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This Month's Cover

Image: Adam Robert Young Model: Jenny Lai Bag: Jodi bag by Anupa Outfit & Accessories: Banana Republic Stylist: Phi Phi Make Up: Kent Nguyen Venue: Crescent Mall, D7

Special thanks to **Crescent Mall** for letting us shoot this month's cover

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Contents



FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

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

P16 TROI OI

See why public toilets, airplane calls and the "golden population structure" made our noteworthy numbers this month

P18 THE BULLETIN

Checking out the latest promotions and openings

P24 MY LIFE AS...

One of the city's ubiquitous yet mysterious mobile masseurs

P26 FIRMLY PLANTED

Giving new life to disadvantaged kids and tired urban spaces

P28 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

One housewife's quest to bring international artists to Vietnam

P48 BEAN TO BAR

The delectable story behind Vietnamese chocolate

P50 STUFFED FOR CHRISTMAS & COUNT DOWN TO NEW YEARS

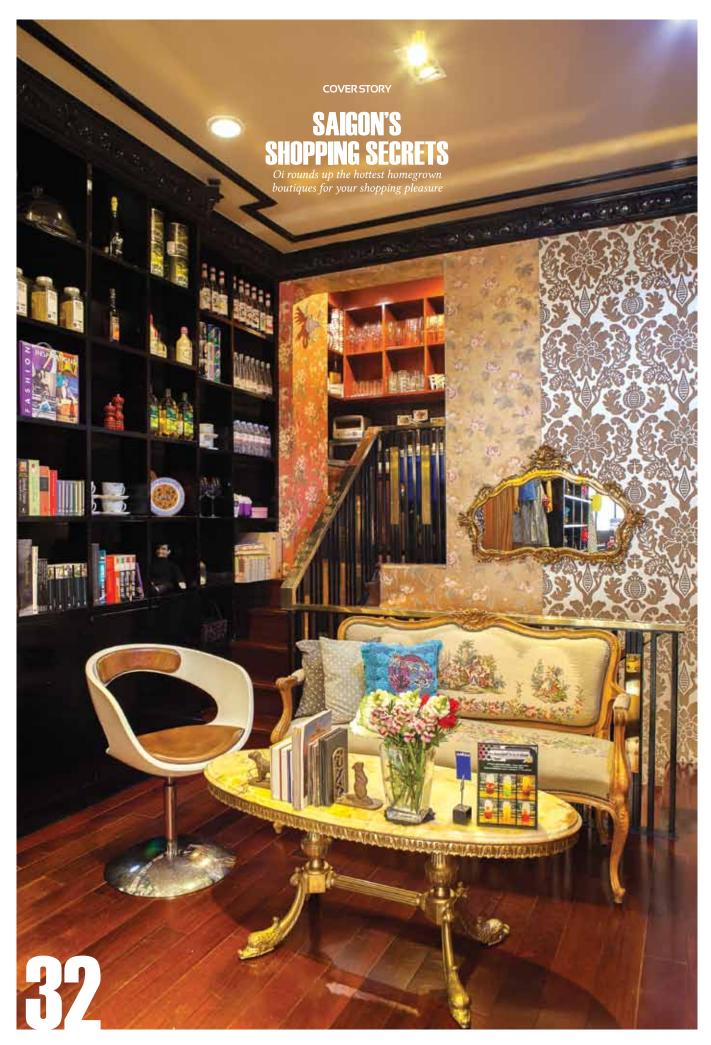
Our guide on where to find the best holiday merrymaking

P80 THE WORKOUT COUPLE

A match made in the gym

P90 THE BUSINESS OF TENNIS

In search of the next great Asian star





COLUMNS

P31 SAIGON MYTHBUSTERS

No soy sauce after surgery, and confinement after giving birth?

P70 LIFE'S A TRIP

Some of the year's best and worst travel stories

P72 ESSENTIALS

Travel gear to better your journey

P73 POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM

 $Tapping\ into\ your\ subconscious\ for\ inspiration$

P82 THE SYLLABUS

The beauty of growing up bilingual

P83 HIGHER LEARNING

Educating children with special needs

P92 LEGAL EASE

Know before you rent

P93 FOUND 404

Groceries and beer without leaving the house

P95 MONEY TALKS

The history of debt

Editor's Note



Shop Till You Drop

THIS SURELY HAS been an exciting year for all of us at *Oi*, marking our very first holiday season together. It seems I just ate turkey (for American Thanksgiving) and it's already time for another blowout meal. Last year, I spent Christmas with great friends and great food (that included a non-traditional seafood BBQ) and hope to do it all again this year. I was just at the supermarket yesterday and heard *Winter Wonderland* playing. While the weather certainly isn't Christmassy, the sentiment is appreciated! Something about the holidays puts us all in a wonderfully cheerful mood.

This time of year, for many, means shopping for friends here or family back home. I remember as a teenager, my friends and I getting together every weekend to hit the malls. My young, materialistic self would beg my sisters to drive me to these endless outlet malls in neighboring Pennsylvania and New Jersey to do some tax-free shopping, scooping up wintertime brand name clothes for cheap. I didn't care that they were last season's fashions or even that they were irregular items! Now that I'm more budget conscious and interested in style and value rather than just brands, I pretty much only shop at thrift and secondhand shops, in search of that unique piece amongst a heap of other items.

Shopping for an increasing number, though, means logging on to a computer. I know my niece and nephew in NYC already have their Amazon Wish Lists up consisting of all things princess or Pokemon. But there's something visceral about going into a shop filled with wonderful things that you can see and touch. This month, our writers and photographers have scoured the city for unique, innovative and even quirky gifts for everyone on your list.

Inside the magazine, you'll also find Lolita Guevarra's fascinating article on the Green Youth Collective, an initiative that's part social work, part urban landscaping, where science meets craft. As an avid gardener (testified to by the rows of plants on my balcony that I religiously check on daily), I'd give this article a green thumbs up.

We received tremendous feedback on our article on Mimi, the transgender funeral performer. So many of you have written in and commented on this gritty, somber, touching piece. This month, NPD Khanh does it again with *My Life as... a Cycling Masseur.* Seeing these men on the city's streets and hearing rumors that they didn't just give massages, I've always wondered what their life story was and how they got into the business. Whether it's a legitimate one or not will be up to you to decide.

Finally, James Pham writes an impassioned love letter to Istanbul, a place that's always been on my travel bucket list because of its fascinating architecture and history. More 'modern' places like Seoul, Tokyo and Singapore simply don't connect with me. Give me a city with cobblestone streets and towering spires that pierce the sky any day. Closer to home, James explores the story of chocolate practically in our backyard, in the province of Ben Tre. One of my favorite post-Christmas turkey and stuffing drinks are mochaccinos, the perfect blend of dark chocolate and espresso, both homegrown right here in Vietnam.

Sometimes it's hard being away from family and friends back home during the holidays. But however you celebrate this time of year, may you share some wonderful times surrounded by the people you love. From all of us at *Oi*, a very merry Christmas and an even happier New Year! Email me with your thoughts and stories at *christine@oivietnam.com* or leave comments on our website or Facebook page.

We'll see you back here in 2014 to explore more of this great country we call home. ■

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor



Datebook

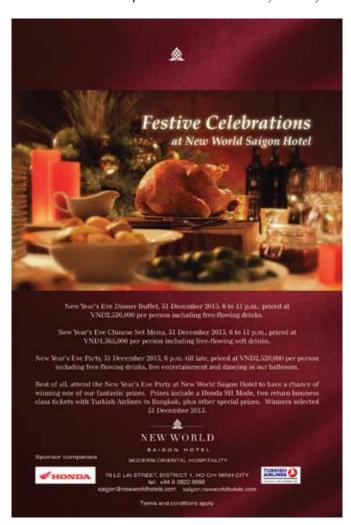
Fill up your calendar with these exciting events

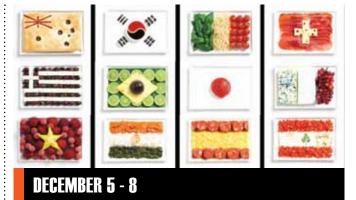


What: Paint like Van Gogh

Where: VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2; 6:30pm - 9pm About: Travel back to the 19th century and feel like Vincent Van Gogh. His use of color, creative portraits and letters have made him one of the most famous painters in history. While enjoying a wine tasting, you will be briefly introduced to Van Gogh's techniques. After that, the canvas is yours to get creative.

Contact: Visit www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846 for more info





What: Food Festival

Where: September 23 Park, Pham Ngu Lao, D1

About: A four-day festival displaying foods and specialties from 20 countries and territories worldwide. Performances and events will demonstrate cooking methods and traditional art and music from other countries. A contest to judge wine and the art of bartending will also be held along with a scheduled program on teaching about food. The festival, which has been held eight times, is organized by the city's Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism and HCMC's Tourism Association. Expect 120 booths from the city's 60 restaurants and hotels.

.....



What: Black Rebel Motorcycle Club Live Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

About: Following on from its recent show with UK headliners The Cribs, Loud Minority has pulled off another major coup, which will see American rock & roll legends, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, ride into Saigon for an intimate show. BRMC rose to fame in 2001 with their raucous self-titled debut and notorious live shows. They have since released seven albums, appeared on numerous movie soundtracks and cemented their reputation as one of the best live bands in the business. Brazilian three-piece Turtle Giant, who played their own headline show at Cargo Bar in October, will also be playing.

Tickets cost VND350,000 (advance) and VND200,000 (with student ID) and are available online at www.ticketbox.com or in person from Asian Kitchen (185/22 Pham Ngu Lau, D1) or Mc Sorleys (4 Thao Dien, D2).

Contact: Email loud_minority@yahoo.com for more info



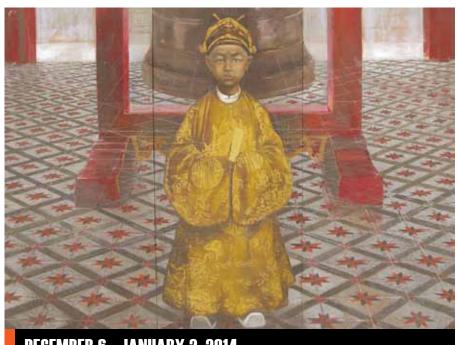
DECEMBER 6

What: 50 Years of The Beatles

Where: Caravelle Hotel, 19 Lam Son Square, D1; 7pm – 11pm

About: British Business Group Vietnam is celebrating 50 years of The Beatles with a four course Christmas dinner that includes free flowing cocktails, wine and beer. Tickets for the party cost VND2.2 million for members and VND2.6 million for non-members. The event will see Saigon Beatles exclusively perform a special musical program. There will also be a charity raffle with flights to Europe and other great prizes to be won. Each raffle ticket costs VND100,000. Attendees are required to adhere to a dress code of The Beatles, The Swinging Sixties or All You Need is Love theme.

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



DECEMBER 6 - JANUARY 2, 2014

What: House of Nguyen

Where: Craig Thomas Gallery, 27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1

About: A solo exhibition of new paintings by Saigon-based artist Nguyen Minh Tam. His interest in the Nguyen Dynasty started some years ago, reading history online and in second-hand books. Like the old books that got thrown out, so did old furniture. Tam paints portraits on old tabletops, cabinets, doors and screens. "I like beds too because we sleep in them," he says. "So many people slept there too and they told stories to their kids."

The home units he gets are discarded. The people who let the furniture go dismissed them as obsolete. Tam plays with that idea and works to render the pieces even more useless - doors don't open, cabinets are like mausoleums.

An opening reception will be held on December 6 from 6pm – 9pm.

Contact: Visit www.cthomasgallery.com for more info





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What: A Choral Christmas

Where: Friday, December 6 at 7:30pm, ICOHCMC will perform at St. Paul's Convent (4 Ton Duc Thang, D1). Saturday, December 7 at 7:30pm, ICOHCMC will perform at the famous Notre Dame Cathedral in District 1.

About: The annual The International Choir & Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City (ICOHCMC) holiday concert. The concert will feature pieces by both Carl Philip Emanuel and Johann Sebastian Bach, Victoria, Praetorius, Handel, and of course, all of your favorite Christmas carols. This year's concert will be held on two nights in December at two very special locations: St. Paul's Convent and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Entrance to both of these performances will be by donation only, so no advance tickets will be available. (Their suggested donation is the cost of a good meal.) As always, the proceeds of this concert will go to support programs that enrich the lives of children throughout Vietnam by donating to two charities: Loreto Vietnam-Australia Program and Poussieres de Vie (Dust of Life). Please arrive early in order to get a good seat, and bring all your loved ones along. Contact: Email marketing@icohcmc.com for more info





What: Volunteer Day Event

Where: Ton Duc Thang Museum, Event Hall, 5 Ton Duc Thang, D1 About: The LIN Volunteer Stories Ceremony and International Volunteer Day Event is a chance to meet skilled volunteers and the not-for-profit organizations they support. You will also be inspired by stories about skilled volunteers and the impact they have made on not-for-profit organizations in Vietnam and be the first to learn which stories were selected for a prize and inclusion in the LIN Volunteer Stories Handbook 2013. The event is sponsored by Irish Aid, Intel Vietnam, ACET, Yoga Living, Yves Rocher, UN Volunteers, Zalora, and Sweet + Sour Bakery.

Contact: Visit www.LINvn.org for more info



DECEMBER 7

What: Fashion Show

Where: Papagayo Restaurant, 18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2; 5pm welcome drinks, 5:30pm show

About: French-Vietnamese designer Magalie will present her new collection, featuring clothing and accessories for adults and children. The new collection will then be sold at Little Anh-Em Concept shop located on 37 Thao Dien, D2. The event is free and open to all. Contact: Email little.anhem@gmail.com or visit www.littleanh-em.

blogspot.com for more info

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Tel: (08) 3911 0588 Fax: (08) 3911 0587 Hotline: 0122 428 5237 www.whiteforest.com.vn

www.facebook.com/WhiteForestRestaurant





The Landmark

The Landmark Health Club is offering 25% discount on Full Club Memberships for 6 months and 1 year, now until 31st December, 2013. Located on the 15th and 16th floors, the Health Club offers a fully-equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, fitness studio, and squash court. The studio offers 3 weekly yoga classes, with other classes coming soon.







The Landmark Health Club is known for its intimate and exclusive atmosphere for residents and outside members. The proud and dedicated staff have been trained according to The Peninsula Properties international standards and are focused on looking after your needs. This, coupled with each individual's experience, makes our staff an outstanding team. The prime waterfront location makes for eye-pleasing views over the Salgon River and the city while working out or relaxing by the pool.

58 Ton Duc Thang St., District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam Tel: (84-8) 38222098 Fax: (84-8) 38225161 www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

DECEMBER 7

What: Bar Wars Xmas Bash

Where: Phatty's, 46-48 Ton That Tiep, D1;

8:30am

About: Bar Wars Xmas Bash includes a two-ball scramble golf competition at Royal Island Golf Course in Binh Duong. Interested players are welcome to join for an entry fee of VND2.8 million (if paid pre-event). Bar Wars teams can pay only VND2.7 million per player but they must book as a team of minimum four players and a team captain must be in place. Entry fee includes breakfast, bus transport, 18-hole green fee with caddy and twin share cart.

During the event, a Secret Santa (Kris Kringle) will also be held. In connection with this, all players are required to bring a small Christmas gift of a minimum value VND100,000. The winner of the competition will get a business class return ticket to Dubai. Other prizes include dinner vouchers from Au Lac Do Brazil. Also, a super special lucky draw for Jasmine Spa VIP card valued at USD1,000 will also be held. Supporting bar teams such as Kim's Tavern, Drunken Duck, Game On, Chilli Pub, ER, Phatty's, Cargo Bar, Voodoo and Jaspas will also be giving vouchers.

Contact: Call Craig Brogan at 090 927 3997 or email craig@brogolfer.com for more info



DEGENIDEN / - II

What: Art Through the Eyes of a Street Child Where: VinGallery, 95 Pasteur, D1; 5pm - 7pm About: The Christina Noble Children's Foundation art class was established in 2000 to offer disadvantaged children the opportunity to explore, create, and develop their innate artistic potential through visual art. Each child is able to do so through activities such as drawing, painting, and craft work. Over the past 13 years, this class has empowered children in the pursuit of artistic creativity as well as offering an escape from difficult personal circumstances. This exhibition is a culmination of each student's creative process. It also provides an opportunity for the children to showcase their artwork and to be proud of their achievements. All proceeds raised from this exhibition will go towards art supplies for the upcoming school year.

Contact: Visit www.cncf.org or www. vingallery.com for more details

DECEMBER 8

What: Kermesse

Where: Saigon Zoo, Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1; 9am - 4pm

About: It's a family fun day for a good cause with live music, dance, magic shows, games for all ages, food, a climbing wall, an art exhibition, a Poussières de Vie educational corner and much more. This charity event attracted a whopping 15,000 visitors last year and this year, Kermesse is expecting even more visitors. Proceeds will go to Vietnamese children in need of Poussières de Vie's help.

Contact: Visit www.poussieresdevie.org for more info



What: Art Market

Where: VinGallery, 95 Pasteur, D1; 10am - 4pm

About: Art Market is a great opportunity for art lovers to come and grab first-hand design. It will showcase handmade arts and crafts, paintings, drawings, limited edition prints and

photography.

Contact: Visit www.vin-space.com for more info

DECEMBER 14

What: Heart Beat Turns 1

Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4; 9pm

About: Heart Beat is presenting German house DJ Gregor Welz to celebrate its first anniversary. Gregor is half of the duo German Lachs. Lots of imagination and a certain feeling for the right sound at the right moment combined with a proper portion of cheeky charm help him create special music to tune in to. Welz will be supported by Saigon's Nic Ford and funky Papa Konka. Tickets are available for VND100,000 (pre-sale) at Ticketbox and VND150,000 at the door. Twenty-five percent of ticket proceeds will be donated to VinaCapital Foundation Heartbeat Vietnam, raising funds for kids with congenital heart disease all over Vietnam.

Contact: Visit www.heartbeatsaigon.com for more info



What: Le Bon Marché Festival

Where: September 23 Park; 4pm – 10pm on Saturday and 11am – 9:30pm on Sunday About: A two-day gastronomic and entertaining festival to celebrate the France-Vietnam friendship and to close the season of "France in Vietnam 2013."

Enjoy a live concert each night with rising young Vietnamese talents, including Vietnamese singer Trang Phap, artistic performances, a professional bakery competition, a gourmet products market and many French and Vietnamese food stalls.

Contact: Visit www.lehoiphapviet.com for more info



What: Johnny Hallyday Concert

Where: Hotel Equatorial, 242 Tran Binh Trong, D5; 9am - 6pm About: Rock and roller Johnny Hallyday, known as the French Elvis Presley, will hold a concert for a cause this month. The proceeds of the concert will be used to build schools for children with AIDS who cannot go to normal schools and also to help them get treatment. The concert is one of several in Asia to support the Laeticia foundation.

Contact: Call 3839 7777 or visit www.ufe.org/concert-johnny for more info

DECEMBER 19

What: Christmas Landscape

Where: VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1

About: Warm up this Christmas with your own masterpiece. This is a perfect way to get creative in the festive season. Make a snowy Christmas landscape or a painting as a gift for a friend, or to hang on your wall at home. No experience is required - you will be guided all the way, no matter what your painting level.

Contact: Visit www.vin-space.com for details



What: A Glowing Affair

Where: 2 Lam Son Martini Bar, 2 Lam Son Square, D1; 5pm About: Come celebrate in neon fashion for a flashy Glow in the Dark New Year's Eve party. The bar will be decorated to illuminate the night and will provide a venue to drink and dance into the New Year. The DJ will spin outrageous beats from 10pm until the early morning. Contact: Call 3824 1234 or email vanthanh.doan@hyatt.com for more details



Troi Oi

The country by numbers

90 MILLION

The total population Vietnam reached last month as recorded by the General Office of Population and Family Planning. Vietnam is the 14th most populous country in the world and the third in Southeast Asia, and with this rank, Vietnam is "a powerful country in terms of population," said Duong Quoc Trong, who is head of the agency.

However, the more important issue here is what the country should do to make it "a powerful country in terms of population quality," continued Trong, adding that population quality here covers various fields including physical fitness, health, education, professional skills, and others.

"Vietnam is entering a period known as a 'golden population structure,' meaning for every two or more people working, there is only one dependent person. Such a structure is providing the country with a good opportunity for boosting its socioeconomic development, but the quality of the golden population must be improved to make the population become golden both in quantity and qualification," he said.





Vietnamese women on average marry foreigners every year and the number is on the rise. The figure was released at a conference titled "Vietnamese women in foreign countries" held in Hanoi by the State Committee for Overseas Vietnamese Affairs and the Vietnam Women's Union. Speaking at the event, Dang The Hung, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Overseas Vietnamese Affairs, said most the marriages between Vietnamese women and foreigners are through matchmakers and brokers. "Many of those with foreign husbands have low educational levels, so they usually have to depend on their husbands. Many marriages were conducted like commercial exchanges between foreigners and poor women who wanted to marry foreigners for financial purposes," Hung explained.



VND 15 BILLION

will be used to build 14 public toilets in the capital. The Hanoi People's Committee has approved the construction of 14 freestanding WCs - 10 with two rooms and four with four rooms – to be placed in densely populated areas around Hanoi. The project is scheduled to kick off later this month. There are currently 310 public toilets in the four old urban districts of Hanoi.



3.5 MILLION

of the country's 90 million citizens suffer from various respiratory diseases caused by pollution, especially air contamination. The number of citizens with respiratory diseases is four to five times higher in large cities like Hanoi, HCMC, and Hai Phong than in less developed localities, said Hong Duong Tung, Deputy Head of the Environmental Protection General Department. Attempts to control air quality have proved inefficient and the technology used to control emission gas in most provinces and cities has not operated as effectively as expected.



penalty will be imposed on anyone caught smoking or using mobile phones during flights. The new fine, which is five times higher than the current one, is included in Decree 147/2013 by the government on the sanctioning of administrative violations in the field of civil aviation. The previous maximum fine was VND1 million.

Under Decree 147, fines ranging from VND10 - 20 million will be applied to those who open the exit door, and another fine of VND5 - 10 million will be given to those who steal objects, like life jackets, from a plane.

Heavier fines, from VND20 to VND30 million, will be imposed on those who verbally threaten to use explosives, radioactive substances or biological weapons at the airport or on flights.

1/3

of young Vietnamese, between the ages of 20 and 24, do not use contraceptives during sex. The figure was released at a ceremony held in Hanoi to introduce the State of World Population 2013 Report, issued by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

According to the report, some 7.3 million adolescent girls give birth each year worldwide, of which 2 million are under 15. If current trends continued, this number could rise to 3 million a year in 2030.

In Vietnam, the rate of unexpected pregnancy and unsafe abortion remains high among young women as 35.4 percent of adolescents, aged 15 - 19, do not use contraceptive measures. In 2011, 46 in every 1,000 adolescents in Vietnam had children.



The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC...



The latest theme bar to hit the city's drinking scene, Ahoy Beer Club on 79 Nguyen Cong Tru, Dl offers local and imported beer served by staff in sailor outfits. The spacious wooden venue is perfect for large groups and hosts occasional live DJed music. For further info, call 090 232 4425.

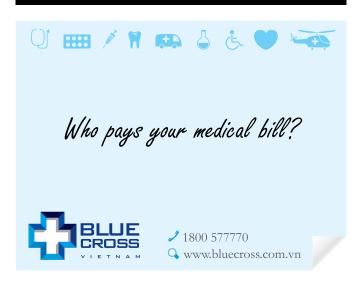




PANDORA OPENS

Pandora Sky Lounge (HDTC Building, Floor 14, 36 Bui Thi Xuan, D1) is a venue that combines trendy and sophisticated indoor settings with a luxury outdoor lounge experience incorporating wonderful rooftop views of Saigon's bustling city centre.

Pandora is an extravagant experience without the high price tag. Tantalize the taste buds with creative cocktails and exquisite fusion cuisine. Party hard fueled by DJ beats in the chic inside area or relax and chat with old and newfound friends on comfortable couches on the rooftop terrace. Opens till late.







KINDERPIZZA

Kindermusik, the early childhood music and movement program for children between the ages of three months to seven years old, is offering a promotion for attendees. Every child attending every Sunday at 4:30pm from December 15 will receive a free coupon for a child-size pizza after class at La Cucina restaurant located at the Crescent Residence 1.

Kindermusik is located at Crescent Residence 2, Ton Dat Tien, D7. Call 090 709 9480 or visit *www.kindermusik-vietnam.com* for more info.

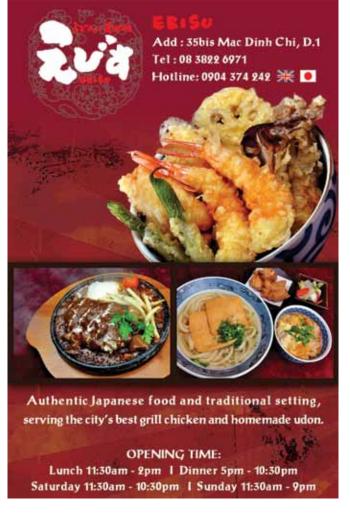


HARI FY-DAVIDSON OPFNS

Iconic American motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson has recently opened its first dealership in Vietnam on 800 Nguyen Van Linh in District 7. The shop offers Harley-Davidson motorcycles, parts, accessories and motorcycle apparel.

Harley-Davidson heavyweight motorcycles, with engine displacements greater than 700 cc, are designed for cruising on highways and are noted for the tradition of heavy customization that give rise to the chopper style of motorcycle.







HEALTH CLUB PROMOTION

The Health Club on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark, an international serviced apartment and office complex located at 5B Ton Duc Thang, D1, is offering a 25 percent discount on full club memberships for six months or one year until December 31.

Members and guests can work out in the fully-equipped gym overlooking the city and yogis can relax in the recently opened fitness studio overlooking the Saigon River. The studio currently offers three weekly classes, with other classes coming soon.

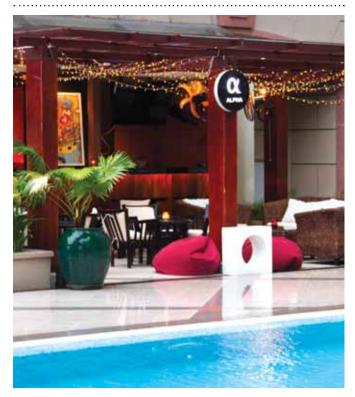
On the 16th floor, a squash court welcomes players ranging from long-term members to beginner guests. If you don't have a partner to play against, Health Club supervisor, Viet, will happily coordinate a partner of similar playing ability, or he will gladly play you himself. Health Club is open from 6am – 10pm on Mondays through Fridays and 8am – 8pm on weekends and public holidays. For more information, contact Health Club manager Pamela Haake at 3822 2098 or email her at *pamela@thelandmarkvietnam.com*.





DUNKIN' DONUTS OPENS

The American donut and coffee franchise has just opened on 59 Nguyen Duc Canh in Phu My Hung. Offerings include munchkins, croissants, donut sandwiches and toasted sandwiches - along with the popular sugar raised, glazed chocolate mochi, glazed, chocolate coconut, cinnamon, Boston kreme, Bavarian Kreme, strawberry-filled or chocolate frosted donuts. A box of 12 is priced at VND160,000 and buying per piece will cost you VND18,000. Dunkin' Donuts in Vietnam is operated by Vietnam Food and Beverage Co. Around the world, Dunkin' Donuts currently has more than 10,000 restaurants in 32 countries, including more than 1,450 locations in Southeast Asia.



