Nam Phong bookstore

A second-hand bookstore specializing in French literature, selling mainly novels and nonfiction titles with a selection of second-hand folio editions. The website is in French only, with a built-in searchable database of all titles available.

**94 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**3914 7859**

## Parker & Waterman

A specialist luxury pens counter in the foyer of the Bitexco Financial Tower, This Parker & Waterman outlet sells precision-crafted pens with gold & platinum finishes.

**Ground Floor Bitexco Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, D1**  
**6291 8739**

## Phuong Nam Book

With a system of over 30 bookstores in Ho Chi Minh City, PNB sells & publishes hundreds of foreign-language titles. The Saigon Center store also has a wide range of children's books.

**Level 2, Saigon Center,**  
**65 Le Loi, D1**  
**3915 1475**

## electronics & camera

## Bose Showroom

Something of a connoisseur's choice, a look through this showroom in the Tax Building will demonstrate some fairly impressive speaker and sound system equipment.

**Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,**  
**135 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3821 5944**

## Canon Vinh Hung

Canon Vinh Hung has over 15 years of experience providing the citizens of Saigon with quality Canon cameras and other products such as photocopiers, fax machines, and photo printers.

**103 Tran Hung Dao, D1**  
**3837 1066**

## Lioa Electrics & Electronics

Hardware mart for power components, electrical appliances, and lighting systems. LiOA has more than 20 years of experience as the largest automatic stabilizer manufacturer in Vietnam.

**138 Yersin, D1**  
**6295 9077**

## Saigon Photo Center - Nam Ky Khoi Nghia

Saigon Photo Center has been providing an extensive range of photography services since 1991. They offer services such as photo printing, digital inkjets, equipment trading, camera sale, and equipment rental.

**114 bis Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1**  
**3825 8735**

## Maydocsach eBook Readers

Vietnamese distributors of Kindle and Nook eBook readers, including e-ink screen and color LCD versions. Providing free Vietnamese language eBooks.

**149/2 Le Thi Rieng, D1**  
**6678 4542**  
**093 822 2489**

## Son Ha

They sell products such as TVs, Karaoke and stage systems, soundproofing, MP3 players, refrigeration, and appliances.

**41 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1**  
**3923 1938**  
**090 820 3262**

## home & furnishings

## AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.

**219 Nguyen Van Thu, D1**  
**3823 0940**

## AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

**91-93 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3915 3491**

## Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.

**71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3823 8811**

## Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

**158 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3822 3430**

## Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

**15C Thi Sach, D1**  
**3823 9394**

## JB Oriental Heritage

Unique Kashmiri products stocked in a plush retail space in the Saigon Center, JB Oriental Heritage sells fine imported Asian products, including carpets and exotic rugs, handicrafts, and objets d'art.

**Unit 20, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**  
**3821 2822**

## Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

**Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1**  
**3914 3553**

## Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.

**Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,**  
**65 Le Loi, D1**  
**3821 7233**

## Patina Home

A furniture and home-styling company specializing in antique reproduction collections, Patina Homes offers an exquisite range of handcrafted furniture, upholstery and home accessories.

**SLOOB Garden plaza, Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phong, D7**  
**5412 4071**

## Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

**77 Pasteur, D1**  
**3824 7504**

## Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.

**31A Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3825 8672**

## SB Furniture

SB Furniture is an award-winning furniture store with a reputation for excellent service and attention to detail. They specialize in products made with artificial wood, and cabinets for apartments and villas.

**Unit 8-10, 1st Floor, Saigon Centre,**  
**65, Le Loi, D1**  
**0902157935**

## markets

## An Dong Market

This boisterous wet market beneath the Caesar Hotel. Customers can find food carts, bulk raw ingredients, shoes, sandals, jeans, shirts, and many other goods.

**36 An Duong Vuong, D5**  
**3835 4773**

## Ba Chieu Market

An old market hosting nearly 800 independent businesses in central Binh Thanh district, famous throughout the city for its rich and diverse commodities. Fresh Food, groceries, crockery, household appliances, textiles, and apparel. Second hand clothing available at cheap rates.

**40 Dien Hong, Binh Thanh**

## Ben Thanh Market

Saigon's most iconic tourist attraction, this Vietnamese souvenir bazaar is busy, hot, and full of most everything you'll need to pick up to prove you've been to Vietnam - you can also stock up on your entire quota of presents for family and friends here.

**Quach Thi Trang Square, D1**

## Binh Tay (Cholon) Market

Binh Tay Market is the largest market in Saigon located in an elegant building of Chinese design in Cho Lon. The market caters mostly to wholesale trade, but also offers household items, makeup, and beauty products.

**Le Tan Ke, Ward 2, D6**

## Tan Binh Market

Products here are targeted towards the locals, so don't expect to see luxurious or high-end products. The prices can't be beaten though. Bargain to your heart's content.

**Le Minh Xuan, Ward 8, Tan Binh**

## Tan Dinh Market

Tan Dinh Market has been providing Saigon with a thriving market experience for decades. Customers can choose from food carts, clothing services, textiles, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Busy old-style market with impressive architecture, selling a great selection of fabrics and seafood.

**48 Ma Lo, Tan Dinh, District 1**  
**3820 1272**

## War Surplus Market (Dan Sinh Market) 🍷 Oi's Pick

Dan Sinh is known as the army surplus

market. Located just 5 minutes from the backpacker area and city center, it specializes in selling war surplus and military style clothing and items. It is also a good market for electronics and other types of imported industrial machinery.

**104 Yersin, D1**  
**3825 1130**

## supermarkets

## Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. Features a deli café serving coffee, wine and foods. Regular shoppers can benefit from a loyalty card program.

**16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3822 9391**

## Sieu Thi Tax Supermarket

General supermarket in the centrally-located Tax Building.

**1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,**  
**135 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**3821 3849**

## wine & liquor

## Bacchus Corner

Bacchus imports from most of the world's wine regions and supplies wholesale and retail customers. It encourages wine tasting in its Pasteur store using the unique Enomatic system, and staff are skilled in advising on wine matches with food.

**158D Pasteur, D1**  
**3829 3306**

## Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.

**94-96 Le Lai, D1**  
**091 816 6809**

## Boutique Cellar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.

**11 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1**

## Liquor City

Purveyors of fine international wines & spirits.

**95, Suong Nguyet Anh, D1**  
**090 240 9024**

## Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.

**54 Ham Nghi, D1**  
**3821 5398**

## The Warehouse

A premium wine importer, distributor, and retailer supplying wines from all over the world, the Warehouse also offers spirits, wine accessories, glassware and refrigeration to complement their customers' choices.

**178 Pasteur, D1**  
**3824 6629**  
**090 921 0014**

## Vinifera

Established in 2002, Vinifera is one of the most reliable wine distribution companies in Vietnam. Offering prestigious wines from around the world at a great value.

**15C7 Thi Sach, D1**  
**3822 1141**



# Business & Tech

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■ IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY





Dear Hadrien,

**I lent my wife's nephew USD5,000 to start a new business. We wrote out an agreement, which we both signed. It's now been a year past the repayment due date and while I think he has the money to pay me back, he doesn't seem to want to. Is there any legal recourse for me to try and get that money back?**



A member of the Paris Bar, Hadrien Wolff has been practicing law in Vietnam for six years, currently as a partner of **Audier & Partners**. He specializes in banking and corporate law, regularly advising major foreign banks and assisting foreign investors in setting up joint venture companies with Vietnamese partners in sensitive sectors such as media, power and natural resources



UNDER VIETNAMESE LAW, the agreement that you signed with your wife's nephew is called a civil contract and the Vietnamese Civil Code governs your rights and obligations regarding this contract.

