

Ở

VIETNAM

FEBRUARY

MEN OF MUSCLE

Bodybuilding Taken to the Next Level

PAGE 27

THE RESTORATION LAB

Rare Books Get a New Life

PAGE 30

LIFE IS A CABARET, OLD CHUM

Classic Dinner Theater Comes to Saigon

PAGE 44

INSIDE THE WORLD OF WORK

The Working Lives of Everyday Locals

PAGE 92

A Family Affair



BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
HO CHI MINH CITY

www.bisvietnam.com

BIS *Academic Success*
Outstanding Learners



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

IGCSE

Top in Vietnam and High Achievement Awards

Nhut Vi Truong - Best Across Eight Cambridge IGCSEs – First Place in Vietnam

Nguyen Vu Chi Lan - Coordinated Sciences, Design and Technology

Chloe Smidt-Nielsen - Foreign Language Spanish, History

Son Nam Tran - Foreign Language French

Natalie Ng Qiao Yun - Geography, Music

Seung Ho Oh - Economics

Hikaru Hotta - Mathematics

Thi Phuong Mai Ngo - Music

Minh Huy Do - Drama

Inspected, approved and rated as 'Outstanding' by the British Government



Ginkgo
T - S H I R T S



Tết ROCKS
2014
Year of the horse





Director **XUAN TRAN**

Business Consultant **ROBERT STOCKDILL**
robert@oivietnam.com
093 253 4090

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

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

Researcher **GEORGE BOND**
george@oivietnam.com

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

Graphic Artist **HIEN NGUYEN**
hien@oivietnam.com

Staff Photographers **NGOC TRAN**
ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

Publication Manager **HANG PHAN**
hang@oivietnam.com
097 430 9710

For advertising please contact:

JULIAN AJELLO 
julian@oivietnam.com
093 700 9910

NGAN NGUYEN  
ngan@oivietnam.com
090 279 7951

JIMMY VAN DER KLOET   
jimmy@oivietnam.com
094 877 9219

KATE TU  
kate@oivietnam.com
091 800 7160

THU VU (HANOI)  
thu@oivietnam.com
090 624 9700

General **advertising@oivietnam.com**

Inquiries **info@oivietnam.com**



This Month's Cover

Image: Ngoc Tran
Model: The Tran Family
Make Up: Huyen Phan

ƠI VIỆT NAM

NHÀ XUẤT BẢN THANH NIÊN

Chịu trách nhiệm xuất bản: Đoàn Minh Tuấn
Biên tập: Nguyễn Giang - Quang Hùng

Thực hiện liên kết xuất bản:

Metro Advertising Co., Ltd

231-233 Lê Thánh Tôn, Phường Bến Thành,
Quận 1

In lần thứ mười một, số lượng 6000 cuốn,
khổ 21cm x 29,7cm
Đăng ký KHXB: 1110-2013/CXB/4 -52/TN
QĐXB số: 366/QĐ-TN/CN

Chế bản và in tại nhà in Lê Quang Lộc
Nộp lưu chiếu tháng 1/2014

Website: www.oivietnam.com



*Wishing you a
happy, healthy
and successful
New Year!*

An IB
World
School
at its best

1100 balanced students | 40
nationalities | 3 world class
campuses | 1 School

t: +84 8 3742 4040



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

enrolments@aisvietnam.com | www.aisvietnam.com

[facebook.com/AustralianInternationalSchoolVietnam](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianInternationalSchoolVietnam) | [youtube.com/aisvietnam](https://www.youtube.com/aisvietnam)



Contents

COVER STORY

A FAMILY AFFAIR

*Touching stories of the meaning of family
and our annual Tet Guide*



FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

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

P14 TROI OI

See why fire trucks and a record-setting cable car project made our noteworthy numbers this month

P16 THE BULLETIN

Checking out the latest promotions and openings

P24 ONE MILLION+

A roundup of some of Vietnam's most successful online startups

P26 MEN OF MUSCLE

Taking bodybuilding in Vietnam to the international level

P28 THE MELODEON PLAYER

Is Vietnam ready for a rock accordionist?

P30 THE RESTORATION LAB

A place where rare and antique books get a new lease on life

P64 PEACEFUL MOMENTS

Photographer Andre Paul showcases the quieter side of Japan

P66 RESPECT THE OLD, CREATE THE NEW

Japanese traditions are remade into Tokyo's hottest trends

P70 A LOVE LETTER TO PHNOM PENH

Our closest capital city deserves more than just a visa run

P92 INSIDE THE WORLD OF WORK

A new book reveals the working lives of everyday Vietnamese



A state of the art Chiropractic
and natural health care center
in Ho Chi Minh City - Vietnam

Relief from pain without drugs or surgery

Foot pain & Shin pain

Elbow injuries

Wrist pain

Sport injuries

Headaches, etc.

We treat

Disk Syndrome

Back Pain & Neck pain

Knee pain & Ankle pain

Shoulder pain & injuries

A | 161-161A Hai Ba Trung, W.6, D.3, HCMC
T | +84 3939 3930 M | +84 946 74 00 66 E | info@acc.vn

HATVALA
COFFEE • TEA • BISTRO

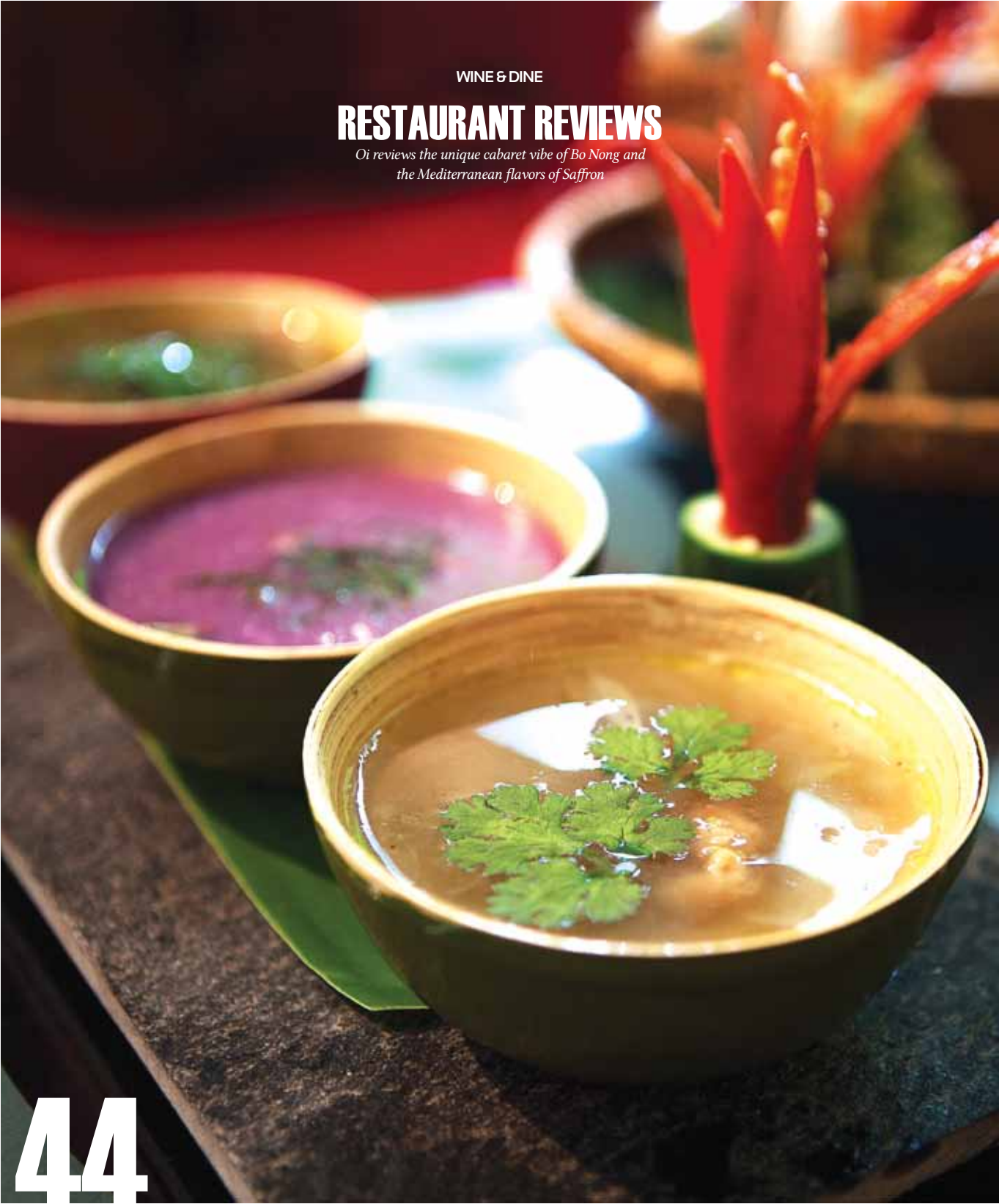
Chúc Mừng Năm Mới



A YEAR FOR FREEDOM, ADVENTURE, TRAVEL AND ROMANCE

STYLISH VIETNAMESE CUISINE • FRESHEST COFFEE IN TOWN • EXCELLENT TEA SELECTION • GREAT VALUE SET LUNCH

44 Nguyen Hue, District 1
Tel: 3824 1534 Email: info@hatvala.com
www.hatvala.com



WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Oi reviews the unique cabaret vibe of Bo Nong and the Mediterranean flavors of Saffron

44

COLUMNS

P22 SAIGON MYTHBUSTERS

What can and can't be mailed out of the country?

P73 POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM

A Gaudi-esque mythological sculpture in Hoi An

P74 LIFE'S A TRIP

Is an all-inclusive vacation for you?

P82 HIGHER LEARNING

How gender differences affect the educational experience

P84 THE SYLLABUS

Keep calm and de-stress your toddler

P95 LEGAL EASE

Creating a will to benefit your family abroad

Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 11
FEBRUARY 2014

All in the Family

WHEN WE FIRST IMMIGRATED to America, my parents very much wanted to keep their Vietnamese traditions alive. I was just a kid then, so the Western holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas only meant days off from school for my sisters and me. Throughout my childhood, it was Tet that really had meaning, a wonderful explosion of Vietnamese traditions that was Thanksgiving and Christmas all rolled into one. I have memories of my mom spending days buying and preparing food for Tet, everything from scratch. There was pickled meat (wrapped in foil because she couldn't get banana leaves), glutinous rice cakes, sweet *che*, crispy shrimp chips and specialties of Hue, passed down from her own mother. By 8pm on the evening before Tet started, all six of my sisters and I would help set the table placed in front of our altar to ancestors and Buddha. My dad had a ritual of lighting three incense sticks and bowing three times. I remember the torturous wait for those incense sticks to burn completely down before we were allowed to eat. I swear, those sticks seemed to be a mile long! That's not to say we didn't sneak little bites of food here and there when our parents were distracted!

Now that I'm here in Vietnam and my family are all back in NYC, I alternate between enjoying the few days of quiet bliss when the city empties out and jetting off somewhere in the region where Tet isn't celebrated. But wherever I am, Tet is still inextricably linked to family in my mind. A time when the whole country stops for just a few days to take a collective breath and to simply reconnect with family and friends. Our two cover stories this month revolve around the bittersweet topic of family, touchingly related by two Vietnamese-Americans who have come back to the country of their birth, unable to shake Vietnam's influence on their own lives and the lives of their families.

In our Business section, James Pham takes a look at a new book, *It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam Today*, which offers a fascinating glimpse into the lives of everyday Vietnamese. This article hit closer to home than I ever imagined. I've often wondered what my life would've been like had my parents not made the difficult decision to undertake that dangerous journey by boat to the US. While reading the article, I found myself becoming the *che* seller or goldfish peddler in a parallel world that could've been.

At 5 foot tall and 100 pounds, I'm more brains than brawn. This month, though, *Oi* brings readers both. For fellow bibliophiles, NPD Khanh takes us inside an antique book restoration department here in HCMC, illustrated beautifully by Adam Robert Young's gorgeous images of books yellowed and stained by age being meticulously cared for by the equally worn hands of age-old craftsmen. For those who prefer brawn to books, Khanh introduces us to Pham Van Mach, Vietnam's most famous bodybuilder, showing us a lighter, more personal side to the world of hard bodies.

Also this month, our country-hopping travel guru James Pham writes about his love / hate and back to love again affair with Phnom Penh and his wacky adventures in Tokyo (where 3m samurai panda robots may or may not be involved), providing us with two destination options for those looking to skip the city during Tet.

Whether you're staying put for the holidays or traveling with family and friends, may the Year of the Horse be an auspicious one for you and yours. *Chúc mừng năm mới!* ■

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor



HAVING MOVED FROM ITS OLD LOCATION AT BLANCHY'S TASH ON HAI BA TRUNG, **BLANCHY STREET** NOW HAS ITS OWN STAND ALONE LOCATION JUST UP THE ROAD IN SAIGON'S MOST FAMOUS FOODIE DESTINATION, THE REFINERY COURTYARD, OFFERING AUTHENTIC SUSHI AND CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE CUISINE WITH PASSION, FLAIR AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL.

寿司 和風 創作 料理

BLANCHY STREET D1
CREATIVE JAPANESE CUISINE

CULINARY TEAM MARTIN BRITO AND YOGO OBA, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE WORKED AT THE WORLD FAMOUS MICHELIN STARRED **NOBU LONDON**, PRESENT A QUALITY SELECTION OF SUSHI CLASSICS AS WELL AS A SHOWCASE OF THEIR VERY OWN SIGNATURE DISHES. ALL DESIGNED TO BE SHARED AND SAVOURED.

ALSO ON OFFER IS AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF SAKES AND WINES.

(08) 3823 8793

74 HAI BA TRUNG, D1

WWW.BLANCHYSTREET.COM

Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



NOW UNTIL JANUARY 15

What: Silk of Light Exhibition

Where: Phuong My Flagship Store, 81 Le Thanh Ton, D1

About: Silk of Light: Ngo Dinh Bao Chau opened at Phuong My Flagship Store commemorating San Art Production's second collaboration with fashion designer Phuong My. San Art Productions, the very first program of its kind in Vietnam, aims to realize a long-standing partnership between visual art and an external creative organization where an open dialogue between two innovative forces commissions new artistic projects.

Silk of Light is a body of work inspired by light as both a physical and metaphorical medium. Bao Chau carefully studies the process of light as it covers, disperses and adjusts to the surface of different materials. The artist's preoccupation with light arises from her deep interest in architecture, and its relationship to form, shape, line and structure. Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Bao Chau's living environment is filled with manmade light and she is fascinated by its role in human forms of labor and urbanization.

Contact: For more information, email hello@san-art.org



JANUARY 16 - 21

What: Encounter lecture with Associate Professor Thaness Wongyannava

Where: Hoa Sen University, 8 Nguyen Van Trang, D1

About: Thaness Wongyannava will discuss his ideas concerning 'Buddhacentrism', which embraces the idea of Buddhism as a system of ideas in contemporary life that has moved away from a focus on 'enlightenment' towards a belief in all things 'delightful' – meaning a focus on anything that entertains, satiates desire and is popularly in demand. He will look at how visual art illustrates such an attitude, including an examination of how we understand the 'self' and 'truth' within such a society.

Contact: For more information, email hello@san-art.org



JANUARY 16

What: Canvas & Wine: Monet and The Impressionists

Where: VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1; 6:30pm - 9pm

About: This will be a fun and creative class for everyone, no matter what your painting level is. Start the night with a wine tasting session to uplift your creativity and confidence, and then enter the studio to learn how to paint. With the help of VinSpace Garage's instructor and some images of paintings as a reference, you will enjoy painting like the impressionists.

Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846



JANUARY 16

What: Ninth Annual Crystal Ball International Business Luncheon

Where: New World Saigon Hotel, 76 Le Lai, D1; 11am – 2pm

About: This will be CanCham's Ninth Annual Crystal Ball business luncheon event. Well-known guest speakers from a variety of business sectors will present their general outlooks and identify challenges and likelihoods for the coming year. Guest speakers include Nicola Connolly of Adecco Vietnam, Mark Fraser of Frasers Law Company, Victoria Kwakwa of The World Bank, Don Lam of VinaCapital, Ralf Matthaes of TNS and Tareq Muhmood of ANZ Bank Vietnam. The entrance fee is VND850,000 (members and co-hosts) and VND1,050,000 (non-members).

Contact: For tickets, contact hcmc@canchamvietnam.org or call 3824 3754



JANUARY 18

What: Special Tet Calligraphy

Where: VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1; 10am-12pm (kids), 2pm-4pm (adults)

About: To celebrate Tet, VinSpace Garage Art Studio presents the Special Tet Calligraphy event where you can learn to write traditional Vietnamese calligraphy with popular New Year wishes such as "Phuc – Good Fortune", "Loc – Prosperity" and "Tho – Longevity."

Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 0907729846



JANUARY 23

What: Canvas & Wine: Paint like Paul Klee

Where: VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2; 6:30pm - 9pm

About: Paul Klee was a unique artist. He cannot be identified clearly with any art movement and often worked in complete isolation. His works show an extraordinary use of color and tone. With the help of VinSpace Garage's instructor, you will create your own abstract impressionist painting in the style of Klee.

Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846



JANUARY 23

What: Saigon Single Malt Club's 1st Burn's Supper

Where: Casablanca Restaurant, 58/9 Thanh Thai, D10; 7pm till late

About: Saigon Single Malt Club is holding its first Burn's Supper featuring bagpipes, Robert Burn's poetry, girls in tartans and lots of single malt scotch and haggis. The supper costs VND1.2 million for members and VND1.4 million for guests.

Contact: For more information, call 0168 990 0905



Kyoto Spa & Hair Salon

New Opening
Spa Kyoto on 20th January at Dong Du




Spa Kyoto


京都

Body massage

Foot-massage

Hair cut-women and men

32 Dong Du, Ben Nghe Ward, D1 (Spa & Hair Salon)
8A/4D1 Thai Van Lung, Ben Nghe Ward, D1 (Spa)
HP: 0902 983 089
Email: loan_royal@gmail.com
www.spakyotohcmc.com.vn




LE RENDEZ-VOUS DE SAIGON


LE RENDEZ-VOUS DE SAIGON

The bistro promises a warm and friendly atmosphere to wind down after a day of work with a stylish downstairs bar, or lounge on cosy leather seating in the upstairs section with a balcony to enjoy the fresh air.

The intimate venue offers a tasty selection of wines from France to South Africa, and a delectable menu of French cuisine.

LIVE MUSIC AND BBQ OR RACLETTE BUFFET EVERY WEEKEND!





CRAZY DEAL ON TAITTINGER DURING ALL WEEKEND!

Unique in Saigon, only at Le Rendez-Vous De Saigon
Special offer available only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE

Champagne Taittinger à Reims - 12% alcoholic volume

9A Ngo Van Nam St. Ben Nghe Ward, District 1, HCMC.
Phone: (08)6291 0396

NOW UNTIL JANUARY 24

What: Right Fiction Exhibition

Where: San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

About: Right Fiction features painting, photography, installation and video by artists Nguyen Hong Ngoc and Phan Thao Nguyen that concludes their time with San Art Laboratory: Session Three.

Contact: For more information, email hello@san-art.org

JANUARY 25

What: San Art Laboratory Session 4

Where: San Art Laboratory, 40/18 Pham Viet Chanh, Binh Thanh

About: San Art Laboratory is a studio/residency program initiated and managed by San Art. It provides three artists with an art studio and living quarters for six months each. Session 4 welcomes Lai Thi Dieu Ha from Hanoi, Le Phi Long from Hue, and Nguyen Van Du from Ho Chi Minh City. This will be the first time they open up on their creative processes to the public. Come visit their studio, get to know the artists, enjoy the creative dialogue, and become part of art in the making.

Contact: For more information, email hello@san-art.org

FEBRUARY 8

What: T-shirt Making for Couples

Where: VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1; 2pm - 4pm

About: Valentine's Day is around the corner and the T-shirt Making for Couples workshop is for those who want to celebrate their love and bring home a lovely couple's T-shirts.

Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846

FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 29

What: Saigon Soul Pool Parties

Where: Splash Bar, New World Saigon Hotel, 76 Le Lai, D1

About: Saigon Soul Pool Parties aim to become the liveliest ongoing event in the city with parties starting from 10am until 11pm every Saturday. At each event they will have DJs spinning tunes, a fully operational bar with drinks from VND50,000 - VND100,000 as well as local restaurants setting up food stations, the New World spa offering outdoor massages, local artisans selling their creations, giveaways, hotel promotions, swimwear retailers and more. Entry fee is VND 100,000 and free for hotel guests.

Contact: For more info call Dallas Waines at 0122 734 8128 or email dallas.waines@gmail.com



FEBRUARY 20

What: Canvas & Wine: Pop Art Day

Where: VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2; 6:30pm - 9pm

About: Develop your own painting using Pop Artworks as a reference. Pop Art was one of the main art movements in the last century and often uses advertising and comic books for inspiration. Andy Warhol, Roy Liechtenstein and David Hockney were the leaders in this style.

Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846



White Forest

Coffee - Restaurant - Tapas

Serving : Italian and French authentic Cuisine.
Good Selection Of European Wines and Cocktails.

"Order Take Away Online at
vietnammm.com, foodpanda.vn & eat.vn"

Opening time: 7:30 am - 11:30 pm
Add: 14Bis Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Dakao Ward, D.1, HCMC
Tel: (08) 3911 0588 Fax: (08) 3911 0587 Hotline: 0122 428 5237 www.whiteforest.com.vn
www.facebook.com/WhiteForestRestaurant/



FEBRUARY 27

What: Canvas & Wine: Van Gogh – The Power of Color
Where: VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2; 6:30pm - 9pm
About: Van Gogh is one of the most famous painters in history. His isolated life seen through the legacy of his letters and his use of color had a tremendous influence on art after his death. With the help of an instructor, you will develop your own piece in the style of Vincent Van Gogh.
Contact: Access www.vin-space.com or call 090 772 9846

FEBRUARY 27

What: Unconditional Belief Exhibition
Where: San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh
About: Unconditional Belief is an art exhibition by Art Labor – visual artists Truong Cong Tung, Phan Thao Nguyen and curator Arlette Quynh-Anh Tran. For over a year, Art Labor has been collaborating with an anthropologist, ophthalmologist and medical architect, researching the influence of psychiatry, medicine and the supernatural on the understanding of sickness by Vietnamese society. This exhibition will showcase their research, which will include painting on various mediums like wooden plates, X-ray films in addition to specific installations, lacquer sculptures and video art.
Contact: More information will be available via www.san-art.org

JANUARY - APRIL

What: Sandrine Llouquet: San Art Productions x Phuong My Exhibition
Where: Phuong My Flagship Store, 81 Le Thanh Ton, D1
About: For the third time, San Art Productions cooperates with Phuong My fashion brand to produce an art exhibition for local young artists to promote and nurture the collaborative dialogue between visual arts and non-art sectors, specifically in this exhibition between art and fashion. The exhibition by Sandrine Llouquet will explore the idea of the human body and the transformation of the soul. Inspired by the sci-fi movie genre and the symbolism of astronomy, this newly commissioned work utilizes futuristic technology in reforming the body's structure. Sandrine will create appealing yet conceptual site-specific drawings on glass and installations.
Contact: For more information, email hello@san-art.org

Troi Oi

The country by numbers



VND100 TRILLION

is how much internet businesses are expected to earn in 2018. General Director of VNG Corporation Le Hong Minh spoke at the Vietnam Internet Day 2013, organized by the Vietnam Internet Association, and said that internet-based businesses have been growing fast in the past decade and many sectors are capitalizing on the internet rapidly. Total revenues of services using the internet and internet services were VND70 billion in 2004 then rapidly increasing to VND2.6 trillion in 2009, and the amount is forecast to reach VND20 trillion in 2014.

Minh said revenue for 2014 would include revenues from online games, e-commerce and digital content.

According to statistics by VNG, Vietnam earned VND1.2 trillion in revenues from online games in 2009 and an estimated VND6 trillion in 2013. Meanwhile, 2014's estimated revenues of e-commerce activities and web content services are VND4.2 trillion and VND8 trillion respectively, rising from VND100 billion and VND1 trillion in 2009.



USD2.56 MILLION

is the estimated amount addicts in Vietnam spend a day on drugs, according to figures released at a photo exhibition held in Hanoi last month. The photographs displayed in the exhibition titled "Get Out and Go On" present stories of former drug addicts who have been successfully treated with methadone.

A representative of the General Department of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control under the Ministry of Health, said some 14,000 drug addicts nationwide are being treated with methadone and 90 to 95 percent of them stop using drugs.

Methadone therapy will be rolled out to 80,000 drug users in 30 cities and provinces nationwide by 2015, according to *Vietnamplus*. Statistics from the Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs show there were 180,000 drug addicts on record in Vietnam as of June 2013 and each of them spent on average VND300,000 on drugs per day.



USD210 MILLION

cable car project to Mt. Fansipan has been launched. The ground breaking ceremony of a 7km long cable car system to the peak of Mt. Fansipan took place in Sapa in November. The cable car will connect Sapa to Muong Hoa Valley and the Fansipan peak. This is the first three-wire cable car system in Asia and the longest, highest and most complex three-wire cable in the world.

It is expected that the work will be completed by the end of 2014 and put into use in 2015. Then, the journey to conquer the Fansipan peak will be only 15 minutes, with speed reaching 8m/s and a maximum transport capacity of 2,000 passengers per hour.

Mt. Fansipan is the highest in Indochina at 3,143 meters.

OVER 1/2

of Vietnam's fire trucks have been in use for more than 20 years, according to the Ministry of Public Security. In 2013 nearly 2,600 fires and explosions occurred in Vietnam, claiming the lives of 124 people and injuring 349 others, 10 percent more than 2012, said Lieutenant General Nguyen Danh Cong, Chief of the Office of the Public Security Ministry.

Lt. General Cong said that the professional firefighting forces are insufficient and weak, particularly the equipment. Vietnam has 927 fire trucks but more than half are outdated. The Ministry of Public Security will ask the government to purchase modern equipment

40

Vietnamese national parks and nature reserves have been named in a new international study identifying protected areas of the utmost importance to the survival of wildlife. Conservationists said this gives Vietnam specific focus for its wildlife protection efforts, and urged the government to do more in an area where foreign NGOs are doing the bulk of the work, *Saigon Tiep Thi* newspaper reported.

Vietnam's hot spots include parks and reserves in the northern highlands like UNESCO biosphere reserve Cat Ba Islands, those in the central region like the famous Phong Nha-Ke Bang, and Cat Tien, which has made national headlines for years for being threatened by two hydropower projects that were scrapped last October.

"If government officials are still going to restaurants to eat wildlife dishes and consider them delicious, Vietnam will hardly work out any conservation efforts," said a representative. The expert also said IUCN has saved Vietnam time by naming the places it needs to pay attention to and how, and the conservationist said the government and people need to try to put its suggestion to work.



STAMFORD SKIN CENTRE



Trust Your Skin To A Dermatologist

Whether for Botox, problem with acne or pigmentation, it is best to get professional treatment from a qualified dermatologist for **accurate diagnosis** and **safe treatment procedures**. So trust your specialist doctor to administer very delicate injections and calibrate highly sensitive laser equipment.

Stamford Skin Centre provides **professional medical treatment** for a range of aesthetic and medical skin conditions with their international team of **fully qualified doctors and dermatologists**.

Skin Cancer Evaluation • Acne • Eczema, Psoriasis & Rosacea
• Melasma, Freckles & Age Spots • Wrinkles • Botox, Restylane & Dysport • Scars & Keloids • Removal of Tattoos & Moles

254 Dien Bien Phu, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City Tel: 08 3932 1090 Mobile: 0908 453 338
Email: info@stamfordskin.com Web: www.stamfordskin.com



MASSIMO FERRARI

CHRISTMAS

SALE

UNTIL LUNAR NEW YEAR

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% ON ALL OROBIANCO ITEMS 25% ON ALL MAISON TAKUYA ITEMS 30% ON ALL DRESS SHOES & SCARVES MADE TO ORDER SUITS - PURCHASE 1 SUIT GET 1 COMPLIMENTARY SHIRT MADE TO ORDER SHOES - ORDER 1 PAIR GET ANY SAPHIR SHOE CARE PRODUCT AT 10% OFF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% ON ALL RTW & ACCESSORIES 45% ON ALL SNEAKERS 50% ON ALL DRIVING SHOES, RAYBAN, CARRERA SUNGLASSES, LUGGAGE, & NECK TIES
--	---

WE ARE MOBILE
SCAN HERE



MASSIMO FERRARI
42A1 TRAN QUOC THAO STREET
WARD 7, DISTRICT 3, HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM
RING: +84.3930.6212

STORE HOURS: MON. - SAT. 9:30 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.
SUNDAY 10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK:
MASSIMO FERRARI STUDIO

MASSIMO FERRARI

The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC...



PAMPER YOURSELF

Nestled in a quiet residential area hidden away from the hustle and bustle of the city is the recently opened **Maison Mikio Boutique Salon** (8 Ton Dat Tien Street in the Garden Plaza 2 Complex, Phu My Hung). The salon and spa offers clients a spacious yet intimate setting for salon and beauty services such as hair styling, coloring, manicures, pedicures, skincare, and waxing.

In honor of its opening, the salon is offering a 50 percent discount for all first-time clients. Those who become VIP members will receive 30 percent off on services throughout the year.