ALPHA LAUNCH

Sports bar Alpha has launched at The Manor, Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh in Binh Thanh District. Alpha is a space "to share new ideas and launch prototypes, create new beginnings and start a tech revolution." Weekly promotions include Manor Mondays (happy hour all day for Manor residents), Teacher Tuesdays (happy hour all day for teachers), Thirsty Thursdays (two for one on all cocktails), Sport Saturdays (screening sports from around the world) and on Sundays movie nights by the pool and "the best roast dinner in town."



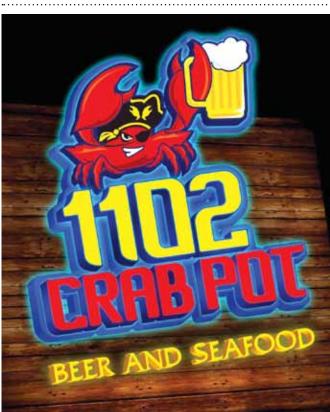
CHEESECAKE NGON OPENS

Cheesecake Ngon (44 Truong Quyen, D3) is a small boutiquestyle cheesecake shop. They use only top quality local and imported ingredients that give their cakes their signature smooth, creamy taste.

They can provide cheesecakes for all occasions: birthdays, functions, cafe/restaurant supply or even just a single slice. A range of flavors are available including passionfruit, raspberry, strawberry, lemon, coconut and of course original, starting at VND40,000 per slice.

Cheesecakes Ngon was created when two brothers had a vision to combine delicious tasting cheesecakes with a social conscience; to make a positive difference in Vietnam through business. They aim to empower local staff and business owners to do the best they can in business and to stop the cycle of poverty by giving each individual specific skills and training in their stores to raise their level of expertise not only in food safe practices and baking, but also in business and life skills.

Online ordering available with free delivery for orders over VND150,000 at www. cheesecakengon.com



CRAB POT OPENS

Crab Pot is a beer and seafood restaurant which describes itself as "a place designed for weird people who dare to be truly themselves." The restaurant offers breakfasts, lunches and dinners of American, French, seafood and Vietnamese cuisines, with delivery and catering services also available. Crab Pot is located on 65 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3 and is open from 10am – 11:30pm.







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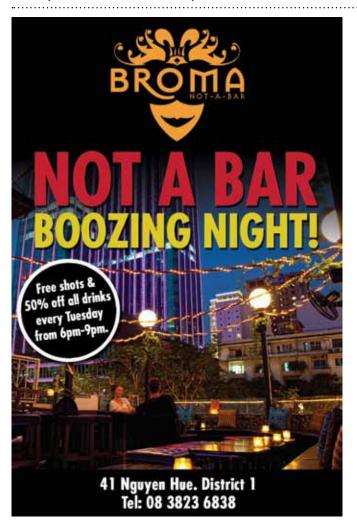
The Observatory, a new place to discover art, culture and the nightlife scene, has just opened in Saigon. Located on the corner of Le Lai and Ton That Tung, D1, the multipurpose space serves as a platform for different types of art and music events. With a café/bar spread over two floors, outdoor terrace and balcony, it's also a place to socialize and relax.

The Observatory is intended to provide a place in Saigon where people can come into contact with alternative styles of music, art, and information on what's going on in the city.

It hosts receptions, screenings and readings of subjects to suit any taste, or you can just chill on the deck overlooking the busy intersection. The gallery provides access to contemporary art with exhibitions ranging from more traditional art displays to experiential, interactive and interdisciplinary programming.

In its capacity as an information centre, The Observatory provides details of other venues, events and exhibitions in Saigon, offering a prime point of contact for anyone interested in discovering what this vibrant city has to offer.

The Observatory is open from 11am – 12am on Mondays through Wednesdays, 11am – 2am on Thursdays, 11am – 4am on Fridays and Saturdays and 11am – 12am on Sundays. For more info, visit *www.theobservatory-hcmc.com*.





HB WILD IN GRAND STYLE

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip has the pleasure of introducing its new resident band, HB Wild, to Club 9. The six-person ensemble that hails from all corners of the globe is bringing world-class entertainment to Vietnam's first fully integrated resort.

Leading HB Wild is bass player, singer, actor and producer, Henri Brown (HB). HB is cousin to the legendary Jimi Hendrix and son of Music Hall of Fame inductee Eleanor Collins.

Jamming with HB is singer Colette Neil from Scotland, guitarist Ryan Carrol also from Scotland, saxophonist Shaun Thomas from Toronto, drummer Josh Carlsen from Vancouver, and Stan Ganapolsky on the keyboard.

"HB Wild is a motley crew of talented versatile musicians who cover everything from rock to funk to pop to jazz and soul. They have performed at some of the best integrated resorts in the world, most recently in Macau. We are very excited to have them bring the 'Wild' party to Vietnam and turn up the heat at Club 9," said John Webb, Vice President of Hospitality at The Grand – Ho Tram Strip.

HB Wild will be playing at Club 9 weekly Tuesday through Sunday nights.

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is located at Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District, Ba Ria Vung Tau. Visit, *www.thegrandhotramstrip.com* for more info



A TASTF OF ITALY

Vecchio Café (39/3 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3) brings Italian cuisine and ambience to Saigon. This cafe features an exterior that looks like an Italian house with brick walls and vases of flowers in the windows. The interior features Italian ornate décor, dim lighting and antique furniture, enhanced by Italian music. Offerings include pasta, soup, chicken dishes, salad, beef dishes, gelato and beverages such as smoothies, fresh fruit juices and tea.



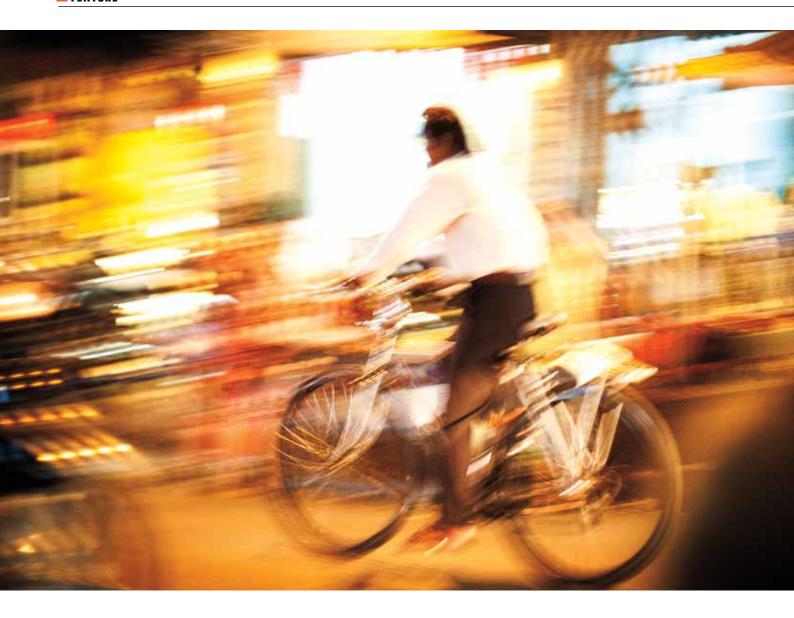
NEW FRENCH RESTAURANT

Le Paris (45 Mac Thi Buoi, D1) adds to the city's growing collection of French restaurants. This cozy modern food space offers French, seafood, steaks and vegetarian dishes. Interior features depictions of Eiffel Tower, Seine River and Notre Dame Cathedral. Services offered include waiter service, reservations, catering and takeout. It opens on Mondays to Sundays from 11am – 3pm and 6pm – 11pm. For reservations, call 6291 3661.



Admissions accepted all year round Contact for more info:

08 37442639 - 0903858659 info@montessori.edu.vn montessorivn@gmail.com www.montessori.edu.vn



My Life as...

a cycling masseur

RETOLD BY NPD KHANH WITH PERMISSION FROM HUY, TAN BINH DISTRICT

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

MY NAME IS Huy. No surname. If you need one, make one up yourself. Have it whatever you like - Smith, Nguyen - whatever you folks fancy. My clients call me "Punch and Knead." So it's Huy Punch and Knead for them. I figure it's as good a name as any.

A couple of years ago, can't remember how long, a newspaper ran a series on us mobile masseurs. I remembered it was a pretty big thing, huge exposé on us, gritty and all that, didn't leave any details unsaid. They ran it on *Tuoi Tre*, or *Thanh Nien* or whatever, and they probably still have it on the net these days. So I don't know what you want to hear from me. Anything you want to know, they probably already published so what's the point? I was paid for my time and it's not like I'm ashamed of what I am, so I'm going to talk cause you

want to hear.

So... I'm a masseur. If you're the fancy spagoing type, you probably don't know what I'm talking about. I'm not one of them cute young girls fresh off the paddy farms in one of them rich people spa houses, no ma'am. If you are one of them fancy spa-going type, you probably never saw my kind in your life before. But maybe you hear about me, no? What am I'm talking about? The kind of masseur I am... you know them - ratty, dirty, sweaty looking people on rickety rackety bicycles driving around the streets at night? Us with the metal Y-shape sticks with lots of empty bottle caps dangling from it. We rattle the stick to get people's attention - the rattling noise is our signal - because shouting and hollering would make our throats dry

and sore. Anyone so much as yell "dam bop" (massage) at us, usually them drunks from the booze houses, and we'll come over all smiles and bowing, "Yes sir?"

That's me, folks. The cycling masseur.

We don't have a fancy spa to treat you in and most of us aren't cute young girls, but hey, we don't charge a service fee. And as long as you don't mind the smell, we do the same thing the cute young girls do in the spa, and we do them at a fifth of the price, so I figure it's as good a deal as any. We aren't picky about who we service either. No shirts, no shoes, I'm still going to give you a massage.

So, are you clear about what we are? Good. Back to me. So I've been a masseur for as long as I can remember, which is forever. At least since I arrived in Saigon. Nope, I'm not a



native Saigonese. You think them hoity-toity native Saigonese would ever stoop to menial immigrant work like mine? You can go the entire city and you won't find one Saigonese mobile masseur, I can tell you that. They think the spa type is already bad enough, let alone us folks of the streets. No sir, we are all poor as dirt emigrants.

Fresh Off the Bus

I've been a masseur since the day I set foot in Old Saigon. That was back a couple of decades ago. I was nine I think. Fresh off the bus with VND50,000 in my pocket. In those days, that lasted me for two weeks. But afterwards, I got nothing to carry me. So I had to find a job. Kneading and punching people's backs is as good a one as any. So I took it.

What did you ask? Where were my mom and dad? Why wasn't I in school? Child labor should be banned?

Why are you so picky about what you hear? We had just finished a war. The Americans dropped bombs on us. You think anyone cared that a couple of kids were running around, sans parents, and working to put food in their mouths? You don't live the life. You don't get a say.

I learned [the job] from this old guy. I used to

run petty jobs for him in those first two weeks. Guess he took pity on me since learning the ropes should have cost me more than I had back then. Back in those days there were lots of kids like me running around. They all came from the paddy farms. You know what war does to people? Think about what it leaves behind. Lots of kids with no parents. Back in those days, if you were a kid with no parents and no paddy farm, you went to the city. The rich people in the city had jobs for you. You could live off their crumbs. You stay in the paddy farms, there's nothing for you but dirt and mud.

So I took the job and it has paid the bills ever since.

Is it hard? Of course it is. It's lots of physical work and no dignity and an hour of backbreaking work gets you only VND50,000 on a good day, and then subtract the fee paid to the local don. And there's a lot more rules to it, to living in the underside of society than you care to know. How do I live off that little? Back in those days, VND50,000 could get you real far. But yeah, it doesn't go as far nowadays. But now there are other 'massages' people want that we can give - the sweet, sticky kind.

I have two patrons: sweet 40-something ladies whose husbands don't give them enough

attention. I feel no shame about it. Few who are doing this job do, regardless of how they may whine to others about it. It's simply part of what we do. We, as in humans. It's the oldest job in the history of mankind, no? I don't get what people are so ashamed about. If you are not doing the job, then you have an excuse, because you need to keep face. It's what society wants to see in you. But if you are doing the job, then there's no excuse. There's no dignity in this job so I don't understand why some are so wound up about something so small. It's not like you don't get money for your labor. My personal opinion is if you feel ashamed about it, you shouldn't be in the business at all.

Of course, nothing lasts forever. My girls, both of them, aren't going to stick around, and neither am I. Doing this for years is a lot more exhausting than people imagine. The long night shift, because no one wants to see our face in the daylight, and the hazards. It gets to you. I sure don't want to do this for the rest of my life. I'm no spring chicken anymore and I've saved up some. It's enough to go back home, to the paddy farms, but this time actually owning something in my name.

I would like that, yeah. Back home, with a cute young wife. A simple wish that all guys want



Firmly Planted

Integrating the urban jungle with the natural world to create a green lifestyle

TEXT BY LOLITA GUEVARRA IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

IMAGINE THE MOBIUS strip, a rectangular form where one end has been twisted and attached to the other. If you were to place a pencil anywhere on this strip and began drawing a line, you will have traveled both sides of the object without ever lifting the pencil.

As this writer has a penchant for many things sci-fi, mathematics and vegetarian, it's best to understand how Green Youth Collective (GYC) operates through a visual representation.

In an abstract and most simplistic (possibly offensive) concept, the Mobius strip can be seen as a plane with infinite beginnings and endings.

The GYC mission is to provide vocational training to disadvantaged youths in organic gardening and urban landscape design following modern and sustainable practices - serving as the plane of the Mobius strip.

"Poor kids get recycled to poor adults," says cofounder Leslie Werner.
"Vocational training here is to become a better maid or waitress." Leslie, who also runs Smile Group, an organization for families affected by HIV/AIDS, hopes to attract youths despite the stigma of a profession typically reserved for the poor and uneducated.

"This is different from traditional farming as we are integrating science with craft," says Thanh Nguyen, another co-founder and marketing/ operations manager. "We are mixing tradition and modern technology together."

Set in District 9, GYC operates on 6,000 square meters of land along the Dong Nai River where the center will hold classes on products and services. The intended market comprises of foreign families, middle to upper class Vietnamese households, commercial businesses and the hospitality

industry wanting to utilize unoccupied wall, roof, patio or balcony space, in addition to maintenance services.

There are currently two recruits: cousins Le Huynh Thanh Quy, 18, and Huynh Le Kim Ngan, 15. Both are Smile Group alumni having lost both their parents to AIDS. The program does not begin until next June but Quy and Ngan attend various GYC events and help build the center on the weekends.

"Planting helps us reduce stress and is good for the environment," says Ngan through translator and co-founder/ beneficiary manager Duoc Nguyen. She sits



next to Quy in their grandmother's home. There are three younger orphaned relatives living with them, and as the eldest, they are expected to provide for the family. Until the program begins, Ngan will finish her public school education while Quy continues night school for older teens.

The program is geared for youths between the age of 18 and 30. GYC is in the process of obtaining more teachers for their program, developing its curriculum, and partnering with more businesses and mentors for training experience and future employment.

Seeds of Life

Funding for GYC projects comes in various forms, including a grant from hotel group Accor and design projects contracted with local firms. Novotel will use GYC trainees to service their potted plants and Rice Creative, a design agency, hired GYC to design their rooftop patio. WORK, a co-working space and creativity school in District 3, contracted GYC to design its organic garden supplying the on-site cafe. The collective has since examined the soil and the surrounding area

to sketch an optimal array of vegetation organic to that terrain.

Part of the GYC is also the product portion. GYC manufactures GRO-POD organic boxes, a square container for clients interested in growing their own produce. The collective recently installed GRO-PODs at Anh Linh School. "We want to maximize growth - most amount of vegetation in the least amount of space," says Tanya Meftah, co-founder and managing director.

Back at the farm, permaculture specialist Steven Wiig instructs trainees in water catchment and irrigation techniques and developing organic

produce with a particular interest on seed cultivation and seed saving. Steven explains that he focuses on cultivating "an organic seed bank, hoping to create a collection of these 'seeds of life' from neighboring countries and locally when possible."

Any given point inhabited on the topological space of the GYC can represent a trainee, partner, client, volunteer or supporter, proving that no matter what skill or service you contribute, you are ultimately realizing one larger existence of a sustainable future.

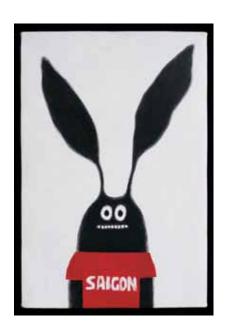


Andy Khun

Artists in Residence

A unique project brings international artists to Vietnam

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM



A DOZEN CHATTY Korean ladies are gathered around a large wooden table laden with tapas-sized snacks. The mood is jovial, fueled by copious amounts of *makgeolli*, a milky Korean rice wine. The small crowd has gathered for an art talk and exhibition by Korean artist, Andy Khun, whose ink drawings range from whimsical to disturbing to perplexing with a side of social commentary thrown into the mix.

But surprisingly the most unusual feature of the evening isn't Andy's drawing of a boy with a bear draped over his head or a red-headed girl with eyes in her hairdo. It isn't even the cartoonish yet anatomically correct nudes drawn directly onto the wall or the slideshow of images projected onto the neighboring villa. It's the fact that the exhibition is taking place in a space that's at once Andy's studio, gallery and living area but in the home of a complete stranger, absolutely rent-free.

Andy is one of several international artists

who have come to Vietnam by invitation of May Jin, a Korean housewife turned art benefactor extraordinaire. During their month-long stay, these artists are completely free to produce artwork, explore Vietnam or simply recharge their artistic batteries.

"I think artists always want to go somewhere to refresh, to find inspiration. But they're worried about the costs of accommodation. I have space, so I want to give them that space and a simple breakfast. They just need a plane ticket and can come here for one month," explains May Jin.

Although dubious at first, her family has warmed up to the project. "If my husband and [son] didn't want to do this, I couldn't do it. But they thought it was a good idea and they cheered me on. If I'm happy, my family's happy. If I'm bored or depressed then my family's bored and depressed."

Housewife of An Phu

Moving to Vietnam five years ago with her





Why on the Road by Seokmee Noh

I'll See You Right Now by Seokmee Noh

corporate exec husband and teenage son, May Jin found herself an unwilling member of the 'Housewives of An Phu' set. "I had nothing to do except engage in the Korean ladies' community. Suddenly, I wanted to do something but wasn't sure what. I cannot speak Vietnamese and everything is hard here. So this project got started."

May Jin began to invite artists to share the ground floor of her two-story home. The fully-equipped unit is completely self-contained and opens out onto a gorgeous lap pool, making it a tempting place to simply while away the hours. However, in exchange for a full month's room and board (while breakfast is always provided, artists can also sit in on other meals. "I'm not a good cook, but they can always join," says May Jin), there is really only one requirement.

"I just want one thing from them – to make something to share with my community. I want more people from Vietnam, both expats and Vietnamese, to enjoy art. I want people here to have easy access to art. It's hard to get my Vietnamese friends to come [to the art talks at May Jin's home]. To come to an art show is unusual for them. But coming here is more accessible than going to a gallery."

Art has been in May Jin's blood since her school days. She first studied biology ("It wasn't my thing"), but after joining an art club, changed her major to art history. After two years in Italy, she worked as an editor for an art magazine then opened a gallery in Seoul's artsy Insadong area. "Business was really bad and I lost lots of money," she says of her gallery which had multiple spaces for art, design and

crafts, and performance art. "But I just didn't want to sell it. In university, I wanted to be an artist but my parents strongly pushed me to be something more stable like a pharmacist or doctor. It's an Asian thing," she says with a hint

"I had nothing to do except engage in the Korean ladies' community. Suddenly, I wanted to do something but wasn't sure what. I cannot speak Vietnamese and everything is hard here. So this project oot started"

of wistfulness.

Through her B&B project, however, she's found a way to rekindle her passion, surrounding herself and her family with creatives. "In Korea, normal people like my husband work for large companies and don't know artists and don't want to know artists. They think they're wasting their life. But here, we get to know them well during the month and they get to know us well. Every evening, we finish our normal lives and then have dinner with the artists. They always think differently from other people. We can get new ideas and energy from them. We can transcend borders between artists and normal people."

To date, a number of artists have participated in May Jin's project, including singles, couples and even a family with a baby. Some are established artists, others novice, specializing in everything from installations to photography to pottery to graphic art. *Oi* spoke to Sunmin Park, Seokmee Noh and Andy Khun about the project and their time in Vietnam.

What was your initial reaction to May Jin's project?

SP: I thought it was a great chance to let my burden down with a "whew!" because I hadn't had a chance to travel since I had a baby.

AK: I was so happy to hear that! I thought this was an amazing chance. Because I am just a rookie in the fine arts field and it's very difficult to get opportunities.

How did you spend your time in Vietnam?

SN: I had a small exhibition here, and shared







From top: The Lonesome Green, Doves on a Rope, Transparent Shadow by Sunmin Park

with visitors. I visited Ho Chi Minh City and went on a short trip to the sea with May and her family. I also visited a few galleries. I had an opportunity to see their current art and to think about Asian art now.

AK: I just strolled many streets in Saigon. I went to several local markets, interesting museums, cafes and parks. I just observed people, animals, fruits, things, buildings, and trees. And sometimes drew them. In the evening, we (May's family and I) had dinners and talks for several hours. It was a very interesting and happy experience.

What artistic inspiration did you receive from your time in Vietnam?

5P: Vietnam is exotic. It's a tight tension between Western and Oriental, old and new, peace and toughness. It's different from Korea. Korea is seriously Americanized and the tradition barely survives. That kind of big contrast in Vietnam was unfamiliar to me and I was inspired.

AK: I've been to some other Southeast Asian countries and I thought the atmosphere of Vietnam would be almost the same. But I was wrong. Vietnam is more energetic and dynamic. Also I think Vietnamese characters are very unique.

How has your time in Vietnam affected your work / your life after returning to your home country?

SN: My life has gained one more fresh experience. So I am not the old me.

AK: I'm not sure yet. I'll just store the memories of Vietnam in my unconscious drawer. Probably it will be mixed with other experiences and come out as unexpected images.

SP: When I was in Vietnam, I admired how gorgeous the aesthetics were, whether people were rich or poor. As soon as I came back to Korea, I tried to make my space look better. Because of the extremely busy daily life in Korea, my circumstances sometimes felt very desolate. Visiting Vietnam awakened how important the trivial beauty of daily life is for peace and happiness.

THE MYTH:

Is it true that in Vietnamese culture one should avoid soy sauce after surgery because it will make the scars darker?

IT'S A PREVALENT belief that consuming dark soy sauce while recovering from any major surgery or during pregnancy, which involves stretch marks, will result in dark spots or scars. The idea is that the dark pigmentation will somehow seep into one's skin while healing, or toxins in foods will deter healing and cause scarring. Some even add more forbidden foods to the list like light soy sauce, seafood and even chicken.

What most fail to realize is that scars are an unavoidable part of the healing process, regardless

of what you do (or do not) eat. Most would rather blame food they've eaten, rather than accept their evolutionary limitations. The truth is that eating soy sauce, seafood or chicken will cause complications only if you have some sort of allergy toward any of the mentioned items to begin with. Sadly, some medical practices have to go so far as to put up notices telling people not to avoid particular foods, as doing so might reduce important protein in your diet, truly hindering recovery.



My Vietnamese wife just had a baby and is now confined to her room for a month without showering and can only eat certain food. What is going on?

ACCORDING TO VIETNAMESE culture, a woman's body is the weakest and most vulnerable to future ailments after childbirth, and thus a confinement period of at least 30 to 40 days will ensure a faster recovery and future long-term health. During confinement, the confined mother will have to observe and endure a series of taboos and traditional rituals, and follow a strict diet.

Confinement cuisine basically consists of 'heating' ingredients such as aged ginger, sesame oil and black vinegar, which are used excessively in almost every meal. Chinese herbs such as ginseng and dong qui are also vital tonics to help the body heal. Water is a no-no as it will cause water retention, hence hot drinks such as ginger & date tea and longan & date tea are prescribed.

Also, certain dishes are must-haves during this period. The most common ones are ginger and black vinegar pig trotters, sesame oil chicken, pork liver and kidneys cooked with ginger and sesame oil, pig stomach soup, etc. The dishes also have to be consumed while hot or warm. Suffice it to say, confinement meals are not your regular everyday cooking, but a series of concoctions prepared only in the traditional way to nourish the body.

Confinement also comes with a laundry list of taboos but the most unbearable of all to a confining mother (and anyone else who's living in the same house) is not being able to shower and wash their hair for an average of 30 to 40 days. It's hard to fathom that this belief still exists but

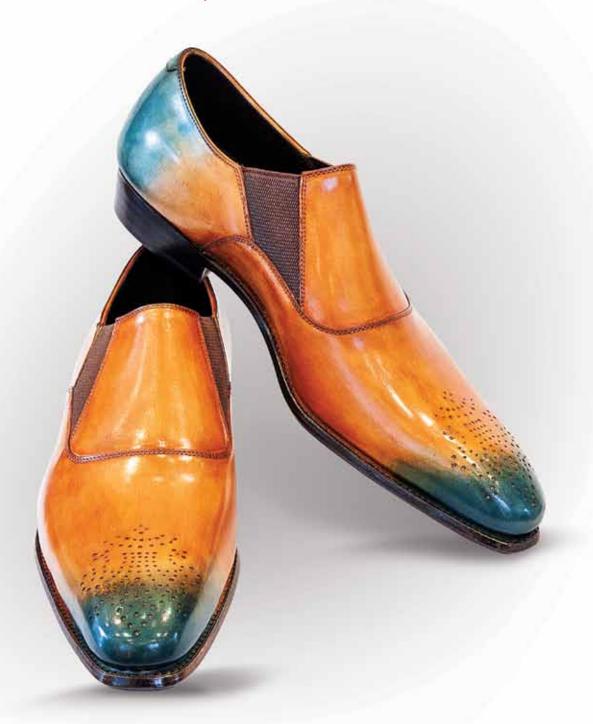
mother has to be wrapped up in layers of clothing and socks, as not to expose the body to the 'wind.'

There is no scientific evidence to support any of this, but whatever your beliefs are, it is important to have a well-balanced diet rather than specific food types to replenish your body. This is especially so during breastfeeding. If necessary, as in the case of vegetarians or vegans, iron or vitamin supplements may be taken to satisfy these nutritional demands. - Christine Van

SAIGON'S SHOPPING SECRETS

From quaint boutiques to indie designers, retail therapy is never far from reach. Homegrown brands, incomparable customer service, and must-have merchandise make these the "It" places to shop in Ho Chi Minh City

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD, NPD KHANH AND LYRA DACIO IMAGES BY LOC NGUYEN, NGOC TRAN AND ADAM ROBERT YOUNG









DRESSED TO THE NINES

TO ANY AND all male fans of impeccable dressing, calling Massimo Ferrari simply a fashion shop or even a boutique is selling it short. Opened since 2006, Massimo Ferrari is the brainchild of an Italian-American couturier who won't ever stop at anything short of perfection.

"People say that luxury clothes can't be made or sold in Vietnam. I'm glad they say that. Because that means they can't do it, whereas I can," says Luis Antonio Torres III, the shop's founder. There's a lot more to his business than simply making and selling fine bespoke clothes for gentlemen of means and taste.

"Anyone can sell a piece of clothing. I sell a wardrobe," he explains. "It takes a master artist to sell a wardrobe. You need to have taste and to *listen* to the customer."

