

A woman in a red and gold outfit is performing hula hoops on a red carpet. She is smiling and has her arms raised, holding two long poles that form a large 'X' shape behind her. Several hula hoops are spinning around her waist and legs. The background is a blue-lit arena with rows of empty seats.

Ở

VIETNAM

JULY 2013

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Meet Saigon's
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Image: Quinn Ryan Mattingly

Model: Luu Thi Bich Lien

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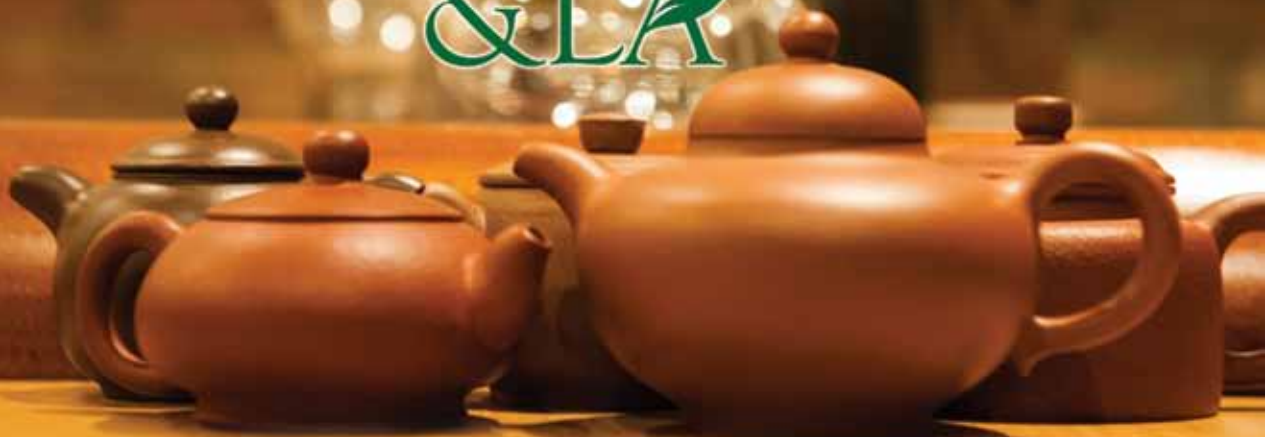
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Editor's Note

JULY 2013

Easy A

THERE IS NO sound quite as sweet as the final afternoon bell on the last day of school. To me, it didn't matter what day summer *officially* started. The act of being dismissed from your last class with promises to K.I.T. (keep in touch) hastily but earnestly scribbled in purple pen in your yearbook, the sun shining on your face as you boarded the bus for the last time and the pure, unadulterated call of freedom were sure signs of summer.

Here in Vietnam, it's almost perpetually summer, but there's still a certain giddiness that comes around this time of year. Maybe it's the international school kids with the entire summer off to walk the malls or go on extended trips. Or the desperation of local school kids trying to squeeze a whole summer's worth of fun into just a couple of weeks before heading back to summer school in preparation for high school and college exams. In our cover series, James Pham uncovers the fascinating back story to some of Saigon's most colorful performers in *Circus Folk* and travels to the Can Gio mangrove forest on a day trip with something to offer everyone in the family. While school's out for the lucky, it's already back to class for some. Clara Phuoc Nguyen gives us an insider's look at a day in the life of a typical Vietnamese teenager and Michael Arnold sheds light on the process some families go through to find the perfect school for their kids.

Play isn't only for the young, though. We adults need to relax as well. While I've never been a golfer, I can certainly appreciate the lure of spending a day out in nature, walking the links and soaking up a frustratingly beautiful game of golf. Newcomers to the city are always surprised at how many world-class golf courses there are within an hour's drive of HCMC. In *The Long Game*, Mike Wakely takes us on a tour of just three of these courses which

use the natural lay of the land to create some stunning greens.

In our May issue, we had the privilege of speaking with Nick Ut of the famed "Napalm Girl" photo. This month, we talk to Nick's counterpart, World Press Photo Prize winner Patrick Chauvel, on some of his most poignant memories of photographing the American War. His insights into the power of a photograph are fascinating. Another Francophone causing waves in Saigon is Paul Rogers, the Quebecois cheesemaker featured in Marianna Daniels' *A Cheesy Kind of Guy*. I don't know any expat who doesn't put cheese towards the top of their list of craves, so this article is sure to please.

Our travel section highlights the highs and lows of solo travel along with exploring India and Egypt, both firmly on my bucket list. One of my favorite ancient civilizations in school, Egypt's soaring pyramids, mysterious beliefs and uncannily sophisticated people were the fodder of many a daydream. More recently, Egypt's been in the news for political rather than cultural reasons, spawning the question of whether it's still a safe destination for travelers. Nazley Omar argues that now is the perfect time to visit in her article, *Captivating Cairo*.

So whether you're in school or out, there's much to celebrate in this issue of *Oi*. Whether you have plans to travel to far-flung locales or are simply keeping it local, here's to a great summer and K.I.T.! We'll be waiting for you when you get back. ■

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor

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Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events

JULY 5 & 19

What: Wine Tasting

Where: Bacchus Corner, 158 Pasteur, D1

About: Join the experts at one of Saigon's premium wine retailers for two tastings - a general tasting on July 5 and a special Riedel Glass Tasting on July 19. Both events from 5pm to 8pm.

Contact: Call 3829 3306 for reservations



JULY 6 - 21

What: Winter Garden

Where: The Exhibition House, Ho Chi Minh City Labor Culture Palace, 55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

About: Curated by art critic Midori Matsui, the exhibition *Winter Garden: The Exploration of the Micropop Imagination in Contemporary Japanese Art* features 35 works - drawings, paintings, and video - by 14 young Japanese artists active from the latter half of the 1990s throughout the first decade of the 21st century. This exhibition is in celebration of the Japan - Vietnam Friendship Year 2013.

Contact: For inquiries, contact Mr. Yoshioka at 0123 384 4138

JULY 7

Where: RMIT University, 702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7, 8am - 5pm

About: BarcampSaigon is an 'unconference' that was created in the tech community in 2005. So come and present about anything you want. The community will vote on topics and the top topics will get the biggest rooms. This year, they've rolled out a mobile BarcampSaigon app for iOS, Android, and Windows phone.

Contact: Visit www.barcampsaiagon.org

JULY 9

What: Contemporary Music and Dance

Where: Opera House, 7 Cong Truong Lam Son, D1

About: The Opera House will open its doors at 8pm for this event organized by the Ho Chi Minh City Ballet Symphony Orchestra and Opera. The two part program will feature performances from the HBSO Chamber Orchestra and Ballet. The HBSO strives to host concerts featuring masterpieces of world academic music as well as Vietnamese classical and contemporary works. Prices for the event range from VND80,000 - VND400,000.

Contact: Visit www.hbso.org.vn

JULY 11 - 13

What: Certificate in Talent, Competency & Succession Management

Where: Windsor Plaza Hotel, 18 An Duong Vuong, D5

About: ITD World is the organizer of this three-day seminar aimed at organizations that have a pressing need to attract, retain and develop first-rate, highly-productive talent. The conference is business related and geared towards CEOs, directors, managers and HR department representatives. Dr. William J. Rothwell, author of 80 best-selling books and the President of Rothwell & Associates Corp. will be the speaker.

Contact: Visit www.itdworld.com

JULY 13

What: Heart Beat

Where: Darts Darts Darts, 224a Pasteur, D3

About: Heart Beat Saigon has recruited two special guests from Germany - Steffen Albert and Sylvio Marquardt for a late night rave party from 9pm to 3am. There is no admission fee; just bring yourself and a love for a good time.

Contact: Visit www.heartbeatsaigon.com

JULY 18 & 19

What: Art, Wine and Words

Where: New York Steakhouse 25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1, 6pm - 9pm

About: Art, Wine and Words gives you an opportunity to combine some of the finer things in life. Combining art and fine dining, Kelly Le is the featured artist for this event and will be showcasing some of her striking work. Free entrance to meet the artist and view her work. VND990,000++ includes aperitif and filet or rib eye with a glass of wine for dinner and dessert with a glass of sparkling wine. Organized by VinGallery.

Contact: Email contact@steakhouse.com.vn or phone 3823 7373

JULY
28

What: Bloody Mary Challenge

Where: Boomerang Bistro Saigon, 2 3-4 107, Ton Dat Tien, Phu My Hung; 11am - 2pm

About: Boomerang and Russian Standard are on the hunt for the best Bloody Mary

recipe in Ho Chi Minh City. So for all you mixers out there, it's time to shake your stuff and put it on the table. Classic ingredients will be provided courtesy of Russian Standard Vodka, McCormick Spices, Tabasco and Annam Gourmet.

Whether you like your poison with sake, wasabi and black vinegar, or Guinness instead of vodka, there are some deliciously expletive variations on the classic combo of tomato, spice and vodka.

It's free to enter and prizes will be given out in the following categories: Professional, Amateur, and Virgin. The event is co-sponsored by Oi Vietnam.

Contact: To pre-register and for official rules, email adam.zakharoff@boomerang.com.vn



Troi Oi

The city by the numbers

2



whales, each weighing around one ton and five meters long, were caught off the central coast of Vietnam last month. Two fishermen from Quang Binh Province spotted a whale stuck in their fishing nets while fishing 500 meters offshore. The fishermen managed to tow the whale to the shore and inform local authorities who persuaded the pair to release it back into the sea.

A day earlier, fishermen in Quang Nam Province saw a beached whale on its belly. They tried to push the whale back into sea several times, but it was unable to swim.

All along the Vietnamese coast, whales are revered and fishermen believe they bring good luck. Many coastal provinces have temples dedicated to the gentle giants and festivals are held every year to celebrate them. Any beached whale that dies is buried with honor.

4



Vietnamese places - Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An and Halong - are among the Top 25 Asia Destinations according to TripAdvisor. Hanoi is rated fourth on the list while HCMC, Hoi An and Halong Bay rank 15th, 17th and 25th, respectively.

"The charming Vietnamese capital has aged well, preserving its Old Quarter, historic monuments and colonial architecture, while making room for modern development. Lakes, parks, shady boulevards and more than 600 temples and pagodas add to the

appeal of this city," is what the TripAdvisor website says about Hanoi.

The travel site also describes HCMC as Vietnam's largest, bustling hub which sets the cultural and economic pace of the country. Hoi An is a well-preserved example of an important Southeast Asian trading port from the 15th to 19th century, and Halong Bay is famous for its stunning limestone islands, rock formations and caves.

78

young volunteers will help tourists in District 1 find accommodation, avoid getting ripped-off as well as help them locate tourist attractions. The volunteers are part of the city's program to better serve the tourism industry in Vietnam.

2nd

hospital in Vietnam gets transgender surgery permit - the Hanoi-based National Hospital Pediatrics. Earlier this year, the Children's Hospital 2 in Ho Chi Minh City was allowed to perform this kind of surgery, becoming the first in Vietnam.

According to the Ministry of Health, surgery is only permitted for those who have birth defects of the sex organs or whose gender is difficult to determine, meaning transgender surgery is allowed only in the case of unidentified gender caused by genetic mutation, not caused by psychological factors.

The two hospitals are banned from performing transgender surgeries for people who have defined genders.



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HOT

HOT

Advertising on buses. Finally another means to raise revenue for the city's public transport system without hiking fares.



NOT

NOT

Those enormous billboards across the river from DI's Bach Dang Wharf. Erected at huge cost, they have apparently still not born a single paid advertisement, instead just blotting out the green environs of D2

HOT

A rare striped rabbit, *nesolagus timminsi*, has been found at a preserve in the central province of Thua Thien – Hue.



NOT

Poachers and lack of territory have killed off the last Javan rhino in Vietnam.

HOT

The first four of 12 satellites, part of a project dubbed O3b (for the "other 3 billion" people), in a new constellation to provide affordable, high-speed internet to people in nearly 180 "under-connected" countries were blasted last month.



NOT

Vietnam among top five countries targeted by online scammers. The IT security company Kaspersky Lab has warned about increasing phishing attacks, of which Vietnam ranks among the top five countries being targeted.

HOT

The Asia Canine Protection Alliance (ACPA) has been set up with a view to put an end to the dog meat trade responsible for the slaughter of some 5 million dogs for human consumption per year.



NOT

Dog theft is common in Vietnam. Stolen dogs can be sold for food for between VND100,000 and VND200,000 per kilogram. The stolen dogs are often valued at less than VND2 million and thus thieves only face a nominal fine.

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The Bulletin

New in HCMC...



100 PERCENT

100% (26b Thao Dien, D2) is the latest high-end grocery store to grace the streets of An Phu. Its goal is to provide customers with safe, natural and local products all sourced and manufactured in Vietnam with international food safety certificates. All products will soon be available to order online at www.100percentvn.com.



SOYLICIOUS

SnowBites Tau Hu (Saigon Pearl, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh) is a Singaporean dessert restaurant that has just opened at Saigon Pearl. Specializing in soy milk desserts, this quaint shop offers an outdoor patio setting where customers can enjoy the city's skyline. While the traditional soy milk pudding (from VND30,000) is the main feature, the cafe also offers a range of cakes, sweets and drinks.



SPECIAL DRINKS PROMOTIONS

Hatvala, a tea house, coffee shop and bistro specializing in pure, high quality Vietnamese teas and coffee, is offering special promotions this month. For the early risers, buy one get one free on any hot or iced coffee drink before 10am. Afternoon folks can get a free piece of cake with any coffee, tea, juice or smoothie purchased between 2:30pm and 6:30pm. Discounts are also offered on beer and wine during those times. Hatvala is located at 44 Nguyen Hue, D1 or visit www.hatvala.com for more info.

GLOBAL FRIENDSHIP

The latest edition in the **Global Friendship** series is set to be released by publisher Amara Para. This installment will feature Vietnam alongside the United Kingdom, Western Samoa, Yemen and Zimbabwe in celebrating each country's unique culture and language.

The Global Friendship Collection is a set of five books that aim to teach children about different countries, people, music, flags and languages. Another book is scheduled in the near future where readers can further learn about the two Vietnamese characters in the book, Minh and Kim, and their adventures. More info on the book can be found at www.amarapara.com



ESCAPE TO CENTRAL VIETNAM

Angsana Lang Co (Laguna Lang Co) has launched a special offer where guests can enjoy a rate of VND2,520,000 per night for a deluxe room in one of the most stylish resorts in central Vietnam. Opened in April 2013, the resort offers a contemporary getaway featuring 229 suites, more than 100 of which have their own private pool. The resort also has one of the longest serpentine pools in Southeast Asia. For more information, call (54) 3695 800



WORKING HARD FOR YOU

The Chinese food delivery place that we all love has finally opened a storefront. Centrally located in the heart of Phu My Hung, **Wok N' Roll** (Hung Vuong 1 E006) serves a wide variety of authentic American-style Chinese cuisine such as Orange Chicken, Broccoli Beef, Sweet n Sour Pork, General Tso's Chicken and many more. Prices range from VND25,000 to VND109,000 with combination plates and family meals starting from VND239,000.

The Chinese-American family behind the business has 20 years of experience in the industry and a successful restaurant in Boston, Massachusetts. Call 090 255 0978 or visit www.woknroll.vn for more info

TIME TO GET FIT

With the recent opening of **Body by Jovie** (Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence Nguyen Luong Bang, D7), an urban boutique gym & yoga studio, there's no excuse not to be fit. The gym offers a unique facility with sessions that focus on raw functional training, small group fitness & yoga classes all combined with state of the art equipment.



BAOTIQUE

Baotique (35 Ton That Thiep, D1) is a recent addition to the city's fine dining experience. The restaurant's décor mixes elegance and luxury that's perfect for intimate meetings or romantic dates. Baotique's menu is all about fresh concepts on traditional Vietnamese dishes (think lemongrass duck sausage, eggplant and vegetable ragout for VND290,000) with world famous wines from the bar to complement.

Michael "Bao" Huynh is a well-known chef and restaurateur in New York City. A former boat person who learned to cook by his mother's side at her restaurant in Saigon, he has been able to capitalize on New York's infatuation with a cuisine for which he has proselytized. His mini chain of Baquette shops cash in on the *banh mi* sandwich craze and serve up *pho*, the fragrant Vietnamese noodle soup New Yorkers have learned to love.

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Under Great Northern Skies

TEXT AND IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

THESE IMAGES ARE a look at the life and land of Vietnam's great north. Busy city streets are nowhere to be found. Instead, motorbikes ply their way up and down the pastoral slopes on imperfect trails while trucks wind their way through endless curvy roads, all at a snail's pace. Work and earning a living comes from the soil. Nothing precious is given without effort.

The faces here are different too. They represent different ethnic minorities with their very own unique features, cultures and attire.

These hills hold great intrigue, offering sights and scenes not found anywhere else in the country, and I will make my way back soon, toward the great northern skies.

Scan to view the full photo essay ■







Long Thanh Golf Resort (above & next page)

The Long Game

While doing a short golf tour of courses around HCMC, we learn about the game's growing popularity among locals

TEXT BY MIKE WAKELY

AS WE ALL stood in the shelter beside the fourth fairway, huddled together like a group of golfing-attired penguins, escaping the horizontal rain and ear-shattering thunder and lightning, I was reminded of six-time Major winner Lee Trevino's advice for playing in bad weather: "If you are caught on a golf course during a storm and are afraid of lightning, hold up a 1 iron. Not even God can hit a 1 iron."

Part of golf's enduring appeal, and one of the reasons that it is one of the world's fastest growing sports, is that it is nigh on impossible. Whoever dreamt up a game

where you hit a tiny ball into an equally tiny hole several hundred yards away, with a tiny club should be found guilty of a crime against humanity. Add to this sand traps, water hazards and the weather and it's not difficult to see why every golfer you ask (barring maybe Tiger Woods or Rory McIlroy) would tell you that it can be a deeply frustrating game. However, they would almost certainly then follow it up with a description of the greatest shot they ever hit and it's those contrasts of elation and despair that make golf so addictive. This love hate game has slowly been sinking its claws into Vietnam over the

last decade with new courses appearing and the number of players steadily growing.

"Five years ago about 10 percent of our membership was local Vietnamese, now they make up more than 45 percent of our 1,000 members," says Hoa Nguyen Viet from Vietnam Golf & Country Club. "The rest are from Korea, China and Japan predominantly."

Vietnam Golf & Country Club is probably the closest 18-hole golf course to central Saigon. It's about 40 minutes by car from District 1 and the first thing that you notice when you turn off the chaotic, dusty road into the gates is the tranquility. In a city with

so many people and so little space you can forget how beautiful an area of empty green is. The clubhouse feels new, if not a little sterile. It has all that one can expect from one of Vietnam's premier golf clubs – wall to wall wood paneling, more free toiletries than any man should need and a conveyor belt to bring your golf clubs out to you.

There are two courses, East and West, and they differ greatly. The newer of the two is the Lee Trevino designed East course, finished in 1997. It is a challenging test for an average handicapper, with undulating fairways, water in play for about half the holes and fast, heavily sloping greens. There are fewer trees and the course is more open than the West so you can be a little less accurate off the tee. It's a good course and each hole has been well-designed so that none of them feel the same. The West is older and more established, with tighter fairways, lots of trees and still a fair amount of water, but easier greens if you can hit straight enough to get there! Both courses are set in beautiful landscaped grounds with abundant beds of ginger lilies and bird of paradise flowers dotting the course, combined with hazy glimpses of the Saigon skyline in the distance. In the UK, golf is often played in an almost somber environment, everyone following stuffy rules of etiquette and speaking in whispers. In Vietnam people seem to enjoy the game more, having more fun and making it a social event – as it should be.

Dragon Guarded Bridges

If I were to describe the journey down QL 51, on my way to Long Thanh Golf Resort, as anything even approaching fun, I'd be lying. A lot. Riding for an hour and a half on a motorbike along one of the dustiest and busiest industrial roads at rush hour probably wasn't the best way to prepare for a sedate round of golf. However, by the time you arrive at the clubhouse you've been driving for 10 minutes through copious woodland, punctuated only by some of the biggest villas I've ever seen in Vietnam, and the horror of the drive seems a distant memory.

The clubhouse is set on top of a hill with glorious views out across the countryside and the Lake course, set down in the valley. The club was opened in 2004 and has two 18-hole courses, the Hill course and Lake course, with plans for another one, in addition to more houses, a hotel, a hospital and schools. The Lake course is an open, almost parkland style course, but with an Asian twist. As the name suggests there is a lot of water, as the Dong Nai River snakes its way menacingly throughout all 18 holes, so expect to lose a lot of balls. The par 3 132-yard 16th hole plays to an island green and, while short, is not for the faint-hearted. They deserve an award for the level of creativity applied to the topiary on the course alone with huge green 20-meter long dragons guarding the bridges. The Lake course is immaculately kept and a testing round of golf, but it is the older Hill course that steals the show. Thoughtfully cut out of the undulating hillside it complements the contours of the land, with sudden changes in elevation from hole to hole. As you play, it's very easy to forget the hassle of the city, hitting your ball around (or in my case, repeatedly into) pines and palms, up hills and





Taekwang Jeongsan Country Club

over lakes. It's one of those courses where you feel a tinge of disappointment when you realize that you've reached the 18th.

Golf for the Masses

What I noticed on both the courses that I'd played was a lack of children or younger players; in fact, I didn't see one. Golf has been growing in other countries as kids take up the game inspired by seeing their national heroes win titles (and millions of dollars) on the world tours. If you go to most golf courses in the US, China or Europe there will be lots of garishly dressed 14-18-year-olds playing golf.

Nguyen Huu Thanh, the Deputy General Director of Long Thanh Golf Resort, explains how the game has developed. "In the beginning only a very small number of Vietnamese played golf; it was mostly Korean or Taiwanese expatriates. Gradually the game became more popular, but it is very expensive and Vietnam is a poor country."

Now a third of the 1,000 members are Vietnamese but there are still only a few younger members and Thanh would like to see more done to encourage children to take up golf. "The Vietnam Golf Association wanted to build one or two golf academies last year, but that hasn't happened yet. We want to have golf academies in Vietnam. At the moment members send the children abroad to learn."

Kang Seung Kyun, the Golf Operation Manager at Taekwang Jeongsan Country Club, the newest arrival on the Saigon golf scene having opened just a year ago, adds, "There needs to be more practice ranges near the city, but land prices are so high that investing and breaking even are difficult. In Vietnam there are currently 27 courses and perhaps 5,000 people play golf. In Korea there are 500 courses and a golfing population of 3 million. In Korea the government rents vacant

land cheap for practice ranges and golf is taught more in schools and universities."

Kang is clearly very passionate about the game. He was a pro before taking up his current role, and his corporation has invested USD45 million building an 18-hole golf course on Ong Con Island in the Dong Nai River.

I began the day waiting at Bach Dang Pier before being picked up in a speedboat and whisked 25 minutes along the river to the golf course jetty. If my journey to Long Thanh was a challenge, this was anything but; charging past all the barges across the murky waters was the perfect way to get in the mood for a round of golf. For the first five holes Jeongsan felt (and played) like a links course, exposed to an increasingly strong wind as the heavy black rains swept in behind us. After the thunder and lightning subsided the course revealed itself to be an extremely well-designed and challenging course with blind tee shots, a good mixture of water and sand and a finishing hole that would make it worth the green fee alone (long par-5, blind tee shot, water down the left and bunkers right. Joy.).

It is estimated 57 million people play golf around the world, and if Vietnam is going to add to that number, then as the game expands it must find ways of making golf more affordable and accessible to as many people as possible. Jeongsan has a weekday rate for 18 holes of VND483,000 including caddie, and both the other courses have discount deals, but perhaps cheaper public courses might offer a way forward.

"All of the caddies and staff at our club can play for free," says Kang. "I'm hoping that we can get a good team together and make the Vietnam golf team stronger."

It might be 10 years before there is a high profile global professional Vietnamese golfer, but in the meantime perhaps I should listen more carefully to what my caddie tells me. ■

GOLF FEES



Vietnam Golf & Country Club

Weekdays - VND2,284,000
Weekends - VND3,009,000
Mondays - VND1,100,000

Buggy hire - VND970,000
Club hire - VND740,000

www.vietnamgolfcc.com

Long Thanh Golf Club

Weekdays - (Guest) VND1,192,000
Weekends - (Guest) VND2,150,000
Mon - Wed promotion - VND967,500

Buggy hire - VND795,000
Club hire - VND596,000

www.longthanggolfresort.com

Taekwang Jeongsan Country Club

One 18-hole course
(split into two 9 holes)
(Sun and Moon) set in 80 hectares.

(18 holes)
Weekdays - VND483,000
Weekends - VND1,638,000

Buggy hire - VND315,000
Club hire - VND840,000

www.jeongsanccvietnam.com



State of the Art

In this two part series, *Oi* features local galleries and the artists they are helping to nurture



La Huy

PORTRAITS BY QUINN RYAN MATINGLY

"Those prices seem unlikely in the short term but I think if you look 10 or more years down the line it's not hard to imagine that there will be contemporary Vietnamese artists commanding those kinds of prices"

Craig Thomas Gallery
27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1; cthomasgallery.com

Craig Thomas, Director

How do you find your artists? What do you look for?

CT: In the past I've found a lot of our artists by going to exhibitions at the HCMC Fine Arts University. It's a small community so it's relatively easy to have a good grasp on the talent that's out there whether it be in Saigon or in Hanoi. Websites such as the Vietnamese language soi.com.vn and the English site Hanoigravevine.com are also excellent resources. I greatly appreciate the rare case when an artist is able to clearly elucidate the intellectual and emotional factors that underpin their work.

Describe your typical buyer and their motivation.

CT: The majority of work is sold to expats and Viet Kieus living here in Vietnam. Most interestingly, we're starting to sell an increasing amount of work to local Vietnamese. I consider us to be a Vietnamese gallery – we only deal in locally-trained Vietnamese artists – and I hope that one day a large portion of our work will be sold to the largest natural market, the local Vietnamese. That's the only way Vietnamese art is going to reach its true potential.

How do you make a gallery profitable and successful?

CT: Profitable and successful are relative terms, of course. I love this job, so just being able to

make a living doing something I love meets those criteria for me in a sense. But I'm in it for the long haul and believe that this is really the beginning and the best days for Vietnamese art are still ahead of us.

A 1932 painting by Nguyen Phan Chanh recently sold for USD390,000 at Christie's Hong Kong, a record for a Vietnamese artist's work. Will contemporary Vietnamese artists be able to fetch that kind of price for their work anytime soon?

CT: Those prices seem unlikely in the short term but I think if you look 10 or more years down the line it's not hard to imagine that there will be contemporary Vietnamese artists commanding those kinds of prices. There is too much talent and determination among these artists for that not to happen.

The Artist: La Huy

Born in Bien Hoa, La Huy graduated from the HCMC University of Fine Arts. He has had solo exhibitions in HCMC and group exhibitions in HCMC, Phu Quoc, Hanoi and Australia.

How did you decide to become an artist?

LH: I was born by the Dong Nai River so I was surrounded by nature and water. My father did pottery as a living and also painted landscapes to hang in the living room. These things have been ingrained in my life. So when I grew up I made the decision to study Fine Arts.

Who or what inspires you?

LH: Everything around me. Recently I poured wax to create the robe of a monk I saw asking



Shyevin S'ng with Hokadate



Simelan



Blossom 5

for alms in District 6 near where I live. To me, this image is quite rare in Saigon. It took me two weeks to visit pagodas and learn how to hang a monk's robe properly.

Why did you choose wax as your medium?

LH: I actually use all kinds of materials to create my works. Wax, though, is a delicate medium which can be combined with light to create illusions. Most of my work combines wax and valuable artifacts such as old Buddhist scripture texts, Bibles, etc.

VinGallery

4 Le Van Mien, D2; vingallery.com

Jenny Tarr, Manager

Who are you particularly excited about right now?

JT: Shyevin S'ng is an artist who truly sees. She has the talent of taking the viewer to the exact place she has been while showing her thoughts at the same time. Her work is deeply personal and acts as a window to her innermost feelings. Shyevin's paintings are instantly gratifying but at the same time, their intensity grows each time you look at them. The texture of the work [the impasto technique, a heavy application of paint] also imbues the work with a real sense of depth. She is an artist going from strength to strength and VinGallery is passionate about her development.

How do you make owning a gallery profitable?

JT: We're successful as a start-up gallery that has been open for one year. But so far we're

running at a loss. However, our main aim is actually to create an awareness and appreciation of art. First and foremost we aim to create a platform for artists and viewers to share an artistic discourse. For this reason we run many events throughout the year. From such events we've acquired a very loyal customer base of individuals who value our contribution to the Saigon art scene and support us accordingly.

Where do your artists come from?

JT: There are many avenues we explore to find artists. We actively encourage young artists to submit their portfolios to us. We visit Hanoi from time to time to arrange collaborations. But really, the most common way is through connections. One of our contacts will introduce us to a promising artist, and the rest flourishes from there. In terms of what we look for – we are interested in modern and contemporary artists who convey a fresh way of looking at the world. But more than that, we look for what we love.

The Artist: Shyevin S'ng

Born in Malaysia, Shyevin S'ng has exhibited her paintings in galleries in Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.

How did you decide to become an artist?

SS: I need to paint. It drives me. And really, I am only truly happy when I am painting. I have made many other decisions in my life, but I could not *not* paint!

What's been your greatest artistic success?

SS: I recently held a solo exhibition in The Fine

Arts Museum in HCMC entitled *A Painter's Journey*. I was very pleased with the exhibition and the exposure. It's a great place to exhibit. I am also very excited about my forthcoming solo exhibition at the Artemis Gallery in Malaysia. It will open on August 24 for a month.

Why did you choose your medium?

SS: I love the depth and versatility of oil. It really allows me to add to a scene and create something new.

How do your projects take shape?

SS: I will write down my thoughts first – every time I have an idea in my head I write it down. Over time many ideas develop together to create the basis of a new art work.

How do you set prices for your pieces?

SS: I have a few galleries representing me internationally. I believe in the gallery's role and since my birth as a painter I have followed their advice on price points. I try to keep the price increasing slowly each year, rather than there being a big jump from one year to the next.

What was the best advice given to you as an artist?

SS: Follow your feelings. You have to follow what your heart tells you - to listen to your heart and paint what it tells you to. For me, if you want to be a famous artist, it's not about the skill, or the concept, but about patience. How long you can fight for this? You have to make a living, but patience will bring you to the ultimate goal of being a successful artist. ■

Conflicts of Interest

French photojournalist Patrick Chauvel defines his life around photography, war and peace

TEXT BY **LOTTIE DELAMIAN** IMAGE BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

PATRICK CHAUVEL HAS pretty much seen it all. Arriving in Vietnam in 1968, aged just 18, he embarked on a photography career that has spanned nearly 50 years and taken him to the heart of conflicts in over 20 countries around the world. And he's far from finished.

Last month he was in Vietnam researching a documentary in which he's hoping to reunite the many photographers working on both sides of the war nearly 40 years ago, some of whom were working only a matter of meters from one another, but due to the conflict, never spoke to each other. Returning here so long after the war has been a mixed experience for Patrick.

On the one hand, being here reminds him of his wild coming-of-age; arriving in Vietnam in 1968 was "like walking onto a movie set – but better, because you could choose your own soundtrack!" As his t-shirt unashamedly proclaimed, Vietnam was "narcotic, erotic and exotic." Saigon was not only the epicenter of one of the most controversial conflicts in modern history, but a high-octane playground for CIA agents, GIs and adrenaline-thirsty young journalists and photographers out to make a name for themselves. He is unapologetic about his original motives for coming to Vietnam.

"As a young adolescent man, I wanted adventure, and sitting in the bar at the Caravelle at dusk watching the sky on the horizon turn red with napalm, I knew Vietnam would offer it in spades," he recalls.