Call 5412 4773, email maisonmikio@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/maisonmikio for more info



MODERN SUSHI

"I want to combine the new with the old. I don't want my restaurant to be the same as anyone else's," says Van, one of the partners and sushi chef at **Ichiban Sushi** (204 Le Lai, D1). Newly opened, the restaurant is a combination of a modern sushi bar with a lounge-like ambiance featuring house music in a multi-level space.

Van, together with his brother Daniel Phan, bringing with them over 20 years of food and beverage experience in the US and aims to redefine sushi dining complete with a live DJ station on the ground floor and a lounge area on the second.

Van brings his own unique take on Japanese cuisine with dishes such as Rock and Roll maki (**unagi**, white tuna and sweet sauce roll, VND138,000), Kobe cheese (filet mignon wrapped around French cream cheese, VND168,000), and his special Mr Van **maki** (sake, **ebi** (shrimp tempura), and **tobiko** (flying fish roll)), which earned him third place in a sushi competition in San Francisco, CA. He has also added a Californian twist to the traditional pancake with the Mr. Van **Okonomiyaki** – Japanese grilled pancake with bonito flakes, grilled and then baked, smothered in mozzarella cheese and mushrooms with house BBQ sauce (VND78,000) – the crust has the same texture and thickness as a pizza.

"I want to create modern Japanese food to establish a new vibe. This is the first modern Japanese dining experience here, like the Japanese pizza. And when people taste my food, they'll come back, because they won't find it anywhere else. I don't want to be a copycat, I want to be me. For sure, it won't please everyone, but the majority will like it," he adds.

For further information, visit www.ichibansushi.vn



*The cheapest time you can buy
health insurance is
when you don't need it.*



☎ 1800 577770
🌐 www.bluecross.com.vn



IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

Saigon School of Imaging on Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1 offers courses in Lightroom, Photoshop, and photography led by professional photographer Quinn Ryan Mattingly. It promises to help you to learn the best way to shoot and edit stunning images. Courses typically run on weekends every two months, starting on January 18 with Lightroom 101 and Photography 101 on January 19. The following weekend sees the second level courses – Lightroom 201 is on January 25, and Photography 201 is on January 26. All courses are eight hours in duration, with a one-hour lunch break catered by Scott & Binh's. One-on-one courses are also available.

For more information, email quinn@quinnmattingly.com or call 0128 569 8144



*drop of nature
improving your life*



Call us on 3820 7721 or visit us at 2388 Pasteur, D.3
Website: www.vscential.com

**THE PURE TASTE OF
NATURAL VIETNAMESE COFFEE™**



Find it at these locations:

Select Mart	Veggy's	Maximart	Citimart
-------------	---------	----------	----------

Tan Son Nhat International Airport



CENTROFARMS™ COFFEE
198/B5 Hoang Van Thu, Ward 9, Phu Nhuan District, HCM City
Tel: 08.3844.5183 | Fax: 08.3844.6395
Web: www.centrofarms.com
Email: sales@centrofarms.com



EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

The **Australian International School (AIS)** has recently unveiled its under 2s childcare program to support busy working parents. Situated in the heart of Thao Dien at XI Riverview Palace compound, the Early Childhood Centre now offers a stimulating and nurturing environment for infants as young as three-months-old, toddlers, and pre-school children up to five.

The center offers specialist facilities for the under 2s, an indoor soft play adventure playground, a splash pool, and two age-appropriate soft turf playgrounds. Teachers are qualified expat Early Years professionals who are supported by a team of dedicated teaching assistants, providing a desirably low staff to pupil ratio.

For more information, contact Thanh Do at thanh.do@aisvietnam.com or call 3519 2727



THE GOLDEN ARCHES

American fast food chain **McDonald's** is opening its first restaurant in Vietnam at 2-6bis Dien Bien Phu, D1. The outlet will include a 24-hour drive-through lane, a first for Vietnam, its 38th Asian market. There is also another outlet that's scheduled to be open soon at the triangle section of Tran Hung Dao and Pham Ngu Lao, near the Ben Thanh Market and bus station.

McDonald's in Vietnam is represented by Henry Nguyen of Good Day Hospitality, the Prime Minister's son-in-law. Nguyen Huy Thinh, GM of McDonald's Vietnam, said most of its ingredients will be imported to ensure quality and safety of the food.



PIANO & COFFEE

Gemmi Coffee's spacious and colonial style café recently opened at 193 D3 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3. They have an office lunch menu delivery service with inexpensive dishes like morning glory with garlic (VND20,000), stir fried seafood noodles (VND45,000), and sautéed squid (VND45,000), among others. In the evenings at 8pm a live solo piano performance provides entertainment for guests.

Call 090 651 0008 or visit www.facebook.com/GemmiCoffee for more info

REVVING INTO VIETNAM

Peugeot and the Vietnamese THACO (Truong Hai Auto Corporation) Group have celebrated the launch of the Peugeot brand in Vietnam with the Peugeot 408, produced locally at THACO's Chulai plant in the Danang region. With the start of production of the Peugeot 408, of which 261,000 units have already been produced and sold across three continents. Peugeot and its partner THACO, the local market leader, are attacking a strategic segment that represents 22 percent of sales in the Vietnamese car market. The 408 project team foresees production and sales of 10,000 cars during the period 2014-2017.

DOG DAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Hair of the Dog bar has opened at 194 Bui Vien, D1, their second location modeled after their original one in Hanoi. The owner has renovated a large space creating an interesting bar with an alfresco sidewalk area downstairs, and an upper lounge area overlooking the lower bar that allows for a great view of the DJ station. If it follows its Hanoi theme, it will be a DJ music-focused nightclub.

For more information, call 094 789 3232



MULTICULTURAL DINING

Opened several months ago, **Indaba Café & Restaurant** (35 Ly Tu Trong, D1) ambitiously combines Japanese sushi, Western style steak, and Italian coffee under one roof. It boasts homemade ingredients such as udon noodles, soy sauce for the sushi, and matcha ice cream. The quaint and cozy restaurant is decorated in soft hues of red and black, complemented with soft jazz music. A German *Viet Kieu* with experience in restaurants in Germany helms the kitchen.

Contact them at 3824 8280 or visit www.facebook.com/indabacafe



24 HOUR CONVENIENCE

Japanese convenience chain **7-Eleven** plans to open its first location in Vietnam within the next two months. Thai CP All, who bought the rights to franchise the brand, will open seven company-owned stores in Vietnam in the first two to three years before allowing a local partner to administer the chain. The stores will stock 40 percent Vietnamese products and 60 percent Thai and other imported products.



NEW & BEAUTIFUL

The start of 2014 saw Xuan Truong Center debut a new cosmetic surgery clinic called **Xuan Truong Paradise** (12 Ky Dong, D3). The clinic is equipped with the latest advanced technology in beauty treatments available today.

"Being beautiful and preserving beauty is a hard job, and in this day and age it's even more difficult. I am happy for those who are truly beautiful, who do not need to go to beauty salons and are satisfied with their appearances," says Do Xuan Truong, Director of Xuan Truong Center. "However, for those who wish to make a few changes, I can tell them that cosmetic surgery can compensate for the shortcomings nature gave you. And for those who want to preserve their beauty, thank god, today skin rejuvenation technology has improved a lot."

The center also has branches in Dong Nai, Long An, Ca Mau and Da Nang.

FEB PROMO AT GRAND MERCURE DANANG

All you can eat Dim Sum at VND400,000 net/person with over 40 dim sum varieties to choose from throughout the week (except Mondays).

Every Friday, savour a sumptuous buffet with delectable Chinese and local seafood Specialties along with a free flow of draught beer/soft drink at VND500,000 net/person. For additional free flow of house wine, the surcharge is VND190,000 net/person.

This Valentine's Day, impress the one you love with a private and gourmet dining experience with their All-you-can-eat Dim Sum at VND400,000/person. For romance, join their Chinese and Seafood buffet with free flow of draught beers and soft drinks at VND500,000/person.

A spring spa package that includes a special blend of uplifting body oils and oriental massage technique, head massage and foot reflexology is priced at VND1,200,000/person for 100 min. Any couple package will enjoy a 20 percent discount for Valentine's Day.

Visit www.mercure.com for more info

DANCE & YOGA FOR KIDS

New Kindermusik dance and yoga educator Nattamon Puangkaew has over 10 years of experience teaching children singing and dancing in numerous musical schools and music camps in Thailand. She has also taught body jam, body balance, body step, funk jazz, pilates and yoga at California Wow Experience Thailand. Recently trained as a Rainbow yoga instructor, she created her own yoga playgroup class at Viva Yoga Thailand.

Visit www.kindermusik-vietnam for details



PROSPEROUS LUNAR NEW YEAR



© 2012 Renaissance Hotel Holdings Inc.

JAN 30th, 2014

Riverside Café, 6pm – 10pm

VND777,000++/person

Dinner buffet and the Countdown

VND999,000++/person

Dinner buffet with free flow of house sparkling wine, house wine, draught beer, sodas, "Tetty" cocktail and the Countdown

Kabin, 6pm – 10pm

VND750,000++/person

Dinner All You Can Eat with food only and the Countdown

VND888,000++/person

Dinner All You Can Eat with free flow of house sparkling wine, house wine, draught beer, sodas, "Tetty" cocktail and the Countdown

Poolside, 6pm – 10pm

VND700,000++/person

Dinner BBQ with food only and Countdown

VND888,000++/person

BBQ dinner with free flow of house sparkling wine, house wine, draught beer, sodas, "Tetty" cocktail and the Countdown

* Surcharge applies on dining vouchers

* Dining Club Member discount is applicable

Countdown @ Poolside, 10:30pm 12:30am

Free flow of house sparkling wine, house wine, draught beer, sodas, "Tetty" cocktail with complimentary of canapes

* Free of charge for restaurant diners

*** VND 400,000++ /person**
for other patrons



8-15 Ton Duc Thang Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
t: (84 8) 3822 0033 • f: (84 8) 3823 5666 • w: www.renaissance-saigon.com

JOIN THE CLUB

Cold Beer Club (64 Ton That Thiep, D1) is another bar alongside Ginger 60, Drunken Duck and Phattys on Ton That Thiep. Large-tabled bar downstairs with a well-designed and laid out upstairs lounge with a balcony overlooking the street below. Expect loud music, plenty of waitresses hovering around and imported and local beers.

24/7

Universal Bar on 90 Bui Vien is now opening 24/7 for food, sports on TV & music. The upstairs bar and lounge is scheduled to reopen soon and will feature DJ music & dancing.

EMMMM...

December saw the opening of the first property of the brand new 3-star chain **EMM Hotels and Resorts**, operated by the same group that manages the upscale Victoria Hotels & Resorts. The 56 room property (157 Pasteur, D3) features 18 hotel rooms and 38 1- and 2-bedroom apartments with kitchen, dining room, and spacious living room for those looking to stay a bit longer. EMM is derived from *em* in Vietnamese, meaning comfort or well-being, and the chain guarantees guests "a fantastic night's sleep, coupled with a nutritional and tasty daily buffet breakfast."

The property's signature colors are vibrant pink and lime green, giving it a funky fresh vibe, coupled with custom art work by Vietnamese artists. The property's most spectacular feature, though, is its gorgeous 11th floor restaurant / bar / terrace with 180 degree views of central Saigon, a chill spot to watch the sun set over the city. Until the website is operational, queries can be emailed to minh.le@victoriahotels.asia

CHIPPING AWAY

Saigon Fish & Chips Vietnam has opened on 237 Pham Ngu Lau (upstairs, use the hotel reception lobby) just around the corner from the popular Hem 241 alleyway. One piece of Atlantic whitefish with chips is VND79,000, or the Fish Basket with two large lightly crumbed fish fillets & chips for VND99,000. Fish & shrimp or deep fried shrimp meals are also available.



El Camino
— TAPAS BAR —

CAPTURE THE FLAVOURS OF SPAIN IN SMALL PLATES

OUTDOOR LOUNGE BAR TAPAS SANGRIA & COCKTAILS

HAPPY HOUR
EVERY DAY 4-7PM
30% OFF ALL BEER,
COCKTAILS, SANGRIA
& SOME LIQUORS

**VEGETARIAN AND
NON-VEGETARIAN TAPAS**
FROM 29.000 - 55.000VND
VAT INCLUSIVE

137 NGUYEN DUC CANH, DISTRICT 7, HCMC
TEL: 08 5412 4641 EMAIL: CHRIS@ELCAMINO-VN.COM

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/elcaminovietnam



MARRIOTT HOTEL

Marriott International marks a milestone in its expansion into Southeast Asia with the unveiling of JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi. The property is the JW Marriott brand's third to open in Asia within the past two months (others in Bengaluru and New Delhi), reflective of a significant investment in the region by the rapidly growing luxury hotel brand.

The 450-room JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi is a 'reverse skyscraper' designed by acclaimed architecture practice Carlos Zapata Studio. The impressive structure was inspired by the country's magnificent coastline and evokes characteristics of a dragon – a modern interpretation of a symbol from Vietnam's past.

With over 3,600 square meters of meeting space built for large corporate and association events, JW Marriott Hanoi is well placed to cater to the flourishing market for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) in Vietnam. The hotel has a total of 17 meeting rooms including two Ballrooms. All meeting facilities are conveniently located on the ground floor with a dedicated entrance and parking.



AEON INFLUX

Japanese retail and shopping center operator **Aeon** has opened its first mall in Vietnam. The mall is the first stage of a mixed residential development called Celadon City, in the outlying Ho Chi Minh City suburb of Tan Phu.

A large Aeon supermarket and department store anchors one end of the center, which extends four stories. Retailers trading from day one include Malaysian listed jeweler Tomei, The Body Shop, Face Shop, local book retailer Fahasa, discount apparel chain Fashion Outlet Store (FOS) and Birkenstock. Levis, Samsonite and a raft of other brands are expected to open soon, with the mall reportedly 90 percent leased.

Aeon has a second Vietnam mall under construction already with at least two more planned.



WORKING TOGETHER

Work Saigon on 267/2 Dien Bien Phu, D3 is a shared working space, creativity school, and café in Saigon. It is home to a community of people who are trying make a meaningful living. The space can host events or workshops as small as 30 all the way up to 250 people. It can also be booked for private meetings and is open from 10am to 9pm.

For more information, visit www.worksaigon.com



EBISU

Add : 35bis Mac Dinh Chi, D.1

Tel : 08 3822 6971

Hotline: 0904 374 242  



Authentic Japanese food and traditional setting, serving the city's best grill chicken and homemade udon.

OPENING TIME:

Lunch 11:30am - 2pm | Dinner 5pm - 10:30pm
Saturday 11:30am - 10:30pm | Sunday 11:30am - 9pm

 **SAIGON STAR**
International School



CARING STAFF & EXCELLENT CLASS SIZES



STUNNING SETTING & FAMILY ATMOSPHERE



**Residential Area No.5,
Thanh My Loi Ward, D2
(08) 3742 STAR / (08) 3742 7827
www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn**

THE MYTH:

Are English books banned from being shipped out of Vietnam?

ACTUALLY, NO, IT'S not English books specifically. Both English and other foreign-language books are often simply caught in the line of fire between local prohibitions and actually-banned publications.

According to Vietnamese Post Office Regulation #49/2010/QH12 (you can find it on the Vietnamese government legal text archive moj.gov.vn) and the imports regulation (12/2006/ND-CP), any "cultural products" (of which books are one) that are banned from circulation within Vietnam are also banned from being imported into or exported out of Vietnam.

Both of these regulations are pretty straightforward concerning the types of books that are unwelcome in Vietnam: books of an adult nature; socially controversial material; and textbooks with an anti-government agenda. Despite this very clear distinction, however, many expats still find their non-adult-material, non-controversial, and non-anti-government books turned away at the post office.

The problem stems from the lack of an institutionalized department dedicated to content inspection (which would probably be too costly) in Vietnamese post offices, especially those smaller ward-level post offices with fewer resources. Without an inspection department, the general post office has a 'cultural inspection' policy that does away with reading through the content in favor of a minimum-effort check for a stamp or book code from a legal Vietnamese book publisher (since any

books bearing an authentic stamp or code will have already undergone a cultural inspection there).



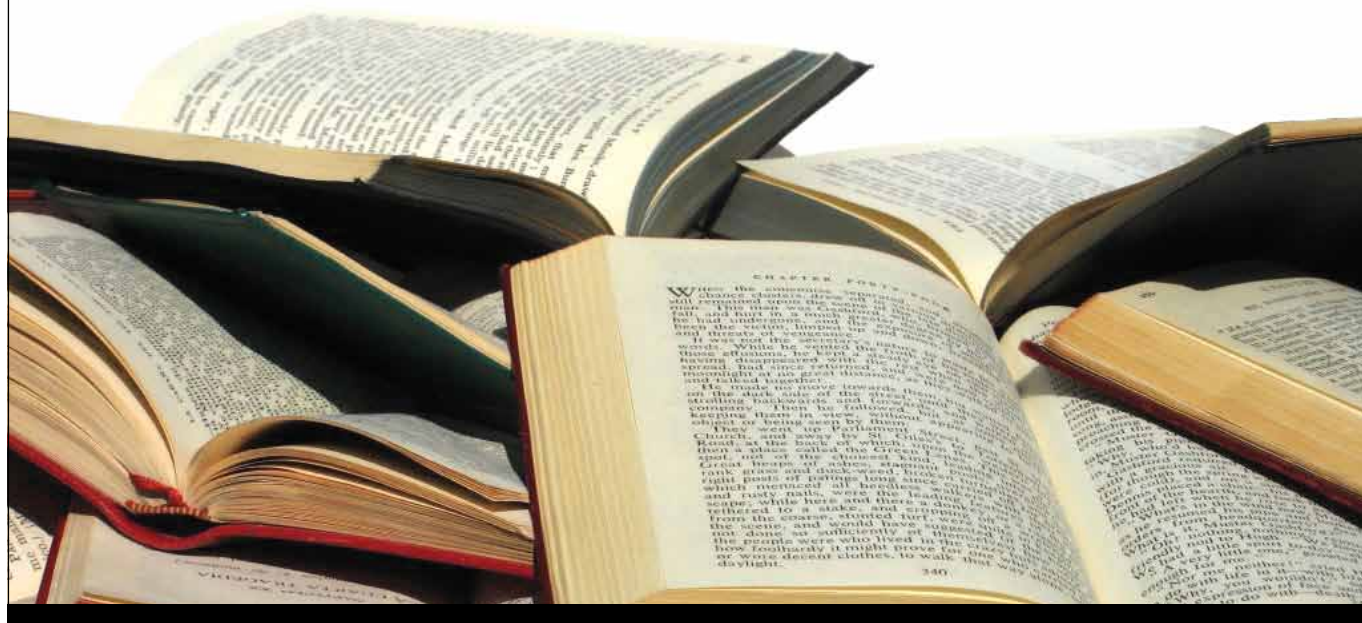
Sample of a book stamp and publisher's name

According to this internal policy, any books, publications, or documents lacking both of these items – whether they're Vietnamese or foreign – are likely to be given the boot by the post office workers in charge.

So what do you do if you know your books are not illegal under Vietnamese law but don't have a stamp or the name of a local publisher on it? Fortunately, in practice, this policy is not set in stone. Because the root problem is not a legal one but rather a lack of resources, if you find that your books are denied at any post office and you know for sure that the law itself has no problem with them, then just take your books to a larger post office or international shipping company where they have more resources (and more staff used to dealing with foreigners), and where you'll have a much better chance of shipping them out of Vietnam than you would at your local branch. - **NPD Khanh** ■

IN GENERAL, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE PROHIBITED FROM CROSSING VIETNAMESE BORDERS:

- Narcotics and neurological drugs
- Weapons and ammunition, unauthorized military technology
- Debauched cultural products, publications and documents that undermine public order and incite against the State
- Explosive, flammable, unhygienic, or polluting substances and materials
- Any items banned from circulation, import and export
- Living organisms
- Items banned from entry to receiving countries
- Precious metals, stones, or products made from precious metals or stones
- Post containing mail sent to multiple addresses



DON'T MAKE IT A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION! MAKE IT A NEW LIFESTYLE!



URBAN BOUTIQUE GYM & YOGA STUDIO



This year, seek for professional & personalized guidance to jumpstart & reach your goals.

New Year, New You Package

3 months duration

- Certified Trainer with International Certification
- Private Training 3 times a week
- Group Yoga 2 times a week
- Re-Assessment session 1 time a month
- Nutrition Guidance

BONUS! EXTRA FREE 6 MONTHS ALL ACCESS MEMBERSHIP
GYM ACCESS, TRX SUSPENSION CLASS, ZUMBA DANCE, BELLY DANCE, YOGA UNLIM-

Valid until February 9th, 2014

BLOCK B, SECOND FLOOR, SFI-11 RIVERSIDE RESIDENCE
 NGUYEN LUONG BANG ST., DISTRICT 7, HCMC, VIETNAM

INFO@BODYBYJOVIE.COM

08 5417 1946

WWW [HTTP://BODYBYJOVIE.COM](http://BODYBYJOVIE.COM)



The Landmark

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE NOW

Available now are office units on the 2nd, 4th and 9th floors, with units ranging from 88 m² to 696 m². Inclusive of management fees are 24 hour security, 100% back-up generators, daily cleaning service, and maintenance of all equipment, among other services.

The 2nd floor hosts a multi-purpose room, comfortably seating 20 for meetings or training programs with full audio/visual equipment for use. Its central city location makes for a great venue for both office tenants and outside companies.



The Landmark provides a Health Club on its 15th and 16th floors, with membership discounts provided for office tenants. The Health Club includes a fully-equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, and the only squash court in HCMC. The saunas also make for a nice way to unwind after a good work out. Vesper Gourmet Lounge on the ground floor is a great spot for lunch or to grab drinks after work.

Opened in 1994 and managed by The Peninsula Properties, The Landmark is HCMC's first international serviced apartment and office complex. The 16-story complex was the first of its kind in the city. The Landmark makes for an ideal office space as it sits in the heart of the thriving business district and has a prime waterfront location.

5B Ton Duc Thang St., District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
 Tel: (84-8) 38222098 Fax: (84-8) 38225161
www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

One Million+

10 startups in Vietnam that have reached over one million users

TEXT BY ANH-MINH DO

THERE CURRENTLY IS a healthy and growing “middle class” app economy. Mobile analytics firm Flurry reports seeing 357 percent growth over the past 18 months from independently owned apps that have a worldwide audience of over 20 million monthly active users, and 121 percent growth from those with an audience of over one million.

A good bit of the mobile app growth Flurry is touting today is because of mobile app adoption in emerging markets, something the company alludes to by citing the adoption of gaming, utility and messaging apps like LINE, Kakao, Snapchat and WhatsApp around the world.

In particular, the company found earlier this summer that China alone accounted for 24 percent of all the connected devices worldwide, including both smartphones and tablets.

This means that while Flurry is making a good point that there’s still plenty of room for growth in the mobile app stores, by taking a high-level view of the mobile

app development and usage data, it may be glossing over the very real struggles developers in mature markets have to overcome to just get their app noticed by users, and then keep it from being abandoned by users later on.

If this latest mobile app data from Flurry about a “middle class” app economy is really true, then this may indeed suggest that there is a middle-ground market for mobile apps that are able to achieve a certain number of active users; even if those same mobile apps might not be constantly used.

The new data from Flurry also confirms that mobile applications will still face an initial struggle to get noticed and then continually adopted and used by many in order to become large successes in the mobile application market due to the current presence of over one million applications in the Apple/iOS mobile app store.

Vietnam is definitely getting in on this

crowded market with successful mobile-oriented startups hitting the one million user milestone. Here’s a list of both the mobile and non-mobile spaces that might interest you.

Greengar

Greengar is one of the most successful mobile app companies in Vietnam. It started out as an app studio that built apps, from productivity to gaming ones, but since entering the 500 Startups program in Silicon Valley, it has focused solely on its most successful app - Whiteboard. The app allows users to collaborate on a shared whiteboard with text, paintbrushes, and more. The app is mainly targeted at educational institutions, but the CEO, one of Vietnam’s few female tech startup co-founders, says it can also be used in business meetings.

Zalo

VNG is no longer a considered a startup. It’s one of Vietnam’s biggest tech giants, and is worth



Whiteboard



Zalo



Fuzel

mentioning because it is basically Southeast Asia's only major contender against East Asian chat apps like Line, KakaoTalk, WeChat, and foreign competitors like Viber and Whatsapp. Zalo is most likely Vietnam's second most used chat app with almost seven million users to date. That's growth that only occurred in the last year. This explosive growth is because VNG has poured huge resources into an aggressive marketing plan.

Not A Basement

The mobile app company recently released another version of its Fuzel app. Rather than update the old app, the Not A Basement team decided to keep the old version as a legacy app and encouraged users to download its new same-name version. The new app has already skyrocketed to Apple's recent "Best New Apps" list and features a modern chic design. The original Fuzel app had received over a million downloads and Not A Basement studio's MangaRock, an app that allows users to read their favorite mangas, has also received over a million downloads.

Divmob

Considered as one of the most successful mobile gaming companies in Vietnam, Divmob has produced more than 10 games for Android and iOS. Its most successful is Ninja Revenge, which garnered over one million downloads in 21 days. It received close to two million downloads in the first month and in total has over four million downloads. My personal favorite is Zombie Age.

Nhom Mua

This is the only startup in this list that has a sad story. Started by a team of Vietnamese-Americans and locals, Nhom Mua was by

far one of Vietnam's most successful daily deals sites. It saw user numbers climb at an exponential rate, and saw revenues approaching USD2 million per month according to an undisclosed source. Unfortunately, the site was embroiled in a controversial embezzlement scandal which led to the exit of the founder and CEO, and the dissolution of the original management team. The scandal resulted in consumers' distrust of the company and leveled the playing field for other daily deals sites to take over the market. Today, Nhom Mua still survives but is just another one of the many medium-sized daily deals sites.

AppVL

HaiVL, like Zalo, has seen explosive growth in a year, but did not need to spend huge amounts of marketing to get there. It's a site that closely resembles 9gag, the funny photo sharing site, and started out by doing free marketing on Facebook. HaiVL, within just over a year, received 2.5 million unique visits to its site per day. Half of those visits came from direct visits where users were typing "HaiVL" into the URL bar. The growth of HaiVL has spawned a number of clones, but it will be a long time before anybody can dethrone a startup whose young 22-year-old CEO is intent on hitting 10 million visits per day within the next few years.

Project Lana

WebTreTho is Vietnam's biggest female forum with over a million users because it focused on one of the most active demographic on the internet - Vietnamese women. Adultery is one of the most searched and asked about topics on WebTreTho. With its large loyal user base, it has since expanded into an e-commerce business under the name Project Lana. Under

Project Lana, there are three main e-commerce sites - Be Yeu (for mothers), Lam Dieu (ladies' fashion and accessories), and Foreva (lingerie). Project Lana is one of IDG Ventures Vietnam's biggest e-commerce projects.

Money Lover

Money Lover is a beautifully designed app that allows users to manage their finances on a smartphone. It's simple to use, and although the app is not at the same level of Mint or Money Management, it has managed to earn a worldwide user base.

MC Corp

MC Corp is a gaming company that specializes in mostly fantasy games ranging from tower defense, card battling, role playing, puzzles, and action adventure. With young Vietnamese gamers so enthralled with ancient Chinese and Vietnamese mythology, MC Corp has been able to capitalize on this niche market with iOS, Android, and flash games.

Colorbox

Its flagship game is Dalton, a particularly fun iOS app that features a running character named Dalton who travels around in a surrealistic universe chopping down odd creatures. The co-founders of Colorbox were all former Gameloft designers, underscoring one of the most important aspects of building a successful startup - experience.

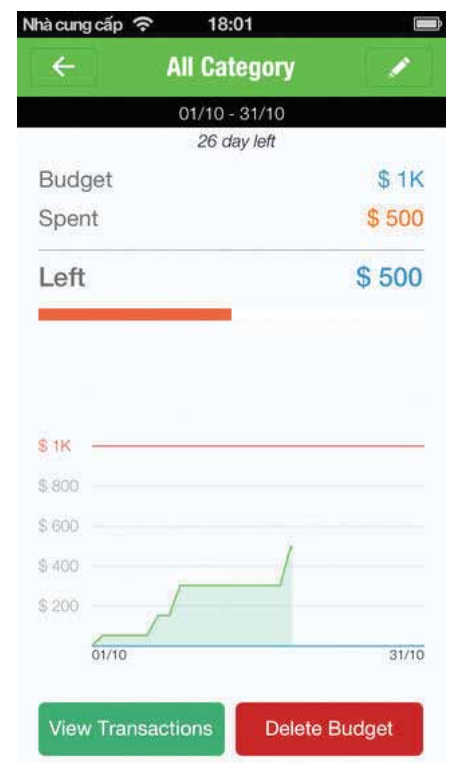
There are many ways Vietnamese startups have been able to achieve over one million users - each hit on very specific markets like education, fantasy gaming, or communication. It's a lesson for young startups in Vietnam today that are looking for growth numbers like these. ■



Nhom Mua



HaiVL



Money Lover - Expense Manager



Men of Muscle

Meet the two men who are trying to take bodybuilding in Vietnam to the next level

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGE BY **NGOC TRAN**



MEET PHAM VAN MACH, a three time world champion and a seven time Asian champion bodybuilder. He's done the rounds both at home and on the international stages, but to become a member of the International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness (IFBB), the world's largest bodybuilding federation, is on another level entirely. If Mach succeeds in getting in, he will be the first Vietnamese bodybuilder to ever gain entrance into the federation.