Massimo Ferrari began with one single core item in its arsenal: shoes. Fine shoes made from Italian and French imported leather, handcrafted and individually dyed in Vietnam under the strict supervision of a Neiman Marcus veteran. According to Luis, 'dress shoes' made in Vietnam aren't really worthy of the name by proper standards. They are only called so for marketing purposes and anyone without knowledge of shoemaking won't know better. Dress shoes made in assembly lines all have chunky shapes and heels instead of the curved silhouette that proper dress shoes have, since the machines can only press-stamp specific rectangular shapes (complicated vertical curves are beyond them). The nuances between a proper pair of handmade dress shoes and machine-stamped shoes are not easily noticeable to your average Vietnamese, so the majority of dress shoes in Vietnam follow the same low standard of the factory dress shoes.

And with this strict philosophy, his dress shoes proved immensely popular and following on that success, Luis rapidly expanded the business and product lines to other fashion brands and items that include bags, glasses, dress shirts, and more.

OI'S PICK:

TWO-TONE LEATHER DRESS SHOES (USD560+)

A back to basic must-have, a pair of handcrafted dress shoes made from crushed Italian leather. No two pairs made by Massimo Ferrari are ever the same because the colors are individually developed and the shoes take two and a half days of continuous work to finish.

MASSIMO FERRARI

42A1 Tran Quoc Thao, D3 www.massimoferrariboutique.com





< < N A T U R A L B E A U T Y

INSPIRED BY VIETNAMESE and Cambodian culture, Mekong Creations features beautifully handcrafted items by locals in the Mekong region. The ethos behind the company is to "support community development in poor remote villages."

""It is also a Vietnamese enterprise with the highest quality standards and designs for modern tastes. All products are handmade for higher quality and with a very special touch." Many are made also of natural, local materials, says Bernard Kervyn, Mekong Plus Regional Director. All profits go back to the same people and villages that create and build the products showcased by Mekong Creations.

Aside from their best selling quilts, the shop offers an array of products that allows indigenous materials to shine together with creative designs. Sarah Thomas, one of Mekong Creations' designers, has created products – magazine holders, handbags, and chairs – made from the abundance of water hyacinth, which grow like weeds, available in the Mekong Delta. "Mekong Creations' design principle is to be natural and sustainable as well as fun and modern. We strive towards sustainable practices and innovation," Sarah shares.

Another material they've made good use of is bamboo. Popular among customers, their handmade bamboo bikes use this form of grass harvested from the forests of Tanh Linh in Binh Thuan Province. They have seven models to choose from: kids to adult bikes, from city to mountain bikes.

With the Christmas season fast approaching, shoppers would be happy to know that Mekong Creations is bringing out their Christmas collection like bamboo Christmas trees, quilted stockings, and ornaments.

OI'S PICK: WATER HYACINTH CLUTCH BAG (VND231,000)

This eco-friendly accessory is great for giving your outfit a natural and ethereal look.

MEKONG CREATIONS

1st Floor, 68 Le Loi, D1 www.mekong-creations.org

IN GOOD COMPANY>>

WHAT BEGAN AS a T-shirt enterprise that celebrated the character and spirit of the Vietnamese as well as promoting local culture became a stage for local and foreign artists in Vietnam to display their unique creations.

The Ginkgo Concept Store lends some of its space to non-profit organizations such as Maison Chance with their soft toys for children; Mekong Creations with their bamboo bikes; Hanoi-based Tohe which puts artwork of disadvantaged children into useful and colorful products; Viet Artisans' meticulously designed Vietnam-inspired paper, bags, and wallets; and handicrafts by Friends for Street Children Association that help support the education of some 1,200 children in Ho Chi Minh City.

If you're looking to accessorize, Bohemian Luxe, by Australian Jude Pratt and Dane Louise Bach Mogensen, offers vintage and trendy necklaces. Pair it with a vintage handbag from Hanoi-based French designer Valerie Cordier's collection while wearing a handmade dress from Vietnamese designer Linda Mai Phuong.

A few more labels in the concept store are Mekong Belle's colorful paper products and home accessories, Very Ngon Homewares' useful home items with Asian inspired hand-prints, and Dame-Clemence's fragrances.

Ol'S PICK: CANVAS BAG (VND1 MILLION) AND TARPAULIN BAG (VND1,200,000)

With the unpredictability of the weather in this country, a Ginkgo must -have is their latest canvas or tarpaulin bag. It's both waterproof and reinforced with a tarpaulin bottom, so it'll keep your belongings safe from the scorching sun or the unforgiving sudden downpours.

GINKGO CONCEPT STORE

254 De Tham, D1 www.ginkgo-vietnam.com





EXCLUSIVE LUXURY

ANUPA HORVIL WOULDN'T run her business any other way but ethically – with a heavy emphasis on fair trade, recycling, and providing employment for local craftspeople. That being said, she'd much rather you came for the product than the cause.

"A bag is a bag," she says. "The main reason my clients buy anupa isn't because we're ethically produced – it's because we're bespoke. We empower the people who work for us, and we'd never think to use their misfortune as a selling point."

Anupa stocks a range of unique collections – predominantly leather goods, jewelry, and accessories – all of her own design. The business has been running here for several years, originally tucked away at the back of a hard-to-find alley, and now in a small, stylish eco-boutique in downtown Saigon.

The classy location and the more exposed shop front have taken nothing away from Anupa's primary focus on quality products, and her love of the materials is oddly sensuous. "Consumers tend to forget that leather is a skin," she says. "It's incredibly natural and sustainable." Anupa's use of leather is innately respectful, preferring large, precisely-cut pieces to bulky patchwork, and carefully using cut-offs in other products. The key to their longevity is the use of elegant bonded nylon, which for the bags distributes the weight evenly and resists breaking – unlike cotton.

You won't see her name emblazoned all over the labels – the branding on all of anupa products is limited to a disk of beads centering on a chunk of tourmaline like an understated mandala. "That's not what anupa luxury is about," she explains. "With other designer brands, anyone can have them, as long as they can afford them – but where's the exclusivity in that? Each and every piece is a one-off unique design."

OI'S PICK: MATCHING RED CLUTCH PURSE WITH FISH LEATHER DESIGN (VND 4.6 MILLION) AND FISH LEATHER KEY RING (VND1.1 MILLION)

ANUPA BOUTIQUE

9 Dong Du, D1 www.anupa.net

















THE SWEET SMELL (

CHRISTINE ALMEIDA IS an interior decorator by profession and she knows that visuals are important but the sense of smell can equally lend a hand in setting an ambiance. So three years ago, after learning about essential oils, she opened Vscential. It all began with selling essential oils to California Wow Fitness & Yoga, and now she's expanded her line to aromatic French lavender bouquets, fresh flowers, silk flowers, and handmade flowers – her best sellers.

She commissions local artisans from the famous Bat Trang Ceramic & Pottery Village in Hanoi to design and produce their ceramic oil burners, all completely handmade.

"We sell unique and quality products that other stores don't have like aroma diffusers, a collection of essential oils, scented candles, and 100 percent essential oil candles," says Christine.

With 45 different types of essential oils available, there's a scent

OF SUCCESS

for everyone. And if you're worried about leaving the flame burning overnight, you can opt for an electric burner. Choose any from their intricately designed lights or lamps.

OPS PICK: PEPPERMINT PURE ESSENTIAL IN A CERAMIC AROMA BURNER (PRICES START AT VND100,000 FOR THE PURE ESSENTIAL OIL AND VND60,000 FOR THE BURNER)

The peppermint smell conjures up images of candy canes hanging on Christmas trees, and peppermint is said to help increase memory and alertness.

VSCENTIAL

238B Pasteur, D3 www.vscential.com





< < IN THE BOUDOIR

OPENED IN 2010, this two-story boutique, with a façade reminiscent of a British pub, aims to making shopping more personal by opening up her 'closet' to customers. Owner Rattana Chongcharoenponsuk, a Thai, has been living in Saigon for two years and had problems finding clothes to match her style and frame.

"Most dresses designed here are so body-fit and tiny," she says. "If you are looking for street wear, casual, pajamas suit, cocktail dresses, Chinese dresses, India, Vietnam ao dai or Aladdin pants, we have everything for you." One of their creations, the Aladdin pants, is intricately designed with special embroidery in a pattern called the Super Aladdin Heavy Embroidery. A must-have for fashion daredevils.

Scattered around the shop are matchless accessories that will make interesting conversational pieces and will give your look the extra pop it needs. A pair of blue-eyed earrings, a rocking horse necklace and earring set, clock & teddy bear earrings, and bat earrings - all are attention grabbers.

Focusing mainly on womenswear, jewelry and leather bags, Rattana sources interesting pieces from Khao San Road, Siam Square, and the Emporium Department Store in Bangkok.

'It is not just a closet where you find something to wear," says Rattana. "It is art in a closet. It has everything that you are looking for... for your lifestyle."

To add to her shopping philosophy, the upper floor of the store is a café-cum-nail salon where you can sip coffee while watching old movies or pampering yourself with a mani-pedi.

Ol'S PICK: LION LUXE RING (VND2,950,000)

You may just be in your black canvas – black tee, black pants, and boots - so give your ensemble that extra oomph with the Lion Luxe ring and earrings set.

ETHOPEN: IT'S HAPPENED TO BE A CLOSET

89 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

www.itshappenedtobeacloset.wordpress.com

THE ART OF UPCYCLING>

BLUE DRAGON WOULD probably be just another souvenir store if it weren't for the perfect marriage right at its core. Any couple would find inspiration in Binh and Lisa's easy affection for each other, but it's in their family business that their respective backgrounds and skills find a perfect accord.

When Binh was growing up here," says Lisa, "You had to use what you had. When you needed something, you had to repurpose, repair, and make things out of nothing. I have more of an arts & crafts background - although I grew up in a small family business, so that's in my blood. When I was traveling here, I couldn't switch off my retail eyes - I was always thinking 'that would be fabulous back in New York." She ended up sourcing Vietnamese handicrafts for export, which in turn led her to her husband, who founded the first ethnic crafts shop on De Tham in the early 1990s.

The couple are very hands-on when it comes to their unique recycled collectible products, sitting and working together to experiment with how the various materials respond to cutting, sewing, twisting, weaving, and blending with other materials. "Vietnam is a great place to do this," says Lisa. "There's lots of production waste; lots of primary production that goes on here. I use the term recycled, but that can mean a number of things. We 'upcycle' - we take something and repurpose it in its original state. It's not reprocessed. We capture whatever substances and energies went into it first without it having to go back into the trash."

Blue Dragon's house designs (paper ornaments made of old discarded magazines, satchels patched together from animal feed sacks, and so on) serve as a reminder of the potential to recycle and reuse. All unique, there are innate variations in the recycled materials themselves, making each piece a one-andonly. Some designs are particularly innovative - the tire tube gadget bags, for instance, are an ideal tribute to the bike culture of Vietnam.

The couple keep their standards high, as the business is also engaged in exporting. "We're very involved in knowing what the standards are in foreign markets," says Lisa. "We're careful to stick to high quality and good value."

OI'S PICK: RECYCLED PAPER FRAMES (VND200,000) AND MATCHING NECKLACE (VND110,000 -VND145,000)

Discards and trash never looked more fabulous and chic.

BLUE DRAGON

1B Bui Vien, D1









< < T H E R E N A I S S A N C E M A N

SECLUDED IN A tiny alleyway deep in Go Vap District is an eclectic studio and workshop belonging to an eccentric artist by the name of Nguyen Van Binh. Inspired (or perhaps obsessed) by Renaissance art, Binh has hand-painted images of the style on everything from masquerade masks, room signs, cups and pots, candles, albums, guitars, paper holders to traditional paintings, ceramic vases, and miniature houses.

Twenty plus collections envelop every last inch of floor, ceiling, tables, arms of chairs, walls and windows, strewing all the way to the back of his shop and threatening to take over other rooms in his house. He's tried his hands on everything he could get away with, and then some.

"There was an HTV channel crew here a while ago. They told me that my collection overwhelmed them. They just didn't know which one they should focus on," enthuses Binh.

At 40+ years old, he says the hardest part is balancing the art aspect of his work and the commercial factor to allow him the funds needed to keep his studio going.

OI'S PICK: MINIATURE HOUSES (VND2 MILLION AND ABOVE)

The crown jewel of Binh's collection and his most favorite work thus far, each of these miniature, handcrafted and hand painted houses take at the very least a full month of non-stop work to finish. No two houses are the same and they are best kept together as part of a full collection.

QUA TANG VE TAY (HAND PAINTED GIFTS)

Binh maintains a booth at the monthly Saigon Flea Market. However, because of limited space, the little he brings each time mainly comprises of commercial, easy to sell small items. For anyone looking for a one-of-a-kind, head to his studio at 97/5 Ly Thuong Kiet, Ward 4, Go Vap.

ALL WIRED UP>>

LIKE MANY INDIE shops of its kind, Yim Bader, named after its owner, remains an unknown outside of its avid customer base. Inside of that circle however, it's something of a cult brand and has been featured twice in a local newspaper and a Japanese interest publication.

Yim started making jewelry from wooden beads, stones and metal wires as a hobby but it soon escalated to a business when friends and acquaintances were constantly asking her to sell the pieces to them. "They were just shy of ripping the jewelry right off my neck," says Yim.

Before long, her skill graduated to much harder to work with materials and more intricate designs and she started consigning her collection in a friend's shop on Nam Ky Khoi Nghia. This decision turned out to be a fortuitous one as the same friend sold the shop to Yim to return to Thailand, fully setting Yim up as a jewelry designer and retailer. Since then, it has been a tough, but constant climb to success.

She says her unique creations represent her mixed Thai and Vietnamese heritage. Some have described them as South-West Asian, Cambodian, Thai, Middle Eastern, South American to even African.

OP'S PICK: BLUE AND WHITE WAVE PATTERNED RING (VND250 000)

Inspired by a trip to the US, Yim created this design to mimic the wave patterns she saw as she watched her husband surf. This delicate piece features imported and color-treated metal that can't be found in Vietnam.

YIM BADER

32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2 www.yimbaderjewelry.com







COOL AND LAID-BACK

TO THE HIPSTER city dwellers out there, the name L'Usine needs no introduction. It's known as a retail and café space for the young and trendy. "The concept behind L'Usine is a place where people go to be inspired. One can be inspired by one's environment, by what one eats, what one wears, or even simple items one decorates with," says Tib, one of its founding members.

There is no simple way to describe what the space has to offer for eager shoppers except that if you enjoy a laid-back, crisp and artsy style, then this perfect is for you.

"Everything needs to be cohesive. Everything needs to be synergic. Nothing in L'Usine was put there without a reason behind it. Some of them we designed and created ourselves. Some of them were sourced from other countries, other galleries and art houses. Every single thing is carefully selected to fit in with the arching theme of L'Usine," says Tib.

OI'S PICK: LAB TABLE LAMP (INQUIRE IN STORE)

You do not choose this lamp. This lamp chooses you. For the ordinary Saigonese out there, hunkered down with the everyday demands of life in the urban city, this doesn't look like something to spend one million plus dong on. But for the art lovers and open thinkers out there, this is a work of industrial art. The black metal framework, wiring and bulb are all designed, made and assembled by District 8, a local company in the L'Usine family. It is not a gift for just anyone, but for the few who can appreciate its edgy, clean and sophisticated beauty. This is a gift to die for.

L'USINE

1st Floor, 151/1 Dong Khoi, D1 www.lusinespace.com











BEST KEPT SECRET

THE WORD "SECRET" is a bit of a misnomer because this local brand is quickly gaining both fame and a solid reputation for selling handmade soaps, balms and other assorted items for your grooming and beauty needs.

Former banker, Nguyen Quynh Le, founded the brand just shy of a year ago. "I was still working as a banker then - office work in the morning, then making soaps at night. It was tough, but fun," says Le.

"There are countless online shops selling things very similar to what I offer but at a lesser quality, and a lesser price," she says, referring to the recent handmade cosmetic trend that has taken the young Vietnamese market by storm. "But there really is no industry standard. It's just everybody doing whatever they want and saying whatever they want to sell their stuff. It's ironic because while they say their soaps or their balms are 100 percent organic, they actually use chemical scents and preservers. It's cheaper, and the scent stays longer. They can also store their products for more than a year, in case they can't sell it. Anything that is 100 percent natural is not going to stay fresh for more than a year."

Everything in her shop must go within six months from the date of production. For Le, she's never had a problem with this self-imposed deadline. "It's really simple. I just make something that I myself can use. Something that is nice, safe, and beneficial. It does not need to be too fancy. It can be rustic. I think a lot of people out there think the same way I do."

Ol'S PICK: TRIAL-SIZED SOAP SET (VND250,000)

The core offering in A Banker's Secret collection, each of these little packages comprises five trial-sized handmade herbal soaps in the most popular scents: Spring, Beer & Coffee, Hipster Farmer, Honey & Oatmeal, and Japanese Green Tea. The size makes them perfect for traveling kits.

A BANKER'S SECRET

She mainly sells online through an English website: www.abankersecret. com. There's also a physical booth in Cafe Me at 8A Luong Huu Khanh, D1.







THE JOY OF READING

ONE OF THE CHIEF complaints of foreigners living throughout this region concerns the limited supply of English-language books. In this city at least, Artbook has been working on solving the problem since 2004, when it opened as a highly specialized book boutique stocking technical volumes on furniture and graphic design. This move, of course, was a dream come true for only a very small section of the community, but it did prove successful: Artbook now has several outlets and has expanded its range across the spectrum, stocking novels, children's books, and even souvenirs and crafts.

Non-fiction volumes on topics such as architecture, programming, and design still feature heavily as niche items, but one of the key innovations in the shop's history was the realization of the demand for materials about Vietnam. At a time when the Lonely Planet was the most commonly referred-to resource for information on this country even amongst those foreigners who lived here, Artbook began to invest in books about Vietnam, particularly those with stunning photo essays. Many titles are published by Artbook itself.

Nowadays, the Tri Books outlet at 158 Dong Khoi is probably the best-known of the store's locations, and with its high quality range of souvenirs (again, many of which are self-produced), it's commonly frequented by tourists as well as local residents. Among the more curious products are the range of contemporary cinema posters (VND120,000) designed in traditional Vietnamese print style, making this an excellent place to pick up unofficial movie merchandise, including the occasional odd mash-up – I noticed a Matt Ranzetta graphic reworking the classic Spielberg *Empire of the Sun* poster with Star Wars themes that still manages to resemble a propaganda pin-up.

OI'S PICK: WANDERING THROUGH VIETNAMESE CULTURE BY HUU NGOC (VND550,000)

An enormous volume full of extraordinary insights into the people and history of this country – also available here in French.

ARTBOOK

1B1 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1 www.artbook.com.vn





< < | N S P | R E D V | C T O R Y

SAIGON KITSCH PROBABLY found its ideal new owner when Audrey Tran picked up the business five years ago. Half French, half Vietnamese, this highly charismatic entrepreneur seems to exist in a permanent state of inspiration – and she's spent much of the time since acquiring the store turning her flashes of brilliance into unique souvenirs for sale.

"Yes, I'm a very enthusiastic person," she admits with a captivating grin, her irresistible French accent openly conveying her genuine passion for the work. "Every day I get some ideas, every day. I live with ideas. When I go out at night or in the afternoon, I'm always thinking about what I can create. Example, I make a poster, they sell good – so I think, why not do a candleholder with that? And now we sell these *aussi*."

The bread and butter of the store comes from its propaganda art souvenirs, based on wartime artworks designed to inspire Vietnamese victory. To Audrey, they've proved a rich resource for original designs. "I created all of them," she says. "The notebooks, the magnets, the folders for school, the pictures. Mouse pads. The tourists, they always want souvenirs from Vietnam – but they want something special - things that reflect something from here. Other stores have lots of souvenirs, but not "like mine."

With plans to take over the first floor of the shop's location on Ton That Thiep, Audrey is now faced with doubling her product range – a task that is obviously an exciting prospect. "I love it, she says. "It's not just for selling and getting the money; you have to love what you do. Like these coasters," she points randomly, "these are great. We sell all of them."

What's especially interesting is that Audrey has no particular background in design. "I just can't stop," she says. "I'm not talented, I didn't go to school for design. But this is all from my ideas."

OI'S PICK: BUDDHA-SHAPED CANDLES IN 11 COLORS (VND160,000)

Offering both enlightenment and lighting for your mind and home, the candles are a good reminder to enjoy some meditative time for yourself.

SAIGON KITSCH

43 Ton That Thiep, D1

THE DESIGN DUO>>

HO THI PHUONG HIEN and Pham Lam Hai Dang are the dynamic duo behind The 7 Studio, a retail space showcasing their unique furniture and home décor ideas. Both interior designers by profession, the shop is also the launch pad for their interior design business where they cater to clients seeking design advice for their home, hotel, resort, and even hospitals.

Before taking the leap to business owners, they first tested the waters by participating in bazaars and fairs, receiving positive responses from the community. While some of their pieces are sourced from Thailand, most are distinctly The 7 Studio trademark products, which go through a rigorous three month research and development process. Hien and Dang ensure that their products are all made from natural materials and are handcrafted by local artisans.

Their shop may be tiny but it's a testament to their interior design prowess and resourcefulness. Every spare space is crammed with furniture and shelves are neatly tucked in every nook and cranny. Once you step in, your eyes will dart from coasters to colorful cutlery, from cushions to 400-thread count cotton bed linens, from colorful bowls to a spoon and fork combo clock. Going home empty-handed after a visit to The 7 Studio is unlikely.

Ol'S PICK: RUSTIC PHOTO FRAME (VND190,000)

In this technological age where photos are now gracing digital Facebook walls instead of concrete ones, this frame made of log and branches is perfect for capturing your loved ones so you can be sure to see them even when there's a blackout.

THE 7 STUDIO

SA2-2 Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7 www.the7studio.com.vn■





Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY **NGOC TRAN**



Memories of Tokyo

Uncompromised Japanese food in downtown Saigon

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL PHOTOS BY NGOC TRAN



WHEN JAPANESE RESTAURANT **Ebisu** (3bis Mac Dinh Chi, D1) opened its doors in early 2011, it had a goal simple to say but a challenge to achieve - to offer the most authentic Japanese dining experience it could.

Two and a half years later, Japanese comprise about 70 percent of its customer base, suggesting the quest to bring a slice of Tokyo to downtown Ho Chi Minh City may well have succeeded. "Our first target is Japanese living or visiting here. So we never change the taste to suit Vietnamese, even though they are our second market," explains Thao Phuong, Ebisu's manager.

The distinctive urban Tokyo decor, its dark sliding panels, maze of walls and walkways, and high backed bench seats hint at mystery: budding romance or discreet business negotiations. There are screens sectioning off dining areas throughout the premises - to the point it is unlikely you can see more than three other groups from your own seat.

And a counter for people eating on their own, as salarymen often do in Tokyo after a long day's work in an office tower. There are private rooms upstairs, and rooms where diners remove their shoes before being seated, in traditional Japanese form. Downstairs, the screens camouflage the true size of the destination, but they're also flexible to allow groups to dine or to create a more intimate environment for couples.

"Our bosses wanted to bring the taste from Tokyo to Ho Chi Minh City. We keep all the flavors," explains Thao. "Some restaurants want to change ingredients and so they lose the original Japanese taste." But not at this restaurant. "We want customers to feel like they are staying in Tokyo."

To achieve that goal, the owners flew in a group of Japanese with restaurant experience prior to opening. Local wait staff were taught basic Japanese phrases to be able to communicate with Japanese customers. The chefs received the most intensive orientation training of all, to ensure not just the flavor of the food was as close as possible to that of Tokyo, but the presentation too. Focus on presentation - of people, buildings and products - is at the core of Japanese culture.

"The Japanese are very strict. But Vietnamese have a very casual approach, so it was hard to establish [benchmarks] at the start," recalls Thao. "Japanese customers expect good service and best value. Price is not so important, but food and service is. It's about value, not price. Ebisu is not cheap, but it is not expensive. Our main point is to present good food and the best service."

OUR MEAL

The commitment to authenticity of Ebisu has created a menu that may at first seem daunting to non-Japanese. That's not something Ebisu needs to apologize for, but for some foreigners with little experience in Japanese cuisine it certainly creates good reason to explore.

Early in the menu, for example, choices include the slightly alarming likes of vinegared chicken gizzard, stewed beef gristle, chicken hearts, pork tongue, leading up to the more disturbing Turtle Hot Pot, an Ebisu special using Chinese soft-shelled turtle, clearly a delicacy for those in the know at 1.4

million a person, for a minimum of three or four people.

If such delicacies are outside your comfort zone, do not be alarmed, there is plenty for everyone here. Besides its specialty of fresh udon noodles made on-site, Ebisu is renowned for its *yakitori*, *kushiyaki* and *kushiage* range - all foods served on skewers. *Yakitori* is grilled chicken, *kushiyaki* other grilled food and meats (pork and beef) and *kushiage* deep-fried.

We chose a selection to sample and each was delicious. The pork belly (buta bara) at VND38,000 was sublimely juicy, its tender meat peppered for a little extra zing and with a lingering flavor of soy and smoke. The chicken and onion (negima) yakitori at VND35,000 was equally moorish, small pieces of tender chicken with crispy skin skewered alternating with chunks of onion. And the cheese (chizu) kushiage at VND48,000 melted in the mouth as you crunched on the lightly crumbed exterior.

In keeping with true Tokyo style, none of the skewers were blackened, and the deep fried one was cooked so fast it did not have time to absorb excessive amounts of oil leaving a clean mouth feel afterwards.

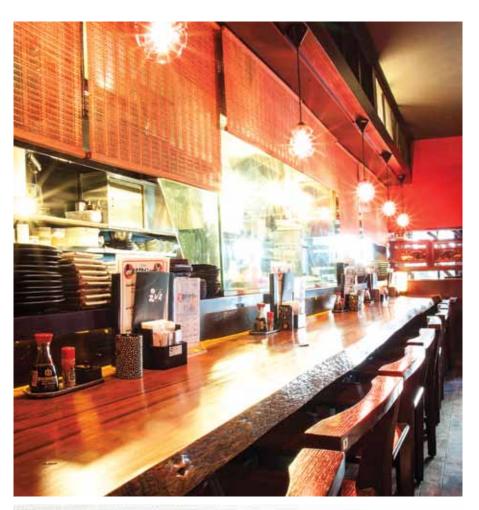
Another Ebisu signature dish is its tofu salad with sesame dressing (konsaito tofuno goma salada) at VND98,000, possibly one of the best salad dishes you can find in town from any cuisine. Despite the description, it is sliced lotus root and crispy fried sweet potato which give this dish its addictive flavor, mixed with tofu chunks, baby tomatoes, lettuce and slim rings of red onion. After the waiter brought the dish to the tabled he poured a delicious creamy sesame dressing all over. This meant that the dressing had no time to soak into the food and make the crispy ingredients soggy - and it added a touch of theatre. Food for the gods!

My companion, a Vietnamese who started the evening a little perturbed by the style of meat on the menu, had heard of Ebisu's reputation for udon noodles, so was keen to try one. She chose the shrimp udon with grated radish (*ebi oroshi udon*) at VND120,000 and was very satisfied. The noodles tasted fresh and felt soft on the tongue, the broth was not too salty as is all too often the case in Japanese restaurants outside Japan, and she declared the dish a great choice.