It was a good idea to write out the agreement and to make sure that both parties signed it. In general, the parties to a civil contract are free to determine its content and, unless the law specifically provides otherwise, such contracts may be entered into verbally or in writing. Two clear advantages of a written agreement over a verbal one are (1) that it proves its own existence without the need for other evidence, such as a testimony or audible materials; and (2) that it expresses and specifies the parties' intentions and their rights and obligations.

According to Article 412 and Article

414 of the Civil Code, civil contracts must, among other things, be performed in compliance with their agreed subject matter and time limit, meaning the most important obligation of your wife's nephew is to repay the money that he has borrowed from you on or before the agreed date. The fact that he has still not repaid the money, one year after the due date in the agreement, means that he has obviously failed to perform his obligations and the question of whether or not he has the money to pay you back is not even relevant in this case.

What can be done to get your money back? Before turning to any legal recourse, it is advisable to try and settle this matter amicably and in good faith, especially considering the relationship between you and your wife's family, and the time and money that could be involved when taking

legal steps. The first step would be to send a formal written notice to your wife's nephew requesting him to fulfill his obligations under the agreement. In the notice, you should include a clear deadline and possibly mention that if he does not repay the money within that deadline you will consider taking legal steps.

The Vietnamese Civil Code states that when a party is late in fulfilling their contractual obligation to repay a loan, the other party shall be entitled to claim interest on the late amount for the period of the delay at the basic rate announced by the State Bank of Vietnam at the time of payment (at the date of writing, this was 9%). You may want to remind your wife's nephew of this.

If all amicable solutions fail, then you can think about commencing legal proceedings before a civil court. Even though it may seem that you have a clear case, proceedings before a civil court always involve some uncertainty and especially in Vietnam, legal proceedings and the enforcement of a civil judgment can take a long time and may be costly.

If you consider filing a civil lawsuit, please keep in mind that Article 427 of the Civil Code limits the period for initiating legal action before a court to resolve a dispute such as yours to two years from the date on which your rights and interests were infringed, i.e. from the moment that your wife's nephew was late in repaying the money he borrowed from you.

In a case like yours it is often advisable to first try to settle the issue amicably. A practical step to prevent such situations in the future is to include a few extra provisions in your agreement, such as a penalty for late payment, a fixed interest rate and a provision on how to settle a potential dispute.

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





IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

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

# i.e-Motorbike

A marriage between an iPhone and an electric motorbike



TERRA MOTORS, A Japanese electric motorcycle manufacturer, is aiming to combat Vietnam's two worst problems – air pollution and traffic congestion – by combining the country's two favorite commodities – motorbikes and smartphones. Terra Motors is hoping to convince the Vietnamese that their latest model, the A4000i, is as much of a status symbol as an Attila or a Yamaha Nuovo. Their biggest draw will be the iPhone-operated dashboard to monitor your location, battery, and electricity usage.

The A4000i is said to be "the world's first wireless, smartphone-connected e-scooter installed," where driving information will be transmitted through an iPhone. Information about the battery and power consumption, mileage, and speed will be displayed on-

screen using an iPhone 3G up to the newest iPhone 5 model. The biggest problem with this, of course, is that someone's going to try to steal your iPhone right out of your dash. Not to mention your expensive motorbike as well.

Now, before you brush it off as another hokey Chinese e-bike, keep in mind that Terra is claiming its electric motorbike will take you 65 kilometers before the battery runs out, and the battery only has to be replaced every 50,000 kilometers. The motorbike can run on a lithium battery that can last five times longer than standard batteries as compared to other electric bikes. It also claims cost-effectiveness besides being environmental friendly.

To top it all off, Terra's going to allow other companies to build apps on top of

its platform, so it's foreseeable that it can work on the traffic problem as well.

The company has opened a factory just outside the city and is looking to ship 100,000 electric motorbikes into Vietnam by the end of 2015. And the price on those bikes, you ask? Around USD4,000. That's right, it's a luxury item.

After 2015, Terra is working on releasing an even cheaper and better mileage motorbike that will address a bigger market after the A4000i is established. This is very similar to Tesla Motors' strategy of offering the fancy Roadster and then working on cheaper sedans for the mass market. In the end, if Terra succeeds in pulling this off in Vietnam, we'll start to see less pollution in the streets, and that'll be good for everybody. ■

Dear Afonso,

**I want to invest my money but how do I know the investment companies in Vietnam are legitimate and not just shell companies that will take my money and then disappear the next day? I've even heard that people have created fake branches here using well-known investment firm names.**



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

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

BEFORE ANSWERING YOUR question, we need to clarify a couple of concepts. A *custodian* is a financial institution that holds customers' money. For instance, HSBC Vietnam is a custodian. An *investment manager* is a person or organization that makes investments on behalf of clients but doesn't hold customers' money. Many times the custodian and the investment manager are the same company. For example, if you have an account with HSBC Vietnam and they offer you investment advice - in essence selling you an investment - then they are both custodian and investment manager. In the last financial crisis it was obvious that there is a clear conflict of interest between both roles, and terrible results occurred like in Madoff's case.

Custodians in Vietnam are licensed and regulated by the State Bank of Vietnam (for banks) or the State Securities Commission (for fund management companies and securities companies), under the securities law of 2006. It is easy to check if a custodian is legitimate: just contact the organizations above.

Investment managers are only licensed and regulated if the investments proposed to clients are inside Vietnam, like stocks in the HCMC stock exchange. If the investments are outside Vietnam, there is no licensing or regulation as yet. And that makes sense because Vietnamese citizens are not supposed to invest elsewhere.

The problem for expats wanting to place some of their savings outside of Vietnam is to identify who to trust. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission ([www.fido.asic.gov.au](http://www.fido.asic.gov.au)) regularly reports on financial scams in Asia. These reports are useful to build simple rules of thumb on how to avoid fraud:

- 1) If the savings/investments suggested are outside Vietnam and the investment manager says, "We are regulated/licensed in Vietnam," then they are lying.
- 2) Be suspicious of the words "guaranteed" and "risk free." There are no such things in finance.
- 3) Take your time, get things in writing, don't be pressured to make a decision on the spur of the moment. There are good investments to be made all the time, don't

think if they are offering a "once in a lifetime opportunity but you must sign now" that there won't be another one next week.

4) Be cautious of companies who cold-call. They can be very convincing; however a legitimate investment manager will get the majority of their business through referral and will not cold-call. Think of it this way: When was the last time a lawyer called you out of the blue to see if you needed any legal advice.

5) Be wary of someone or a company trying to sell an investment before really knowing your circumstances. They should match an investment to you, not the other way round.

6) Ask a lot of questions and obtain written answers. If the investment manager behaves arrogantly and avoids questions, that's a clear sign you are dealing with a salesman.

7) Ask for referrals. What do other clients say? Referrals are other expats living in the same city as you, easily approachable, and that have worked with the investment manager for a few years at least.

Finally, I have been working in Vietnam since 2006 and the most common scam is product misrepresentation. The longest version (25 years) of Premier (a legitimate product) from Friends Provident (a legitimate

custodian) is sold by 'financial advisers' as having charges for 1.5 years only - but you guessed it - the charges are for 25 years.