Ben Dell, a veteran bodybuilding coach with over 25 years of experience under his belt and a Canadian champion in his own right, is Mach's ace to open the gate to the IFBB.

"There was a time when people thought bodybuilders were these huge, stupid people that lifted weights," says Ben, whose sentiment Mach agrees with and thinks is still the case in Vietnam.

For the two, there is much more than meets the eye when it comes to bodybuilding. "You have to understand everything about your body, about your muscles and about the foods you eat in order to create the body shape you want. You have to be a nutritionist and you have to be a chef. You have to understand how your foods interact with each other and how they interact with your body. You have to educate yourself. Knowledge is the first step," says Ben.

And with that passion for food and body, Ben has even created a restaurant called Ben Style (302 Co Bac, D1) to help those who want to bulk up or just want to eat healthier.

What comes after the required knowledge is even tougher. The will to adhere to the diet.

"Bodybuilding is more about the control of the mind," Ben adds. "If you cannot control your mind, you cannot control your body. The pain of hunger will kill you. Mental preparation is the first thing. When you are hungry, you won't care about anything at all. You have to learn to control it. People will say, 'Ok, I'll start my diet tomorrow,' and that's why they fail because tomorrow never comes. But for a bodybuilder, no means no. When we start the diet, everything stops. I love ice cream and I love coffee. But once the diet starts, everything stops overnight."

"I would say bodybuilders are gods of diet. The two weeks before the competition is the toughest. Our meals are planned and timed exactly every day. Even the water we drink is controlled. Maybe ten cups per day because we have to balance between dehydration, which is dangerous of course, and creating the body shape we want by controlling our food and water intake. The last two days you cannot drink much, if you can drink at all."

The last step, the stage performance of bodybuilders is also not as simple as it seems.

A Secret Is Revealed

"I have a secret," Mach shares. "I actually don't have the best body out of all the bodybuilders in Vietnam." Mach currently weighs a mere 55kg, not even enough to get on the lightest classification of the IFBB, and stands at a modest 1.58 meters. "Many bodybuilders younger than me have much buffer bodies and are far taller. I went to the beach with them a couple of time before, but sometimes I don't even dare to pull off my shirt in front of their awesome physiques. I look tiny compared to them."

But when it comes to showmanship and competitions, Mach still reigns as the champion.

"The key is to understand how your body looks as a three dimensional object. The exact shape of your body. Bodybuilding is not just starving yourself and pumping weights until you look like a gorilla. It's the careful carving of your own body until you achieve the exact shape you want. And then when you stand before the judges, know how to flaunt your best parts and hide your not so good parts. Everyone has good and not so good parts, so bring your good parts into the light and hide the other stuffs in the shade," Mach says, he drawing this knowledge from his ongoing Masters Studies in architecture.

In terms of gaining entrance into the IFBB, both Ben and Mach think it will be a challenge though not an impossible one, despite Mach's disadvantage in weight and height classification.

"I'm used to gaining or losing 15-20kg one at a time. It's just part of the job for me. But what we want to do is to bring bodybuilding in Vietnam to the next level," says Mach.

According to him, there is no lack of talent or passion for bodybuilding in Vietnam. What is lacking though is proper attention from the government in developing bodybuilding, attention - both organizational and financial - that is being paid to other more popular sports such as football.

"We athletes all receive our funding and sponsorship from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Anyone can look into the monthly salary and see the discrepancy between the salary of a footballer and your average athletes of any sports. Usually it's a 10 to 1 ratio." But even this cannot deter what the team of two have in mind.

Mach adds: "We understand that a sport needs to be more popular, needs to prove itself before it can pull that kind of attention and funding, and that's exactly what we are doing. We will compete with the king sport. We will show Vietnam and the world that we can take bodybuilding to the next level." ■



The Melodeon Player

Meet Saigon's only melodeon playing folk singer from Manchester

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

SAIGON'S AN UNLIKELY stage for a retired folk melodeon player from Manchester to start making a big comeback, but Keith Hancock's certainly looking very pleased with himself these days, and one gets the impression that life's about to drop yet another new adventure straight into his lap. He's recently been on tour in Europe, after billing in a series of Scottish arts centers with renowned folk/blues vocalist Marilyn Middleton, and he's now talking about putting a band together – here.

"I've really got the bit between my teeth now," he enthuses. "I want to start playing again. I've got a drummer and a guitarist lined up here already. They sound interested and they're fantastic players. It's just a case of finding the other personnel."

He's already talking about going on tour in Asia, confident he can get gigs in Jakarta, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and here. "You've got the makings of it there already," he says, "and once you start putting gigs in, people start getting interested. We sell it big, and if that works, then we take it to Europe."

This kind of talk would have been inconceivable at this time last year. Having long since left the folk festival circuit behind him, a series of misfortunes left him stuck in Saigon with USD60 in his pocket. So far, it's only been his determination to stay in Asia that's put him back on his feet, but the music seems to be calling once again.

"Music is my freedom," he says. "I don't want to go back on the road full-time though. It's too grueling. It is a very, very hard existence. I would never knock it, because it's the most exciting time I've ever had in my life, to be jumping on airplanes once every month flying off to exotic locations – that's pretty good stuff. But it takes it out of you.

If it all works out, I want to stay here and do maybe two tours a year, one on this side of the world, and one on the Europe side."

Describing himself as a "rock accordion" player, Keith shies of the 'folk' label. "People – the Brits, and the Americans in particular – they like to put music in boxes," he says. "They just decided it was folk music. I mean really, once you call one thing folk music, what isn't? It's just one guy on stage with an instrument."

Keith's roots lie more in the Beatles and the Who than they do in the genre with which he's commonly associated. "I was lucky enough to grow up in the 60s with all that phenomenal English music," he says. "I think I got into folk music when I was about 20. I'd moved to the East Coast with my brother, but he was killed in a car crash in 1976, so I came back to Manchester a bit of a mess. I had a pretty tough three years. It was grim. Then I just walked into a pub one night, and there were about 15 musicians in there, all playing folk music. A tune would start, and everyone in the room knew it, and they all played it. I thought this is just terrific. I've got no idea why it was the melodeon – and I don't know what it was, I just thought, I like the sound of that, and I reckon I could play it."

"I just took to it so quickly," he recalls. "I literally just borrowed one off a guy, he taught me one tune, I went home, worked on it, then sat in the pub waiting for that one tune to play, and joined in. The week after I learned another two tunes. And within about three months, I knew the repertoire. I was playing all of it. In fact, I did my first gig three weeks after I first picked the instrument up. There were two other accordions in the band and they sort of carried me along. That's what did it. You can sit in your bedroom till you're

blue in the face practicing, but it's only when you're in front of people, and you get that feedback that you suddenly think, bloody hell, I'm doing a gig, I'm a musician."

Don't Call It a Comeback

Things progressed quickly from that point on. Keith released a few albums, started gigging with his then-wife, and eventually went on international tours, at one point playing to a crowd of 25,000 people.

"Whenever I toured Canada, I used to freak out," he says. "They have so many fantastic musicians over there. The first gig I did was the Regina Festival, and I was at the top of the bill, because I'd come over from England, so I was headlining the whole weekend. We followed a guy called Oscar Lopez on stage, and Oscar's one of the finest guitar players in the world. And he just had the place. This young, good-looking Hispanic-American onstage in these gleaming spotlights, ripping his guitar, you know, shredding it. Who would want to follow that? But because we were English it was fine, so we went on and we sounded completely different to everybody else over the whole weekend."

Things may have quieted down these days, but the future's taking shape very quickly. "I've never played in Vietnam apart from doing two songs one night," he says. "But I'm doing two gigs, I'm doing one in probably February. I'm doing April the 23rd, St. George's Day, in BMV (38 Quoc Huong, D2). And there's going to be a date at Snap Café (32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2) before then. That's just going to be me solo."

"I don't really see it as a comeback," he says. "I do see it as a new phase in my life, though, and I'm happier than I've been in quite a long time." ■



The Restoration Lab

In the hands of a team of skilled surgeons, rare and antique books get a new life

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**

IN THE HEART OF Ho Chi Minh City lies a secret hospital - a tiny well-kept and well-loved operating room the size of a shoebox apartment. There are three surgeons, two operating beds, and ten nurses and caretakers who oversee a total of 3,000 inpatients in addition to a fluctuating amount of close to one million entries in and out every year. However, to be admitted to this hospital you must meet two criteria: you have to be rare and antique, and be made out of paper.

The hospital goes by the name of The Department of Preservation and Restoration, shortened to simply Preserve and Restore (PAR) by its residents. It is the youngest department of the restricted access area of the Ho Chi Minh City Library of General Sciences, and is the only place in all of southern Vietnam where dying books - rare and antiques, maps, documents, and aged torn papers that have seen firsthand the turmoil of Vietnamese history - can be brought back to life. PAR has three main functions:

preservation, restoration, and digitization.

PAR officially started in 2000 when the Library of General Sciences invited two antiquarians from Cornell University (US) to Vietnam to provide training to their staff. Prior to this, PAR was simply a book binding room. Its true origin, however, began much earlier than that, in as early as 1996 when the then-Director of the library, Nguyen Thi Bac, was sent on a one-person training trip to the US. It was from Bac's trip that knowledge of antique book restoration began trickling back to Vietnam. Out of the original staff in 2000, only one remains till this day - a senior staff member named Quy who now acts as the chief specialist restorer and main surgeon of the entire operation.

"It's a quiet, patient thing, what we do. As you can see, not many people actually know about us," says Kim Anh, the chief of PAR. "It's an unglamorous and unforgiving job that requires your full attention to the most minute of details over weeks or even months

at a time. A single page can take as much as a month to restore, a full-size book as much as half a year or longer. And we have a total of 3,000 rare antique books to care for, and beyond that, nearly one million public titles that also need someone watching over them."

"The environment needs constant monitoring - PAR's main and storage rooms, the cellars, shelves, and the processing rooms - the entire building actually. No sunlight. We have blinders on all the windows and somebody is always checking on the sun. Heat and humidity, neither of which are easy to control, of course, but if we don't do that, the texts will either rot away or dry up and fall apart."

She adds: "The tools we use are that of real surgeons. Scalpels, chisels, cutters, standing scopes, clamps and forceps, even surgical room needles. We have them all. A surgeon can walk into this room and he wouldn't lack for a small operation. The only few things we

"They are hundreds of years old. Some of them are on the verge of falling to pieces and probably would have if we hadn't sealed them up"



have that aren't taken from a surgeon's tool list are things specific to our specialty, such as paper thread used for sewing up tears, non-acidic paper glue, or a handheld bookbinder's iron. There is no room for error, since the books we are working on are considered national treasures and part of the Vietnamese cultural heritage. They are hundreds of years old. Some of them are on the verge of falling to pieces and probably would have if we hadn't sealed them up. The government has strict rules regarding our handling of these books and texts and one slipup is all it takes to see a veteran staff out the door."

Self-preservation

From that first starting point in 2000, it took a full five years for the department to grow to a level where it could start offering its services to outside libraries, museums and private collectors.

"I won't say it's tough asking for funding," says Kim Anh. "We do have funding, of a sort, VND40 to VND50 million per year. Sometimes a couple hundred million if we need new equipment for digitization." This amount is roughly the equivalent of a national football team member's monthly salary.

"What I will say, however, is that there's still not enough attention paid to the importance and necessity of book restoration. Out of our three functions, the fund is actually almost exclusively for the digitization team since it's the only one mentioned in the government charter on the preservation of our cultural heritage. Preservation and restoration have to get their funds from those earmarked for digitization. There is no charter and no campaign that calls for book preservation and restoration. So while people on the outside are clamoring for the creation of an online library of our digitized historical texts, the real articles are left forgotten and locked away to rot in our cellar."

Despite these challenges the staff at PAR aren't daunted. "We have done this for more than a decade. We are plenty patient," they say. "And we are teaching other people, other libraries in other provinces about book restoration and preservation. We are making sure the knowledge we got from our foreign teachers isn't lost along with the old generation."

"If I have to put it in words," says Kim Anh, "an antiquarian restorer is both a doctor and an artist. A doctor because you really have to know what you are doing and be really meticulous about it. An artist because only an artist can work on a single piece, on a single cause for months or years and not grow tired of it. Truly, it's a job fit only for the most fanatic of book lovers." ■

A Family Affair

As the new year begins and the old year is put to rest, all Vietnamese rejoice in their most important holiday - New Year. The living pay homage to the dead, and younger community members honor their elders. Families are reunified; the coming of spring and the planting season are celebrated. This is a time for relaxation, joy, and hope. Tet is the time to settle past mistakes and start anew.

To celebrate the New Year as a family is an essential part of the Vietnamese experience and a way of validating one's place in the most important group - the family. Everybody who is able to do so goes back home to visit parents and grandparents. Extended families come together to enjoy each other's company and to pay ceremonial respect to the elders of the family and the ancestors. People visit family and friends, eat special holiday dishes, give gifts, and play games of chance. Firecrackers welcome the New Year. A good Tet augurs a good year ahead. And with that in mind our family at Oi wish your family "Chuc Mung Nam Moi!"





A Tale of Two Families

THE ONE THAT WENT AND THE ONE LEFT BEHIND

Text and Images provided by James Pham

FEW WORDS ENGENDER feelings of warmth, safety and belonging like “family.” Especially this time of the year, when Vietnamese families the world over gather for a few precious days of merrymaking, overeating and good-natured gossip. For some, it’s literally the only respite from an unforgiving work schedule, time to revel in the embrace of family.

I was born in Vietnam, a child of the war. Here, it’s referred to as the American War while everywhere else it goes by a different name.

Growing up in the US since the age of two, I was blissfully unaware of the world I was born into, a country which no longer exists. In fact, I was perfectly happy being a ‘banana,’ yellowy Asian on the outside, more white than anything else on the inside, living in suburban Virginia, going to the best, predominantly White schools, hanging out with my conspicuously pale, homogeneous group of friends with little thought to where I came from.

But the story of my childhood, and now, of my present, is a tale of two families. One that went and the one that was left behind.

My father’s family came from Thai Binh, 100 km south of Hanoi. Part of the *Bac 54*

movement (Northerners who moved to the South in 1954 as France lost its grip on Vietnam), they settled in Saigon. My grandfather was a civil servant and old family photos tell a tale of carefree children with good teeth, fashionably dressed, posing in front of a landscaped garden with an automobile in the background, servants to help around the house.

Even then, my father’s family was open-minded, sophisticated, well-traveled. My own parents got married in Germany while away on scholarship, my father also studied in France and Morocco. One uncle met his Australian wife on a cruise. Another aunt met her Swiss husband while hanging out in a kibbutz in Israel. Yet another uncle was stationed as a diplomat in Paris, London and New York. Photos show graduations all around the US. To this day, I find it surreal that I have sets of cousins who look nothing like me, including some with the blondest of hair.

My baby book, a surprising recent find after being safeguarded for decades, shows glimpses of a comfortable life. A smiling family of four, perched on a shiny new Vespa which I’m told was quite the status symbol



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Carefree aunts and uncles,
James' grandmother, Aunt
Thu then and now, James'
grandfather

in the day. My mother, dusting sand off my one-year-old feet on a visit to Cap Saint Jacques, the French coastal playground now known as Vung Tau.

While the country was at war, my privileged family felt little of it, insulated in Saigon. We experienced no deprivations, no shortages to speak of. Those with money could still find whatever they wanted. Of course, by then, the war had been going on for nearly 20 years. People kept up with it in the papers, but there was little panic. It kindly left our family alone. Sure, my father witnessed the aftermath of battles as a teacher in the southern provinces of Vietnam. And my parents carefully monitored the news of the 1968 Tet Offensive from far away Germany, worried for the newborn daughter they had sent back to live with my grandparents in Saigon.

In fact, the only person in my family to go to war was my Uncle Giap. He came home uninjured but no longer whole. A few years later, and three years before I was born, Uncle Giap took his own life. I still hear the heartbreaking wistfulness in my father's voice on the rare occasion he speaks of his brother, younger by four years, the one uncle I never knew. In old photos, I see kind eyes looking back at me. How much did his suicide have to do with the things he experienced as a soldier?

By the early 70s, most of my father's surviving six brothers and sisters were already living abroad. Our little family remained in our tenuous bubble of security. Things came to a head, though, in the early part of 1975. Now the war was no longer just on the fringes of consciousness. It was inexorably moving towards Saigon. In those final moments, my parents tell me they spent every waking minute listening to the radio in a torturous, helpless exercise of tracking exactly how close the front lines had become. The end of life as they knew it was measured in days and hours, not weeks and years.

One of my aunts, who had by then returned from a study tour in the US and gained citizenship, went to the US Embassy in Saigon to arrange evacuation. She was told there was no space. Undeterred, she went directly to the airport and was able to sign herself up along with our family for evacuation. My mother recalls they had less than one day's notice. What do you take when you have just a few hours to liquidate your entire life? Even though my maternal grandparents lived only 15 minutes away, in the confusion and panic, there was not even time enough for good-byes. We left five days before what is now called the "liberation" of Vietnam, before the infamous scenes of people desperately clinging to the last few helicopters. My mom tells me that the night we left, I asked my parents why we were still outside at night despite the curfew.

The word "curfew" should not be in any





Portraits of James' family in 1974 and below, in the US

two-year-old child's vocabulary.

The Weight of History

Safely in the US, though, our family photo albums depict a happy kid who rode ponies and hugged Disney characters, as always, shielded from the past. But over the years, small chinks appeared in the armor.

I vividly recall one late afternoon in 1977. I would've been four. My mom was drying her hair with one of those old fashioned contraptions that included a light green plastic bonnet, a hose and a very loud fan. The phone rang. In an instant, my mother was doubled over, sobbing inconsolably over the news that my grandmother had died in a land far away. The one there was no time to say good-bye to. A kind woman who I had no memory of. Part of the family left behind.

Other than that, I cannot recall one instance where we talked about the war growing up. I think my parents were just happy to be living abroad, especially as we started meeting 'boat people' who in most cases paid a terrible price to get to where we were.

Then came the war on Iraq during my teen years. Again, there was 24/7 coverage of war, but this time with live images. My father was transfixed. Not only did he watch the news when he was home, he taped it when he wasn't. Even after all those years, he had an intense visceral reaction to what he was seeing, the final crack in the floodgates of his memory, a trigger which led to more serious issues that carry on until this day. I have never asked him what terrible things he must have seen in those country provinces long before I was born. I'm not sure I want to know.

The young are rarely burdened by the weight of history. It's usually when we see our lives as history mostly written that we start looking back. My parents have since come back to Vietnam on many occasions. They marvel at how much everything has changed. I tell them of new 50 story buildings going up and mega cities being planned.

This is actually one of the reasons I've decided to come back to the land of my birth. I'm no longer happy being a 'banana'. I want to know the country that shaped my parents, even though that country, on paper at least, does not exist anymore. Later on, most of the family left behind did manage to come to America. But by then, my maternal grandfather was wizened and shriveled, a toothless shadow of what he once was.

Even if I wanted to forget my childhood connection to this country, I can't. It's everywhere I turn, even now, almost 40 years later. It's in the mural that I pass by three times a week on the way to my tennis courts, defiant faces ripping foreign flags as fires rage in the distance.

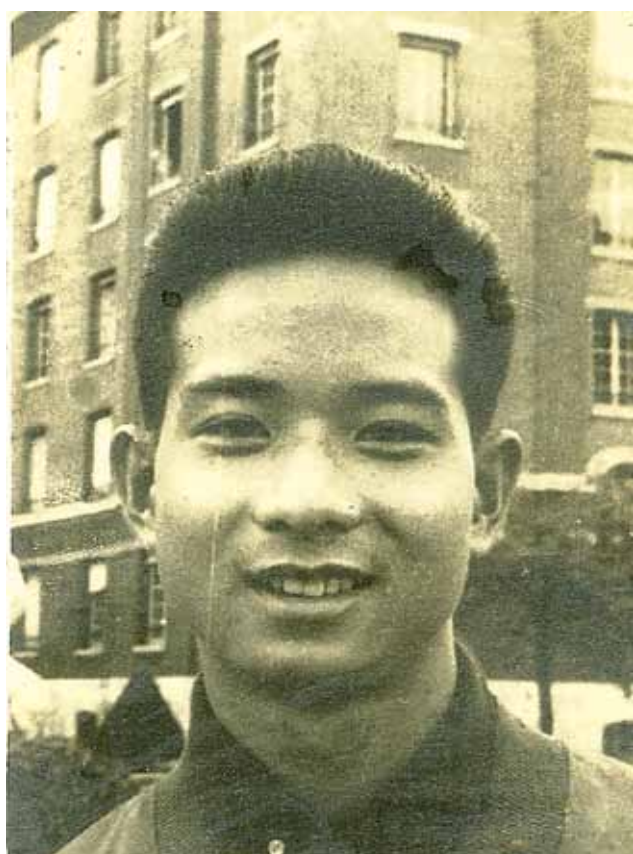
It's in the landscape of the city, previously known as the Pearl of the Far East. Where are the slick monorails of Bangkok or the impressive skylines of Hong Kong?





TOP: James' great-grandmother, grandparents and aunts and uncles;

BELOW: Uncle Giap



It's in the missing tip of the right forefinger of the security guard who scans my parking pass, an all too common sign among men of a certain age who voluntarily amputated their trigger finger to avoid a soldier's life.

It's in the gaunt face of a woman I randomly met who happened to have been in the same graduating class as my mother and taught at the same all girls' school as she did. I came back to show her a recent photo of our family and she stared at my mother's now aged face for a long time. "I hardly recognize her," she says quietly of a friend she hadn't seen in nearly four decades. "I remember your mother as a very pretty girl with a round face." I don't know if the years have been kind to her either. Or whether this was the life she envisioned for herself.

It's in my childhood home that I drive past in District 3, strangers now living in it, squatters who had their pick of homes abandoned by the fortunate / desperate. Whenever relatives come to visit, they always ask me to drive them by there, though never entering, as if to try and cling to a dream in those ethereal moments between sleep and wake. I wonder whether it still looks anything like the neat, cheerful home in my baby photos, filled with toys and books?

All I know is that the past has shaped my present. Then and now. Empty and complete. East and West. While I straddle both worlds, I'm not sure I can say I truly belong in either. But I know my family will always be there to help me figure it out, both the family that went and the one that got left behind. ■



Unknown

A MAN'S JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY WHILE SEARCHING FOR HIS LOST BIRTH PARENTS

Text by Michael Arnold

Images by Adam Robert Young

THE OLD ORPHANAGE in Vung Tau has now been closed down; the man who kept it running for so many years has long since passed away. Back where he began life as Cao Hung Phi, an abandoned Vietnamese war baby, Brian Hester can see that his journey home hasn't answered any questions – but somehow, the circle seems complete. In a sense, Vietnam has already given him the sense of identity he's been looking for.

He carries a photograph down to the nearby beach. It's an old black and white image of himself taken right there back in the day – January 1973, before the end of the war. A glance at his face even then would have been enough to show beyond any doubt

that he was the son of a local woman and an American soldier.

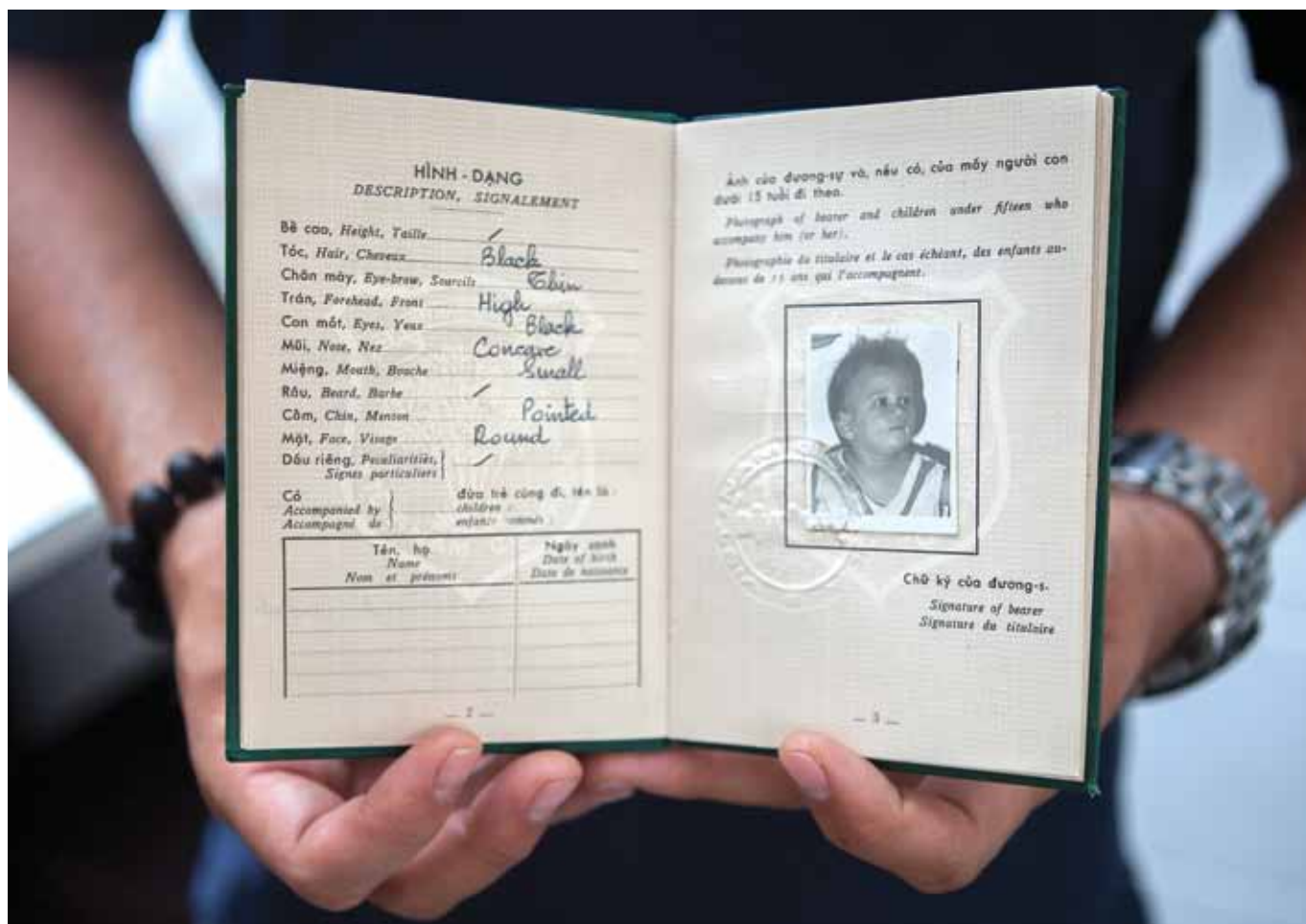
He says a prayer and buries the picture beneath the sand that must have borne his mother's footsteps a thousand times. He may never know whether or not she still remains in this area, or why she didn't have the courage to take him home after the birth. The nurses who filled out his adoption report weren't exactly sympathetic to her sacrifice, simply noting that she'd had a false death certificate made out for her baby, and that she took his original birth registration away with her, which had to be replaced.

Whatever suffering brought her to that decision was not recorded. It's unlikely,

however, that it ended when she walked out of the hospital doors without her son.

Brian's now close to 41, and he's ended up settling here in the country where, if his mother had made a different decision, he would have been raised. He's a strapping, gregarious, easily likable man, and he's actually crazy enough to be running a Vietnamese restaurant for Vietnamese people – despite having essentially grown up as a corn-fed boy from the Midwest who'd never laid eyes on a Vietnamese person until he was 19-years-old.

"When I was young, my mother never told me much," he says, leaning back at one of his dining room tables where curious locals come



to eat *pho* at an American-run restaurant. There's very little about his face that's obviously Vietnamese, although his tattoo, which reads "Cao Hung Phi," is in plain sight. "I just knew I was different. I was darker; I had black, straight hair. My siblings were whiter and our parents were Caucasian, blue eyes and green eyes. In my family pictures, I'm the one who looks different."

"I remember one time, I was almost 28 years old, and my mom comes over with a box. It was the clothes that she'd mailed to me in Vietnam, so that when I came over on the plane, I'd be wearing them. My baby shoes, my little jacket. And then all the letters that were written back and forth. My mother in America wrote to the nurses in Vietnam, 'how is he doing, what're the updates.' 'He had his first shots here,' they'd answer, 'he had his first haircut.' And they described my personality exactly the way I am today. It's amazing. To write that down and have that was priceless. You're not going to find too many adoptees who still have that today in this kind of condition. I'm looking at the letters with the nurses writing back and forth, and it's bringing tears to my eyes, it's like, what the hell? And there were more than a dozen letters that I never knew about for half of my life."

Growing up with only a vague sense of his heritage left Brian with a jarring disconnect. "I'd ride around with friends in the car back home," he recalled. "It was like, 'yeah, that's where my grandparents live,' and 'that's the hospital where I was born' and 'my parents are buried over there' and I could never do that. I

could never relate."

"The stigmatism in America back then," he adds, "it was not good about Vietnam because of the war. Though a lot of it wasn't discussed. I didn't even tell my friends, probably the better half, until I was in my senior year in high school. A lot of my friend's fathers were Vietnam vets, hated Vietnam, or loved Vietnam, and what could I do? When I was in fifth grade, I skipped school one day. They were studying different parts of the world. Vietnam came up, and I was like, 'I'm not going to that class.' I went to my mom, and I said, 'I can't do this. I don't feel right.' There was a part of me that I didn't understand, in fifth grade. I'll never forget that."