We also ordered the grilled chicken bowl (yakitori don) from the Special Chicken & Egg Rice Bowl section of the menu at VND160,000, a feast in itself. This comprised of various cuts of chicken - meatballs, gizzard, hearts and sliced breast meat - served with an egg, sliced spring onion and shredded seaweed over rice. It was aromatic, savory and very filling.

The peril of restaurant reviewing is you tend to order too much to get a good feel for the styles of food on offer. In this case, the udon dish or the chicken on rice dish would have been sufficient for one, which makes dining at Ebisu exceptional value when one balances the price with the quality of food - a point many travelers and locals alike have made on Tripadvisor where no one has ranked it as "average" or below.

This is real Japanese food, for diners who know what they want, made by chefs who refuse to compromise and served in a setting evoking fond memories of Tokyo.







Délicieux!

A new restaurant is keeping the Gallic flame alive in the city's dining scene

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY LOC NGUYEN

JUST OFF DONG KHOI on the fast-regenerating Mac Thi Buoi, sits Saigon's newest French dining experience – **Le Paris** (45 Mac Thi Buoi, D1). Executive chef Serge Alain has spent 45 years in restaurants as renowned as Maxims in Paris and Tokyo, and le Pavillon d'Elysee in Paris. He's lived in Japan, China, California and Macau and in early July chose Ho Chi Minh City as his new home, attracted by its relaxed lifestyle.

By chance he met Vicki Nguyen and two other partners, and together the idea of Le Paris was born. Alain conceived the entire design and look, transforming a failed Japanese restaurant into a stunning multi-level upmarket restaurant with an open kitchen on the ground floor, a public dining area above, which seats just 36 in an intimate surrounding, overlooked by a private function room, and with a rooftop terrace still under construction. It's hard to

tell the quality and style of the restaurant from the narrow street frontage, but when you climb the stairs you enter a room with stunning murals depicting the Eiffel Tower and the famous Moulin Rouge theatre. The decor is rich in cream and fawns, and the napkins are sculpted in such a way that they tower above the table creating a conversation point in themselves.

Alain may have worked in kitchens all over the globe, but his focus is firmly on French cuisine and his creations are styled on recipes handed down through several generations of his family.

"We wanted to do something different in Ho Chi Minh City," Vicky explains. "We wanted to deliver authentic French food in a nice ambience."

Le Paris has to be one of the fastest brick and mortar dining venues ever to pop up downtown. From conception in July, construction took just two months and the eatery opened officially on October 8. The biggest talking point is no doubt the open kitchen. It's hard to miss - whether walking by on the street or dining there - patrons must walk the entire length of the kitchen (separated by a glass wall) to reach the stairs to the dining rooms. There are many restaurants in this town where customers would prefer not to see inside the kitchen, and very few where you can. But this one is modern, professional and spotless - all gleaming steel and not a scrap of wayward food in sight.

NIIR MEAI

Le Paris offers a broad range of dishes covering all spectrums of meat and fish: snails, *foie gras*, steak, fowl, tuna and duck are all on the list of signature dishes.

For an entree we shared salmon and daurado carpaccio basilic oil, (carpaccio de saumon et Daurade a l'huile de basilic) at VND210,000. Wafer thin salmon slices imported from Canada served with slivers of peeled lime, drizzled with basilic oil and sprinkled with rocket leaves. The combination of lime and oil complemented the delicate salmon flavor, making this one of the tastiest salmon carpaccios we've ever tried. Served on a large rectangular plate, the portion was generous - easily satisfying two as an appetizer.

For mains we were recommended the *coq au vin de Brouilly*, (rooster braised in burgundy wine sauce) at VND290,000.



"It's hard to tell the quality and style of the restaurant from the narrow street frontage, but when you climb the stairs you enter a room with stunning murals depicting the Eiffel Tower and the famous Moulin Rouge theatre."





It was presented in an orange ceramic casserole pot, with a smaller green one of matching style. The large pot contained the rooster, braised in red wine, garlic, mushrooms and thyme and served with a crunchy pastry puff resting on top - aromatic and piping hot. It was delicious. The meat fell easily from the bone, the herbs and vegetables were full of flavor and the serving was so generous it was a challenge completing the dish. The smaller bowl contained a side of steamed farfalle pasta, served al dente, which offset the strong herbaceous notes of the main dish.

My companion enjoyed the *entrecote Francais de Lezere au poivre vert flambe au whisky* (rib eye with green pepper sauce flambéed in whisky) at VND290,000. This

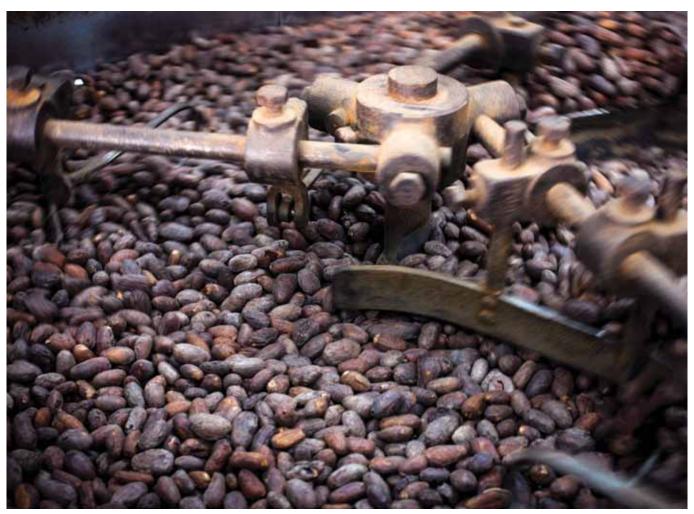
truly has to be one of the best value steaks in town, belying the luxurious surroundings of the restaurant and the immaculate presentation. It was tender, juicy and pink and the sauce carried a hint of spiciness from the green peppercorns.

Both main courses were a good match to the 2013 vintage George Duboeuf Beaujolais the waitress recommended.

After three generously sized dishes we really had little room for dessert but were encouraged to share a house specialty - chocolate cake with lavender cream (Moelleux aux chocolats guanaja Creme Anglaise a la Lavande) at VND210,000. We were glad we indulged. Rich chocolate cake the size and shape of a cupcake was served in a pool of creamy sauce with a smooth

creamy topping, along with several strands of curved chocolate slivers and lemon zest. It looked like a work of art and proved to be everything a great dessert should be: rich, sweet and smooth with a strong slightly bitter chocolate and sweet cream taste, each perfectly balancing the other.

We left Le Paris more than satisfied and with a bill of just VND1 million++ (excluding wine) for two mains and shared entree and dessert. Given the high standard of the food and the luxurious feel of the dining environment, this felt like exceptional value which perhaps explains why this venue has already become a favorite for some of the local Vietnamese celebrity set as well as those looking for a delicious French dining experience.



Marou Chocolate Factory

Bean to Bar

The rich history of Vietnamese chocolate

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM

IN ITS 4,000 year history, it's been used as currency and tribute. It's been drunk as an alcoholic beverage and a bitter foamy elixir in gold cups by Mayan elites. It's been presented as an offering at the funerals of noblemen and played a part in ancient New World religious rituals. It's spawned saints and gods. It is the divine cocoa.

Originating in the steamy, leafy jungles of the Amazon, chocolate was first known as *chikolatl*, an Aztec word meaning "bitter water" or, some say, "beaten water," possibly pointing to its original drink of cocoa paste mixed with spices and vanilla, poured from on high to create a frothy cup of pure deliciousness.

Only after Spanish invaders brought the bitter concoction back to the Spanish court where sugar was added to better suit Western palates, did its seductive sweetness enthrall Europe and the rest of the world. In the 18th century, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus assigned it its scientific name, *Theobroma*

cacao, meaning "Food of the Gods," and the rest, as they say, is history.

Now a USD74 billion dollar worldwide industry, four of the five leading cocoa producing countries are in Africa accounting for almost 70 percent of the world's production. Asia is represented in the top eight countries by Indonesia and Malaysia.

Unfortunately for local chocophiles, two words that don't seem to go together are "Vietnam" and "chocolate." Until recently, that pairing may have conjured up the thought of cheap, almost inedible, bite-sized squares of pure sugar, marketed for the masses who even then couldn't be bothered with locally made inferior-quality chocolate. Surprisingly, though, cocoa, or cacao as it's more commonly called here, has a long history in Vietnam, stretching back as early as 1890 when records indicate the French had been encouraging local farmers to grow the product. However, any real signs of success would have to wait almost 100 years.

In 1997, the World Cocoa Foundation started the Cocoa Project in Vietnam with its ideal combination of heat and humidity, promoting cocoa among smallholder farmers by means of research, demonstration plots and technical assistance. In the following years, organizations from USAID to the World Wildlife Fund pitched in. This in turn has filtered down to small scale farmers in the form of government subsidies such as technical support, a daily growing schedule, free or subsidized saplings, free fertilizer, and regular seminars, all expected to last until 2020.

One of the recipients of the cacao projects is Thanh, a local farmer in the Mekong Delta. "It's not difficult to grow and we can sell it back to the government and to our customers in other provinces," he says of the thousands of saplings growing under a canopy of netting in front of his home. At his 3,000sqm seedling farm where he's been cultivating cacao for over 10 years, he turns out 200,000-300,000 cacao seedlings per year, with the majority being sold to the government under various subsidized projects.

Cacao Mecca

Seventy kilometers south of Saigon along the new expressway, past the stalled construction of Happyland and the area of My Tho, home of the Coconut Monk (who according to local legend did not need to eat anything after eating nothing but coconuts for three years), lies Ben Tre, a province famous for its coconut production. Stalls line the road







selling coconut candy and kitschy everything-coconut souvenirs. However, in recent years, Ben Tre has proven ideal for cacao as well, a crop that the government began to encourage 15 years ago, when the price of coconuts plummeted to VND500 per fruit. It is now the most productive of more than a dozen provinces in central and southern Vietnam to cultivate cacao.

"Planting cacao here is ideal because when the plants are young, they need shade," says Anh of Puratos Grand Place, a Belgian joint venture providing industrial-sized bars of chocolate to businesses. "The saplings can be intercropped, or planted under the shade of larger trees like coconuts or cashews or mangoes. Cacao trees can also live to be 40 years old and productivity increases with age. Also, while every part of the coconut palm can be used, the government is supporting a move away from them because local people burn the coconut shells to make charcoal, but this burning process produces carcinogenic smoke as a by-product."

Vietnam strictly grows the Trinitario variety of cacao, and like wines, coffees and teas, the soil plays a large role in the final taste of the beans. Vietnam's chocolate has been described as more fruity, with sweet and sour notes, compared to African-grown cacao.

As the saplings mature, taking approximately three years to start producing fruit, local farmers strap bottles filled with duck grease and entrails to attract ants which in turn control cacao pests.

"From flower to fruit takes about 100 days," explains Vincent Marou, co-owner of Marou Chocolate, artisanal chocolate makers. "The tree produces fruit year round. It's good for Vietnamese farmers because they typically don't have much land. A mix of crops can be grown together."

The ripe fruit has a peculiar oval shape in varying shades of green, yellow and red, but it's the creamy white flesh that's most surprising, looking and tasting much like soursop. In fact, staff of the Puratos Grand Place processing center can sometimes make deliciously sweet cacao juice and even dessert wine from the fresh pulp.

More commonly, though, the fruit is heaped into large wooden vats for fermentation. "This is the most important step," says Vincent. "A chemical transformation takes place. This brings out the very best flavors, the body and richness of the cacao." It is also during this process that the fruity undertones of the pulp are infused into the beans.

The beans are then constantly raked and completely sundried, before going into a coffee roaster at the Marou factory in Binh Duong to develop their chocolate factor. Grinding the essence of the cocoa bean produces a chocolate liquor where cocoa solids and butter are released. From there, sugar, vanilla and milk are added to create the familiar bars of chocolate.

However, growing the cacao and producing the chocolate is only half the battle. "Vietnamese in general don't have an educated chocolate palate, preferring the cheaper compound which is mainly used for decorating cakes," says Anh whose clients are mainly bakeries, hotels and restaurants. "We've had to really promote the use of couverture (higher quality chocolate) by going into the bakeries and showing them how to use it. Before, cakes were mainly decorated with frosting and the final product depended on the skill of the decorator. We introduced the bakeries to molds and showed them how they could get the same great results every time using chocolate instead of frosting."

Back in the kitchens of the Park Hyatt Saigon, Pastry Chef Bertrand Sommereux is busy using Vietnamese chocolate to produce dark chocolate coffee truffles and chocolate fondant with Phan Thiet vanilla. "I have traveled extensively and I like to work with local products. Not only is it cheaper, less tax, but we're really lucky to be in Vietnam because we have good chocolate, excellent coffee and fragrant vanilla beans. It's very nice for one country to have such a variety of good products."

A chocolate master class with Park Hyatt Saigon's Chef Sommereux can be arranged with two days' notice. For more information, email concierge.saiph@hyatt.com. The Marou Chocolate factory can be visited on the Binh Duong tour operated by www.exotissimo.com.

Stuffed for Christmas

Whether you're planning an intimate Christmas dinner at home or opting for a grand gathering in a restaurant, we've got you covered for this holiday season

III CARAVELLE

19-23 Lam Son Square, D1

Have a glittering Christmas party at the Caravelle where events are transformed into experiences. The festive event package includes: choice of international buffet or set menu, free flow of beer & soft drinks for two hours, Christmas decoration in room, Christmas noise makers setup on tables, welcome Christmas mocktails, Santa Claus delivers candies to children and Christmas piped music.

Cost: From VND 970,000++/person, minimum guarantee of 50 guests and is valid to December 31.

III INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON

Corner of Le Duan and Hai Ba Trung, D1

Unwind with family and friends at Market 39 with traditional dishes for this festive season that include fresh seafood, gourmet salads and cheeses, seasonal delicacies, a live carving station and decadent desserts.

Cost: Christmas Eve dinner priced at VND1,888,000++/person. Christmas Day brunch priced at VND1,888,000++/person. Christmas Day dinner priced at VND980,000++/person. All includes free flow of wines, cocktails selection, soft drinks, and beer.

III LOTTE LEGEND HOTEL SAIGON

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1

Celebrate Christmas Eve with a gala buffet dinner, novelties, free flow of beverages, professional variety entertainment and live performance by a Filipino Band in yuletide atmosphere of the hotel's Poolside. Santa will give gifts to kids on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Cost: Call 3823 3333 ext. 180 for pricing

III MOEVENPICK

253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

At their Chinese restaurant Lotus Court, you can share a cozy Christmas Eve dinner with authentic Cantonese cuisine. Each day of the week for lunch and dinner, enjoy a melt-in-your-mouth experience with the Emperor's Set Menu including "Buddha Jumps over The Wall" soup, seafood spring roll, sautéed Chinese cabbage with bean curd white preserve, pork ha kau, steamed spinach dumpling, and pan-fried Chinese Fukkien.

Cost: VND799,000++

111 NEW WORLD SAIGON HOTEL

76 Le Lai, D1

To Fly Festive Menus

From now till December 26, enjoy a festive lunch or dinner without spending hours in the kitchen by ordering a festive takeaway turkey, ham or roasted imported beef rib-eye dinner.

Cost: VND2,478,000 including a bottle of red or white wine. Additional bottles of red or white Pasos De Tango 2012 wine priced at VND400,000/bottle.

Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet

From December 20 to 24, indulge in a selection of seasonal favorites such as roast turkey with homemade stuffing, cranberry sauce and gravy or honey-glazed ham with sage and mustard sauce. Complemented by a seafood buffet.

Cost: VND2,058,000/person including free flow of champagne, mulled wine, house wine, draft beer and soft drinks.

Christmas Eve Chinese Set Menu

From December 20 to 24, if you are a lover of Chinese cuisine,

then your table is waiting for you at Dynasty. Enjoy a beautiful prepared menu featuring the best dishes from their Chinese kitchen.

Cost: VND1,365,000/person including free flow of champagne, mulled wine, house wine, draft beer and soft drinks and juices.

Christmas Brunch Buffet

On December 25, start your day with a traditional Christmas brunch buffet filled with your Christmas favorites. Relax and enjoy the morning together with your family and friends at Parkview.

Cost: VND1,365,000/person including free flow of sparkling wine, mulled wine, house wine, draft beer and soft drinks.

Christmas Day Chinese Set Menu

On December 25, enjoy a delicious Christmas set dinner offering the most exquisite dishes exclusively prepared by their Chinese chef.

Cost: VND1,365,000/person including a free flow of champagne, house wine, draft beer and soft drinks.

Christmas Day Dinner Buffet

On December 25, enjoy a lavish dinner buffet offering delicious Christmas favorites including roast turkey, ham and Yule log. Complete with live cooking stations with the freshest seafood cooked to order.

Cost: VND1,365,000/erson including a free flow of champagne, mulled wine, house wine, draft beer and soft drinks.

III RENAISSANCE RIVERSIDE HOTEL SAIGON

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1

Christmas Eve

Enjoy an enchanted Christmas Eve at Riverside Café featuring a delicious array of festive specialties with live cooking stations made complete with traditional Christmas desserts.

Cost: VND1,300,000++/person (food only). VND1,550,000++/person including Chandon sparkling, house wines, beer, sodas, and holiday cocktails.

Revel in the joy and warmth of Christmas at Kabin and Me Linh, offering a wide selection of Asian dishes.

Cost: VND990,000++/person (food only). VND1,100,000++/person including Villa Sandi sparkling wine, house wines, beer, sodas, and holiday cocktails.

Christmas Day

After the gifts are shared, get together for a great brunch that you and your family will love at Riverside Cafe. Featuring a delicious range of festive specialties, with live cooking stations made complete with traditional Christmas desserts.

Cost: VND1,100,000++/person (food only). VND1,350,000++/person including Villa Sandi sparkling wine, house wine, beer, sodas, and holiday cocktails.



Count Down to a New Year



DECIDING WHERE - and how - to celebrate New Year's Eve is no easy task. It is, after all, internationally heralded as one of the most important nights of the year, fraught with great expectations (and even greater expense). And then there's that whole resolutions thing. It's almost tempting to pack it all in and just stay home watching downloaded movies while sipping champagne. But December 31 has more to offer than just overstuffed city streets and tin foil decorations. Here are some ideas to help you ring in 2014 in style.

III INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON

Corner of Le Duan and Hai Ba Trung, D1

New Year's Eve dinner includes free flow of Veuve Clicquot, wines, cocktails selection, soft drinks, beer, water and complimentary one welcome cocktail at Purple Jade's countdown party. Dinner is served from 6pm – 10pm.

Cost: VND2,388,000++/person.

111 MOEVENPICK

253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

At Slate the Bar a special DJ performance will have you dancing the night away as you count down to the New Year. On this magical occasion, indulge in a delicious selection of canapés and enjoy the champagne bubbles for toasting in the New Year. Come and experience the excitement, mood and atmosphere of a memorable New Year with your loved ones and friends. From 5pm to 1am.

Cost: Admission is free.

III NEW WORLD SAIGON HOTEL

76 Le Lai, Di

Celebrate the last day of the year in style while enjoying a dinner buffet, live entertainment and dancing at the ballroom. Best of all celebrate with the hotel this festive season and get a chance to win prizes that include a Honda SH 150cc, (winner selected December 30), a Honda SH Mode (winner selected December 31), two return business class tickets with Turkish Airlines to Bangkok (winner selected December 31), plus other special prizes. Terms and conditions and minimum spend applies.

Cost: New Year's Eve Party, 6pm till late, priced at VND2,520,000/ person including a free flow of champagne, house wine, draft beer, soft drinks and juices. Club Epicure members can purchase a ticket at a special price of VND1,785,000.

III PARK HYATT

2 Lam Son Square

Ring in the New Year at Park Lounge. Commemorate the occasion with friends and family to reminisce on the past year, while anticipating what lies ahead for the future. Guests will enjoy the musical stylings of a live jazz band and toast with champagne in hand to another year. Live performance from 9:30pm – 12:30am.

Cost: *Inquire at 3824 1234.*

111 RENAISSANCE RIVERSIDE HOTEL SAIGON

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1

Countdown Parties

Popular for its panoramic views of the city and the Saigon River below, their poolside is the best setting for a party with Villa Sandi sparkling wine, house wine, beer, sodas, holiday cocktails & canapés under the moonlit sky with DJ music. From 10:30pm – 12:30am.

Cost: VND400,000++/person for hotel residents and restaurant diners. VND600,000++/person for others.

You can also count down to New Year's with live piano, drum and guitar music at Atrium Lounge, which includes Villa Sandi sparkling wine, house wine, beer, sodas, holiday cocktails & canapés. From 10:30pm – 12:30am.

Cost: VND400,000++/person for hotel residents and restaurant diners. VND600,000++/person for others.

New Year's Day Brunch

Riverside Café

Start 2014 right and set the tone for the whole year. Meet friends for a leisurely brunch or dine with family at the widespread Renaissance New Year brunch.

Cost: VND1 million++/person (including Chandon sparkling, house wine, beer and sodas, and holiday cocktails).

SHERATON SAIGON

88 Dong Khoi, D1

Count down the night at Level 23 Nightspot in dazzling decorations and with spectacular views over the Saigon River and Ho Chi Minh City as well as music from our acclaimed celebrity DJ.

Cost: VND600,000++/person. Please purchase tickets in advance.

>>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

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, DI 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, DI 3829 6552 kinhdobakery.vn 6am - 10.30pm

La Doree

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

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

L'amour Bakery & Cafe

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

Open from 6am – 10:30pm

24 Hai Ba Trung D1

Nhu Lan Bakerv

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, DI 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 38248179 5am - 10pm

Savouré Bakery

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

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

www.savourebakery.com

Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

The bakers at Schneider's offer fresh, healthy, delicious breads, cakes, and pastries, introducing Ho Chi Minh City to eight centuries of German baking tradition. 27 Han Thuyen, DI

2229 6910 www.schneiders-finest.com

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

Ahov Beer Club

Recently opened, this nautical themed bar serves local and imported beer along with food served by wait staff in sailor outfits.
79 Nguyen Cong Tru, D1

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 62915424 allezboo@hcm.fpt.vn 24 hours

Alpha is a sports bar recently opened on the first level of The Manor. Offers weekly promotions such as Manor Mondays (happy hour all day for Manor residents), Teacher Tuesdays (happy hour all day for teachers), Thirsty Thursdays (two for one on all cocktails), Sport Saturdays (screening sports from around the world) and on Sundays movie nights by the pool and a roast dinner.

The Manor, Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

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 38221720

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 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 healthconscious Italian fare.

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

Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1 6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar

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

41 Nguyen Hue, D.1 3823 6838 bromasaigonbar@gmail.com

Carmen Bar

bars

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, DI 3915 3826 thecharmsq@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, DI 09 8376 3372 fifi291182@yahoo.com 4pm-4am

Chu Bar

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

158 Dong Khoi, D1 3822 3907 7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

Located near Turtle Lake, this stunning bar offers panoramic views of Saigon. Guests



can peruse an extensive international wine list or choose from an array of creative cocktails and international beers.

Level 667, Hai Nam Building, 2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc, D3 O9O 944 5544

Fon51

Eon5l includes a fine dining restaurant, a champagne lounge, a cigar bar and a heli pad cocktail

bar. Spread on three levels, Eon51 is a destination for bespoke private and corporate events in Saigon. Levels 51-52. Bitexco Financial Tower. 2

Levels 51-52, Bitexco Financial Tower, 3 Hai Trieu, D1

6291 8751 www.eon51.com 7am - 2am

Game On

Opened in July, Game On is Saigon's newest and biggest sports bar that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The bar also has an extensive drink menu that includes coffees, juices, beers, wines, vodkas and more. Besides being a good place to watch games, Game On also boasts a function room for corporate meetings or private parties.

115 Ho Tung Mau, DI 6251 9898 gameonsaigon@gmail.com 8am till late

Ginger 60



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

60 Ton That Thiep, DI 093 772 1011

Go2

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O

Go2 is a popular nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers

dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.

187 De Tham, D1 3836 9575

Hard Rock Café

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

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

Heaven Bar Saigon

@I fa

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

E)

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 - lam

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 🌢 Oi's Pick

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

59 Dong Du, 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

a

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

3837 2704 6pm to verv late. Tuesday - Sunday

Lush

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

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

M52 Bar

A bar catering primarily to foreigners. Offers a simple setting for a night of drinking in the company of friends. **34 Ton That Thiep, DI**

3821 0151

5pm - 12am

Miss Saigon 🖦 Oi's Pick

1

Recently opened, this quaint and cozy bar offers great service and delicious cochtails 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/1Cl Thai Van Lung, Dl

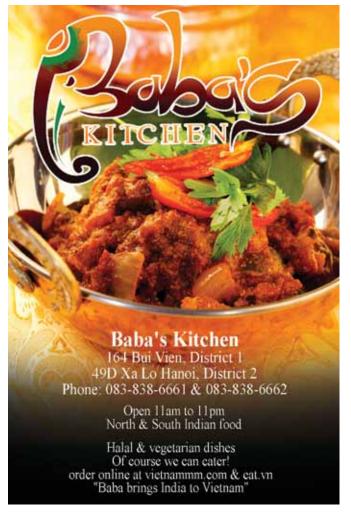
MTV

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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





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

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

O'Brien'S 🏜 Oi's Pick

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

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

Phatty's

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

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

Purple Jade

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

First floor- InterContinental Asiana Saigon Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan 3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon



RED Bar

RED offers one of the longest Happy Hours in Saigon, from 9am - 9pm, with live music available from Monday - Saturday. This multi-level bar has a non-smoking floor and a function room along with a top quality pool table and soft-tip dart machines. A menu of Eastern and Western dishes includes wood-fire pizzas 70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1

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 Opens till

First Floor, 119 - 121 Bui Vien, D1

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 🏜 Oi's Pick

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

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

Shots Bar

A corner bar on Bui Vien that, along with drinks, serves a variety of food such as seafood, pork and chicken dishes.

207 Bui Vien, DI

Slate

Slate takes its name from the dark grev 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 RBO menu. A tad difficult to find above a BMW dealership, but accessible from the hotel it is worth the effort.

3rd Floor Moevennick Hotel 253 Nauven Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

5pm - 11pm

Spotted Cow

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

111 Bui Vien, D1 3920 7670

spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com

11am - 12pm

Storm P

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

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

Vasco's

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

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

Wine Embassy

For those looking to relax and enjoy a glass of wine after work, Wine Embassy is the perfect place with wine specialists and an interactive menu to help you pair your wine with crafted food.

13 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 3824 7827 www.wineembassy.com.vn 4pm till late 11am - late

7an7Rar

ZanZBar boasts an eclectic range of international cuisine, great wines, handcrafted espresso coffees, happy hour specials and more. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week from 7am until late.

19-21 Dong Khoi, D1

cafés

ABC Bakery & Cafe

ABC Bakery & Cafe has over 30 different

kinds of baked goods such as baquettes, danishes, whole cakes, sliced cakes and even pizza. Together with its range of baked items, it is also has Western and Vietnamese coffee and juices.

223 - 225 Pham Ngu Lao, DI www.abcbnc.com

Achaya Cafe

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

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

Aisha Lounge

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

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

AO 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, DI 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. DI 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

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

53 Dang Dung, DI 3290 6004

Caffe Fresco

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

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

Café Terrace

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

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

Cafe Vuon Kieng

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

10B Ton Duc Thang, DI

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.banhsaurieng.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.