But alongside the heady memories are twinges of sadness. He tells me that "eight of the ten photographers I worked with in the war died, including my good friend British photographer Larry Burrows." Some of them remain missing today. Losing friends and colleagues so early on in his career illustrated to Patrick the fragility of life and the painful truth that death is often arbitrary. It's a lesson that Patrick's career has taught him time and time again. While in Beirut in the early 70s, he was living the dream "running around after girls and going to nice restaurants." Little did he know that only a few years later, the city once known as the "Switzerland of the Middle East" would be "ripped to shreds in a bloody civil war."

"We all live thinking that war is something that happens elsewhere, and that it will never happen where we live. But it might," he says.

"One day you may wake up to find full-scale war outside your bedroom window."

A Thin Line Between Good and Bad

It was also in Vietnam that he learned that war is not about good and bad, friends and enemies – an insight that has been the backbone of his photography ever since. Out on patrol with the US army in 1970, he came across a North Vietnamese prisoner – a 'bad guy,' he assumed. But then he heard him speaking French. He struck up a conversation with him and discovered he'd studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. He listened to his story and the penny dropped.

"On the other side of the jungle, it's not just the enemy, it's people. It is about humans – everyday people with jobs, friends, families, lives."

Not long after, the 'bad guy' Patrick had temporarily befriended was marched away to resume his life as the enemy, but for a moment, Patrick and the prisoner had been equals.

"This sense of connectedness is what I hope to inspire with my photos," he continues. He's realistic – he knows that this type of photography is too much for most. But if he can inspire unity between just a few people, he feels his erratic lifestyle and daily confrontations with death are worth it.

In today's world, with Twitter and Instagram providing us with live feeds from conflicts the world over it seems hard to imagine that in 1968, the gruesome realities of war had never really been reported on celluloid. Alongside the infamous "Napalm Girl" (Phan Thi Kim Phuc, taken by Nick Ut), Patrick thinks there was another watershed moment.

"A dying American soldier agreed to be filmed in the last minutes of his life. Because of the time difference between Vietnam and America, the broadcast of his death in the States actually happened before his death in Vietnam," he explains. It garnered worldwide attention and war photography acquired a new level of influence. People started asking questions and for the first time, says Patrick, "governments had to be accountable."

Today, where anyone with a mobile phone can take a photo on the frontline, the role of photographers is changing. Patrick is often asked by news agencies to corroborate a picture that had been sent in by a rebel or

militant from a camera phone. "Pictures are an incredibly powerful way of telling a story, but they can be misrepresentative. In the wrong hands, a single picture can come to represent a whole nation, sometimes unfairly."

As photographers, Patrick and his colleagues have to exercise judgment, and carefully balance the context in which a photo is taken – a photo of a young Taliban member holding a gun to child's head may make a compelling photo, but is it representative of the Taliban as a whole?

For Patrick, who has spent most of his adult life chasing atrocities around the world, there will always be a need for war photography. The threat of war will never go away because "war is our natural state. You have to know about war to know how to avoid it." And if anyone knows that, it's probably Patrick. ■

ABOUT PATRICK

Patrick Chauvel has been an independent war photographer since his youth covering conflicts that included the Six-Day War and the American War. In 1989 during the invasion of Panama, he was critically wounded in the stomach by two rounds shot by Marines; Juan Antonio Rodríguez (*El País*) was killed. After the death of Princess Diana of Wales he allegedly saw time-stamped photographs from a speed camera showing the Mercedes entering the fatal tunnel. He has written two books in French – the autobiographical *Rapporteur de Guerre* (2003) and the novel *Sky* (2005). He also participated in *24h. comneo* media projects and in the Condition One project, and has made several documentary films. He became a laureate of the prestigious World Press Photo Prize in 1995.



THE MYTH:

Is it true that they bleach coconuts here to make them whiter and more appealing to customers?

THE SIMPLE ANSWER is yes.

Nguyen Trong Tan, a university student in District 10, personally witnessed the shocking practice. After purchasing an 'extremely' white coconut from his school's cafeteria he forgot about it and left it in his desk overnight. The following day in class upon rediscovering the abandoned coconut Tan and his fellow classmates reported the coconut milk had turned a rancid pink. Coconuts have a fairly long shelf life and can be left unrefrigerated for up to several days.

As shocking as this may be to many, it's not a new trend. Bleaching the coconuts has dual purposes - sellers believe that it will entice potential buyers into thinking there is more juice inside the coconut (the skin of the coconut soaks up the bleach making it heavier) and that the coconut is fresher because it's white. The bleach is also used to whiten dried coconut flesh (commonly used to make coconut candies), which usually turns grayish-brown after being left out in the air. Coconuts aren't the only food reportedly being bleached. Investigators in Hanoi discovered many restaurants were using bleach to whiten everything from banana flowers and blackened meat to cement and even chopsticks.

"I've seen it firsthand at the market near the bridge going into District 4. A lady had a box filled with water with coconuts soaking in it. I thought she was just washing them but I smelled

bleach too so I asked her what she was doing. She said she was making the coconuts white. I was shocked," says Hong Van, a *Viet Kieu* here on vacation for three months. "Now I only buy brown looking coconuts or ones in their natural green shell. I've warned my daughter who lives here about it too."

Not only is it a dangerous way to maximize profits but what is more concerning are the serious health issues that can arise from not only touching the altered coconut but ingesting it. Doctors say that consuming even the slightest amount of the bleaching toxins can cause respiratory, gastrointestinal and other unpredictable diseases. Accidental contact with the eyes can also result in temporary or even permanent loss of sight.

Some of the chemicals that are used to bleach coconuts are detergent, sodium hydrosulfite, citric acid and phosphorous acid, all common ingredients in many household cleaning products purchasable in bulk.

Coconut bleaching is a widespread practice throughout Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, with Ben Phu Dinh Street (known for producing coconut candies and wholesaling coconuts) in District 8, Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Xuan Market in the capital being major culprits.

THE MYTH:

Is it true vendors boil batteries with corn to make them look more yellow?

THIS IS HARDER to answer as there are no concrete evidence or eyewitness accounts to back it up, so for now it's just a rumor.

In February of this year, Phan Van Lieu, Chairman of Hoi An Farmers, said, "The Farmers Association collaborated with local authorities to check each facility cooking corn, but did not detect any household boiling corn with zinc batteries and chemicals. We are inviting the competent authorities to investigate and bring back the fair truth for our people."

Results are still pending. - **Harrison Tripple**

Do you have a myth you want us to bust? Email us at saigonmythbusters@oivietnam.com ■





THE COUPLES GLIDE across the floor, some aggressive, almost angry, others measured and regal. The music comes to a stop and the pairs freeze in place, eyes closed, muscles tense, savoring the final throes of intimacy.

This is Argentinian tango.

The setting is Bros Cafe in District 1. A handful of couples mingle in the upstairs space, the day's tables having been pushed out of the way to create a dance floor. As the milonga, or tango dance party, starts, more participants filter in with dancing shoes slung in cloth bags over the shoulder. The 70:30 ratio of Vietnamese and expat dancers greet each other with kisses on the cheek while swapping street shoes for high heels for her and leather tango shoes for him. Sequins glitter in the dim lighting.

The music begins, usually pre-recorded. Tonight, though, a live band is playing, its disparate members gathered from around the city. A beckoning look accompanied by a nod flashes from across the room. Averted eyes signal back disinterest. Finally, amiable couples come together on the floor. Cheek to cheek in close embrace, many of the "followers" with eyes closed bear a look of what could best be described as rapture.

"With tango, you feel like you're cared for. Sometimes I can feel connected to my partner; it can be very intimate," explains Thuy, a 29-year-old Vietnamese teacher of English and a regular at the weekly milongas.

These passionate tangophiles are members of Ta Tango, a dance community founded by husband and wife team Tony and Ziu. Lecturers by day and tango enthusiasts by night, they initially shared their love of tango in Hanoi after returning from overseas study. A year and a half later, they married, moved to Saigon and started

Two to Tango

Vietnam has a long history of social dancing, ranging from cha cha to waltz. But tango is the new kid on the block

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM
IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

up the tango movement here in 2007.

Tony recalls, "I was doing research for a thesis in Australia. It was such a stressful time and I needed some way to relax. I think tango chose me. I had never danced anything before..."

"For someone to be interested in dance isn't very well viewed in Vietnam," Tony continues. "You should be interested in making money and taking care of family. But actually, tango is suitable for Vietnamese. [The salon style] is not very showy; there's not a lot of hip shaking. Your energy is focused on the connection with your partner and other couples on the floor."

Ziu clarifies, "There are two main types of tango: stage tango for professionals in movies. You can't perform that in real life. The second kind is salon tango for socializing. It's for regular people; one leads, one follows. You connect with the music. You connect with your partner."

A Youthful Dance

There are around 30 "regular people" at tonight's milonga, but the crowd can number up to 50. The youngest member is around 27 and the oldest is pushing 80. "He just got married a few years ago," says Tony.

"Tango keeps people young." Of the average age of 45, Ziu says: "People who tango have life experience. Tango is like a conversation. You can talk to anyone, from babies to old men. But in order to keep the conversation going, you need experience. Beyond vocabulary, you need to know about many things, have many experiences to share with each other. Tango is life."

Duc, a professor at the HCMC University of Technology, is the fourth person this evening to say that tango chose them. "I tried other types of dancing, but when I found tango, I was hooked. The dance is very flexible.

With other dances, you have to remember a sequence of steps. But with tango, you can learn some basic steps and join in very easily. I've been studying it for over a year. My children think tango is good for my health."

In contrast, when asked what brought her here Thuy says nonchalantly: "The men."

With the diversity of ethnicities and ages, Ta Tango has a community, feel good vibe to it beyond the overt sensuality. Kristie, a Viet Kieu in the hospitality industry, says, "We do things with others outside of the milongas as well. You're not only welcome locally but when you travel worldwide, tango dancers receive a warm welcome. Tango allows you to express your feelings on the floor with your partner. Other dances are like swimming. Tango is like snorkeling. It's like seeing a whole other world."

Ta Tango usually organizes a workshop and a milonga each week. Other events are sometimes organized by tango students and occasionally, there are larger festivals with tango masters and champions from various countries participating. For more info, visit www.ta-tango.blogspot.com

Would your club like to be featured in Oi? Email us at editorial@oivietnam.com

SUMMER IN



It's summer (at least in the northern hemisphere!), and this means kids are mainly out of school and families are spending more time with each other. Even though it's almost perpetually "summer" here in Saigon, something about June, July and August just screams vacation.

In our cover series, we explore a unique day trip to the mangrove forests of Can Gio with something of interest for the whole family. Kids will love crocodile fishing from a pontoon (the closest you'll ever want to get to a 3 meter leviathan) as well as being canoed around the mangrove swamps with giant fruit bats hanging overhead. Adults will enjoy the serenity of life on the river and photographic opportunities in a fishing market rarely visited by tourists. Almost every kid wants to run away to the circus at some point, and in our article, *Circus Folk*, *Oi* sits down with members of the Ho Chi Minh City Circus to discover their fascinating back stories.

While school is just wrapping up for most, some parents are already scrambling to get their child registered for the next school year. Michael Arnold walks us through stories of families who struggled to make sense of the complex, sometimes frustrating and always expensive world of choosing the right school. We also take a look at primary schools because you can never start too early. While many international schools are off for the entire summer, some Vietnamese public schools are already back in session after only two weeks off. *Oi* goes behind the scenes to present a day in the life of a typical Vietnamese high school student and it's anything but.

So, your homework for this month is to sit back and enjoy the read.

SAIGON

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY / NAM QUAN



CIRCUS FOLK

A COLLECTION OF TALENTED PERFORMERS HAVE ENSURED
THAT THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH WILL ALWAYS GO ON

>> TEXT BY JAMES PHAM
IMAGES BY NAM QUAN AND
QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

FEW THINGS ARE synonymous with pure, unadulterated glee like the circus. For many, memorable 'first time' childhood experiences include airplane and carousel rides, losing a tooth, the first day of school... and a trip to what's been dubbed "the greatest show on earth". There's something magical that comes from seeing the stuff of childhood imagination turning into real life right before your unbelieving eyes in the form of monstrous elephants, fiery illusions and superhuman acrobatics, all set to a backdrop of explosive color and sound.

Entertaining kids and kids-at-heart since 1986, the Ho Chi Minh City Circus has recently found a new home within the grounds of Gia Dinh Park in Phu Nhuan after more than 10 years of being a familiar fixture in the September 23 Park in D1. Some of the performers of the Blue Sky troupe sat down with *Oi* during one of their practice sessions for their summer production of *Tarzan*.

THE DIRECTOR

With a background in music composition and more than 300 film and stage scores to his name, Ho Van Thanh is the Director and Composer for the Ho Chi Minh City Circus. Having had many posts with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, including being the teaching principal for the Opera House, Thanh has now been with the circus for 10 years. *Oi* spoke to him just before he left for a performance in Kazakhstan, one of many international engagements the troupe has had over the years.

"We might not be the best technically, but we bring a fresh, positive, optimistic outlook. Other countries' troupes have high technical ability, but they look sad performing. Even in hard times, we're always cheerful with our special acts of bravery," he says.

There are about 75 performers, divided up into two troupes performing entirely different programs. Oftentimes, one troupe travels while the other performs locally. In the decade he's been involved, the city's performers have won medals in international competitions all over the world, including China, Cuba, Japan and Taiwan.

"We get invited every year to perform in France. And they're not free shows. People buy tickets to watch us perform," he explains proudly. "We may not be the best and sometimes we make mistakes but that shows that we're humans and not soulless robots. We carefully tread the line between what's humanly possible and what's not. We reflect the human condition."

THE JUGGLER

Eyes locked on a spot where seven bowling pins successively come into view as they are tossed





between him and his partner, Duc, 24, is a study in intensity. Hailing from Thanh Hoa, 150km south of Hanoi, Duc has mastered the art of juggling pins, balls and hoops. Introduced to the circus by a performing cousin, Duc graduated from a five year program at the circus school in Hanoi, spending 2.5 hours a day juggling, doing acrobatics, feats of balance and gymnastics, followed by dance, culture and politics in the afternoon.

For Duc, life is quite literally a balancing act. "I'm working on learning tight rope walking. Right now, I'm only at two meters. It's scary and frustrating but I'm always trying to hone my craft, add a new act and be able to show off my full range of skills." To that end, he spends his days practicing, returning to the group home at night, which houses 20-30 young single performers, with separate quarters for men and women.

In a profession where only a few, like illusionists and clowns, can work into their 40s, Duc knows that acrobats like him have a relatively short career, most likely only into their 30s. "Circus life is hard. I've fractured a bone in my elbow and I've had an ankle sprain. But I love the circus life. I've been to France and Taiwan and I know that without the circus I'd probably have no chance to go abroad. This is my passion. I earn my own living and take care of my own needs. I haven't thought much about life afterwards."

THE UNICYCLE GIRL

Born in Hue into a family with nine brothers and sisters, Kiem's father walked out when she was five. Her mother packed her up with one of her siblings and headed to HCMC in search of a better life. "I was what you would call a disadvantaged child," she recalls. "One day, when I was about 11 or 12, the government had a campaign to round up all the homeless people and I got sent to a special school for vulnerable youths. There, I learned circus skills. My teacher chose the bicycle for me. Later I learned how to ride

my unicycle up steps. I remember not being afraid because I was so young. I definitely wasn't a lucky child but I tried hard and did everything with enthusiasm. I poured my blood, sweat and tears into it. Now my best trick is flipping seven bowls onto my head while riding a unicycle."

Kiem is now happily married to a security guard at the circus and has two children, aged three and 12, who regularly come to see her perform. "The 12-year-old doesn't really want to do what I do. But my three-year-old sees the tricks that I do and goes home and tries to copy me."

Kiem knows that she can't go on performing forever. "When I retire from the circus, I want to teach my skills to kids in orphanage schools. I owe everything to the circus. I can't imagine sitting in an office somewhere. My hands and feet always need to be moving."

THE ACROBAT

Playing the lead role in the circus' summer production of *Tarzan*, Thang, 23, is working feverishly to add even more difficult tricks to his already highly physical aerial moves. Literally following through on every kid's dream to run away to the circus, Thang, who hails from Ninh Binh, remembers being entranced by the circus as a child. "The circus came to our town and I was in love with seeing the people and animals. So when they came again for a summer recruitment program when I was 13, I went for it. At the tryouts, they looked at our bodies and hands to make sure we were strong and watched us walking to see how we moved."

From there, it was off to Hanoi for two months of initial training. "More than 100 kids signed up. It was soon whittled down to 45. Staying in the dorms, I missed my family, but not too much. We woke up early to practice the splits and other flexibility skills, tumbling and headstands. At first, it was really painful. I was always sore. I cried and thought about quitting. But I made lots of friends and soon

realized this was every boy's dream. When I started performing, my parents didn't like it at first. They thought it was dangerous. But now they like watching me perform."

After five years at the circus school, Thang decided to leave his three-person act and strike out on his own in Saigon. He honed his aerial skills, performing strength moves while suspended high in the air with nothing but two strands of silk.

"The feeling of flying is simply indescribable. No nets, no spotters. Just holding on for dear life," he says.

The recent production of *Tarzan* had Thang flying high above the audience, whisking Jane away to the treetops along with a handful of other simian acrobats on bungee cords.

"Before the circus, I had never performed in front of people before. I was really shy, but thanks to the circus I have self confidence," Thang adds.

His motivation for choosing this nomadic, short-lived career? "I love traveling. We've been up and down the country and I've been to Taiwan, France and Switzerland. But in the end, it's all about performing in front of people. I actually see individual faces in the crowd while I'm on stage. I see happy smiling faces."

THE CLOWN

Making kids laugh is a tough job. Initially an aerialist, Hiep, 36, moved into clowning later in his career. "It's less stressful on the body," he says. "But you still have to give it your all. Some days you might not be feeling it, but you have to forget everything outside of the performance and put on your best face for the kids."

Hiep's life has revolved around the circus, starting in circus school in 1996. He also found love through his profession, meeting his wife, an illusionist, at a performance in District 4. "It's easier being able to relate to each other's work. We just had baby. If my son wants to be circus folk, I wouldn't stop him. It's been a good life. I couldn't imagine any other." ■



WHERE THE RIVER

CAN GIO IS A FAMILY FRIENDLY ESCAPE FROM THE CITY WITH SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

>> TEXT BY JAMES PHAM
IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



HEADING SOUTH FROM the Bach Dang Pier in District 1, a cruise along the Saigon River is an exercise in serenity. City life incrementally gives way to country. Bridges get less ornate, more utilitarian. The familiar view of tall Phu My Hung apartment blocks morph into stilted houses in an oddly pleasing geometric patchwork of unintentionally colorful metal siding. In mere minutes, we suddenly realize that not only are there no high rises, but no buildings whatsoever break the low treeline. We are out of Saigon.

A stiff breeze rushes through the speedboat, carrying away with it motorbike honking and urban smells as we leave the haze of the city behind. In its place, family groups pull up nets from their small boats, a haphazard collection of fish, eel and the occasional monitor lizard their reward. Repurposed styrofoam coolers mark where the 30 meter long nets have been left overnight. As the river widens and narrows, we slow down so as not to disturb barges laden with fresh water servicing local families who only have access to the brackish river water. In a play on words, they refer to

it as *doi nuoc* or "trading water," instead of the more treasonous "selling water" which also translates to "betraying your country."

We stop for a quick walk around the market of Can Giuoc where the vendors are refreshingly unjaded by the presence of tourists. Old women offer toothless smiles for the cameras, egging each other on with playful banter across the aisles about making it onto television (even though there are no TV cameras in sight). In this riverside market, fishing nets are as much at home as feather dusters and kitchen utensils. The people here are the salt of the earth; a woman nonchalantly snips the heads off still live frogs while chatting to a neighbor. Another tends to her crates of fluffy chicken and duck chicks.

The journey itself is every bit as engaging as the destination. We pass high concrete structures totally unadorned and unfinished with a solitary window at the top. They're nesting sites for swallows, complete with loudspeakers which play chirping sounds to attract the profitable birds whose nests fetch up to USD3,000 per kilo, popular with Chinese ladies recovering from pregnancy.

BIRDS, CROCS, MONKEYS AND BATS

By late morning, we reach Can Gio, the only trapezoid of green on a Google map of the area. A 714 square kilometer expanse of mangrove forests connected by 800km of waterways, Can Gio was declared a world biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 2000. Previously a battle zone then a re-education



MEETS THE SEA

camp, the government-owned site is now home to a Noah's Ark of animals, great and small. We pull into the jetty at Vam Sat Nature Preserve and set on a walk of the dense, woody forest, exposed roots protruding downwards like many discarded umbrella frames. Rustic wooden bridges built over a maze of canals recall every *cai luong* karaoke video ever made. The air positively hums with bird calls of every kind. But only when we climb the 10m tall viewing tower does it become apparent that practically every treetop is heavy with migrating waterbirds. Dark cormorants, snow white herons and snake-eating crow pheasants (often found in medicinal wines, feathers and all) provide a raucous soundtrack so conspicuously missing from city life. A short walk takes us to crabbing ponds where we try our hand at slowly lifting the baited rods, gleefully scooping up our prize which is later steamed for lunch.

Before this trip, I was somewhat dreading what I would find at Can Gio. "There's beach, but it's very dirty. You can't swim there," my Vietnamese friends told me. For them, sea

equates to swimming. "The animal abuse at the monkey circus is horrendous," warned my foreign friends. As an animal lover, I was pleasantly surprised to see the atypical tasteful restraint displayed in the parks and sanctuaries that dot the area. We wisely avoid the animal circus at Monkey Island, instead opting for a visit to the crocodile enclosure where we take a pontoon out to see the animals up close. I am thankful for the security railing when the surprisingly agile crocs launch themselves out of the water, twisting in tight coils, making multiple snaps in search of a snack. The powerful jaws clap shut with a thunder-like bang. Being that close to the wild animals is at once terrifying and exhilarating.

Soon enough, we stop for lunch at the Nghe Doi Bat Sanctuary. While a feast of claypot dishes and seafood, including the mud crabs from the morning's expedition, is being prepared, we're rowed in small boats to see the red and black mangrove forest up close. Furry fruit bats with 1m wing spans hang from the trees, watching the boats silently glide through the forest.

After a late lunch, we make our way back

onto the boat. Too soon, the jungle greens and avian whites are replaced by steely grays and urban browns. It's been good to have spent the day where the river meets the sea.

Can Gio riverboat tours are operated by Les Rives and can be booked through Exotissimo by visiting www.exotissimo.com ■



"CAN GIO WAS DECLARED A WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE BY UNESCO IN 2000. PREVIOUSLY A BATTLE ZONE THEN A RE-EDUCATION CAMP, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED SITE IS NOW HOME TO A NOAH'S ARK OF ANIMALS, GREAT AND SMALL"



MY LIFE AS...

...A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

>> RETOLD BY CLARA PHUOC NGUYEN
IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE being a 12th grade student in public high school. OMG! It means a time bomb has been set for the university entrance exam and failure is not an option. What would happen if I fail? My parents would get an earful from neighbors and relatives. Just the thought of it darkens my day.

My name is Khanh Ha and I am an above average student. One thing about me is I hate literature.

It's 6am and I am getting ready for the day. History test is on and I am fearless as my friends and I have strategized on tackling it – writing the answers onto our table and legs. Yes, legs. Sometimes I think we're so creative, and we always know when to pick the right moments to peek. The teachers will never find out in a zillion years.

6:15AM Riding my scooter to school and wearing Monday's uniform – an *ao dai*. My older sister told me that in her time, she had to wear an *ao dai* to school every day, except when she had Physical Education. Perhaps because of that, there were more poems written about high school then than now.

6:30AM Flag saluting ceremony.

6:45AM 12th graders have to take a quiz every day at this time. Some days are scheduled for history while others are for literature. Four unlucky souls are called up to the board and have to write answers on the board as quickly

as they can. The ones with a better memory get better grades. Today the quiz is about literature. I cannot understand why we have to recite poems word for word. Shouldn't literature be about how we feel and appreciate a novel or a poem?

7AM The first subject of the day is math. I like math. Math is clear and straightforward. Unlike literature where we're punished for thinking the poem sucks big time, math is fair. We calculate correctly, we get the points.

7:45AM Another math period. The teacher gives us some exercises to do and he is off somewhere. I think he is off for his morning coffee. The class is like a fish market now and I am sure the teacher next door will come over in a second and shut us up. There she is and we are doomed now.

8:30AM Break time. My tummy is rumbling and I am running like the wind to the canteen for a *banh mi*.

9AM History test. No fear really. The materials needed for the test are either on the table surface or on my legs. The numbers of airplanes taken down and the number of soldiers captured are all... on my legs. I am so thankful for my mother who has given me such long legs to use now.

9:45AM It's time for English period. We seldom have speaking exercises in English class, only

grammar, reading or writing lessons. The other day I went to the shopping center and was asked by tourists for directions. I know how to show the way. I learnt it already but words kept sticking in my throat.

11:15AM Phew, the last period of the day is biology. This year biology is not part of the graduation exam's six subjects so the teacher allows us to study whatever subject we want. And he just sits at his desk reading the newspaper.

12PM I ride my scooter home for a quick bite and a much needed nap. The afternoon tutorial on math, literature and physics is going to start real soon.

2PM It's the school's regulation for all students to take tutorials in the afternoon but what is the point of extra studying time if the teachers do not really teach the extra stuff? I do not blame our teachers for saving the 'secrets' of passing the university entrance exams for the evening paid tutorials since their salaries do not make ends meet.

7PM I am at my math teacher's home for a private tutorial. He is well-known for helping a good number of students pass the university entrance exam.

To be honest, my friends and I do not know what we want to study in university. We just pick the easiest to get in. The more intelligent ones might choose more prestigious universities. I want to study baking and I would immediately apply for it if it was taught at university. There are only vocational schools that offer cooking and baking courses, and wearing a vocational tag is not fondly seen in society's eyes and will make my parents lose face. A degree is always more welcomed than a certificate; even an irrelevant degree is still better regarded than a practical and useful certificate.

12AM My eyes automatically shut off. In my dream I see me in the exam room with eyes open staring at the test paper, horrified! ■

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING
A SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD

>> TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD
IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



The Kazzis

So imagine you've had this fantastic opportunity. An opening has come up in Vietnam, the salary is everything you've been waiting for, and your whole family's invited to go with you – on the company account. To top it all off, your kids are going to have access to the finest international education Vietnam has to offer – and all you need to do is pick the school.

As a parent, how do you make that decision? Fifteen years ago there might have been a handful of options, but with the local economy accelerating over the years – and as more expat families keep stepping off the planes – the Ho Chi Minh City schools market has truly taken off.

The decision to let your kids be educated in Vietnam involves multiple considerations, from the distance to your home to where you hope your six-year-old will be attending university come 2025. We speak to five families to find out how they made their choices.

THE KAZZI FAMILY

For Cindy Kazzi, it all happened when her husband was offered the role as Country Manager for Baxter Healthcare here back in September 2012. "I started researching schools immediately," she says. "I also had the children doing research so that they'd have some input into our final decision. Our children love sport, and came from a great school that offered many sporting activities, so this was an important factor."

The family eventually settled on the British International School. "We were also interested in BIS being an international baccalaureate school, as this will benefit the children later. It's more than likely that our kids will go to university in Australia, but doing the IB should open more opportunities for them in other countries."

The Kazzis were sure to see the schools for themselves before making their final decision, and firmly believe that making a school visit is an essential step in the process. "We visited the three schools that we had narrowed down to," she says, "and BIS was definitely a standout for us and was the school preferred by the children. We were very impressed with the facilities, the grounds, the staff, and the fact that there were so many different nationalities of children at the school."

THE TAYLOR FAMILY

For New Zealanders Rebecca and Brook Taylor, deciding on an international school was nothing new. "Our children have only ever lived in Asia," says Rebecca. "Emily (now 12) attended preschool in Bangkok, kindergarten at UNIS in Hanoi, and did the rest of her schooling in HCMC. Ben (10) went to UNIS for preschool, but the rest of the boys' schooling has been at International School Ho Chi Minh City. Nathan (6) started school at two."

"Our children started school early because there was little else for them to do back then – no

"LOOK AROUND THE SCHOOLS, ASK QUESTIONS, AND ALSO ASK PEOPLE YOU KNOW WHAT THEY LIKE OR DISLIKE. WORK OUT WHAT YOU WANT IN A SCHOOL. I KNOW IT'S HARD TO KNOW HOW A TWO-YEAR-OLD WILL DEVELOP, BUT IF YOU LIKE CREATIVE ARTS OR SPORTS THEN MAKE SURE THERE'S A PROGRAM TO MATCH."

- REBECCA TAYLOR



The Taylors

playgrounds or gyms. Now there's a lot more choice with Kindermusik, swim classes, SNAP Café, and even a Little Gym has just opened. However I don't regret that decision, as going to school early gave them a chance to socialize."

The IB program offered at ISHCMC was a major drawcard for the Taylors. "It's important to us that our children are educated in English to a standard that will enable them to go on to further education, so international schooling is essential. With an IB diploma they can go to a university of their choice, whether that's in North America, the UK, Asia, or in NZ. We also want them to learn a second world language."

"Our children understand that they are more fortunate than many in Vietnam. ISHCMC kids are taught to reach out and support those less fortunate through different actions at school. They fundraise, visit schools and orphanages, teach English, and even help build houses."

"My best advice about schooling is to make an appointment and meet the admissions people," says Rebecca. "Look around the schools, ask questions, and also ask people you know what they like or dislike. Work out what you want in a school. I know it's hard to know how a two-year-old will develop, but if

you like creative arts or sports then make sure there's a program to match."

Not everyone, of course, has the luxury of having their kid's education covered in an expat salary package. "School fees are expensive," says Rebecca. "It's something you have to weigh up. Why are you here? The cost of fees has to be included in that decision along with the cost of living, the benefits of an international upbringing, and career opportunities as well. Education is important to us, and this is part of the cost of being here."

THE FOSTER FAMILY

For American resident Jennifer Foster, there were no issues with transitioning to a new school system – her son Tai Foster-Knappe (7) was born here, and she's lived here almost 10 years herself. As a long-term expat, she was already well-aware of what was available on the local education market and knew very well what fellow parents were saying about them.

"I felt confident in the international schools available, as they had good reputations, are accredited, and have good teachers," she says. "Tai attended preschool in Saigon, and then went to kindergarten in America. He has now attended AIS for both year 1 and 2."

Even with a degree of insider knowledge,

it took a good deal of research before Jennifer made the final decision. "I researched online and checked out the different curricula, whether it be the British Cambridge, the IB system, American, etc. The price is also very important, but most of the main international schools have similar prices. Accreditation is important, and particularly relevant when it comes time to apply for university. Location wasn't a deciding factor for me, as all the schools have buses that go all over the city."

"I visited several schools prior to enrolling Tai in year 1. While I felt he would get a good education at any of them, the deciding factor was the feeling I got from the visit. The AIS primary campus is small and personal, which I appreciated for a younger child. There is a very personal feeling at AIS, like a big family, just a very happy, warm environment. With two years' experience there now, I can say I really love the teachers and staff, and the PYP system is wonderful."

"I do think it's important to be involved in Vietnamese culture, and AIS has a class where the students learn about the Vietnamese language and culture," continues Jennifer. "For parents of prospective students, my advice would be to visit the schools, talk to the teachers and just get a feel for the environment. It's best to check

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO US THAT OUR SON IS ABLE TO EMBRACE LOCAL CULTURE. AFTER ALL, HIS FORMATIVE YEARS WERE PRACTICALLY SPENT HERE IN VIETNAM. IN ALL HONESTY, VIETNAM IS MY SON'S SECOND HOME AND HE HAS ACTUALLY BEEN MORE IMMERSSED HERE BECAUSE OF THE TIME WE'VE SPENT HERE."