Growing Roots

It was Facebook that started Brian on the hunt for his roots. Not long after making a cursory search for "Vietnamese adoptees," he found himself at a reunion seated across from people who'd been through exactly the same experiences as he had. "It was like we were all related," he says. "But then on the flip side of that was, I didn't look Vietnamese. Everyone thought I was someone's boyfriend."

Some time later, Brian ran into a *Viet Kieu* through his landscaping business who invited him to visit Vietnam. "Six months later I was on a plane and we were going back," he says. "And in my mind, I always pictured we'd fly into Saigon, and I'd see it all right there. It was all in my head, in pictures. But unfortunately we flew in at 11 o'clock at night, and I had a window seat ready to go, but it was dark! Then

we got shipped out to the countryside, it was at night, and I stayed at his brother's house. The next morning I woke up – couldn't sleep much – opened the gates, and the whole world came alive."

"I felt like I was watching a movie. A guy walks past with a cow, and there were kids riding their bicycles to school, and everybody going to work on their motorbikes, and I was like: This is what it's like, huh? Let's go to Ho Chi Minh, I want to see what it's like down there."

"So we got in the car, we drove down here, and I literally had a headache for two days from looking at all the bikes, at this mayhem. The chaos. The controlled chaos. Now it doesn't affect me. But back then it was amazing."

Brian stayed three weeks, and immediately booked a return flight after arriving back home. It wasn't long before he found himself standing on a beach in Vung Tau, his questions buried beneath his feet in the sand, reflecting on a lifetime of "wondering what it was like to be on the other side of the ocean."

"I just started exploring every town," he says. "Started going to every place. I wanted to know and learn about everywhere. I traveled about 80 percent of Vietnam. I came back again two years ago, figured I'd start a life here and try to get back... focus the second half of my life here. If I ever write a book, the title would be *Coming Full Circle*."

Beyond the business, Brian has devoted a good number of volunteer hours to working with orphans. "You know, I'm a firm believer in paying it forward," he says. "Whatever you

NOV 28 1973
INITIAL SOCIAL HISTORY

A. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:
 Child's Name: CAO HUNG PHI Case No.: VN 566
 Birthplace: Vung Tau Birthdate: 23 Jan 1973
 Race: VN/Other Sex: Male
 Present location: Vung Tau Christian Home
 If special child, or assigned, Family name: HUNG, A
 Admission: to original orphan 25 Feb 73
 Admission to center: _____
 Registration by Halt: _____

B. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:
 Height: Cm Weight: 7,500g Hair: Light Brown Eyes: Brown
 26 inch 16 lb
 Complexion: Fair Texture: Fine
 Physical description/defects: beautiful child

C. CHILD'S BACKGROUND:
 1. Source of referral to Halt: V.T.C.H.
 2. If child is from orphanage, Orphanage care No. _____
 Name of orphanage: V.T.C.H. Location: Vung Tau, RVN
 Is orphanage information on file? Yes ☒ No ☐
 If not, fill out orphanage information sheet.
 3. If child is from relatives, fill out Social History Supplement.
 4. When and under what circumstances did he become an orphan?
 while still at the hospital, after birth, mother had death certificate made from hospital certificate because she didn't want to take him home. A hospital worker brought him to VUCH the second day. Since mother took birth registration, Mr & Mrs. Phat, foster parents at VUCH, had a new birth certificate made in their name.
 5. The location of child at birth is known.
 In Lat Hospital

VIETNAM PHYSICAL EXAMINATION
 DATE: 11/28/73
 RELEASED FOR ASSIGNMENT
 R. MENDO DATED 11/28/73



do in life, you have to continue it. There's a certain part of your life where it's, OK, I'm done learning, or I'm not done learning but it's time to start teaching. I first worked in an orphanage here in Vietnam. It was up in Danang. It brought tears to my eyes, I just couldn't believe it. I was walking around, there were so many adoptees who were looking at us, through a window, and that could've been us. That really... that was hard."

"It wasn't complete until I came back," he adds. "I think going back to Vung Tau, that was it. I was only a block and a half off the beach. Back to where the kids were taken after the hospital. No memory. I was a year old when I left. I was able to walk and speak a little Vietnamese."

"A lot of my life when I was over there in America, I thought about what it would be like in Vietnam. Now that I'm here, I think about my past and what it was like back home. That's almost like a myth, a memory. It's two years ago. I've been so involved here – I mean, I love it here, I wouldn't change anything. I just have to keep moving forward, that's all I would wish for anybody. Success, life and learning. Those are important."

Lost & Unfound

Brian seems to think we're done, so he ducks out of the restaurant doors to check on the measurements for a new sign that's being delivered, cheerfully tending to his reclaimed slice of Vietnam with obvious enthusiasm. As much as he seems to fit in here, there's still a sense in which he hasn't come full circle

at all. Since deciding to make his move to Vietnam permanent, he has never made any serious attempt to search for his birth family.

"My story about finding my actual parents is, there's nothing there," he says when he gets back. "My story's about me coming back and learning about me and moving forward. Getting back to the real me, trying to be successful."

There's something unconvincing about his tone, however, and he concedes there's more to it than merely not having gotten around to knocking on his birth mother's door. "It's not that I don't want them," he admits. "It's just that the pursuit of that isn't something I've really focused on. Right now I'm distracting myself. With the restaurant and the business, yeah."

In any case, one thing Brian won't be doing is participating in the popular TV show that reunites families torn apart by the war. "I don't want to get involved with that," he says. "I had a friend of mine go do that show, she went in for the interview. No clue that her parents were sitting in the audience behind her. Talk about dropping the bomb. There's not really a finesse way to do things in Vietnam. She's sitting there in the interview, and they're talking, and the camera's on, and they're saying, 'oh by the way, we found your parents.' They're sitting right here in the audience.' No, I don't ever want to go through that. It turned her upside down for about ten years."

The real barrier is probably something far more straightforward. Given that Brian

hasn't inherited a Vietnamese face, the chances are high that he strongly resembles his father. How his mother might react to seeing the face of the one American soldier she most wanted to forget is anyone's guess. That possibility of reopening old wounds is something that Brian is reluctant to force upon his birth mother, even though a reunion could ultimately bring her a sense of peace she has never since known. His mother may yet walk that Vung Tau beach to this day, not knowing that the picture of her baby boy lies buried beneath her feet, nor that her son has come home.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about what it could be like," Brian says. "But I'm reminded even more when I'm around other adoptees who found their mother, their siblings. I think the number one reason why I haven't pursued it is my look. Even back home, I don't look like my family. I don't want to come here and have the same thing with my own blood."

Brian may not yet have made the decision to "open Pandora's box" and make his circle complete by finding his family – but his answers could still be within reach. His mother may have taken away his real birth certificate, but intentionally or otherwise, she's left him a clue. In falsely registering her child's death, there's bound to be a record listed in the musty old archives of a hospital somewhere in Vung Tau that details the unfortunate stillborn delivery of a certain Cao Hung Phi, along with the name of the woman who gave birth to him. ■





No Horsing Around

A GUIDE TO TET

WHEN VIETNAMESE PEOPLE talk about Tet, they generally mean Tet Nguyen Dan, which can be interpreted as “Feast of the First Morning” or “The Dawning Period” of a new lunar year. This year, Tet begins on January 31, 2014 (Gregorian calendar).

According to the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of 12 animal signs, 2014 is the Year of the Wood Horse. Wood is related to trees and the color green; therefore 2014 is also called the Year of the Green Horse. People born in the Year of the Horse are believed to be hard-working, high-spirited, smart, sophisticated, and talented. It's also thought that horses do not like to be restrained and tend to be impatient. According to superstition, if you're born in the Year of the Horse, you are most content as a journalist, lawyer, publicist, or within the fields of sport or travel. It is also believed that the horse is most compatible with the dog and the tiger, but least compatible with the monkey and the rat.

Since Tet occupies an important role in traditional religious beliefs here, the Vietnamese will begin their preparations well in advance of the upcoming Lunar New Year. In an effort to get rid of the bad luck of the past year, people will spend a few days cleaning their homes, polishing every utensil, or will even repaint or redecorate their houses with kumquat trees, branches of peach blossoms, and many other colorful flowers. The ancestral altar is especially taken care of, with careful decoration of five kinds of fruits and votive papers, along with performing many religious rituals. Everybody, especially children, buy new clothes and shoes to wear on the first days of the Lunar New Year. People also try to pay all their pending debts and resolve any conflicts or problems among colleagues, friends, and family.

Like other Asian countries, Vietnamese

people believe that the colors red and yellow will bring good fortune, which may explain why these colors can be seen everywhere during Tet. People believe that what they do on the dawn of Tet will determine their fate for the rest of the year, hence people will always smile and behave as nicely as they can in the hope for a better year. In addition, gifts are exchanged between family members and friends, where usually children receive lucky money kept in a red envelope.

No matter where Tet is celebrated, it must be clarified from the beginning that Tet is not a day, but several days of celebration. The general process is as follows (all dates quoted according to the **lunar calendar**):

1. *Ong Cong, Ong Tao Day (Kitchen God day) – December 23rd*
2. *Wrapping chung cake – December 26-28th*
3. *Family reunion and tat nien – December 30th*
4. *Giao thua – Tet Eve – Includes praying sessions to gods and ancestors, xong dat (First visit to a family in the Lunar New Year).*
5. *First three days of Tet – Visit paternal side on the first day, maternal side on the second day, and teachers on the third day.*
6. *Visit relatives, friends and neighbors. This can take place from January 3rd-5th.*
7. *Hoa vang – Burn offerings near the end of Tet for ancestors on January 4th.*
8. *Reopen business. Usually owners pick a good date that matches their age.*

9. Tet Nguyen Tieu – January 15th

During this time, most families make or buy the traditional *banh chung* (in the north) or *banh Tet* (in the south). The main ingredients for these cakes include sticky rice, green bean paste, and pork. *Banh chung* is shaped like a square box and wrapped in *dong* leaves, while *banh Tet* is shaped like a cylinder wrapped in banana leaves.

In addition to these cakes, other popular dishes are stewed fish, pork pate, pickled bok choy, and spring onions. Most households also stock red-dyed melon seed, sweetened lotus seed, sweetened ginger, and squash candy strips.

Most importantly, Tet is an opportunity for people to return home and spend time with their families. Seven days prior to Tet, each Vietnamese family offers a farewell ceremony for Ong Tao (the Kitchen God) to go up to Heaven Palace. His task is to make an annual report to the Jade Emperor of the family's affairs throughout the year.

The last day of the old year and the first three days of the Lunar New Year are the most important ones. On Tet Eve, most Vietnamese people have dinner with their family members, and will celebrate with a feast at midnight. They offer prayers to honor and thank the gods of Heaven and Earth for their blessings.

During this time, Vietnamese families often offer an open-air ceremony to welcome Ong Tao back from his report to the Jade Emperor. At the altar, they will place a tray of five fruits which represent the five basic elements of Asian mythology: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. Traditionally, these offerings are for good crops and prosperity.

On Lunar New Year's Day itself, it is considered important to celebrate, to have



IMAGES BY YUMI

smiling faces, and to refrain from scowling, quarreling with, or criticizing anyone.

Tet Etiquette

"Lucky money" is given by the older and superior, to the younger and subordinate. Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles give lucky money to children. People give money to their friends' children, teachers give lucky money to students, and management gives lucky money to employees. You can also give lucky money to the people who helped you throughout the year like your driver, gardener, guard, or household helpers.

Lucky money should be given during the first few days of Tet, but it's also possible to give it a little before or after this time. It's traditional to give new bank notes, which are considered luckier for the recipients.

Being invited to be the first guest of the year is both an honor and a challenging responsibility to anyone. The best time for *xong dat* is from the midnight of Tet Eve until the morning of the first day of Tet. However, the host and the guest normally come to an agreement in advance about the time deemed most suitable for the host's zodiac sign.

A successful and humorous gentleman, smiling happily, giving good wishes is believed to bring a lucky new year to every member in the house. Before coming to the host's home, the guest is expected to spend time visiting pagodas or temples praying for fortune, health and achievement for the upcoming New Year. Afterward, he can bring some buds, tree branches with fruits, or a bottle of wine, which stand for vitality and wealth as gifts for the host. He can also give some lucky money stuffed inside red envelopes to children with wishes for health and wisdom.

Moreover, the host also needs to wish the guest all the best for the New Year and give him some lucky money in return. In southern Vietnam, the host puts a small bucket of water and a branch of apricot blossoms so that the guest can splash the water and scatter the flowers on the way leading to the house. Water and apricot blossom petals symbolize 'multiplying luck,' according to

Vietnamese beliefs.

When entering a Vietnamese home for the first time during the year, guests should wear brightly-colored clothes that are appropriate for the occasion, and black and white combined is definitely unacceptable since they are mourning colors. Everyone should avoid getting angry and saying words related to unfortunate topics like death, accidents, failure, or breaking up. Normally, girls and women are not selected to be the first visitors, especially if pregnant or having just given birth. The guest is expected to be a man who has an open personality and achieved much success the previous year.

Do's and Don'ts

Unless asked, do not set foot in anybody's home on the first day of Tet. Most shops, companies, etc. are very serious about picking the most auspicious date and time to start or reopen their businesses.

Be extremely careful when going out. This is the time when many thieves look for opportunities to steal valuables. Double check your doors and windows before leaving your home. Make sure that everything is locked. Put your wallet, hand phone, motorbike/car keys in a safe place. Stay away from crowds because most thieves tend to blend into crowds for an easy chance to pick your pocket.

If you have household helpers or employees, it is expected at this time to give them a bonus. The bonus is determined by how long they have been working for you and, of course, whether you're happy with their services or otherwise. Generally speaking, if the employee has been working for you for more than a year, the bonus starts from one month's salary and above, normally up to a maximum of three months. (The average is one to two months). If an employee has been working for you for under a year, you would pro-rate the bonus. For example, if they have been working for eight months, you would give 2/3 of their monthly salary.

Before Tet begins, you should give them their salary and their bonus (bonus in a red lucky money envelope) and wish them a happy Tet with their families. ■

Events and Activities

Fireworks will be held in various locations on the evening of January 30, 2014. They will begin at midnight and last for about 15 minutes.

- Thu Thiem Tunnel (corner of Ton Duc Thang and Ham Nghi, D1)
- Go Vap Cultural Park (Go Vap District)
- Nga Ba Giong Memorial Park (Hoc Mon)
- Ben Duoc Memorial Park (Cu Chi)
- Park of Culture and Ethnic History (D9)
- Dam Sen Park (D11)
- Lang Le-Bau Co History Relic Zone (Binh Chanh District)

Tet Flower Markets

A week before Tet, flower markets will be located in more than 68 places around city. The largest ones can be found at:

- 23/9 Park (Pham Ngu Lao near Ben Thanh Market, D1)
- Gia Dinh Park (corner of Nguyen Kiem)
- Nguyen Thai Son, Binh Thanh District
- Le Van Tam Park (corner of Hai Ba Trung and Dien Bien Phu, D3)

Tet Flower Festival

See thousands of flower exhibits from all over Vietnam at Tao Dan Park (55C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3)

Lunar New Year's Eve

Hear outdoor music performances in front of Sunwah Tower on Nguyen Hue (D1) with light art performances on Sunwah Tower, Palace Hotel, and Fahasa.

Lunar New Year in Chinatown

In District 5's Cultural Center (Tran Hung Dao B near Nguyen Tri Phuong)

- Lantern festival
- Lion performances every night
- Traditional music performances

A special thanks to Santa Fe Relocation Services (www.santaferelo.com) for their help in compiling this special Tet survival guide.

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



Life is a Cabaret, Old Chum

Dinner theater comes to HCMC

TEXT BY JULIAN AJELLO IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



A COLLECTIVE GROAN can be heard across Saigon on any given evening. “There’s nothing to do,” so the familiar complaint goes. More to the point, there’s nothing *new* to do in our city. We’re all quite familiar with the different areas expats and locals flock to for nightly entertainment. Drinking, dining, dancing, live music, even darts and sports are all a part of our existence, but many of us yearn for the novel. We want a new experience that injects some culture and sophistication into the city.

Enter Thibault Detraz and Jeremy Gremillet, a pair of Frenchmen who set out to reclaim an old French coffee shop on the second floor of 143 Nguyen Trai, but found themselves embarking on an entirely different journey. Nestled in one of the many nooks and crannies along Nguyen Trai is their brainchild, Bo Nong (meaning pelican), a cabaret that brings the French passion for fusing live entertainment with dining. When

asked about the inspiration for a cabaret, they laughed and proclaimed, “Well, we are French!” The only thing French about the fare on offer here, however, is the wine. The food and entertainment are decidedly, and deliciously, Vietnamese.

An unassuming stairwell leads guests to a set of red curtains, behind which lie the Bo Nong cabaret. Simple, subtle, and very cozy, Bo Nong’s small round tables ring the central stage. Fans of cabaret and live theater are familiar with excitement that starts to build the moment you take your seat, knowing the action is going to be close enough to reach out and touch.

Working in conjunction with their chef, Thibault and Jeremy assembled an elegant set menu, with a la carte options, to provide a wonderful meal that will satisfy foodies yet leave the focus on the show. The set menu is priced at VND300,000 per person and

comes with appetizers, a main, and dessert. Appetizers include a trio of fresh spring rolls that consist of traditional shrimp and pork, chicken and mint, a *la lot* roll, and a pair of deep fried prawns encrusted in sticky blue rice. Light and crunchy, when dipped in an accompanying coconut sauce they are nothing short of spectacular.

We went a la carte and sampled the young Haiti apple salad with prawns and water celery that, at VND125,000, was a tender, moist prelude to our mains. The stewed beef with green pepper delivered a kick, but their version of *cha ca La Vong*, along with the prawns for appetizers, is what stood out on the menu. Thibault will readily explain, “We want patrons to enjoy their meal, but the food is not the focus.”

Come Hear the Music Play

One goes to a cabaret not for the food, but



for the entertainment, which Bo Nong delivers. As the house lights dim, a small troupe of dancers assemble on stage and begin to stomp and drum their way around, causing the room to vibrate. Brightly colored costumes add flair to the show. Once the performers have your attention, the real fun begins. The emcee elicits active participation from the audience as people are drawn into assisting with magic tricks and other delights. They coax some audience members on stage, as this writer was, and then ask personal questions about dinner companions. Of course, it's all in good fun, there's no cause for alarm if you find yourself under the lights.

Should you survive your bout of stage fright, the show will continue in the form of a narrative. "All the artists are local talents," explains Jeremy. "We found them through word of mouth, and the musicians study

at the Conservatory of Ho Chi Minh City." Of particular note were the lead dancer and the musicians who played the *dan tranh*, a 17-string zither, and the *dan bau*, a monochord zither. If you've never had the pleasure of hearing these instruments played well, the music emanating from them may keep you spellbound.

Bo Nong presents old world Vietnamese culture and beauty in a way only the French can manage. Combined with food and wine, you just may find yourself captivated by it all, looking forward to the next iteration of their show. And dare we hope, that more such cabarets will follow, one day giving Ho Chi Minh City its own Little Pigalle.

Ticket prices only (per person, per show): Standard VND500,000; VIP VND700,000; Premier VND1,000,000. For booking call 090 302 0243 or visit www.bo-nong.com for more info. ■

"Bo Nong presents old world Vietnamese culture and beauty in a way only the French can manage. Combined with food and wine, you just may find yourself captivated by it all"



A Taste of the Mediterranean

A new restaurant stirs up the dining scene with the unexpected

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

ENTER SAFFRON, Tony Fox's new Mediterranean style restaurant on 51 Hai Ba Trung, D1, and the first thing that strikes you is the terracotta pots. There are 450 of them - all mounted upside down at different angles on the ceiling as if pouring out warmth, intimacy and romance on the diners below. Many customers no doubt wonder if any have come unstuck: the answer is a resounding no.

The unconventional ceiling is a hint of what to expect at Saffron - the unexpected. There are no starters and mains on the Saffron menu, rather a long list of dishes from every spectrum of Mediterranean cuisine, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness.

The dishes are larger than tapas but (usually) smaller than main courses, so a group of four should find themselves well and truly satisfied with about six dishes. Three will satisfy a couple, with the sharing concept guaranteed to add to the romance of any date.

Saffron is located 50 meters from Ciao Bella, Tony's popular Italian restaurant on Dung Du and some of the best staff and customs of Ciao Bella have been shared with the new location. For example, the complimentary welcome drink of Prosecco when guests are seated, the fresh-baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus, and the moorish lemoncello delivered with the bill.

The biggest challenge for diners here is choosing from the extensive menu, complemented by a specials board that has

even more mouthwatering dishes. The range stretches from cheese (more about that later) and salads, through seafood, beef, chicken, rice, pork and vegetarian offers, many of them unlike anything we have seen on other restaurants' menus in Vietnam or beyond. Some dishes are spicy, but most easy on any palate and on multiple visits to Saffron we've noticed Vietnamese enjoying the food equally as much as Europeans which bodes well for Saffron's success in a fast crowding downtown restaurant scene.

Our Meal

We gladly accepted Tony's offer to surprise us with a mix of four dishes he is particularly proud of. Each of the dishes exceeded expectation, perhaps explaining why this eatery has established a loyal customer base in just two months since opening.

First to arrive was the most spectacular dish, the Cheese Saganaki (VND150,000) - a large slice of halloumi cheese, fried and served on a sizzling iron platter. By the table, the server pours a glass of cognac over the cheese, then sets it on fire, an act of theater that attracts the attention of all the diners each time someone orders it. The last of the flames are extinguished with lemon juice. It's covered in a soft, fragrant pesto and sliced tomato. Once the flames were out we tucked in and found the cheese deliciously chewy with only a hint of salt, not the overbearing saltiness often found in

halloumi.

Chargrilled Octopus (VND195,000) was next up. The soft white meat was tender, not chewy, and it was laid on warm potatoes, Tuscan beans, kalamata olives and drizzled with harissa vinaigrette.

For those who enjoy a little spice, you cannot ignore the Shrimp Pil-pil (VND130,000). Fresh, tender meaty shrimps served with slices of spicy chorizo sausage, garlic and salsa bravas. It has a decidedly Asian kick this dish, but not too much that you're left with a burning tongue.

Our fourth and final dish (and we were struggling by now) was a new signature special: Duck Shepherds Pie (VND240,000), a sensational invention in texture and taste.

Shepherd's Pie is traditionally an English dish made with minced lamb, wholesome, hearty, and home-cooked to warm the coldest worker on a winter's day. Somehow it still works in the Vietnamese heat, though. Switching twice cooked, boneless duck meat for minced lamb is a masterstroke. The tender, tasty meat is a perfect match for the creamy layer of potato on top. The dish is somehow soft and light despite its meat and potato composition. It's delicious, filling and innovative.

Saffron's menu is extensive, and you can dine to any budget, with dishes ranging from VND110,000 through to VND295,000 (and a Caesar salad for just VND90,000). Tony has opened an impressive addition to the downtown restaurant scene. ■



Just Like Nonna's

The simple elegance of Basilico

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

WE VISIT BASILICO (corner of Nguyen Du and Le Van Huu, D1) on a cold, overcast Sunday night, floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on whipping raincoats and pounding rain. Inside, though, the mood is decidedly warm, fueled by a roaring wood-burning pizza oven set into a rough stone feature wall.

Managed by the InterContinental Asiana Saigon, Basilico feels unlike your typical hotel restaurant. Yes, there's the efficient wait staff clad in all black and its location near the entrance of the InterContinental Asiana Saigon Residences, but the vibe is very much laid back and welcoming. This Sunday sees the dozen or so tables inside Basilico's main dining area (think casual contemporary) completely full, with diners also seated in the covered outdoor terrace and spilling out onto the smattering of tables set in the atrium shared with the residential tower.

If you're hoping for a clichéd Italian dining experience, you'll find it in the requisite red checkered tablecloths and the hanging cured meats with accompanying garlands of knotted garlic, but there is a fine line between cliché and authentic and thankfully Basilico's fare squarely falls on the side of the latter. The one page menu is mercifully simple and focuses on the classics, from homemade fettuccine and wood-fired pizzas to traditional osso buco and oven-baked *branzino*. "My personal philosophy is a bit old style and absolutely traditional. While we follow new trends

in healthy cooking and techniques like *sous-vide* and cooking at low temperatures, I'm actually a bit against innovation. I want to keep Italian food the way it's done by Italian grandmothers without any fusion or adaptation to the North American or local palate," says Executive Chef Roberto Mancini who himself hails from Rome. "Italian cuisine is based on not much elaboration. The key is to showcase top quality ingredients."

Delizioso!

For the appetizer, we order the Antipasto Misto Basilico (VND298,000), an unexpectedly generous selection of olives, Parmigiano cheese and a bevy of cured meats, including a standout home cured salmon with orange and dill that balances perfectly with peppery sprigs of arugula. The dish is thoughtfully presented on a wood board, cheekily pedestaled using cans of tomato sauce, but paired with a complimentary selection of homemade crostini with a smooth yellow zucchini dip and shaved Parma ham, and certainly shareable between a small table.

For our mains, we order one dish each from the pasta, meat and fish menu. The seafood linguini (*linguini allo scoglio*, VND215,000), traditionally a hodgepodge of whatever is freshest at the fish monger's that day, features a huge freshwater shrimp, beautifully presented in shell, as if guarding what turns out to be a wonderfully (and surprisingly)

spicy dish, tossed in a flavorful, thick to the point of being almost gritty, tomato-based sauce. I found the osso buco (*ossobuco di vitella*, VND365,000) well braised in a modern red wine and tomato sauce, and set on a fragrant bed of saffron risotto, tender but not mushy. Our fish course was a rustic and again, generously sized, *branzino* (European sea bass), oven-baked with a white wine sauce and served atop crunchy sautéed spinach with slices of baby potatoes which provided textural contrast to the flaky, meaty fish.

By meal's end, we were so full that we managed to try only one dessert amongst the beckoning tiramisu, panna cotta and crème brûlées. Considering the cold-for-Saigon weather and the festive time of year, we went off-menu (but always available) with a whole wine-poached pear over almond chocolate cake (VND125,000). It turned out to be the perfect end to the evening, the pear evenly poached in a fragrant cinnamon and star anise spiced red wine, atop a decadent yet light bitter chocolate cake to offset the sweetness of the reduction of the red wine poaching liquid.

The decor is eclectic, vacillating between a casual trattoria and a trendy eatery, with the soundtrack alternating between opera and jazz, and the food is confidently authentic, serving up generous portions of Italian classics with premium ingredients in a friendly, cozy space. This is one restaurant which feels like home. ■



IMAGE PROVIDED BY WINDSOR PLAZA

Eating for Prosperity

Food is the cornerstone of any Tet celebration. So in keeping with the festive spirit, we've rounded up a number of places where you can enjoy some essential New Year's dishes.

🏠 CARAVELLE HOTEL

19-23 Lam Son Square, D1

The hotel is hosting a mouthwatering Lunar New Year buffet dinner of Asian, Western, and traditional Tet delicacies at Restaurant Nineteen every evening from January 30 to February 5. Families and friends can indulge in an extensive array of time-honored Tet delicacies, ocean-fresh fish and seafood, and imported grilled and barbecued meats. The East-meets-West spread will feature local dishes such as beef in *la lot* leaves and *banh xeo* alongside international classics such as red wine poached beef tenderloin, saffron-marinated chicken, and Chinese whole steamed fish.

Cost: Inquire at eam-fb@caravellehotel.com.

🏠 HOTEL MAJESTIC SAIGON

1 Dong Khoi, D1

The Lunar New Year's Eve gala dinner at Prima Hall (5th Floor) includes a buffet with free flow of house wines, soft drinks, and water. Entertainment consists of a dragon dance, a New Year LED dance, live music, and a fireworks show.

Cost: VND1,999,000/adult; VND999,000/child (below 1.2 meters)

The New Year gala dinner at M.Bar (8th Floor) includes a buffet dinner and free flow of house wine, soft drinks, and water. Entertainment consists of a dragon dance, a New Year dance, live music, and a fireworks show.

Cost: VND2,499,000/adult; VND1,249,000/child (below 1.2 meters) with a 10 percent discount for early purchase 15 days before the event.

III INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON

Corner of Le Duan and Hai Ba Trung, D1

A lion dance performance will be held in the hotel lobby at 10:00am on January 31, where you'll have a chance to watch a local troupe ring in the Year of the Horse.

YU CHU

Yee-Sang Salad, or Prosperity Toss, is a popular dish believed to bring luck and prosperity to everyone. This shared raw fish salad is colorful and the act of tossing the salad together symbolizes ushering in prosperity and abundance for the coming New Year.

Cost: Yee Sang Salad priced at VND250,000 (serves up to 2), VND400,000 (serves up to 6) and VND550,000 (serves up to 10).

MARKET 39

Along with an international and Vietnamese buffet, delicacies include barbecued pork, seafood, Vietnamese caramelized pork with egg, Tet sticky rice cakes and much more.

Cost: Buffet lunch priced from VND498,000++/person including free flow of tea and coffee. Buffet dinner priced from VND899,000++/person including free flow of selected house wines, Tiger draught beer, soft drinks and signature cocktails.