Chi's Cafe

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

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

Cian 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 Nauven Hue, DI 40 Ngo Duc Ke, DI

Cosmo Lounae

Cosmo Lounge is a popular location for stylish and trendy locals and expats alike. Chill out in a bold blue and white

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environment with local and European cafe food and a broad selection of coffees

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

Crèperie & Café

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

5 Han Thuyen, D1

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe features an architecture that blends classic and modern elements. Featured drinks include Cryptic frappe (the combination of coffee and Orion cake, banana and fresh cream), Cryptic soda (soda, flavored orange peel, lemon and fresh cream) and Cryptic yogurt (with yogurt, mango, strawberry, peach). This place also holds acoustic and art performances.

343/6 To Hien Thanh, DIO

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@deiavu.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

Fe Cafe

Fe Cafe brings you all kinds of scrumptious coffee, along with Vietnamese food and dessert. It offers breakfast, lunch, dinner and offers delivery as well. The interior is a mix of alternative and fancy, with wooden furniture, soft backrest pillows and decorative paintings

26 Lv Tu Trong. D1 090 878 3788

www.facebook.com/fecafe.vn 7:30am - 11pm

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, DI

Imagine Coffee shop

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

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan 090 956 0105

www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop

09 0956 0105 nguyenmaihuan@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 homemade puree.

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

Kem Mv

This quiet ice cream shop is the perfect place for families and couples to include their sweet tooth. It offers a fresh release from the heat of Ho Chi Minh City 11 Duong 41, D4

093730 3030 www.kemmv.vn 3.30pm - 11pm

Kesera

A cozv and friendly café/bar serving coffee, beer, wines, freshly- baked





Grab a copy

MOF (KUMHO ASIAN PLAZA)

Kumho Asiana Plaza, Le Duan, DI

Al Fresco Restaurant 111 Bui Vien, D1

Angel-in-us Coffee 145 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Dl

Anna Vo 23 Dong Khoi, DI

Anupa 9 Dong Du, D1

Awesome Coffee (D2 - 21) My Toan 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Baba's Kitchen 164 Bui Vien, D1

Bahdia 87-91 Ho Tung Mau, DI

Bernie Bar 19 Thai Van Lung, DI

Blanchy street 74/3 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Blue Dragon 1B Bui Vien, D1

BMV pub 38 Quoc Huong, D2

Boathouse 36 Thao Dien. D2

Boomarang 107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Boutique Hotel (R3-84) Bui Bang Doan, D7

Caravelle

1 Dong Khoi, D1

Carls' Jr Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

Chaya Cafe 90 Le Loi, D1

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

L'amour

A stylish bakery and cafe new to Hai Ba Trung, in the city centre, L'amour specialises in cakes and desserts and serves Illy Coffee. Eat in or take away. 24 Hai Ba Trung, D1

3520 8180 www.lamourbakery.com

L'Anmien Dining Cafe

Linked to the luxurious Mui Ne hotel of the same name, this internationally-styled sidewalk 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 www.lusinespace.tumblr.com 9am - 9pm

Le Tokyo Baum

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

May Coffee

A superb, friendly, and inexpensive little café most notable for its perfect view of the Cathedral tower bells and close proximity to the post office.

1 Cong Xa Paris, D1 3827 7099 www.mavcoffee.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

M7 Coffee

A cafe in a colonial villa that was built in the early 20th century. It boasts a broad selection of

coffee from fine Vietnamese condensed milk coffee to Italian Lavazza expresso, cappucinos

and lattes as well as wines and beers.

56-56 A Bui Thi Xuan, DI 39255258 www.m-zing.com

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, DI 3822 9992

www.nvdc.com.vn

Onset Cafe

This lounge cafe features live bands and is a good setting for work events or business meetings. With bold interior furniture it is a popular respite for Ho Chi Minh residents.

319 Ly Thuong Kiet, D11 6670 7092 onsetcoffee@yahoo.com.vn

Paris Deli



A French style cafe serving some of the best pastries in Saigon, this cheerful spot is a real slice of Parisian life. Many European drinks and dishes

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1 3821 6127

Passio Coffee to Go

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

112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

Phuong Cac Cafe

With indoor and outdoor lounge areas this cafe is a relaxing respite from the grind of Ho Chi Minh City. With live bands and drinks under VND100.000 it makes for the perfect getaway.

Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3 3932 7484

Phúc Minh Coffee

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

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

Princess and the Pea

A fairvtale-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

84 Nguyen Du, D1

Retrobite Diner Cafe

Inspired by the concept of 1960s Americana, bi-level Retrobite Diner Cafe features an interior that includes booths, retro egg chairs, jukebox and classic radio players. The menu is mostly American food with sandwiches, hamburgers pastas, steaks, milkshakes, waffles and

6 Cona Truona Ouoc Te. D3 3521 0673 retrobite.vn@gmail.com 7:30am - 11pm

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

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, DI Ground Floor, Crescent Mall Ton Dat Tien, D7 157-159 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1 39 Le Duan, DI 12-14 Thai Van Lung, D1 94 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1 235 Dong Khoi, DI 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 Livina Room

The Living Room has two floors providing

a laid-back atmosphere for meet-ups or after-work relaxation over drinks and Western and Vietnamese food.

40-42 Dong Du, D1 3822 0377

Tram Coffee 🏜 Oi's Pick

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

100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan 2240 5306

The Myth Cafe

Escape the daily grind of Ho Chi Minh City with a trip into the mystical setting of Myth Cafe. With live bands and prices under VND100,000 it's no wonder The Myth cafe is one of the best around.

176 Dien Bien Phu, D3 3820 9735 thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com

Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

26B-C Le Loi, D1

The Serenata Cafe

The Serenata Cafe is a peaceful, relaxing oasis in a French Colonial house. This cafe embraces nature with plants, fishponds, and small fountains, and offers music in

the evenings 6D Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3 3930 7436

Vecchio Cafe

The interior features Italian ornate décor, dim lighting and antique furniture, enhanced by Italian music. Offerings include pasta, soup, chicken dishes salad, beef dishes, gelato and beverages such as smoothies, fresh fruit juices and tea

39/3 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

Windows

A highly fashionable cafe near the cathedral. For many years, this eyecatching 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, DI 38238408

Yogen Fruz

Serves frozen yogurt with 20 different kinds of fruits for you to choose from. This place also provides an environment where customers can relax and be social

B3-15B Basement Vincom Center B, 72 Le Thanh Ton DI www.yogenfruz.com.vn

Zoom Cafe 🖦 Oi's Pick

This distinctive Vespa-themed Café has been a popular fixture in DI 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

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chinese

Dragon Court

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Dragon Court is a large restaurant opposite the Opera House in Saigon's bustling District I. 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

a B

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 thee totally private rooms.

New World Hotel 76 Le Lai, D1 3822 8888

www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Hung Ky Mi Gia

a

Hung Ky Mi Gia is a famous and longstanding 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, DI 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, DI 3822 0033

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

Located in the Sheraton Hotel, Li Bai offers a selection of over 50 dim sum dishes as well as traditional Chinese and Cantonese specialties. Diners will enjoy the relaxed, upscale ambiance provided by the wood paneling and oriental art.

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

Ming Court

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Since the Nikto 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, DI 3925 7777

Ocean Palace

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

2 Le Duan Street, DI

2 Le Duan Stree 3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

It's worth traipsing out to D6 for this one. Not only are the Dim Sum, Pelaing 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

E

Shang Palace Restaurant

a 🔊

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.

Ist Floor, Norfolk Mansion 17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, DI 3823 2221

Shi-Fu Dim sum

⇔ 3 € 18

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.dimsumhouse.vn

Yu Chu

Yu chu is renowned for the quality and presentation of its authentic Cantonese and Peking cuisines along with its elegant décor. Watching the chefs prepare signature dishes such as hand-pulled noodle, dim sum and Peking duck right in the kitchen is a prominent dining feature here

First floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan 3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon

french

Alibi Restaurant and Bar

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

5 Nguyen Sieu, 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

ta d≠ B

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 45 P

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

38 Mac Dinh Chi, DI

3822 5216 www.cordonblue.vn

La Brasserie de Saigon

a b

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

38 Dong Du, D1 0862913657

contact@labrasseriedesaigon.com www.labrasseriedesaigon.com 11.30pm - 2.30pm; 6pm - 12am

La Camarque

I25)

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 Cuisine

☆ 🔊

This ultra-fine little bistro is an exercise in minimalism with its twenty seats and bare, chic-rustic interior of wooden furnishings and black & white photographs on whitewashed walls. Its warm lighting and clean atmosphere belies a certain sophistication, however, and the price of the fare is significantly damaging enough to make this a rare treat for those not in the restaurant's fabulously wealthy target market.

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

La Creperie

La Creperie is the first authentic Brittany French restaurant that serves savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and

the best apple cider in Saigon.

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

La Dore

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

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

La Fourchette

a b

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

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

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 b

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

98 Ho Tung Mau, DI 0948 415 646

Le Bordeaux

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Set in a French colonial-style mansion, Le

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

72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh 3899 9831

restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn 11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm

Le Bouchon De Saigon

120

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.lebouchondesaigon.com

Le Jardin

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

31D Thai Van Lung, D1 3825 8465

o Parie

Le Paris has an interior that features depictions of Eiffel Tower, Seine River and Notre Dame Cathedral. Food offerings include French, seafood, steats and vegetarian dishes.

45 Mac Thi Buoi, D1 www.facebook.com/leparisrestaurant

L'Olivier

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

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

The Refinery 🏜 Oi's Pick

This Parisian bistro hidden away in its enclave on Hai Ba Trung is an exceptional venue, making for an elegant 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, DI 3825 7667 www.therefinerysaigon.com

Ty COZ 🏜 Oi's Pick

E)

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

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

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

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

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



Bollywood

Bollywood omplete North Taste Of India & South Indian

Cuisine. Special Chaat & Tandoori Dishes. Parties, Events & catering service available, Daily Lunch tiffin and

Free Delivery(All Phu my Hung) 22131481 - 22450096 0938069433

Hotline: 0906357442(English) bollywoodvietnam@gmail.com facebook:

bollywoodvietnamindiancuisine (for complete menu)

Ashoka

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards.Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups.

17/10 Le Thanh Ton, D1 3823 1372

www.ashokavietnam.com

Baba's Kitchen 🖦 Oi's Pick

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

164 Bui Vien, D1 3838 6661 www.babaskitchen.in llam - llom

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, dovas, and vada from the southern region

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

Indus Indian

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

2G Thi Sach, DI 3521 0324

Mumtaz

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

city if you're ever on holiday and missing vour curries

226 Bui Vien, DI 3837 1767

The Punjabi

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

40/3 Bui Vien, D1 3508 3777

italian

1960 Presidential Club

1960 Presidential Club is a memberonly restaurant with an interior design inspired by Saigon in the 60s. You will experience more traditional style of Italian cuisine with an extensive menu led by chef Franco Buressi.

Floor 22 Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1 www.club1960.vn

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-O3A, Level B3 Vincom Tower, 70 Le Thanh Ton, DI

www.capricciosa.com.vn

Casa Italia

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

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



Ciao Bella 🌢 Oi's Pick

Hearty home-

style İtalian 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 vance

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



Chef Mamma's

Chef Mamma's is located at Saidon's

Superbowl Center offering a variety of Italian and Asian food. The restaurant opens from early in the morning until late at night serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

A43 Truong Son, Tan Binh



Da Vinci's

Da Vinci's is an Vinet Italian-American style pizzeria delivery offering pizzas, lasagna, spaghetti, calzones, salads and desserts. Their full menu is online at www. davincisvietnam.com. Free delivery to Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and Phu My Hung.

Open Ilam - IOpm. Call 083 943 4982 or SMS your order to 093 328 4624

Good Morning Vietnam

Italian restaurant with a unique menu including traditional Italian dishes. The restaurant is conveniently located in a beautiful old house in the heart of Saigon, well integrated in the local architecture. 197 De Tham, DI

3837 1894

www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com

La Hostaria

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

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

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 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, D1 3837 0760

Opera Restaurant

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

1st floor Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, D1 38241234 www.saigon.park.hyatt.com 6am - 11pm

Pizza 4P'S 🖦 Oi's Pick

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

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

Pomodoro

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

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

Sarpino's Pizzeria

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

125 Ho Tung Mau, D1 www.sarpinos.vn

iabanese



Achaya Cafe

OCHAYA CAFE

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

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

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

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

120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1 3822 0522

Aki Japanese Restaurant

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

15/9 Le Thanh Ton, DI 3827 9083

Baby Spoon

Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers

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contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.

47 Phan Chu Trinh, DI

Blanchy Street 🖦 Oi's Pick

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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 saltes and wines.

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI 3823 8793 www.blanchystreet.com

* Reviewed by Oi in April 2013

Cam On Restaurant

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

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

Dragon Hotpot

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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

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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

Dragon Steak

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A striking Japanese restaurant tucked away off Saigon's central street, Dragon steak specialises in thick wagayu 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 O288 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 697I ductm@incubation-vn.com ebisu-vn.asia

Fuji Restaurant

The cuisine is exceptional – fresh seafood

and vegetables flown in direct from Japan and Dalat. A preferred venue for those staying at the hotel, and worth trying if you're living local.

Ground Floor, Nikko Hotel Saigon 235 Nguyen Van Cu, 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

42 R

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 Ilam - 2pm, 5.30pm - I0pm

Kabuto Tokyo

183

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

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 Ilam - 2pm, 5pm - Ilpm

Kuru Kuru Shusi

A Japanese restaurant that features a rotating conveyor belt for the buffet, offering 50 different selections. It also offers an a la carte menu.

129 Nguyen Du, D1 www.kurukuru.com.vn 11am - 2pm and 5pm - 10:30pm

Kokekokko Pandora

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

4th Floor Pandora, 1/1 Truong Chinh, Tan Phu 3849 6840

www.kokekokko.com.vn

La Fenetre Soleil

a b

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 Il large French windows. Its sense of personality attracts artistically-inclined expats to return often, and many of these profess it as their favourite hangout in Saigon. Cuisine is Japanese-Vietnamese fusion.

44 Ly Tu Trong, D1 3824 5994

Mus Mus

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

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

Osaka Ramen

a

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

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

Robata Dining An

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

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

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

A IS

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

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1 6291 1036 saburasabu yn

sakurasaku.vn 11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Sumo BBO

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

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

Sushi Bar

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

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

Sushi Dining Aoi

1 18

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

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

Sushi World

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A four-storey restaurant in a Japanesestyle, 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.sushiworld.com.vn

Tokyo Deli

🔝 🎶

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

240 Le Thanh Ton, DI 5404 2244 tokyodeli.com.vn Ilam - Ilom

Uraetei 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

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

42 Le Anh Xuan, DI 3823 3232 vickis.com.vn

10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm

Wainosuke

Wainosuke is a Japanese and Italian style restaurant. It serves food such as pastas, salads and steaks to name a few and wine from traditional Japanese to premium Italian wine.

37 Ho Tung Mau, DI 382I 4016 www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Yoshino

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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

Vubi

nuni na da ™

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.

Ist Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza 39 Le Duan, DI 3825 7974 www.daejanggum.vn

Hana Restaurant

a 🛵 🗈

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, D1 7306 4045 094 467 2281 jymimil1@hanmail.net 10am - 3am

Mi Han Ouoc

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, D1 3914 1565 www.mihanquocvn.com 8am - 11pm

Mr. BBQ - Korean Chicken & Hof

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

20 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1 3823 9000 9am-11pm

Seoul House

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

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

steakhouses

Au Lac do Brazil

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

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

Corso Steakhouse and Bar

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

117 Le Thanh Ton, DI 3829 5368 www.norfolkhotel.com.vn 6pm - 11pm

Dragon Steak

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

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

11am - late FI Gaucho

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

5D Nguyen Sieu, D1 38251879 www.elgaucho.asia

New York Steakhouse

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

25-27 Nauven Dinh Chieu, DI contact@steakhouse.com.vn

www.steakhouse.com.vn Pho 99 🏜 Oi's Pick

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

139 Nguyen Trai, D1 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, D1 3822 0079 www.samba.vnnhahang.com

Wild Horse Salon

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

8A/IDI 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, D1 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, D1 3823 4423 091 233 9138 www.kohthai.com.vn 11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai

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

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, D1 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

13 Ton That Thiep, D1 3821 2920 11am - 2pm, 5pm - 10pm

Malee Thai

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

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

Spice

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

27C Le Quy Don, D3 3930 7873 www.spicevn.com 11am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10pm

Thai Express

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

8A Le Thanh Ton, DI 6299 1338 www.thaiexpress.com.vn 10.30am - 10pm

vietnamese

3T Quan Nuong

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

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1 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, D1 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

Ranh Xen 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, D1 3833 0534 www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en

Barbecue Garden

The venue features all open-air dining and the atmosphere is distinctly festivallike, 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, D1 3823 3340 www.barbecuegarden.com

Beefsteak Nam Son

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

188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3 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

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

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, D1

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, D3 3829 5243 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

Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

A new trendy kitchen and cozy restaurant with the concept of taking traditional Vietnamese charcoal grilled street food and serving it in a New York stylie cafe.

122 Le Thanh Ton, D1 38227 901 www.grillbar.com.vn



Quan Bui -Authentic Vietnamese



An exciting Vietnamese culinary experience awaits you in the heart of the old French quarter in downtown Saigon. Reasonably priced, you will see the open kitchen as you come in (chefs working hard to thrill your palate with the herbs, spices and sauces from around the country - definitely no MSG here) The ambiance is sophisticated and comfortable with traditional crockery o‱o

ing as decoration. 17A Ngo Van Nam, D1 3828 1515 www.guanbui.vn

Highway 4

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

101 Vo Van Tan, D3 3602 2069 www.highway4.com

Hoa Tuc

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

74 Hai Ba Trung, DI 3825 1676 www.hoatuc.com

Hoang Yen

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

7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 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

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, D1 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, D1 3825 1330

www.facebook.com/LuongSonOuan

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, D1 3910 6488 nhahangnamphat@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, D3 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, D1

Mitau

Mitau creates a gathering place for those who love Hue cuisine. The interior includes memorabilia, statues, bric and brac and golf trophies

52 Hai Ba Trung, DI 3823 0767 www.mitauhue.com

Nahi 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, D1 3823 0699 nghixuanrestaurant.com

Nha Hang Ngon

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

160 Pasteur, D1 3827 7131

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 Chanh, Binh Thanh 6258 1508 papaya@chi-nghia.com www.chi-nghia.com

Pho 2000

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

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

Pho 24

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

71-73 Dong Khoi, D1 3825 7505

Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

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

17a Ngo Van Nam, D1 3829 1515 (deliveries: 3602 2241 or 091 400 8835)

Ouan An Noon

Ouan An Ngon appeals easily to tourists and local people alike in its unique concept: presenting the diversity of Vietnamese cuisine from different regions in a village market style. The restaurant is set in a large new building, which from its external yellow appearance is reminiscent of an old European villa: but inside its space is designed as an ancient Hue ruong house

138 Nam Kv Khoi Nghia, D1 3827 9666 www.quanngon138.com 7am - 10pm

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. D3 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, D1 6680 0188 shaarden.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, D1 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, D1 3829 9244 templeclub.com.vn

Thanh Nien Restaurant

With its attractive home-style layout, pretty garden for outdoor dining, and warm, vellow-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/thanhnien

Tih Restaurant

This fine Vietnamese Hue-style restaurant looks almost like a temple, and it's considered one of the city's premier settings serving imperial cuisine.

187 Hai Ba Trung, D3 3829 7242 www.tibrestaurant.com.vn

Tin Nahia

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

93-95 Dong Khoi, DI 3829 1623 www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

(other) asian

Crawfish King

Crawfish King serves special menus with crawfish, lobster, mantis shrimp, American-style chicken wings, oysters, fruit beer, sea urchin and more. Offers free delivery for customers in DI and D3.

63 Truong Dinh, DI 6272 7888

www.facebook.com/crawfishking63

7am - 12am

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, DI 3823 8371 www.lioncitvrestaurant.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

Ground Floor, Etown 1 364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh www.longmonaco.com.vn

western/international

Al Fresco's

Offering a mix of Tex-Mex, Italian, and Australian food along with cold local & imported beers and a wine list featuring Australia's finest whites along with affordable South American reds.

16 Nguyen Thi Nghia, D1 3926 0036 www.alfrescosgroup.com 8.30am - 11pm

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten -free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1 3822 9391 41A Thao Dien street. D2 3744 2630 SB2-1 My Khanh 4,Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5412 3263

www.annam-gourmet.com

Au Parc

It's only fitting that this Mediterraneanstyled restored villa with its original tiles old window frames, plush cushions, and onium-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

Bahdia

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, DI 093 787 2010 (French, Arabic, English,

0122 763 1261 (English, Russian, Vietnamese) Mon - Fri 11:30 - 2pm Mon - Sat 6pm - 11pm

Ben Style h Oi's Pick

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

meal plans for those who want to get fit and bulk up. 302 Co Bac, D1

090 691 2730

Black Cat Restaurant

Originally envisioned as a fast food Vietnamese sandwich place, Black Cat Saigon now serves international food with a focus on burgers, most famously its "Big Cheese" featuring 500g of beef.

13 Phan Van Dat. DI 3829 2955 www.blackcatsaigon.com 7am - 11pm

Blu Bar and Grill

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

7am - 11pm

Buraer Oi

Burger Oi offers fast delivery at affordable prices. Try their burgers, filet of fish, BBQ pulled pork, fresh cut curly fries and desserts. See their full menu online at www.burgeroi.com

Call 083 826 5426 or SMS your order to 093 836 3030

Chuck's

Chuck's offers American comfort food like pancakes, omelets, burritos, fries, cos, burgers and hotdogs.

27 Tran Nhat Duat, DI

Crab Pot

Crab Pot is a beer and seafood restaurant serving breakfasts, lunches and dinners of American, French, Seafood and Vietnamese cuisines, with delivery and catering services also. 65 Pham Ngoc Thach 6, D3

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 090 381 8700 www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

Jaspas Wine & Grill 🏜 Oi's Pick

Jaspas Wine and Grill provides an extensive wine list along with many "reinvented" Jaspas dishes, new creations, and mouthwatering steaks. Japas also offers a wide array of delectable dessert options 74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1

3827 0931 alfrescosgroup.com



Khoi Thom

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

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

www.khoithom.com

La Fenetre Soleil

La Fenetre Soleil, literally means 'window to the sun', showcases a fusion of Old World fittings such as exposed bricks, antique furniture and chandeliers with New World elements such as fur cushions and mosaic tiled and glass tables. Serves a range of cocktails, imported beer, coffee and smoothies together with a Japanese-Vietnamese fusion menu.

4 Ly Tu Trong, D1

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 Ouat, DI 3829 5180

www.lahabana-saigon.com

Ly Club

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

143 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3 3930 5588 www.lyclub.vn

Margherita

For some, Margherita doubles as an unofficial expat rendezvous, partly a result of its agreeable prices and sumptuous Western-style pizzas and foods.

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1 3837 0760

Market 39

Market 39 showcases seven interactive live show kitchens, featuring a la carte all-day dining and an extensive buffet selection served daily during breakfast, lunch and dinner

Ground floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan 3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Mogambo Bar & Grill

Mogambo is a dark. African-styled restaurant with some the finest US & Tex-Mex and exceptional burgers.

50 Pasteur, D1 3825 1311

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

The city's best-known Spanish restaurant with a sports bar on the ground floor, two floors of dining space, and an open rooftop deck for cocktails and live music. Serving tapas, paella, and an extensive Iberian wine list.

97 Hai Ba Trung, D1 090 724 2757 andres@pacharan.com.vn 10am - late

Parkview Restaurant

This restaurant is best known locally for its seafood buffet, with a wide variety of international specialties freshly-prepared at the live cooking stations. Local and imported seafood includes oysters and prawns, molluscs and organic lobsters

76 Le Lai, D1 3822 8888

www.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

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, DI

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, DI

3914 4118

The Burger Corner

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

3821 0094

www.theburgercorner.com.vn

The Elbow Room

The Elbow Room on Pasteur is an American-style bistro with a long bar, exposed brickwork, white walls, and whirring 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 DI 3821 4327 www.elbowroom.com.vn

The Hungry Pig

A sandwich bar that takes bacon very seriously, The Hungry Pig is a place where you can find bacon, wrapped in fresh-baked bagels and baguettes.

144 Cong Quynh, D1 3836 4533

Wainosuke

Wainosuke is a Japanese and Italian style restaurant. It serves food and wine fróm traditional Japanese to premium

Italian wine 37 Ho Tung Mau, DI www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Warda

Warda is a Middle-Eastern style bar and restaurant headed by a renowned Syrian chef. Guests can enjoy authentic middleeastern cuisine indoors and outdoors while enjoying an almond cigar or shisha.



White Forest

Set in a modern décor, the restaurant serves

White Forest authentic Italian and French cuisine accompanied by a good selection of

European wines and cocktails. Happy Hour cocktails from 2pm – 7:30pm where it's buy one get one free. Order take-away online at vietnammm.com, foodpanda.vn, and eat.vn 14 Bis Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1

0122 428 5237 www.whiteforest.com.vn JISTINGS COPYRIGHT @2013 ATEXPATS



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

Zest Bistro & Cafe

A casual restaurant featuring an American, French and fusion menu. Located across from the waterfront, just minutes away from the Bach Dang pier, Zest offers diners one of the nicest views in the city.

5 Ton Duc Thang, DI 3911 5599

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 vscooterguv@vahoo.com 7am - 2am daily

>>The List District 2

BAKERIES

Vnelker

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

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

Shalom Coffee

Shalom Coffee is available for all your coffee and chocolate needs, warm snacks, cold refreshments, breakfasts and lunches.

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2 37444111

www.coffeeshalom.com 6:30am - 7pm

RESTAURANTS

FRENCH

Gastro'home

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service. 100 Xuan Thuy, D2. 6281 9830

La Villa 🏜 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day. Set amongst the flowers and with a ring of the lost charm of the Colonial era, this is an appealing and impressive venue for An Phu's highprofile community.

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2 3898 2082

www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn

wed 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

18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2 3744 4585

INDIAN

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards.Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups

33 Tong Huu Dinh (Street 53), D2 3744 4177

www.ashokavietnam.com

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 14El Thao Dien, D2

3744 6782

Chiisana Hashi

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

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2 6683 5308

THAI

Baan Thai

Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs.Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.

55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453 www.baanthai-anphu.com

Jasmine Thai

Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.

85 Quoc Huong, D2 3519 0038

VIETNAMESE

Banian Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant. Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

Francipani Hoa Su

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

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

WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse in Oi's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environmen

40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790 www.boathouse.com.vn

Blue Crab in Oi's Pick

Blue Crab offers delicious seafood prawns, scallops and lobster, crab, oysters, scallops and many more for rock-bottom prices. All of the seafood is sourced from the same supplier as a number of high-end hotels and restaurants in the city, ensuring the food is fresh and high quality. For meat-lovers there's also a wide range of dishes that include pork ribs and chicken wings. They offer weekly specials as well

49 Quoc Huong, D2 www.bluecrabsaigon.com

Mekong Merchant

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list

23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713

Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, foosball, and more. Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large openplan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie

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 Nauven U Di. D2 www.thedecksaigon.com

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

>>The List District 7

BAKERIES

Dunkin' Donuts

This American doughnut and coffee franchise offers munchkins, croissants, donut sandwich and toasted sandwiches - along with the popular sugar raised, glazed chocolate mochi, glazed, chocolate coconut, cinnamon, Boston kreme, Bavarian Kreme, strawberry-filled or chocolate frosted donuts.