- LYRA DACIO



The Dacios

out the schools well in advance, as some may not have many spaces available, and some require entrance exams."

THE HOLDSWORTH FAMILY

Superior schooling options were amongst the chief reasons that brought British expat Peter Holdsworth and his family to Ho Chi Minh City after 15 years in Hanoi. What makes their family unique is the fact that the children attend different schools.

"When I decided to move to Saigon two years ago," he says. "I had to make the decision based on my two daughters' education. I was recommended a school for Lucy (13), but Jasmine (7) was a little more difficult, even though she's younger. I wanted to find a school for her that she felt at home in."

"I checked out about six schools and visited them all. I came across Saigon Star on the internet and arranged a visit – I had no hesitation when I visited the school, because it had a great family atmosphere and with the class sizes and facilities, I knew my daughter would love it. I'm not disappointed."

Not covered by company sponsorship, the family absorbs the costs of education on their own. "Sure international schools are expensive, but we try to balance the preferred

lifestyle in Vietnam against the obvious costs. My wife and I both work full-time and pay the school fees personally."

The extra legwork for Jasmine's school paid off, and her parents are very content with their choice. "The most satisfying aspect of the school is the close family atmosphere that they create," says Peter. "She is so happy there, and when I meet the other parents of her classmates, they all feel the same. For me it is so important that each child has an opportunity to be a big fish, rather than at bigger schools where they are absorbed into the crowd."

THE DACIO FAMILY

When Manuel and Lyra Dacio moved to Vietnam, their initial reaction to the local school prices was to consider homeschooling. They were fortunate, however, in that Manuel's company offered to cover the education costs. Still, Lyra took charge of her son Sam's education from the outset.

"I enrolled him in a playschool and homeschooled him a bit on reading from age two till he entered Saigon South International School with the EC-3 (Early Childhood for three-year-olds) program. I think the biggest factor for me was the location. The school had to be near our home

where I could easily get to my son in times of emergency or in case he was sick – which proved to be a good decision, because during the early part of his first year, he did get sick quite often."

One of the most frequently-raised criticisms of the international school system is the potential they have to instill elitist tendencies in young kids – something inappropriate, perhaps, in a country such as this one. I ask Lyra if she has any concerns about the "expat glass bubble."

"It's important to us that our son is able to embrace local culture," she says. "After all, his formative years were practically spent here in Vietnam. In all honesty, Vietnam is my son's second home and he has actually been more immersed here because of the time we've spent here."

Lyra advises parents to take an active role in the school decision-making process. "Take interest in your children's education," she says. "I think the best way to scout for a good school is by also assessing our friends' children who are attending school. But also keep in mind that no school is perfect and that you just can't expect your children to become excellent individuals just because of the school they attend – that's actually on you." ■



INDEPENDENT STUDY

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI FELT THAT THE GOAL OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS SHOULD NOT BE TO FILL A CHILD WITH FACTS, BUT RATHER TO CULTIVATE A CHILD'S OWN NATURAL DESIRE TO LEARN

>> TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD
IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

EXPATS DON'T LEAD the same kind of lives as other people, and that affects our parenting values too. Folks back home worry about their kids fitting in and having a chance at a normal life, while those of us who are permanent travelers are already far from being ordinary. Living in Vietnam is as inspiring as it is challenging, and if we want our kids to follow in our footsteps, then we want them to grow up confident, curious, creative, and strongly independent.

It's for this reason that Montessori-based education systems for preschoolers tend to get a lot of attention from expat parents, and this is something that professionally-trained teacher Ann Beloeuvre was quick to notice while based in Beijing, where schools offering the Montessori curriculum are popular with expats with salary packages including education allowances. Preschoolers in Montessori classes are guided to love learning rather than be

instructed; the schools follow standardized methods to encourage personal development and determined self-expression, and with their internationally-focused learning environment, they aim to turn out "global citizens" – a term, perhaps, for baby expats.

It was while volunteering at her daughter's Montessori school that Ann's enthusiasm for the method really took off, and the experience prompted her to train as a qualified Montessori teacher and go on to open the first Montessori Summer Camp program in her native Ho Chi Minh City back in 2007. Six years on, and the school has two District 2 campuses and teaches the only fully-implemented Montessori curriculum in the city.

There are other preschools here that employ Montessori techniques, but the authenticity of the full Montessori experience is something particularly important to Ann for her school. "It's most effective when

implemented fully in the right environment. Genuine Montessori classrooms are more or less the same the world over – a child can start a course in one country and finish it in another, moving seamlessly between them. The layout and system will be the same. This is extremely important for expats who want to be sure that they can change countries while their child continues in the same curriculum."

RESPECT

"Basically, we believe that every child has a great ability to learn everything themselves. Our teachers are facilitators who help young children engage with their environment, and a child with a proper guide can learn almost independently," continues Ann. "Montessori teachers are trained not to preach or to pressure the kids – so with the right direction, each child can reach their own potential. All this is implemented from simple, basic activities inside the classroom."

In each of the school's teaching rooms, for example, there's only one set of each of the activity materials on the shelf. "The kids have to respect others and take turns. If one child sees someone else playing with something they want, they learn to ask for it, and to accept it if they're given a refusal. This same quality is fostered between all the children, regardless of nationality."

While a few local students are enrolled, the school predominantly admits expats. "With the method's international mindset, of course we serve the international community," says Ann. "Classes are taught in English, while the students are introduced to French and Mandarin Chinese. But the materials can be used in any culture and language." The school has a program in Vietnamese, but it's not fully-implemented yet – she intends to expand into the local Vietnamese market in the near future.

"I'm keen on connecting with local schools to establish a program. Our current local course uses a child-centered approach, without blackboards or a teacher-centric focus. It's something Vietnamese kids need to experience too."

Ann has seen school numbers grow steadily during its six years in operation, but the Montessori curriculum is still far less center-stage in expat circles than it is in other cities, like Beijing. Still, the results have been pleasing. "The real measure of our success lies in the fact that every single foreign parent who has sent their child to our school continues to pursue a Montessori-style education when they return home. That tells me that they're happy with how their kids have progressed with us." ■

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY NAM QUAN







Southeast Asia on One Plate

An ambitious culinary tour through Indochina

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN

A RESTAURANT WITH more than 120 menu items spanning five countries would seem to be a warning bell for customers, a culinary "jack of all trades, master of none." Having lived in three of these countries and traveled to a fourth, that was my mindset heading into Monsoon, the creation of Naya Ehrlich-Adam, a Thai national married to an Austrian tourism executive. Born in Bangkok and having been in the tourism industry herself, Ehrlich-Adam has lived in all five countries featured on the menu: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and now Vietnam, where she's been for five years.

The restaurant seems to be an extension of the warm, trendy, globe-trotting woman herself. The stark smooth concrete floors, the bookcase filled with well-read books and the carved bed on the ground floor of the airy two story space shouts 'contemporary traveler'. The kids corner tucked away upstairs with its toys, books and bean bag chairs say 'mother of two'. The patio furniture set out on the shocking grass lawn in front of the restaurant (there are actual lawns in D1?) and bright red woven tea cozies say this is a place where people are expected to come and hang out for awhile.

The one-year-old **Monsoon Restaurant and Bar** (1 Cao Ba Nha, D1) is actually the second restaurant Ehrlich-Adam has opened. The first, an award-winning eatery with the same

name, opened in Yangon, Myanmar in 2004, and remains a local favorite. The concept for the restaurants is to showcase the cuisine that has played such an important role in Ehrlich-Adam's love affair with Indochina and whose foods share so many of the same ingredients.

Ehrlich-Adam is a self-taught cook, having never gone to culinary school. The kitchen staff received training from a Thai chef who makes periodic visits, but the day-to-day operations are overseen by Ehrlich-Adam and her Thai-restaurant trained Vietnamese sous chef who speaks to Ehrlich-Adam in Thai. The homecooking background is reflected in the dishes which are simple, less refined but beautifully presented.

The Food

We start with the Monsoon Appetizer Platter (VND250,000) which is a generous helping of bites from all five countries. The crunchy sweet corn fritters whisk me back to the wonderful street food carts of Bangkok whereas the *lephet thoke*, a Myanmar salad made from fermented tea leaves which Ehrlich-Adam hand carries back herself, is a combination of oddly pleasing *umami* flavors. A squeeze of lime for acid and the sweetness of the peanuts balance out the faint bitterness of the tea leaves. The Cambodian fried shrimp cakes are lovely for their meatiness however for all but the most recent arrivals to

Vietnam, the fresh spring rolls with their too salty dipping sauce and the fried spring rolls while good, are not as impressive. Still, the platter is beautifully arranged and would be best shared with visitors.

For our mains, we order the Cambodian Amok Trei (VND100,000) and the Thai Beef Green Curry (VND120,000). While I wish the Thai curry had been slightly more adventurous and the baby eggplants slightly more cooked, the Amok Trei, a sweetish coconut based curry with generous chunks of firm sea bass, was truly delicious. Served up in a coconut shell, it was as pleasing to the eye as it was to the palate. There was just the right amount of spice to feel it in the back of your throat, the heat bringing out all the intense flavors. Our meal for the evening was paired with a Deakin Sauvignon Blanc, an Australian wine whose acidity worked to soften the powerful flavors in these Asian dishes.

Again, dessert was a love / love-not-as-much affair. The mango with sticky rice and coconut (VND90,000) was good, but not as good as you'd find in Bangkok's eateries. However the banana fritters drizzled in honey and sesame seeds with a scoop of Fanny's vanilla ice cream (VND50,000) was a welcome contrast of hot and cold, crunchy and creamy.

No airfare needed, a visit to Monsoon is a delightful culinary journey through Indochina. ■



Food with Attitude

Here, the owner is as popular as his food

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

THERE'S LITTLE POINT in scheduling an interview with Scott Marquis. Within the first five minutes of sitting down in his restaurant, I've already overheard most of what I wanted to learn listening to him greet and chat with other diners. It's hard not to eavesdrop: Scott's slow, resonant Maine accent travels easily across the modestly-sized venue; and frankly, part of the success of **Scott & Binh's** (15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, Hung Phuoc 1, D7) comes down to the patient, engaging personality of its owner.

"Let me put it this way," I overhear him explaining his concern to a customer seated behind me. "We wouldn't want you to leave hungry. So if you only want to order one dish, I'll just have to make it bigger."

Everyone loves his attitude, and online reviews of the restaurant regularly mention his personal touch. In fact, Scott & Binh's consistently astronomical ratings on TripAdvisor have made Scott something of an internet celebrity – a small group of American tourists on my right immediately recognizes him by his endearing natural fauxhawk and listen intently as he runs through the story of his home-style family restaurant, interweaved with parenting anecdotes about his infant daughter Zoey, who's plodding about at the front.

I'm taking the evening slow, but the waiters are notably zealous in their customer care, matching their chef's penchant for personal service without catching his casual pace. I wait for Scott himself before I pick my dishes: the restaurant's catchphrase is "comfort food with a twist," and while I'm rather guiltily taking this as a signal that I'll be able to get away from local food for just one night, I'm aware that my Vietnamese co-reviewer may not find the

cuisine quite as 'comforting.'

"We're known for our burgers," he says candidly. "And we have an extensive sandwich menu. But we do have more 'adult' food as well." I decide to be mature and opt for a salad, along with an intriguing dish labeled "chili roast pork tenderloin" (VND185,000) that I've seen frequently mentioned online. My Vietnamese dining partner surprises me by going for the macaroni and cheese (VND135,000).

We're lucky to have landed a night when the restaurant's only half-full. TripAdvisor alone has kept it packed on most evenings (reservations are recommended) but living up to international expectations has been tough. "I check TripAdvisor first thing every morning," he says, "and part of it is that at least my wife Duc or I need to be here pacing the restaurant floor every night. We joke every week about taking a holiday – about three hours in Vung Tau is all we could manage!"

The Food

We just love the food, and it's as simple as that. My taco salad (VND85,000) is what I expect when I order Mexican, its only hint of Asian cuisine stemming from its handful of black beans and Vietnamese parsley. The tacos are all the better for being handmade and not out of a packet. I finish it without trouble, which is a problem by the time I get to the pork – the salad was enormous, and so is the main. Scott proudly tells me this popular dish was inspired by a curious menu item he tried in Hoi An that played bacon off against spinach, which somehow reminded him of the cuisine of the South back home. Reverse-engineered with some fermented Vietnamese onion to perfect the taste, the succulent tenderloin is added

almost as an afterthought, with a spicy, creamy mashed potato on backup. Just the potato is enough to enthuse over, and I've actually tasted it before – chilled mashed potato is a local delicacy in parts of rural China, which makes me wonder to what extent Scott is consciously channeling diverse Asian influences. Then again, there isn't a hint of Asian DNA in the macaroni – it's hearty, heavy, and home-style.

In fact, I've spent most of the meal trying to analyze the food for this review, and I've hit upon a theory. I've already heard Scott tell another diner that the "twist" to his comfort food isn't some attempt at an East-West fusion but rather a straightforward commitment to using fresh local ingredients. My theory is that he has consciously hunted down the close equivalents of foreign ingredients and then added a bit of magic to produce dishes that are as authentic as possible.

I'm completely shot down before I've finished asking the question as we leave. "No, it's not authentic at all," he says. "You see French and Thai dishes on the menu. They're not anything fancy. It's just good food. It tastes good. The customers leave happy. That's what we're about." ■



"With an output of over 1,000 sausages a day, more of Jonty's products are finding their way into retail outlets in An Phu and Phu My Hung"

All Linked Up

An Englishman and his bangers are never far apart

TEXT BY **HARRISON TRIPPLE** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

FOR AN ENGLISHMAN with a background in Fine Arts and special effects, the Vietnamese sausage industry was about as foreign to Jonathan Stuart as the culture he found himself immersed in when he arrived here. Having owned and operated a small farm in his native Kent, Jonathan (Jonty) was aware of the obstacles that lay ahead. However, it would take a stroke of luck, along with meticulous planning and many failed experiments to see him break into the Vietnam food industry.

"There wasn't a market when I arrived [in 2006], to the extent I had to make and build it myself," says Jonty. "The key thing with sausage making is you have to be absolutely consistent. It's no use altering your ingredients because your customers won't come back."

For example, Jonty found a local source of sausage casings but opted to import them from the UK because he knew the quality would

be consistent from one order to the next. Unsatisfied with the quality of seasonings he found in China and Southeast Asia he continues to rely on imports from the UK.

He was reassured of that quality when he returned to the UK to pick the brain of his family's now-retired butcher. "I went to ask him for some tips and tell him what I was doing and see if he could give me any guidance," explains Jonty. "The butcher's two sons weren't interested in doing any butchering so we sat down and he said he would give me the recipe. He was a champion butcher in Kent, so I'm eternally grateful."

Jonty's factory is a converted two-story house in Thu Duc District where only two staff work in the kitchen. Expanding on his original market of sausages which included flavors like pork & leak, old English (herb/onion), tomato & basil and the original vegetarian, Jonty's

Bangers now also offers meat pies, sausage rolls and Scotch eggs. For anyone scratching their heads as to what a Scotch egg is you're not alone.

"It's an egg with basically sausage meat around it then rolled in breadcrumbs and deep fried," explains Jonty. Apparently, it's quite a tricky delicacy to make. "Nhung is a master at making them; most of mine were a disaster."

He doesn't use MSG in his sausages and only uses fresh, daily delivered supplies of lean meat and fat. Ingredients are never frozen which means production of the sausages starts when the meat is delivered around 7am.

With an output of over 1,000 sausages a day, more of Jonty's products are finding their way into retail outlets in An Phu and Phu My Hung as well as on the menu at restaurants including Mogambo's and Snap Café.

"We've thought about going down the shop route but at the moment I'd like to just concentrate on getting these out to as many people as I can," he explains when asked if he's considered opening his own butcher shop.

Even with all of his success, expansion isn't the most important concern for Jonty, who is proud his shop resembles that of a traditional butcher's. "If an English butcher came in here he'd recognize instantly what was going on."

For more on Jonty's Bangers, visit www.kitchen.net.vn ■



A Cheesy Kind of Guy

Meet the Canadian who's turning HCMC into a cheesy town

TEXT BY **MARIANNA DANIELS** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**

IT IS A long way from the icy forests of Quebec to the back streets of Thu Duc District. But Paul Rogers, a native of the Canadian province is bringing the flavors of home to Ho Chi Minh City with his company Saigon Cheeses. An engineer by trade who used to work for the Canadian International Development Agency, Paul now handcrafts cheeses in a small, unassuming factory that overlooks a quiet pond.

It was almost by accident that Paul entered the cheese making trade. He began experimenting for personal use while living in China, attempting to produce the fresh cheese curds that are a vital component of *poutine*, the national dish of his native Quebec. His first forays into the world of cheese failed, but



many years later, after moving to Vietnam, he made a Monterey Jack cheese.

"It didn't look good. I was going to throw it away, but my friend convinced me to try it," explains Paul. "It was the best I had ever eaten." He then began to take cheese to his son's school for taste tests. When his cheese met with approval from other parents he built a concrete aging room in his house and began producing cheese for sale in 2011. Recently, he moved production to the current location.

His business continued to grow with the help of supermarket heavy-weight Metro. They called Paul and asked him to supply their stores. When Paul insisted he did not have the capacity to supply such a large

business, they encouraged him to increase production. He eventually signed his first supply contract with the company and now sells in four Metro stores in Vietnam in An Phu, Nha Trang, Danang and Hanoi.

Today, Saigon Cheeses' biggest customers are high-end hotels in the city such as the Caravelle and the Sofitel. The company has recently signed a contract to supply Giant supermarkets and Paul also sells directly to customers through his website www.saigoncheeses.com. Business has increased enough that the company is tripling its production from 6kg per day to 18kg per day. This will require adding a second shift of cheese making in the evening.

Early Risers

If you want to make cheese you have to get up early. Production starts at 4am. Saigon Cheeses sources its milk from a pair of farmers in Thu Duc District, who also happen to be brothers. The cows are milked mostly by hand and the milk is collected right after milking time to ensure freshness. It is brought back to the factory and immediately pasteurized.

"The biggest issue is the hot weather," says Paul. "It allows bacteria to grow very quickly so the milk has to be used right away."

After that the milk is heated and a coagulant is added, which causes the milk to separate into firm curds and liquid whey. Some of the whey is skimmed off to make creamy Italian ricotta. A bacterial culture is added which gives each type of cheese its unique characteristics then the curds are cut and pressed into a mold. Weights are put on top to allow the liquid to slowly drain away. The aged cheeses are pressed again in a large wooden contraption of Paul's own design, before being brined for a full day. Finally, they are placed in a temperature and humidity controlled room to complete the process of *affinage*, or aging.

"It is not hard to make cheese, you just have to know a few tricks, and be patient," he insists.

Most cheeses here are aged between 20 days and two months, although they do make a small amount of parmesan that is aged for up to a year and a half. This can create problems for such a small business. If a customer makes a large order it takes a long time to produce more cheese. The company has room to grow as it has just installed equipment that can process up to 400 liters of milk per day. It currently uses about 120 to 140 liters per day. Paul designed the equipment himself and had it manufactured here in Vietnam.

Saigon Cheeses offers four main cheese varieties. Paul's personal favorite is the St. Paul in Vietnam, a semi-soft cheese similar to the famed Oka cheese of Quebec. It is creamy and rich with a pungent, orange rind. The Tomme Thu Duc is based on cheeses originally made in the French Alps. It is firmer than the St. Paul with a milder smell. The Baby Swiss is very flavorful and nutty with a firm texture. Last is a Pepper Jack, Monterey Jack flavored with plenty of roasted, Vietnamese peppercorns that give it a pleasant bite to complement its smooth texture. There are two cheeses available for special order - a creamy, rich ricotta is sought after by local restaurants and supply is very limited. And for *Quebecois* and their fellow *poutine* lovers, the company makes fresh cheese curds. Paul creates them specially in the morning and delivers them the same day to ensure the rubbery cheese is absolutely fresh. All of the cheeses are made with vegetarian coagulants which, along with the bacterial cultures, are imported from Europe and Canada.

In the near future he's looking to expand his products to include more fresh cheeses that don't require a lot of time to age. ■

>>The List

Wine & Dine



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

bakeries

Bread Talk

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

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 3181

Brodard Bakery

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

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

Cakewalk Cupcakes

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

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

Givral

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

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

Gourmand Shop

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

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

Harvest Baking

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

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

Kinh Do Bakery

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

128A Hai Ba Trung, D1

3829 6552
kinhdobakery.vn
6am - 10.30pm

La Doree

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

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

Nhu Lan Bakery

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

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

Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

Pat'a Chou

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

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

Savoure Bakery

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

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

Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

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

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

Tous Les Jours

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

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

bars

Allez Boo

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

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

Alto Heli Bar

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

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

Bernie's Bar & Grill

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

19 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1720

Blue Gecko

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

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

Bootleg DJ Café

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

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

Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1
6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar

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

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

Carmen Bar

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

8 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3829 7699

Charm Bar

Unassuming expat bar in the central city with table soccer and an upstairs floor for private functions. Charm holds an understated air of class within the expat bar district, and is the favorite of its series of regular patrons.

58 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1
3915 3826
thecharmshg@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 🍷 O's Pick

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

104 Ho Tung Mau, D1
09 8376 3372
fi6291182@yahoo.com
4pm-4am

Chu Bar

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

158 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3907
7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

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

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

Ginger 60

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

60 Ton That Thiep, D1
093 772 1011



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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, D1
3836 9575

Hard Rock Café

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

39 Le Duan, D1
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.barsaigoneaven.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, D1
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, D1
090 777 5141
4pm - 1am

Last Call

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

59 Dong Du, D1
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 behind 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, D1
3837 7679
www.lepub.org

Lindo

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

149 Ton That Dam, D1
3915 3149

Long Phi

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

207 Bui Vien, 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

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
heinzvn@gmail.com
3pm - 1am

O'Brien's

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

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

Olive Bar

Spanish-influenced restobar specializing in cocktails, wine, tapas and finger food. Modern, stylish decor and fusion-influenced menu make this a trendy destination for young business executives and fashion-conscious tourists alike.

17A6 Le Thanh Ton, D1

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 Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Red Bar & Restaurant

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

3rd Floor, 70-72 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
2229 7017

Ryan's Pub 'Banter Bar' @ Stella

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

First Floor, 119 - 121 Bui Vien, D1
090 000 0042
www.stellacaffe@yahoo.com

Saigon Saigon Bar

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

19 Lam Son Square, D1
3823 4999
www.caravellehotel.com/en/1/15/325/products.aspx

Saigon Retro

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

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

Sheridan's Irish Pub

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

24 Ngo Van Nam, D1
3823 0793
8am to midnight

Slate

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

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

Spotted Cow

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

111 Bui Vien, 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

cafés

Achaya Cafe

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

90 Le Loi, 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



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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](https://www.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 Tan Son Nhut airport. Extensive menu and broad range of coffees and chilled drinks.

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

Bobby Brewer's

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

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

Boulevard Cafe

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

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Bukafe - Cafe

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

43 Nguyen Huu Cau, D1
090 265 2635

bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com

Café Ban Sonate

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

53 Dang Dung, D1
3290 6004

Caffe Fresco

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

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

Café Terrace

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

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

Cafe Vuon Kieng

Cafe Vuon Kieng is a quiet, casual cafe near the banks of the Saigon River, boasting relaxing views and refreshing breezes. This riverside cafe offers jasmine

tea, coffee, ice cream, beer, even cocktails.

10B Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 3279

Cake Durian Duiro

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

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

Centrofarms Coffee

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

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

Chi's Cafe

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

40/31 Bui Vien, D1
3836 7622

Ciao Cafe

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

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

Cosmo Lounge

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

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 5848

Cooku's Nest

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

13 Tu Xuong, D3
2241 2043

Crêperie & Café

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

5 Han Thuyen, D1

DeJa Vu Cafe

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

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

Elle Cafe

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

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

Geisha's Coffee and Tea House

Experience a funky, relaxed atmosphere

with a refreshing drinks & delicious snack at Geisha Coffee and Tea House. A retreat away from the hustle and bustle of the streets of Saigon.

85 Pasteur, D1
3829 4004
www.geishacafe.com



Hatvala

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

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

Hi-End Coffee

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

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

Gloria Jean's

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

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

Highlands Coffee

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

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1

i-Box Cafe

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

135 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 6718

ID Café

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, D1

Imagine Coffee shop

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

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan
090 956 0105
www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop
09 0956 0105

nguyenmaiuhuan@gmail.com
8am - 10pm

Kebab Cafe

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

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

Kem My

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

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

Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, D1
[keserakesera.com](http://www.keserakesera.com)

Kita Coffee

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

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

Kopi Beans

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

L'amour

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

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

L'Anmien Dining Cafe

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

76A Le Lai, D1
38212718

LightBox Cafe

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

179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan
3527 6668
www.lightbox.vn

L'Usine

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

locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.

151/1 Dong Khoi, D1
70B Le Loi, D1
info@lusinespace.com | www.lusinespace.com
tumblr.com
9am - 9pm

Le Tokyo Baum

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

May Coffee

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

Minhu Coffee

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

MTV Cafe

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

NYDC

A fun, dynamic and cosmopolitan place for food, desserts, beverages and not forgetting the company of good friends. Prices range between VND100,000 - VND300,000.
Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, D1
3822 9992
www.nydc.com.vn

Onset Cafe

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

Paris Deli

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

Passio Coffee to Go

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

Phuong Cac Cafe

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

Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 7484

Phuc Minh Coffee

Phuc Minh coffee is an airy, clean environment providing a varied menu and delicious coffee. The staff is attentive and quick with a friendly approach. Prices start around VN 25,000 for this simple cafe.
51 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
www.quancafe.vn/phucminh.1

Princess and the Pea

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

Regina Coffee

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

Soho Coffee

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

Starbucks Coffee

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

Stella Restaurant & Cafe

Providing authentic Italian and

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



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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 Thai Nhiem, D3
3930 7436

Windows

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

Zoom Cafe ☺ Oi's Pick

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

chinese

Dragon Court

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

Dynasty

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

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

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.dimsunhouse.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

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 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
Mon-Sun 11am-11pm



La Cuisine

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

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, DI
www.lebouchondesaigon.com

Le Jardin

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

31D Thai Van Lung, DI
3825 8465

L'Olivier

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

Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, DI
3824 1555
www.sofitel.com

The Refinery

This Parisian bistro hidden away in its enclave on Hai Ba Trung is an exceptional venue, making for an elegant repast of the sins of the past. It was here in

French Colonial days that opium was manufactured, bringing ruin to the people of Asia; it is here that a far softer side of the French culture now exercises its influence over present-day Saigon, serving modern European cuisine in its tastefully decorated dining area and airy outdoor patio.

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

Ty Coz

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

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

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

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, DI
08 5404 2220
vatelsaigon.com

indian

Baba's Kitchen

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

164 Bui Vien, DI
3838 6661

www.babaskitchen.in
11am - 11pm

Bombay Indian Restaurant

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

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

Ganesh

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

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

Indus Indian

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

2G Thi Sach, DI
3521 0324

Mumtaz

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

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

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 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"



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
Tonyfox5@hotmail.com
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



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.
178 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.saigon.park.hyatt.com
6am - 11pm

Pizza 4P's 🍴 Oi's Pick

A little treasure hidden away at the top of an out-of-the-way alley off Le Thanh Ton, this Japanese pizzeria is a major hit with those in the know. Highly attractive

premises and some extraordinary toppings catering to all tastes make this an unmissable pizza experience.
8/15 Le Thanh Ton, 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

japanese

Aka Taiyo

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

Ajisen Ramen

📍 📶
One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.
120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3822 0522

Aki Japanese Restaurant

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

Blanchy Street 🍴 Oi's Pick

📍
Once hidden upstairs at the Blanchy's Tash bar, Blanchy Street now has its own location in the courtyard of eateries on Hai Ba Trung, offering authentic Japanese food mixed with fusion cuisine and the occasional additional Southeast Asian dish. Run by an ex Nobu (London) chef with his own signature dishes, it has wide appeal. Food is designed to be shared and is backed by an extensive list of sakes and wines.
74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
** 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, Nikko Hotel Saigon
235 Nguyen Van Cu, DI
3830 8123

Hanayuki

📍 📶
A Japanese-style restaurant on Ton Duc Thang with a sushi bar on the ground floor and a fine mezzanine level, Hanayuki serves more than 200 exquisite Japanese dishes with more than 30 kinds of sushi and sashimi. Private, traditional Japanese VIP rooms are available on the top level.
21C Ton Duc Thang, DI
3824 2754

Inaho Restaurant

🍴 📶
This unique venue specializes in traditional sushi & sashimi as well as hot pot dishes. Couples can retreat to the upstairs area; it's far more private than the downstairs bar.
4 Chu Manh Trinh, DI
3829 0326
11am - 2pm, 5.30pm - 10pm

Kabuto Tokyo

📍
One of the more exuberant Japanese venues in this city, Kabuto Tokyo on Mac Thi Buoi specialises in both traditional and fusion fresh Japanese seafood cuisine.

It's a vibrant venue with its manga murals, carp lanterns, giant samurai warrior, and large aquarium – and in the evening it becomes a respectable upmarket bar. For a quirky beverage there, try a sake served in a bamboo tube.
45 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3822 2351
kabuto.com.vn

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

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 Kokekokko is a must see.
4th Floor Pandora, I/1 Truong 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

📍
This is a particularly bright and simple Japanese health food bistro where the cuisine is based on straightforward hotpot recipes. 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

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

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.sushidiningaoi.com

Sushi World

The Japanese presence in HCMC has ensured a wealth of sushi for both themselves and the rest of us here, Sushi World being one specialty venue with a more casual atmosphere that's also a comfortable place to eat for local diners. 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

Uraetai BBQ Restaurant

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

6673 9373

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ

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

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

Yoshino

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

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

Yuki

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

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

korean

Dae Jang Gum

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

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

Hana Restaurant

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

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

Kimsine

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

8A/5D2 Thai Van Lung, DI
7306 4045
094 467 2281
jymimill@hanmail.net
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, DI
3829 5368
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn
6pm - 11pm

Dragon Steak

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

138 Ton That Dam, DI
3821 0288
www.steak.vn
11am - late

El Gaucho 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

New York Steakhouse

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

25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3823 7373
contact@steakhouse.com.vn
www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

Samba Brazilian Steakhouse

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

10C Thai Van Lung, DI
3822 0079
www.samba.vnnhahang.com

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, DI
3825 1901
10am - 2pm; 4pm - 11.30pm

thai

Coriander

A small Thai joint pleasingly decked out in natural materials with cork walls and sedge-lined floors. The resulting ambience is nicely authentic, and the same goes for the cuisine – try the green shrimp curry, the fried noodles in Thai style, or the squid vermicelli for a taste of the Gulf of Thailand. The restaurant is also known for its almost embarrassingly cheap beer.

16 Bui Vien, DI
3837 1311

Golden Elephant

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

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

Jasmine Thai

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

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

Koh Thai

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

1st floor, 39 Le Duan, DI
3823 4423
091 233 9138
www.rohthai.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 Koon, Chicken Satay and many others.

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, DI

3823 7506

9am - 9pm

Mai Thai

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

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

Malee Thai

A cute, central Thai venue decked

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

37 Dong Du, 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



This pleasant little establishment out by the New World hotel is simply decorated with plain wooden furnishings and minimal, albeit tasteful, decorations. This is appropriate for the restaurant's style, 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



This franchise emphasises ethnic Vietnamese traditions with the rustic decor of the countryside, featuring thatched roofing and red tiles, bamboo chairs, and an open, natural ambience. 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 Nguyen 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.bunsaigon.com.vn

Cha Ca La Vong

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

36 Ton That Thiep, D1
3915 3343

Cuc Gach Quan

Fine cuisine with a rustic touch hidden away in the extreme reaches of the inner city. Set inside a restored French colonial mansion with antique wooden furniture and a central staircase, 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

Highway 4



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

101 Vo Van Tan, D3
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

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

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 🍌 Oi's Pick



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

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

Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US

President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.