III LOTTE LEGEND SAIGON

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1

From January 31 to February 3 the hotel's Atrium Café will feature a Tet buffet. Their local chefs will be adding traditional Tet specialties and Vietnamese delicacies from Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Vietnam to their standard international spread. Diners can expect *gio thu* (pig's head paste), *dua hanh* (pickled welsh onion), *cu kieu* (pickled scallion heads), *goi luon nuong hanh tay* (grilled eel with onion salad), *goi hai san thom* (seafood with pineapple salad), *ca ri vit* (duck curry), and much more. All will be complemented with a free flow of beer, soft drinks, coffee and tea for lunch; wines, beer, cocktails, fresh fruit juices, soft drinks, coffee and tea for Saturday & Sunday brunch; and wines, beer, cocktails, soft drinks, coffee and tea for dinner.

Cost: VND550,000++ for lunch, VND880,000++ for Saturday & Sunday brunch and VND940,000++ for dinner. Children from four to 12-years-old are half price.



III NEW WORLD SAIGON

76 Le Lai, D1

PARKVIEW

From January 31 to February 14, gather your family and friends for a Tet lunch or dinner at Parkview to enjoy traditional Vietnamese and Chinese dishes, local and imported specialty seafood delights, homemade Yee Sang, and much more.

Cost: Lunch is priced at VND668,000, while dinner is priced at VND968,000. Including tea, coffee, soft drinks, house wine and sparkling wine.

DYNASTY

On January 31, Dynasty offers Tet lunch featuring a sumptuous array of dim sum and Chinese delicacies and a Tet card to ensure a healthy and prosperous year of the horse.

Cost: Priced at VND888,000 per person. Including complimentary Chinese tea made from their own special blend.

BRING TET TO YOUR HOME

From January 15 until February 14, celebrate with a delicious and healthy meal in the comfort of your home. Choose from either Dynasty style deep-fried chicken stuffed with seafood and sticky rice, served with broccoli, cauliflower and sesame spring onion sauce, Chui Chow style marinated duck, deep-fried bean curd, red chili and garlic vinegar or Hong Kong style roasted suckling pig, steamed buns, vegetable pickle and hoisin sauce.

Cost: Priced from VND1,650,000, and no matter which set of gourmet delicacies you choose, you'll receive a complimentary bottle of wine as well as free delivery to Districts 1 and 3.

III RENAISSANCE RIVERSIDE HOTEL SAIGON

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1

Ring in a happy Lunar New Year by celebrating with your loved ones at Riverside Café. There will be a delicious array of traditional favorite dishes during the Tet celebrations including Vietnamese vegetable roots pickle (*dua mon*) accompanied with sticky rice with pork & mung bean filling (*banh chung*), traditional cold cuts (*cac mon thit nguoi truyen thong*), and delicious braised pork with egg in fresh coconut juice (*thit kho nuoc dua*). For desserts, the highlights will include a selection of Vietnamese sweet candies (*mut*) with traditional coconut and ginger candy (*mut dua va mut gung*).

Cost: Inquire at 3822 0033.

III WINDSOR PLAZA

18A An Duong Vuong, D5

CAFÉ AN DONG

Available every Thursday and Friday in January, savor rotisserie roasted whole pig over an open fire and served alongside vegetables and sauces. For a sweet treat, experience the sweet flavors of vanilla cake with white peanut butter ganache and crushed roasted peanuts.

Additionally from January 25 to February 15, dine on a traditional Tet feast featuring sticky rice cakes, dried fruits, and many more Vietnamese favorites. From January 31 to February 2, the God of Fortune will visit with lucky envelopes for all.

Cost: Lunch buffet: Monday to Friday is VND318,000++/person; Saturday, Sunday & Holidays is VND338,000++/person. Dinner Buffet: Monday to Friday is VND488,000++/person; Saturday, Sunday & Holidays is VND518,000++/person

NGAN DINH RESTAURANT

Available from January 1 to 26, Ngan Dinh Restaurant is proud to present a feast of nine authentic Chinese dishes in a unique set menu. This delicious meal features roasted suckling pig, pan-fried beef with black pepper, steamed garoupa with lotus leaf, and much more.

Cost: Each order includes ten glasses of Pineapple Green and is VND3,188,000++ for ten people. ■

>>The List Wine & Dine



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

bakeries

Bread Talk

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

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 3181

Brodard Bakery

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

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

Cakewalk Cupcakes

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

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

Cheesecake Ngon 🍷 Oi's Pick

Cheesecake Ngon is a small boutique-style 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. With a range of flavors including passionfruit, raspberry, strawberry, lemon, coconut and of course original and a price starting at VND40,000 per slice.

44 Truong Quyen, D3
www.cheesecakesnow.com
3610 0211

Givral

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

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

Gourmand Shop

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

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

Harvest Baking

Harvest Baking offers a delivery-based

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

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

Kinh Do Bakery

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

128A Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 6552
kinhdobakery.vn
6am - 10.30pm

La Doree

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

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

L'amour Bakery & Cafe

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

Open from 6am - 10:30pm
24 Hai Ba Trung D1

Nhu Lan Bakery

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

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

Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

Pat'a Chou

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

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

Savouré Bakery

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

Unit E3, 1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 3733
www.savourebakery.com

Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

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

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

Tous Les Jours

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

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

bars

Ahoy 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
6291 5424
allezboo@hcm.fpt.vn
24 hours

Alpha

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
3822 1720

Blanchy's Tash

This cocktail lounge is a perfect place to relax with friends, meet with colleagues or just enjoy a cocktail or two. With plenty of seating around the central bar as well as tables for couples or larger groups, plus a more intimate VIP area with comfortable sofas, you will find the right space for any occasion.

95 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.blanchyestash.com
090 902 8293

Blue Gecko

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

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1

3824 3483
simon@hcm.vnn.vn
www.bluegeckosaigon.com
4.30pm - 12am

Bootleg DJ Café

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

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

Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1
6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar

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

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

Carmen Bar

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

8 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3829 7699

Charm Bar

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

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

Boudoir Lounge

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

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

Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

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

39 Le Duan, D1

9822 4206
brotzeit.co/kumholink

Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 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
hfi291182@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, DI
3822 3907
7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

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

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

Eon51

Eon51 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 Hai Trieu, DI

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

Go2 is a popular nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.

187 De Tham, DI
3836 9575

Hair of the Dog

A large space creating an interesting bar with an alfresco sidewalk area downstairs, and an upper lounge area overlooking the lower bar that allows for a view of the DJ station. If it follows its Hanoi theme, it will be a DJ music-focused nightclub.

194 Bui Vien, DI

Hard Rock Café

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

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

Heaven Bar Saigon

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

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

Ice Blue

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

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

Kim's Tavern

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

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

Last Call 🍷 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

Lion Brewery and Restaurant

The brewery offers its signature Lion beer, brewed by its German master brewer, who trained in Germany, along with other kinds of beer. The Lion restaurant has two banquet halls that can accommodate 530 persons.

11-13 Cong Truong Lam Son, DI
www.lionsaigon.com

Lindo

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

149 Ton That Dam, DI
3915 3149



American Chinese Food

Full Menu

www.woknroll.vn

We wok hard for you!



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

SUPER FAST DELIVERY!

0122-690-8881



Scan for the full menu



Baba's Kitchen

164 Bui Vien, District 1
49D Xa Lo Hanoi, District 2
Phone: 083-838-6661 & 083-838-6662

Open 11am to 11pm
North & South Indian food

Halal & vegetarian dishes
Of course we can cater!
order online at vietnammm.com & eat.vn
"Baba brings India to Vietnam"



Long Phi

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

207 Bui Vien, D1
3837 2704

6pm to very late, Tuesday - Sunday

Lush

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

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

M52 Bar

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

34 Ton That Thiep, D1
3821 0151
5pm - 12am

Miss Saigon 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

8A/ICI Thai Van Lung, D1

MTV

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

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

Number Five Bar

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

44 Pasteur, D1
3915 3150
heinzvm@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 ice-cold local and imported beers as well as a complete range of tasty pub food. Central features are the TVs, connected to an extensive sports channel network.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

Purple Jade

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

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

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 also includes wood-fire pizzas.
70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1
2229 7017

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 late.

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, D1
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, D1

Slate

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

3rd Floor, Moevenpick Hotel, 253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 9222
5pm - 11pm

Spotted Cow

Hearty breakfasts, great pub grub, cheap drinks and the latest sport on TV make

this an appealing destination for tourists of all budgets. Located in the heart of the backpacker district.

111 Bui Vien, D1
3920 7670
spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com
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, D1
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

Xu Bar

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

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

cafés

ABC Bakery & Cafe

ABC Bakery & Cafe has over 30 different kinds of baked goods such as baguettes, 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, D1
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

AQ Coffee

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

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

Angel-in-us Coffee

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

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

Blue Cafe

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

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

Bobby Brewer's

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

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

Boulevard Cafe

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

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Bukafe - Cafe

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

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

Café Ban Sonate

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, D1
3290 6004

Caffe Fresco

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

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

Café Terrace

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

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

Cafe Vuon Kieng

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

10B Ton Duc Thang, DI
3823 3279

Cake Durian Duiro

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

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

Centrofarms Coffee

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

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

Chi's Cafe

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

40/31 Bui Vien, DI
3836 7622

Ciao Cafe

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

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

Cosmo Lounge

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

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, DI
3823 5848

Cooku's Nest

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

13 Tu Xuong, D3
2241 2043

Crêperie & Café

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

5 Han Thuyen, DI

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, D10

DeJa Vu Cafe

It is easy to mistake this cafe for

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

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

Elle Cafe

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

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

Fa Cafe

Fa 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 Ly Tu Trong, DI
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, DI
3829 4004
www.geishacafe.com

Gemmi Coffee

This cafe serves a variety of food like salads, chicken dish alongside coffees and other beverages. Provides live solo piano music every night from 8pm.

193 D3 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

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, DI
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, DI
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, DI

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, DI
3825 6718

ID Café

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, 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
nguyenmai.huan@gmail.com
8am - 10pm

Kebab Cafe

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

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

Kem My

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

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

Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, DI
keserakesera.com

Kita Coffee

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

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

Kopi Beans

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

L'amour

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

24 Hai Ba Trung, DI

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, DI
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 DI. 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, DI
70B Le Loi, DI
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
3926 0388

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, DI
3827 7099
www.maycoffee.com

Minhu Coffee

This specialty cafe offers a wood furniture interior setting, which resembles the cabins you would expect to see in the western North American frontier. Live bands are a regular feature at the cozy cafe and prices are inexpensive.

149/35 Le Thi Rieng, DI
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

MZ 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 espresso, cappuccinos 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, D1
3822 9992
www.nydc.com.vn

Onset Cafe



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

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

Paris Deli



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

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

Passio Coffee to Go



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

112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

Phuong Cac Cafe



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

Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 7484

Phuc Minh Coffee



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

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

Princess and the Pea



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

63/18 Pasteur, D1

Regina Coffee

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

84 Nguyen Du, D1

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 more.

6 Cong Truong Quoc 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 Western prices.

76 Le Lai, D1

Stella Restaurant & Cafe



Providing authentic Italian and Vietnamese food using fresh imported and local premium-quality ingredients. Where else can you find such good coffee/cuisine at such reasonable prices?

119-121 Bui Vien, D1
3836 9220
www.stellacaffe.com

The Blue Cafe



A spacious cafe divided into two different areas with a lush, outdoor garden seating lounge and an air conditioned in-door lounge. The Blue Cafe has live music with drinks under VND100,000.

701-703 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3588 6824

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf



Offering over 22 varieties of coffee and 20 kinds of tea, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf has been serving the best coffees and teas from around the world for more than 40 years in its cozy, handcrafted oak paneled stores.

www.coffeebean.com.vn

7am - 11pm

39 Le Duan, D1

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall

Ton Dat Tien, D7

157-159 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1

39 Le Duan, D1

12-14 Thai Van Lung, D1

94 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1

235 Dong Khoi, D1

1-5 Le Duan, D1

60-62 Cach Mang Thang 8, D3

1-3 Phan Chu Trinh, D1

The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon

Ground floor - InterContinental Asiana

Saigon

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan

3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon

The Living Room



The Living Room has two floors providing a laid-back atmosphere for meet-ups or after-work relaxation over drinks and Western and Vietnamese food.

40-42 Dong Du, D1

3822 0377

Tram Coffee ☺️ Oi's Pick



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

100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan

2240 5306

The Myth Cafe



Escape the daily grind of Ho Chi Minh City with a trip into the mystical setting of Myth

Cafe. With live bands and prices under VND100,000 it's no wonder The Myth cafe is one of the best around.

176 Dien Bien Phu, D3

3820 9735

thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com

Trung Nguyen Cafe



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

26B-C Le Loi, D1

The 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 eye-catching venue has remained a place to see and be seen, often frequented by the famous, the well-to-do, and the ne'er do well.

12 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1

38238408

Yogen Früz

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, D1

www.yogenfruz.com.vn

Zoom Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

169A Bui Vien, D1

3920 3897

chinese

Dragon Court



Dragon Court is a large restaurant opposite the Opera House in Saigon's bustling District 1. Enjoy Chinese dishes from many regions with dishes like glass noodles, hot pot, and a large dim sum collection.

11-13 Lam Son Square, D1

3827 2566

Dynasty



New World hotel's in-house Chinese restaurant is certainly a venue of fine contemporary Chinese dining. The chef offers a variety of authentic Cantonese dishes along with classic dim sum under a high lantern/chandelier-lit ceiling, in a broad dining room decorated in classic Chinese style. VIP guests can dine in one of four

semi-private or three totally private rooms.

New World Hotel

76 Le Lai, D1

3822 8888

www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Hung Ky Mi Gia



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

20 Le Anh Xuan, D1

3822 2673

Kabin



Kabin is a Cantonese restaurant specializing in exotic dishes such as baked duck tongue, grouper cutlet, and lobster soup. Located in the five star Renaissance Riverside Hotel, this restaurant offers a wide variety of dim sum.

Renaissance Riverside Hotel,

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1

3822 0033

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1

3827 2828

www.libaisaigon.com

Ming Court



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

3rd floor, Nikko Saigon Hotel

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1

3925 7777

Ocean Palace

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

2 Le Duan Street, D1

3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

It's worth traipsing out to D6 for this one. Not only are the Dim Sum, Peking Duck, and pan-China home-style cuisine exemplary, but the venue design, with its architectural flourishes from the seven wonders of the world (including the Great Wall, the Taj Mahal, and the pyramids) makes for a highly distinctive dining experience.

12 Duong 26, D6

3755 1577

www.7kyquan.com

Shang Palace Restaurant



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

1st Floor, Norfolk Mansion

17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D1

3823 2221

Shi-Fu Dim sum



Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant specializing in dim sum, with modern

Chinese décor and over 68 dim sum dishes.
139A Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 1111
www.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

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

5 Nguyen Sieu, D1
3825 6257

Au Manoir de Khai

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

251 Dien Bien Phu, D3

3930 3394

Augustin

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

10D Nguyen Thiep, D1
www.augustinrestaurant.com

Bon Appétit

A small French-Vietnamese fusion bistro on Pham Ngoc Thach with a simplistic charm enhanced by a fine selection of old-style French music.

78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
090 789 8345

Bonjour Restaurant

Bonjour serves up international dishes with a French flair. The large menu of main courses feature roast duck, salmon, lamb and steak with specialties being ostrich and venison.

150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1
3926 0699

Cordon Blue

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

38 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3822 5216
www.cordonblue.vn

La Brasserie de Saigon

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

38 Dong Du, D1
0862913657
contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com
www.labrasseriendesaigon.com
11.30pm - 2.30pm; 6pm - 12am

La Camargue

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

74/17 Hai Ba Trung, D1

La Cuisine

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

48 Le Thanh Ton, D1
2229 8882
www.lacuisine.com.vn

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 Doree

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

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

La Fourchette

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

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

La Nicoise

A small, friendly French bistro with about a dozen tables, La Nicoise serves up typical French dishes under the watchful eye of its French-Vietnamese owners.

56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 3056

L'essentiel

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

98 Ho Tung Mau, D1
0948 415 646

Le Bordeaux

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

72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh
3899 9831
restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn
11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm

Le Bouchon De Saigon

Red and white checked tablecloths and closely set tables make Le bouchon de Saigon the place to go for a casual, classic French bistro experience under the eye of iron chef Vietnam winner David Thai.

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.lebouchondesaigon.com



Le Bacoulos

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

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

Le Chateau de Saigon

Situated in a small but romantic French villa, Le Chateau De Saigon Restaurant is designed to accommodate any kind of event. Whether it is dinner with family and friends, or a passionate evening with your loved one, Le Chateau De Saigon will provide a sophisticated and memorable dining experience.

45A Le Quy Don, D3
www.lechateaudesaigon.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

Le Paris

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

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

L'Olivier

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

Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1

3824 1555

www.sofitel.com

Le Rendez-Vous de Saigon

A new wine bistro that offers a warm and friendly atmosphere. Unwind either in their stylish downstairs bar, or lounge on cozy leather seating in the upstairs section with a balcony overlooking a courtyard in an alley. The venue offers a tasty selection of wines from France to South Africa, and a delectable menu of French cuisine.

9A Ngo Van Nam, D1
www.lerendezvousdesaigon.com
6291 0396

The Refinery

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

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 7667
www.therefinerysaigon.com

Ty Coz

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

178/4 Pasteur, D1
3822 2457
www.tycozsaigon.com

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

This is a fine, well-managed, and even luxurious dining venue serving authentic French cuisine in a Franco-Viet design space. There's red carpet along the entrance way, gallery-standard art on the walls, and an overall atmosphere of refinement and good service.

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

indian

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

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

164 Bui Vien, D1
3838 6661
www.babaskitchen.in
11am - 11pm

Bombay Indian Restaurant

Located in D1 near the Ben Thanh Market area, serving Indian & Halal cuisine. The ambience is relaxed thanks to Bombay's easy-going, family kitchen vibe.

57-59 Ham Nghi, D1
9am - 10.30pm

Bollywood

Complete North & South Indian Cuisine. Special Chaat & Tandoori Dishes. Parties, Events & catering service available, Daily Lunch tiffin and Set menus.

Free Delivery (All Phu my Hung)
22131481 - 22450096
0938069433
Hotline: 0906357442 (English)
bollywoodvietnam@gmail.com
facebook: bollywoodvietnamindiancuisine
(for complete menu)

Ganesh

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

1584 Le Thanh Ton, D1
8223 0173
www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com

Indus Indian

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

2G Thi Sach, D1
3521 0324

Mumtaz

With bona-fide Indian owners and chefs,

authenticity at Mumtaz is guaranteed. While the service and setting is relatively basic, the food is amongst the best of its type in the city in terms of taste alone. The brand has a second branch in Da Nang city if you're ever on holiday and missing your curries.

226 Bui Vien, DI
3837 1767

The Punjabi



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

40/3 Bui Vien, DI
3508 3777

italian

1960 Presidential Club

1960 Presidential Club is a member-only 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 Buresi.

Floor 22 Sailing Tower, IIIA Pasteur, DI
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, DI**
3520 9099
6.30am - 10.30pm

Capricciosa



You'll find the standards here – pizza, pasta, soups, salads, with a few special dishes such as calamari and onion in squid ink sauce. They're all prepared according to strict Japanese standards, and the result is actually really good.

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

Casa Italia



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

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



Ciao Bella 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

11 Dong Du, DI
3822 3329
tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.saiگونrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



Chef Mamma's

Chef Mamma's is located at Saigon'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 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 11am - 10pm.
Call 083 943 4982 or
SMS your order to 093 328 4624

Good Morning Vietnam



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

197 De Tham, DI
3837 1894
www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com

La Hostaria



Designed with an intimate atmosphere invoking something like an Italian town, this venue focuses on traditional ethnic Italian cuisine (rather than the ubiquitous pizza and pasta), creations of the skillful executive chef – straight out of Venice. The place lights up on romantic Thursday evenings with candlelight and light music. **17B Le Thanh Ton, DI**
3823 1080
www.lahostaria.com

Lucca 🍷 Oi's Pick



A Brooklyn-style Italian eatery upstairs with an adjoining bar. Downstairs is a relaxing cafe offering generous breakfasts, simple cafe fare for lunch and some of the best espresso coffee you'll find in the city. **88 Ho Tung Mau, DI**
3915 3692
8am - 11pm

Margherita



Well-reviewed overseas, Margherita is a familiar place to tourists trawling the nooks of Ho Chi Minh City. This is partly a result of its agreeable price, sumptuous Western-style pizzas, English-speaking staff, and more than average customer service. **175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, DI**
3837 0760

Opera Restaurant



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

1st floor Park Hyatt Hotel,
2 Lam Son Square, DI
3824 1234
www.saiгон.park.hyatt.com
6am - 11pm

Pizza 4P's 🍷 Oi's Pick

A little treasure hidden away at the top of an out-of-the-way alley off Le Thanh Ton, this Japanese pizzeria is a major hit with those in the know. Highly attractive premises and some extraordinary toppings catering to all tastes make this an unmissable pizza experience. **8/15 Le Thanh Ton, DI**
012 0789 4444
www.pizza4ps.com

Pomodoro



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

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

Sarpino's Pizzeria



Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients. **125 Ho Tung Mau, DI**
www.sarpinos.vn

Scoozi

An Italian restaurant that offers pizza, pasta, salad, special desserts and a wide variety of drinks. Provide dine-in, take away and home delivery services. **6 Thai Van Lung, DI**

japanese



Achaya Cafe



Achaya Cafe have two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meeting, relaxation or party. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, Vietnamese food from sandwiches, spaghetti, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts. **90 Le Loi, DI**
093 897 2050
11am - 10:30pm

Aka Taiyo



Aka Taiyo serves traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine with an extensive menu featuring more than 200 dishes. Also stocks a surprisingly comprehensive range of Japanese alcoholic beverages. **74B Hai Ba Trung, DI**
3824 4295
www.akataiyo.com

Ajisen Ramen



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

120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3822 0522

Aki Japanese Restaurant



A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes. **15/9 Le Thanh Ton, DI**
3827 9083

Baby Spoon



Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion

cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.

47 Phan Chu Trinh, DI

Blanchy Street 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
*** Reviewed by Oi in April 2013**

Cam On Restaurant



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

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

Dragon Hotpot



Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine. Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines. **122-124 Ho Tung Mau, DI**
3825 8842

Dragon Noodle



A rather small but pretty restaurant with warm tones and a nice series of murals depicting old Saigon, Dragon Noodle focuses on the Japanese staple – ramen noodle soups – although their version is a little less spicy than is traditionally served, increasing perhaps the international appeal of the dish. There are a total of four soup bases to accompany the noodles. **29 Dong Du, DI**
3521 0008
www.ramen.vn

Dragon Steak



A striking Japanese restaurant tucked away off Saigon's central street, Dragon steak specialises in thick wagyu cuts and tenderloin that could well have been cut off a beast the size of a dragon. They're so enormous that the restaurant once ran a cheeky competition – guests who finished one within half an hour dined free. **138 Ton That Dam, DI**
3821 0288
www.steak.vn

Ebisu



Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles – made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes. **35bis Mac Dinh Chi, DI**
3822 6971
ductm@incubation-vn.com
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, Nikho 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

Ichiban Sushi

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting.

204 Le Lai, DI
www.ichibansushi.vn

Indaba Restaurant

Indaba Cafe & Restaurant offers Japanese, Western and Vietnamese cuisine. It boasts homemade ingredients such as udon noodles, soy sauce for sushi and matcha ice cream.

35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
www.facebook.com/indabacafe

Inaho Restaurant

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

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

Kabuto Tokyo

One of the more exuberant Japanese venues in this city, Kabuto Tokyo on Mac Thi Buoi specializes 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
11am - 2pm, 5pm - 11pm

Kissho

Experienced chefs prepare teppanyaki, sushi, and yakiniku dishes before your eyes. In addition, an extensive wine list is available as well as an array of fine sake to complement the exquisite flavors of premium imported meat and seafood.

14 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.kissho.wmccvietnam.com

Kuru Kuru Shushi

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, DI
www.kurukuru.com.vn
11am - 2pm and 5pm - 10.30pm

Kokekokko Pandora

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

4th Floor Pandora, I/I Trung Chinh, Tan Phu
3849 6840
www.kokekokko.com.vn

La Fenetre Soleil

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

44 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3824 5994
Mus Mus
Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.

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

Osaka Ramen

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

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

Robata Dining An

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

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

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

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

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI
6291 1036
sakurasaku.vn
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Sumo BBQ

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

300 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 4757
sumobbq.com.vn
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

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.sushidingaioi.com

Sushi World

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

28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3911 0147
www.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
11am - 11pm

Uraetel BBQ Restaurant

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

6673 9373

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ

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

42 Le Anh Xuan, DI
3823 3232
vickis.com.vn
10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm

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
3821 4016
www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Yoshino

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

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

Yuki

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

99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, DI
3824 2754

10am - 2pm; 4pm - 10pm

korean

Dae Jang Gum

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

1st Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza
39 Le Duan, DI
3825 7974
www.daejanggum.vn

Hana Restaurant

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

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

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

8A/5D2 Thai Van Lung, DI
7306 4045
094 467 2281
jymimil1@hanmail.net
10am - 3am

MI Han Quoc

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

92 Ham Nghi, DI
3914 1565
www.mihanquocvn.com
8am - 11pm

Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof

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

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

Seoul House

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

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

steakhouses

Au Lac do Brazil

Serving Saigon for more than 10 years, Au Lac do Brazil is the very first authentic Brazilian Churrascaria in Vietnam, bringing a new dining concept - an "All you can

eat" Brazilian style BBQ where meat is brought to your table on skewers by a passador and served to your heart's content. They have an extensive selection of fine wines as well.

HO CHI MINH CITY

Au Lac do Brazil I

238 Pasteur, D3

(08) 3820 7157

HA NOI

Au Lac do Brazil II

6A Cao Ba Quat, Ba Dinh

(04) 3845 5224

For Banquet & Catering

Call or email

pr@aulacdobrazil.com

090 947 8698

www.aulacdobrazil.com

www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil

Corso Steakhouse and Bar

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

117 Le Thanh Ton, D1

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, D1

3821 0288

www.steak.vn

11am - late

El Gaucho

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

5D Nguyen Sieu, 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 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1

3823 7373

contact@steakhouse.com.vn

www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99



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

139 Nguyen Trai, 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 high-quality Tex Mex/American cuisine with

enormous servings.

8A/1D1 Thai Van Lung, D1

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, D1

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.hothai.com.vn

11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai

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

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, 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 service.

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, D1

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, D1

6299 1338

www.thaieexpress.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, D1

3825 8275

Banh Xeo 46A



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

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

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 festival-like, relaxing, and casual, becoming congenially boisterous in the evenings. The restaurant specializes in Western-Vietnamese fusion dishes such as beef with cheese, 5-spices beef, squid with satay sauce, and shrimp kebabs.

135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, 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

3930 3917

www.namsonsteak.com

Bo Ne Le Hong



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

489/27/39 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan

3990 5106

Bun Sai Gon

This franchise positions itself firmly in the local market with the slogan 'the bun noodles of the Vietnamese people' - indicating a concerted dedication to the authenticity of its noodle soup staples.

6276 2609

www.bunsaiгон.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, D1

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, D1

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 style cafe.

122 Le Thanh Ton, D1

38227 901

www.grillbar.com.vn



Quan Bui - Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

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 serving as decoration.

17A Ngo Van Nam, D1

3828 1515

www.quanbui.vn



Highway 4



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

101 Vo Van Tan, 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, D1
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, D1
Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5
CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.hoangyencuisine.com

Khoai Restaurant

Specializes in dishes from Nha Trang.
3A Le Quy Don, D3
www.khoairestaurant.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/LuongSonQuan

Nam Phat Restaurant



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

21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, 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, D1
3823 0767
www.mitauhue.com

Nghi Xuan



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

5/9 Nguyen Sieu, 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



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, D1
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)

Quan An Ngon

Quan 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 Ky 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
shgarden.com.vn

Song Ngu



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

70 Suong Nguyet Anh, 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, yellow-toned interior for the buffet, it's a charming venue for tourists and a familiar favourite for long-timers. It's intentionally decorated like a private home, walls decorated with floral artworks, and the garden surrounded by bamboo.

11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1
3822 5909
www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien

Thang Bom Quan

Serves hot pot and special style BBQ.
49 Pho Duc Chinh, D1

Tib Restaurant

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

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

Tin Nghia

A charming little venue serving vegetarian cuisine. Its quaint appearance hides the fact that it was the first international vegetarian restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City and an important center of the city's vegetarian culture.

9 Tran Hung Dao, D1
3821 2538

Vietnam House



Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine. This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.

93-95 Dong Khoi, D1
3829 1623
www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

(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 D1 and D3.

63 Truong Dinh, D1
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, D1
3823 8371
www.lioncityrestaurant.com

Long Monaco



Long Monaco operates throughout the city under various brand names – this outlet is a standalone restaurant in the busy Etown office complex in Tan Binh district. You'll probably only visit if you're working nearby or visiting on official business, but you'll find the restaurant serves some great Asian business lunches.

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

western/international



Parkview

Located within New World Saigon Hotel, Parkview is a sophisticated restaurant with a view of the adjacent 23 September Park. Their buffets feature both Asian and international favorites along with local and imported fish, oysters, prawns, shrimps and snails. Every Sunday, the brunch buffet offers a fine fare including rotisserie and steak specialties, with an ice bar serving up sushi and sashimi. New World Saigon Hotel
76 Le Lai Street, D1
3822 8888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

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 Mediterranean-styled restored villa with its original tiles, old window frames, plush cushions, and opium-themed art collection sits in one of the most gorgeous streets of central Saigon. Au Parc is an unforgettable venue with a décor that manages to simultaneously capture the grace of the old Colonial architecture and the mood of west-Asian exoticism that transfixed Europe in the Romantic period.