To summarize, the most important thing is establishing trust with the company, person and product you are dealing with. You should be able to answer these questions:

**1) Do you trust the company?**

- Does it have a physical office in Vietnam?
- Is it registered in a country with a strong legal/financial system?
- How long has it been established?

**2) Do you trust the individual?**

- What qualifications does this person have?
- Where do they live and work? Will they disappear?
- Can you contact them and arrange a meeting in person when you want to?
- Are they answering questions about fees, risks, expected return that you have?
- Are they a financial professional or a salesman? What qualifications do they have to give financial advice?

**3) Do you trust the investment?**

- Is this the right investment for me? Does it suit my individual requirements?
- Where is the money going to be invested? Which country and under what legal jurisdiction?
- Is the expected return and risk reasonable?
- What are the fees involved? ■





# >>The List Business



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

## banks

### Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
39290999

### Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9949

### Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3824 2267  
094 801 6318

### Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1  
3824 1525  
012 1861 8695

### HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1  
3724 7247

### Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3827 8260

### Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc  
Thang, D1  
3911 0000

### Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
3829 1581

### Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3824 4797  
www.vietcombank.com.vn

## concierge

### Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.  
7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)  
service@giup.me  
www.giup.me

## consulates

### Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3521 8100  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

### Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2  
6281 8001  
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

### Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 2751  
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

### Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong  
Khoi, D1  
3827 9899  
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

### Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1  
3910 2903

### China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3829 5009  
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

### China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3823 1142  
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn  
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

### Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 7350  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9373  
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

### Finland Consulate

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

### France Consulate

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

### Germany Consulate

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

### Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 0130

### Iceland Consulate

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

### Consulate General of India

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

### Indonesia Consulate

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

### Italy Consulate

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

### Japanese Consulate

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

### Kuwait Consulate

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

### Laos Consulate

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

### Malaysia Consulate

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

### Mexico Consulate

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

### Myanmar Consulate

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

### New Zealand Consulate

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

### Nordcham

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

### Norway Consulate

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

### Panama Consulate

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

### Russia Consulate

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

### Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

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

### Slovakia Consulate

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

### South Korea Consulate

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

### Sweden Consulate

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

### Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2  
3744 6996

### Thailand Consulate

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

### The Czech Republic Consulate

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

### The UK Consulate

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

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

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

### Ukraine Consulate

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

## insurance

### ACE Life Insurance

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

### AIG Vietnam

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

### BaoViet Insurance Corporation

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

### BHNT Great Eastern

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

### Blue Cross

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

### IGlobal Assist

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

### IF Consulting

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

### Liberty Mutual Insurance

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

### LIG Insurance

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

long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

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

### McLarens Young International

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

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

### Prudential Vietnam

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

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

## information technology

### Asia Pacific Solutions

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

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

### NTT Communications Vietnam

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

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

### Oracle Vietnam

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

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

### Prism Smart IT

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

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

## law firms

### Apex Law

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

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

### Baker & McKenzie

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

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

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

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

### Logos Law Firm

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

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

### Nishimura & Asahi

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

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

### Phuoc & Partners Company

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

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

### PricewaterhouseCoopers

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

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

## marketing

### Ambrij Vietnam

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

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

### Bates 141 Vietnam

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

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

### Edge Marketing

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

**1815 Ngo Van Nam, D1. 3911 1190**

### Ogilvy & Mather

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

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

### Purple Asia 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

### Red 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

### Saatchi & Saatchi - The Lovemarks Company

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

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

## media

### GroupM - MEC Media

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

competitive advantage to clients and companies.

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

### S3 Studios

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

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

## real estate agencies

### Colliers International Vietnam

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

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

### Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

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

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

### House Link

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

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

### Realty World

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

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

### Savills

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

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

### The Nest

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

## recruiters

### Opus Recruitment

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

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

### Navigos Group & Vietnam Works

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

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

### Odgers Berndtson Vietnam

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

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

## relocation

### AGS Four Winds (Vietnam)

Global leader in international removals

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

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

### Allied Pickfords

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

**District 1. 0122 5141 848**

### Asian Tigers

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

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

### Crown Line

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

**60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1**

### JVK International Movers

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

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

### Logical Moves

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

**3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net**

### Santa Fe Relocation Service

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

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

## shipping

### HL Shipping

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

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

### Logitem Viet Nam

Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.

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

### Sagawa Express Vietnam

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

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



# The Outer Districts

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY





# To While Away

Two cafes that are perfect for relaxing in

TEXT BY CLARA PHUOC NGUYEN IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

A SUBURB POPULAR with expats in Ho Chi Minh City, District 2 is a perfect blend of modern lifestyle, with condominiums and international supermarkets, and 'hidden charms' including quaint coffee shops. I took a trip down to District 2 one day and after two hours of struggling with a head-scratching one way road network, found my two favorite places.

## B&A Café

### Coffee by the Riverside

The Saigonese loves things that are 'by the side' like roadside eateries, selling goods by the side of the bridge, and the all-time favorite

riverside cafés. This is a no frills place with just a few long rows of reclining plastic chairs with low tables. The history of this simple place traces back 10 years ago when District 2 was, according to Thi, the café's owner, still a dark and dangerous place. Back then, his parents operated the café indoors with just their neighbors as customers but six years ago a loyal customer contributed money and muscle to revamp the riverside area. With the gentrification of An Phu, he was able to take his business outdoors. I ask Thi, whose background is in journalism, why he quit writing to do this. "It's a family business," he replies simply.

B&A Café serves coffee, soft drinks, ice cream and fruit juices and now welcomes a variety of customers ranging from youngsters who come in groups, families with kids and couples who want to soak up the romantic al fresco setting in the evenings.

The breeze from the Saigon River blows away the heat of a summer day. It is still early in the evening and just a few old men are playing chess. Watching this brings me an overwhelming sense of peace. After all, this place is hidden from city life and providing its customers with the necessary tranquility to indulge in deep thinking or revive the mind.

*Road No. 19, D2 (off Tran Nao Street)*





### 3G Café

#### Coffee in the Garden

“Why didn’t you name the place 4G to be in sync with technology?” was the first question I ask the owner. He bursts into laughter. Hieu says 3G actually stands for three good things: good service, good food and drink and a good environment.

This spacious café is divided into three areas and shaded by large trees. It even has a small pond with a mini bridge that links the parking space to one of the three seating areas. Kids enjoy standing on the bridge and watching the fish swim, or playing hide-and-seek among the big trees.

Hieu purposely didn’t install any air conditioning units as he wanted customers to enjoy the garden to its fullest. 3G serves both food and drink but go there for dinner when he’s inside the kitchen doing the cooking himself.

The drink menu isn’t fancy, just the usual coffees, ice creams, juices, and soft drinks. I ordered an iced salted plum juice which turned out to be pretty good choice.

25A, Road No. 3, D2 ■







IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

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

# Printed Books vs Electronic Books

Future generations of readers may use tablets rather than a printed book – is that a good thing?

A RECENT ARTICLE in *The Guardian* stated: "Reading for pleasure is declining among primary-age pupils, and increasing numbers of 'time poor' parents are dropping the ritual of sharing bedtime stories with their children once they start school."

Although based upon data in the UK, it parallels my experience in Hong Kong and now Vietnam. I wonder what are the ramifications of this new 'trend'? International studies show that even parents who read to preschoolers generally no longer read to children once they are able to read competently on their own. Here in HCMC, one sees children as young as two and three sitting in restaurants in front of iPads and other tablets.