4 Phan Chu Trinh, 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

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 food and place. 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 Nguyen 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

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

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
3812 2242
www.longmonaco.com.vn

western/international

Al Fresco's

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

Annam Gourmet

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

Au Parc

  It's only fitting that this Mediterranean-styled restored villa with its original tiles, old window frames, plush cushions, and opium-themed art collection sits in one of the most gorgeous streets of central Saigon. Au Parc is an unforgettable venue with a décor that manages to simultaneously capture the grace of the old Colonial architecture and the mood of west-Asian exoticism that transfixed Europe in the Romantic period.
23 Han Thuyen, D1
3829 2772



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


Beirut Shisha Bar

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

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 Truong Toan, D2
3744 4111
7am - 11pm

Bobby Chinn's

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


The Burger Corner

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

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 3237
www.elbowroom.com.vn

Hog's Breath Café

  An Australian family diner and bar concept.

Renowned for quality steaks, seafood and other western fare served in an informal environment. Smoke-free indoors.
Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
3915 6066
090 381 8700
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

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

Khoi Thom

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


La Habana

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

Ly Club

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



Margherita

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

Market 39

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



Mogambo Bar & Grill

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

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

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

Parkview Restaurant

  This restaurant is best known locally for

its seafood buffet, with a wide variety of international specialties freshly-prepared at the live cooking stations. Local and imported seafood includes oysters and prawns, molluscs and organic lobsters.
76 Le Lai, D1
3822 8888
www.saiгон.newworldhotels.com

Pasha

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


Shri Restaurant and Lounge

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

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

Strata

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

Warda

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

Xu Restaurant Lounge

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

Zoom Cafe

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



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Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY JESSICA J. HILL





Highlights of Northern India

From camel races to hot springs and holy rats, these five hotspots will keep you entertained

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JESSICA J. HILL

INDIA IS NOT a tourist destination for the faint hearted. Its streets and restrooms can be shockingly dirty, its people can be overly inquisitive, and its spirituality can be downright overwhelming. But from the in-your-face poverty and trash-lined streets sprouts an elaborate array of color, from bright silk saris and bejeweled scarves to vibrant *tuk tuks*, houses and sunsets. From the once cloying curiosity stems brilliant smiles and an often misunderstood friendliness, and from the faith-filled population shines an innate reverence for both life and death unrivaled by anywhere else I've ever seen.

The world's second largest country by population and seventh largest by size, India offers a landscape and climate to suit any traveler. Every itinerary to the northern half of India typically includes the white-marbled Taj Mahal, the Golden City of Jaisalmer and

the world's oldest continuously inhabited city of Varanasi. However, if you seek a thrill by way of cultural immersion and aren't afraid to venture a little further off the well-trod trail, some of these lesser-known yet stunning destinations await.

Bikaner

In the northern tip of the popular desert state of Rajasthan, Bikaner is an often forgotten stop. An eight-hour train ride from Delhi, Bikaner is less showy than its famous neighbors, which makes it the perfect place to get off the tourist trail and relax in a small town atmosphere where friendly locals are happy to have you. It boasts the immaculate Junagarh Fort, a series of elaborately detailed *havelis* (houses), Jain temples, and streets abundant with heavily laden carts pulled by camels and donkeys. It's small enough to walk from place to place,

but big enough to hold the curiosity of any adventure seeker.

Bikaner is also home to the annual Bikaner Camel Festival, held just outside the city in February. It's a much smaller version of the more popular one in Jaisalmer, but with camel races and villager games in the sand, delicious sweets made on-site and the backdrop of India's famous dunes, it's definitely worth including in your itinerary.

Tip: *The only restroom facility at the camel festival is the great outdoors. There isn't much you can do about it but come armed with knowledge and prepared to bare all... or withhold from drinking water.*

Karni Mata – The Rat Temple

Thirty kilometers outside of Bikaner is a Hindu temple that worships rats – the Karni Mata. Hundreds of these squirmy, gutter animals



Clockwise from top: Camel racer at Bikaner, Haridwar, Rajaji National Park, Tattapani Hot Springs

race around the ancient temple, feeding on large bowls of milk and other food provided by the pilgrims as sock-footed tourists and Hindus alike wander amidst their feces. It's an outstanding photographic opportunity and a beautiful display of the Hindu religion with a *sadhu* (priest) on site to bless every visitor. Even if these animals make you squeamish, it's an experience you won't forget.

Tip: Bring extra socks in case they run out of shoe covers. The unpleasant alternative is walking barefoot.

Tattapani Hot Springs

A 50-kilometer drive over narrow, winding Himalayan roads from the popular hill station of Shimla (about six hours from Delhi by train) will take you to the mountain village of Tattapani. Locally famous for its natural sulfur hot springs, this little jewel of a city is situated along the mineral rich Satluj River. Its water is believed to have healing powers, but even if you aren't a believer, the view is worth the trip. After you take a dip, take off on a trek through the picturesque Himalayas and take in the town from a bird's eye view.

Tip: Visit Hotel Hot Spring Therme & Spa to use its natural sulfur water pools and showers, both hot and cold, for a day fee.

Haridwar

Just a four-hour train ride from Delhi,

Haridwar is a popular tourist destination for Indians on their spiritual path, but often overlooked by foreigners. It's one of the holiest cities in India, and you can join many devoted Hindus on a hike up to the two hilltop temples for a special blessing, but beware of the naughty monkeys looking to steal your coconut offerings for the Gods. Those who aren't monkey fans can take the cable car up to the top.

Each night at dusk, hundreds of people gather around Haridwar's banks of the river Ganges to cleanse themselves of their sins (or just the day's dirt) and view the nightly *aarti* ceremony – a traditional offering to the Gods complete with chanting and prayer. Afterwards, pilgrims light candle floats and release them into the rushing rapids. It's an image that will stay with you, even for a non-participant.

Tip: Arrive at the 'aarti' well before sundown to get a good river view of the ceremony. If you show up late, you'll have a hard time seeing much through the throngs of people who gather here, and police disperse people who congregate on the bridges.

Rajaji National Park

Located in between Haridwar and Rishikesh, and reachable by *tuk tuk* from either, sits an 820 sq km spread of forest and wildlife known as Rajaji National Park. A Gypsy jeep

and guide helps visitors spot wild elephants, monkeys, deer or any of the other 20 species of mammals that live here as well as 315 types of birds. The very lucky (and keen of eye) may even spot a tiger behind the trees. However, even the unlucky will be satisfied by the lush landscape during the two hour journey.

Tip: The park entrance from Haridwar is about two kilometers from the main road, so hire a driver for a round-trip ride in and out of the park; otherwise you could end up stranded inside and have to plead with a park ranger to drive you out. Also, pay the extra money for a guide. While it's possible to do the journey with only a driver, he probably won't speak much English or know all of the best places to go. Pack a lunch to enjoy while waiting for wild elephants to cross your path.

They say visitors to India either love it or hate it, and I believe the former are those who leave this beautiful country changed. They let India crawl under their skin, perhaps unwillingly at first. They keep an open mind, soak in every facet of the experience and seek answers to all their questions. They undoubtedly leave with only the tip of their curiosity fulfilled, with more questions still, and with a promise to return.

Bio: Jessica J. Hill is a freelance writer, traveler and blogger. She writes about teaching abroad, culture and immersion travel. Find more of her stories at www.missadventure.com ■



Capturing Cairo

Galvanic and soul-stirring, Cairo's breakneck pace of life translates into a colorful concoction of intriguing characters and unlikely sights and sounds

TEXT AND IMAGES BY **NAZLEY OMAR**

"EVERY FRIDAY THERE is a revolution!" declares Ahmed, an Egyptian taxi driver, as he takes a corner at full tilt.

My introduction to the Egyptian capital immediately sends my senses into overdrive. With no traffic lights or stop signs in sight, Ahmed weaves in and out of the frenzied traffic with ease and precision. When I wince as a car brakes right in front of us he flashes me a big grin and says, "Relax! This is Cairo. It's crazy but everything is OK!"

There is no better way to sum up this enigmatic city. Few countries have changed so much over such a short period of time as Egypt has since the revolution of 2011 when a wave of demonstrations resulted in the overthrow of long-time President Hosni Mubarak.

As we near the city center, the streets pulsate with life and the locals show off their raucous entrepreneurial spirit. Street stalls and hawkers have set up shop in the shadows of grand historic edifices. And even though it's still the early hours of the morning,

people mill about in the hundreds. We drive past the symbolic Tahrir Square that was the backdrop for Egypt's Arab Spring. While the unrest in the city has subsided, some people are now unhappy with the current President Mohammed Morsi, explains Ahmed.

"Many feel that his government is in fact worse than Mubarak's but at least Cairo is safe to visit now. We want visitors to know that they are welcome," he says.

While it's a precarious time politically and economically, it's a fascinating time for tourists to experience the city as it bursts with change. The jewel of the Nile is prepared to reward travelers with lower prices and less congested tourist hotspots due to a significant decrease in visitor numbers. In addition, as tourism is essential to the livelihood of many, locals seem to go out of their way to avoid bad publicity.

Cultural Kaleidoscope

A character in the story *One Thousand and One Nights* proclaims, "he who has not

seen Cairo has not seen the world at all."

The center of one of the most spectacular civilizations of the ancient world, Cairo has long experienced changes of power. This has resulted in the city being divided into the Pharaonic, Roman, Islamic and Christian districts, each significantly different, making the city a kaleidoscope of cultural diversity.

Dubbed "the city of 1,000 minarets," Cairo's skyline is an amiable horizon of domes and minarets and is home to some of the oldest and grandest mosques in the world. Each mosque stands tall in its opulence and has a charm of its own, meaning you could visit several and still be enchanted by each one. While the Al-Azhar Mosque is the most popular with tourists, the ambiance at the Aqsunqur Mosque is like no other. From the outside, it blends in with the gray, dusty backdrop of the city but once you enter the courtyard, calm permeates the structure where high ceilings are peppered with small, bright lights. While the mosque resembles the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, there is no denying

the exceptional architecture highlighted by the beautiful blue tiles with floral motifs that cover the *qibla* wall. The best part of the mosque is the reward you get for climbing the stairs up the minaret. It opens up into a sublime view of the citadel, the Sultan Hassan Mosque and the walled medieval city. People, farm animals and cars swarm about below in a controlled frenzy of a well-oiled commerce machine. Then the *adhan* (call to prayer) sounds, and just like that, the city comes to a virtual standstill.

Old Cairo, home to the Coptic Orthodox Church, is the chalk to the Islamic district's cheese. Founded in 42AD, the Coptic Christian community has withstood centuries of persecution under the Crusaders and Muslim rulers. With some of the city's oldest churches, mosques and synagogues in the same vicinity, it's the perfect area to lose yourself for a few hours. I wander the streets discovering mosaics and tombstones hidden in dusty lanes.

The Hanging Church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, is the most popular church and for good reason. Beyond the entrance of the gate, the courtyard is bordered with beautiful mosaics and steps lead to the sanctuary where the 11th century marble pulpit, murals and timber roof reminiscent of Noah's Ark bask in their grandeur. I am lucky enough to witness some of the liturgy held in the old Coptic language.

Egyptian souks are an integral part of local customs where commerce takes place cheek by jowl blending elements of the medieval period, African and Arab culture. Situated in the Islamic district, Khan el-Khalili is a revered outdoor marketplace that dates back to the 14th century. It's easy to lose yourself in the labyrinth of stalls and get intoxicated by the excess of colors, smells and tastes. Handmade traditional artifacts, spices, hookah pipes and leather are all a steal. Here, haggling is a valued verbal art.

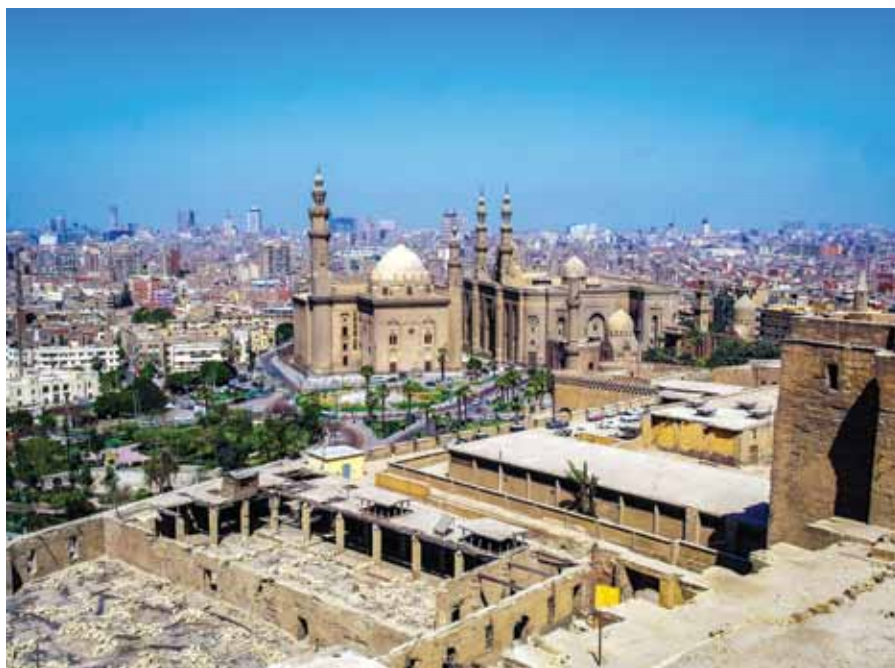
While the shopkeepers' persistent, and sometimes aggressive, tactics intimidated some, I welcome the challenge. My most celebrated moment comes after 15 minutes of playing cat and mouse, as I manage to bring a merchant down to 100 Egyptian Pounds (USD28), from 220, for a pair of handmade leather shoes. As I skip out the store, he calls out, "Nice doing business with you, Shakira, Shakira!"

I reward myself with a cheap but hearty falafel (bread filled with chickpeas) and *fūl medammis* (cooked and mashed fava beans). Finishing it off with a traditional Arabic coffee and shisha at an authentic coffeehouse makes it the quintessential cultural treat.

The Real Pyramid Scheme

No trip to Cairo is complete without visiting the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still intact. The Pyramids of Giza are every bit as awe-inspiring as expected. When standing at the base looking at the Great Pyramid rise coolly from the desert, I am overwhelmed by the sheer size. Imposing and majestic, the pyramids baffle the mind and stir the soul. Standing right up against the large slabs of rock, some of them far taller than me, is proof enough that the Egyptians were far ahead of their time. It is believed that the three pyramids were built for the Pharaoh Khufu, his son and grandson





(Khafre and Menkaure) around 2530BC. Some 100,000 people worked on it moving six and a half million tons of stone with nothing but wood and rope, over a 10-20 year period. It's no wonder historians and Egyptologists have long questioned how the grandiose tomb was built - before the invention of the wheel - inspiring countless conspiracy theories.

The best way to explore this mind-blowing region is by camelback. Our guide Yusuf delights us with stories of this fascinating civilization. We have great fun snapping pictures from a spot where you can capture all three pyramids. We take the requisite shots of using perspective to alternately jump over the pyramids or hold them up. A short camel ride away lies the magnificent Great Sphinx of Giza which is the world's oldest known monumental sculpture and is believed to date back to the reign of Pharaoh Khafra 2532BC. Well worth the extra cost of the camel ride, my day trip to Giza culminates by watching the sunset in the desert, which paints the sky in picturesque brushstrokes.

If the Pyramids of Giza are the holy grail of Cairo then a cultural trip down the Nile is the Cup of Life. The river overflows with history, religious significance and culture. I decide on a dinner cruise that has a scrumptious buffet of local delights. A complete juxtaposition from the conservative, Islamic elements of Cairo, the belly dancers wow me with their captivating pelvic moves. Curvy, gorgeous and scantily clad, they work the crowd often stopping to snap pictures with eager tourists. The most impressive is the spinning Tanoura folk dancer. Dressed in an elaborate outfit that resembles something out of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, the dancer spins tightly around one spot, performing various tricks for a solid half an hour. The show concludes with audience interaction. Unfortunately, I am not as graceful as the folk dancer, the weight of the coat throwing me off balance after just four spins. I make my way back to the table in a fit of giggles.

With its mix of old and new, bargain prices and the winds of change firmly stirring through it there is no better time to visit Cairo. A visit to Egypt not only brings the pages of history books to life, it's firmly paving the way for the modern, allowing visitors to experience history through revolution in the making. ■

TIPS FOR TRAVELING

As Egypt is an Islamic country, it is advisable to wear modest clothing that covers your shoulders and knees, especially if you plan on visiting the religious monuments.

Egyptian hawkers and merchants are known to be in your face and sometimes aggressive but by responding politely and firmly they will let you be.

Tipping or *baksheesh* is a big part of Egyptian culture and is often requested as service charges to waiters, doormen, shopkeepers and garage attendants so factor this into your budget.

The Lowdown on Solo Travel: Part 1

How to avoid being penalized for traveling alone



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

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

THE STRESS OF travel can be a crucible for relationships and friendships. I've had Dickensian best of times and worst of times with friends and family on the road, everything from shared memories of a lifetime to heated friendship-ending squabbles over who used the last of the batteries.

Sometimes, it's just easier to travel solo. Or it may be that my schedule doesn't quite align with friends' and it's either go alone or lose out on a great deal to a destination I've always wanted to get to. In the spirit of traveling no matter what, here are my best tips on making solo travel affordable:

Avoiding Single Supplements

The bane of solo travel is having to pay more. Hotels and cruises say that cleaning and maintaining a room for one is just as expensive as for two which is why most vacation packages and hotel stays are priced based on double occupancy. Single travelers get stuck with paying a supplement that can be anything from a few extra dollars to double the price of the holiday, for instance, with most cruises, who are typically the worst offenders at penalizing singles by charging a 200 percent penalty, as was the case with a trio I met on a European cruise (young couple traveling with a single friend). For the friend, it was either pay the penalty and at least get to go with friends, or not go at all.

In order to mitigate these charges, try cutting out the middle man and dealing directly with the supplier. I wanted to take a Nile cruise between Aswan and Luxor and the travel agency I found the cruise through wanted to levy an expensive single

supplement. Instead, I contacted the ship directly and negotiated a deal which ended up being just USD62 per day for all meals, entertainment and accommodations in a swank cabin with a king bed.

Traveling in shoulder season can also open up deals as can booking very early (giving the travel provider assurance that their tour or package will fill up) or very late (when providers are desperate to sell their perishable product on the premise of "something is better than nothing"). On one trans-Atlantic cruise, I was able to secure a cabin with a single supplement of less than USD200 instead of the normal practice of having to pay for two travelers. The catch was that the cruise ship was doing an unscheduled repositioning from Europe back to the US, meaning that it was a rare case of having a completely empty ship to fill, with no prior bookings. In this case, the cruise line was happy to fill the cabin close to sailing by reducing the supplement.

Another potential money saver is by going smaller. Smaller tour companies are often a mom-and-pop operation, meaning you're likely to be dealing directly with the owner who can provide you with special rates, something that a sales agent for a larger company can't. Smaller hotels are also often amenable to negotiation, especially if you're okay with getting a smaller room or one further away from the action. In some cities where accommodation is notoriously expensive, checking into a dorm room in a hostel guarantees that you'll only be paying for one bed.

Solo Specialists

With more and more people getting

married later in life (or not at all) and traveling later in life (after a divorce or the death of a spouse or even traveling without their spouse), solo travel is on the rise. Travel providers have responded by putting packages together utilizing hotels that don't charge single supplements. Websites like allsingletravel.com either put together trips just for singles or match up singles of the same sex to share rooms. They usually don't guarantee compatibility, though. Singlescruise.com warns prospective roomies that they accept "no responsibility for roommate matching incompatibility such as sleep patterns, snoring, noise, or age differences." I experienced this the hard way on a package trip to Ha Long Bay where I was put in a room with three Swiss guys who weren't interested in socializing and who inexplicably refused to open the windows at night in the stuffy non-air conditioned room. The next night, I negotiated directly with the hotel to move me to my own a/c room for a couple of extra dollars since the property wasn't full.

Many seasoned solo travelers, though, tend to capitalize on the flexibility of not having to plan very far in advance by eschewing package tours altogether. Independent travel tends to free you up for more "adventurous" (i.e. less comfortable) ways of skipping expensive hotel stays. Whenever I can, I factor in overnight train or bus trips to avoid accommodation supplements, something I wouldn't do (as much) if traveling with others.

Check out next month's column where I'll talk about connecting with others while traveling solo, as well as my favorite tech and packing tips for traveling alone. ■



airlines

Air China

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

Air France

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

Asiana Airlines

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

Air Asia

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

Cathay Pacific Airlines

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

China Southern

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

Emirates

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

Etihad

etihadairways.com

EVA Airlines

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

JAL Japan Airlines

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

Jetstar

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

Korean Air

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

Lufthansa

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

Malaysia Airlines

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

Qantas Airways

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3910 5373

Qatar

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

Singapore Airlines

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

Thai

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

Turkish

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

United Airlines

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

Vietnam Airlines

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

Vietjet

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

hotels

HO CHI MINH CITY

TWO STAR

Bali Hotel

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

Calmette Hotel

★★
Charming hotel on one of the most attractively-named streets in the city, although slightly out-of-the-way. Quality, elegant furnishings and modern amenities.
151 Calmette, D1
39144951

Cat Huy Hotel

★★
Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi

Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D1
39208717

Ken Hotel

★★
A surprisingly well-designed hotel, this budget establishment looks anything but from within, although the location in a side alley off CMT8 is quite deceiving.
285/7 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
0906699371

Little Saigon Boutique Hotel

★★
A small, value-for-money boutique hotel with 18 air-conditioned, non-smoking rooms, Little Saigon Boutique Hotel is an easy walk to Ben Thanh Market and other D1 sights. Hidden away in a quiet back alley right in the central area.
36 Bis/2 Le Loi, D1
35218462

THREE STAR

A&EM Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung

★★★
Local accommodation chain that aims at the classy mid-level market; still budget, but with a touch of dignity about it.
8A/1D2 Thai Van Lung, D1
38224495

Blue Diamond Hotel

★★★
A cut above the multiple nearby 2-star properties, this hotel has been officially recognized for its quality décor and service, including high accolades in international publications.
48-50 Thu Khoa Huan, D1
38236167

Bong Sen Hotel

★★★
Located in the heart of D1, The Bong Sen Hotel offers luxurious accommodation for guests who wish to relax or get a little work done.
117-123 Dong Khoi, D1
38291516
www.bongsenhotel.com

Catina Saigon

★★★
Hotel Catina Saigon provides 3 star accommodation in large, boutique rooms that include free, high-speed internet access and city views.
109 Dong Khoi, D1
38296296

Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa- Nguyen An Ninh

★★★
The Tan Hai Long Hotel and Spa offers award winning 3 star service and stunning views of Ben Thanh Market and downtown Saigon. 3 star Hotel and spa located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh city with 160 rooms and suites, also providing professional spa services by skillful and experienced staff
15-17 Nguyen An Ninh, D1
38272738

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

★★★★
One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most famous as the location where much of

Graham Greene's The Quiet American was written in room 214.

132-134 Dong Khoi, D1
38299201
www.continentalsaigon.com

Kimdo Royal City Hotel

★★★★
Nestled in amongst the commercial buildings at the top of District One's central business strip, the posh-looking Kimdo is right in the heart of the administrative, business, shopping, and entertainment district.
133 Nguyen Hue, D1
38225914
www.kimdohotel.com

Liberty Central Hotel

★★★★
Liberty Central has a very prominent brand and is a particularly stylish, eye-catching property right in the centre of the tourist district.
179 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38239269
www.libertycentralhotel.com

Norfolk Hotel

★★★★
Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.
117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
38293415
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Novotel Saigon Centre

★★★★
One of HCMC's newest hotels, Novotel is located on busy Hai Ba Trung St, just within walking distance of downtown attractions. It's everything you'd expect from the international brand with 24-seven guest services and a broad dining offer.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D1

38224866
www.novotel.com

Oscar Saigon Hotel

★★★★
French colonial hotel in District 1 offering stunning panoramic views and 4 star amenities.
68A Nguyen Hue, D1
www.oscar-saigonhotel.com

Palace Hotel Saigon

★★★★
One of the tidier properties of its class within the vicinity, with 144 deluxe guest rooms of contemporary design well-equipped with modern facilities.
56-66 Nguyen Hue, D1
www.palacesaigon.com

Park Royal Saigon Hotel

★★★★
Park Royal Saigon Hotel is an ideally placed conference hotel which caters to all MICE needs. The hotel offers a wide array of banquet services and can accommodate 30 to 300 guests.
309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
www.parkroyalhotels.com

Thao Dien Boutique Hotel

★★★★
Set in a secluded, verdant garden occupying 1.2 hectares along the Saigon River, Thao Dien village is a tropical hideaway that's just 20 minutes from the city centre.
195 -197 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
37442222
www.thaodienvillage.com

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era.

Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining one of its most luxurious places to stay.

19 Lam Son Square, D 1
38234999
www.caravellehotel.com

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

***** **👉 Oi's Pick**

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, the InterContinental Asiana Saigon is dedicated to providing local, authentic, and enriching travel experiences. Decorated in tasteful oriental flair, the hotel is dedicated to representing the charms of Asia and evokes the mystique of this beautiful continent and its cultures. Right next to Saigon's key landmarks, this hotel is ideally placed for high-class travellers and groups seeking a high standard of accommodation. Full MICE areas and facilities are on-site.

Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9999
saigon@ihg.com
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Legend Hotel

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

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

***** **👉 Oi's Pick**

One of the most impressive business hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, with stunning views and 5 star amenities. 533 luxury rooms and suites offering the perfect ambience for concentrated work and undisturbed relaxation.

76 Le Lai, D 1
38228888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Nikko Saigon

One of the city's newest

accommodation jewels, this lavish hotel is designed to make the maximum impression of austere Japanese-style class from the lobby upwards. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in HCMC, with classic, precise and elegant decor.

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D 1
39257777
www.hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn

Park Hyatt Saigon

Without a doubt the city's most luxurious hotel, Park Hyatt Saigon features French colonial inspired rooms, two award-winning restaurants, an outdoor pool and a stylish contemporary bar. The exterior is the result of meticulous research into the colonial architecture of the region.

2 Lam Son Square, D 1
38241234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

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

***** **👉 Oi's Pick**

High-class getaway hotel located out of the city centre on exotic Thanh Da Island, allowing guests to escape from the chaos of the city life while remaining close to the action. More hotel than apartment complex, The Domaine's private residences are classic and luxurious, making the most of the natural surroundings.

1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
35561145
www.saigondomaine.com

Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City vibrant business and entertainment district, Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers is a 5 star haven of convenience, connecting guests with colleagues and friends.

88 Dong Khoi, D 1
38272828
sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com

Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

The Sofitel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.

17 Le Duan, D 1
38241555
H2077@Sofitel.com
www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.

18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
www.windsorplazahotel.com

CON DAO ISLAND

True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an

untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.

Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son
06 4383 1222

DALAT

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises seventeen restored French-style villas from the 1920's and 1930's, preserving the original design, décor and charm, is and set in the cool climate of the rural highlands of Central Vietnam. Striking views of the surrounding town and countryside abound from all areas of the gently sloping hillside property.

Le Lai, Phuong 5, Dalat
06 3355 5888

Sofitel Dalat Palace

Hotel Sofitel Dalat Palace is one of the most beautiful and amongst the few remaining historical hotels in Southeast Asia. Built in 1922 and meticulously restored in 1995 to its original grandeur, the Sofitel Dalat Palace offers individualized service in the finest tradition of Vietnamese hospitality.

12 Tran Phu, Dalat
06 3382 5444
info@dalatresorts.com

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.

Trung Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
051 1384 7333

Fusion Maia

Incorporating the spirit of our time, Fusion Maia Danang is a unique fusion of resort and spa where spa treatments are inclusive and a part of daily living in this beach resort. It is the first all-pool villa-style resort in the destination and offers 87 pool suites, spa villas, and beach villas each with modern, open-plan living and private courtyard with swimming pool. Customize-your-stay options and breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store.

Trung Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
051 1396 7999

Life Resort Danang

Sitting on the Bac My An beachfront only 3km from downtown Danang, and 30km from Hoi An. A pair of four-storey hotel blocks house most of the resort's rooms, with villas flanking one side of a long pool corridor splicing the middle of the resort. Its proximity to three UNESCO World Heritage sites as well as the former colonial French hill stations at Bach Ma and Ba Na make this ideally placed for incentive excursions.

Trung 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
03 3384 2999

HANOI

Hilton Hanoi Opera

This landmark of Hanoi was inspired by the famous Opera House located nearby. A hotel of great beauty and luxury, the Hilton stands in the city's fashionable and elegant French Quarter, and is within close range of the charming Old Quarter and bustling Business District.

1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
04 3933 0500

Intercontinental Westlake

Superbly situated on the serene waters of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities,



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team@insideasiatravel.com | www.insideasiatravel.com

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and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveller.

la Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi
04 6270 8888
Reservation.Hanoi@ihg.com

Sheraton Hanoi

 Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden and courtyard, the hotel provides the perfect balance between tranquillity and convenience. Take in panoramic views of Hanoi's largest lake and enjoy great comforts in the 299 spacious guest rooms and suites, specially designed for relaxation.

K5 Nghi Tam, Il Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi
04 3719 9000

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

*****  **O's Pick**

Located at the heart of Hanoi since 1901, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi has a long history as a luxurious place for prestigious events and popular rendezvous. Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

15 Ngo Quyen, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
04 3826 6919
h1555@sofitel.com

HOI AN

Life Heritage Resort Hoi An

 Rooms are designed along Japanese themes, each having a personal porch with couches for reading and relaxing. Spacious bathrooms feature stand-alone showers or recessed baths, and many bathrooms enjoy views of a private garden. Ideal for events where participants will be enjoying the colourful ancient town area.

1 Pham Hong Thai, Hoi An Town, Quang Nam
051 0391 4555

The Nam Hai

 A stunning all-villa resort located on the pristine China Beach featuring 60 one-bedroom retreats as well as 40 privately-owned two-to-five bedroom residences each with a private infinity pool.

Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam
051 0394 0000
reservations@thenamhai.com



Palm Garden Resort

 Set on five hectares of landscaped tropical garden with over 400 species of palm trees and plants right along the beach and near the World Heritage Hoi An Ancient Town.

Lac Long Quan, Cua Dai beach, Hoi An
0510 3927 927
www.palmgardenresort.com.vn

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

The quiet sounds and vistas of the sea welcome guests to the first unique luxury beach resort with private pool villas in the area. Located a scenic 15km drive from central Hue, this is spacious resort with the largest villas and rooms in the area. The property includes private pool villas, beach villas, duplex and deluxe rooms in a wide range of styles and decor designed with complete and modern facilities.

An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang
05 4398 3333

La Residence Hotel & Spa

This former French Governor's residence dates to 1930 and is a masterpiece of art deco design. Its incredible location overlooking the Citadel and the Perfume River brings this 122-room hotel a total and serene tranquillity. The hotel features a 40m outdoor salt swimming pool at river height giving the illusion of merging into the Perfume River. Ideal for executive retreats and exotic incentives programmes.

5 Le Loi, Hue
05 4383 7475

Pilgrimage Village

Pilgrimage Village offers the harmony of a soothing natural environment and fascinating local culture. Delicious meals, sound sleep, and the peaceful life of the quiet countryside refresh the spirit.

130 Minh Mang, Truong An, Hue
05 4388 5461

NHA TRANG

Evason Ana Mandara

The exclusive location affords city-centre access to Nha Trang's only beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.

Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang
05 8352 2222

Six Senses Hideaway Ninh Van Bay

The resort is one of Asia's most exclusive and intimate beach escapes, sitting on dramatic Ninh Van Bay, with its impressive rock formations overlooking the South China Sea, white sand beach and towering mountains behind.

Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa
05 8372 8222

Sheraton Nha Trang

Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa offers ten categories of accommodation – from spacious, deluxe rooms to 70m2 executive suites and a huge presidential suite. With exemplary conference facilities, this is the number-one MICE resort in the region.

26-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
05 8388 0000

PHAN THIET

Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

The new face of the former l'Anmien, this resort offers an exclusive haven of luxury and relaxation in a spectacular beachfront location right in the heart of Mui Ne. The only property in the Mui Ne district with full conferencing facilities

and a range of exclusive villas – and it has an impressive wine cellar.

Mui Ne
06 2374 1888
muine@anantara.com

Princess d'Annam

The look of the resort is classical, bright, and impeccably clean and private. The two Empress Suites are the pinnacle of luxury accommodation in Vietnam – they are mini millionaire's mansions in themselves, fully-equipped, bright and spacious, and possessing of the same ethereal design quality that pervades this whole resort. Set in the remote Ke Ga Bay, wordlessly beautiful.

Hon Lan, Binh Thuan
06 2368 2222
info@princessannam.com

Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel

Located in the resort capital of Vietnam – Mui Ne Bay, Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel offers an intimate setting for guests to enjoy a getaway on the beach to its fullest. The hotel is home to 24 cozy deluxe rooms with services and sophistication that are expected from a beach boutique hotel.

76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne (Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969
www.windflowermuine.com

PHU QUOC ISLAND

Chen Sea Resort & Spa

Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers. The resort was born from a long and passionate study in order to be integrated and to respect the uncontaminated nature of the bay and of the coastal zone.

Bai Xep, Phu Quoc
07 7399 5895

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

Located on a hill of coconut palm trees, Saigon Phu Quoc is a beautiful, quiet seaside resort with plenty of sunshine. Just 10 minutes from the airport, the resort is an ideal haven for relaxing, fishing, trekking, snorkeling, and scuba diving.

62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc
07 7384 6999
sgphuquocresort@hcm.vnn.vn

La Veranda

The most distinguished of Phu Quoc Island's hotels and guesthouses, La Veranda sports paddle fans, butterfly exteriors, whitewashed louvers, and tropical gardens recalling a colonial plantation. Freestanding deluxe villas are notable for their sea-facing porches, spacious bathrooms, and cathedral ceilings.

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc
07 7398 2988

QUY NHON

Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam. This resort was awarded Best Wellness Resort in Vietnam in 2005, 2006 and 2007 by the Vietnam Economic Times.

Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh
05 6384 0132
quynhon@life-resorts.com

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen
05 7372 2563

serviced apartments

Avila Serviced Apartment

These serviced apartments combine an excellent location with luxurious amenities.

20-20bis Thi Sach, D I
35218365

Bella Serviced Apartments

Affordable, classy apartment living in a tidy alleyway residence styled with white classical flourishes, Bella offers good living and proximity to the city without succumbing to the lures of the expat bubble. Facilities include a small but well-equipped gym on the top floor and pleasant terraces on front-facing apartments.

56/4 Nguyen Thong, D3
3526 0020

Cantavil Daewon Apartment

High-luxury complex with libraries, research center, and cultural information center on site. Also features an outdoor swimming pool. One of the most luxurious towers in the central area.

600A Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Central Garden Apartment

These luxurious apartments offer stunning views of downtown Saigon along with western style accommodations and excellent location.

Clean, inner-city luxury compound close to the Ben Nghe River.
225 Ben Chuong Duong, D I
091 654 2598 / 093 347 6556

City View

Located in the prime business and residential district, only minutes away by car from downtown area, City View is the perfect place for home and/or business in Ho Chi Minh City.

12 Mac Dinh Chi, D I
38221111

Hung Vuong Plaza Apartment

Huong Vuong Plaza apartments above the D5 Parkson are comprised of two 29 floor buildings with many luxurious apartments in bustling Cho Lon.

126 Hong Bang, D 5

Jasmine Court Serviced Apartment

A boutique property with only 12 apartments, comprised of one and two-bedroom suites of various sizes. All apartments are designed in a fresh contemporary style and finished in a pleasing neutral colour scheme.

307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh

38446639

Lancaster Serviced Apartments

Lancaster Serviced Apartments Le Thanh Ton enjoys a commanding position over the nightlife, culture, and business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, offering a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window.

22 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D I
38246666

The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.

58 Ton Duc Thang, D I
38222098

Mai Ha Lan II Serviced Apartments

Mai Ha Lan II offers a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window. It offers 33 luxurious and graciously furnished apartments with studio and two bedroom options.

8A/1C Thai Van Lung, D 1
62990992 0909868052

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.

17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1
38226111

Saigon Court

Since its opening in 1998, Saigon Court has become well-known amongst the expatriate community for exceptional standards of service. This 12 storey building is among the highest in the area, offering its tenants commanding views of other parts of the city.

149 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D 3
39306466

Saigon Pearl Apartment

Ho Chi Minh City's largest five star apartment complex, Saigon Pearl comprises six 37-story residential towers located on the banks of the Saigon River in Binh Thanh District, about five minutes by taxi from downtown. Pool, gym, supermarket and dining facilities all on site.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
38219999

Saigon Skygarden

A 15-storey building located in the Saigonese Little Tokyo on Le Thanh Ton, offering 172 international-standard Serviced Apartments for lease.

20 Le Thanh Ton, D 1
38220002

Saigon View Residences

Saigon View Residences offer a range of Deluxe, Superior, and Executive room types in distinctive one and two bedroom apartments.

117, Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh
38404966

Sedona Suites

With a fantastic location in District 1 and rooms offering all of the comforts of home, this award winning serviced apartment complex caters to businessmen and families alike.

65 Le Loi, D 1
38229666

Sherwood Residence

Serviced apartments available for short or long term bookings, located in Pasteur, within walking distance of downtown Ho Chi Minh City, international schools, shopping centres, etc. Pool, sauna, gym, mini-cinema onsite.

127 Pasteur, D 3
38232288

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Khieu, 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

V-Star Apartment

Good proximity to the Saigon River and FV International Hospital, as well as international schools and the Tan Thuan export zone.

Go O Moi, Phu Thuan, D 7
37733151

travel agencies

Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.

92-96 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1358

Aquarius Booking Office

With access to a global network of leading travel specialists, Aquarius is a domestic & international air ticketing agency committed to offering low-cost flights, travel insurance, and accommodation.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1905

Amazing Thailand Tourism Office

Funded by the Thai tourism board, this office is loaded up with travel resources and advice for travellers to Thailand, an invaluable source of help for travelers on their way to the land of smiles. Travel resources and advice for travelers to Thailand.

5th Floor, Empire Tower, 26-28 Ham Nghi, D1
6291 3887

Ben Thanh Tourist

One of the better-known tour agencies in the city, Ben Thanh Tourist is 20 years old and specializes in domestic and foreign travel, MICE, tourist transportation, and air ticketing.

51 Dong Khoi, D1
3914 3921
090 611 1121

Clé Voyages - Xuan Viet Travel

Xuan Viet Travel has been providing travel services and advice for nearly two decades.

Unit 1105, Harbour View Tower,
35 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 4942

Fiditour

Fiditour offers a wide range of tours to the southeast Asian region, including unique cultural trips, adventure trips, beach holidays, cruises, and culinary trips.

129 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 1414

Hoi An Express

Preferred by many five-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh city such as Windsor Plaza Hotel, Duxton Hotel, Legend Hotel Saigon, and Equatorial Hotel, this privately owned travel agency offers a wide range of services.

94 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3939 0135
090 803 9699

Inside Asia Travel

Inside Asia Travel is a boutique luxury travel provider of tailor made travel arrangements for English speaking expats and travelers through Southeast Asia. Guests enjoy highly personalized, bespoke travel arrangements suited to individual tastes and budget.

www.insideasiatravel.com
team@insideasiatravel.com
3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

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FLOWER-POWERED BY 

Refine Asia

Representing class, creativity, and absolute professionalism in Asian corporate and luxury travel services, Refine Asia is the first-class and luxury arm of the well-known regular travel services operator Focus Asia.

138 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ward 6, D3
3932 0732

Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1
6290 9410

Sinh Cafe

Sinh Cafe started out as a coffee shop, but later expanded to cater to the needs of tourists and travelers. This unique travel agency offers tours within Vietnam, and also to Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

246-248 De Tham, D1

Viet Journey

Viet Journey was founded by dedicated travelers of the southeast Asian region, and they strive to provide quality, time-efficient service for travelers from around the world.

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 7152

bowling

The Bowling Center

The Bowling Centre is a smaller venue with 12 lanes located in the International Club.

285B Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
3864 3784

Bowling Pacific Garden

Small bowling alley at the Pacific Garden apartments complex, ideal for a more private game away from the crowds of teenagers.

8 Bis Ba Thang Hai, D10
3863 7944

Diamond Superbowl

An electrifying bowling experience featuring a 32 lane centrally-located bowling alley with fluorescent bowling balls and high-tech scoring.

4th Floor, 34 Le Duan, Ben Nghe, D1

PowerBowl 388

This is a 10 lane, 10 pin bowling alley with a games section attached, located on the 4th floor of the Parkson Saigon Plaza building.

Level 4, 35 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Powerbowl Hung Vuong

12 lane 10 pin AMF bowling alley with a games section located on the 3rd floor of the Parkson Hung Vuong Plaza building - a Bud's ice-cream station awaits indoors.

126 Hong Bang, D5

Saigon Superbowl

Formerly the coolest venue in HCMC and opened to great aplomb in the early noughties, this tired old complex in the wrong part of town still retains its international-standard huge bowling alley.

43A Truong Son, Tan Binh
3848 8888

charities

Education For Development Vietnam

An international organization that works with Vietnamese partners to improve and expand their educational services for disadvantaged children and youth.

305/30 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 6033

International Organization For Migration

The organization is concerned with the welfare and quality of life of the Vietnamese people, particularly migrant and mobile populations.

1B Pham Ngoc Thach, D1
3822 2057

Loreto Vietnam Australia

Dedicated to the reduction of poverty through beneficial, qualitative and responsive educational opportunities for underprivileged and disabled students.

17c Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3910 6364

Mekong Quilts

Founded in 2001, Mekong Quilts employs women in communities northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, to create high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, accessories and gift wares. All profits from the sale of the quilts are reinvested into the community through the NGO Mekong Plus.

1st Floor, 35-37 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
2210 3110

mekong.quilts.creations.hcmdt@gmail.com

517- Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758

Saigon Children's Charity

Saigon Children's Charity was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged Vietnamese children to get an education and a fairer start in life.

Their programs aim to help the most disadvantaged children of Vietnam to escape from poverty through education and training.

59 Tran Quoc Thao, D3
3930 0503

The Little Rose Shelter

The Little Rose Shelter is a refuge for young girls who have been sexually abused or trafficked for the purpose of labor or sexual exploitation. It offers psychological rehabilitation, opportunities to go to school, free healthcare and a supportive, loving environment to grow.

Hem 30, 55/2 Bis Lam Van Ben, D7
3872 0308

Unicef Vietnam

UNICEF Vietnam provides support in policy development, legal reform, and improving social services. Following reunification in 1975, the charity launched a nationwide programme to meet the basic needs of Vietnam's girls and boys.

Unit 1406, Suh Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1

Waifs Of War Foundation

The Waifs of War Foundation was established in March 2004 by a group of individuals concerned with improving the lives of the children born to Vietnamese mothers and American War servicemen fathers.

24 Le Loi, D1
3913 0439

cinemas & theatres

The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

Ho Chi Minh City's local classical music venue with regular programs & performances.

212 Nguyen Trai, D1

Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3823 1652

CT Plaza Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex on the 7th floor with 3D theatres and VIP room.

Level 10, 60A Truong Son, Tan Binh
6297 1981

Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films.

116 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 8533

230 Nguyen Trai, D1
3920 6688

246 Nguyen Hong Dao, Tan Binh
3849 4567

Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement.

55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3840 4027

098 937 9873 (Mr. Lam)

Ho Chi Minh Conservatory Of Music

One of three conservatories in Vietnam, offering world class musical education and performances.

Concerts at the local Ho Chi Minh City Music School.

112 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 5841

Hung Vuong Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex in the CT Plaza building with 3D theatres and VIP room.

126 Hong Bang, D5
3222 0388

IDECAP Drama Theatre

IDECAP is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1
38295451

Lo Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre.

25 Phan Phu Tien, D5
2242 4622

Lotte Cinema Diamond

Fine cinema complex in one of the most iconic department store buildings in town. Ride up the elevator to the top floor to catch a flick.

13th Floor, 34 Le Duan, D1

Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece, the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety.

7 Lam Son Square, D1
3825 1563

The Soul of Vietnam

The Soul of Vietnam showcases traditional Vietnamese music shows with voice and traditional instruments.

Be sure to check out the three-part Legend of the Trung Sisters' with accompaniment of stone musical instruments, gongs and two lifelike elephants.

7 Lam Son Square, D1
2229 9414

gyms

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at

clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

0902271830

personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the-art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5
3222 0299

28-30-32 Le Lai, D1
6291 5999

5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4
3826 0999

Get Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4
6261 6169

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
091 833 7111

Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3825 8560

Rex Health Club

This spa was designed for both men & women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas.

141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1814

Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 9009

Star Fitness Bítexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0255

museums

Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City

With a collection housing more than 21,000 pieces in various displays, the Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City highlights traditional and modern works of HCMC artists as well as other artists from the south of Vietnam.

97A Pho Duc Chinh, D1

Geological Museum

A fittingly dull-looking building at the corner of Nguyen Binh Khiem and Nguyen Huu Canh, the museum has over 20,000 samples of interesting rocks.

2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1

Ho Chi Minh Campaign Museum

Small military museum dedicated to

the Ho Chi Minh Campaign that led to communist victory over southern Vietnam.

2 Le Duan, D1

Ho Chi Minh City Museum

An old French Colonial palace, the museum has a wide and varied collection and some interesting modern history of its own.

65 Ly Tu Trong, D1

Ho Chi Minh Museum

Three stories dedicated to Ho Chi Minh, the museum features an assortment of artifacts from his personal life, including a radio, sandals and clothes. After exploring the more than 3,000 Ho Chi Minh portraits, take a walk in the lovely gardens around the old building nicknamed the Dragon House' for its ornate roof and hybrid Franco-Chinese architecture.

1 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women

The Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women has become a place of interest for both locals and tourists alike. The museum was set up in order to educate future generations of women about patriotism and the national traditions of Vietnamese women.

202 Vo Thi Sau, D3

Reunification Palace

Formerly known as the Independence Palace, the Reunification Palace marked the end of the Vietnam War, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its main gates. Roped-off showrooms, exactly as they were in 1975, include the presidential office, bedroom, and reception.

135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

Vietnam History Museum

This long-running historical museum offers a chronological display of many items and artefacts, and has been showered with multiple awards by the local administration.

**2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1
3829 8146**

Vietnamese Traditional Medicine Museum

The Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine contains nearly 3,000 items informing guests about the subject dating all the way back to the Stone Age.

**41 Hoang Du Khuong, D10
3862 7812**

War Remnants Museum

Attracting more than 500,000 visitors a year, the War Remnants Museum shows the grim reality of war, focusing mainly on the American phase of the Vietnam War. The multi-building museum includes a courtyard with military equipment including a "Huey" helicopter, an M48 Patton tank and an F-5A fighter.

**28 Vo Van Tan, D3
3930 6325**

parks

Cong Vien Van Hoa Park

This former French recreational space has been converted into one of the city's favorite sports parks.

115 Nguyen Du, D1

Dam Sen Park

This beautiful park was constructed on reclaimed marshland and is widely considered to be Vietnam's most exciting cultural theme park.

3 Hoa Binh, D11

Ky Hoa Park

Large tourist area in the inner suburbs with many lakeside entertainment activities.

12 Ba Thang Hai, D10

Lo Thi Rieng Park

A large park in D10, Le Thi Rieng park is a well-known spot for casual exercise, a friendly game of badminton and early morning birdwatching.

875 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10

Phu Lam Park

Gentle park on a small lake amidst busy back streets of outer Cholon, popular with locals for fishing and exercise.

121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6

September 23 Park

One of the largest parks in the city center. It's a great place to exercise, see free music performances, attend public events, and enjoy food from street vendors.

Pham Ngu Lao, Pham Ngu Lao, D1

Suoi Tien Theme Park 🍷 *Or's Pick*

Enormous amusement park on the outskirts of the city with multiple themed attractions demonstrating Vietnamese culture.

Xa Lo Ha Noi, D9

Van Thanh Park

This expansive park located on the banks of the Thi Nghe River offers myriad culinary options in addition to stunning views and natural atmosphere.

48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Zoo and Botanical Gardens

One of the world's oldest zoos, with a modest collection of animals and a botanical garden, with many rare orchids, ornamental plants, and over a hundred species of mammals, reptiles and birds.

2B Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1

places of worship

Ba Chuong Church of St Dominic

Ba Chuong Church was redesigned in 2003, and now this visually stunning house of worship features a blend of traditional oriental and western architecture.

**190 Le Van Sy, Phu Nhuan
3844 8206**

Bac Ha Church

Built in 2008. The name Bac Ha is the combination between the two names of their original dioceses, Bac Ninh and Ha Noi. The church has two bell towers at 42m high, and there's a room dedicated to looking after kids to let their parents join the mass.

**419 Ly Thai To, D10
3839 1032**

Central Mosque

Built by South Indian Muslims in 1935 on the site of an earlier mosque, this was originally constructed for worshippers from southern India then-resident in Saigon. Now Muslims from all over the world come here to worship.

**66 Dong Du, D1
3824 2903**

Cha Tam Church

Cha Tam Church is an old catholic church built in 1900. The church was named for priest Cha Tam in honor of his great sermons and contributions to the community.

**25 Hoc Lac, D5
3829 8914**

Cho Quan Church

An old church built on the foundations of earlier churches that have stood here for centuries, Cho Quan Church was constructed in 1887 in the Gothic tradition, with large stone pillars and a red tiled roof. The massive bell tower consists of three floors and provides stunning views.

120 Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cholon Mosque

Built by Muslims from South India

in 1932, the Cholon Mosque Serves Cholon's Muslim community, including Malaysian, Indonesian as well as South Asian worshippers.

**641 Nguyen Trai, D5
3855 5350**

Dieu Phap

Almost half a century after Dieu Phap pagoda was founded, it has continued to provide a home and food for the poor, helpless, and homeless elderly people.

**188 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh
3553 3267**

Giac Lam Pagoda

Probably Ho Chi Minh City's oldest pagoda, Giac Lam features a rare bodhi tree and seven-storied stupa containing Buddhist relics. The 32 metre-high stupa, facing East, is one of the most distinguished towers of the city.

11, Lac Long Quan, Tan Binh

Hoà Khanh Temple

A tall, colorful, and oddly out-of-place temple, sticking up prominently from the homes and businesses that surround it.

**215 Phan Van Tri, Binh Thanh
3843 1699
www.chuahokhanh.com**

Hung Phuoc Pagoda

Quiet and unassuming active Buddhist pagoda situated behind the Saigon Railway Station.

**540/23 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3
3993 4113
095 806 3311**

Huyen Sy Church

One of Saigon's oldest churches convenient to the backpacker district, and built by the grandfather-in-law of the last king of Vietnam.

**1 Ton That Tung, D1
3882 3858**

Jade Emperor Pagoda

An ancient temple built by the city's Cantonese Chinese community, the interiors are filled with paintings portraying Taoist and Buddhist mythical stories and sculpture depicting the ten levels of hell and the apocalypse from Chinese mythology.

73 Mai Thi Luu, D1

Jamiul Islamiyah Mosque

Highly stylistic Mosque near the central police station, servicing a sizeable local Muslim community, it is also known as the Nancy Mosque.

**459B Tran Hung Dao, D1
3920 3325**

Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber

In stark contrast with the pagodas and temples that dot the city landscape, Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber is a place dedicated to seeking inner peace and the study of Buddhism. A colorful D6 pagoda with resident monks, daily devotional instruction, and a free traditional medical healer on Thursdays and Sundays from 8-11am.

**121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6
3875 1155
093 868 0935**

Mariamman Temple

This small Hindu temple is frequented by both Saigon's tiny Hindu population along with residential Vietnamese.

The temple was built in the late 19th century by traders from Tamil Nadu and is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Mariamman.

45 Truong Dinh, D1

Nga Sau Church / Saint Jeanne d'Arc Church

Dedicated to St. Joan of Arc, this salmon-pink church is built on the site

of a former Chinese cemetery.

116B Hung Vuong, D5

Quan Am Pagoda

An impressive pagoda dedicated to the popular Goddess of Mercy, with a beautiful interior and large fish and turtle pond.

12 Lao Tu, D5

Quoc Tu Pagoda

Prominent seven storied pagoda with colorful statuary in D10, the main complex of the pagoda spans seven stories with the first two open to the public.

Ba Thang Hai, D10

Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica

Ho Chi Minh City's foremost tourist attraction, this beautiful cathedral dates from the 1860s and is built with bricks from Marseille. In front of the cathedral stands a Virgin Mary statue, which is said to have been shed tears in 2005, causing thousands of people to stop around the Basilica.

1 Cong Xa Paris, D1

St Joseph Seminary

This stunning complex of old colonial-period buildings a few blocks to the east of Notre Dame Cathedral is looking its age after significant tropical weathering, but it's slowly being restored and has been training new seminarians since 1986.

6bis Ton Duc Thang, D1

Subramaniam Swami Temple

One among the city's only two South Indian Hindu temples, it was the first Hindu temple ever built in Ho Chi Minh City and the largest. Located a mere five minutes' walk from Ben Thanh Market.

98 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

Tan Dinh Church

Built by French colonists in the late 19th century, Tan Dinh Church is renowned for its distinctive pink facade and decorative designs. A popular photography subject for visitors to Ho Chi Minh City regardless of their religion.

**289 Hai Ba Trung, D3
3829 0093**

THE WELL International Church

The Well is a registered English speaking, evangelical Protestant church for Ho Chi Minh City's expatriate community meeting each Sunday at 11am.

**Khanh Hoi Church, 98 Le Quoc Hung, D4
0976 285 610
www.thewellvn.org**

Thien Hau Pagoda

One of Cholon's most popular pagodas, this temple was originally built as an expression of gratitude by 19th century Chinese immigrants for Thien Hau's protection during their initial trip to Saigon by sea. Its many hanging incense coils make for superb photographs.

710 Nguyen Trai, D5

Tran Hung Dao Temple

One among a series of temples and pagodas dedicated to the Vietnamese folk hero Tran Hung Dao, who freed ancient Vietnamese people from the Mongolians in the 13th century.

36 Vo Thi Sau, D1

Vinh Nghiem Pagoda

Sitting next to the canal at the end of Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, this structure draws its inspiration from traditional Vietnamese culture and a touch of the Japanese architectural style. The largest and most impressive Mahayana Buddhist pagoda in the city.

**339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3843 9901**

Xa Loi Pagoda

The largest pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City and known for a brutal 1963 raid,

Xa Loi was built in 1956 following the drawings of the architects Nguyen Van Duong and Do Ba Vinh for worshipping Buddhist relics.

89 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 0679

social clubs

Brogolf Bar Wars

Group of barflies who meet regularly for golf, open to new members. First Saturday of each month, breakfast, brunch, and 18 holes with a caddy.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1
090 927 3997

Dat Nam Friendly Club

While it may ring of a bingo association, this is a fairly well-respected venue for entertainment and cultural exchange amongst foreigners and entrepreneurs - a very casual networking opportunity.

Basement Level, 116 Nguyen Du, D1
5404 3618

International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from 10am- noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (127 Pasteur, D3). Cost for coffee and snacks is VND130,000. Membership is VND700,000 per year. Open to all ladies

Latin Street Dance

Geisha's was funky enough without the addition of this new meet-up for Latin fans yearning for something a little grittier than salsa.

Geisha Tea House, 85 Pasteur, D1

Overland Club

Overland Club is a 100 percent foreign-owned Japanese company that organizes cultural classes including

pottery (from basic to intermediate level, as well as painting unglazed pottery) and cooking classes (Japanese and Vietnamese). The Overland Club also hosts various events. Past events include noodle making, soap carving, and kids' cooking.

36bis Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1
3820 9734

Saigon Swing Cats

Saigon Swing Cats organizes dance classes, workshops and events at various venues around HCMC including restaurants, lounges and dance studios. Dance styles include the Lindy, Shim Sham and Tranky Doo.

Petrohouse Tower- caffe molinari,
5 Le Duan, D1

sports

Green Bamboo Club

Pleasant tennis club with several courts just a short hop over the bridge from District 1 into Binh Thanh.

50/3 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh
3898 6504

Lan Anh International Tennis Court

Popular international sports club facility with advanced sporting equipment, courts, gym, and restaurant. This sports club also hosts tennis tournaments and other events.

291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
3862 7144

Kimdo Recreation Centre

Situated in downtown Saigon, Kim Do Recreational Centre provides a wide variety of services: restaurant, karaoke, live music cafe, bar, dancing, massage, steam bath and hairdressing.

129A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 5914

swimming pools

Great World Pool

Popular public pool known for its high standard of cleanliness, this indoor pool is shallow at both ends and deep in the middle to ensure safety for non-swimmers.

600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6
3853 7867

Ky Dong Swimming Pool

Great D3 outdoor family pool, ideal for the kids.

40 Ky Dong, D3
2241 5322

Lam Son Swimming Club

Olympic-sized swimming pool with designated lanes (one exclusively for women) and a reputation for cleanliness.

242 Tran Binh Trong, D5
3835 8028

Lan Anh Swimming Club Pool

The popular Lan Anh club is a well-situated sports area with a clean, quiet pool and jacuzzi. A bar serves drinks and towels by the water. There are various areas with different depths from 1.4m to 2m, suitable for adults. Swimming lessons are available at the club.

291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3
3932 5508

Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favored by younger people and recreational swimmers.

48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh
2219 5487

Yet Kieu Swimming Pool

A long-standing swimming club that's become the standard for competition, clean water, and inexpensive prices, Yet Kieu is a well-managed complex of pools for the family - and it also has its

own gym.

1 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
0839101542

classes

Cetana PSB Intellis International College

PSB College is the first and only Singapore licensed college in Vietnam. Provides students easier accessibility in gaining knowledge and skills beyond the usual classroom study. PSB College offers a suite of internationally-recognized diploma programs from business, marketing, hospitality to finance.

144-146-148 Le Lai, D1
3926 2233
www.psbcollege.edu.vn

Saigon Cooking Class

Classes can include a market tour to buy the day's ingredients followed by a hands-on cooking class, organized twice a day from Tuesday till Sunday (US\$39.50 to 45.50). Team building programs also available.

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 8485

Vietnam Cookery Centre Oi's Pick

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.

26 Ly Tu Trong, 4th floor, Ste 45, D1
3827 0349 / 3823 8085

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

4th floor, CMARD2 Building, 45 Dinh Tien Hoang, D1
3910 0168



Vientiane's manifest choice


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Fashion

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Ain't Misbehavin'

The decadence and glamor of the 1920s is alive and well right now in 2013. Jumping on *The Great Gatsby* revival is surprisingly easy if you know where to look. The key is to style yourself right into the Roaring 20s with a number of long necklaces, headscarves of different lengths and a selection of clever hair pieces and clips. Now is definitely the time to revisit the glitz of the Gatsby era, even if you are off into District 1 for a very 21st century night out.

MODEL: THANH THUY/PL MODEL

STYLIST: JAMES ALLEN

MAKEUP AND HAIR: KENNY LIEU

ASSISTANT STYLIST: DANNY ST. LOUIS

Dress | LOT
VND15,000,000

Headband | Gosto
Not for sale

Ring | M.D Mansion
VND65,000



Dress | LOT
VND5,000,000

Hairclip | Accessorize
VND285,000



Dress | Song
VND945,000

Bracelet | Accessorize
VND615,000

Earrings | Accessorize
485,000

Hairclips | Accessorize
285,000 each



Shirt | **Le Hang**
VND765,000

Cardigan | **Odd**
VND688,000

Necklace | **Accessorize**
VND485,000

Cloche Hat | **Shin**
VND500,000



Dress | **Shin**
VND850,000

Scarf | **Song**
VND1,365,000

Pendant Necklace | **Accessorize**
VND405,000

Tassels Necklace | **Accessorize**
VND695,000

Bracelet | **Accessorize**
VND4,850,000



ADDRESSES

Shin
53A Nguyen Du, DI

Le Hang | Designer Boutique
Zen Plaza 54-56
Nguyen Trai, DI

Odd | Designer Boutique
Zen Plaza 54-56
Nguyen Trai, DI

Accessorize
BI Floor, Vincom Center B,
45A Ly Tu Trong, DI

Song
Floor 1, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, DI

Gosto
58 Le Loi, DI

M.D Mansion
56/4B Huynh Khuong Ninh,
DI - 091 744 8773

LOT
67A Mac Dinh Chi, DI

The Milliner

Kan Kanemura is a young designer dedicated to dressing people above the hairline

INTERVIEW TRANSLATED BY **DANNY ST. LOUIS**



Living in Saigon since 2009, **James Allen** has become steadily obsessed with the Vietnamese fashion industry, eager to promote homegrown talent through his work as a stylist.



ORIGINALLY A GRAPHIC designer, Kan Kanemura's head was always elsewhere, and after winning a national fashion design competition or two, he decided to get involved full-time. Working as a stylist, photographer and art director, with solo exhibitions, has led him to his main passion - headwear. Hidden away in his workshop, Kan manipulates an array of materials into sometimes delicate, sometimes in your face (literally) pieces of art.

How did you get involved in making head pieces?

It just happened. Working with various designers as an art director and stylist I found I always wanted to make big changes to the model's hair, from the size to the shape. And that's really how the Kan Kanemura headwear developed.

During my time studying and working abroad, my love for hats just bloomed; it wasn't long before I discovered how thrilling it is to create and design headwear

from concept to production. I took a course and now I'm designing hats that are more and more inventive and also suitable for Vietnamese people. I often collaborate with designers; you can see some of my recent work I have finished with Dieu Anh and Nguyen Quoc Binh.

What inspires your designs?

The dramatic arts! I never truly understood the beauty of the dramatic arts. It was only when I was working at the IDECAF theatre as an Art Director and poster designer that I developed this passion. It allows me to contribute something decorative to the stage and also a way for me to pursue the art of making something fashionable off stage.

What is the most challenging project you have undertaken?

I've made some very detailed hats for dancer Linh Nga. Recently I hand embroidered an entire headpiece to portray a phoenix. It took me three days straight to get my artwork done (I prefer this term to "hat"). I worked

with the utmost care and attention as Linh Nga is a very precise and elegant woman and she knows what she wants.

Are there a lot of milliners in Vietnam?

[Laughs] I haven't actually researched it but I do know I'm not the first one. There are a lot of craftsmen making headwear for the stage - exquisite, genuine head pieces that you can see in Vietnamese operas (*tuồng*). Being able to see them creating artwork such as that makes me love my job even more.

What are you working on at the moment?

Currently I'm working on a big project for a contemporary/traditional dance performance. It's just great to work on something for the stage again. Other than that I'm still doing custom-made headwear for celebrities and artists and producing pieces under the label Kan Kanemura.

To see more of Kan Kanemura's work, go to www.facebook.com/kankanemura or contact him on nguyen.kan@gmail.com ■

>>The List Fashion



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

eyewear

Dilusso

Selling many famous eyewear brands under Italian manufacturers such as Dolce & Gabbana, RayBan, Versace and Bvlgari. Provides high-quality products at an affordable price.