23 Han Thuyen, D1
3829 2772

Bahdja



Algerian restaurant serving north African delights such as couscous, tajines and desserts. Unique Mechoui set dinner is a popular choice and perfect for groups (available with prior notice).

87-89-91 Ho Tung Mau, D1
093 787 2010 (French, Arabic, English, Finnish)
0122 763 1261 (English, Russian, Vietnamese)
Mon - Fri 11:30 - 2pm
Mon - Sat 6pm - 11pm

Ben Style



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

302 Co Bac, D1
090 691 2730

Black Cat Restaurant



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

13 Phan Van Dat, D1
3829 2955
www.blackcatsaigon.com
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 Trung Toan, D2
3744 4111
7am - 11pm

Burger 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, tacos, burgers and hotdogs.

27 Tran Nhat Duat, D1

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
3915 6066
090 381 8700
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

Jaspas Wine & Grill



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



MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Khoi Thom



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

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
www.khoithom.com

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 Quat, D1
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 darts, 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

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, D1
38224798
www.skewers-restaurant.com

Subway



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

121 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4118

The Burrito Revolution

A food cart serving Mexican food such as tacos, burritos, tortillas and more.

124 Bui Vien, D1
090 271 4882

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 whirling ceiling fans - making for a casual, contemporary space with an international vibe. More of a diner than a restaurant, Elbow shoots at a cool, relaxed atmosphere, pleasantly decorating its warmly-lit walls with evocative black & white photos and subtle lighting.

52 Pasteur, D1
3821 4327
www.elbowroom.com.vn

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 from traditional Japanese to premium Italian wine.

37 Ho Tung Mau, D1
www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Warda



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

71/7 Mac Thi Buoi, D1



White Forest

Set in a modern décor, the restaurant serves 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 eatvn

14 Bis Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1

0122 428 5237

www.whiteforest.com.vn

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

ZanZBar

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

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, D1
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 cafe.
169A Bui Vien, D1
3920 3897
vscooterguy@yahoo.com
 7am - 2am daily

>>The List District 2

BAKERIES

Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate
39 Thao Dien, D2
6296 0066
voelker-vietnam.com

BARS

Mcsorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.
4 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4659
www.mcsorleys.vn

Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.
18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
6252 1333

Buddha Bar

One of the long standing bars in the area, it has a pool table, darts, big screen tvs along with cheap beers and bar food.
7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080

CAFES

Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

At Agnes Cafe they offer fresh coffee, smoothies and juices along with a delicious breakfast and lunch menu. This quaint and cozy cafe is a perfect place to meet up with friends or just relax to get away from the bustling traffic outside. They offer free delivery.
11A-B Thao Dien, D2
agnescafe@agnescoffee.vn
6281 9772
facebook.com/pages/Agnes-Cafe

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 high-profile community.
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn
 *Reviewed in Oi March 2013

Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.
18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3744 4585

INDIAN

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.
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.
14E1 Thao Dien, D2
3744 6782

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine

including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308
THAI

Baan Thai

Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs. Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.
55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453
www.baanthai-anphu.com

Jasmine Thai

Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.
85 Quoc Huong, D2
3519 0038

VIETNAMESE

Banlan Tree

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

Frangipani 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 🍷 Oi's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.
40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790
www.boathouse.com.vn

Blue Crab 🍷 Oi's Pick

Blue Crab offers delicious seafood - prawns, scallops and lobster, crab, oysters, scallops and many more for rock-bottom prices. All of the seafood is sourced from the same supplier as a number of high-end hotels and restaurants in the city, ensuring the food is fresh and high quality. For meat-lovers there's also a wide range of dishes that include pork ribs and chicken wings. They offer weekly specials as well.
49 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 2008
www.bluecrabsaigon.com

Mekong Merchant

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.
23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713

Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, foosball, and more. Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large open-plan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie screenings.
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
35194532
www.snap.com.vn

The Deck

Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.
38 Nguyen U Di, D2
www.thedecksaigon.com

Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.
NO.1, Street 2nd, D2
www.vinovietnam.com

>>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 the season.
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.
557-1 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.
552-1 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 Bean & Tea Leaf serves

some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes.

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7
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 area.

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

NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC, The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular muddies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.

SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
 5411 1186

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.

559-561, 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 tandoor.

S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7
 5410 1989

Spice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any palette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood.

S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7
 093 841 6551
www.namaste-india.com.vn

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

Sarpino's



Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.

351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7
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.

S9 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

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 wines.

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 ambience and genuine atmosphere.

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

Salt & Pepper

Salt & Pepper Restaurant mainly serves Italian dishes.

103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.saltpepper.com.vn

Scott & Binh's Restaurant



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

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

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.100percentvn.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, D1

An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more

43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Iilly, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.

No. 17, Street 12, D2
www.classicfinefoods.com



Le Cochon D'or

LeCochon 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, D1

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 one-day 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.

554-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

Bacchus imports from most of the world's wine regions and supplies wholesale and retail customers. It encourages wine tasting in its Pasteur store using the unique Enomatic system, and staff are skilled in advising on wine matches with food.

158D Pasteur, D1

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, D1

Vinifera

Established in 2002, Vinifera is one of the most reliable wine distribution companies in Vietnam. Offering prestigious wines from around the world at a great value.

15C7 Thi Sach, D1

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY JAMES PHAM



Robot Restaurant



Peaceful Moments

GROWING UP, I was always curious about how photographers captured the images they did and how they brought the subjects to life. This curiosity turned into a passion for taking photos when I was in my 20s and then into a career.

When I embarked on my first overseas holiday through Asia, the people and the places really struck a chord with me - I wanted to capture and hold onto the memories. One destination that has really grabbed a hold of me is Japan. On one

hand, a place so steeped in tradition, with beautiful temples and natural wonders and on the other, a modern powerhouse full of sprawling cities, flashing lights and technological marvels.

Looking through the lens I am often drawn into the peace and tranquility of this side of Japan and I always hope my images portray this, drawing the viewer into the subject and allowing them to experience that same peaceful moment.

Japan never ceases to amaze me - it is always changing so I find something new to shoot every time I visit.

Bio: *Andre Paul* currently lives and works in Southeast Asia with his wife, renowned makeup artist **Claire Schultz**. He specializes in photo shoots for luxury hotels and resorts, restaurants, tourism campaigns and commercial brands. To view more of his work, visit www.andrepaul-photography.com. ■





Respect the Old, Create the New

Chasing Tokyo's new old trends

TEXT & IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM



Sushi Art

THE JAPANESE HAVE a saying: *On-ko-chi-shin*, meaning “ask old things” to “know new things.” The Confucian proverb encourages taking lessons from the past and learning from the wisdom of the ancients in order to forge new paths.

From an outsider's perspective, Japan is all about the new. Japanese culture with its obsession towards perfectionism (and the equally strong pull against perfect uniformity) seems the ideal incubator for the latest crazes and headshaking forms of self-expression. Michiyo, a Tokyo guide, explains that “Japanese are perfectionists. We find something we like and will immerse ourselves in it to the end.” But somewhere along the line, amidst sensational stories of eyeball licking, *hadoken*-ing knockout photos and bagel heads, Japan became the arbiter of cool. Hello Kitty, Pac-Man, energy drinks and anime are worldwide phenomena originating in the Land of the Rising Sun. But increasingly, what appears to be new may actually be a reinvention of the old, a living expression of *on-ko-chi-shin*, on display on

the streets of frenetic Tokyo, where Lolitas (modeled after Victorian-era schoolgirls) walk side by side with kimono-clad matrons.

Sushi as Art

While some tales say sushi was fortuitously discovered by an old woman who stashed her pots of rice high up in an osprey's nest far from thieving hands, only to come back and find her rice had fermented and got mixed with tasty scraps of fish, sushi most likely originated as a way to preserve seafood using the acid from fermenting rice. With the invention of rice vinegar, the process of sushi-making went from months to days, making it available to the Japanese masses and then the world.

While traditional sushi chefs (almost always men) take up to five years to master the art, the Tokyo Sushi Academy has seen a new trend - *kazari maki sushi* (‘fancy rolled sushi’) prepared mainly by women. During a recent class, the 12 participants, ranging from a Parisian wine instructor to housewives looking to generate income by teaching sushi-making classes at

home, looked on intently as the instructor went through the intricate steps of making a crab design, meticulously assembling cucumber claws, egg body and tuber eyes. Yuta, 26, one of only two men in the class, explains the renewed interest in art sushi. “It's all about beauty and presentation.”

“You'll probably never see these in a restaurant,” says Sachiko Goto, vice president of the academy. “While a skillful sushi chef can make a regular roll in two to three minutes, one art roll can sometimes take 30 minutes and only yield four or five slices.” The academy has filled orders for everything from corporate logos to sports team mascots. One particularly difficult design involved Olympic rings, the face of a table tennis player and a Japanese flag.

Sachiko thinks *kazari maki sushi* is more than just a fad, though. The academy has had more than 700 members in its art roll program, completing the five-day course which costs around USD1,500 per person. “Sushi is very healthy and these days people love healthy food. Unlike baking where you need a lot of



special equipment, here you just need a sushi roll mat. For color, seaweed powder, cod roe, salmon flakes, chopped pickles, scrambled eggs and sesame powder can be used. Once you have the basic skills, you can create a lot of different patterns."

Inside Tsukiji

The fish used in Tokyo's sushi likely comes from the iconic Tsukiji Market, over 1,700 stalls selling more than 500 varieties of fish. "Unlike Western food laden with sauces we want to taste every single ingredient," says Reiko Yoshikawa, author of an upcoming book on the stories behind the market and its vendors. "The Japanese say it's ideal to have 30 ingredients per day for a balanced meal. That's why the Japanese take pride in the freshness and care provided to our food."

In the wet market, Reiko points out some of the old ways - a woman who deftly uses an abacus to tally up purchases and a traditional woven basket strung from the ceiling used as a cash register. A few solitary handcarts are lined up outside, abandoned for the fast electric carts which whiz around tight corners, oblivious tourists be damned. Technology has come to Tsukiji, bringing with it sanitation and efficiency. Despite 2,000 tons of seafood changing hands daily, the market barely smells fishy thanks to roving sanitation inspectors with the latest in laser thermometers to ensure the products are fresh. Mountains of used styrofoam containers for both live and flash frozen fish are ground up and melted into industrial-sized cakes of resin for export right on the grounds of the market.

Embracing the new, though, may actually sound a death knell for the market. The government has plans to relocate the world's largest fish market (inner market only) to a new, modern facility as early as 2015. "About one-third have decided to move, but the rest are opposed to moving," says Reiko. "Most workers

here are older and are used to the old style of business. The government is trying to make 'good use' of the land by building malls and office complexes. Their thinking is: New is good. But I think it would be unfortunate to knock down the locality and the nearly 80-year history of Tsukiji."

Inn Style

New properties often look back to find inspiration when it comes to design aesthetics. The award-winning 37-story Conrad Tokyo, is an example of marrying elements of traditional Japanese architecture with contemporary design. Entrances are perfectly square, emulating Shinto torii gates, denoting visitors are about to enter a sacred space. In the lobby, "Purification", a modern oversized sculpture is designed to alleviate modern-day stress and fatigue. Elements reflecting the Shinto ("the way of the gods") reverence for nature are also woven throughout the property, in the form of *sakura* (cherry blossom) motifs in the carpets, *sumi-e* (brush paintings) of trees and birds, live pine cuttings in each room and even the light-rimmed circular mirrors, mimicking the full moon.

In Kazahana, Conrad Tokyo's Japanese restaurant, the nature theme resurfaces in Chef Masanobu Inaba's traditional 9-course *kaiseki* menu. Sashimi is served atop a whole fresh *yuzu* and garnished with purple *shiso* flowers. While obsessed with perfect presentation, Chef Inaba is also known for his modern blend of Western ingredients and classic Japanese dishes. Diners may be surprised to find cheese and truffles incorporated into their dish or bite into a Kyoto chestnut infused with brandy. "I always think: What looks natural but has a creative twist?" says Chef Inaba whose intention is to bring out each ingredient while making it look like its natural state. His menu includes seasonal and grilled dishes, like barracuda wrapped in wood paper and grilled with autumn mushrooms and

chestnuts, adorned with leaves that look like they just fell onto the plate. "I want it to look natural and not too staged so guests can fully feel the season."

Geek Chic

As any *otaku* (geek) knows, Akihabara, Tokyo's electronics mecca, is *the* place to hang out, where cosplay-ers (short for 'costume play') in elaborate outfits find themselves at home amidst shops specializing in anime, manga and retro video games. For a lonely *otaku*, an hour with a cute, giggling girl in a French maid outfit who calls you "Master" while hand feeding you dessert and playing rock-paper-scissors may sound like heaven, explaining the estimated nearly 300 maid cafes which have opened in Akihabara alone since they first appeared in 2001.

But the maid cafes have found their match in the Robot Restaurant which opened last year, reportedly at a cost of USD100 million. Visitors are greeted outside the restaurant by robotic dinosaurs and aliens, providing the smallest of hints of what's to come. The 70-minute experience is in part seizure-inducing, awe-inspiring and head-scratching, an homage to everything gaudy, blinking and deliriously gleeful. Flashing lights, flat panel screens, psychedelic colors and lasers covering every available surface assault the senses, and we haven't even gotten to the main showroom yet.

As the crowd filters in - part tourist, part work colleagues looking for some fun, part middle-aged single guys - bento boxes and light sticks are handed out. What follows is a blur of million-dollar, larger than life robots, staged battles between what looks to be Kung Fu Panda riding a giant cow against samurai robot warlords and a *taiko* drum sequence by scantily clad, white-wigged beauties. This is every boy's Princess Leia fantasy reinvented for the new millennium.

"Originally, we targeted Japanese customers -



OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Tsukiji Market, Robot Restaurant, Yakitori, Monjayaki

ABOVE: Shibuya Crossing

mostly business people after work, or maybe girlfriends going for a night out. We didn't expect it to be so popular with tourists, too," says Namie Osawa, the dancer / choreographer / businesswoman behind the restaurant cum dance extravaganza. "My vision was to have futuristic girl dancers together with robots. Other than that, it's just my taste," she says of the gold bathrooms, the gilded nautilus chairs in the lounge and the three meter tall humanoid robots. "There doesn't have to be a reason for creating something."

If the quirky celebrities who've visited the Robot Restaurant, ranging from JJ Abrams to Katy Perry to Tim Burton, are any indication, the *otaku*s of the world have a new place to call home.

The Cultural Barometer of Food

The Japanese are known for their life expectancy, perennially the world's longest. While good genes, a leaner diet and a more active lifestyle are often cited as factors, Japan is also spearheading the trend towards being more health conscious. Food creator and writer Yuka Togami is a proponent of fermented foods and macrobiotics, a low-fat, low-sugar, high-fiber diet focusing on whole grains and vegetables. Founded by Japanese educator George Oshawa in the early 20th century (and further mainstreamed by celebrities like Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow), the macrobiotic movement addresses spiritual health and balance in addition to the physical side.

"Japanese people have gotten used to eating oily Western fast food that isn't suitable for Japanese DNA," says Yuka, who now leans towards ingredients like *shio-koji* (a fermented mixture of rice inoculated with a special mold and sea salt that has become trendy in recent years) and substituting ingredients like beet sugar for processed sugar and soy instead of meat protein. "Macrobiotics is about the yin and yang of every ingredient and its connection

with the environment. We are what we eat and the macrobiotic diet encourages eating seasonal food harvested locally where one is born and raised, in order to harmonize one's body with the environment in balance."

Another food trend reflects Japan's changing attitude towards work. With the average Japanese spending 540 working minutes per day, amongst the world's highest, it's no surprise that *yakitori*, skewered grilled chicken marinated in soy sauce or simply seasoned with salt, has long been popular with Tokyo's salarymen. "That's why you'll often find *yakitori* joints near train stations," says foodie Meg Yamagute. "Most open after five and are more bar than restaurant. People typically work until late and the trains are packed during rush hour, so businessmen will pass the time here until the trains thin out. That's why the clientele is mainly middle-aged men wearing suits. The culture here is you finish work and then keep working. If your boss invites you out for a beer, you're not supposed to refuse. Their life is their work. They see more of their coworkers than their own family."

But that workaholic tide may be turning. "Nowadays when the work day is done, young people are saying: I'm sorry but I have to go home to my family," says Meg. "With changing economics, keeping the same job even if you don't like it isn't the norm anymore." We hop on the metro and head out to Tsukishima for *monjayaki*, a popular savory pancake, evidenced by the 70 or so similar restaurants that line the road. Inside, the atmosphere is raucous and alive, filled with family and friends. Meg orders *monjayaki* with bacon and cheese and proceeds to cook the pancake on the table's hot plate. "You can choose your own ingredients, like pork, fish, spicy eggs or seafood and as you can see, this dish is designed to be shared so it's nice to have in a group", perhaps a reflection of Japan's shifting focus from work to family. ■



Conrad Tokyo

IF YOU GO...

WHERE TO STAY:

For a luxe experience, the Conrad Tokyo with gorgeous panoramic views over scenic Tokyo Bay and the Hamarikyu Gardens is conveniently located directly above the Shiodome metro station within walking distance to the Ginza entertainment district. Guest rooms start at ¥75,000 (USD715). See www.ConradTokyo.co.jp

WHERE TO EAT:

Kazahana offers traditional Sushi, Kaiseki and Teppan dishes with a contemporary twist, 28 stories above Tokyo Bay viewed through 8m high floor-to-ceiling windows. The Kaiseki Shunka menu (¥14,000 (USD133)) features 9 courses including a soup, sashimi, a grilled dish, a simmered dish and a seasonal dish. Located on the 28th floor of the Conrad Tokyo.

More bizarre-yet-endearing show than restaurant, the Robot Restaurant serves up a bento box meal with a bottled drink for ¥5,000 (USD48). There are three shows per night and reservations are recommended. Within easy walk of the Shinjuku station. See www.robot-restaurant.com/E

The Tokyo After 5 tour by Tokyo Urban Adventures is part-walking tour, part-foodie tour of Tokyo's culinary landscape, including stops for *yakitori*, *monjayaki* and grilled carp (actually fish-shaped cakes filled with sweet red beans), with enthusiastic commentary on the fascinating history of the food and places visited. Tours are ¥11,300 (USD107) per person and include transportation, all food and one local drink. See www.urbanadventures.com/tokyo_tour_tokyo_after_5

WHERE TO LEARN:

The Tokyo Sushi Academy offers classes in fish preparation, sushi making and art sushi. Group lessons and private classes available. Three-hour private classes start at ¥40,000 (USD380) per person. See www.sushischool.jp

Reiko Yoshitawa gives small-group tours of the Tsukiji Market and surrounds. Market tours are followed by a cooking class, conducted in English. Find her on Facebook at "Tsukiji Fish Market and Beyond" or email Reiko for pricing: reikointokyo@gmail.com

Yuka Togami gives cooking classes out of her Kyodo home (about a 40 minute train / bus ride from Shinjuku station) often highlighting local products used in macrobiotics and fermented foods. For more see www.yucharism.com/jp/blog/ or email: mail@yucharism.com

The Tokyo Traditions and Trends tour combines walking and public transportation to provide an overview of some of Tokyo's most iconic sights in one day including the square gates of the Shinto Asakusa Shrine, the *otaku* and maids of Akihabara and the *lolitas* of Harajuku. Tours are ¥4,000 (USD38, not including transportation and lunch) and can be booked at www.travelience.com/tours/

A Love Letter to Phnom Penh

The Pearl of Asia rises once more

TEXT & IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM AND NGUYEN DUY PHUONG





Dear Phnom Penh,

I love you even when people tell me I shouldn't. You were my first foreign love and throughout our ten year affair (my longest adult relationship ever), you grew on me and helped shape my views on what it meant to be an expatriate. Admittedly, we didn't hit it off immediately. In fact we had the worst of first impressions. Remember in 1995 when we first met and I was a victim of a scary home invasion? I vowed to leave and never come back to your lawless, unsavory, Wild West-like streets.

But over the years, we both grew up. You matured. I matured. And when we met again a few years later, we were different people. Sure, whenever your name came up, friends still talked behind your back. "It's dusty," some said. "It's backwards," injected others. "It's barbaric," claimed my Vietnamese friends. They were probably remembering you when you were younger, during your more turbulent years. I saw a glimpse of that when I visited the Toul Sleng school turned concentration camp turned museum where rows upon rows of haunted eyes from scared, resigned faces burned right through me. In my dreams I can sometimes hear the echo of my footsteps across faded tiled floors that witnessed unspeakable things. And seeing bits of bone, teeth and fabric poking out from the ground at Choeung Ek, better known as the Killing Fields, just a few miles outside of the city, was nearly too much to bear. I'll always remember one innocent conversation about Valentine's Day when one of your daughters stated matter-of-factly that had she kissed her husband in public back in those terrible times, they would have been killed. I know you went through some horrific experiences, Phnom Penh, but that has just made you stronger. The way you've put the past behind you is extraordinary. New skyscrapers, trendy

eateries, chic boutiques - you've never looked as good. But while you've blossomed into a real beauty, I love the way your heart hasn't changed. The easy smiles I see on your people are among some of the most genuine I've come across anywhere.

While so many barely take the time to know you, preferring the company of Siem Reap (with its jewel of Angkor Wat) or the laid-back beaches of Sihanoukville, I see the beauty in you - now and what once was - when you were rightly called the "The Pearl of Asia" and the "City of Four Faces" (situated where the Mekong, Tonle Sap and Bassac rivers meet). My whole life, I've been drawn to cities near water, and I truly miss your vibrant riverside, so much more alive than my current love, Saigon. Remember that one perfect day we spent along the newly rebuilt riverside? Thanks for convincing me to wake up early and do tai chi with the older Chinese ladies. If we weren't there so early, we would've missed Sambo, the huge elephant that came lumbering by, on its way to Wat Phnom, the temple hill you were named after. Then we walked to the nearby Royal Palace with its Silver Pagoda and 9,584 diamond-encrusted Buddha statue whose bling made your eyes light up, Phnom Penh. We came back in the evening for a stroll past other young couples watching the sun go down, groups of kids playing pick-up football games, and the smell of sugared popcorn and fried noodles in the air. That nightcap at the Foreign Correspondent's Club (locally known by its acronym, "the FCC"), with its live music, vintage ceiling fans and stunning view of the river was amazing. I could almost hear the ghosts of yesteryear's diplomats, UN officials, and reporters rehash war stories and close calls. And remember that one magical night we spent at the regal Hotel Cambodiana, swimming in the pool overlooking the Mekong, just you and me, when all of a sudden

IF YOU GO...

Many bus companies (Sapaco, Mekong Express, Mailinh) do the six hour trip between Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh, with multiple departures daily which include stops at both borders and for a meal. Tickets are around USD12 and for many nationalities, the bus staff takes care of Cambodian visas on arrival (USD25, though check with your embassy). It should be noted that the actual cost of the visa is USD20. The extra USD 5 is ostensibly for the convenience of having someone expedite the paperwork for you.

WHERE TO STAY:

Initiated by the late King Sihanouk as the first luxury hotel in Phnom Penh, the 4-star Hotel Cambodiana occupies the best spot on the riverside. Floor to ceiling windows from the restaurant as well as a gorgeous swimming pool overlooking the Tonle Sap River take advantage of its prime location, within easy walking distance of the bustling riverside and private boats available for river cruises. Doubles start at USD100+, inclusive of buffet breakfast with its own *ku tiev* station. See www.hotelcambodiana.com.kh

For more intimate accommodations, try the 5-room White Linen Boutique Hotel. Located near the Russian Market, the bright and airy property has flexible booking options from single suites to entire floors. Best of all, White Linen is one of six small businesses run by the Daughters of Cambodia NGO, providing fair trade employment for victims of trafficking. Doubles start at USD45 (including cooked breakfasts). See www.daughtersofcambodia.org



"I'll never forget that time you served me a platter of fried tarantulas, crispy grasshoppers and boiled cocoons in front of the Central Market"

WHERE TO EAT:

Try Malis (136 Norodom Boulevard) for an upscale Cambodian meal in an elegant setting (mains start at USD 10), Khmer Surin (9 Street 57) for authentic, reasonably priced Cambodian fare (mains are USD3-6), and a tiny, unassuming noodle shop that's only open in the morning but has the best *ku tiev* in the business (corner of Streets 51 and 208). Get there at around 10 am as it's starting to wind down for the most flavorful soup you'll ever have.

WHERE TO BUY:

Check out the Central Market for its architecture but head to the Russian Market for a wider selection of souvenirs. If planning on clothes shopping, be aware that the cramped stalls have no dressing rooms, so wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to duck behind a stack of clothes to change. The market can get pretty hot, so head over to the only air-conditioned stall in the market, Bodhi Nature (stall #284-285), and pick up some excellent all-natural balms, lotions and oils.

HOW TO HELP:

Phnom Penh has lots of beggars, both adults and children. Instead of giving money directly to the poor, support NGOs and other worthy organizations. Mith Samlanh ("Friends" in English), an organization which provides training opportunities for former street youth and employment for their parents, runs various outlets including Romdeng Restaurant (74 Street 174) which serves up delicious tapas and even red tree ants stir-fried with beef and basil. Or stop by the Friends 'N' Stuff stall at the Russian Market (#434) for some unique mementos. See www.mithsamlanh.org.

fireworks went off so close that we could almost touch them? I'll never forget the magic of that moment, Phnom Penh.

Confessions

A confession, though, now that that we're no longer together. You're not the best of cooks. I'm sorry. Some of my other loves, Bangkok, Athens, Beijing, have been more talented in the kitchen. Don't get me wrong. You had some shining moments. Like your *ku tiev*, some of the grittiest, most flavorful noodles I've ever had. The sweeter, more refined Saigon version of *hu tiu Nam Vang* ("Nam Vang" is the Vietnamese word for Phnom Penh) doesn't hold a candle to you. Or the distinctly Cambodian *amok* (coconut-based fish curry steamed in a banana leaf) was a pleasure to unwrap. You've surprised me, too. I'll never forget that time you served me a platter of fried tarantulas, crispy grasshoppers and boiled cocoons in front of the Central Market. Or the strangely tasty traditional dish of red tree ants stir-fried with beef and basil. That was a nice surprise, Phnom Penh.

I enjoyed the quiet afternoons we spent at Wat Phnom, the hill topped by a stupa which in legend was set up by Daun Penh, a woman who found statues of the Buddha inside a tree floating on the Tonle Sap River. Remember when we laughed at the troupe of very bold monkeys just waiting for a moment of distraction to snatch away drinks and snacks

from unsuspecting tourists? Or the industrious little boys with their long sticks tipped with glue to re-catch and re-sell the just-released "lucky" little sparrows? I miss our little hikes to the top of the hill to view the temple complete with its colorful murals and naga snakes decorating the roof. There's nothing like that here, Phnom Penh. In fact, I miss the closeness we shared. No matter where you were, I could get to you within 20 minutes. No so here, Phnom Penh. My current love is so much more complicated. And loud. And high maintenance. We shared simpler times, Phnom Penh.

I still have some of the quirky gifts you gave me - all the lovely silks and even the "I survived Cambodia" t-shirt from the art deco, ziggurat-looking Central Market (*Phsar Thmey* in Khmer). Especially since it got that USD4.2 million facelift a couple of years ago, it's never looked better. I didn't even mind shopping with you at the Russian Market (known as *Phsar Toul Tom Pong*) with its claustrophobic warren of stalls but with amazing bargains like the hand carved, wooden plaques (great as trivets), and inexpensive silver and turquoise jewelry. I'm still using the wallet you gave me that has a Cambodian newspaper design and the fork that got twisted into a ring.

I'm so sorry it had to end, Phnom Penh. It wasn't you. It was me. I needed a change. But I'm so glad we've remained friends. After all, I'm still coming over for Tet. We'll pick up where we left off and it'll be like I never left. ■

A Dragon, a Turtle and a Carp

Folklore immortalized in broken pottery



A professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*, **Bridget March** specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and small town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget holds drawing classes for beginners and improves in Saigon. For more of Bridget's work including her new book, see BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

THERE IS A wonderful piece of mythological sculpture in a temple garden in Hoi An that I visit every time I go to the Old Town. It stands in the forecourt of the Quang Trieu Assembly Hall and is truly one of the finest examples of folk mosaic I have ever seen. It reminds me of the mosaics from Antoni Gaudi, and is imbued with the same wit, artistry and invention. Gaudi commissioned custom glazed tiles to achieve the desired look for his work but the mosaic panels and sculptural reliefs found in Vietnam's temples are mainly made from shards of broken pottery, making them all the more ingenious and well crafted.

Gaudi's dragon (El Drac) that stands at one of the entrances to Parc Guell in Barcelona is possibly one of the most famous pieces of 20th century mosaic art in the world but, beautiful as it is, it doesn't come close to the matching the vigor, splendor, passion and cultural legacy embodied in the fountain sculpture at 176 Tran Phu in Hoi An. Interestingly, the two may have been constructed within only a few decades of each other. The Assembly

Hall itself was erected in 1885 from components crafted in China; Parc Guell was completed in 1914. It is possible the fountain even predates Gaudi's work.

The fountain sculpture is loaded with symbolism of Chinese mythology. The imperial dragon (signified by its five claws) is attributed with the power to control water, rain, floods and typhoons which, in this corner of the world, make him someone worth keeping in with! Its scales are of peaty, sea green and a ridge of spiky ochre fins runs down its back. Its white belly is made of a continuous stack of white saucers and it has rice bowls for its protruding, flashing eyes.