59 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

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

Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5412 2469

www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

A spacious, attractive restobar with comfortable, lounge-style seating and a bar area, this watering hole mixes three beers on tap and a large screen for live sports with a pan-Asian curry menu. **S57-1 Sky Garden 2, D7**

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.

S52-1 Sky Garden 2, D7

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

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 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 www budsicecream com vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Rean & 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

LEGEND: ★ Wi-Fi

Credit Card

Dendau Privileges Apply

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7 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

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

SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

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

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 mudpies and a whole range of Western comfort foods 107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretl 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

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

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

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoris. S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 1989

Snice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any pallette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7 093 841 6551

www.namaste-india.com.vn

ITALIAN

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 CR1-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7

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.

3SI 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7 www.sarpinos.vn

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices. 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 | 5412 4848 www.saltpepper.com.vn

JAPANESE

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

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.

59 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7 5410 0822

www nathaliesrestaurant com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000 VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

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

Charm 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

Berru is a family-run Turkish restaurant offering a variety of Turkish specialties

on the menu including kebabs, koftas, mezzes and soups. This is one of the few halal restaurants that imports all of their halal meat

SC 3-1 Khu Pho My Khang, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

Boomarang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomarang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town. 107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

3841 3883

www.boomarang.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

EL CAMINO

A small bar & restaurant situated in the heart of Phu My Hung. Relaxing outdoor saloon featuring inexpensive Spanish tapas and small plates from gourmet ingredients. Affordable selection of Spanish & French win

137 SB-02 Khu My Phat, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

5412 4641, 3pm - midnight www.facebook.com/elcaminovietnam

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

Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7 3825 1879 www.elgaucho.com.vn

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

Scott & Binh's Restaurant 🎍 Oi's Pick

This unassuming little bistro is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike. With a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and various other international dishes, this is an ideal guilty hideaway from Vietnamese cuisine for just one meal at least

supermarkets

100%

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

26b Thao dien, D2 **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 16-18 Hai Ba Trung, DI

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

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 www.classicfinefoods.com



Le Cochon D'or

D'or shop sells



European and International meat that include ham, sausages, pate, terrine, and smoked specialties. A taste of home, because you and your taste buds deserve it! Customizes service available including door-to-door delivery

64 Ngo Duc Ke, DI 3829 3856 8am - 7pm www.ngp.com.vn

Metro

Wholesale suppliers of foodstuff, office supplies, furniture, clothes and more Entry is reserved for business owners only but foreigners can obtain a oneday pass by showing their passports. Residential An Phu, An Khanh Ward 2

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. **S54-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7**

wine & liauor

Bacchus Corner

Bachhus 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

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

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

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai. 54 Ham Nghi, D1

The Warehouse

A premium wine importer, distributor, and retailer supplying wines from all over the world, the Warehouse also offers spirits, wine accessories, glassware and refrigeration to complement their customers' choices

178 Pasteur, DI

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 a great value. 15C7 Thi Sach, D1

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY **PATRICK STEPHEN COLGAN**



Istanbul (Not Constantinople)

A love letter to the "City of the World's Desire"

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM

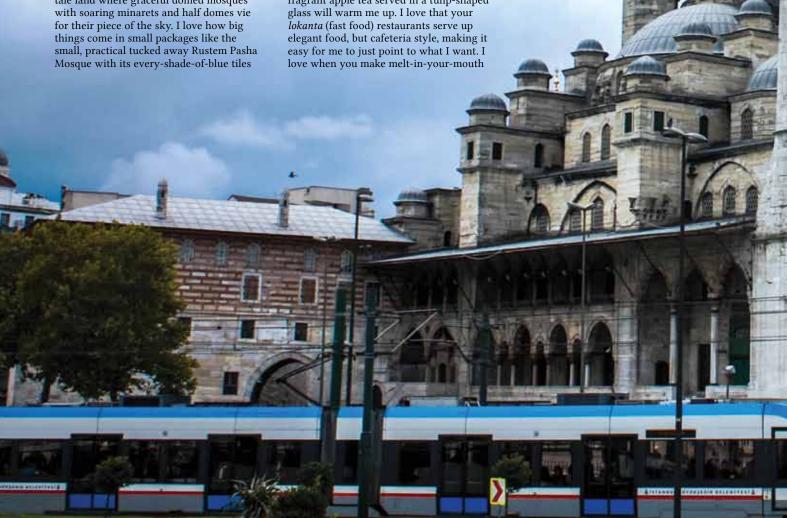
Dear Istanbul,

I know we've only known each other for a few days, but in that short amount of time, I've really grown to love you.

I love how I never know what to expect from you. Are you Asian or European? Or both, because you're the only metropolis in the world to straddle both continents? Are you old or are you new? (I love how it's called the New Mosque, even though it's practically 400 years old.) Are you Muslim or are you Christian? I just never know with you. What do I call you? Constantinople (Istanbul prior to 1930)? Byzantium? Maybe I'll just call you "Gorgeous." I love that I can be walking on marble, then round the corner and see a beautiful cobblestone lane. I love that some squares pipe classical music while a block away, European techno blares. I love that being with you is like walking in a fairy tale land where graceful domed mosques with soaring minarets and half domes vie for their piece of the sky. I love how big things come in small packages like the small, practical tucked away Rustem Pasha

and how big things also come in humongous packages, like the Haghia Sophia, first the greatest church in Eastern Christendom, then re-consecrated to chief mosque of the Ottoman empire and finally to a museum. I loved the shimmering metallic mosaics found inside along with the largest dome ever constructed (at least for 1000 years until Michelangelo built the dome over St. Peter's). If that weren't enough, I love the silhouette of the Sultanahmet Mosque, with its six minarets and blue Isnik tiles, hence its other name, the Blue Mosque. Do you really need that many mosques, so close together? But alas, it's not a matter of need. It's a celebration of beauty, "the world's desire"

Have I also told you that you're a great cook? When it's cold and rainy, you know that the smell of roasted chestnuts or a fragrant apple tea served in a tulip-shaped glass will warm me up. I love that your lokanta (fast food) restaurants serve up elegant food, but cafeteria style, making it easy for me to just point to what I want. I







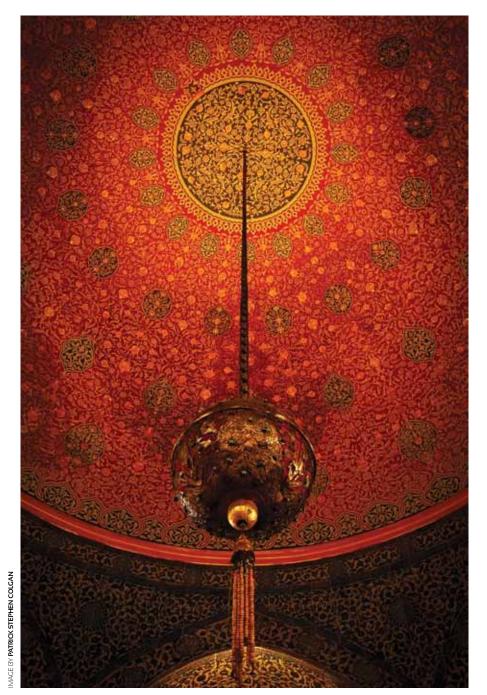
kofte meatballs and succulent lamb kebabs. And remember that time we stopped in the tiny fishing village of Anadolu Kavagi, right by the Black Sea, and you made me a seafood platter of grilled fish, mussels and calamari? Good times, Istanbul, good times.

I even love that you're a shopaholic, with your kazillion bazaars selling everything from the kitschiest of fez hats and Turkish delight rolled in pumpkin seeds, chocolate or coconut (or coconut AND chocolate!) to ancient coins and gorgeous Isnik ceramics. Oh, how I wish I could take more of your treasures with me! I love how the mountains of colorful spices in the Egyptian Spice Market fight for space alongside exotic teas and how even the bazaar

buildings are beautiful with mosaics on the floor and painted ceilings. (I'm still grossed out by the availability of leech treatments, but I'm willing to let that go.) But the Grand Bazaar, with its more than 4,000 shops? C'mon, Istanbul. Even you don't need THAT much retail therapy...

I love how we travel together. Sometimes, we go by boat, like the time we cruised up and down the Bosphorus Strait, Europe on one side and Asia on the other, passing fortresses, waterfront mansions and gleaming palaces. Or the time we took the Tunel, the world's shortest metro line with only one stop, traveling up the steep, narrow 555 meter incline and letting out at Istiklal Caddesi, the raucous mile long pedestrianonly stretch filled with stores selling antique engravings, the most visually stunning food and the latest fashions. It's the place to see and be seen. Although, Istanbul, I'll have to admit that I'm not all too crazy about the tram, though, as a crush of people try to surge and fit into spaces that don't exist. But no one's perfect, right?

I love how you surprise me with too-cool-for-school places, like the underground Basilica Cistern (Sunken Palace) with its 336 columns providing water to the ancient palaces or the tiny Mosaics Museum with its grand tessellated courtyard from the 6th century's Great Palace or the Circumcision Room in the Topkapi Palace, with its soothing greens and blues designed to relax the royal princes before the big snip...



And I love your children. Always nice and polite, and so very helpful. I like the contrast of how some of your daughters are dressed in full burqa and hajib while others sport the latest trends. I love the fact that people are still lined up, fishing on the Galata Bridge, even in the rain and even at night.

I love you even though I've had a glimpse of some of your character flaws, like your jealous streak. I saw that side of you in the Harem within the Topkapi Palace (haram is Arabic for 'forbidden') where four centuries of palace women were locked up for life in posh surrounds (only Christians and Jews, no Muslim girls). But safe to say, you are different from all my other loves. With them, I felt like I knew them all in a relatively short time. But you, Istanbul, I feel like I can get lost in you for days and not see the half of it. So don't think of it as "good bye", Istanbul. Just "till we meet again." ■

ISTANBUL TRAVEL TIPS

Most tourists stay in either the Taksim or the Sultanahmet areas. Taksim has loads of shops and good eats (including the very entertaining pedestrian-only Istiklal Caddesi street), while Sultanahmet has tons of mosques, palaces and museums, all within blocks of each other. I stayed at the excellent Minel Hotel, a very small nine-room hotel that was affordable, new and just minutes from all that great history in Sultanahmet. It was nice to be able to see the gorgeous mosques in daylight and lit up at night. 2 To get to Sultanahmet from the airport, there are three choices: a taxi for about 40-45 Turkish Lira (TL2 = USDI), the express bus to Aksaray (TL10) and then a taxi (TL20) or the metro to Zeytinburnu and switch over to the tram to continue on to Sultanahmet (TL4). Be aware that the trams can be extremely crowded (like mashed up against the glass, crowded). There are, however, shared shuttles TO the airport for only five euros, which can be arranged through your hotel. Every time you switch lines, you will need to pay. You can either pay TL2 for a token or buy a transportation card that you top up with money (strangely, these are sold by regular kiosks selling other things, like kebabs). The benefit of the card (TL6, non-refundable) is that your subsequent trips (within two hours) are discounted. 4 The cruise up the Bosphorus is easy to do on your own. Skip the expensive 50 euro trips advertised around town. To go all the way from Eminonu (on the Marmara Sea) to the end of the line at the Black Sea, only costs TL25 return. The trip takes about 1.5 hours and leaves you at Anadolu Kavagi for three hours before making the trip back, which amounts to a relatively long day. However, lots of fish restaurants right over the water await you (set meal, TL15-20) and you can climb to the Yoros Castle for sweeping views out to the Black Sea. Don't forget to bring ID with you to leave as a deposit for the audio quide, an excellent value at only TL5.

LIFE'S A TRIP



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

Traveling Tales

Strange (but true) travel stories



"TWENTY YEARS FROM now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

I'm desperately trying to recall Mark Twain's inspirational words as I'm struggling with two suitcases which I'm schlepping from the train station to my Tokyo hotel which according to Google maps is only a nine minute walk away albeit on uneven pavement. It's raining. The brand new umbrella I brought with me broke in transit and now requires a third hand (which I obviously don't have) to keep it open. Then an old but apologetic sushi chef tells me I've taken a wrong turn and am now twice as far from my hotel as when I started. It starts to rain more heavily now and I'm

late for a tour.

Why am I subjecting myself to this misery when I could be ensconced in my comfortable Saigon apartment surrounded by the familiar? It's the lure of travel. Confusion of a new culture. Sights that my eyes didn't hitherto know existed. Ordering from a vending machine and trying to figure out the frustrating sequence of blinking buttons that will eject the ticket I need to get my dinner. Then, finally, the payoff what makes the frustration of travel with its incomprehensible maps, indecipherable language, indistinguishable ingredients worth it - heated toilet seats and soothing sprays (cue the chorus to Hallelujah). Of course, I jest. It's really all about the new experiences, the real connections, a new way of seeing things that make us travel junkies meticulously plan our next

destinations or dream about far-flung places we may never get to see.

But when I'm not actually traveling, I'm getting lost reading about it. So here are my favorite travel stories of the year that was.

Best Travel App

Used by pilot Raymond Cody when his instrument panel, including his radio, suddenly malfunctioned, Raymond was able to contact the tower with his cell phone and use his iPad app to relay his flight path in real time. Nearly half an hour later, he was back on the ground. The Federal Aviation Administration now has an iPad option, allowing authorized operators to use the tablet as an alternative to paper charts and manuals. My most useful travel app? Words With Friends to help pass the time waiting for flights.



Best Food Tour

I love food tours in new cities. See the sights while sampling the local cuisine - what's not to love? The people at VeryFirstTo have put together the food tour to end all food tours - visiting every single one of the 109 three-star Michelin restaurants in the world including arranging impossible-to-get reservations, booking hotels and navigating your airfare. The tour visits a restaurant every other day for about six months in 12 countries (nine in Europe, and the rest in the US, Japan and China). The price tag for your culinary journey? Just shy of USD150,000 for two. Your stomach will thank you.

Too Handsome to Travel

The travel world was tickled with the story of Omar Borkan Al Gala, aka Too Sexy to Travel, a male model who was allegedly kicked out of Saudi Arabia for being too tempting to its women, earning him viral stardom and over one million Facebook fans. The story even has a Vietnamese twist, as Omar admitted that the original story was a rumor blown out of proportion shortly before he was brought to Vietnam on a marketing tour in September. Reports have him disappointing fans with his real, unretouched looks and reduced appearances supposedly over money disputes. Maybe he should've Instagrammed himself instead?

Too Heavy to Travel

Matthew Harper, 154 kg, says he was ejected from a US flight, ostensibly because it

was overbooked. Southwest Airlines has a "customer of size" policy which encourages passengers to buy a second seat if they are unable to fit in a single seat. In the end, Matthew was allowed to fly, but he said he'd "never been humiliated like this in my life". The friendly skies may not be so friendly to the rotund.

Best Travel Perk

Forget luxe hotel aromatherapy shampoos and first class gourmet peanuts. The best travel perk goes to Michael Dettlaff, 12, who visited Arkansas' Crater of Diamonds park with his family this summer. The diamond mining site turned US state park allows visitors to dig in the 15 ha field. While most diamonds found are too small to be cut, after 10 minutes of digging, Michael found a 5.16 carat honey brown diamond, estimated to be worth between USD12,000 and USD15,000 once cut and polished. The park allows visitors to keep whatever they find. Now that's what I call a reason to travel!

Most Decadent Hotel Package

Hotels in 2013 continued to try to wow us with their most over-the-top offerings. Some of my favorites for the traveling One Percent include the Royal Suite at the St. Regis Saddiyat Island Resort in the United Arab Emirates. For just USD35,000, you get two floors, four bedrooms, a mini-cinema, a game room and a private swimming pool with sea views to call home for the night. For USD100,000, how about a room at the

Delano (in Miami's South Beach) instead? The Bungalow Bliss Package comes with a poolside bungalow, monogrammed linens, a one-on-one sushi-making class and cocktail-shaking class. The best perk? Two hours of completely private late-night pool access in your own cabana with rainfall shower and a Roman-inspired marble soaking tub. Skinny dip with abandon! But the topper is the "Ultimate 50" package from the Conrad Tokyo where I just stayed. For a whopping USD500,000, enjoy a fourday, three-night stay for two in the 37th floor royal suite overlooking Tokyo Bay, a dedicated concierge, a Tourbillon Grande Date watch, a Tsukiji fish market tour with a sushi master and an airport helicopter pick up. Oh, and I almost forgot - a Lamborghini Gallardo to drive away in after your stay. Yes, please!

Beware the Underwear

Apparently, a new and improved underwear bomb is one of the latest security concerns for the US Transportation Safety Administration. Dubbed "Underwear 2" after its predecessor failed to detonate on Christmas Day 2009, severely burning the would-be terrorist's groin instead of bringing down the plane, the latest version incorporates household caulk to seal the explosive device, making it difficult to detect by bomb-sniffing dogs. Another reason to always wear clean underwear when you travel as you never know when and where you'll get searched.

ESSENTIALS TRAVEL COLUMN

Gear Up

Travel gear is all about enhancing your travel experiences. With the wrong gear, your entire trip could be jeopardized. On the other hand, the right gear can take your travels to the next level

TEXT BY JONATHAN LOOF



Stashing the Cash

Keep your secret stash of bills safe from pickpocket with the **Travelon** money belt (Nylon USD15, Leather USD60). I've worn this while walking around pickpocket-infested Buenos Aires, and experienced the city without fear. It looks like a normal belt, but on the inside, there is a secret zippered compartment that can hold 8 - 12 bills. Plus, the nylon belt can go through airport security without hassles due to its plasticonly buckle. This money belt comes in either nylon or leather. While wearing this belt, you can feel safe without attracting attention.

Keeping Warm

The Arc'teryx Atom LT jacket (USD200) is disproportionately warm for its weight. All 12 ounces of the Atom LT will keep you toasty when the weather turns cold. While traveling through South America, I wore this jacket for activities ranging from trekking in high altitude to casually walking around town. When not in use, the Atom LT can be packed into its sleeve to the size of a grapefruit. It is water resistant, wind resistant, breathable and super compressible. What more could you ask for?

6 Staying Connected

The MacBook Air (USD1,099) is hands down the best laptop for any traveler. Slip in and out of cafés and airports seamlessly without having to pull out a chunky laptop. I use the MacBook Air for managing my blog, doing schoolwork, and just updating my Twitter account. The laptop can easily fit in any carry-on bag or purse. The MacBook Air weighs only 2.38 pounds, and is 0.68 inches thin, yet powerful. It is as beautiful as it is practical.

Keeping Fresh & Clean

Traveling requires versatile gear, and the **Patagonia Men's Capilene 1 Silkweight T-Shirt** (USD29) is just that. The shirt can be worn as a comfortable base layer or on its own. It weighs only 136g (4.8 oz), has 50+ UPF sun protection, and has built in odor control to keep you smelling fresh while exploring the world. The polyester T-shirt is comfy and will barely take up any space in your luggage. If purple isn't your style, you can always get it in another of the five colors available.

6 Locked Up Abroad

A durable suitcase is useless if you don't

have a lock on it. Thankfully, the **Master Lock Cable Luggage Lock** (USD9) makes it easy to secure luggage with its flexible cable. It is TSA accepted, comes in four different colors to make your luggage more visible when at the baggage claim, and has an easily customizable three-number combination.

Packing It In

The Eagle Creek Pack-It Mobile Locker (USD38) is the ultimate packing accessory. The locker is made of three compartments for sorting and organizing your clothes. I usually use the top compartment for shirts, and the bottom compartment for pants. The clear compartment is great for storing slides, sandals or even dirty clothes. The locker can easily zip up into a compact and organized cube that can be hung in any hotel for quick access. When not in use, the cube can fit in a carry-on luggage, or even a large backpack.

Bio: Jonathan Looi is a teen traveler, currently exploring South America with his family on an RTW. He blogs and writes travel gear reviews on his website, thetravelgearreviews.com.

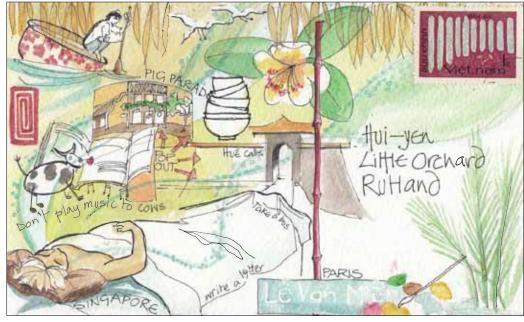
POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM **ART COLUMN**

Breakfast **Can Wait**

How creative inspiration begins



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



LUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK me where I get my inspiration from, how do I start a piece of work and why do I choose to draw or paint the things I do? I am always silenced by this question because the answer is so complex. It is similar to the question I am asked by people who stop to look at my work: "How long did it take you to do that?" Should my answer be three hours or 40 years?

When a child starts to draw at the age of two or three, every single mark made on the paper is of equal importance. By five they see that people look different and so give them different features like long or short hair, but houses are still all the same. By seven or eight they will include landscape and weather to give context to their characters, but the houses are still the same. By nine the young artist is drawing on their own observations and start to create recognizable compositions of places and things that they know, have seen or, maybe, in response to recent events. There are no houses.

Now that the young mind is taking in everything that is going on, they are

gathering image and sensory memories. They are interested in the creations of others and become fans, or followers, of different styles. These influences are also stored in the memory banks of the mind.

With every drawing, a path is being carved between the eye, the creative corridors of the mind and the hand. They start a conversation that is sometimes led by the hand and sometimes by the mind. Sometimes the hand makes a mistake or 'does its own thing' and the mind quite likes the result. Other times, the hand is a slave to the mind's intent.

As the young artist experiences more emotions the heart also becomes part of the conversation. When we mature from dependency to independence and then to collaboration we seek the input of others and they too become part of the conversation. All the while, the artist is storing away images and sensations that can be later drawn on at any time. The memory banks are growing in size every year. As the artist ages, the memories become more detailed and the banks grow every hour and minute. It can become overwhelming.

So how do I draw on these memories and inspirations? Memory banks are not like a library; you cannot do a search by subject because the categories are infinite and the languages used to store them are those of the hand, the eye, the heart and all 19 senses. The only tool that can sort them out is the subconscious and this seldom works on command.

I access my subconscious every morning in that precious time between waking and rising. As I become conscious, I lie on my back and stretch my spine and limbs as if on a rack. I use a small pillow of seeds and perfumed oils to support my neck. Sometimes I am naked; sometimes my sheet has to be perfectly smoothed over me. I don't decide - something inside decides.

Now I start to think about the task for the day ahead and soon my imagination, directed by my subconscious, takes over. They talk for about an hour and then it is time to start work while it is fresh. Breakfast can wait.

Travel & Leisure



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

airlines

Air China

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

www.airchina.com

Air France

130 Dong Khoi, DI 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: (O4).37478953

Cathay Pacific Airlines

R502, 5th floor, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ward 6, D3 3822 3203 san#rnt@cathavpacific.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: ekvietnam@emirates.com Phone: 08 39113099 www.emirates.com/vn

Etihad

etihadairways.com

EVA Airlines

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

JAL Japan Airlines

4F Hotel Nikko Saigon, 235 Nguyen Van Cu, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D 1 3830 6231

Jetstar

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

Korean Air

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

Lufthansa

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

Malaysia Airlines

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

Nantas Airways

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1 3910 5373

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.gatarairwavs.com Working hours: Mon-Fri: 8-17, Sat: 8:30am - 12:30pm

Singapore Airlines

Hanoi phone No: 04 39336767

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

29 Le Duan Blvd, D 1 Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam Phone: (84-8) 3822 3365 E-mail: reservationsqn@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, DI 3823 4755 www.united.com

Vietnam Airlines

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

Vietiet

CT Plaza Building 8th Floor, 60 Truong Son St., Tan Binh Dist., HCMC 84 8 35471866 / Hotline: 1900 1886 www vietietair 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, D 1 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, D 1 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, D 10 0906699371

Little Saigon Boutique Hotel

A small, value-for-money boutique hotel with 18 air-conditioned, nonsmoking rooms, Little Saigon Boutique Hotel is an easy walk to Ben Thanh Market and other DI sights. Hidden away in a quiet back alley right in the central area.

36 Bis/2 Le Loi, D 1 35218462

THREE STAR

AEEM Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung

Local accommodation chain that aims at the classy mid-level market; still budget, but with a touch of dignity

8A/1D2 Thai Van Lung, D 1

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Huna

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

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, D I 38236167

Bong Sen Hotel

Located in the heart of D I, The Bong Sen Hotel offers luxurious accommodation for guests who wish to relax or get a little work done.

117-123 Dong Khoi, D 1

Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently

located close to Phu Mv Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, quests can choose from 20 rooms.

R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7 5410 5941

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, D 1 38296296

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

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

15-17-19 Nguyen An Ninh, D 1 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, D 1 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, D 1 38225914 www.kimdohotel.com

Liberty Central Hotel

Liberty Central has a very prominent brand and is a particularly stylish, eyecatching property right in the centre of the tourist district

179 Le Thanh Ton. D 1 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, D 1 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 quest services and a broad dining offer.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D 1 38224866 www.novotel.com

Oscar Saigon Hotel

French colonial hotel in District 1 offering stunning panoramic views and 4 star amenities

68A Nguyen Hue, D 1 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 wellequipped with modern facilities

56-66 Nauven Hue. D 1 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.parkrovalhotels.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, D 2 37442222 www.thaodienvillage.com

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era. Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining

one of its most luxurious places to stay.

19 Lam Son Square, D 1 38234999

www.caravellehotel.com

Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

An international hotel located where the borders of the city's four main districts meet. The city's major commercial and entertainment area is only an 8-minute drive away.

242 Tran Binh Trong, D 5 38397777 www.equatorial.com/hcm

InterContinental Asiana Saigon

* * * * * 🖦 Oi'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@ihq.com www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

Classic hotel offering 5 star amenities along with a scenic view of the Saigon River, and providing a unique culinary experience with many options for fine dining.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D 1 38233333 www.legendsaigon.com

Maiestic 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.

Ol Dong Khoi, D 1 38295517 www.majesticsaigon.com.vn

Moevenpick Hotel Saigon

An international hotel chain with Swiss roots, this comfortable hotel caters to both businesspeople and families with fine dining options, a fitness centre, and multiple conference rooms.

253 Nguyen Van Troi Apartments, Phu Nhuan 38449222

hotel.saigon@moevenpick.com www.moevenpick-hotels.com

New World Saigon Hotel

* * * * * 🖦 Oi's Pick

One of the most impressive business hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, with stunning views and 5 star amenities. 533 luxury rooms and suites offering the perfect ambience for concentrated work and undisturbed relaxation

76 Le Lai, D 1 38228888

saigon@newworldhotels.com www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Nikko Saigon

One of the city's newest accommodation jewels, this lavish hotel is designed to make the maximum impression of austere Japanese-style class from the lobby upwards. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in HCMC, with classic, precise and elegant decor

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D 1 39257777 www.hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn

Park Hyatt Saigon

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

38241234 www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

Renaissance Riverside Hotel

A five-star hotel located in the heart of

Saigon's business and entertainment district. The hotel's 336 rooms and suites offer an incredible view of the Saigon River as well as over the city. Each guest room is designed and furnished with discerning business and leisure travelers in mind. Choose a deluxe room or suite with large desk and ample lighting, in-room coffee and tea service, high speed internet, safe, well-stocked mini-bar as well as the jack bag (connectivity kit)

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, DI 3822 0033

www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sgnbrrenaissance-riverside-hotel-saigon

Rex Hotel Saidon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets

141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1 38292185

www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

🕶 🕶 🎃 Oi's Pick

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

1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh 35561145

www.saigondomaine.com

Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City vibrant business and entertainment district, Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers is a 5 star haven of convenience, connecting guests with colleagues and friends.