29A Dong Khoi, DI
3824 6469
090 921 0192

Eyewear Hut

Eyewear Hut offers prescription glasses, contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses and other devices. They also stock popular brands such as Luxottica, DeRigo, Charmant, Marcolin, Dolce & Gabbana, D & G, Tom Ford, Salvatore Ferragamo and more. Also caters to kids.

135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 1695

Eyewear Plaza

The largest shopping center for eyewear in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 1,000 products including sunglasses and prescription glasses.

33 Nguyen Du, DI
3829 5051

Oakley

Decades of Oakley innovation have led to a full array of market-leading products including performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics. The company continues to build on its heritage of authenticity by reinventing products from scratch to achieve superior quality and genuine innovation that delivers the unexpected.

28 Ton That Thiep, DI
3821 5712

Sunwear Boutique

With many locations around the city, this luxury eyewear store supplies many designer brands, including Burberry, Vogue, Blue Bay, and many others.

89-91 Nguyen Du, DI
3824 4397

ladieswear

Axara Paris - Saigon Center

Axara may have seduced the whole world, but its 2010 launch in Vietnam at the Vincom Centre is still making headway with modern young Vietnamese women entranced by its romantic, glamorous designs.

65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7655

Banana Shop

Banana Shop provides everything a girl needs to be noticed in Ho Chi Minh City. Whether it be undergarments, shoes, bags, or jewelry, Banana Shop delivers with unique products from Hong Kong and the United States.

128 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3829 0061

Bebe

The shop sells its brand of women's clothing and apparel, dresses, jumpsuits, shoes and bags.

1st floor, Saigon center, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 4011

Cao Vinh Fashion

Specializes in formal Western-style shirts, Cao Vinh is distinctive if for

nothing else than its simple, intriguing website allowing customers to specify design elements.

69 Pasteur, DI
3824 5645
090 817 9129

Cashew

Fashion shop chain with 4 boutiques in HCMC. Specializes in women clothes and accessories. Designed by their own designers. Familiar brand in HCMC catwalk and Vietnam fashion industry.

38 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6683 9669

Diva Silk Boutique

Diva is all about silk, oriental glamour, luxury, and a feminine charm to match. The products in this little shop comprise both locally-woven first-grade silk garments and those imported from Thailand.

146 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 7153

Esprit

Hong Kong-based lifestyle apparel brand offering affordable casual streetwear from a two-story shop in the heart of downtown HCMC.

58 Dong Khoi, DI
3827 6085

Eva Gopa

Office fashion, street-style fashion, and evening dresses for women.

11E Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3910 3877

Fit

Caters to women in their 20s.

44 Luu Van Lang, DI

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, DI
3925 1495

Kelly Bui

Launched in April 2010, the shop sells the most recent collections by the brand. The collections shown on the website are the same as those in-store.

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3936 9386

Khai Silk

Khai Silk is a favorite among local celebrities for its high quality tailoring, fabrics and service.

81 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 2856

Kiwi Fashion

Kiwi offers contemporary designs at an affordable price. It was founded by former Vietnamese model Kim Hong Phung and houses the latest fashion trends exclusively designed by Josephine Geralda, one of the leading designers in London.

74C-74/1 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 8214
3822 1191

La Bella

A Vietnamese fashion shop that carries dresses, skirts, tops and a large selection of bags and purses.

58-87 Pasteur, DI
3823 0172
9am - 9pm

Lyn Around

This is the Saigon branch of the international high-class fashion label Lyn Around. It is famous for its girly girl and street style.

1st Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 6575

L'Usine

The central retail space offers famous fashion brands from around the world with full rotating stock.

First Floor, 151 Dong Khoi, DI
6674 3565

Maison de Bunga

Maison de Bunga is a specialty women's clothing store specializing in designers with floral motifs, hats, bags, and other accessories.

81 Pasteur, DI
3943 0990

Mango

Mango is a Spanish fashion design company with over 2,000 stores around the world. Ho Chi Minh City is home to several of its branches. Mango sells fashion clothing for women including dresses, skirts, tops and accessories.

Unit 2F-11, 2nd floor, Icon 68, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6266 2111
1st Floor, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7464

Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke ao dais.

67 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3829 4007
098 330 0469

Ngan Private Collection

A collection of multi-brand fashion labels created by one of Vietnam's highly recognized fashion designers. Dedicated personal styling consultant available for those in need of their own stylist.

23 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6290 9391

Phuong My

A ready-to-wear fashion designer currently working from Ho Chi Minh City, producing feminine pieces using high quality fabric such as silk organza and lace using expert tailoring and construction which has earned her frequent coverage in the country's top fashion magazines.

81 Le Thanh Ton, DI
09 7271 7788

Shin

Vintage style ladies fashion, clothes and accessories by local designers.

122 Ly Tu Trong, DI
090 935 2369

Sifa Fashion

Known for selling office wear for women.

192 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3825 0618

Song - Valerie Gregori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophisticated women.

75 Pasteur, DI
3824 6986

Sophilita

A simple Italian fashion brand with several branches in Vietnam, Sophilita mainly sells office, street, and casual,

womenswear.

15C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
6275 9019

Suite Blanco

Suite Blanco is a Spanish company specialized in the design, production, distribution and sale of all types of accessories and clothing for the modern woman and man looking for the latest trends at affordable prices. The chain now has 240 shops spread in 15 different countries including Vietnam.

Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, DI

Thuy Design House

A popular Vietnamese ready-to-wear designer creating seasonal collections using high quality materials with a minimalist design aesthetic. Thuy's friendly boutique carries a range of shapes and silhouettes that are often worn by the city's fashion conscious.

151/6 Dong Khoi, DI
www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse

Umbrella

This fashion label caters to a higher end market with tailored bags to accessories.

35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6276 2730

www.umbrella-fashion.com

Valenciani 🍷 O's Pick

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

1F/12 Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 2788
090 785 5788

menswear

Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, DI
6675 4013

An Phuoc

An Phuoc Garment Manufacturing was established in 1992 with 50 workers and 40 sewing machines, specializing in manufacturing for exporting enterprises. Now it has transformed itself into a garment export company featuring handmade clothing and shoes.

182 Hai Ba Trung, DI

Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

Maschio Shop

Colorful retro men's fashions, one of the quirkiest fine-quality local fashion stores in the central area.

168 Ly Tu Trong, DI
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 Sciaro Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

1st Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3864 0800
090 316 6364

Santo Nero

Centrally-located purveyors of international Santo Nero brand "Italian gents wear".

23 Ly Tu Trong, D1

Veston Huy Hoang

Men's tailored fashions, specialising in suits. Expect to Pay: \$200 and upward for a suit, fabric included. Obviously, the better the quality of fabric, the higher the price. 70% of customers are foreigners.

65 Pasteur, D1
3822 4609
090 865 4988



U.S. POLO ASSN.

U.S. POLO ASSN. is an American fashion brand that carries trendy and cool polo style clothing for men. Their high quality items are ideal for casual wear as well as for a game of golfing or any other sports.

138 Nguyen Trai, D1
6291 3282
uspolo.hcm@gmail.com
www.uspoloassn.com
090 399 9551



shoes & accessories

Accessorize

Accessorize is devoted to bringing customers eclectic products with its own in-house design team. Accessorize is focused on sourcing globally in an effort to find well priced and good quality collections of fashion accessories following seasonal themes.

Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Adidas Performance Store

Sells running shoes and sportswear by the famous German brand.

2nd Floor Bitexco Tower, 135 Nguyen
Hue, D1
3821 2894
66 Le Loi, D1
3824 1455

Asian Fish

Serves made-to-order classic souvenirs, original ao dai designs, and is highly popular with Japanese customers. Also sells bags, sunglasses and clothing.

39/9 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 1839

Avocado

Airy and spacious shop for handbags and accessories.

117 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
0123 999 9099

Bam Skate Shop - VVT

Bam Skate Shop stocks a wide range of international brands for those in search of skating equipment and apparel.

228 Vo Van Tan, D3
090 878 9820

Cara Diamond & Jewelry Vincom

One of the better-appointed jewelry counters at Vincom B, Cara sells boldly-designed pieces at reasonable rates.

Shop B28, First Floor, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Charles & Keith

Singapore-based fashion retailer specialising in shoes, handbags and accessories at a mid range price point.

17-18 Nguyen Trai, D1

Compa Jewelry store

Compa Jewelry Store specializes in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds from the finest quality of raw materials that meet international standards. Compa Jewelry is also a manufacturer and importer of gemstones and fashion jewelry.

135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3915 2151

Doc Martens

Small central-city outlet of the popular international Doc Marten brand with an extensive stock of the latest styles.

39 Le Loi, D1
3821 4931

Hong Anh Collections - LTT

Using fabrics such as silk and taffeta, the brand caters to a younger crowd. Stocks clothing, handbags, jewelry and neckties.

75 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3542

Ice Accessories

ICE and ICE Accessories are the newest brands from Duy Anh Trading Co., Ltd. under the creative direction of Adrian Anh Tuan. This high end fashion hub is now open at the Saigon Centre. Each ICE collection offers 100 types of fashionable designs and colors.

Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3521 0881

Ipa-Nima

With a focus on handbags and a design-first philosophy, Hong Kong expat Christina Yu's Ipa-Nima brand translates fashion trends into edgy accessories, steeped in soul.

77-79 Dong Khoi, D1
3515 3980

ITALY Shoes Shop

Modest Italian-style mens shoes at local prices in the central area.

186 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3827 9813

Kim Ngon Jewelry

A counter in Tax building that buys and sells jewelry made from gold and gemstones.

A37-A39 Counter, Saigon Tax Trade
Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4874

Kimseng

An open storefront that sells gold and gold-related jewelry

50 Le Loi, D1
3823 4414
090 821 3245

Kita Diamonds

Quality diamonds specialist with a professional showroom.

82 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 1510

Lam Boutique

The shop sells clothing for women only and most of the items on offer

are European casual vintage style with a touch of street chic. The clothes are made by the shop and has become quite popular among Vietnamese celebrities.

1st Floor, 71 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
090 671 2309

Le Hang Crystal Jewellery

With almost 20 years of experience in the design field, Le Hang's experienced group of staff create jewelry from fragments of Swarovski crystals.

101 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 3596

Lua Exclusive Boutique

Prestige shop that sells exclusive Vietnamese silks.

83 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3822 5292

Nine West

Originating in the U.S. Nine West has a built a name for itself by quickly translating runway trends into styles attainable on the high street, and in the case of Vietnam, the malls of district one. Collections found in store now include a wider range of accessories such as bags, belts and other lines of accessories.

Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1
Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1

Pandora

Pandora designs, manufactures and markets hand-finished and modern jewelry made from genuine materials such as sterling silver, pearls and gemstones at affordable prices.

6 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3241

PNJ Nguyen Hue

PNJ was the first local jewelry company exporting products overseas. Since 1995, PNJ jewelry products have been introduced in Hong Kong Jewelry Fair, as well as exported to Denmark, Germany, US, Australia and is now entering the Dubai market.

Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4854

Puma

One of a network of Puma shops around town, this has a far more limited range than some of the other outlets, but scores on its convenient location.

1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 7464

Saigon Jewelry Company Ltd

Formerly known as the Saigon Jewelry Holding Company, SJC specializes in manufacturing and trading gold and jewels. The brand is well-recognized throughout Vietnam as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.

1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135
Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8844

Sapa Shop

Certainly one of the grooviest souvenir shops on Le Loi, much of the stock comprises ethnic handicrafts brought down direct from breathtaking Sapa.

76 Le Loi, D1

Shoes Hanoi

Cheap, centrally-located shoe store with babywear boutique at the doorway. Since 1929, they've been making and selling shoes for both men and women.

107 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5753

Steve Madden

Considered the fashion footwear mogul of the 21st century, Madden has been responsible for the design and marketing of the company's trendsetting shoes for the past two decades. His collections are aimed

at fashion forward men and women, and also include bags and other accessories.

Vincom Center B, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Sophia Jewellery

Fine jewelry sold in an annex to the lobby of the Oscar Saigon Hotel.

68A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 8513

Tran Quoc Lan

Custom-makes shoes and sells shoes of all kinds.

97 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5453

Tuyet Lan

Tuyet Lan's tailor will help you design your own garment or choose from a colorful selection of exquisite hand-embroidered pieces.

91 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3827 7038
090 392 6286

Viet Thanh

People still hunt Mekong crocodiles for their fine leather, and there's a healthy home-grown crocodile leather industry with this venue being one of the more upper-class of these establishments. Sells wallets, belts, handbags, keychains, and other small leather goods.

137 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 2735

tailors

ANH SILK

A little fashion shop near the Sheraton hotel selling both men's and women's clothing and with a fast turnaround tailoring service for silk garments.

151 Dong Khoi, D1
2211 9116

Cao Minh

Founded by Mr. Ly Minh in 1948, who dedicated his entire life to custom-tailoring works. Cao Minh Garment Private Enterprise was the first in Vietnam to successfully export its suits to Japan.

77 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3824 2547

Kim Dung Embroidery Tailor

Tailored outfits and specializing in Asian garments as well as Western suits and dresses for both domestic and foreign customers.

129 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 2077
012 7773 8146

Lam Tailor's

Considered the tailor of choice in the diplomatic community here, it had the honor to tailor a suit for President George W Bush when he was in Vietnam several years ago. They import their fabrics from England and Italy.

158C Dong Khoi, D1
3824 3830

Lan Vy

A small tailor shop near Ben Thanh market. Female tailor who specializes in shorts, skirts, business shirts and dresses.

217 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5087

Minh Doan Tailors Shop

Specializes in suits for men and women.

120 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1687

Phuong Anh

The shop stocks fine embroideries and brocade, with a 24 hour turnover tailoring service.

B4, 2nd Floor Tax Building,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
38213115
090 380 9758

Tailors Nhut

Well-known tailor for men's business and event suits as well as ladies' business wear. Pre-tailored products are available in-store.

232 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5338

Viet Tien Garment Company

The company was established in 1976, and has been successfully manufacturing garment, textiles and accessories for fashion industry.

178 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 4350

watches

D & D

Purveyors of fine watches on Saigon's central strip - one place to go to avoid questionable merchandise.

68 Nguyen Hue, D1
093 847 1846

Luu Hung Phat

There's no shortage of vendors of watches in this part of town, but not many that can afford a plum spot on the central district's richest shopping strip.

56 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 4777
090 380 8909

Rhythm Showroom

An authorized importer and distributor of the Japanese Rhythm brand into Vietnam. Rhythm has 16 stores in HCMC; this Tax Building showroom is known as Shop Dang Nghi.

Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3891

Swiss Watch

Straightforward, quality swiss watch products for the discerning Dong Khoi shopper.

41 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 6126
091 392 5212

Tan Tan Watch

Luxury watch retailers selling from a shop within the Kimdo Hotel foyer. Selling luxury branded watches such as Citizen, Movado, Enicar, Raymond Weil, Frederique Constant, Alfex, Mido, and Tissot - Swiss.

Kimdo Hotel, 133 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8297

Thanh Phat Watch

Thanh Phat Watch is a famous long-standing wholesaler and retailer with many watch stores throughout the city. They specialize in selling high-end watches from Switzerland and Japan, such as Rado, Longines, Montblanc, and many more.

Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3231

Topten

Topten has been an exclusive distributor of the luxurious Swiss watch brand Tissot since 2006. This outlet is a luxury watch showroom in the foyer of the Sunwah building.

Ground Floor, Sunwah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9279

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

8 Trung Dinh, D3
3930 6667

Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10
3834 9941

Center Medical International

Center Medical International is an outpatient clinic fully-equipped to provide international standard comprehensive and specialized medical services. All physicians are either French or Vietnamese.

1 Han Thuyen, D1
3827 2365

Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.

8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
3823 8454

Diag Center International

Situated in Ho Chi Minh City, Diag Center International is a diagnostic testing center, which consists of a team of thirty Vietnamese staff, and operates under French medical biologists and assisted by a group of Vietnamese medical technicians trained in France.

146 An Binh, D5
3838 1551

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 1860

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 5954

Lotus Clinic

Lotus Clinic was established in 2007 as the first Japanese medical clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lancaster Bldg , 22 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 0000

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551

Perfect Skin lab

More than just a spa, this District 1 venue is a genuine skin lab that caters to each customer's unique characteristics and needs. The lab is the latest concept developed by Dermal Essentials, the elite distributor for Dermalogica, a skin care system researched and developed by The International Dermal Institute in

Vietnam.

1st floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 0372

Stamford Skin Center

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.

254 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3932 1090
090 845 3338

Uc Chau Cosmetic Surgery

This central clinic performs straightforward cosmetic treatments, including enhancing the nose bridge, breast enlargement, eyelid folds, and wrinkle removal.

25 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
2212 3396
2212 3398

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.

79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.

Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0758

dental

2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.

125 Le Thi Rieng, D1
3925 6501

Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.

34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh
3903 6636

Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.

R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2276

Elite Dental

With an atmosphere more reminiscent of a luxury hotel, this is one of the largest high-quality dental clinics in HCMC, established to answer expat demands for superb dental techniques and professional staff.

57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
3933 3737

German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.

1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 3777

Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of

Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.

Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9446

Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.

199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1
3925 3399

Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.

50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3835 6159

Smile Dental Center

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

173 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6635

Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.

2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485

hairdressers

Art Hair

A small-time local Korean community hairdresser's with a highly-regarded service, presenting an ideal opportunity to be styled after the fashion of the most glamorous country in Asia.

R4-1 Hung Phuoc Villas, D7
5410 3154
090 663 2580

Hair Salon Nguyen The Hien

Nguyen The Hien is an upscale Vietnamese hair salon catering to both men and women. Named after its award-winning hairdresser and designer, the salon is decked out in stylish, modern décor.

102 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 2275

Hairlab

Hair salon without a hint of Asia, bright & clean with all the proper hair-tech on the first floor of the Saigon Center.

1st floor, unit 9-10, Saigon center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 4576
093 799 0880

His Salon - Gentleman's Barbershop

Popular men's salon with very good service and complimentary beer.

29 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 9455

Hung Pasteur

This salon offers a complete range of beauty treatments and services using quality imported products, drawing in a host of local celebrities and wannabes.

182 Pasteur, D1
3823 1118
090 391 9375

Just Men

A full-service salon for men. A spa and salon specializing in the unique styling and maintenance needs of men only. Masculine all-wood interior and dark brown Mercedes-style chairs. Specialising in hair, facial, massage, and relaxation for men.

40 Ton That Thiep, D1
3914 1407

Kim Hair Salon

An affordable hair salon in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. The range of services is focused on different hair treatments, but also includes manicures and pedicures.

2B Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3825 8643
090 823 9011

Masa hair

Beauty salon, make up, facial care and hair services – hair treatments and restoring damaged hair.

111 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 1282 / 093 777 5862

My Duyen

Cutting, perms, combs, hair washing, and dyeing - full services out of trendy Thai Van Lung.

20 Thai Van Lung, D1
091 927 7126

The Salon

Prominent ladies' salon & sanctuary - the sister venue to the well-known His Salon with its touts out on Ton That Thiep. Services include hairstyling, shampoo, hair removal, manicures, and pedicures.

Ladies' hair & bodycare sanctuary.
64 Ton That Thiep, D1
3914 3999

Vamp Hairline

Vamp Hair Line is a high-class Japanese hair salon offering quality hair care services.

9th Floor LANT Building,
56-58-60, Hai Ba Trung, D1
7303 3330
012 2768 8614

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5
090 588 6086

Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5
3855 4137

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Binh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh
3803 0677

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3930 0828

FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 3334

Hoan My Hospital

Private hospital with a wide range of specialist areas, running for 15 years on Phan Xich Long.

Private owned hospital, has been run for 15 years
60-60A Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan
3990 2468
3995 9862

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.

63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
3925 3620

Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 6579

Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, D1
5404 2829

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3989 4989

nails

118 Nail & Beauty

118 Nail and Beauty is a salon and spa providing full services including oil, hot stone, foot and body massages, along with skin/nail care.

118 Pasteur, D1
3821 5313
090 372 8338

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, D1
6291 5477
012 2805 6789

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, D1
2211 4956

pharmacies

Curewel International

Involved in marketing and distribution

of pharmaceuticals, as well as personal healthcare products, throughout Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius.

49/3 Bis, Tran Quang Khai, D1
38484493

Pharmacy Nguyen Hue

Small western medical pharmacy right in the central city CBD area, selling both domestic and imported medicines.

81 Nguyen Hue, D1
3829 3058

spas

An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, D1
3825 1250

Dermal Essentials

Dermalogica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermalogica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.

108 Pasteur, D1
3910 2038

Eden Spa

Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.

19-25 Nguyen Hue, 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
3823 8368

Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully-featured massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung. Various salt scrubs, and high-end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1515

HP Oxygen Spa

A safe haven from the dust and smoke

of the city offering an array of body/skin treatment options, including advanced skin care, an eye lightening process, body massages, hair care, and foot care.

Ground Floor, Yoco Building,
41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3822 1286
093 800 2322

Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan
3842 2218
090 395 1902

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, D1
3827 2737

Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1515

L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638



La Cochinchine Spa

Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1812
info@lacochinchine.net
www.lacochinchine-hcm.net
12pm-10:30pm



La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3
3932 5181
100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 2158
1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638

MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events – and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dong Khoi, D1
090 387 6666

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609

Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507
1st & 2nd Floor, 92 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1
6650 4806

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

54 Dong Du, D1
6299 0964

Thann

Thann provide a range of natural hair and skincare products formulated from botanicals derived by combining the art of natural therapy with modern dermatological science.

Level 2, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
098 362 4497

Thalgo La Beaute Marine

Thalgo is on the cutting edge of spa treatments, and is renowned for its products and skilled therapists.

40C Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 4990
090 360 6366

The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 5318

The Prime – Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with imported machines from Europe. The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy – and a Prime special service package.

192 Le Lai, D1
3925 5743

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

76C Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 2554

Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom – Mai, Bamboo, and more.

2 Lam Son Square, D1
3824 1234

Yuan

Despite being labeled as a foot massage establishment, Yuan actually has a full range of services. Customers

usually make appointments. Yuan is especially geared towards Japanese expats.

1588 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0795

Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8782

Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
6291 6835

art & crafts

Art Arcade

Art Arcade displays a wide range of original Vietnamese artwork in a charming passageway off of Dong Khoi.

151 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 4076

Beeline

Small shop with cute stuffs. Special traditional hand-embroidered bags, shoes, clothes, and souvenirs.

60-62 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 2364
155 Dong Khoi, D1



Blue Dragon
Oil's Pick
Blue Dragon designs 'recycled' fashion and décor. Eco-friendly bags, jewelry, and home accessories made of feed-sacks, rubber, billboard and paper.

1B Bui Vien, D1
2210 2084
9am - 10pm

Cao Lien Huong

Artistic & traditional handicrafts on Saigon's heritage street.

49 Dong Khoi, D1
3521 0445
091 806 0608

CD Paragon Leather - Caodong Boutique 2

Attractive leather souvenirs & handicrafts

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3915 1778

Chon Nhan Production & Trading

Chon Nhan Production & Trading specializes in making high grade fine art, especially bamboo works, oil paintings, lacquering, and carved furniture. They have experience in interior design and handmade crafts.

70D Nguyen Hue, D1
3667 0341
090 383 8355

Du Du

One of Saigon's higher-class souvenir shops.

78 Dong Khoi, D1
38276128

Em Em

Bright, unusual souvenir shop with

high-quality ethnic fashion accessories unavailable elsewhere. Special figurines and a tailoring service are also available.

38 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4408

Em Oi

Funky souvenir shop with a twist, selling original designer T-shirts, handmade jewelry, recycled bags, and hand-crafted leather products.

124d Le Loi, D1

Ethnic Folk Art Anh

Fine ethnic folk products, mostly hand-made embroidered cloths, accessories and statues carved from horns and bones.

Lot B1-C11-C12 2nd Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3716
090 360 7527

Fatima Shop

Fatima shop is manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of customer handicrafts, lacquerware, embroidery goods, and silverware souvenirs.

3 Ton That Thiep, D1
3914 2403

Gia Gia

One of Vietnam's leading manufacturer and distributor of products made from precious stones. Range includes paintings, jewelry, precious stones used for medicinal purposes and fashion products.

135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 5384

Hai Yen

Sells fully-rigged model ships and boats, situated next to the Oscar Hotel. Fine model ships & boats

68 Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 0280

Huong Nga Fine Art

Huong Nga designs, manufactures and sells high quality arts and crafts products in Vietnam and around the world.

41 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 8356

Loang Xoang

Owned by a husband and wife glasswork artist team, they mainly sell their creations through their website, Facebook page, and at the monthly handicrafts fair.

232/8/6 Ba Hat, D10
090 855 6665



MEKONG QUILTS
They produce high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, baby quilts, accessories and giftware.

1st floor, 68 Le Loi, D1
517-Sky Garden I,
Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758
www.mekong-quilts.org
9am-7pm



MH Craft

The shop has a collection of fine handicrafts, artworks, furniture, and all kinds of knick-knacks made from Vietnamese traditional materials such as egg shells, buffalo horns, bamboo, white clay, lacquer, and more.

33 Ton That Thiep, D1
3915 2913

090 382 7471

Na Sa Shop

Selling fine wooden sculptures from a small store at the back of a tiny retail enclave, sales staff insist that the particular wood chosen has natural medicinal properties.

35 Le Loi, D1
016 9778 8303

Ngan Quang Wooden Boats

Sells model-size wooden boats.

74/1 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 1814
091 822 9272

Nguyen Freres - Fine Furnishing

Spacious furniture establishment selling handmade goods of silk, mother-of-pearl, stone, brick, bronze, silver, indigo, wood, lacquer along with Buddha figurines, carved wooden screens, ceramic decorations, red lacquered boxes, water puppets, and lacquered statues.

2 Dong Khoi, D1
3823 9459
098 380 3070

Nhu Y Oriental Lacquerwares

Nhu y provides coasters, tissue boxes, wine bottle holders and boxes, cabinets, frames, plates, trays, vases, and many other items with unusual designs spattered with lacquer dots.

22 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1
3829 6138

Paper Paradise

Funky little retailer selling just about anything relating to paper and paper arts.

19 Do Quang Dau, D1
091 597 8896

Phuong Mai Gallery

Phuong Mai Art Gallery focuses on the contemporary art works of both up & coming and established artists from across Vietnam. The real deal in a district of mass-produced art retailers.

129B Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 3181

Saigon Kitsch

Historic socialist pop-art culture is printed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, coasters and a raft of other goodies creating cool gifts for folks back home - or expats home in HCMC.

43 Ton That Thiep, D1
093 590 5675

Sapa Crafts & Fashion

Established in 1996, the shop sells clothes and bags reflecting the style of the picturesque village in the northern region of Vietnam after which it is named.

7 Ton That Thiep, D1
090 244 1256

SoCoLa Boutique

Unique souvenir items and crafts in an off-beat retail space. Highly unusual trinkets.

39/4 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3822 1839

books & magazines

Cua Hang Van Phong Pham

Large stationery shop with paints and supplies for artists, this is the place to come for art paper, easels, paints and brushes.

54 Le Loi, D1
3825 7986
091 917 0356

Fahasa - Le Loi

One of Vietnam's largest book chains with 56 stores around the country, Fahasa has a good range of English titles.

60-62 Le Loi, D1
3829 6386

Fahasa - Nguyen Hue

One of the largest book distributors in Vietnam with 35 years of operations, Fahasa provides a wide range of books – including English titles – from local to translated editions, as well as CDs, videos, puzzles and stationery.

40 Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 5796

Nam Phong bookstore

A second-hand bookstore specializing in French literature, selling mainly novels and nonfiction titles with a selection of second-hand folio editions. The website is in French only, with a built-in searchable database of all titles available.

94 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 7859

Parker & Waterman

A specialist luxury pens counter in the foyer of the Bitexco Financial Tower, This Parker & Waterman outlet sells precision-crafted pens with gold & platinum finishes.

Ground Floor Bitexco Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, D1
6291 8739

Phuong Nam Book

With a system of over 30 bookstores in Ho Chi Minh City, PNB sells & publishes hundreds of foreign-language titles. The Saigon Center store also has a wide range of children's books.

Level 2, Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3915 1475

electronics & camera

Bose Showroom

Something of a connoisseur's choice, a look through this showroom in the Tax Building will demonstrate some fairly impressive speaker and sound system equipment.

Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 5944

Canon Vinh Hung

Canon Vinh Hung has over 15 years of experience providing the citizens of Saigon with quality Canon cameras and other products such as photocopiers, fax machines, and photo printers.

103 Tran Hung Dao, D1
3837 1066

Lioa Electrics & Electronics

Hardware mart for power components, electrical appliances, and lighting systems. LIOA has more than 20 years of experience as the largest automatic stabilizer manufacturer in Vietnam.

138 Yersin, D1
6295 9077

Saigon Photo Center - Nam Ky Khoi Nghia

Saigon Photo Center has been providing an extensive range of photography services since 1991. They offer services such as photo printing, digital inkjets, equipment trading, camera sale, and equipment rental.

114 bis Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3825 8735

Maydocsach eBook Readers

Vietnamese distributors of Kindle and Nook eBook readers, including e-ink screen and color LCD versions. Providing free Vietnamese language eBooks.

149/2 Le Thi Rieng, D1
6678 4542
093 822 2489

Son Ha

They sell products such as TVs, Karaoke and stage systems, soundproofing, MP3

players, refrigeration, and appliances.

41 Huynh Thuc Khang, D1
3923 1938
090 820 3262

home & furnishings

AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.

219 Nguyen Van Thu, D1
3823 0940
3744 2728

AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

91-93 Nguyen Hue, D1
3915 3491

Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.

71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 8811

Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

158 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3822 3430

Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

15C Thi Sach, D1
3823 9394

JB Oriental Heritage

Unique Kashmiri products stocked in a plush retail space in the Saigon Center, JB Oriental Heritage sells fine imported Asian products, including carpets and exotic rugs, handicrafts, and objets d'art.

Unit 20, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3821 2892

Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3914 3553

Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, D1
3821 7233

Patina Home

A furniture and home-styling company specializing in antique reproduction collections, Patina Homes offers an exquisite range of handcrafted furniture, upholstery and home accessories.

SLOO8 Garden plaza, Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phong, D7
5412 4071

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70

countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, D1
3824 7504

Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.

31A Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 8672

SB Furniture

SB Furniture is an award-winning furniture store with a reputation for excellent service and attention to detail. They specialize in products made with artificial wood, and cabinets for apartments and villas.

Unit 8-10, 1st Floor, Saigon Centre,
65, Le Loi, D1
0902157935

markets

An Dong Market

This boisterous wet market beneath the Caesar Hotel. Customers can find food carts, bulk raw ingredients, shoes, sandals, jeans, shirts, and many other goods.

36 An Duong Vuong, D5
3835 4773

Ba Chieu Market

An old market hosting nearly 800 independent businesses in central Binh Thanh district, famous throughout the city for its rich and diverse commodities. Fresh Food, groceries, crockery, household appliances, textiles, and apparel. Second hand clothing available at cheap rates.

40 Dien Hong, Binh Thanh
3841 2483

Ben Thanh Market

Saigon's most iconic tourist attraction, this Vietnamese souvenir bazaar is busy, hot, and full of most everything you'll need to pick up to prove you've been to Vietnam - you can also stock up on your entire quota of presents for family and friends here.

Quach Thi Trang Square, D1
3829 2096

Binh Tay (Cholon) Market

Binh Tay Market is the largest market in Saigon located in an elegant building of Chinese design in Cho Lon. The market caters mostly to wholesale trade, but also offers household items, makeup, and beauty products.

Le Tan Ke, Ward 2, D6
3857 1512

Tan Binh Market

Products here are targeted towards the locals, so don't expect to see luxurious or high-end products. The prices can't be beaten though. Bargain to your heart's content.

Le Minh Xuan, Ward 8, Tan Binh
3864 3711

Tan Dinh Market

Tan Dinh Market has been providing Saigon with a thriving market experience for decades. Customers can choose from food carts, clothing services, textiles, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Busy old-style market with impressive architecture, selling a great selection of fabrics and seafood.