The dragon is in good company with a leaping carp and a turtle. Because the carp, which comes from the same clan as the dragon, is known for leaping up waterfalls just like the homecoming salmon, it has come to represent tenacity, courage and achievement in Chinese culture. There is a high waterfall on the Yellow River in Hunan known as the Dragon's Gate, and there's a belief that any carp strong enough to leap it will be transformed into dragons and fly

up to the heavens. And the sacred turtle is said to have helped Pangu create the world. Ancient Chinese thought the turtle's flat belly and the domed carapace of the shell was like the flat earth and the domed sky. The turtle represents endurance, tenacity and stability.

Visiting traders and fishermen seeking shelter and good company in Hoi An would have been much comforted by the sight of these three heavenly creatures as they moored their ships at the dock in front of the Assembly Hall where the original waterfront used to be.

For me, the dragon riding on his heavenly swirl of spiraling blue and white clouds looking down on his cousin the koi and the sacred turtle speaks volumes about the culture of this tenacious little town. Hoi An has survived centuries of typhoons and floods to become a haven for craftsmen and artists from many fields of art and design. Go to the Assembly Hall on a sunny day to enjoy this sparkling sculpture at its best and be uplifted by its infectious energy. ■

No Worries

Inside an all-inclusive resort



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



"ARE YOU SURE this is free?" my mother asks for the third time in disbelief, as the waitress brings her a Piña Colada, swiftly followed by a Miami Vice (pina colada/ daiquiri mix). It's 10 in the morning and we're ensconced under thatched huts on a gorgeous beach in Akumal, on Mexico's so-called Mayan Riviera, a 112 mile stretch of coast which encompasses the relatively new tourist area from Puerto Morales down to Tulum, south of Cancun.

This week, we're spending a family reunion at the Bahia Principe Sian Ka'an, an all-inclusive, 420-room resort set on almost 300 acres of lush jungle. Together with the three larger sister properties just across the street, it's part of a mega resort with a mind-boggling total of nearly 3,000 rooms on 600 acres which includes two world-class golf courses, a dolphin center, and residences.

All-inclusive resorts usually encompass all food, drink, accommodation and entertainment for one price, and are practically the norm in the Caribbean and Mexico as well as on most cruises – places

where guests are likely to stay put. The concept has yet to make a dent in Vietnam, or even Asia, though, as resorts are typically close to city centers where food is plentiful and cheap and where guests are likely to go out and explore during the day. A handful of Vietnamese properties offer meal plans with select meals but rarely drinks, alcoholic or otherwise, as an added option purely for the sake of convenience, like the ritzy An Lam Ninh Van Bay, a distant speedboat plus 20km ride away from Nha Trang. But true all-inclusives are few and far between in this part of the world.

At the Bahia Principe properties this week, a Spanish-owned chain with resorts in the Caribbean, Mexico, the Canary Islands and Spain, one price buys activities like water aerobics, dance/Spanish/cooking classes, bingo and karaoke nights, as well as non-motorized watersports and access to a whopping 63 bars, restaurants and clubs, a departure from our family's usual MO of renting a beach house with the requisite burdens of car rental, grocery stops and decisions about where to eat out.

Oi speaks to Jose Luis Cervantes, Director of Sales for Bahia Principe Mexico, about the world of all-inclusives.

For those who've never tried it, what's the draw behind the all-inclusive concept?

JLC: The economy has been changing a lot so people want to know that they just need to pay whatever amount they can afford and not worry about paying anything extra because pretty much all your food, beverages and activities are covered. If you're on a budget, you know you're going to have good meals, good drinks. The concept of all-inclusives has changed a lot. I remember one of the first all-inclusives in Cancun was Club Med, which was semi all-inclusive (meals but not drinks). Other properties saw their success and said why don't we change to be like that?

Now that the all-inclusive hotels have been around for a few years, guests already have expectations. They try out different hotels, always looking for something better. If there are 35,000 rooms on the Mayan



Riviera, probably less than 1,000 are on a European Plan (room only, no meals). People expect it now.

Does the all-inclusive concept discourage people from leaving the resort and visiting local businesses?

JLC: In Cancun, where it's pretty much just restaurants, bars and discos, they don't really like the all-inclusive concept because people tend to stay at the property and not spend money anywhere else.

Here, in the Mayan Riviera, there is nothing within walking distance of our property. It's different from the way they built hotels in Cancun which was just like Miami. Mexico learned their lesson. When they started thinking of expansion to the Mayan Riviera, they planned to do it a better way. The government mandated that each building had to be surrounded by lots of space with vegetation. So it's not like there's a corner store where you can pick up a Coke.

Most people will stay within the property except for the tours, like to Xcaret with its culture shows or [the famous Mayan ruins at] Chichen Itza which is two hours away.

Because all-inclusive guests tend to stay put, what can you do to make sure they're entertained the whole time?

JLC: Part of our challenge is to be able to offer guests whatever they want. Onsite we have a disco, bars and live shows certain days of the week.

Even within the complex, we have one property that has 1,000 rooms and it's family-oriented with a water park, a big children's club, and starting this winter, we'll have family rooms where kids will have their own room with their own mini-bar but with juice and candy instead of beer. Two of the properties are right on the ocean so they're popular with honeymooners. This month alone, we'll have 80 weddings on the complex.

What is involved in taking care of so many people 24/7?

JLC: We're running at 95 percent occupancy, so around 6,000 people will be staying here tonight. Less than 0.5 percent really go and take advantage of local restaurants. The closest area is Playa del Carmen but it's an USD80 cab ride plus dinner.

When we have that many people, it's difficult to make everyone happy. But we have more than 2,000 employees in three shifts – we're a 24/7 business. This is a city. We have our own transportation, our own areas where we have apartments for select staff, our own doctors, gyms and pools for staff only.

Making sure everyone is well-fed must be a huge challenge.

JLC: In an average month, we'll cook 23,700kgs of chicken drumsticks, 20,000kgs of chicken breasts, 25,600kgs of tomatoes and 5,800kgs of rice.

Depending on the season, we provide each chef an amount per person per day. Chefs have their own menus which repeats every two weeks. For each guest, [the food budget] is something like USD15-20 per person per day. The chefs can use that money to create a good variety of food, drink and desserts.

In addition to the buffet restaurants, guests can also book one of the a la carte restaurants featuring seafood, Brazilian, Japanese, and many other cuisines. It's all included. For our costs, some restaurants cost less than the buffet, like Italian. Pasta isn't expensive. But dinner for one at one of the other gourmet restaurants may be more than two people at a buffet. You can always tell who's coming to an all-inclusive for the first time. They have a huge mound of food at the buffet – that's an 'arrival.' The second night, they realize they can eat anything they want, as many times as they want! ■

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

TIPS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ALL-INCLUSIVE HOLIDAY

- 1 Beware the upsell. Extras can add up quickly, including premium alcohol, wine with meals, spa treatments and on-site shopping. It's easy to sign things to your room, so be aware of what you're spending.
- 2 Take a few minutes to read through the week's program and try something you wouldn't ordinarily do, like a language or dance class.
- 3 All-inclusive holidays, whether they be land or cruise, tend to be based on volume, so if you're looking for secluded beaches and few people, this type of holiday may not be for you. That said, if you're willing to pay more, chances are you'll be in select company. We were looking for quiet, so the property we're at is adults-only and costs slightly more than the others, giving us more privileges (like being able to dine at any of the other specialty restaurants and having a separate beach area with bar service).
- 4 Unless your package says otherwise, gratuities are usually not included. Bring lots of small bills for everyone on the waiters to the housekeepers.
- 5 Make specialty restaurant reservations early. Seats are limited and after the first few days, most people will want a break from the buffet restaurants. It's easier to change reservations than to make new ones. Bring along one dressy outfit just in case there's a dress code.

airlines

Air China

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

Air France

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

Asiana Airlines

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

Air Asia

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

Cathay Pacific Airlines

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

China Southern

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

Emirates

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

Etihad

etihadairways.com

EVA Airlines

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

JAL Japan Airlines

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

Jetstar

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

Korean Air

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

Lufthansa

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

Malaysia Airlines

37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
www.malaysiaairlines.com

Qantas Airways

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3910 5373

Qatar

Suite 8, GF, Petro Vietnam Tower
1-5 Le Duan St., room 4, Floor 8, AB tower,

Singapore Airlines

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

Thai

29 Le Duan Blvd, D1

Turkish

Sales office in Vietnam
76 Le Lai St., room 4, Floor 8, AB tower, D1

United Airlines

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

Vietnam Airlines

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

Vietjet

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

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, D7
54104747

Calmette Hotel

★★
Charming hotel on one of the most attractively-named streets in the city, although slightly out-of-the-way. Quality, elegant furnishings and modern amenities.
151 Calmette, D1
39144951

Cat Huy Hotel

★★
Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.
353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D1
39208717

Ken Hotel

★★
A surprisingly well-designed hotel, this budget establishment looks anything but from within, although the location in

a side alley off CMT8 is quite deceiving.
285/7 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
0906699371

Little Saigon Boutique Hotel

★★
A small, value-for-money boutique hotel with 18 air-conditioned, non-smoking rooms, Little Saigon Boutique Hotel is an easy walk to Ben Thanh Market and other D1 sights. Hidden away in a quiet back alley right in the central area.
36 Bis/2 Le Loi, D1
35218462

THREE STAR

A&E Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung

★★★★
Local accommodation chain that aims at the classy mid-level market; still budget, but with a touch of dignity about it.
8A/1D2 Thai Van Lung, D1
38224495

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.
15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
5411 1008

Blue Diamond Hotel

★★★★
A cut above the multiple nearby 2-star properties, this hotel has been officially recognized for its quality décor and service, including high accolades in international publications.
48-50 Thu Khoa Huan, D1
38236167

Bong Sen Hotel

★★★★
Located in the heart of D1, The Bong Sen Hotel offers luxurious accommodation for guests who wish to relax or get a little work done.
117-123 Dong Khoi, D1
38291516
www.bongsenhotel.com

Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently located close to Phu My Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, guests can choose from 20 rooms.
R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7
5410 5941

Catina Saigon

★★★★
Hotel Catina Saigon provides 3 star accommodation in large, boutique rooms that include free, high-speed internet access and city views.
109 Dong Khoi, D1
38296296

EMM Hotel Saigon

★★★★
The 56 air-conditioned guestrooms at EMM Hotel Saigon include laptop-compatible safes and minibars. Complimentary wireless and wired high-speed Internet access and in-room

refrigerators are provided. 32-inch LED TVs are equipped with premium cable channels. All accommodations provide desks, safes, and direct-dial phones.
157 Pasteur, D3
01663221322

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, D1
38272738

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

★★★★
One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most famous as the location where much of Graham Greene's The Quiet American was written in room 214.
132-134 Dong Khoi, D1
38299201
www.continentalsaigon.com

Kimdo Royal City Hotel

★★★★
Nestled in amongst the commercial buildings at the top of District One's central business strip, the posh-looking Kimdo is right in the heart of the administrative, business, shopping, and entertainment district.
133 Nguyen Hue, D1
38225914
www.kimdohotel.com

Liberty Central Hotel

★★★★
Liberty Central has a very prominent brand and is a particularly stylish, eye-catching property right in the centre of the tourist district.
179 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38239269
www.libertycentralhotel.com

Norfolk Hotel

★★★★
Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.
117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38293415
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Novotel Saigon Centre

★★★★
One of HCMC's newest hotels, Novotel

is located on busy Hai Ba Trung St, just within walking distance of downtown attractions. It's everything you'd expect from the international brand with 24-seven guest services and a broad dining offer.

167 Hai Ba Trung, 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 well-equipped with modern facilities.

56-66 Nguyen 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.parkroyalhotels.com

Thao Dien Boutique Hotel

Set in a secluded, verdant garden occupying 1.2 hectares along the Saigon River, Thao Dien village is a tropical hideaway that's just 20 minutes from the city centre.

195 -197 Nguyen Van Huong, 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

***** 

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, the InterContinental Asiana Saigon is dedicated to providing local, authentic, and enriching travel experiences. Decorated in tasteful oriental flair, the hotel is dedicated to representing the charms of Asia and evokes the mystique of this beautiful continent and its cultures. Right next to Saigon's key landmarks, this hotel is ideally placed for high-class travellers and groups seeking a high standard of accommodation. Full MICE areas and facilities are on-site.

Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9999
saigon@ihg.com
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

Majestic Saigon

One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.

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

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

***** 

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, D1
3822 0033
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sgnbr-renaissance-riverside-hotel-saigon

Rex Hotel Saigon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.

141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1
38292185
www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

***** 

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

Softel Saigon Plaza Hotel

The Softel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.

17 Le Duan, D 1
38241555
H2077@Softel.com
www.softel.com/gb/hotel-2077-softel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.

18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
www.windsorplazahotel.com

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.dalatgreencityhotel.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

Softel Dalat Palace

Hotel Softel 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 Softel 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 Quarter, and is within close range of the charming Old Quarter and bustling Business District.

1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
04 3933 0500

Intercontinental Westlake

Superbly situated on the serene waters of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities, and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveler.

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, Il Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

04 3719 9000

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

*****  **O!s Pick**

Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

15 Ngo Quyen, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
04 3826 6919

h1555@sofitel.com

HOI AN

Life Heritage Resort Hoi An

Rooms are designed along Japanese themes, each having a personal porch with couches for reading and relaxing. Spacious bathrooms feature stand-alone showers or recessed baths, and many bathrooms enjoy views of a private garden. Ideal for events where participants will be enjoying the colourful ancient town area.

1 Pham Hong Thai, Hoi An Town, Quang Nam

051 0391 4555

The Nam Hai

A stunning all-villa resort located on the pristine China Beach featuring 60 one-bedroom retreats as well as 40 privately-owned two-to-five bedroom residences each with a private infinity pool.

Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam

051 0394 0000

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
05 4383 7475

Pilgrimage Village

Pilgrimage Village offers the harmony of a soothing natural environment and fascinating local culture. Delicious meals, sound sleep, and the peaceful life of the quiet countryside refresh the spirit.

130 Minh Mang, Truong An, Hue
05 4388 5461

NHA TRANG

Evason Ana Mandara

The exclusive location affords city-

centre access to Nha Trang's only beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.

Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang
05 8352 2222

Six Senses Hideaway Ninh Van Bay

The resort is one of Asia's most exclusive and intimate beach escapes, sitting on dramatic Ninh Van Bay, with its impressive rock formations overlooking the South China Sea, white sand beach and towering mountains behind.

Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa
05 8372 8222

Sheraton Nha Trang

Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa offers ten categories of accommodation – from spacious, deluxe rooms to 70m2 executive suites and a huge presidential suite. With exemplary conference facilities, this is the number-one MICE resort in the region.

26-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
05 8388 0000

PHAN THIET

Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

The new face of the former l'Anmien, this resort offers an exclusive haven of luxury and relaxation in a spectacular beachfront location right in the heart of Mui Ne. The only property in the Mui Ne district with full conferencing facilities and a range of exclusive villas – and it has an impressive wine cellar.

Mui Ne

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

Muine Bay Resort

Located in the Mui Ne Bay and overlooking the Hon Lao pristine island of blue sea, Muine Bay Resort includes 103 rooms in 4-stars standard of which 32 bungalows designed and inspired by the Cham Tower.

Khu pho 14, Mui Ne Ward, Phan Thiet
www.muinebayresort.com
0622220222

Sea Links Beach Hotel

Located within the Sea Links City complex resort, Sea Links Beach Hotel offers 188 elegant rooms and suites, four palatial-sized pools, restaurants and bars, spa, recreational amenities and the largest meeting facilities providing modern conveniences to every guest.

Km9 Nguyen Thong Road, Phan Thiet
www.sealinkscity.com
039304083

The Cliff Resort and Residences

Offers 128 rooms equipped with a myriad of amenities such as 3D smart TV, safe and mini bar as well as private bathroom. It boasts an extensive lap pool, a kid's pool and pool bar as well as submerged on deck swimming pool chairs. Its restaurant serves a selection of local seafood specialties and Western cuisine.

Zone 5, Phu Hai Ward, Phan Thiet
www.theciffresort-binhthuan.com
0623719111

The Sailing Beach Resort

Offers a contemporary setting in sensual tropical harmony that befits its bay host. All 192 rooms, with spacious private balconies affording stunning ocean views, are scattered across tropical vegetation, ponds and rests steps from an endless beach.

107 Ho Xuan Huong, Mui Ne, Binh Thuan, Phan Thiet
www.thesailingbay.com

WindFlower Beach Boutique Hotel

Located in the resort capital of Vietnam – Mui Ne Bay, WindFlower Beach Boutique Hotel offers an intimate setting for guests to enjoy a getaway on the beach to its fullest. The hotel is home to 24 cozy deluxe rooms with services and sophistication that are expected from a beach boutique hotel.

76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne (Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969
www.windflowermuine.com

PHU QUOC ISLAND

Chen Sea Resort & Spa

Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers. The resort was born from a long and passionate study in order to be integrated and to respect the uncontaminated nature of the bay and of the coastal zone.

Bai Xep, Phu Quoc
07 7399 5895

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

Located on a hill of coconut palm trees, Saigon Phu Quoc is a beautiful, quiet seaside resort with plenty of sunshine. Just 10 minutes from the airport, the resort is an ideal haven for relaxing, fishing, trekking, snorkeling, and scuba diving.

62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc
07 7384 6999

La Veranda

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 ceilings.

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc
07 7398 2988

Paris Beach Resort **O!s Pick**

Owned and managed by a friendly and hospitable French-Vietnamese woman and her French husband, the resort is located about a 15-minute taxi ride from the airport. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a private beachfront, recreation room, bicycles and a restaurant serving local and French food. Each room or bungalow has air conditioning, a mini bar, cable TV and free Wi-Fi. They also offer tours around the island.

Cua Lap, Duong To, Phu Quoc
www.phuquocparisbeach.com

QUY NHON

Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam. This resort was awarded Best Wellness

Resort in Vietnam in 2005, 2006 and 2007 by the Vietnam Economic Times.
Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen
05 7372 2563

VUNG TAU

The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is Vietnam's first largest integrated resort and ultimately will include an 1,100-room five-star hotel, a world-class casino, restaurants, high-tech meeting space, an exclusive VIP area, as well as a variety of beach-front recreation activities. The first 541-room tower of this development opened in July 2013 with its casino including 90 live tables and 614 electronic game positions. The second 559-room tower is on track to open in 2015.

Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District

Tel: (64) 3788 888

www.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 1

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 kitchen, 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 tranquility that will have you relaxed 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

Hung 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 dining and dining outlets. They will also benefit from the preferred amenities at the InterContinental Asiana Saigon next door.

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

Lancaster Serviced Apartments

Lancaster Serviced Apartments Le Thanh Ton enjoys a commanding position over the nightlife, culture, and business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, offering a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window.

22 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D 1

The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D 1

38222098

Mai Ha Lan II Serviced Apartments

Mai Ha Lan II offers a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window. It offers 33 luxurious and graciously furnished apartments with studio and two bedroom options.

8A/1C Thai Van Lung, D 1

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk

features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.
17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1

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 Thanh 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

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, D 1

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

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, D1

3822 8899

www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
38229197

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, D1

www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool ensconced by verdant gardens.

197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2

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 offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world! Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office. A District 1 presence will re-open soon.
41 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4111
www.exotissimo.com
anphu@exotissimo.com

Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.

92-96 Nguyen Hue, D1

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

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, D1
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, D1

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

Viet Journey

Viet Journey was founded by dedicated travelers of the southeast Asian region, and they strive to provide quality, time-efficient service for travelers from around the world.

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 7152

cinemas & theatres

The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

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

212 Nguyen Trai, D1

Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi, D1

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, D1

Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement.

55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

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

IDECAF Drama Theatre

IDECAF is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1

Le Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre.

25 Phan Phu Tien, D5

Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece, the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety.

7 Lam Son Square, D1

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, D1

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 at 2pm.

www.saigonh3.com

International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from 10am- noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (127 Pasteur, D3) Cost for coffee and snacks is VND130,000. Membership is VND700,000 per year. Open to all ladies

Overland Club

Overland Club is a 100 percent foreign-owned Japanese company that organizes cultural classes including pottery (from basic to intermediate level, as well as painting unglazed pottery) and cooking classes (Japanese and Vietnamese). The Overland Club also hosts various events. Past events include noodle making, soap carving, and kids' cooking.

36bis Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1

Rubber Duckies Swim Program

Group swim lessons for children ages six months - four-years- old. 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 1, 2, and 7. For more details or to reserve a place contact Katie at admin@rubberduckiesvietnam.com, Facebook @ Rubber Duckies Vietnam, or call/text 0122 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 Pick

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.

26 Ly Tu Trong, 4th floor, Ste 45, D1

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organized and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

4th floor, CMARD2 Building,
45 Dinh Tien Hoang, D1

sports

Great World Pool

Popular public pool known for its high standard of cleanliness, this indoor pool is shallow at both ends and deep in the middle to ensure safety for non-swimmers.

600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6

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

The Bike Shop

The shop is a full service shop serving the local cycling community. They offer a huge selection of bikes, BMX, urban, mountain & road bikes for all levels of cyclists. Brands include: Trek, Cannondale, GT, Jett, Elite & 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

Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favored by younger people and recreational swimmers.

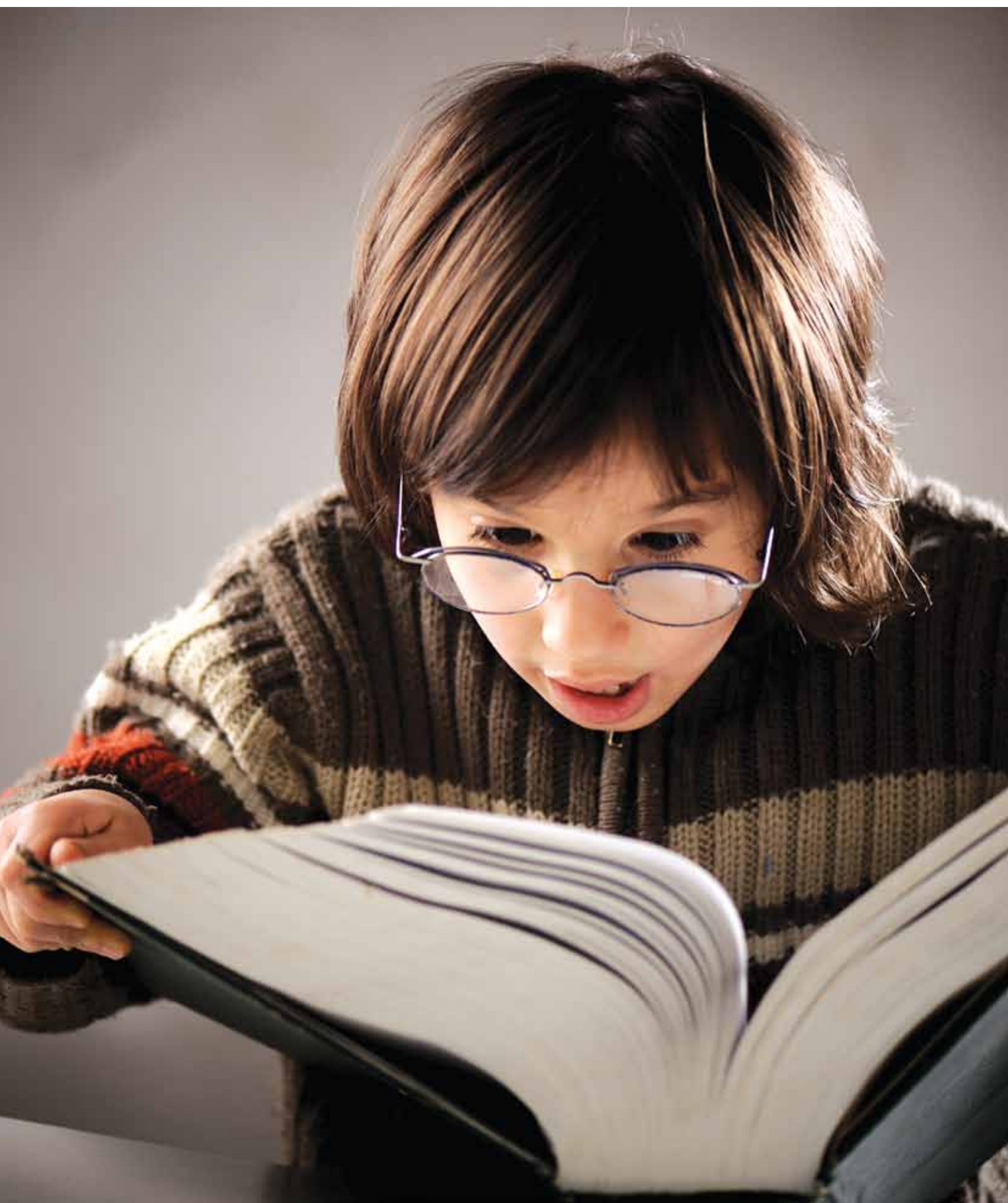
48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

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



Boys Will Be Boys

"The 'differentness' of boys is not inherently bad but it does present a challenge to teachers, to the school culture and to boys themselves."

Excerpt from *Raising Cain* by Dan Kindlom and Michael Thompson



Adrian Watts is the Deputy Headmaster and Director of Academic Studies at the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)



SINCE THE LATE 90s, evidence has been mounting showing that boys are struggling in school far more than their fathers ever did. The evidence also shows that girls on average outperform boys in school, when measured by report card grades in most subjects and in all age groups. What emerges from research into this topic is that nature is playing a bigger role in gender differences than nurture, and therefore gender differences are real, biologically programmed, and important to how children are educated. Let's take a look at some of the differences that have been identified by researchers and how these might affect a boy's education.

Firstly, girls are born with **more sensitive hearing** than boys and this difference increases with age. Males tolerate higher noise levels than females because they don't realize that it's louder. Boys may be inattentive in class because they genuinely do not hear what a teacher is saying. This could be because many

female teachers themselves have more sensitive hearing and will tend to speak more quietly. So, without realizing it, boys may innocently be noisier in class and consequently distract girls from their work.

Girls develop a link between the **amygdala and the cerebral cortex** much earlier than boys. This means that it often isn't productive to ask adolescent boys why they are feeling an emotion or even to imagine an emotion because for them there isn't a connection between where emotion is generated and the part of the brain that is used to talk about that emotion. Perhaps this is why so many boys are uncomfortable and appear resistant when asked to express their emotions about an event in which they have been involved.

There is apparently a difference in the **anatomy of the eye** where the male retina is thicker than a female's because of cell composition. This leads to preferences regarding colors and motion. Boys could be more interested in a mobile in their cot

than their mother's face. Girls naturally prefer colors like red, orange and green while boys are attracted to black, grey and silver. This translates into the type of art that interests young boys and girls. In the majority of kindergarten classrooms teachers are female, and many encourage students to draw people and animals using lots of colors, but boys want to draw trucks in motion using darker colors. This could consequently make boys decide that they are no good at art or that art is for girls from a very early age.

Boys and girls like to read different **types of books** because of the way their brain develops. Girls enjoy fiction, short stories and novels. Girls can experience greater emotional connection and empathy with characters and their feelings. Boys, on the other hand, tend to prefer nonfiction, action books with strong male characters who often act as brave heroes. This can 'turn off' boys from reading because at the early elementary level the type of books



provided by schools tend to be of little interest to boys.

These days children are starting school younger and younger. This may be detrimental for boys because their brains develop in a different sequence to that of girls. Boys tend to need more time to adapt to the skills of **reading and writing** than girls. Girls' language and fine motor skills mature earlier than boys, while in boys targeting and spatial memory matures earlier. It may be worth noting that in the majority of Scandinavian countries children don't start formal education until they're seven, an age at which boys are as ready as girls to start to learn to read and write. Perhaps the rush to get children into formal education and away from social play groups has different implications for boys than girls.

Boys and girls have different perspectives about **friendships**. Girls enjoy spending time together – face-to-face, talking and sharing secrets, and self-disclosure. When boys form friendships, they are usually developed out of a shared interest in a game or activity. They don't want to hear secrets. They want to focus on the activity, not the conversation. This has implications for teachers in classrooms where girls look for a friendship with the teacher – a smile, eye contact, or non-verbal reassurance. Working with boys means sitting down next to them, shoulder to shoulder. It also means that girls suffer greater stress and anxiety pressures when friendships break down. Girls under stress want to be with friends, while boys would rather be left alone.

Males can be innately **more aggressive**

than females because of testosterone. Boys enjoy rough and tumble play fighting as it releases aggression, while girls do not have this need. It has been shown that banning more aggressive activities for boys at an early age can lead to more serious acts of violence later in their lives. For boys, aggressive sport is seen as fun. It is certainly important not to treat boys and girls the same in this area because they are hardwired entirely differently from as early as the first three months in the womb, where the combination of testosterone and Mullerian-inhibiting substance 'defeminizes' a boy's body and brain.

It is commonly joked about throughout the world that males and females **navigate differently**. Females will use landmarks that can be seen, heard or smelled, while males use absolute directions such as north or south and exact distances when giving directions. This is common not because of nurture but nature. Women use a different part of their brain (cerebral cortex) to navigate and for other spatial tasks, while men use their hippocampus. It is the same for children, and hence has differing implications for teaching geometry and number theory.