88 Dong Khoi, D 1 38272828

sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com

Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

The Sofitel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.

17 Le Duan, D1 38241555 H2077@Sofitel.com www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitelsaigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.

18 An Duong Vuong, D 5 www.windsorplazahotel.com

CON DAO ISLAND

Six Senses Con Dao

True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with

villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.

Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son 06 4383 1222

DALAT

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

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

Le Lai, Phuong 5, Dalat 06 3355 5888

BLUE MOON HOTEL & SPA

Located in the heart of breathtaking Dalat, the Blue Moon Resort & Spa is designed to complement the natural beauty of the "City of Eternal Spring." Built opposite the popular and tranquil Xuan Huong Lake, Blue Moon is centrally located and convenient to Dalat's eating, shopping and entertainment spots Much more than just a comfortable night's sleep, Blue Moon Resort & Spa invites you to experience true hospitality.

4 Phan Boi Chau, Dalat 67, Vietnam www.bluemoonhotel.com.vn/bluemoon2

DALAT GREEN CITY HOTEL

Budget hotel in the center of Dalat. Five minutes from most major attractions in Dalat. Quiet. Newly refurbished. Beautiful mountain and city views from the rooftop. Features free WIFI, TV, snack bar in all rooms. Coffee shop downstairs. Airport pickup by private car. Motorbike rental. Tour information. Laundry. Computers in lobby for public use

172 Phan Dinh Phung, Dalat (063) 3827 999 www.dalatgreencitvhotel.com

DALAT TRAIN VILLA & CAFE

Located near the Dalat Train Station, the Dalat Train Villa is for short or long staying guests. The villa is a restored 2-story French colonial-era villa. Next to the villa is a French train car which has been renovated into a bar/cafe/restaurant. Romantic venue. From the lake, take first left after Dalat Train Station.

1 Quang Trung St, Ward 9, Villa #3 (063) 381 6365 or 090 334 2442 www dalattrainvilla com

Sofitel Dalat Palace

Hotel Sofitel Dalat Palace is one of the most beautiful and amongst the few remaining historical hotels in Southeast Asia. Built in 1922 and meticulously restored in 1995 to its original grandeur, the Sofitel Dalat Palace offers individualized service in the finest tradition of Vietnamese hospitality.

12 Tran Phu. Dalat 06 3382 5444 info@dalatresorts.com

DANANG

Furama Resort Danang

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

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang 051 1384 7333

Fusion Maia

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

A pair of four-storey hotel blocks house most of the resort's rooms, with villas flanking one side of a long pool corridor splicing the middle of the resort. Its proximity to three UNESCO World Heritage sites as well as the former colonial French hill stations at Bach Ma and Ba Na make this ideally placed for incentive excursions.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang 051 1395 8888

HALONG BAY

Novotel Halong Bay

A glimpse into contemporary Vietnam with echoes of the country's intricate past through its elegant interior décor. Sturdy polished stone, glass and marble stand against the delicate Asian textures of silk, wickerwork and carved wood. With sweeping windows and large mirrors, the hotel captures panoramic views of Halong Bay and its spectacular seascapes at every turn.

Ha Long Road, Bai Chay Ward, Ha Long City

03 3384 8108 info@novotelhalong.com.vn

TUAN CHAU RESORT

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

Tuan Chau Island, Ha Long City

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

luxuny, 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.

l 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, and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure

la Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi 04 6270 8888

Sheraton Hanoi

Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded

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

K5 Nghi Tam, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi 04 3719 9000

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

***** A Oi'c Dich

Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialities 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 standalone 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 O51 O391 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 I Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam 051 0394 0000

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

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 O5 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 citycentre 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.

nas an

Princess d'Annam

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

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

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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

La Veranda

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

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, Chaminspired 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

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

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

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen 05 7372 2563

VUNG TAU

The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

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

Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District Tel: (64) 3788 888

www.thegrandhotramstrip.com

serviced apartments

Avila Serviced Apartment

These serviced apartments combine an excellent location with luxurious amenities.

20-20bis Thi Sach, D 1

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

Cantavil Daewon Apartment

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

600A Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Central Garden Apartment

These luxurious apartments offer stunning views of downtown Saigon along with western style accommodations and excellent location. Clean, inner-city luxury compound close to the Ben Nghe River. 225 Ben Chuong Duong, D 1

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

Diamond Island Luxury Residences

Diamond Island Luxury Residences offers 68 fully-furnished apartments, ranging from two- to four-bedroom units with private balconies providing panoramic views of the stunning surroundings. Each apartment comes with a fully-equipped litchen, en-suite bathrooms, separate work and living areas. Each lavish space features plush interiors, modern amenities, elegant furnishings and carefully chosen trimmings and fixtures, creating a luxurious harmony of comfort and recharged, and functioning at peak performance.

No 01 – Street No.104-BTT, Quarter 3, Binh Trung Tay Ward, D2 096 829 3388 / 3742 5678 www.the-ascott.com

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

Glenwood Serviced Apartment

A very modern property, located in the heart of the expatriate's residential area, steps away from Int'l schools and supermarket.

248A Nguyen Van Huong, D2 0944 168 568

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

InterContinental Asiana Saigon Residences

It's a 31-floor tower with 260 rooms; the Residences offers superb panoramic views of downtown area and is part of the Kumho Asiana Plaza - the city's finest integrated complex featuring commercial, hotel, residential and a diverse choice of wining and dining outlets. They will also benefit from the preferred amenities at the InterContinental Asiana Saigon next

Corner of Le Van Huu & Nguyen Du 3520 8888

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, D1

The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D 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/IC Thai Van Lung, D 1

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym Θ sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant. 17-19-21, Ly Π Trong, D 1

Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2 www.riverside-apartments.com

River Garden Apartment

It is located within a 15-minute drive of downtown and provides its occupants with stunning views of the Saigon River in a resort type of environment.

170 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2

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

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 Than District, about five minutes by taxi from downtown. Pool, gym, supermarket and dining facilities all on site.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

Saigon Skygarden

A 15-storey building located in the Saigonese Little Tokyo on Le Thanh Ton, offering 172 international-standard Serviced Apartments for lease.

20 Le Thanh Ton, D 1 38220002

Saigon View Residences

Saigon View Residences offer a range of Deluxe, Superior, and Executive room types in distinctive one and two bedroom apartments.

117, Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh

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. D1

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

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

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Khiem, DI 3822 8899

www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1

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

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

The Landmark

The Landmark features serviced apartments, offices, luxury dining, sports clubs, swimming pool at the rooftop of the building with great views of the Saigon River. It offers one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units for rent. Amenities offered include wireless broadband Internet access, 100 percent power backup, room service, maid service and laundry, 24-hour reception and airport shuttle service.

5B Ton Duc Thang, DI www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool ensconced by yerdant gardens.

197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2 0906099180

www.villasong.com

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



Exotissimo Travel

EXOTISSIMO (TRAVEL ASIA)

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

3519 4111 www.exotissimo.com anphu@exotissimo.com

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, DI

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

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

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

Buffalo Tours

A premium travel agency that helps travelers customize their itinerary and destination packages. From corporate to small tour packages available.

81 Mac Thi Buoi, DI www.buffalotours.com.vn

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

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

Ha Nguyen

Specializes in providing tickets for Eva Airlines, Qatar Airways, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific, American Airlines, Singapore Air, Malaysia Airlines, Korean Airlines, Qantas Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines and many other international airlines.

64B3 Xuan Thuy, D2

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, DI

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 3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1

Sinh Cafe

Sinh Cafe started out as a coffee shop, but later expanded to cater to the needs of tourists and travelers. This unique travel agency offers tours within Vietnam, and also to Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

246-248 De Tham, DI

Viet Journey

Viet Journey was founded by dedicated travelers of the southeast Asian region, and they strive to provide quality, time-efficient service for travelers from around the world.

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, DI 3823 7152

cinemas & theatres

The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

Ho Chi Minh City's local classical music venue with regular programs $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ 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 θ cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi. D1

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

Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films. **116 Nguyen Du, Dl**

Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement. 55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI

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

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.

IDECAF Drama Theatre

IDECAF is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1

126 Hong Bang, D5

Le Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre.

25 Phan Phu Tien, D5

Lotte Cinema Diamond

Fine cinema complex in one of the most iconic department store buildings in town. Ride up the elevator to the top floor to catch a flick.

13th Floor, 34 Le Duan, DI

Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece, the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows predominantly of the classical, highbrow, and top-dollar variety. 7 Lam Son Square, DI

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

social clubs & classes

Brogolf Bar Wars

Group of barflies who meet regularly for golf, open to new members. First Saturday of each month, breakfast, brunch, and 18 holes with a caddy.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, DI 090 927 3997

DanCenter

A professionally run dance studio with an international teaching team

offering over 70 classes per week and workshops for kids and adults of all ages and abilities. Kids can start from age 4 with Dance Intro. Regular classes offered for kids and teens in Sing & Dance, Jazz, Ballet, Tap, Hip Hop, Break & Acro Dance. Adults of any age, size and ability are also welcomed. Come and try Ballet, Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Contemporary, Belly and many more.

53 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2 3519 4490 / 3519 4340 www.dancentervn.com

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

Hash House Harriers

Combining beer and running, this long-established club goes to various out of the city running areas to burn some calories. Departs from the

Caravelle Hotel every Sunday ay 2pm. www.saigonh3.com

International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from IOam-noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (I27 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, DI

Rubber Duckies Swim Program

Group swim lessons for children ages six months - four-years- Id. Parents and children participate together in songs and safe water activities. Instruction is focused on developing water safety habits, basic water skills and confidence in the water. Classes are currently located in Districts I, 2, and 7. For more details or to reserve a place contact Katie at admin@rubberduckiesvietnam. com, Facebook @ Rubber Duckies Vietnam, or call/text O122 3922 550

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

Saigon Swing Cats

Saigon Swing Cats organizes dance classes, workshops and events at various venues around HCMC including restaurants, lounges and dance studios. Dance styles include the Lindy, Shim Sham and Tranky Doo.

Petrohouse Tower- caffe molinari, 5 Le Duan, D1

Vietnam Cookery Centre 🖦 Oi's

Picb

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.

26 Ly Tu Trong, 4th floor, Ste 45, DI

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

4th floor, CMARD2 Building, 45 Dinh Tien Hoang, DI

sports



The Bike Shop

The shop is a full service shop serving the local cycling community. They offer a huge selection of kids, BMX, urban, mountain 6 road bites for all levels of cyclists. Brands include: Trek, Canondale, GT, Jett, Ellite 6 J. Wolf Custom bikes. They also stock a wide range of accessories and components from leading manufacturers, with a top-notch service center and performs world class bio-mechanical bike fittings. Hours: Tue-Fri 12-8, Sat-Sun 9-6, Closed Monday.

250 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

3744 6405
facebook.com/thebikeshopVN

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 nonswimmers

600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6

Ky Dong Swimming Pool

Great D3 outdoor family pool, ideal for the kids.

40 Ky Dong, D3

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

Lan Anh Swimming Club Pool

There are various areas with different depths from 1.4m to 2m, suitable for adults. Swimming lessons are available at the club.

291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3

Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favored by younger people and recreational swimmers.

48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

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

Living

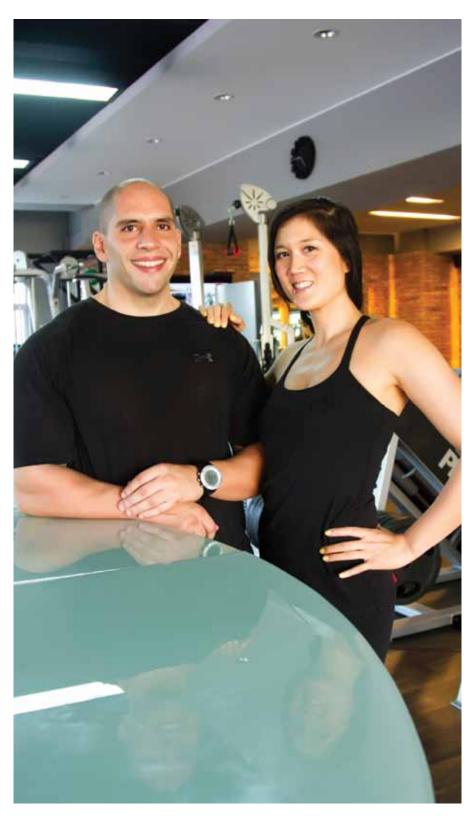
IMAGE BY LOC NGUYEN



The Workout Couple

A husband and wife team combine love and fitness to open their own gym

TEXT BY LOTTIE DELAMAIN IMAGES BY LOC NGUYEN



FOR MOST COUPLES, living and working together is a bridge too far – blurring the boundaries between work and play, and bringing office stress home is something to be avoided at all costs. But for Sylvie and Joao, who have been working together since they met at college, it is the most natural thing in the world. And not only do they work together, they have just set up a business together in a foreign country. Or at least semi-foreign. Sylvie's parents are Vietnamese but she grew up in Canada, while Joao, who has Portuguese relatives, also grew up in Canada.

Like so many expats living here, after visiting Vietnam on holiday, they fell in love with the place, and were struck by how many opportunities there were for development and growth. With their backgrounds in health and fitness, they were shocked by how far behind Vietnam was both in terms of their attitude to health and fitness and the expertise available in the country. So after a short stint working at a gym (together, obviously), they decided to bite the bullet and venture out on their own to open up Body by Jovie. They wanted to create a boutique gym with a focus on personal training, which would allow them to deliver customized service, and in doing so, help people reach their health goals more quickly.

Seven months in, and the business is doing well, although it has not been without its hurdles. Getting state-of-the-art gym equipment into the country from far-flung corners of the world proved a logistical nightmare, and client retention in a naturally transient expat environment is tricky. But it has been the clash of cultural attitudes that has been most interesting.

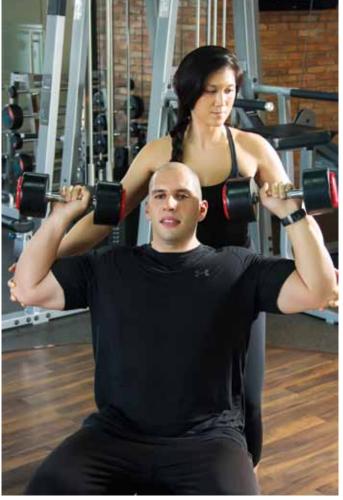
Battling Health Myths

In Vietnam, health myths abound and advice about which foods do what to your body are steeped in cultural tradition. There are theories about whether sweat is a sign of health or a sign of sickness, archaic myths about how to lose weight and what constitutes being 'healthy.' In the absence of a coherent public health policy and health education here, it is inherited advice and cultural practice that people live by, oftentimes wrongly. Knowledge about food groups and the dangers of too much salt and sugar is not a given, which explains the rising obesity in kids and the growing number of adults afflicted with diabetes.

For Sylvie and Joao, it's a challenge. They are not only working in an environment where the primary social activity is to eat and drink, but they are battling centuries-old cultural myths about how to look after our bodies. But they are undeterred. In fact they relish the challenge and even see it as their









duty. Vietnam's health and fitness industry is completely unregulated – personal trainers do not need qualifications or need to be experts on nutrition, which further fuels the problems and can lead to serious injury. Therefore the couple is able to offer knowledgeable, professional advice to their clients that they hope will make a difference in their lives.

Alongside the gym, which includes unique equipment such as Kettleballs, ViPR and TRX suspension training, they have a varied roster of classes to make working out fun, including kids' classes that are increasingly popular. But the main draw is the couple's combined personal training partnership. Joao is an ex-bodybuilder,

so if it's strength training you're after, he's your guy. But for those wanting a cardio trainer, Sylvie has got it covered. Both Joao and Sylvie are always at the gym to motivate and speak to clients about creating a specialized diet and health plan that will suit their individual needs. Together, with their Western expertise and local knowledge, they offer a package few can beat. It makes a refreshing change to have such a personalized service at a place where so many of us have come to dread on a Monday morning.

Body by Jovie is located in Block B, Riverside Residence, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7; or visit www.bodybyjovie.com for more info ■

'We wanted to create a boutique gym with a focus on personal training, which would allow us to deliver customized service'

THE SYLLABUS EDUCATION COLUMN

Two is Better than One

Why raising bilingual kids will give them a better start in the future



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



"MEET THE AUSTRALIAN children fluent in Mandarin" was the recent headline of a BBC story written by Jon Donnison in Melbourne. He visited one of the country's few bilingual schools, which has a very successful program teaching four- and five-year-olds in Mandarin (and also Vietnamese, which it wants to expand.)

In the article he wrote, "Sitting crosslegged on the floor of her classroom, chewing on the end of her pen, five-year-old Jackie Baldwin is deep in thought. Blonde haired, with pink spectacles balanced on the tip of her nose, her hand begins to move steadily and confidently across her page, leaving a neat line of Chinese characters."

As he looked over little Jackie's shoulder, he noticed the letters "BBC." She looked up at him and translated, "Today the BBC is visiting our school!" She is studying in a bilingual English and Chinese immersion program at Richmond West Primary School in Melbourne. There are 23 children in this class and Jackie has been learning Mandarin for less than a year. She confidently communicates with her classmates in both Mandarin and English. Jackie and her classmates are learning Chinese through total immersion twice a week.

"The younger they start learning Chinese as a second language, the easier it is for them to learn," said Kim Lim, the children's Mandarin teacher who has been at the school for almost 20 years. "They are like sponges, socially and mentally they just easily absorb things. Learning a second language comes naturally."

I later learned that the school is statefunded, and is located in an average income neighborhood with children from over 23 nations.

"Asian languages are taught in many primary schools but only for half an hour or so a week, which is nowhere near enough to get a proper grasp of a language. It means when children move on to high school, there are very high dropout rates for Asian language classes because many simply feel they have not progressed or it is too difficult. The dropout rate at high school for Chinese language classes is around 95 percent," explained Dr. Jane Orton, an education pundit based in Melbourne.

Say What?

Then just last month I came across this story in *The Economist*: "This weekend Johnson enjoyed an American holiday in Berlin: the children's Halloween party held by neighbors; a half German, half American couple. Besides mermaid tails, ladybug antennas or monster horns, nearly every one of the nippers at the party had another accessory: a second language."

Johnson's dad goes on to say that his "nipper is still pre-verbal at nearly 18 months, meaning that every request not immediately understood and satisfied may quickly turn into a piercing shriek. But we take comfort that Johnson Junior is cognitively just fine. If his language comes a little late, that is probably because, for one thing, he is male, and for another, he is surrounded every day by three languages: English and Danish at home, and German all day at nursery. More confusingly still, the three languages are closely related: is it bread, brot or brød? Apple, apfel or æble? House, haus or hus? The earthy words in English are mostly Germanic, meaning these triplets are coming up in his world all the time."

His child's challenging tri-lingual language immersion is also common here in Vietnam where daddy is from one country (usually Western), Mommy is from another country (usually Asian) and the caregiver is generally from Vietnam. Children exposed to multiple languages often exhibit similar results - initially they mingle languages, or

use syntax of one language and the words of another. But Johnson says "these problems disappear quickly. By three or four, children reliably separate the languages, knowing which can be spoken with whom. Their fluency in each would be the envy of any adult language learner."

Often parents ask me if a second (or third) language would confuse the child. Even the Vietnamese government (not the education department) is on record as suggesting that second language acquisition be delayed until at least five years old. The premise is that it would interfere with developing the 'Vietnamese-ness' of the child. Johnson goes on to report that such beliefs are woefully out of date today. In short, there is little evidence that raising a bilingual child will hurt their primary language.

The benefits, by contrast, are both strong and long-lasting. Bilingual children as young as seven months outperform monolinguals at tasks requiring "executive function" such as prioritizing and planning complex tasks and switching mental gears. This is probably because monitoring the use of two languages is itself an exercise in executive function. The same beneficial effects have been shown in bilingual children of poor families.

Recent studies clearly prove that children raised with multiple dialects spoken by natives will become fluent in all. These studies use a type of MRI with children as young as six months old.

The final quote from Johnson makes an excellent case: "The earlier children begin the second language, the better they will learn it. Norway has already introduced English in the first year of school, and Denmark is soon to do so. These countries, unlike France, Germany or Spain, have very small languages of their own, so they know language ability is crucial to their future competitiveness. Talk about the 'need factor.'"

HIGHER LEARNING EDUCATION COLUMN



Abbie Holmes is the Year I classroom teacher at Saigon Star International School. Prior to teaching in Vietnam, she worked as an autism specialist in a special needs facility in the UK.

Special Needs

Educating parents and the community about children with special needs

AUTISM, SPECIAL NEEDS and learning difficulties are rarely spoken about in Vietnam, but this is a topic that needs more awareness, discussion and action.

Here, as in many places around the world, there is a stigma attached to children and young adults with any sort of learning difficulties. The traditional belief has been that the mother is being punished for her sins. A child with learning disabilities may be hidden away to avoid the 'shame' of the child's condition. Parents in the past would avoid seeking special treatment, afraid to draw attention to the child. Such attitudes can bring about shame, isolation, and victimization to the family. Parents sometimes refuse to believe their child has a special need and will often refuse to discuss the possibilities of help with teachers. Teachers have to constantly skirt around the issue. This mindset is slowly changing, but a cultural adaptation is one which will take time and awareness to overcome. Part of the difficulty here is that the number of schools with specific special needs programs remains limited. Contributing to the problem is the lack of availability of teachers trained in the field.

Children with learning disabilities are suffering from a shortage of support options in Vietnam. These difficulties are present not just in public schools, but also private ones. It isn't easy for parents to place their child into an international school in general, and it is especially challenging for those whose child's needs are more severe than dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD. Many schools tend to take only students with mild difficulties because of the lack of professional expertise in fields such as autism. There is also a gap in purpose-built facilities required to address students facing physical challenges such as hearing, speaking and mobility.

Actually, the only centre in Vietnam that enrols students with a range of needs is the Kianh Foundation's Dien Ban Day Center. It offers therapeutic approaches and daily living skills, with the stated aim to eventually integrate the children into society. It is the only facility designed to educate students with severe special needs in Vietnam.

Open Discussion

Whatever the severity, once a child has been diagnosed with a learning difficulty, parents have to begin the long and arduous process of locating a school which best addresses the needs of the child and their family. Hopefully, such a school will be close to home and is one that will accept their child. This process often involves stretches of time off to look after the child and this can put a strain on the family. This in turn puts extreme pressure on students; in addition to struggling academically, they may begin to develop low self-esteem and fail to integrate on a social level with others as well.

Private schools may currently offer the greatest opportunities here in Vietnam, but it is important to match the needs of the student with the strengths of the school. Any dedicated educator wants to provide the best education possible for each student, however, there are limitations set by school format, class size and academic expectations. Large schools will most likely have extensive facilities and a wider range of staff and course options while smaller schools tend to provide individually structured lesson plans and smaller classes with more one-on-one teaching.

Awareness of learning difficulties is slowly growing in the local community. In the future I would like to see the development of a special needs forum centered around the international community where school administrators, educators and parents can discuss individual needs of students and also discuss strategies which have been tried in various environments. Open discussion about how to identify needs and possible solutions, the difficulties encountered, and how challenges have been overcome can be helpful to educators. This can also provide hope for parents who are searching for a nurturing educational environment for their child.

When dealing with learning difficulties of any nature it is best to ensure that early intervention techniques and strategies are taken. Ignoring the situation will not make the problem go away. With the increasing information available about disabilities,

early intervention may help minimize long-term difficulties. If children are left for long periods of time with no specialist support then their progress will fall below the national average standard. If parents are concerned that their child does have a need then please go and speak to the student support team at the child's school.

As our understanding of learning disabilities and their treatments grow, it might be good to think of all students as having special needs – special in the sense of individual needs. Special needs should not be a stigma, and it should not be a label just for learning disabilities. Can't the term 'special' also be applied to highly intelligent students who surpass the academic abilities of their peers and perhaps their teachers, as well? All students benefit from special, individualized attention which helps them maximize their accomplishments; some just need it more than others.



>>The List **Education**



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

education

SCHOOLS [CHILDREN]

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 I (Primary & Secondary)

www.theabcis.com

#2, IE Street, Khu Dan Cu Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh 5431 1833 /34/35/36 abcintschoolss@vnn.vn

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP) Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2 Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)

APSC Compound 36 Thao Dien, D2 Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School) East-West Highway, D2 3742 4040





British International School (BIS)



Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body and is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISSEA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam

An Phu Primary Campus 225 Nguyen Van Huong, D2 3744 4551

An Phu Secondary Campus 246 Nguyen Van Huong, D2 3744 2335

Tu Xuong Primary Campus 43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D 3932 0210

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

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 aligh with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary vears.

Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7 www.kindermusik-vietnam.com 090 709 9480

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 Ouoc Huona, D2 3744 6844 www.latelier-anphu.com

Montessori International School of

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

noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn

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 www.rissaigon.edu.vn

Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families SSIS enrolls over 850 students in

Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious sixhectare, well-equipped campus.

78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5413 0901

www.ssis.edu.vn



The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

The most established school in Ho Chi Minh City is celebrating 20 years of success in 2013. ISHCMC is the only school in HCMC with full accreditation to teach all three IB programs to students from 2 to 18. ISHCMC is fully accredited by both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC), two of the most prestigious international accreditation organisations. ISHCMC has 975 students from over 50 different nationalities enjoying recently upgraded

28 Vo Truong Toan, D2 www.ishcmc.com

kindergarten and pre-school education for children between 18 months and six years. old. A fun and friendly environment, the school focuses on learning through play.

1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2 3744 6076

www.smartkidsinfo.com

SCHOOLS [ADULT]

Cetana PSB Intellis International

PSB College offers a suite of internationally-recognized diploma programs from business, marketing, hospitality to finance.

144-146-148 Le Lai, D1 www.psbcollege.edu.vn

RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro enaineerina.

702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's bestorganised 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



Saigon Star International



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 ESI

Residential Area No.5 Thanh My Loi Ward, D2 3742 STAR / 3742 7827

www.saigonstarschool.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

Smartkids

An international childcare centre provides



>>The List

Health & Beauty



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

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, D1 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, D1 3829 0061

Reha

The shop sells its brand of women's clothing and apparel, dresses, jumpsuits, shoes and bags.

1st floor, Saigon center, 65 Le Loi, D1 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, D1 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, D1 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, D1 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, D1 3910 3877

Fit

Caters to women in their 20s. **44 Luu Van Lang, D1**

Gava

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. B1-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1 3936 9386

Khai Silk

Khai Silk is a favorite among local celebrities for its high quality tailoring, fabrics and service.

81 Dong Khoi, D1 3822 2856

Kiwi Fashion

Kiwi offers contemporary designes at an affordable price. It was founded by former Vietnamese model Kim Hong Phung and houses the latest fashion trends exclusively designed by Josphine Geralda, one of the leading designers in London.

74C-74/1 Hai Ba Trung, DI 3824 8214 3822 1191

La Bella

A Vietnamese fashion shop that carries dresses, skirts, tops and a large selection of bags and purses.

58-87 Pasteur, DI 3823 0172 9am - 9pm

Lvn 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, D1 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, D1 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, D1 3943 0990

Manno

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-11, 2nd floor, Icon 68, 2 Hai Trieu, DI 6266 2111

1st Floor, 65 Le Loi, D1

Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke ao dias.