48 Ma Lo, Tan Dinh, District 1
3820 1272

War Surplus Market (Dan Sinh Market) 🍷 Oi's Pick

Dan Sinh is known as the army surplus

market. Located just 5 minutes from the backpacker area and city center, it specializes in selling war surplus and military style clothing and items. It is also a good market for electronics and other types of imported industrial machinery.

104 Yersin, D1
3825 1130

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. Features a deli café serving coffee, wine and foods. Regular shoppers can benefit from a loyalty card program.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3822 9391

Sieu Thi Tax Supermarket

General supermarket in the centrally-located Tax Building.

1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3849

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

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

158D Pasteur, D1
3829 3306

Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.

94-96 Le Lai, D1
091 816 6809

Boutique Collar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.

11 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1

Liquor City

Purveyors of fine international wines & spirits.

95, Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
090 240 9024

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.

54 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 5398
098 888 9496

The Warehouse

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

178 Pasteur, D1
3824 6629
090 921 0014

Vinifera

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

15C7 Thi Sach, D1
3822 1141

Business & Tech

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY





Brand Aid

The do's and don'ts of building a name

TEXT BY **CHRIS ELKIN** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**

IT CAN BE both comical and controversial how some international brands can misunderstand their local customers and their culture. There are countless stories where brands have failed to connect because they misunderstood what was necessary to create the genuine trust, relevance and acceptance their customers are looking for. Certain companies often fail to realize that as the living standards of Vietnamese people have increased, so too have their expectations of what life (and the products they buy) should offer them not only on a functional but emotional level.

I increasingly hear customers in research focus groups shouting “excite me,” “uplift me,” “give me something new” - but what they’re really saying is “understand me.”

Why is this emotional understanding of customers so important? Well, because people essentially choose brands to express their personalities. Often what they eat, drink, wear, play and live with every day actually defines them to their friends, family, colleagues and society.

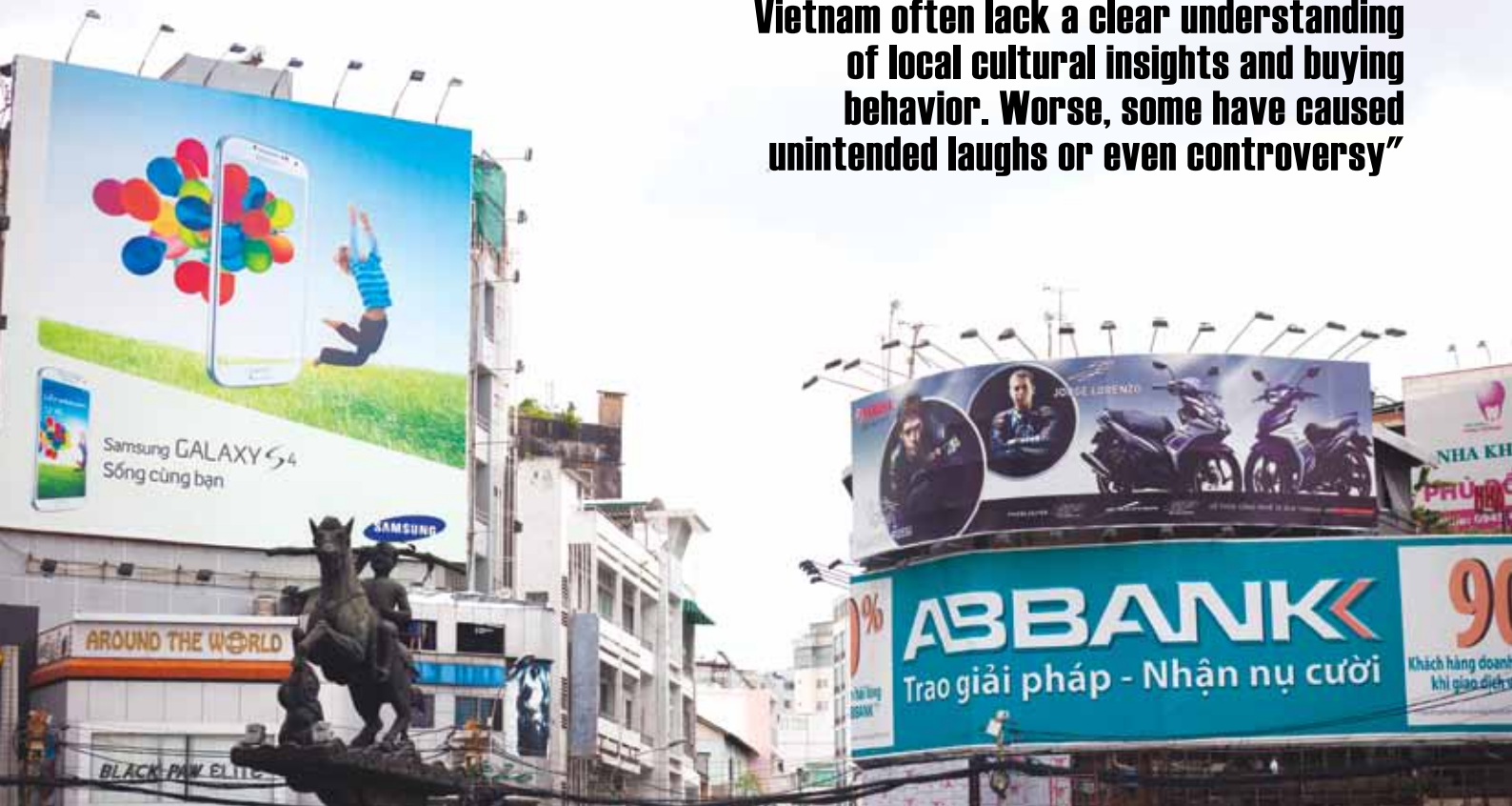
International brands that struggle in Vietnam often lack a clear understanding of local cultural insights and buying behavior. Worse, some have caused unintended laughs or even controversy. The following are several companies that can use better market research to improve how they connect with their audiences:

Dole Bananas

The company was asked to remove a signage because it was causing too much distraction in supermarkets. Woman found it either humorous or somewhat offensive as the imagery used was, to them, phallic. Further market research informed Dole that local women always break their bananas into two equal pieces before eating them to avoid any suggestive or lewd interpretations.



"International brands that struggle in Vietnam often lack a clear understanding of local cultural insights and buying behavior. Worse, some have caused unintended laughs or even controversy"



Gloria Jean's Coffee

This café chain got into hot water when it ran a campaign that offered discounts to women over 1.65 metres tall. Outrage and negative comments within the local blogging community rapidly ensued at what they considered to be insensitive and discriminative.

Rejoice

This TV commercial demonstrated how careful brands need to be when it comes to translation. Simply following what appears to be a literal translation of a TV script sent from their overseas branch, the young lady's response to her mother-in-law's question was considered disrespectful between a daughter and an elder.



Scan the QR code to view the commercial.

To avoid the many brand building pitfalls, here's a summary of a three-step process to help businesses create, shape and localize brands with impact to drive sales and loyalty in the Vietnamese market place.

Step 1 – Contact

It's important to make 'contact' with your target audience, competition and local market place. It's critical to re-appraise the changes that are happening out there regularly. Go out with your core team to

observe, meet, question and listen to your target customers to evaluate how your competitors are adapting and ultimately to seek out new and critical insights into the 'drivers and barriers' influencing why a customer currently chooses your brand - or not. This can, of course, include using the support of a marketing research agency to validate your findings.

Step 2 – React

With your newfound local insights you can now 'react' to what you've learned and build the foundations of a distinctive, locally relevant 'brand personality.' Ask yourself tough questions. Analyze and question why your brand exists, define what your brand will really stand for locally and how it will build an emotional connection that's truly relevant to your chosen target customers. If you and your team are not 100 percent clear and aligned on what your brand stands for and how it will differentiate itself from the competition, then your target customers have no hope of understanding. Your 'brand personality' should be defined clearly, agreed on by your senior management and documented succinctly so that you are all on the same page before you begin to spend any money on advertising or engaging with your target customers.

Step 3 – Attract

After step two, you can now decide how

your brand will be expressed, consistently, to attract your customers. Brands need to be expressed through a mixture of supporting communication elements, including your brand logo, identity, locally relevant colors, imagery, icons, messaging, advertising, PR events, website and social media.

To be locally relevant and appealing, it's even more important that you align your whole team (local and from overseas) around the same set of key messages and promotional offers that ensure your brand stands out from the clutter and appeals to your customers in new ways to form an emotional connection.

Simplify your marketing and your messages as much as possible. Consider all the possibilities for cultural differences and potential misunderstandings. Don't simply translate existing messages that may be used by your brand in other countries but truly understand how the locals will interpret what you communicate. Assess whether your brand offering is relevant or is allowing your audience to express themselves through it in a socially acceptable way. Your ultimate goal is to ensure that your target customers buy your brand and, more importantly, recommends it to family and friends.

Bio: Chris Elkin is the Managing Director of red brand builders. Chris and the red team regularly contribute their industry views on their blog brandbits.vn and at www.red.tm ■



At Your Service

A new concierge service that can take care of your personal and business needs at local prices

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO**

FEW THINGS ARE as exciting as moving to an exotic foreign locale and starting life as an expat. The senses are bombarded with new sights, smells, and tastes. An array of new experiences are collected that work to stretch, change, and amuse those people intrepid enough to embark on such a journey. However, not all such experiences are pleasant, of course. As with anything, there are always tradeoffs.

Moving to a Southeast Asian city in general, and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, comes with a host of challenges. Chief among them are finding the goods and services one needs and, equally important, at favorable prices. The inability to speak the language or simply being a foreigner amplifies those challenges.

David Ward, a derivatives trader from London, started Giup.me ('giup' means 'help' in Vietnamese), a concierge service, to assist people in such a position. "It's difficult to get the things you need and very difficult to get a price you want. When you step into a store prices immediately go up." It's a common experience among people from Western nations.

For VND175,000/hour Giup.me will take over the chore of locating goods and services and will set about acquiring them at a fair price. "We can provide contact information upon request at no charge," explains David. "But the disadvantage is that a foreigner will still get a different price

over the phone. Our aim is that you make one call and it all gets done."

Their philosophy is that the money you spend using Giup.me's service will be recovered in the savings achieved by paying local prices. According to David, real estate agents will take up to two months' rent as a fee for finding an apartment for someone. On a one year lease that equates to approximately 16 percent. A concierge service fee of USD7-USD8 per hour will certainly net savings if they can negotiate a 10 percent discount.

Price Hunting

Another area Giup specializes in is helping foreigners find professional services such as lawyers and accountants, and with setting up businesses. "Many expats arrive thinking they can set up a business easily and find cheap labor to get started. What we do is manage expectations for them while also getting it done at a reasonable price," he says. When he first arrived David was quoted anywhere from USD700-USD1,500 per month for accounting services when he paid only GBP100 in London. He had to hunt to find a fair price.

"Housekeepers and nannies are a bit trickier because the requirements change from family to family. We provide a pool of service providers that we have vetted by using them ourselves or on the recommendation of people we know very well."

When asked about the boundaries for services his company will try to accommodate, David grins and exclaims, "We do our best to make people happy, but we operate within the boundaries of the law. We're thrilled to make sure your dinner party has plenty of ice and alcohol delivered if that's needed, but for more personal service requirements we would rather refer you to someone who might be better equipped to procure them."

Ward believes his service complements the raft of social media outlets and forums available to expats. "If people are getting stuff they like through those channels, that's great. But often people hop on one of the message boards or Facebook pages and have to sift through days, weeks, or months of posts to find something useful, and then there's no telling if that information is even good anymore."

Giup.me takes no additional fees or commissions and receives no kickbacks for its service. Payment is made by cash or PayPal after services are rendered. "We're conscious about the fact that expats are constantly getting raked over the coals so we focus on being scrupulous about charging them," David explains. Because he sympathizes with those who face getting overcharged on a routine basis, Giup.me is willing to adjust a bill for any customer who honestly feels they've been overcharged for a service.

For more info on their services, visit giup.me ■

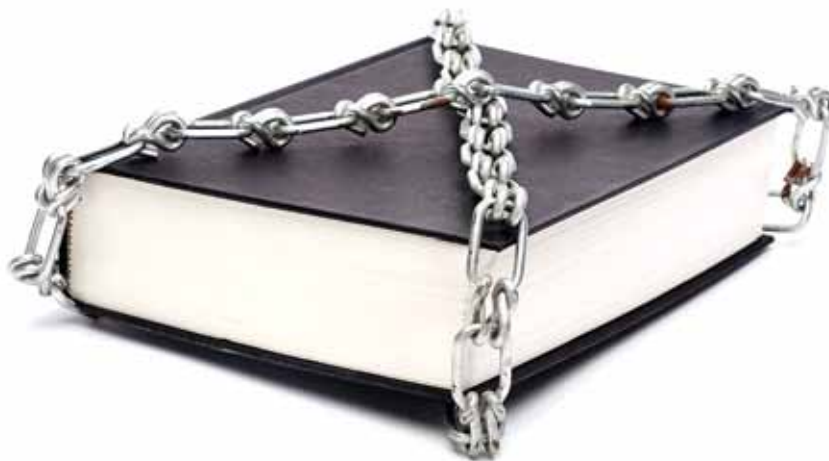
Dear Hadrien,

I'm about to publish a novel in Ho Chi Minh City. I'm hoping that it will gain some traction and be available at English language bookshops here in Vietnam. But I'm worried that it will get photocopied and sold in tourist areas like so many other books here. Are there any Vietnamese intellectual property laws that would protect me? If so, must the book be published here in Vietnam?



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

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



IN VIETNAM, INTELLECTUAL property rights are protected by national and international law. The Vietnamese Intellectual Property Law provides a good starting point to learn about the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, but Vietnam has also signed various relevant international treaties, including the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Pursuant to Article 14.1 (a) of the Law on Intellectual Property, your novel is classified as “literary work” and the type of intellectual property right applicable would be a “copyright”.

According to Article 13.1 of the same law, a person who directly creates work shall be an “author” and the law provides for copyright protection for foreign individuals:

1. With works published for the first time in Vietnam and not yet published in any other country.
2. With works simultaneously published in Vietnam within 30 days after publication for the first time in another country.
3. With works protected in Vietnam pursuant to an international treaty on

copyright to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a member.

So if you publish your work for the first time in Vietnam, your copyright will certainly be protected. However, if you publish your novel for the first time in another member country to the Berne Convention, then this Convention will prevail. Because Vietnam is a member nation this means that you would be entitled to all the rights of a Vietnamese author and receive copyright protection in compliance with Vietnam’s Law on Intellectual Property without having to publish your work here at all.

Even though copyrights are established automatically and registration is not compulsory, it is recommended to make use of the existing system for registration at the Copyright Office of Vietnam (www.cov.gov.vn). After registration, you will be granted a certificate as valid proof of your copyright ownership in Vietnam. Copyright includes moral and economic rights. The right to title and to publish your novel and the right to protect its integrity are moral rights, whereas the right to display your novel to the public and the right to reproduce and distribute it are examples of economic copyrights. Moral copyrights (except for the right to publish)

are indefinitely protected, whereas economic copyrights (and the right to publish) are protected during the life of the author and 50 years after their death.

If somebody infringes on your copyrights, Vietnamese law provides several remedies. Government authorities may, for example, impose administrative sanctions while customs officers at the border may provisionally suspend import and export of goods suspected of infringing intellectual property rights. Furthermore, criminal sanctions may apply to certain serious breaches and you could also file a civil lawsuit against someone who has infringed copyrights. In such civil proceedings, you could claim the termination of the infringing acts, the destruction of the goods infringing your rights, and you can claim for financial compensation.

Even though Vietnamese legislation on copyright protection is comprehensive and in line with international standards, enforcement of your rights may be difficult in practice. First of all, there are too many different enforcement bodies involved in the process. Secondly, whereas often administrative action would be the most convenient way to deal with copyright infringement, fines are relatively low and there is no compensation for the owner of the copyright. To receive financial compensation, you could start a civil case before the courts of Vietnam, but bearing in mind the length of such civil proceedings, this option may be less appealing in practice.

In conclusion, when publishing or distributing a novel in Vietnam, your copyrights will, at least in theory, be well-protected. Enforcement of copyrights in practice may be more of an issue. There are, however, a few things that you can do to protect your rights. First of all, register your copyrights with the Copyright Office of Vietnam. Secondly, when working with local staff, publishers and distributors, make sure they are aware of the Vietnamese copyright law, educating them if needed. Thirdly, make use of intellectual property clauses in your commercial contracts. Best of luck with your novel!

If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com ■

Hi Paul,

How does the black market currency exchange work? How do the gold shops make profit from selling and buying dollars? And is it a good idea to invest in currency? If so, what currency would you recommend?



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Paul McLardie is a partner and a member of the investment committee at **Total Wealth Management** in Saigon. Previously he was Head of Wealth Management for a firm in Moscow and before that spent eight years at Barclays Bank UK within the Private Clients and Large Corporate sectors

THE BLACK MARKET currency exchange works in a similar way to the regulated market. Each currency has a buy and sell rate which will change depending on how much you are buying or selling. The exchange rates change on how much that individual currency trader needs throughout the day to make a profit. The difference to the regulated market is the way that the exchange rates are fixed. The regulated market (banks and legal money changers) use the daily rates quoted by the central bank. The black market traders do not do this. They can set their own rates. This may mean that the band that the black market traders buy and sell in is wider than the regulated market, allowing them to profit on the margin between these rates. They also profit on the fact that unlike banks, they do not need to pay taxes and do not need to hold a certain amount of currency classified as reserves. Also, the rates that the unlicensed traders use are linked to more internal factors such as the price of gold rather than external factors such as global rates and also inflation.

The currency exchange mechanisms that the black market uses are only one part of a larger picture. As you would imagine, the people that control the black market are not just your local mom and pop making a bit of cash on the side. They can also be involved in everything from unlicensed money lending, gambling, and money laundering with all the implications that that carries from tax evasion to prostitution, drug dealing and even human trafficking.

The black market is called that for a reason. It goes on without any regulation and is controlled by individuals or groups with an interest in keeping the money they earn out of the regulated and declared income arena. This means that many people here that do need the money generated from the taxes that this would give the economy do not get it. Yes, the government and banks need to do more to reach out to the people who do not have a bank account and have never used banks before. These people are the lifeblood of any retail bank. That said, however, the retail banks here have made huge leaps forward in certain areas. Please use the licensed providers, not the black

market. It will be safer for you, your money and also healthier for the economy here.

A Risky Business

Investing in currency can be very risky. It takes time, knowledge and application of your risk awareness. It sounds easy that you will be able to buy some currency when the price is low, keep hold of it until there is a market shift and then sell it for a higher figure. A couple of things to look at though: Firstly, if you are just doing this from your own bank account rather than a trading account not held in Vietnam, the charges can be quite heavy meaning your margins will be reduced if you are buying and selling a large amount of one currency against another. If you are making multiple trades, you can use an online trading platform, but again, please work out the charges against what you will be trading. One way to lessen the exchange rate risk is to take an option on a forward contract. This means that you will have access to a certain amount of foreign currency over a set period of time

at a single rate. These cannot be utilized in Vietnam at the moment, but if you know you are transferring or buying a certain amount of currency in your home country, your bank abroad may be able to set this up for you, especially if the value is at least over GBP25,000 or USD50,000.

At present, giving an indication on what currency that someone should invest in is difficult. I would need to understand the reasons behind an individual's decision to jump into currency trading and to ask if currency trading is the best way to an end. Even with that information, recommending one or even two particular currencies to invest in is difficult because I would also need to understand the client's timescales. If you do not want to use a basket of currencies to spread your risk, my only advice to you is this: Understand the fees and your own timescales of what you want to achieve and if this is your first time doing this, only risk money you can afford to lose.

Have a finance question you want answered? Email us at finance@oivietnam.com.



>>The List Business



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

banks

Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
39290999

Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9949

Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3824 2267
094 801 6318

Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 1525
012 1861 8695

HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3724 7247

Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8260

Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc
Thang, D1
3911 0000

Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3829 1581

Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 4797
www.vietcombank.com.vn

concierge

Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.
7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)
service@giup.me
www.giup.me

consulates

Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3521 8100
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2
6281 8001
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 2751
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong
Khoi, D1
3827 9899
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1
3910 2903

China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 5009
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1142
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 7350
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9373
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

Finland Consulate

Room 501, 5/F Sailing Tower, 11A Pasteur, D1
3827 2029

France Consulate

27 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3520 6819
www.consulfrance-hcm.org

Germany Consulate

126 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3829 2455
www.ho-chi-minh-stadt.diplo.de
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 0130

Iceland Consulate

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm

Consulate General of India

55 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3823 7050
www.india-consulate.org.vn
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 5pm

Indonesia Consulate

18 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3825 1888
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm

Italy Consulate

81 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
08 6258 6473
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 4pm

Japanese Consulate

261 Dien Bien Phu, D3
08 3933 3520
8.30am - 11.30am; 1.15pm - 4.45pm

Kuwait Consulate

24 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3827 0555
kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com
Mon-Fri: 9am - 4pm

Laos Consulate

93 Pasteur, D1
3829 7667
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1pm - 4.30pm

Malaysia Consulate

2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 9023
malhcmnh@kln.gov.my
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am

Mexico Consulate

215 A-B Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan
3844 5520
Mon-Fri: 8am - 3pm

Myanmar Consulate

50 Sam Son, Tan Binh
5449 2425
www.gmas.com.vn
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm; Sat: 9am - 12pm

New Zealand Consulate

235 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 6907
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 11.30am; 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Nordcham

12A Floor, Bitexco Building, 19-25 Nguyen
Hue, D1
3821 5423
www.nordcham.com

Norway Consulate

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3822 1696
norcons@hcm.fpt.vn
Mon - Fri: 08.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0334
consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn
Mon - Fri: 9am - 5pm

Russia Consulate

40 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 3936
www.russianconsulates.com

Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1
3822 5174
www.mfa.gov.sg
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 8888
Thurs: 2pm - 5pm; Fri, Sat: 8.30am - 11.30pm

South Korea Consulate

107 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 5757
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

Sweden Consulate

8A/11 Thai Van Lung, D1
3823 6800
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2
3744 6996

Thailand Consulate

77 Tran Quoc Thao, D3
7.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 3pm

The Czech Republic Consulate

28 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
Mon-Fri: 8am - 5pm Sat: 8am - 11.30am

The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, D1
3829 8433
Mon-Thurs: 8.30am-12.30pm; 1.30pm - 4.45pm; Fri: 8.30am - 1pm

U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, D1
3520 4610
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, D1
09 0987 5678
Mon-Fri: 8am-11am; 1.30pm - 5pm

insurance

ACE Life Insurance

One of the world's largest multiline property and casualty insurers, insurance products include universal life insurance, term life, whole life, riders, and global personal accident.
21st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8989

AIG Vietnam

AIG's presence in Vietnam dates back to the 1920s, although modern operations began back in 2005. They offer a wide range of personal and commercial insurance products.
9th Floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1
3914 0067

BaoViet Insurance Corporation

BaoViet is now the leading financial insurance group in Vietnam with more than 145 branches across 63 provinces.
23-25 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 0247

BHNT Great Eastern

Life assurance & financial plans for customers of various age groups. The company's focus is on promoting health and longevity - they have the perfect incentive to do so, really.
Level 8, 25 Bis Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
6288 6339

Blue Cross

Blue Cross Vietnam is a Medical Insurance Administrator specializing in Health and Travel insurance in Asia. Our competitive advantage is in our design and administration of modern travel and medical insurance plans; plans built for people living and working in Vietnam.
Level 8, River View Tower, 7A Thai Van Lung, D1
3821 9908

IGlobal Assist

Offers insurance programs offered by ACE, Liberty, Seven Corners and other global insurers. Free consultation and custom quotes for most lines of insurance including health, travel, home, auto, motorbike, property, liability, and personal accident.
09 3487 4271
jpruss@iglobalassist.com
www.iglobalassist.com

IF Consulting

IF Consulting has for 20 years provided advice to individuals and businesses in assessing health/accident risk and finding the best suitable solution. The company is independent and Vietnam-based.
IBC Building, 3rd Floor, 1A Me Linh Square, D1
3827 7362
hcmc@insuranceinvietnam.com
www.insuranceinvietnam.com

Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual is a 100% US-owned general insurer licensed to provide insurance services directly to Vietnamese individuals and state-owned enterprises as well as motor insurance.
15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1
3812 5125

LIG Insurance

The company provides property and casualty insurance, along with customer relations management and automobile claims support services and

long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

Unit 809, 8th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 9968

McLarens Young International

McLarens Young International is a global claims service provider that helps our clients achieve timely and equitable claims resolution.

9th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3821 3316

Prudential Vietnam

Prudential Vietnam is one of the leading life insurers nationwide, also providing a variety of financial solutions, with over 200 customer service centers, branch offices and general agency and business partner offices.

Unit 25F, Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1

information technology

Asia Pacific Solutions

A software development and IT support service company, services include developing all kinds of engineering systems and implementing software solutions.

Suite 1201, 12th Floor, 111A Pasteur, D1 3825 1041

NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME

11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1 3827 3646

Oracle Vietnam

Oracle offers an optimized and fully integrated stack of business hardware and software systems, lowering the cost and complexity of IT implementation and management.

Suite 25 & 26, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1

Prism Smart IT

Prism is a foreign-owned Information and Communications Technology company that offers IT Managed Services and Total Business Solutions to companies throughout Vietnam.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

law firms

Apex Law

The Apex management system represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.

Unit 4A2, 4F Nam Han Office Building, 65 Nguyen Du, D1. 3822 2942

Baker & McKenzie

Baker & McKenzie is a law company with over 72 branches around the world, including offices in Australia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Canada, and the United States. Has a team of 4000 highly trained and insightful lawyers.

12th Floor, Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1

J&P 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, D1

Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.

Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3822 7161

Nishimura & Asahi

Nishimura & Asahi is one of Japan™s

premier full-service law firms, covering all aspects of domestic and international business and corporate activity.

Unit 704, 7th Floor, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3821 4432

Phuoc & Partners Company

Phuoc & Partners is an independent law and consulting firm with integrated legal and tax practices. The firm enables clients to reduce their administrative overhead and focus on core business activities.

Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

PricewaterhouseCoopers

PwC boasts a thorough understanding of the transitional economy of Vietnam and a wide knowledge of policies and procedures covering investment, tax and accounting, and consulting throughout the country.

4th Floor Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1 3825 1947

marketing

Ambrij Vietnam

Specialist supplier in the concept, design, production and supply of corporate gifts and merchandise.

14-16-18 Chu Manh Trinh, D1

Bates 141 Vietnam

The Vietnamese brand of a global WWP social media marketing company. Bates 141 has bases in 11 countries across Asia and counts HSBC, Unilever, Avon, and more amongst its ranks of prestigious clients.

7th Floor, Vietnam Business Center, 57-59 Ho Tung Mau, D1

Edge Marketing

Particularly dynamic local marketing firm, committed to a "highly productive collision of creativity and technology". The firm's international staff bring local and foreign perspectives to each campaign.

1815 Ngo Van Nam, D1. 3911 1190

Ogilvy & Mather

An international advertising agency, O&M aims to be "the most local of the internationals and most international of the locals" in the advertising market.

12th Floor, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3. 3821 9529

Purple Asia 🍷 Oi's Pick

Purple Asia stands out as one of the most unique advertising design firms in the city, with a commitment to making brands perform better on the hard-to-crack local market.

Melody Tower, 422-424 Ung Van Khiem, Binh Thanh 3898 1005

Red 🍷 Oi's Pick

A branding consultancy and marketing agency team inspired to give your brand impact. Long established, red create and shape unique brand personalities to form emotional connections between people and brands. The team regularly share branding insights at red.tm/blog.

10 Phan Ngu, D1 3820 0169 info@red.tm | www.red.tm

Saatchi & Saatchi - The Lovemarks Company

This world-class international advertising firm has grown from strength to strength in Vietnam, picking up some major clients and showing exponential growth in the local market.

3 Phan Van Dat, D1. 3824 1207

media

GroupM - MEC Media

The focus of GroupM is the intelligent application of physical and intellectual scale to benefit trading, innovation, and new communication services to bring

competitive advantage to clients and companies.

Level 6, 111A Pasteur, D1. 3821 2233

S3 Studios

The first international calibre, full-service production house and studio in Vietnam, S3 is designed to accommodate commercial photography, film & video productions and events.

1K Ngo Van So, D4. 3941 1179

real estate agencies

Colliers International Vietnam

Globally, Colliers International is a leading commercial real estate services company offering comprehensive expertise to investors, owners and tenants around the world.

Bitexco Office Building, 7th Floor, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3823 3529

Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

Their primary focus is on consultancy, brokerage, and investment across the retail, office, and hospitality sectors.

Level 2, Pathfinder Building, 52 Dong Du, D1. 6291 4707

House Link

House Link offers a wide array of apartments and houses for lease all over Ho Chi Minh City.

23 Phung Khac Khoan, D1 3824 5271

Realty World

Focuses on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office buildings, and villas.

111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh. 3899 4979

Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3825 8598

The Nest

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.

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Opus group was originally a unit under KPMG Thailand that defected to run independently, focusing on quality executive searches.

2A Rolanno Offices, 128 Nguyen Phi Khanh, Tan Dinh, D1 3827 8209

Navigos Group & Vietnam Works

Navigos Group provides recruitment solutions in Vietnam. Services include VietnamWorks (which posts about 200 new jobs per day) and Navigos Search (the leading recruitment firm in Vietnam).

130 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1 3925 5000

Odgers Berndtson Vietnam

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District 1. 0122 5141 848

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9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, D4. 3826 7799

Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.

60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.

1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4. 3826 7655

Logical Moves

They offer your belongings the best protection available with the latest technology, experienced staff and equipment. With door to door services, Logical Moves is all about quality service, best prices and well-arranged time. They have moved offices and household goods for many well-known international companies in Vietnam.

3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net

Santa Fe Relocation Service

Door to door relocation service which promises to take the stress out of moving personal possessions from one city - or country - to another. Also offers pet relocations, records management, home search and immigration help.

www.santaferelo.com info@santaferelo.com.vn

shipping

HL Shipping

A worldwide freight forwarder offering dedicated, integral services in the international trade market providing a reliable, customer-oriented, and cost-effective coverage of all shipping needs, including a comprehensive assessment of all costs and assurance of on-time delivery for each segment. Competent service in English direct from the MD Jeff Tran.

29 Huynh Van Banh, Ward 17, Phu Nhuan 3995 6117

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Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.

23 Tran Nao, Binh An, D2 3744 2281

Sagawa Express Vietnam

A subsidiary of Sagawa Holdings Group, this firm specialises in providing solutions to general logistics issues in Vietnam, and it has a general logistics certificate unique in this country.

160 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh 3840 9330 090 900 3649

The Outer Districts

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY







Cycle Paths

Phu My Hung's wide pavements
are great for cycling around

TEXT BY **LYRA DACIO** IMAGE BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

WITH DISTRICT 7 a bit further out from the hubbub of the central business district and practically a residential area, there are ideal places where you can get your family to slip on their running shoes or ride their bikes, meander through the tree-lined streets, and enjoy the scenery.

Route 1: The Short Snake Route

Starting from the corner of Bui Bang Doan and Nguyen Van Linh (where Huong Vuong 3 apartments is), turn left at Hung Phuoc 4 then towards the Sky Garden apartments along Pham Van Nghi. This area is basically a grid so you can weave your way through the streets up to the Hung Thai villas. And if you need air in your tires, this is the best place to start because there's a *bom xe* right at the corner (outside Sacombank) that charges VND5,000.

As you go further from the main road, the streets become less busy and narrow, but with trees serving as cover from the heat of the Saigon sun, it's a good place to cycle without getting sunburned.