It is most likely that if and when they graduate to reading, they'll choose an electronic device rather than a traditional book. A team from the BBC's CBeebies channel saw a huge shift in numbers of its users trying to access it by tablet devices other than laptops and personal computers. Touch-screen phones and tablets are intuitive to children and by 2018, children's television will have adapted to the presence of this second screen, and it will be odd not to have children at home drawing alone on tablets and then having these appear live in the show.

Which raises another critical consideration for parents: how will all this electronic media affect children's eyesight? "There's plenty of evidence that computers and prolonged near work can give what eye doctors call 'computer vision syndrome' - symptoms that include eyestrain, headache, dry eyes, and blurry vision, as well the neck and back pain that result from poor posture," says Dr. Nam Tran Pham, an American Board-certified ophthalmologist and

Medical Director at the American Eye Center in Crescent Plaza, Phu My Hung.

"In children, increased use of the eyes for near distances may be implicated in causing elongation of the eye that leads to more nearsightedness. The greatest concern with the iPad (or other hand-held recreational electronic devices) is that they are being used by younger and younger children,

and because they are so entertaining, for longer and longer periods of time. This can potentially lead to more eye problems that will show up in the future that we don't see now," she continues.

The safest approach is for parents to allow the use of these devices in moderation, balanced with other healthy outdoor activities. ■



ILLUSTRATION BY QUAN NGUYEN





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at these locations...

**Jaspas Restaurant**  
33 Dong Khoi, D1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Pacharan**  
97 Hai Ba Trung, D1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Stella**  
121D Bui Vien, D1

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

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

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

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

**Top Shop**  
2 Hai Trieu, D1

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

**Xu**  
71 Hai Ba Trung, D1

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

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# Teaming Up

Parents and teachers partnering up to enrich the learning experience



Deputy Head Teacher of  
Saigon Star International School

CHOOSING YOUR CHILD'S school is only the first step in a parent's participation in the learning process. Besides supporting their teachers, parents can be very instrumental in helping their children succeed by working in productive partnership with their child and school.

Below are eight every day and long-term things that can help:

## Individuality

Each child is unique and has their own individual learning style – whether visually, auditory or sensorial. Work with their teachers on how to encourage your child's individual learning style at home.

## Preparation

Make sure they get to bed on time and have nine to 10 hours of sleep. And a protein-rich breakfast is a must. Encourage personal responsibility by helping them be prepared with the right supplies to participate fully in classroom activities.

## An Encouraging Environment at Home

Students learn through positive and encouraging environments, rather than through negative remarks or what can be seen as a threatening environment. Parents can help their child to progress faster by asking their children every day about their learning in a supportive and non-judgmental way. Helping with homework, listening to your children's concerns and praising their efforts, will go a long way.

## Read with Your Child

Studies have shown that children who are read to six or seven times per week are more likely to have better literacy and numeracy skills. With small children, choose a book and read to them. For older children, possibly set up a family book club as a time to read together.

## Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences

Whether your child is gifted, right in the middle of the pack or needs some extra attention, your attendance at one-on-one meetings with their teacher will provide you with insight about their capabilities and can also help in choosing the next

steps. With some children, for whom learning in general is challenging, meetings and open dialogue with staff offering specialist support from school is essential. This might include an additional teacher who is offering one-to-one support or discrete lessons outside of the classroom, or even consultation with a speech therapist, physiotherapist or psychologist.

## Remind Children About Their Individual Aims

In this way students can be aware of their goals, take ownership of their progress and be aware and proud of their achievements. Many practitioners hold the belief that success in itself, and the praise and recognition of others in turn, generates higher levels of motivation and further success. Parents taking part in this process through quiet persistence and practice with their child can enhance and enrich their learning experience. They needn't be experts in the most effective teaching techniques or methods and really it is preferable that the parents' approach is more informal and relaxed so the children

don't feel stressed or pressurized.

## Be Involved in School Sponsored Activities

Make time to attend programs, plays, sporting events and awards ceremonies. Your support of school activities will show your child that school – and education – is a priority.

## Show Them You Love Them

And that you cherish them as an individual, and that you believe education will help them to achieve their greatest potential.

While the type and depth of each teacher-parent partnership will vary between schools and even between teachers and parents within the same school, there is little doubt that teacher-parent partnerships enrich a child's learning experience and help in their future progress and achievement. Using a student-centered approach delivered with love, care and understanding can go a long way in helping the student become tomorrow's humane and global citizen, and become a role model for others to follow. ■





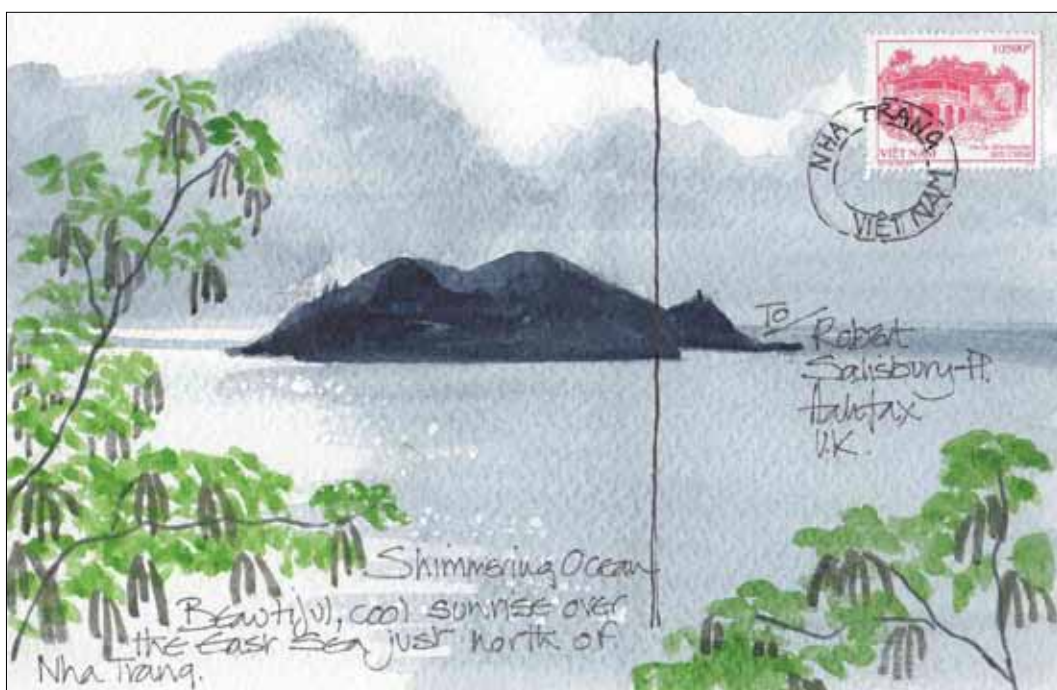
# On the Rails in Vietnam

Don't rush and enjoy the slow ride



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

A professional artist and author of "A Week in Hoi An", **Bridget March** specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and small town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget holds drawing classes for beginners and improvers in Saigon. For more of Bridget's work including her new book, see [BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com](http://BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com)



ONE OF THE beautiful things about traveling by train in Vietnam is the opportunity to sit and gaze out at gorgeous landscapes, all at a leisurely pace. Trains in Europe are designed to get you from one place to another as quickly as possible, the countryside going by in a blur, but to travel by rail in Vietnam fulfils the Chinese proverb, "The journey is the reward."