As Nietzsche, the German philosopher, said, "the secret to getting the most out of life is to live dangerously," but again this applies very differently to boys and girls. Boys find risks irresistible, admire others who take risks and get a thrill from physically risky activities. Boys and girls react differently to pain and so therefore are attracted to different activities. This risk-taking is again hardwired in the brain as

the amygdala in males dominates behavior patterns far more and far longer than in females, who transition at a much earlier age to the cerebral cortex for their response mechanisms. This has definite implications for issues such as drug education in schools. Boys and girls will respond very differently to the same information; what might scare a girl may trigger the **risk-taking** thrill response in a boy.

It appears clear to the majority of people who have raised children of different genders or worked with them in schools that boys and girls are different, have different needs and abilities, and aim for different goals. If one accepts that these differences are due to nature and not nurture, as the studies of children raised in a gender-neutral manner would suggest, then education needs to reflect seriously on why it treats boys and girls the same. Schools abound with the rhetoric of differentiation, but where is this applied when it comes to probably the most important area of difference – gender? As we learn more from neuroscientists about gender differences in our brains, the need for answers becomes ever more important for schools if they are to reverse recent trends concerning boys in school.

Research for this article were taken from these sources: theatlantic.com, newsweek.com, www.aph.gov.au, et al.

In his next column, Adrian will write about challenges facing girls in schools today. ■

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Oi.

Keep Calm & Read On

Teaching children to relax



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

IT MAY SURPRISE parents to learn that toddlers experience stress too. Dr. Becky Bailey, author of *Conscious Discipline*, describes stress as the sense of “not enough-ness” in their language, physical, and cognitive skill areas. Throughout their day, babies have to deal with all the frustrations of their developing selfhood – which is why taking the time to teach them how to relax and be calm is critical to their emotional well-being.

Melody Warnick in *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine offers “11 Ways to Help Your Child Chill Out.” I have chosen the following five as most relevant to children here in a multicultural society:

Do Relaxing Activities

A recent survey revealed that more than half of seven- to nine-year-olds studied were stressed out. You can't eliminate all stress but you can help your child manage it in a healthy way. Play in the park, take a yoga class, meditate – any activity that you two can do together to relax.

Make Family Meals a Priority

Studies show that sharing a meal together keeps kids and parents connected and communicative, which in turn makes children more resilient to the negative effects of stress. If dinner is usually a no-

go at your house, breakfast or lunch are great alternatives.

Make Sleep a Priority

Experts recommend nine hours of sleep a night for teens but high school seniors generally average less than seven. Work with your child to limit late-night studying, try to enforce an earlier bedtime, and encourage naps if you can tell that your child is worn out.

This is especially important here in Vietnam where I have children as young as three-years-old coming to class after being up until midnight or later.

De-Stress Technique: Deep Breathing

Taking deep, belly-filling breaths sends an all-clear signal to the nervous system that triggers the relaxation response. “The heart beats more slowly, blood pressure comes down, and the muscles release tension,” says Susan Biali, M.D., the author of *Live a Life You Love*.

How to teach it: Have your child sit or lie down and coach them to breathe in and out of their nose so that their belly fills with air and empties again. For a younger kid, coach them to fill their belly like a balloon as they breathe in and then let the air out as if they're blowing water from

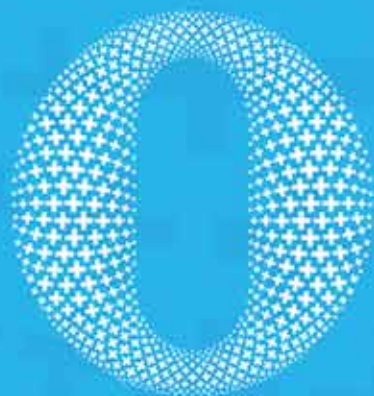
their nose. You can also have them place a hand on their belly and try to move their hand up and down with each breath.

De-Stress Technique: Listening to Music and Yoga

Why it works: Studies have shown that soothing music lowers heart rate, blood pressure, and stress-hormone levels. It can help to create a mellow mood. Yoga can also help counter early childhood pressures. When children learn techniques for self-health, relaxation, and inner fulfillment, they can navigate life's challenges with a little more ease. Yoga at an early age encourages self-esteem and bodily awareness with a physical activity that's noncompetitive – improving their concentration and sense of calmness and relaxation. By doing yoga, children exercise, play, connect more deeply with the inner self, and develop an intimate relationship with the natural world that surrounds them.

Shana Meyerson, the founder of Mini Yogis (miniyogis.com), a yoga studio in Southern California that offers classes for kids, believes that yoga builds self-esteem and self-respect. “A child's yoga practice is a rare opportunity to experience play and focus without worrying about being wrong,” she says. ■





unicef
ZEROawards
2013

Thank you!

Our generous **ZERO**awards supporters are helping us get closer to **ZERO** preventable child deaths in Viet Nam with **\$440,000 USD** raised!

Platinum Philanthropists



Philanthropists



Creative Partners



Beverage



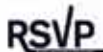
Airline



Media Partners



Media Supporters



In Kind Supporters

Minh Long
Marou Chocolate
L'usine
Neil Massey
Forwood Design
Bui Huu Hung
Pham Luc
Ha Huynh My

Manchester United
Lê Sang Bông
Nguyễn Thụy Dung
Phuong Vy
Ha Phuong
Phuong My Chi
Quang Le
Thai Chau

Phuong Anh
Huong Lan
Thuy Minh
Nguyễn Hoàng Dung
Xuan Bac
Nguyễn Nhật Anh
Daniel Hayden

Special thanks to UNICEF Corporate Advisory Board members;
NextGen Viet Nam volunteers; and all cash donors.

BELIEVE IN ZERO
unicef.org/vietnam/believeinzero

unicef

>>The List Education

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 1 (Primary & Secondary)

#2, 1E Street, Khu Dan Cu Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh
5431 1833 / 34/35/36
abcintschools@vnn.vn
www.theabcis.com

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).

Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)

APSC Compound

36 Thao Dien, D2

Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)

East-West Highway, D2

3742 4040

www.aisvietnam.com



British International School (BIS)



Inspected and

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

An Phu Primary Campus

225 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2

3744 4551

apprimary@bisvietnam.com

An Phu Secondary Campus

246 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2

3744 2335

apsecondary@bisvietnam.com

Tu Xuong Primary Campus

43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D3

3932 0210

txprimary@bisvietnam.com

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 align with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary years.

Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7

www.kindermusik-vietnam.com

090 709 9480

L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

33/19 Quoc Huong, D2

3744 6844

www.latelier-anphu.com

Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2

3744 2639

www.montessori.edu.vn

Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2

3744 4709

noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn

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 six-hectare, 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 facilities.

28 Vo Trung Toan, D2

www.ishcmc.com



Saigon Star International School



Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.

Residential Area No.5,

Thanh My Loi Ward, D2

3742 STAR / 3742 7827

www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn



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 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]

Cotana PSB Intellis International College

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 engineering.

702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Universal English Center

UEC was founded in 2009. Now with 600 students drawn from 17 different nationalities, the class is served by over 35 native English speaking teachers who are committed to providing a culturally diverse and engaging classroom atmosphere. The center offers a wide range of classes from beginner levels through IGCSE, SAT, IELTS, TOEFL. UEC also provides support to students aspiring for a place in international schools.

R4-55-56-57 Hung Gia 5, D7

5412 3300

www.uec.edu.vn

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

R4 - 28 Hung Phuoc 2, Le Van Thiem, D7

3602 6694



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, D1
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

Bebe

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, D1
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

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, D1
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 designs 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/I Hai Ba Trung, D1
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, D1
3823 0172
9am - 9pm

Lyn Around

This is the Saigon branch of the international high-class fashion label Lyn Around. It is famous for its girly girl and street style.

1st Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, 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

Mango

Mango is a Spanish fashion design company with over 2,000 stores around the world. Ho Chi Minh City is home to several of its branches. Mango sells fashion clothing for women including dresses, skirts, tops and accessories.

Unit 2F-11, 2nd floor, Icon 68, 2 Hai Trieu, D1
6266 2111

1st Floor, 65 Le Loi, D1
3914 7464

Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke adias.

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, D1
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, D1
090 935 2369

Sifa Fashion

Known for selling office wear for women.

192 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3825 0618

Song - Valeria Grogori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophisticated women.

75 Pasteur, D1
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, D1
www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse

Umbrella

This fashion label caters to a higher end market with tailored bags to accessories.

35 Ly Tu Trong, D1
6276 2730
www.umbrella-fashion.com

Valenciani 🍷 O'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, D1
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, D1

Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

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 quirkiest fine-quality local fashion stores in the central area.

168 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3829 2975

Mizada

Since its inception in 2004, Mizada has become one of the leading luxury

fashion brands in Vietnam. Mizada caters to both women and women with products such as T-shirts, jeans, coats, scarves, and much more.

105 Le Thanh Ton, D1
6673 4199

San Sciario Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

1st Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3864 0800
090 316 6364

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.aisportscentre.com

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

0902271830
personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

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
28-30-32 Le Lai, D1
5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

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

Got Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4
6261 6169

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
091 833 7111

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba® Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbaAtomic®.

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

Rex Health Club

This spa was designed for both men & women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1

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, D1
3520 9999
spa@icasianasaigon.com
8am - 9:30pm

Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool
751 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, D1
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 Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
www.xrockclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2
3897 6786

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

161-161A Hai Ba Trung, D3
3939 3930
www.acc.vn

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, D10
3834 9941

Center Medical International

Center Medical International is an outpatient clinic fully-equipped to provide international standard comprehensive and specialized medical services. All physicians are either French or Vietnamese.

1 Han Thuyen, D1
3827 2365

Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.

8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
3823 8454

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.saignonchiropractic.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, D1
3911 1860

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 5954

Lotus Clinic

Lotus Clinic was established in 2007 as the first Japanese medical clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lancaster Bldg , 22 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 0000

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency

healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.
**167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551**

Perfect Skin lab

More than just a spa, this District 1 venue is a genuine skin lab that caters to each customer's unique characteristics and needs. The lab is the latest concept developed by Dermal Essentials, the elite distributor for Dermalogica, a skin care system researched and developed by The International Dermal Institute in Vietnam.
**1st floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 0372**

Stamford Skin Center

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.
**254 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3932 1090
090 845 3338**

Uc Chau Cosmetic Surgery

This central clinic performs straightforward cosmetic treatments, including enhancing the nose bridge, breast enlargement, eyelid folds, and wrinkle removal.
**25 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
2212 3396
2212 3398**

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.
79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.
**Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0758**

dental

2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.
**125 Le Thi Rieng, D1
3925 6501**

Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.
34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh

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

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, D1
3821 9446**

Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.
**199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1
3925 3399**

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, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.
**50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3835 6159**

Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.
**173 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6635**

Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.
**2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222**

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand,

and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.
**27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485**

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

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

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.
253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

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

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

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

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

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

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, D1
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, D1

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.
103 Nguyen Hue, D1

spas



Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanliness 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

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, D1
3822 1074
091 243 9601
FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com



Glow

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, guests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options.

Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, D1

Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully-featured massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung. Various salt scrubs, and high-end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

15 Thai Van Lung, 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, D1

Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan

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
5413 6638

La Cochinchine Spa

Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of

Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1812

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3
100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7



Maison Mikio Boutique Salon

District 7's Premium Boutique Salon. Two floors providing full beauty services nestled in a quiet residential area in Phu My Hung's Garden Plaza 2 Complex. Equipped with a café, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.
Garden Plaza 2 Complex
8 Tôn Dật Tiên, Quận 7
5412 4773

MIMI Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events - and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dong Khoi, D1
090 387 6666

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609

Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting in a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being.

9C Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 7118

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

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

54 Dong Du, D1

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 guests 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

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 & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

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

Yuan

Despite being labeled as a foot massage establishment, Yuan actually has a full range of services. Customers usually make appointments. Yuan is especially geared towards Japanese expats.

1588 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

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

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

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

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

Gomo

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 decor items.

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,
65 Le Loi, D1

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, 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 MAI HUYEN CHI





Inside the World of Work

A glimpse into the working lives of everyday Vietnamese

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY MAI HUYEN CHI

SOONER OR LATER, every visitor to Vietnam has that moment of realization.

The trigger might be the casual ring of a bicycle bell signaling a mobile massage. Or the late night tap-tap-tapping of a noodle seller. Or a woman wanting to measure your weight and height in the park. Or riding along and seeing an entire pet shop loaded onto a bicycle. It's the realization that the working world here is oftentimes completely and utterly foreign to us. As outsiders looking in, the seemingly endless gamut of jobs often evokes emotions ranging from amazement to admiration, concern to compassion. It may even make us question our own fortitude. "If I had to, would I be able to do that for a living?" But more often than not, the light turns green, the person walks on by, we get distracted, and life goes on.

Stay another year or two and you might get actual glimpses into the everyday lives of the Vietnamese. An offhand conversation with the lady who sells *che* on the corner or



Watermelon farmer

'In the future, rice fields will get smaller, and more and more land will be used for industry. When that day comes, there won't be any more farming. Our kids' generation will have to leave the village.' - Farmer, Gia Lam

with a friendly barber or perhaps the man who delivers water may reveal tantalizing snippets into a world most of us could never hope to understand. Compounded by the language barrier, accessibility issues and even concepts of personal space, most of us rarely get beyond the surface and into the lives of the millions of hardworking men and women who surround us daily.

A new book, *It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam Today*, aims to do just that. A collection of 67 interviews and 59 photographs, the book offers a look into the lives of people ranging from a goldfish peddler installing aquariums and a business school graduate selling shoes on the sidewalk to high-level managers and marketers. The stories are at once insightful and mundane, and at times, even heartbreaking. Oi talks to Gerard Sasges, the editor of *It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam Today*, who spent 10 years in Vietnam conducting research, writing, and directing a study abroad program

for the University of California.

Where did the idea for this book project come from?

GS: I think I've always been interested in talking to people. In Vietnam everyone wanted to talk to me, too. Oh my God! It's a white guy and he speaks Vietnamese! [laughs]. People were so happy to invite me into their homes and tell me their stories. I'm doing a similar project [here in Singapore] and others have said that people won't be as open as in Vietnam.

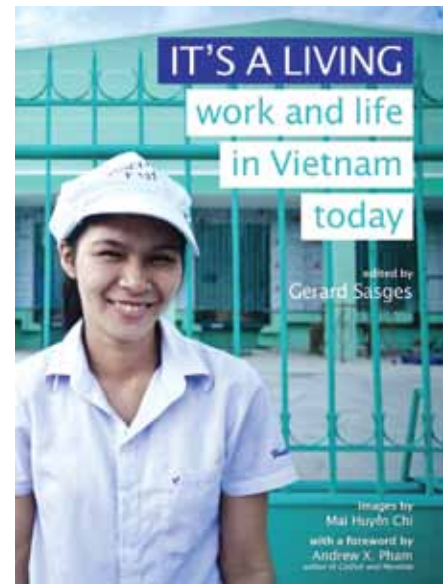
The project was actually for my university students – 85 students participated, conducting 150 interviews over two years. The American students were more open to these sorts of experiences than the Vietnamese ones. The class consciousness in Vietnam is strong where some think: I wouldn't normally talk to that person. But that said, all my

students had heard about the class and the things we'd be doing, so they were more or less open to it.

A lot of these stories are on the original project website. Why not take it down once the book was published?

GS: Actually less than half of the stories in the book are online [www.projectkieman.wordpress.com]. People keep asking me why I don't do a Vietnamese version of the book. Publishing in Vietnam would be more complicated and this is really more of a labor of love for me. I want to put up all the interviews in Vietnamese if I can, though. But some people don't understand the purpose of the website. Two-thirds of the comments are people wanting to apply for a job. For instance, our most popular story is of a worker at KFC and some of the comments are like: How can I get this job? I really want to work at KFC. [laughs]

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Pawnshop owner; *It's a Living:
Work and Life in Vietnam
Today* cover, Gerard Sasges



The book includes stories of Vietnamese living abroad. Why?

GS: Well, two reasons. First, I wanted to make the argument that they're Vietnamese whether they're living inside or outside the country. Second, I wanted people to think about how the experiences of Vietnamese in America are different but can be surprisingly similar. Placing two factory workers side by side, one in Vietnam and one in Houston [Texas] was kind of neat. Objectively speaking, I'd rather be the factory worker in Vietnam than in America!

Which stories most affected you and why?

GS: There's a story [of a *Viet Kieu* woman] who had a laundromat in Orange County [California] but it captures a lot of the difficulties Vietnamese-Americans have faced in the US, how hard they've had to work and the kinds of sacrifices they make for their kids. Another one is the story of an electric appliance repairman who makes USD150 a month and yet finds joy in what he does. That was a really inspiring story for me.

The interviewees often commented that interaction with customers is what made their jobs joyful, like the *che* seller who is moved by a "hello" from customers or the school security guard who's happy to give advice to naughty children. Was that surprising to you?

GS: It was. One of my reasons for doing this project was that my students were all going off to start their work lives. At the end of the semester, we talked about what we learned about work and what's important and what's not and I'd like to think the students came away from the project with a deeper understanding about the things in life that matter.

A common view throughout the interviews is of education being the savior of children born to hard laborers. What's your take on the educational system in Vietnam? Is it the answer?

GS: It's really funny because people put so



much stress on education, but they're also very aware that without connections, you can't get anywhere. In Vietnam, we have this wonderful combination of optimism and realism that coexist. Is university education filling actual needs or just training a bunch of managers, because everyone wants to be in business or work in an NGO? I don't know, but how different is this story from the US, for example? That said, I was having a tea on the street and talking to the seller. She's living in a one-room apartment in the Old Quarter, no money, divorced, yet her son is going to the Foreign Trade University, the top school in Hanoi. It's still impressive that that sort of ability exists. That's pretty amazing.

What do you want the public to take away from this book?

GS: First is the idea that our work is an important window on ourselves and our world; it's what we do to survive, and most human beings will spend the greater part of their waking lives doing it. Second is the idea that every job, and every person doing that

job, is worthy of our respect and our time. These are the two ideas that have inspired our project, and that shape every interview we do.

I hope that people will walk away having more appreciation for the menial, everyday jobs. These stories happen to be from Vietnam but you could do exactly the same project anywhere and just be reminded how hard so many people have to work. Luckily, I don't have to work hard in the same sense as many of these people. When I was younger, I had some pretty crappy jobs. I worked in a factory for six months which was all I could take before going crazy. We should all really respect these billions of people who are doing jobs that make our lives possible. We often forget that.

It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam Today is available in paperback on Amazon or as an e-book on iTunes (scan code). ■



Dear Hadrien,

I am an American citizen living and working in Ho Chi Minh City. I want to know what I should do if the unthinkable happened to me... How can I create a will to ensure that if I die here, the savings that I have in my Vietnamese bank account will go to my family in the US?



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

GENERALLY SPEAKING, CIVIL matters involving a foreign element, such as inheritance from a person not residing in his or her country of citizenship, can be complicated.

The first step to answering your question is to determine which law is applicable to the inheritance. As an American citizen living in Vietnam, there are two legal systems to consider: Vietnamese law and US law. The application of one or the other depends mainly on the territory where the will has been written.

Assuming that the assets subject to your inheritance are, for most if not all, located in Vietnam, the entities and people that shall proceed with the transfer of your assets in accordance with your will are in Vietnam and governed by Vietnamese law (such as your bank). As a matter of practice, they will be more likely to accept and apply Vietnamese law to your inheritance than any other law.

To avoid any risk of confusion and challenges by such Vietnamese entities and people of the validity of the choice of US law as the law applicable to your inheritance (on the ground that the will was created in the US), we advise that your inheritance is governed by Vietnamese law, which implies creating your will in Vietnam.

In a situation like yours, the Vietnamese Civil Code provides that the law of the country of your citizenship (e.g. US law) will determine your legal capacity to create, change and revoke a will but that Vietnamese law, however, will rule on the matter of the form of the will as well as the matter of the change and/or the termination of the ownership rights over your assets.

The legal capacity of a person determines whether he or she may make binding amendments to their rights, duties and obligations, such as getting married or merging, entering into contracts, making gifts, or writing a valid will. You will need to obtain confirmation from a competent US lawyer that you indeed have legal capacity to write a will but, until then, you can assume that you are capable to do so.

Distribution of Assets

As for the matters of the form of the will

and transfer of your assets, Vietnamese law, like many other legal systems around the world, makes a distinction between “testate inheritance,” which applies when a person has made a will, whereby that person called the “testator” decides to whom his or her assets will be transferred to when passing away, and “inheritance at law,” which applies when no such will has been made or when an existing will is unlawful. In the latter case, Vietnamese law provides guidance on how to distribute the assets between successors.

As a testator, you can make a will to express how you would like to bequeath your property that is located in Vietnam. Among other things, you will have the right to appoint “heirs”: to determine to which parts of your assets those heirs will be entitled to, to reserve a part of your assets as a gift, to designate heirs to perform certain obligations, and to appoint a custodian of your will (e.g. a notary public), as well as a manager and a distributor of your assets.

Now what should a will look like? In principle, a will must be made in writing. Under Vietnamese law, you are free to choose whether you want the will to be witnessed or not and whether or not you would like it to be notarized or certified. In either case, a will must clearly specify: the date on which it is made, the full name and place of residence of the testator, the full names of the people or organizations entitled to inherit an asset or any specific conditions that those individuals or organizations would have to satisfy in order to inherit an asset, the asset to be bequeathed, its location and the appointment of people to perform certain obligations regarding the asset and the content of such obligations. Furthermore, a will may not contain abbreviations or other symbols and if a will consists of several pages, each page must be numbered and bear the signature or the fingerprint of the testator.

Movable Property

The savings that you have in your Vietnamese bank account qualifies as movable property located in Vietnam and

in your will you may stipulate that those savings should be distributed to your family in the US. Under Vietnamese law, it is explicitly provided that foreigners with a lawful foreign currency resource are entitled to remit their foreign currency abroad. Assuming that you have a lawful source of money in Vietnamese dong and that you complied with all your tax obligations, your money may validly be converted into US dollars and remitted to the US should your will so provide.

Please note that the situation would be a bit more complicated if your inheritance also includes immovable property. Without going into too much detail, when foreign citizens inherit immovable property in Vietnam, as a general rule the property must first be sold and the designated heirs can only inherit the corresponding value.

It is important to know that under Vietnamese law, certain heirs are protected. This means that regardless of your will as a testator, any minor children, adult children incapable of working, your father, your mother and your wife or husband will be entitled to claim a certain portion of the inheritance. Furthermore, a husband and wife may choose to jointly make a will regarding their shared assets. At the same time, certain people are excluded from inheriting, such as those having seriously breached their duty to support the deceased.

So, if you want to be sure that your family in the US will receive your savings in case anything were to happen to you, making a will in Vietnam would be advisable. Even though it is not required under Vietnamese law, I would further suggest you visit a notary public who can help you prepare your will in accordance with the law and who can notarize and keep custody over it for you. If there is ever a dispute regarding your will, a notarized will could make proceedings before a competent civil court of Vietnam much easier. In the meanwhile, please stay healthy and safe!

If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com ■

banks

Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
39290999

Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9949

Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3824 2267
094 801 6318

Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 1525
012 1861 8695

HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3724 7247

Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8260

Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc
Thang, D1
3911 0000

Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3829 1581

Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 4797
www.vietcombank.com.vn

concierge

Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.
7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)
service@giup.me
www.giup.me

consulates

Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3521 8100
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2
6281 8001
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 2751
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong
Khoi, D1
3827 9899
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1
3910 2903

China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 5009
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1142
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 7350
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9373
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

Finland Consulate

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

France Consulate

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

Germany Consulate

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

Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 0130

Iceland Consulate

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

Consulate General of India

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

Indonesia Consulate

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

Italy Consulate

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

Japanese Consulate

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

Kuwait Consulate

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

Laos Consulate

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

Malaysia Consulate

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

Mexico Consulate

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

Myanmar Consulate

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

New Zealand Consulate

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

Nordcham

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

Norway Consulate

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

Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0334
consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn

Hon. Consulate of Portugal

66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach
3820 0623

Russia Consulate

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

Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1
3822 5174
www.mfa.gov.sg

Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 8888

South Korea Consulate

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

Sweden Consulate

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

Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2
3744 6996

Thailand Consulate

77 Tran Quoc Thao, D3

The Czech Republic Consulate

28 Mac Dinh Chi, D1

The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, D1
3829 8433

U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, D1
3520 4610

Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

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, D1

BHNT Great Eastern

Life assurance & financial plans for customers of various age groups. The company's focus is on promoting health and longevity - they have the perfect incentive to do so, really.

Level 8, 25 Bis Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

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, D1

www.insuranceinvietnam.com

Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual is a 100% US-owned general insurer licensed to provide insurance services directly to Vietnamese individuals and state-owned enterprises as well as motor insurance.

15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1. 3812 5125

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, IIIA Pasteur, DI 3825 1041

NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME
11th Floor, Sailing Tower, IIIA Pasteur, DI 3827 3646

Oracle Vietnam

Oracle offers an optimized and fully integrated stack of business hardware and software systems, lowering the cost and complexity of IT implementation and management.
Suite 25 & 26, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, DI

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, DI

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

Apex Law

The Apex management system represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.
Unit 4A2, 4F Nam Han Office Building, 65 Nguyen Du, DI. 3822 2942

Baker & McKenzie

Baker & McKenzie is a law company with over 72 branches around the world, including offices in Australia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Canada, and the United States. Has a team of 4000 highly trained and insightful lawyers.
34th Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI

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 widely-recognized practice areas include Corporate, M&A and Finance.
Level 7 - Room 702, 81-85 Ham Nghi, DI

Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.
Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3822 7161

Nishimura & Asahi

Nishimura & Asahi is one of Japan's premier full-service law firms, covering all aspects of domestic and international business and corporate activity.

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

Phuoc & Partners Company

Phuoc & Partners is an independent law and consulting firm with integrated legal and tax practices. The firm enables clients to reduce their administrative overhead and focus on core business activities.
Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

PricewaterhouseCoopers

PwC boasts a thorough understanding of the transitional economy of Vietnam and a wide knowledge of policies and procedures covering investment, tax and accounting, and consulting throughout the country.
4th Floor Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, DI

marketing

Ambrij Vietnam

Specialist supplier in the concept, design, production and supply of corporate gifts and merchandise.
14-16-18 Chu Manh Trinh, DI

Bates 141 Vietnam

The Vietnamese brand of a global WWP social media marketing company. Bates 141 has bases in 11 countries across Asia and counts HSBC, Unilever, Avon, and more amongst its ranks of prestigious clients.
7th Floor, Vietnam Business Center, 57-59 Ho Tung Mau, DI

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, DI. 3911 1190

Explosion Media

The company offers an aggressive, no-nonsense approach to marketing that saves you money and gets results.
Call 0126 317 4332 or email contact@ExplosionMediaGroup.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, D3. 3821 9529

Purple Asia 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Melody Tower, 422-424 Ung Van Khiem, Binh Thanh

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, DI 3820 0169
info@red.tm | www.red.tm**

Saatchi & Saatchi - The Lovemarks Company

This world-class international advertising firm has grown from strength to strength in Vietnam, picking up some major clients and showing exponential growth in the local market.
3 Phan Van Dat, DI. 3824 1207

media

GroupM - MEC Media

The focus of GroupM is the intelligent

application of physical and intellectual scale to benefit trading, innovation, and new communication services to bring competitive advantage to clients and companies.

Level 6, IIIA Pasteur, DI. 3821 2233

S3 Studios

The first international calibre, full-service production house and studio in Vietnam, S3 is designed to accommodate commercial photography, film & video productions and events.
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, DI. 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, DI. 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, DI. 3825 8598

The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.
369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9

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, DI

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 3995 6117

Logitem Viet Nam

Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.
23 Tran Nao, Binh An, D2 3744 2281

Sagawa Express Vietnam

A subsidiary of Sagawa Holdings Group, this firm specialises in providing solutions to general logistics issues in Vietnam, and it has a general logistics certificate unique in this country.
169 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh 3840 9330

Faces & Places



20

ISHCMC celebrated their 20 years of educational success this school year. 980 students and teachers attended a cake cutting ceremony in December 2013 on the school campus to commemorate the occasion and acknowledge long-serving staff members and students.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY **ISHCMC**



40

The final celebration to honor 40 years of diplomatic relations between France and Vietnam was a spectacular lighting show at the Reunification Palace created by image artists from the Spectaculaires group.

IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**



20,000

The HCMC leg of the heavy metal concert RockStorm saw 20,000 headbangers fill up the Military Zone 7 stadium. From veteran bands like Wall, Pentatonic, and Microwave Generation to younger ones like Black Infinity, KOP, and Oringchains, the music was loud and pumping.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

ME GET YOU CUSTOMER

DON'T SETTLE FOR MARKETING COPY IN SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH!

Metro Solutions is a team of foreign and Vietnamese specialists assisting foreign companies in presenting a compelling and professional image to local and/or international consumers.

WE CREATE:

- * Incisive PR copy
- * Successful online marketing campaigns
- * High-response social media packages
- * Lucid and engaging copywriting work
- * Media-savvy blogs and online articles
 - * Error-free print publishing
- * Promotional eBooks for businesses
 - * Personal publishing projects
- * Ghostwriting in all styles
- * Gorgeous photographic assignments

With a proven track record for international-quality professional communications, Metro Solutions delivers complete media packages for businesses and individuals across Asia and beyond.



www.metro-solutions.asia | 08 3943 4223

Contact: Kate Tu | 091 800 7160



Everyday embraced by nature

Diamond Island

LUXURY RESIDENCES

Managed by The Ascott Limited

FOR LEASING ENQUIRIES:

- Hotline: +8496.829.3388
- enquiry.hochiminh@the-ascott.com
- www.the-ascott.com

Managed by



A Member of Capitaland