Recently opened Paris Baguette Café along Pham Van Nghi at Sky Garden 2 is a good place to stop by for some coffee and carbs to fuel your bike ride. Or find Awesome Coffee at D2-21 My Toan 3 (along Nguyen Van Linh) to enjoy Italian coffee and their signature waffles with choco-honey and banana. Their homemade tiramisu is a must try.

Route 2: The Longer Snake Route

From the corner of My Khanh 1 along Nguyen Duc Canh, turn left at Pham Thai Buong to explore the streets behind the apartment buildings of Parkview, My Duc, My Phat, My Phuc, Grandview, and Garden Plaza. The roads are wide and usually empty of vehicles. During early mornings and late afternoons, it's common to see couples posing for pre-wedding photos. With beautiful villas and huge umbrella trees, this vicinity makes a lovely backdrop for a cycling trip.

After cycling back to the starting point, stop over at Hoang Long Quan for some piping hot *pho* and *bun cha* at 7-1A My An -

a perfect breakfast after a morning of biking.

Route 3: Crescent Route

Another good route starts at Tran Van Tra at the corner of the Panorama complex. The Canal District where the Garden Plaza and Garden Court apartments are located is good for cycling laps. For a stronger workout bike by the river where there's a bit of a climb as you go over the bridge connecting to the Crescent area, but be warned because this stretch is not covered by trees which exposes you to the mercy of the sun. Behind Crescent Residences are huge empty lots and roads - ideal for biking or running. For a quick refreshment head to the Ton Dat Tien arc in front of Ho Ban Nguyet (the Crescent Lake) and choose from the dozens of cafes there.

Route 4: My Thai and Canh Vien Area

For the ultimate bike versus motorbike challenge, cross Nguyen Luong Bang (from Crescent) and bike over to the My Thai and Canh Vien area. Nguyen Luong Bang is a busy main road but once you pass the Ca Cam 2 bridge and turn left to My Thai 1, an oasis with gorgeous looking villas and well-kept apartment buildings around an elongated park surrounding a pond is your reward. This is another popular spot for pre-wedding photos, and the area is a safe haven for kids to play in. Roll out the picnic blanket and take a break.

You can also visit The Greenhouse at Canh Vien 1 and try their mouthwatering pizzas. For some Indochine coffee, walk a bit further to Master's Cup Coffee House at B-08 Nam Do. Master's Cup is housed in a charming villa originally established for Vietnamese students to practice their English. Their homemade apple pie, New York cheesecake, and chocolate cheesecake are delicious. The cafe mocha and café latte are great pick-uppers.

If you need to get a bike, check out Saigon Cycles (Shop 51/1 Sky Garden 2, Phuong Tan Phuong) or Bike Life (401 Pham Thai Buong).

Remember, the family that bikes together, well basically, gets tired together. But you'll have loads of fun doing it. ■

Goals vs. Reality

Sometimes it's the teachers that need teaching more than the students



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

Lauralynn Goetz, B.A., M.M.Ed. US, is a director of an early childhood education center in Vietnam

I RECENTLY READ a post on the internet that stated: "Vietnam is trying to overhaul its education system, with a view to prepare students for the increasing role of English... and the importance of internationalizing the education system to maintain the rapid economic growth of the last two decades."

My recent involvement with an education initiative program in a local school illustrated the obstacles to implementing these goals and provides an example of how the adoption of international educational curricula will be a slow process.

In attendance were the Chairman of the Department of Research Management and International Cooperation, the Dean of the Faculty of English (National College) and the Director & Vice Director of the Practical Kindergarten.

The National College wanted to conduct a pilot music and movement program in their Practical Kindergarten for children three to five-years-old. Its initial proposal was to train seven teachers and conduct classes for a total of 70 children for 15 weeks. Upon discussion of the cost for the curricula (an internationally-recognized program aligning with standards of the EU, UK, USA, IB and TESOL), it was agreed that the parents would be requested to pay for the program.

Classes began after Tet and the National College agreed to arrange a presentation to introduce the program to the parents. Enthusiastic responses from parents increased the total number of children to 100.

Originally the number of children for this pilot program was limited to 20 per class and in the end compromised with four classes of 25 children each. (These were very young children who had little or no English language skills.)

From the very beginning, the classes were a success for the children. They were shepherded from their classrooms in the Practical Kindergarten through the courtyard to a lecture hall where all the desks and chairs were stacked against the walls. Seated on the floor in a large

circle, we spent scores of hours together incorporating the Natural Approach with Total Physical Response (TPR), visuals, repetition and movement in a completely English language immersion program. An important element in the process was a hand puppet with a movable mouth. The puppet only 'spoke' English.

At the end of the 15 weeks, it was expected that the seven teachers would carry on with new material and begin the next school term on their own.

In a meeting with the Principal of the Practical Kindergarten, I was asked if I would continue for the next term. She claimed that her teachers were unable to continue the program on their own and that the school would drop the program.

Why? Her reasoning was that the children's English language skills were measurably improved because they had a native English speaking teacher, not because of the educational process employed.

This was not a total surprise as the teachers were challenging this proven process of teaching from the beginning - never participating, texting on their phones, or worse, actually making phone calls during class. They did not appreciate sitting on the floor as opposed to standing as lecturers before their tiny students.

The Dean of English and her colleagues understood and were eager to implement internationally proven educational methods, while their teachers were unwilling to think outside the box. ■





**Grab a copy of Oi
at these locations...**

Jaspas Restaurant
33 Dong Khoi, D1

Just Men Spa
40 Ton That Thiep, D1

La Brasserie de Saigon
38 Dong Du D1

La Villa
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2

Long Monaco Restaurant
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh

Lucca Coffee
88 Ho Tung Mau, D1

L'essential Restaurant
98 Ho Tung Mau, D1

L'usine
151 Dong Khoi, D1

McSorley's
D2 street, Binh Thanh

Nathalie's
59 Hung Vuong, D7

Now Zone Coffee
R1-73 Bui Bang Doan
Hung Gia 3, D7

Pacharan
97 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Papaya Restaurant
68 Pham Viet Chanh
Binh Thanh District

Phatty's
46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

Pizza Hut
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh

Saigon Retro
113 Ho Tung Mau, D1

Sala Beer
28-29 Le Van Thiem
Tan Phong, D7

Sofitel Saigon Hotel
17 Le Duan, D1

Spice India Restaurant
56-1 Bui Bang Doan
Hung Vuong 3, D7

Stella
121D Bui Vien, D1

The Refinery
74 Hai Ba Trung, D1

The Tavern
R2-24 Hung Gia 3
Bui Bang Doan, D7

The Terrace Cafe
Saigon Centre
65 Le Loi, D1

Tokyo Deli
103 Ton Dat Tien
Tan Phong, Q7

Top Shop
2 Hai Trieu, D1

Vesper Bar
5B Ton Duc Thang, D1

Xu
71 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Zoom Cafe
169A De Tham, D1

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No, Not Chrysanthemums!

At the wet market, Bridget stumbles into a comedy of errors



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

A professional artist working in Vietnam, **Bridget March** has lectured at Leeds College of Art (UK) and practiced as a freelance product designer. She specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and the richness of smaller town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget also holds drawing classes for beginners and improvers in Saigon. Find more of her work at BrushWithAsia.blogspot.com



HAVING BEEN IN Vietnam only a matter of weeks and still filled with enthusiasm and girlish bravado, I decided to cook a Vietnamese feast for some friends. Surely such a simple endeavor couldn't be too difficult. Armed with an illustrated English cook book by a famous chef who had recently traveled this region, I simply needed to translate the ingredients into Vietnamese for a shopping trip at a local market.

I soon discovered that even with Google as my guide, I couldn't find reliable translations for such simple ingredients as lettuce, chicken breasts and spring onions, never mind the more difficult items I would need like palm sugar, pork belly, kohlrabi and kaffir lime leaves.

Not one to be easily beaten, I set about creating a visual shopping list. I found photos of all the ingredients I required and formed a foolproof plan to show them to the lovely ladies of the wet market ensuring the meal would all come together somehow.

Vietnamese wet markets are amongst the most colorful and vibrant that you will find anywhere in the world. They are in the quiet streets of city centers and suburban neighborhoods. The stall holders shade their wares from the sun with an array of brightly colored awnings strung across the streets that bathe everything below in an inviting iridescent light. It becomes a kaleidoscope of fruit, flowers, meat and fish.

One of my favorites, in District 3, feels like a perpetual street party. The alleys are filled with voices and laughter, bobbing conical hats, goods being fetched and carried and impatient motorcyclists wriggling through the crowds. The whole event is a feast for all the senses which I could happily sit and experience for hours.

My appearance at the local wet market always causes amusement. Apparently, they don't get many Westerners down that part of town. A ripple of laughter runs through the stalls as my first lady vendor giggles

at my complete inability to pronounce the Vietnamese name for tomatoes and lemongrass. I've reached my limit. It's time to bring out the photo shopping list.

People appear from cool shadows, tip out of hammocks and gather round to look at this strange document. But I soon discover a problem. The sellers are not very visually oriented so they find it difficult to decipher some of my photos and argue amongst themselves about what they may or may not represent. Nonetheless, the cooking ingredients gradually come together in the fruit and vegetable section and friendly vendors point me in the right direction for chicken and fish.

Amongst the poultry stalls I find a display where all the individual parts of the chicken are laid out in full view from head to intestine, feet to liver, wings and heart too, like some 'assemble your own chicken' kit. I soon have some meaty breasts and then pick up gorgeous fresh prawns and lean pork on my way back to my bike. I don't really want to leave; next time I will bring my sketch pad I think.

Oh! Coriander! I forgot the coriander! I rush around the vegetable stalls but, unbelievably, I cannot see any anywhere. I need to ask for some but I don't know the name. What's worse, I don't have a photo of it on my shopping list. I improvise by whipping out a pencil and drawing a coriander leaf on a scrap of paper but there is a lot of hand waggling going on as the crowd try to tell me they don't understand my drawing.

Then one young man thinks he understands what I want. A message is sent through the ranks of the market to some poor soul who was apparently enjoying his siesta under a table in a storeroom somewhere. Ten minutes later, he appears at my side with a broad grin and an expression of pride and achievement written all over his face. Everyone nods and grins as he presents me with... a bunch of yellow chrysanthemums.

No, not chrysanthemums! I can't help but laugh! ■

Eaters Beware

With the abundance of fresh herbs and vegetables available here, it's easy to assume Vietnamese food is healthy. However, sometimes looks and bursting flavors can be deceiving



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Born and raised in Canada, Sylvie Melo, together with her husband, co-founded Body By Jovie (www.bodybyjovie.com), an urban boutique gym & yoga studio in District 7. Turning her passion into a career, she is determined to raise health and fitness awareness in HCMC and help people live a more active and well-balanced lifestyle

BY NOW, YOU probably know that what you eat has a profound impact on your health. The mantra, "You are what you eat" is really true. But what if you were unaware of what you were actually putting into your body? Here are 10 things that deliciously mask unhealthy Vietnamese food and eating habits:

1. Let's take the very popular *café sua da*. The reason why this exquisite drink is so good is because it's comprised of more highly sugared condensed milk than coffee itself. A *café sua da* served with this dense mixture of milk and sugar packs a minimum of 35g of sugar and 10g of saturated fat. A diet high in refined sugars can lead to weight problems, cardiovascular problems and diabetes.

2. Carbohydrates are the staple diet. Everything is rice and starch related. Rice, rice noodles, rice flour, rice soup, rice paper, flat rice crackers and white bread. High glycemic carbohydrates feature prominently in Vietnamese cuisine and a high carb diet is not the key to a well-balance healthy nutritional regime.

3. Fish sauce is the quintessential Vietnamese ingredient, and you find it not only in the dipping sauces but in almost every dish. It's nearly impossible to have a meal without it in sight. A tablespoon will contain anywhere from 1,100-1,400mg of sodium. Think twice about splurging because the daily recommendation is 1,500-2,300mg per day. High sodium intake may contribute to hypertension, or high blood pressure, and may increase your risk of heart disease.

4. *Pho*, this beef noodle soup is a classic and is practically the national dish in the Vietnamese repertoire. But the MSG added can be very deceiving. A bowl may contain up to 3,100mg of sodium, deriving mostly from the added MSG. This artificial flavor enhancer is added to 90 percent of the dishes throughout Vietnam and will lead to bloated

tummy and water retention.

5. The *banh mi* is a big go-to amongst locals and expats alike. This simple French baguette, filled with a variety of fresh and local Vietnamese ingredients seems very harmless. However, be aware of the mayonnaise-like spread. It's a spiced up mixture made of egg yolk, cooking oils, salt, sugar and butter - basically, oily loads of saturated fat. Eating too much saturated fat can increase your cholesterol, and thus increase your risk for heart disease.

6. Healthy vegetables, meat and seafood are great but once you dip them into sauces, it diminishes their true raw healthy principles. Try to avoid soy sauce. It's extremely high in sodium while caramel or peanut sauces are laden with added sugar and fats from coconut milk. Be on the lookout for these extra calories and enjoy these small bites in moderation.

7. Eating at the table family style will allow you to experience great company and a wider variety of foods. However, just be careful about portion control as it's very easy to overeat in such a setting. Aim for a carbohydrate serving the size of your cupped hand. Then filled up with proteins and steamed, grilled or boiled vegetables.

8. Don't skip meals. Vietnamese are early risers. They eat breakfast early, lunch and dinner. Many of them tend to skip meals due to past cultural habits. It's always best to have three well-balanced meals a day and two light snacks in between meals. Eating regularly throughout the day helps maintain your blood sugar levels and allows your body to burn calories as fuel all day.

9. Lighten up on the alcohol. Because alcohol is so cheap in Vietnam, many tend to drink more leading to hundreds, if not thousands, of empty calories. This

also goes for hard liquors many of which, though not as bad in calories, are high in sugar. Drinking of any kind in excess can be extremely bad for your health and weight control.

10. Be aware of added sugar. The Vietnamese have a tendency to add sugar to almost everything. For example, if you order a black coffee they will add sugary syrup without even asking, even adding sugar to milk, fresh fruit juices and fruit shakes. Always watch them make your drinks and food or simply ask for no sugar (*không đường*). This can take your fruit shake from an unhealthy high calorie drink leading to weight gain and other health problems to a more healthy option. ■



>>The List District 2



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

food & drink

BAKERIES

Voelker

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

BARS

Mcsorley's

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

Papagayo Saigon

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

Buddha Bar

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

restaurants

FRENCH

Gastrohome

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

La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day. Set amongst the flowers and with a ring of the lost charm of the Colonial era, this is an appealing and impressive venue for An Phu's high-profile community.
14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn
*Reviewed in Oi March 2013

Trois Gourmands

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

ITALIAN

Pendolasco – Thao Dien

Expect excellent classic Italian cuisine – wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu – cooked with a focus on fresh flavours and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy.
36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
62532888
www.pendolasco.vn

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three

branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.
43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132

JAPANESE

Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

Bottles of sake fill shelves along the wall behind the sushi bar, and unique Japanese paintings add a nice visual touch. Since opening four months ago, the restaurant has attracted a diverse clientele, from locals to expats.
14E1 Thao Dien, D2
3744 6782

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu
River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308

THAI

Baan Thai

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

Jasmine Thai

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

VIETNAMESE

Baniam Tree

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

WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Mekong Merchant 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, 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.thedecksaiagon.com

Vino

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

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.
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 / 5412 3264
www.annam-gourmet.com

An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more
43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.
No. 17, Street 12, D2
3740 7105
www.classicfinefoods.com

Metro

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

business

LAW FIRMS

Nguyen Giap Law Firm

14 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7812
www.hangluatnguyengiap.com
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Dang Khuong

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8224 09726

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VILLA B, 12A Street Number 12, D2
3740 6388

Thanh Tung

Prints digital, cuts decal, LED signs, Braille and stainless neon materials to ensure compliance with quality.
373 Luong Dinh Cua, D2
090 952 1411

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Namhouse

Provides rental properties for home and office use, focusing in the District 2 area.
48A Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
www.namhouse.com.vn

Snap Café

Has an extensive list of property rentals in District 2.
32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
3519 4282
www.snap.com.vn

health & beauty

DENTISTS

European Dental Clinic

This is the dental clinic's second location in Ho Chi Minh City. Experienced practitioners, latest technology, most dentists from UK and France. Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.
17-17A Le Van Mien, D2
091 874 9204 or 090 955 1916
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.
96 Tran Nao, D2
6674 4255
8am to 8pm

Nu Cuoi Hoan My (Perfect Smile)

14-16 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7470
hoanmysmile@gmail.com
8am to 8pm

Dental Truong Thanh

276 Tran Nao, D2
5402 3009
www.nhakhoadtruongthanh.com
8am to 8pm

FITNESS

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.
APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2549
www.aissportscentre.com

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs. Holds regular sessions at Boathouse.
Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326
www.cyril-and-you.com

NTFQ2

Besides an excellent weights and cardio area, the facility runs group classes including power yoga, pilates, circuit training, martial arts and spinning. The centre also contains a spa and a restaurant serving up calorie-calibrated meals to help members stay in line with individual fitness programs.
34 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2
3744 6672
www.nutrifort.com

Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool
751 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0012

X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
www.xrochclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women
18 Street Number 2, D2
3897 6786

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.
31-44 Thao Dien, D2
www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.
251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2
6660 6602
www.dakhoanphu.com

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.
95 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2000
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

SALONS & SPAS

J Hair Salon

Experienced stylist Jimmy Le provides modern styling, healthy and fashionable hair care, along with professional blonde highlighting treatments.
33A Thao Dien, D2
090 934 2022

Saigon Dep

The clinic treats various skin diseases and offers skin care protection and prevention packages.
79 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0448
www.saigondep.net

Thao Dien Village

Within this tourist complex is a luxury spa and wellness center.
189 - 197, 197/1 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3744 2222

The Royal Spa And Salon

Services include acrylic nails, facials, hair salons and massages
14E14 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4873
9am - 9pm

shopping

HOME INTERIORS

Austin Home

Furniture shop that stocks art deco pieces, cushions, fabrics and wooden ornaments for the home
20 Thao Dien, D2
3519 0023

Click Sofa

Sells sofas that double up as beds in various sizes and wood
327F Luong Dinh Cua, D2
5402 7434
www.clickclacsofa.com

education

SCHOOLS

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).
Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van 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

Offers pre-school to secondary education under the English national curriculum.
225 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3744 2335
www.bisvietnam.com

Horizon International Bilingual School

A bilingual school, HIBS opened in 2005 and applies 100 percent of the Vietnamese national curriculum, MOET, as well as providing students with an intensive English program along with teaching science and math in English.
6 - 6A - 8, 44 Street, D2
hibsvietnam.com

L'atelier

A French language center offering classes in all forms to children and adults. 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

Saigon Sports Academy

A multi-sports training school that teaches chess, swimming, tennis, soccer, among others.
28 Tran Nao, D2
7303 1100



Saigon Star International School

Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.
Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, D2
3742 STAR / 3742 7827
www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn

Smartkids

An international childcare centre provides kindergarten and pre-school education for children between 18 months and six years old. A fun and friendly environment, the school focuses on learning through play.
1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2
3744 6076
www.smartkidsinfo.com

travel

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Exotissimo

With 20 years of operations in the region, they offer unique travel experiences with destination-based offices in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and China.
41 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4111
www.exotissimo.com
yen@exotissimo.com
9am - 9pm

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
6674 9041

SERVICED APARTMENTS

Glenwood Serviced Apartment

A very modern property, located in the heart of the expatriate's residential area, steps away from Int'l schools and supermarket. Securities and professional staffs are at your service.
248A Nguyen Van Huong, D2
0944 168 568

Fideco River View Apartment

The Fideco River View Apartment is located in a safe and secure area in district 2, offering tenants luxurious amenities with a panoramic view of Saigon.
14 Thao Dien, D2

Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases.
53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
37 444 111
www.riverside-apartments.com

River Garden Apartment

River Garden is the first luxury river-view condominium development in HCMC. 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

Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

Enjoy all the space you need for a balanced and enriching lifestyle while staying at the new Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City. It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.
628C Hanoi Highway, D2
6255 9900
www.somerset.com/vietnam

Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool ensconced by verdant gardens.
197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D 2
37446090
0906099180
www.villasong.com



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WWW

www.oivietnam.com

>>The List District 7



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

food & drink

BAKERIES

Savouré Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season.

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

www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

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

557-1 Sky Garden 2, D7 5410 0999

Ruby Soho

A popular district 7 spot with excellent and cheap range of cocktails, good food and great music! Listen to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Ramones or Beck while downing an ice cold one.

552-1 Sky Garden 2, D7 0120 325 9138

The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 3900

CAFES

Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7 7308 3131

www.baskinrobbins.vn

Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7 3932 2778

www.budsicecream.com.vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7 3824 4527

www.coffeebean.com.vn

FB Deli Coffee



FB Deli Coffee features a unique black and white design and signature coffee beans imported from Italy. Guests can also enjoy many varieties of homemade cakes, along with Tiramisu, muffins, and sandwiches. All cakes 50% off from 7 to 10pm.

SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7 5411 9696

8am - 10pm

The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7 5412 3257

MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent



Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

101 Ton Dat Tien, D7

www.mof.com.vn/en

NYDC

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

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5413 6523

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

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

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

restaurants

La Cucina



La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.

Reviewed in Oi April 2013

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

CHINESE

Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant



Serving China's little-known spiciest cuisine, the dishes of China's reddest province and the preferred taste of Chairman Mao, Huong Vien is well-decorated although a bit on the pricey side, with dishes averaging VND180,000.

S59-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7 5410 4368

Ming Dynasty

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

23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7 5411 5555

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoor.

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

Spice India

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

S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7 093 841 6551

www.namaste-india.com.vn

ITALIAN

Sarpino's



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

351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7 5412 2480

www.sarpino.vn

9am - 10.30pm

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.

103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 | 5412 4848

www.saltpepper.com.vn

JAPANESE

Baby Spoon

Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.

SB 2-1 Parkview, D7

3822 3356

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.

SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7 5412 3940

THAI

Nathalie's Phu My Hung



Nathalie's Phu My Hung is situated in an ideal location on a central corner in the district 7 high-profile metropolitan area. Serving delicious Thai cuisine in charming and romantic surroundings, the restaurant has two floors with a unified, simple decor and warm colourful tones throughout.

S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7

5410 0822

www.nathaliesrestaurant.com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

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

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

5415 5556

www.thaieexpress.vn

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional

Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

R1-72 Hung Gia 1, Bui Bang Doan, D7 5410 2027

ASIAN

Cham Charm



Cham is more like a museum than a dining venue, filled with the artefacts and sculpture of the Champa people and with gorgeous artworks and colourful hangings on the walls. The upstairs area is a wide-open terrace with plenty of tables for a more relaxing atmosphere. The cuisine is pan-Asian.

2 Phan Van Chuong, D7

WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

3841 3883

www.boomerang.com.vn

Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.

02 Phan Van Chuong, Phu My Hung New Urban, D7

5410 9999

El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere.

Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7

3825 1879

www.elgaucho.com.vn

Scott & Binh's Restaurant

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

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

3920 8986

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. This location also features a coffee lounge.

SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

Citimart

Despite being smaller in floor size than some other supermarkets, Citimart, a large Vietnamese supermarket chain, carries a wide selection of imported goods.

SC-10 Green View, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

B3-4, B3-5, B3-6 Ha Huy Tap, D7

S4-1 Hung Vuong 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Lotte Mart

Lotte Mart is a South Korean supermarket chain with two branches in Ho Chi Minh City carrying a very wide range of products.
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7

Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.

554-I Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7
5410 2613

business

BANKS

ANZ Bank

47 Phu My Hung
5410 1666
www.anz.com/vietnam/vn

HUMAN RESOURCES

Xage Consultancy

A human resource management consulting firm that develops people and organizations specializing in talent development, organizational development and outplacement.

35A-I-2, 1st Floor, Grandview C, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3402

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

Xone FM

The first independently run radio station in Vietnam, Xone FM provides the latest and hottest songs in both English and Vietnamese via 10 channels throughout the country.

100 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5413 5341

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Anh Nguyen Real Estate

Anh Nguyen specializes in rental and sales of residences in Phu My Hung.
168 Ha Huy Tap, D7
090 958 2489

Vietnam Housing

Vietnam Housing specializes in helping Vietnam's foreign community with their long- and short-term real estate rental and purchasing needs.

R1-49, Hung Gia 3, D7
5412 5979

health & beauty

DENTISTS

Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Mikiho.

R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
5410 3937

HOSPITALS

David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

DSCC provides Chiropractic care for patients using state of the art physiotherapy equipment imported from USA. DSCC is managed and operated by American doctors who use modern and advanced technologies techniques to ensure safe, gentle, and effective treatment.

41 Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7
5410 6242
www.saigonchiropractic.com

FV Hospital

French Hospital - Vietnam is a multi-specialty hospital equipped with modern equipment and providing a full range of medical services including medical and health advice, diagnosis and surgical treatment at a single point.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 3333

SALON

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the

Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

shopping

HOME & FURNISHINGS

Mekong Quilts

Mekong Quilts offers sustainable employment to women from poor rural regions of Vietnam and Cambodia who craft fashionable, quality silk quilts and home wares.

517 Sky Garden I, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758
www.mekong-quilts.org

LADIESWEAR

Aquamarine

Aquamarine and Xuan Thu are premium swimsuit brands for men, women and children.

3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
3842 7105

Vera

Vera is an international premium lingerie brand that is designed and made in Vietnam. The line offers cutting edge lingerie and is reasonably priced.

469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3822 1152
www.vera.com.vn

education

SCHOOLS

ABC International School

Providing a caring and nurturing atmosphere for all its students, the ABC International School offers a combination of both British and international educations and qualifications.

Saigon South Campus I (Primary & Secondary)
#2, IE Street, Khu Dan Cu Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh
5431 1833 /34/35/36
abcintschools@vnn.vn
www.theabcis.com

Kids Club Saigon

Early childhood centers in Phu My Hung offering creative play-based programs for children ages 2 to 5. Known for unique facilities, experienced staff, high-quality learning resources, and small class sizes
79/7 Pham Thai Buong, D7
27/3 Ha Huy Tap, D7
5412 5944
www.kidsclubsaigon.com

Kindermusik

The center is a music, movement and English-language program for children from birth to 7 years. Each lesson promotes early literacy and English language acquisition, social skills and more. Kindermusik programs align with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary years.

Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7
www.kindermusik-vietnam.com
090 709 9480

Renaissance International School Saigon

Opened in 2008, The Renaissance International School Saigon offers programs from Early Years to secondary curriculum, founded on the International British System. The four buildings on the school's one-hectare site include a 350-seat auditorium, a computer resource centre, gymnasium and 25 m swimming pool.

74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171
www.rissaiagon.edu.vn

RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT International University Vietnam is the Asian hub of Melbourne-based University RMIT - Australia's biggest tertiary institution.

The largest offshore campus in the world, RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering.

702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 1300

Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families. SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.

78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5413 0901
www.ssis.edu.vn

Vstar School

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.

Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3821 3821

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels.

R4 -28 Hung Phuoc 2, Le Van Thiem, D7
3602 6694

recreation

CINEMAS AND THEATRES

Lotte Cinema

Lotte Cinema (Nam Saigon) has 1,336 seats in 6 theaters, showing movies in English and Vietnamese.

3rd Floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2527

Megastar Cineplex

Showing movies in English and Vietnamese, and Megastar offers more cinema screens than anyone else in Vietnam. Both the Crescent Mall and Parkson Paragon location s have 8 theaters.

5th Floor, Crescent Mall, 101 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2222
5th Floor, Parkson Paragon, 3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5416 0088

GYMS & SPORTS

The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.

3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza,
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 1277

Body by Jovie

An urban boutique gym & yoga studio with a unique facility catering to the individual demanding diversity, personal attention and results. They are an alternative to the mainstream gym who strive on raw functional training, small group fitness & Yoga combined with state of the art equipment.
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence
Block B, Second Floor, Riverside Residence
Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5417 1946; 0120 384 0961
bodybyjovie.com
info@bodybyjovie.com

Saigon South Golf Club

The closest golf course to HCMC's downtown area, Saigon South is a 9-hole, par 3 golf course and driving range situated behind FV hospital. There are foreign trainers to help golfers with golf skills. Equipment hire is available.

Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5411 2001

travel

HOTELS

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
5411 1008

Bizu Premier Hotel Phu My Hung

Twenty-five rooms spread over 5 floors provide modern comforts such as satellite/cable TV, bathtub, balcony/terrace, bathrobes, air conditioning.

7-9 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently located close to Phu My Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, guests can choose from 20 rooms.

R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7
5410 5941

Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.

73 Hoang Van Thai, D7
www.ibis.com

Sabena Hotel

The Sabena Hotel sits in a quiet, tree-lined street just off the major Parkway Nguyen Van Linh. The Saigon Exhibition & Convention Center, RMIT International University and The Crescent Mall are only 1km away.

24 Noi Khu Hung Gia 4, D7

5416 1000

Torino Hotel

Located on a peaceful and green neighborhood, this 10-room contemporary property is close to restaurants, cafés and shopping centers.

25 Road No. 2, D7

5410 5611

SERVICED APARTMENTS

The Crescent

The Crescent is located along the Crescent Lake in the heart of Phu My Hung New City Centre, offering an exclusive high-class lifestyle for locals and expats. This area consists of a variety of green parks, restaurants, luxury apartments, retail shops and entertainment venues.

101 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Court

Completed in 2009, Garden Court is a luxury apartment building located close to schools, supermarkets and shopping centers and a golf course.

Garden Court, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Plaza

Garden Plaza is a high class apartment building designed after modern Singapore buildings, comprising of four inter-connected 8-storey blocks.

Garden Plaza, Ton Dat Tien, D7

The Panorama

A complex consisting of six medium- and high-rises, from 6 to 24 storeys tall, The Panorama has 276 individual apartments and 51 stores.

The Panorama, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Sky Garden

Sky Garden is a huge complex of apartments including 42 buildings with more than 3,000 individual apartments set on 10.4 hectares.

Sky Garden, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5410 1616

Faces & Places



Live by the Sword

Katori (www.katorivietnam.org), a samurai sword fighting school, organized a seminar with Yamada sensei from Japan who is one of the highest level sword teachers in the world.

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



Ship Ahoy

To mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between France and Vietnam, the frigate anti-submarine Tonnerre paid a courtesy call to HCMC.

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



Happily Ever After

To help plan your wedding and beyond, New World Hotel hosted a bridal fair featuring a wedding dress fashion show and dinner with lobster, crabs and rack of lamb.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY NEW WORLD HOTEL



SAIGON SOUTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Connecting Learning To Life

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2013



COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ACCEPTANCES

U.S.A.

Alfred University
Barnard College
Bay State College
Baylor University
Bentley College, MA*
Boston College
Boston University, MA*
Brown University
California Lutheran University
CSU-Fullerton, CA
CSU-Norridge, CA
Central Michigan University
Chapman Univ, CA
Clark University
Colorado State University*
Concordia University-Irvine
Cornell University
Da Anza College
DePauw University
Drexel University
Fashion Institute of Technology
Fairfield University, CT*
George Mason University
Grand Valley State University
Harvard University
James Madison University
Johns Hopkins University
Lasell College
Loyola Marymount Univ
Loyola University Chicago
Massachusetts College of
Pharmacy & Health Sciences
Michigan State University*
Mount Holyoke College
New York University*
Northeastern University*
Ohio Wesleyan University
Orange Coast College
Parsons The New School of Design

Pennsylvania State University
Pepperdine University
Pratt Institute **
Purdue University
Rhode Island School of Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
San Diego State University
Savannah College of A and D
School of Visual Arts-NY
Susquehanna University
Swarthmore College
Texas A&M University
Texas State University-San Marcos
Texas Tech University
The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University
The George Washington University
The University of Iowa
The University of Texas, San Antonio
Tufts University
UC Berkeley, CA
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