Departing from *ga* Saigon (from the French for railway station, *gare*) on a recent trip north, I was amazed at how close people live, work, play, eat and sleep to the single track that carves a narrow corridor through the tightly packed neighborhoods of north western Saigon. One more meter to the left or right and we would have been traveling through their living rooms, barber shops and drink stands.

After a while, the scenery opens out and we are in a watery landscape of rice paddies, lakes and small towns. Our train starts to climb to higher ground and the scenery and the light changes. This region

reminds me of the Highlands of Scotland in many ways. The hills rise steeply on both sides of the train and the lush green of the lowlands has given way to a starker landscape with fewer trees and villages, and dusty roads that are less travelled on. But the best is yet to come.

From the comfort of my sleeper carriage, the landscape gently rolls past the window like a documentary film. In this seemingly idyllic land every view is worth painting and the fields and villages themselves seem to have been touched by an artist's brush.

If you take the midnight train from Saigon, you will arrive at the coastal town of Nha Trang at dawn. From here the single train track hugs the beautiful coastline which is dotted with romantic islands and purple peninsulas backlit by the rising sun. The views of the East Sea shimmering in the low light of a fresh morning are breathtaking.

On one of my journeys, this hour was marked by the arrival of the breakfast

trolley carrying a large bucket of fresh, hard boiled eggs. These delicious treats are served with a pinch of the ubiquitous chilli salt presented in a little recycled paper wrapper. Mine was part of a page of an old train timetable – how apt!

As Vietnam wakes to another day, you can see people tending their gardens and allotments beside the train track. A cowherd takes his cattle and calves to pasture. A lone motorcyclist spins down a country road easily keeping pace with the train. Workers make an early start in the green and gold fields at the coolest time of day. Teams of women in their conical hats are gathering in the hay to make haystacks reminiscent of those in Monet's paintings of rural France in the late 1800s.

Traveling along the single track railway that runs the length of Vietnam is truly one of this country's hidden delights. It may be slow but I cannot think of any good reason to rush through this fascinating and varied landscape. ■

# >>The List District 2



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

## food & drink

### BAKERIES

#### Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate  
39 Thao Dien, D2  
6296 0066  
voelker-vietnam.com

### BARS

#### Mcsorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.  
4 Thao Dien, D2  
3519 4659  
www.mcsorleys.vn

#### Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.  
18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2  
6252 1333

#### Buddha Bar

One of the long standing bars in the area, it has a pool table, darts, big screen tvs along with cheap beers and bar food.  
7 Thao Dien, D2  
3744 2080

### CAFES

#### Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

At Agnes Cafe they offer fresh coffee, smoothies and juices along with a delicious breakfast and lunch menu. This quaint and cozy cafe is a perfect place to meet up with friends or just relax to get away from the bustling traffic outside. They offer free delivery.  
11A-B Thao Dien, D2  
agnescafe@agnescoffee.vn  
6281 9772  
facebook.com/pages/Agnes-Cafe

## restaurants

### FRENCH

#### Gastrohome

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service.  
100 Xuan Thuy, D2. 6281 9830

#### La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day. Set amongst the flowers and with a ring of the lost charm of the Colonial era, this is an appealing and impressive venue for An Phu's high-profile community.  
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2  
3898 2082  
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn  
\*Reviewed in Oi March 2013

#### Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.  
18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2  
3744 4585

### ITALIAN

#### Pendolasco – Thao Dien

Expect excellent classic Italian cuisine – wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu – cooked with a focus on fresh flavours and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy.  
36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2  
62532888  
www.pendolasco.vn

#### Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.  
43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132

### JAPANESE

#### Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

Bottles of sake fill shelves along the wall behind the sushi bar, and unique Japanese paintings add a nice visual touch. Since opening four months ago, the restaurant has attracted a diverse clientele, from locals to expats.  
14E1 Thao Dien, D2  
3744 6782

#### Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu  
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2  
6683 5308

### THAI

#### Baan Thai

Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs. Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.  
55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453  
www.baanthai-anphu.com

#### Jasmine Thai

Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.  
85 Quoc Huong, D2  
3519 0038

### VIETNAMESE

#### Banien Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant. Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast  
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

### WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

#### Boathouse 🍷 Oi's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.  
40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790  
www.boathouse.com.vn

#### Mekong Merchant 🍷 Oi's Pick

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.  
23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713

#### Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and

restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, football, and more. Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large open-plan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie screenings.  
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2  
35194532  
www.snap.com.vn

#### The Deck

Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.  
38 Nguyen U Di, D2  
www.thedecksaiigon.com

#### Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.  
NO.1, Street 2nd, D2  
www.vinovietnam.com

## supermarkets

#### Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.  
41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630  
SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7  
5412 3263 / 5412 3264  
www.annam-gourmet.com

#### An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more  
43 Thao Dien, D2

#### Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.  
No. 17, Street 12, D2  
3740 7105  
www.classicfinefoods.com

#### Metro

Wholesale suppliers of foodstuff, office supplies, furniture, clothes and more. Entry is reserved for business owners only but foreigners can obtain a one-day pass by showing their passports.  
Residential An Phu, An Khanh Ward 2

## business

### LAW FIRMS

#### Nguyen Giap Law Firm

14 Tran Nao, D2  
3740 7812  
www.hangluatnguyengiap.com  
8am - 5pm

#### Dang Khuong

26 Street 44, D2  
8224 09726

### MARKETING & ADVERTISING

#### Industrial Design Asia

Offers design engineering and innovation consultancy for plastics, consumer products, electronics, metal parts. Dutch industrial designers with over 10 years of working experience in Asia. Contact them to get a free quotation.

VILLA B,12A Street Number 12, D2  
3740 6388

#### Thanh Tung

Prints digital, cuts decal, LED signs, Braille and stainless neon materials to ensure compliance with quality.  
373 Luong Dinh Cua, D2  
090 952 1411

### REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

#### Namhouse

Provides rental properties for home and office use, focusing in the District 2 area.  
48A Tran Ngoc Dien, D2  
www.namhouse.com.vn

#### Snap Café

Has an extensive list of property rentals in District 2.  
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2  
3519 4282  
www.snap.com.vn

## health & beauty

### DENTISTS

#### European Dental Clinic

Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.  
17-17A Le Van Mien, D2  
091 874 9204 or 090 955 1916  
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

#### Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.  
96 Tran Nao, D2  
6674 4255  
8am to 8pm

#### Nu Cuoi Hoan My (Perfect Smile)

14-16 Tran Nao, D2  
3740 7470  
hoanmysmile@gmail.com  
8am to 8pm

#### Dental Truong Thanh

276 Tran Nao, D2  
5402 3009  
www.nhakhoatruongthanh.com

### FITNESS

#### Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.  
APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2  
3744 2549  
www.aisportscentre.com

#### Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs.  
Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326  
www.cyril-and-you.com

#### NTFQ2

Besides an excellent weights and cardio area, the facility runs group classes including power yoga, pilates, circuit training, martial arts and spinning.  
34 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2  
www.nutrifort.com

#### Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool



751 Xuan Thuy, D2  
3899 0012

### X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2  
www.xrockclimbing.com

### Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2  
3897 6786

## HOSPITALS & CLINICS

### Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2  
www.arcpets.com

### An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2  
6660 6602  
www.dakhaoanphu.com

### Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2  
3744 2000  
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com  
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com  
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

## SALONS & SPAS

### J Hair Salon

Experienced stylist Jimmy Le provides modern styling, healthy and fashionable hair care, along with professional blonde highlighting treatments.