67 Mac Thi Buoi, D1 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, D1 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, D1 3825 0618

Song - Valerie Gregori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophsiticated women.

75 Pasteur. DI

75 Pasteur, E 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, D1 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, D1

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

llmhrella

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, D1 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, Dĺ

Roniour

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

Massimo Ferrari Boutique

Italiana - Americana fusion brand of impeccable quality and style. Collections are available as ready-to-wear and/or made-to-order. Sizes from 39 - 47 D and E widths

available. Run by an Italian Spanish American himself, master tailor Luis Antonio Torres fits and consults all of his customers himself. Suits are the best fit and quality in Vietnam. All shirts, suits and trousers are fully bench made and the fabric selections are to die for. If you're hunting for briefcases, wallets, and accessories look no further. Massimo Ferrari carries all types of bags and accessories for the man and the lady. Brands carried are Maison Takuya and Orobianco from Italy. Luxury quality and designs are simply gorgeous.

42A1 Tran Quoc Thao, D3
www.massimoferrariboutique.com

Maschio Shop

Colorful retro men's fashions, one of the quirkier 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, DI 6673 4199

San Sciaro Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

Ist Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1 3864 0800 090 316 6364

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

gyms

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.

APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2 3744 2549 www.aissportscentre.com

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning 8 strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated avms.

0902271830 personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

Body By Jovie

Body By Jovie is a boutique personal training center and yoga studio, catering to individuals demanding diversity, challenge and results. It specializes in one on one session and also offer a full range of classes such as yoga, TRX suspension class, belly dancing, Zumba and outdoor boot camp.

Riverside Residence, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7 5417 1946 info@bodybyjovie.com 7am - 9pm (Weekdays) and 7:30am - 7pm (Saturdays)

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

Christina Eberlin Yoga Teacher

Christina graduated from Virajati 300hr yoga teacher training in Thailand. She is offering private yoga classes and group classes. For more information you can reach her at

Christinaeberlin@gmail.com or 093 849 2461

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs. **Thao Dien**,

D2; 094 777 1326 www.cyril-and-you.com

Get Fit Gvm

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

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba®Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nurtition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbAtomic®.

Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril&you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1). 093 406 0735 or 6680 7226 zumba.nutrition@gmail.com www.zumba-saigon.com

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 6 women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1 3825 1814

Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh 3514 9009

Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh 3514 0255

Spa InterContinental & Healthclub

Guests will have access to a 20-meter outdoor lap pool complete with a sundeck, a 160-square meter spacious fitness centre with the latest generation cardio and resistance equipment, plus a personal program of fitness classes.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, DI 3520 9999

spa@icasianasaigon.com 8am – 9:30pm

Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool 75I Xuan Thuy, D2 3899 0012

The Health Club

The Landmark Health Club is located on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark serviced apartments, and offers a fully equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, and a squash court. It also features male and female changing facilities and saunas.

5B Ton Duc Thang, DI 3822 2098

hc@thelandmarkvietnam.com

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

X-Rock Climbina

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

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 Frenchtained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

8 Truong Dinh, D3 3930 6667

Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2
www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2 6660 6602 www.dakhoaanphu.com

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2 3744 2000

www.vietnammedicalpractice.com hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com 8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

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, DIO 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, DI 3823 8454

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

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

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

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, DI 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, DI 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 spoten 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 I 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 Viernam

lst floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, DI 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

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, DI 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, DI

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

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

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, DI 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, DI 3925 3399

Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Mikio.

R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7 5410 3937

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

Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, each, 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, DI 3825 7485

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

DialAsie International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsie is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology 6 dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

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

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, D1 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, D1 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

nails



Classic Nails

Classic Nation

Located near Ben Thanh Market,

Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation. 4 Phan Boi Chau, DI 3825 7047

9am - 8pm

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, DI

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand. 103 Nguyen Hue, DI

spas



Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to a

In Jagon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanness environment, Indochine spa provides your senses with natural energy. Indulge yourself for a unique and amazing experience.

69 Thu Khoa Huan st., D. 1, HCM 3827 7188 indochinespa@gmail.com www.indochine-spa.com.vn Open: 10:00-22:00

An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, D1

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, D1

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, D1 3821 3815 097 810 6868



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

3823 8368

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, quests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, D1

Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club

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, D1

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

Huona Sen Sna

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

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, D1

Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1

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

La Cochinchine Spa

Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1 3825 1812

info@lacochinchine.net www.lacochinchine-hcm.net 12pm-10:30pm

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers quests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products

64A Truong Dinh, D3 3932 5181 100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1 3822 2158 1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7 5413 6638

MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events - and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dona Khoi, DI 090 387 6666

Min Min

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1 6659 3609

Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional , physiotherapists



who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being. **9C Ton Duc Thang, DI**

3911 7118

Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1 1st & 2nd Floor, 92 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu. 1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1

Sense Sna

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

Spa InterContinental

Spa InterContinental is a contemporary spa that has two double and five single treatment rooms, each with a private bathroom, a foot reflexology area, and luxurious changing and shower rooms. Combining the fresh, local traditional herbs and plants, an ambient lighting, soft scents and soothing sounds with the best of international brands, Spa InterContinental offers quests the professional spa expertise and a truly sensory experience. 3rd Floor,

InterContinental Asiana Saigon Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1 3520 9999

spa@icasianasaigon.com 8am - 9:30pm

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

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 $\boldsymbol{\vartheta}$ body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, DI

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

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling. 76C Hai Ba Trung, D1

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

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

15B8 Le Thanh Ton, DI

Yııri

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

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

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

Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

15C Thi Sach, D1

Typical of the large furniture warehouses in North America and Europe, Gomo sells contemporary items for your home and office.

7/30B, Road 13, Binh Hoa Thuan An Town, Binh Duong (0650) 376 5115 www.gomo.com.vn

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

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1 3914 3553

Mosaique Decoration

Mosaique Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaique offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories. Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories. Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, D1

65 Le Loi, D1

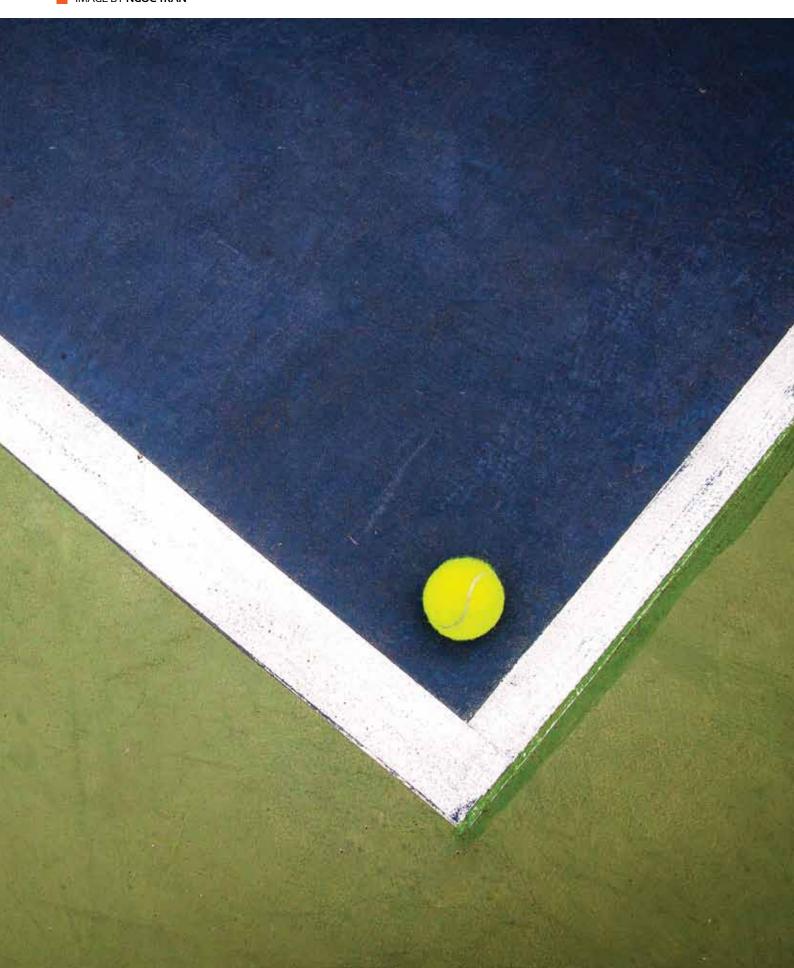
Red Door Décor

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

Business & Tech

IMAGE BY **NGOC TRAN**



The Business of Tennis

The other color green that makes the sport so exciting

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM



WAGES PROVIDED BY THAILAND OPEN TENNISTOURNAMENT

WHEN TENNIS ACES, women's #1 Serena Williams and men's #2 Novak Djokovic, won their respective year-end championships recently to cap spectacular seasons, they pocketed handy winner's checks of around USD2 million each. Djokovic ended the regular season with just over USD11 million in prize money and Williams shattered the previous female single-season prize money record by more than USD4 million, finishing the year with USD12.4 million. Despite her #1 status, Williams fell short of Maria Sharapova as the highest paid female athlete of 2013, who pulled in USD29 million (of which only USD6 million was actual prize money) who is dwarfed still by the monstrous earning power of Roger Federer who raked in USD71.5 million last year

Tennis can indeed be a lucrative business. In fact, it's the reason why many go into the sport. Richard Williams, father to Serena and Venus Williams, famously went on record in a 1992 interview to say he decided to steer his daughters into tennis when he saw a female player being handed a USD40,000 check for

winning a tournament. "I figured since I work for USD52,000 all year and this girl made USD40,000 in four days, I was in the wrong business," said Mr. Williams.

However, for every Serena, Roger, Novak and Maria, there are thousands of tennis hopefuls bouncing around the globe in an effort to break into tennis' elite, or more realistically, to simply break even. For Asian players, who often lack funding, facilities and the physical characteristics so necessary to the modern game, it's an even more uphill battle.

"I earn about 30 percent of my expenses," says Jui-Chen Hung, a 23-year-old from Taiwan, struggling to make it on the professional circuit. "There's no tennis association in Taiwan, so my father sponsors me. I travel alone to keep costs down. My dad loves tennis, so he's happy. My mom didn't want to help me play tennis, but finally my dad talked to her and she agreed to give me two years to play. If I can play very well and get a good ranking, she'll let me continue."

One year on, Jui-Chen is currently ranked around #800 in the world which means he

must play pre-tournament qualifying rounds just to make it into the main draw. More often than not, though, Jui-Chen is playing in Futures or Challengers, the two rungs beneath the main tournaments, in places like Israel, India, Thailand and Vietnam.

This week, we're at the Thailand Open, a small but exciting tournament which boasts four top 15 players in the draw. Past players have included Roger Federer, Andy Murray, Novak Djokovic and Andy Roddick. The winner receives USD102,450 in prize money and just more than one-tenth the points of Grand Slam winners, tennis' biggest tournaments.

Jui-Chen lost in the second round of qualifying but it's been a good tournament for him, his first professional ATP-level one. For his troubles, he picked up a check for USD450. "If you win a main draw match, you get your hotel provided," he says wistfully of the ritzy InterContinental where the higher-ranked players are accommodated. Jui-Chen instead has opted to stay in a guesthouse near the tournament site and hang around the practice







courts in hopes of practicing with one of the top players, a rare learning experience. This morning, he practiced against world #6, Tomas Berdych.

"I can keep the ball in play against those guys, but the main difference is their balls are faster, the trajectory lower. Berdych can put the ball wherever he wants and can change the direction from ball to ball. They're all very good," he says a bit reverentially.

Of course, Asians breaking into tennis' elite is not all together new. The late 80s saw Chinese-American Michael Chang winning the French Open. In the early 2000s, it was 6'1" Paradorn Srichapan from Thailand rising to world #9 and currently, Kei Nishikori (Japanese men's world #17) and Li Na (Chinese women's world #3) are leading the Asian charge. (By contrast, Vietnam's highest ranked player ever, Do Minh Quan, reached #1,002 in the ATP rankings.)

Standing Tall

With a combined population of 4.3 billion, what will it take for more than one Asian player per decade to make the big leagues?

Alison Lee, Executive Vice President of ATP International says: "Asia needs to increase the number of ATP Challenger events it has, to really improve its chances of creating top-ranked players. These events are organized by local promoters or tennis federations. Now, there are only 17 of these ATP Challenger events in Asia [although none in Vietnam] - which is an improvement from a few years ago, but still not enough. Futures events [the lowest tier tournaments, of which Vietnam hosted three in 2013] are great for players starting out, but Asia needs to develop many more Challenger events the next level up - for its rising stars to play against international players and test their

skills. In Asia, it is very difficult for players as they have to travel much further usually to get to a Challenger event. Once we have a strong platform of tournaments, we will be able to see more players like Japan's Kei Nishikori emerge."

Other than funding and facilities, Asian players must also contend with opponents increasingly more physically imposing than themselves. Compared to 20 years ago, the average height of the top 16 men has risen by two inches to 6'2" and players of today are on average 3.5 inches taller than in 1980.

However, other players see a bright future for Asian tennis. Tomas Berdych, hailing from a long line of Czech champions, joked that although the Czech Republic was "like half the size of Bangkok," the tennis culture there is well established. On the prospects for Asia, he said: "It probably needs time. People need to see others as idols, like I had Lendl and Navratilova, but it needs to start one day and I hope for all Asian guys and girls it's going to be soon."

Serbian player, world #556 Laslo Djere, who partnered Thailand's #1 junior in doubles and practiced with a few Asian players during the week, commented that what Asians lack in height they can make up for in other ways. "They are really fast on their feet. They run really well. [Size] doesn't matter so much. 1.80m [5'9"] is enough for tennis. Look at Ferrer [who despite being only 5'9" is world #3]. He's less than that but he's so fast, so prepared physically."

Tournament eighth seed Lukas Rosol, best known for his win over Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon 2012 and beaten by Chinese player Yen-Hsun Lu (ranked #52) at this week's Thailand Open, said of Asian players: "They're fast. I know they're working hard also. They're not coming - they're already here." ■

FOR LOVE OF THE GAME

With no ATP-level tournaments in Vietnam, there are many reasons why tennis fans should head over to the Thailand Open:

- * Held in the relatively intimate setting of the Impact Arena, there's no such thing as a bad seat.
- * In addition to Center Court, there's also a Court I where the bleacher seats are literally a few feet from the court.
- * There's a food court with Siamese glass noodles, Hainese chicken and rice, or Biryani chicken, all for less than USD2.
- * Players walk the grounds. Bangkok is cheap, so qualifiers and early losers tend to hang around to practice with main draw players or to simply check out the tennis.
- * You never know who you'll get to see. Past matches have included Federer vs. Roddick, Federer vs. Murray and Djokovic vs. Tsonga.
- * There's a cheap shuttle bus to the Mo Chit sky train station, also home to the 15,000 stalls of the weekend Chatuchak Market. Matches on the final weekend start at Ipm so it's entirely possible to spend your mornings shopping before heading over for the matches.

The Thailand Open is usually held at the end of September. For more, visit www. thailandopen.org

LEGAL EASE LEGAL COLUMN

Dear Hadrien,

I recently found a job in Ho Chi Minh City! That means that I can finally change my shabby hotel room for a nice place of my own. I heard, however, that it is very complicated for a foreigner to rent an apartment in Vietnam. Is that really true?



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



YOU ARE RIGHT that land law is perhaps one of the most difficult fields in the Vietnamese legal system to understand. As an example, one of the basic principles under the constitution is that no one can own the land in Vietnam but the people of Vietnam as a whole and the State, representing the people, is responsible for the management and administration of the land. Rather than ownership titles, a system of "Land Use Rights" exists, which often leads to confusion among foreigners and Vietnamese alike as to the extent of such rights.

Your question, however, concerns the rental of an apartment and, fortunately, this is a lot less complicated. If you want to learn more about your rights and obligations as a potential lessee, the following three legal documents may come in handy: the Law on Residential Housing, the Regulations on Leasing Premises to Foreigners and Overseas Vietnamese, and the Civil Code of Vietnam. Let's have a look at some of the basic rules that governs leasing an apartment.

According to the Law on Residential Housing, any foreign individual who is

allowed to stay in Vietnam for a period of three or more consecutive months may lease a residential house (including apartments) in Vietnam. Assuming that you meet this requirement, you may now start searching for a nice place to live. You can either do so by yourself, or you can make use of one of the many agencies that can act as an intermediary.

The next step is negotiating and signing a lease agreement. Such an agreement must be a written document and according to the Law on Residential Housing, it must contain at least the following items: the names and addresses of the parties, a description of the characteristics of the residential house, the price and method of payment, the time of receipt of the residential house and the duration of the lease, the rights and obligations of the parties, any undertakings of the parties, the date of signing the agreement and the signatures of the parties.

Unless the agreed lease term is less than six months, the lease agreement must be notarized and the lessor must submit a copy of it to the People's Committee of the commune where you future apartment is situated. As a foreign lessee, you must register with the public security office of the local ward or commune where you will be living. Landlords usually take care of that for their foreign tenants.

Like in many other countries, lessees in Vietnam enjoy, to a certain extent at least, protection of their rights. As long as you pay the rent in full and strictly on time as agreed, the landlord, for his part, must ensure you uninterrupted use of your apartment during the lease term. Furthermore, in case the ownership of the apartment changes, you will be entitled to continue leasing under the terms agreed with the previous lessor and if the landlord decides to unreasonably increase the rent, you will be entitled to terminate the contract. In other cases, for example, if you do not pay the rent for three consecutive months without a legitimate reason or if you sub-lease your apartment without the consent of the lessor, the latter may terminate the agreement. In any case, such a "unilateral" termination must be accompanied by at least a month's prior written notice.

If things turn sour with your landlord, the law allows that, after an effort for conciliation, parties may go before a Vietnamese court to settle any dispute relating to the lease. Having a careful look at your rights and obligations as a lessee before entering into a lease agreement can often prevent trouble at a later stage. Personally speaking, I have found that working on maintaining a good relationship with your landlord by paying on time, being respectful to neighbors and, from time to time, bringing your landlord a little gift from your trips abroad is also a good way to avoid bad surprises.

Best of luck searching for your penthouse with a pool, and I'll be waiting for my invitation to the housewarming party!

If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com

FOUND 404 TECHNOLOGY COLUMN

Beer at a Click

A new online service that deliveries groceries, and beer, directly to your door



Anh-Minh Do is the editor at TechInAsia.com for Vietnam focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh also organizes events at Evecoo.vn

RESEARCH SHOWS VIETNAM'S e-commerce market, which totaled approximately USD300 million in 2011, is expected to grow at an average rate of 75 percent per year between 2011 and 2015 to reach upwards of USD2.8 billion by 2015. While this may seem largely optimistic, several factors regarding supply and demand influence this huge potential growth.

On the supply side, certain online shopping business models are crucial to creating awareness and transforming potential demand into actual sales. Furthermore, the introduction of groupbuying websites radically changed the pace of e-commerce in Vietnam in 2011.

A report from the Vietnam E-Commerce and Information Technology Agency (VECITA) found that 57 percent of the Vietnamese population has bought goods or services online, and 96 percent of Vietnamese people see buying goods online as a normal everyday activity. By VECITA's previous estimates, the e-commerce market is currently worth USD700 million and will grow to USD1.3 billion by 2015. Leading the growth are e-commerce sites like VC Corp, VNG, Rocket Internet, Tiki, and Vat Gia.

Last month Vietnammm.com, one of Vietnam's premier food delivery sites, was acquired by Dutch company Takeaway. com. In the same month, GetNGo.vn launched the first ever online coffee delivery service in Vietnam. And just a few months ago Foodpanda.vn (through Rocket Internet) entered the online market as well. Vietnam's online food delivery industry is hot and it just got hotter when Suma. vn launched. Suma.vn is entering a new category of online food delivery - groceries.

The founders of the new site are Anders Palm and Uyen Vu, the same folks behind the food delivery site Eat.vn, which was picked up by VC Corp last year for about USD130,000. Along with the deal, the two have been working with VC Corp on building up Eat.vn and are now launching Suma.vn. According to Anders, the site will target expats, much like Eat.vn did in the beginning.

"We are not trying to create a complete online supermarket at first, but rather a selection of products that customers buy frequently. Our main target is expats at first, just like what we did with Eat.vn, although we have a Vietnamese version from day one," Anders explains.

"Online grocery delivery is not a new concept here. The big local supermarkets have attempted to do this but their user interfaces and logistics are unreliable at best. They've had a hard time transitioning from a bricks and mortar business to an online one.

"I've tried some Vietnamese online supermarkets, but have never managed to get anything actually delivered, so I am not sure how serious they were. For English language competitors, I don't know of any in Vietnam. We have a few hundred products right now, but will add more quickly according to customer requests (already coming in), and this will be my main focus together with Eat.

vn," he continues.

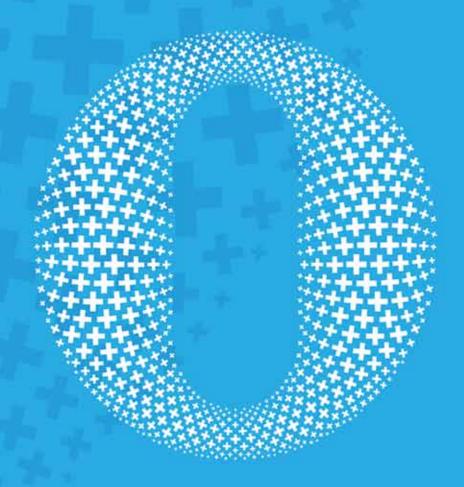
Anders will be using his Eat.vn team to run the execution in the beginning and will expand the team later.

The site does one thing never done before in Vietnam - it sells beer, and at a very low margin. Alcohol, according to Decree 94 of Vietnamese law, cannot legally be sold online. Anders explained his legal team has found it is okay (maybe they found a loophole?), but the site will stay away from selling tobacco. Either way, it's good news for beer drinkers across Ho Chi Minh City who would rather have a case or two shipped straight to their home instead of battling the streets trying to balance the heavy load on the back of their motorbikes.



1 child dies in Viet Nam every hour from drowning or traffic accidents.

We believe that number should be ZERO. Do you?







MONEY TALKS

Dear Afonso,

How much debt should I have?



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



OF COURSE THE answer is none. But every individual has a unique situation, and there are no definitive answers that can guarantee financial success for everyone. We can use developed countries' lending rules to limit the amount of money one can borrow as a rule of thumb for ourselves. In today's Singapore for instance, banks and other lending financial institutions are required to consider all of the borrower's outstanding debt obligations, including car loans, credit card loans, etc. They calculate the "total debt servicing ratio," computed as a percentage of total monthly debt obligations versus total monthly income - all income, including bonus, gifts, rental income, etc. The maximum limit is 60 percent, in other words, if your monthly income is USD1,000, you can borrow USD600.

The concept and practice of debt and lending and borrowing has been around for a long time. Some of the very first

written documents that have come to us are Mesopotamian tablets recording credits and debts, rations issued by temples, money owed for rent of temple lands, the value of each precisely specified in grain and silver. In the marketplaces that cropped up in Mesopotamian cities most transactions were based on credit. While debts were calculated in silver, they did not have to be paid in silver. It was perfectly acceptable to show up with goats or furniture. But debt levels remained low when compared with income. The explosion of debt (not just family debt but also government debt) is a modern day occurrence. The increase of debt in households is today most clearly visible in the US. The total mortgage debt outstanding has risen 75 fold in 50 years. Altogether, American owners/occupiers owed a sum equivalent to 100 percent of the US gross domestic product by the end of 2006, compared with less than 40 percent five decades prior. The higher

prices go, the higher the debt levels go as first-time buyers can't get financial assistance from their parents or family.

Financial institutions have become ever less inhibited about lending money to people who want to buy property. "Safe as houses" was a term coined by bankers. The phrase means that there is nothing safer than lending to people with property. Why? Because if they default on the loan the bank can repossess their house. Even if they run away, the house can't. In contrast, on Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian records, we can find general debt amnesties issued by the rulers canceling all outstanding debts. For instance, in Babylon in the spring of 1761 BC, the rulers oversaw the ritual of "breaking the tablets," which is the debt record, restoring economic balance as part of the calendric renewal of society along with the rest of nature. Perhaps this is something we will see happening in the 21st century.

Business & Tech



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

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

Metropolitan Bulding, 235 Dong Khoi, DI

Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3827 8260

Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc 3911 0000

Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3829 1581

Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, DI 3824 4797 www.vietcombank.com.vn

concierae

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

Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2 62818001 9am - 11.30am on Mon. Tue. Thu. Fri

Camhodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, DI 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, DI 3829 5009 www.vn.china-embassv.org/eng/ Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI 3833 11/3 ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, DI 3829 7350

Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am: 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Denmark Consulate

115 Nauven Hue, D1 Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am

Finland Consulate

Room 501, 5/F Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1

France Consulate

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

Germany Consulate

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

Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, DI 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, 1 pm - 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, Di 3827 0555 kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com Mon-Fri: 9am - 4pm

Laos Consulate

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

Malavsia Consulate

2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 3829 9023 malhcminh@kln gov mv 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.qmas.com.vn

Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm; Sat: 9am

New Zealand Consulate

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

Nordcham

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

Norway Consulate

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

Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, DI 3825 0334 consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn

Hon. Consulate of Portugal

66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach 3820 0623

Russia Consulate

40 Ba Huven Thanh Ouan, D3 3930 3936 www.russianconsulates.com

Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, DI 3822 5174 www.mfa.gov.sg

Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, DI 3829 8888

South Korea Consulate

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

Sweden Consulate

8A/II Thai Van Lung, DI 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

The Czech Republic Consulate

The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, DI 3829 8433

U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, DI 3520 4610

Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, DI

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

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

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, DI

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, DI

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.

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,

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 stateowned 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, DI

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

Com Vietnam delivers highquality ICT services to customers in Vietnám, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME

11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1

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

financial planning

Total Wealth Management

A team of experts available to offer advice and options on how to manage your wealth.

66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach 3820 0623 t-wm@t-wm.com

law firms

he 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, Dl. 3822 2942

Raker & 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 34th Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai

JP Law Firm

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

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

Lonos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States. Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh

Khai, D3 3822 7161

Nishimura & Asahi

Nishimura & Asahi is one of Japan′™s premier full-service law firms, covering all aspects of domestic and international business and corporate activity.

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

Phuoc & Partners Company

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

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

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

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

Edge Marketing

Particularly dynamic local marketing firm, committed to a "highly productive collision of creativity and technology". The firm's international staff bring local and foreign perspectives to each campaign. 1Bis Ngo Van Nam, D1. 3911 1190

Explosion Media

The company offers an aggressive, nononsense approach to marketing that saves you money and gets results.

Call 0126 317 4332 or email contact@ ${\bf Explosion Media Group.com}$

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,

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-tocrack local market.

Melody Tower, 422-424 Ung Van Khiem, Binh Thanh

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

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

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

IK 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, DI 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,

The Nest

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

369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9

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, DI

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, DI

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

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, DI 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, DI

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

Logitem Viet Nam

3995 6117

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.

169 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh 3840 9330

Faces & Places









RockStorm

A competition was held to choose rock bands, from seven cities and provinces, to perform at the upcoming RockStorm party on December 28.

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN









Holland Village

The Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands organized a Dutch village where visitors enjoyed typical Dutch snacks and culture at the 23/9 Park.

IMAGES BY LOC NGUYEN









INICFF

A VIP pre-event of UNICEF ZERO awards with exclusive preview of live auction items was held at Ly Club.

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

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