33A Thao Dien, D2  
090 934 2022

### Saigon Dep

The clinic treats various skin diseases and offers skin care protection and prevention packages.

79 Xuan Thuy, D2  
3899 0448  
www.saigondep.net

### The Royal Spa And Salon

Services include acrylic nails, facials, hair salons and massages

14E14 Thao Dien, D2  
3519 4873

## shopping

### HOME INTERIORS

#### Austin Home

Furniture shop that stocks art deco pieces, cushions, fabrics and wooden ornaments for the home

20 Thao Dien, D2  
3519 0023

#### Click Clac Sofa

Sells sofas that double up as beds in various sizes and wood

327F Luong Dinh Cua, D2  
5402 7434  
www.clickclacsofa.com

## education

### SCHOOLS

#### Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).  
Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van Hung, D2  
Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)  
APSC Compound

36 Thao Dien, D2  
Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)  
East-West Highway, D2  
3742 4040  
www.aivietnam.com

### British International School

Offers pre-school to secondary education under the English national curriculum.

225 Nguyen Van Hung, D2  
3744 2335  
www.bisvietnam.com

### Horizon International Bilingual School

A bilingual school, HIBS opened in 2005 and applies 100 percent of the Vietnamese national curriculum, MOET, as well as providing students with an intensive English program along with teaching science and math in English.

6 - 6A - 8, 44 Street, D2  
hibsvietnam.com

### L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

33/19 Quoc Hung, D2  
3744 6844  
www.latelier-anphu.com

### Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2  
3744 2639  
www.montessori.edu.vn

### Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2  
3744 4709  
noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn

### Saigon Sports Academy

A multi-sports training school that teaches chess, swimming, tennis, soccer, among others.

28 Tran Nao, D2  
7303 1100



### Saigon Star International School

Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.  
Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, D2  
3742 STAR / 3742 7827  
www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn

### Smartkids

An international childcare centre provides kindergarten and pre-school education for children between 18 months and six years old. A fun and friendly environment, the school focuses on learning through play.

1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2  
3744 6076  
www.smarthidsinfo.com

## travel

### TRAVEL AGENCIES



### Exotissimo Travel

EXOTISSIMO TRAVEL Asia 20

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world! Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office. A District 1 presence will re-open soon.  
41 Thao Dien, D2  
3519 4111  
www.exotissimo.com  
anphu@exotissimo.com

### Ka Nguyen

Specializes in providing tickets for Eva Airlines, Qatar Airways, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific, American Airlines,

Singapore Air, Malaysia Airlines, Korean Airlines, Qantas Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines and many other international airlines.

6483 Xuan Thuy, D2  
6674 9041

## SERVICED APARTMENTS

### Glenwood Serviced Apartment

A very modern property, located in the heart of the expatriate's residential area, steps away from Int'l schools and supermarket.

248A Nguyen Van Hung, D2  
0944 168 568

### Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases.

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2  
www.riverside-apartments.com

### River Garden Apartment

It is located within a 15-minute drive of downtown and provides its occupants with stunning views of the Saigon River in a resort type of environment.

170 Nguyen Van Hung, Thao Dien, D2

### Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

628C Hanoi Highway, D2  
6255 9900  
www.somerset.com/vietnam

### Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool ensconced by verdant gardens.

197/2, Nguyen Van Hung, Thao Dien, D2  
0906099180  
www.villasong.com



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www.oivietnam.com

# >>The List District 7



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

## food & drink

### BAKERIES

#### Savouré Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season.

**Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
5412 2469  
[www.savourebakery.com](http://www.savourebakery.com)

### BARS

#### Peaches

A spacious, attractive restobar with comfortable, lounge-style seating and a bar area, this watering hole mixes three beers on tap and a large screen for live sports with a pan-Asian curry menu.

**557-1 Sky Garden 2, D7**  
5410 0999

#### Ruby Soho

A popular district 7 spot with excellent and cheap range of cocktails, good food and great music! Listen to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Ramones or Beck while downing an ice cold one.

**552-1 Sky Garden 2, D7**  
0120 325 9138

#### The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

**R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7**  
5410 3900

### CAFES

#### Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

**105 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
7308 3131

[www.baskinrobbins.vn](http://www.baskinrobbins.vn)

#### Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

**SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7**  
3932 2778

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

#### Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf serves some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes.

**Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
3824 4527

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

#### FB Deli Coffee

FB Deli Coffee features a unique black and white design and signature coffee beans imported from Italy. Guests can also enjoy many varieties of homemade cakes, along with Tiramisu, muffins, and sandwiches. All cakes 50% off from 7 to 10pm.

**SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7**  
5411 9696

8am - 10pm

#### The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

**SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
5412 3257

#### MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent

Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

**101 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
[www.mof.com.vn/en](http://www.mof.com.vn/en)

#### NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC, The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular muddies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.

**107 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
5413 6523

#### S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.

**SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
5411 1186

## restaurants

#### La Cucina

La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.

Reviewed in Oi April 2013  
**Block 07-08 CRI-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
5413 7932

### CHINESE

#### Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant

Serving China's little-known spiciest cuisine, the dishes of China's reddest province and the preferred taste of Chairman Mao, Huong Vien is well-decorated although a bit on the pricey side, with dishes averaging VND180,000.

**S59-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7**  
5410 4368

#### Ming Dynasty

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

**23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7**  
5411 5555

### INDIAN

#### Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoor.

**S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7**  
5410 1989

#### Spice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any palette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood.

**S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7**  
093 841 6551  
[www.namaste-india.com.vn](http://www.namaste-india.com.vn)

### ITALIAN

#### Sarpino's

Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.

**351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7**  
5412 2480  
[www.sarpino.vn](http://www.sarpino.vn)  
9am - 10.30pm

#### Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.

**103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 | 5412 4848**  
[www.saltpepper.com.vn](http://www.saltpepper.com.vn)

### JAPANESE

#### Baby Spoon

Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.

**SB 2-1 Parkview, D7**  
3822 3356

#### Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.

**SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7**  
5412 3940

### THAI

#### Nathalie's Phu My Hung

Nathalie's Phu My Hung is situated in an ideal location on a central corner in the district 7 high-profile metropolitan area. Serving delicious Thai cuisine in charming and romantic surroundings, the restaurant has two floors with a unified, simple decor and warm colourful tones throughout.

**S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7**  
5410 0822  
[www.nathaliesrestaurant.com](http://www.nathaliesrestaurant.com)

#### Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000 VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.

**105 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
5415 5556  
[www.thaieexpress.vn](http://www.thaieexpress.vn)

### VIETNAMESE

#### Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional

Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

**R1-72 Hung Gia 1, Bui Bang Doan, D7**  
5410 2027

### ASIAN

#### Cham Charm

Cham is more like a museum than a dining venue, filled with the artefacts and sculpture of the Champa people and with gorgeous artworks and colourful hangings on the walls. The upstairs area is a wide-open terrace with plenty of tables for a more relaxing atmosphere. The cuisine is pan-Asian.

**2 Phan Van Chuong, D7**

### WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

#### Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

**107 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
3841 3883  
[www.boomerang.com.vn](http://www.boomerang.com.vn)

#### Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.

**02 Phan Van Chuong, Phu My Hung New Urban, D7**  
5410 9999

#### El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere.

**Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7**  
3825 1879  
[www.elgaucho.com.vn](http://www.elgaucho.com.vn)

#### Scott & Binh's Restaurant

This unassuming little bistro is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike. With a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and various other international dishes, this is an ideal guilty hideaway from Vietnamese cuisine for just one meal at least.

**15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7**  
3920 8986

## supermarkets

#### Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. This location also features a coffee lounge.

**SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**

#### Citimart

Despite being smaller in floor size than some other supermarkets, Citimart, a large Vietnamese supermarket chain, carries a wide selection of imported goods.

**SC-10 Green View, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7**

**B3-4, B3-5, B3-6 Ha Huy Tap, D7**

**S4-1 Hung Vuong 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7**



## Lotte Mart

Lotte Mart is a South Korean supermarket chain with two branches in Ho Chi Minh City carrying a very wide range of products.  
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7

## Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.  
554-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7  
5410 2613

## business

### BANKS

#### ANZ Bank

47 Phu My Hung  
5410 1666  
www.anz.com/vietnam/vn

### HUMAN RESOURCES

#### Xage Consultancy

A human resource management consulting firm that develops people and organizations specializing in talent development, organizational development and outplacement.  
35A-1-2, 1st Floor, Grandview C, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7  
5412 3402

### MARKETING & ADVERTISING

#### Xone FM

The first independently run radio station in Vietnam, Xone FM provides the latest and hottest songs in both English and Vietnamese via 10 channels throughout the country.  
100 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
5413 5341

### REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

#### Anh Nguyen Real Estate

Anh Nguyen specializes in rental and sales of residences in Phu My Hung.  
168 Ha Huy Tap, D7  
090 958 2489

#### Vietnam Housing

Vietnam Housing specializes in helping Vietnam's foreign community with their long- and short-term real estate rental and purchasing needs.  
R1-49, Hung Gia 3, D7  
5412 5979

## health & beauty

### DENTISTS

#### Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Mihiro.  
R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7  
5410 3937

### HOSPITALS

#### David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

DSCC provides Chiropractic care for patients using state of the art physiotherapy equipment imported from USA. DSCC is managed and operated by American doctors who use modern and advanced technologies techniques to ensure safe, gentle, and effective treatment.  
41 Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7  
5410 6242  
www.saigonchiropractic.com

#### FV Hospital

French Hospital - Vietnam is a multi-specialty hospital equipped with modern equipment and providing a full range of medical services including medical and health advice, diagnosis and surgical treatment at a single point.  
6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
5411 3333

### SALON

#### Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the

Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7  
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

## shopping

### HOME & FURNISHINGS

#### Mekong Quilts

Mekong Quilts offers sustainable employment to women from poor rural regions of Vietnam and Cambodia who craft fashionable, quality silk quilts and home wares.  
517 Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
6271 7758  
www.mekong-quilts.org

#### LADIESWEAR

#### Aquamarine

Aquamarine and Xuan Thu are premium swimsuit brands for men, women and children.  
3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
3842 7105

#### Vera

Vera is an international premium lingerie brand that is designed and made in Vietnam. The line offers cutting edge lingerie and is reasonably priced.  
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7  
3822 1152  
www.vera.com.vn

## education

### SCHOOLS

#### ABC International School

Providing a caring and nurturing atmosphere for all its students, the ABC International School offers a combination of both British and international educations and qualifications.  
Saigon South Campus 1 (Primary & Secondary)  
#2, 1E Street, Khu Dan Cu Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh  
5431 1833 /34/35/36  
abcintschoolss@vnn.vn  
www.theabcis.com

#### Kids Club Saigon

Early childhood centers in Phu My Hung offering creative play-based programs for children ages 2 to 5. Known for unique facilities, experienced staff, high-quality learning resources, and small class sizes  
79/7 Pham Thai Buong, D7  
27/3 Ha Huy Tap, D7  
5412 5944  
www.kidsclubsaigon.com

#### Kindermusik

The center is a music, movement and English-language program for children from birth to 7 years. Each lesson promotes early literacy and English language acquisition, social skills and more. Kindermusik programs align with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary years.  
Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7  
www.kindermusik-vietnam.com  
090 709 9480

#### Renaissance International School Saigon

Opened in 2008, The Renaissance International School Saigon offers programs from Early Years to secondary curriculum, founded on the International British System. The four buildings on the school's one-hectare site include a 350-seat auditorium, a computer resource centre, gymnasium and 25 m swimming pool.  
74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7  
3773 3171  
www.rissaiagon.edu.vn

#### RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT International University Vietnam is the Asian hub of Melbourne-based University RMIT - Australia's biggest tertiary institution.

The largest offshore campus in the world, RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering.  
702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
3776 1300

#### Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families. SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.  
78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7  
5413 0901  
www.ssis.edu.vn

#### Vstar School

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.  
Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7  
3821 3821

#### VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.  
R4 -28 Hung Phuoc 2, Le Van Thiem, D7  
3602 6694

## recreation

### CINEMAS AND THEATRES

#### Lotte Cinema

Lotte Cinema (Nam Saigon) has 1,336 seats in 6 theaters, showing movies in English and Vietnamese.  
3rd Floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7  
3775 2527

#### Megastar Cineplex

Showing movies in English and Vietnamese, and Megastar offers more cinema screens than anyone else in Vietnam. Both the Crescent Mall and Parkson Paragon location s have 8 theaters.  
5th Floor, Crescent Mall, 101 Ton Dat Tien, D7  
5412 2222  
5th Floor, Parkson Paragon, 3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
5416 0088

### GYMS & SPORTS

#### The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.  
3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza,  
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7  
5412 1277

#### Body by Jovie

An urban boutique gym & yoga studio with a unique facility catering to the individual demanding diversity, personal attention and results. They are an alternative to the mainstream gym who strive on raw functional training, small group fitness & Yoga combined with state of the art equipment.  
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence  
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence  
Nguyen Luong Bang, D7  
5417 1946; 0120 384 0961  
bodybyjovie.com  
info@bodybyjovie.com

#### Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba®Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbAtomic®.  
Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril6you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and

Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1).  
093 406 0735 or 6680 7226  
zumba.nutrition@gmail.com  
www.zumba-saigon.com

#### Saigon South Golf Club

The closest golf course to HCMC's downtown area, Saigon South is a 9-hole, par 3 golf course and driving range situated behind FV hospital. There are foreign trainers to help golfers with golf skills. Equipment hire is available.  
Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
5411 2001

## travel

### HOTELS

#### Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.  
15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7  
5411 1008

#### Bizu Premier Hotel Phu My Hung

Twenty-five rooms spread over 5 floors provide modern comforts such as satellite/cable TV, bathtub, balcony/terrace, bathrobes, air conditioning.  
7-9 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

#### Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently located close to Phu My Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, guests can choose from 20 rooms.  
R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7  
5410 5941

#### Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.  
73 Hoang Van Thai, D7  
www.ibis.com

#### Sabena Hotel

The Sabena Hotel sits in a quiet, tree-lined street just off the major Parkway Nguyen Van Linh. The Saigon Exhibition & Convention Center, RMIT International University and The Crescent Mall are only 1km away.  
24 Noi Khu Hung Gia 4, D7  
5416 1000

### SERVICED APARTMENTS

#### The Crescent

The Crescent is located along the Crescent Lake in the heart of Phu My Hung New City Centre, offering an exclusive high-class lifestyle for locals and expats. This area consists of a variety of green parks, restaurants, luxury apartments, retail shops and entertainment venues.  
101 Ton Dat Tien, D7

#### Garden Court

Completed in 2009, Garden Court is a luxury apartment building located close to schools, supermarkets and shopping centers and a golf course.  
Garden Court, Ton Dat Tien, D7

#### Garden Plaza

Garden Plaza is a high class apartment building designed after modern Singapore buildings, comprising of four inter-connected 8-storey blocks.  
Garden Plaza, Ton Dat Tien, D7

#### Sky Garden

Sky Garden is a huge complex of apartments including 42 buildings with more than 3,000 individual apartments set on 10.4 hectares.  
Sky Garden, Nguyen Van Linh, D7  
5410 1616

# The Second Coming of José Mourinho

English Premier League team Chelsea FC take on the All Stars in Bangkok

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO**

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE giant Chelsea FC kicked off a three game tour through Southeast Asia last month with a 1-0 win against the Thailand Premier League All-Stars in Rajamangala National Stadium in Bangkok. They join several other EPL teams touring the region including Liverpool, Arsenal, and Manchester United. Only days earlier, the Thai side posted an identical victory over Chelsea's hated EPL rival, Manchester United.

The match, for the Singha 80th Anniversary Cup sponsored by Singha Beer, marked the return of coaching icon José Mourinho, dubbed 'The Special One,' to the West London Club. And much like their play during his first stint, the Blues stifled their opponent and put up a clean sheet while never getting themselves into trouble to the delight of 45,000 screaming blue clad fans.

Four of the five remaining players - Captain John Terry, Peter Cech, Ashley Cole, and Michael Essien - from his spectacular first run at Stamford Bridge started the match and drew thunderous applause throughout the first half. Frank Lampard sat it out due to ankle problems that flared during warm ups.

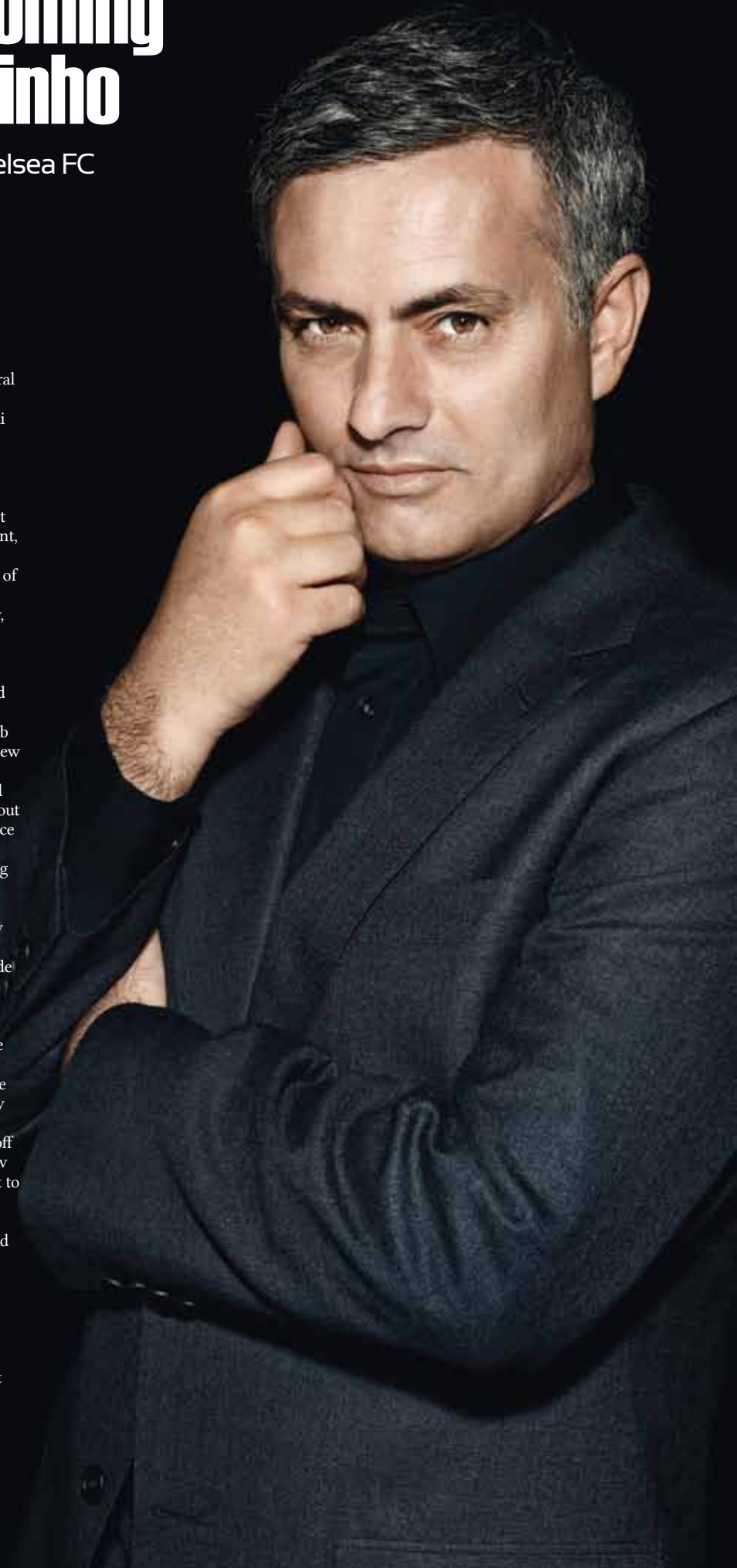
On a night when the story was the bid by Chelsea to grab Manchester United's forward Wayne Rooney, the crop of new signings and young players shined for the Blues. Kevin De Bruyne and Andre Schurrle were active and created several quality scoring opportunities on the offensive end throughout the first half, including a cross from De Bruyne on a set piece that Essien headed into the crossbar.

Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku, whose size and beasting style of play is reminiscent of Didier Drogba, found his rhythm about 20 minutes into the match and relentlessly pressured the Thai defense. He finally converted a penalty kick in the 38th minute after Brazilian defender Wallace was brought down in the box by Lazarus Kaimbi to provide the lone goal. He nearly doubled the score a minute later, but was foiled by Thai goalkeeper Kritsana Klankin. The 20-year-old forward looked supremely confident in his return from a one-year loan to West Brom and looks to be an important part of the offense this season.

The substitutions were plentiful for the second half in the sweltering heat of Bangkok. Mourinho swapped out nearly his entire side. De Bruyne was the only player to see more than 45 minutes for Chelsea, and he continued to impress off set pieces that were squandered by Demba Ba and Branislav Ivanovic who drilled a low cross wide and weakly tapped it to the waiting Klankin, respectively.

Missed opportunities piled up for the Blues as young players like newcomer Marco van Ginkel and Eden Hazard were getting good looks but couldn't finish. Hazard provided a few inspiring plays including a free kick that he bent around the wall in dramatic fashion only to have a feisty Klankin come up with yet another sterling save. Mistakes came in bunches for the Blues, but that's to be expected for a first match.

Jamal Blackman got a turn in goal in the second half, but other than one brazen 45-yard strike and a far post header that didn't come close, the Thai side never legitimately threatened Chelsea's goal. Despite Mourinho's displeasure with the blown chances, Chelsea's performance was promising and bodes well for the upcoming season. ■







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