



oi

VIETNAM

MAY 2014

INDOCHINE

THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

THE SAND MASTER

How Billions of
Sand Grains Become Art

PAGE 26

TINY TREASURES

Delectable Morsels From
Hue and Phan Rang

PAGE 68

COLONIAL CLONE

Le Petit Paris in Dalat

PAGE 66

THE MOTHER CITY

A Must-Read Before
Visiting Cape Town

PAGE 69

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Contents



COVER STORY

INDOCHINE

From baguettes to banh mi and savon to xa phong, explore the French influences on the Vietnamese culture

34

FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

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

P18 TROI OI

See why 450,000 fingerlings, a 1,000 year-old stele and 8,500 cruise ship tourists made our noteworthy numbers this month

P20 THE BULLETIN

Checking out the latest promotions and openings

P24 A SYMPTOMATIC APPROACH

Is self diagnosing at a local pharmacy good for your health?

P26 THE SAND MASTER

The unconventional art of sanding painting

P32 SMOOTH CRIMINAL

From humble beginnings to becoming District 4's major crime boss, meet the notorious Nam Cam

P66 ON THE ROAD BACK

A nostalgic look at a photographer's road trip back to Dalat

P69 THE MOTHER CITY

Gateway to Africa, home to Table Mountain, beaches & wine estates, a Cape Town holiday should be on your bucket list



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WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Our culinary travels take us from classic Cantonese cuisine to delicious food from Brittany while taking a stopover in Hue and Phan Rang for tasty Vietnamese tapas

47

P80 MY LIFE AS... A GRAY HAIR PLUCKER

Before there were hair dying treatments

P90 CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON

A charity founded on the belief that true happiness comes from helping others

COLUMNS

P28 SAIGON MYTHBUSTERS

Are Ben Thanh Market's days numbered? And will drinking urine cure my illnesses? Find out

P72 LIFE'S A TRIP

Top tips on when and how to complain when confronted with bad customer service

P74 POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM

Get lost in the essences of Paris while in Hanoi

P82 HIGHER LEARNING

Multitasking is more hurtful than helpful when it comes to studying

P92 LEGAL EASE

Should you flee or stay if you get into a traffic accident in Vietnam?

P93 FOUND 404

Why Viet Kieus should invest in technology in Vietnam

Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 14
MAY 2014

Parlez-vous Français?

WHILE I'M NO tour guide, whenever friends come to visit me in Saigon, one of my favorite outings involves pointing out the historic colonial-era buildings dotting the city. Regardless of what districts we wander into, we normally see quaint French villas, shop houses and cafés. Just one of the many perks of living in this city.

However, when my friend Mike from NYC recently came over, I noticed that we saw far less colonial architecture on our walks, the edifices having been torn down and replaced with either tall shiny glass buildings or construction fences plastered with computer renditions of what was soon to be. Being a bit of a history buff, when I look at old buildings I like to imagine what it was like to live during that time — who lived there? What was their life like? Who walked on the exact same spot I was walking on? In **Saving the Soul of Saigon**, James Pham talks to some experts on urban conservation on exactly what challenges there are to preserving the city's past. I for one would hate to wake up one day and have those beautiful reminders of yesteryear completely erased.

Last year, I was lucky enough to visit France for the first time and while sitting at a café waiting for our train, I overheard a couple talking. While I don't speak French, their conversation almost seemed familiar as I realized certain words sounded almost Vietnamese in a way. And then it dawned on me that some Vietnamese words were in fact derived from the French language. Throughout my trip there I noticed other similarities between the two cultures. Our cover series traces the fascinating origin of the influences left by colonialism in modern-day Vietnam.

In our Wine and Dine section, we review Beo Gap Nuoc, a Hue restaurant named after a Vietnamese expression about destiny. My parents are from Hue so, in addition to growing up eating school lunches in the US, I was also eating a lot of Hue food at home. Reading James Allen's review transported me back to Brooklyn circa 1985, watching my mom open up a can of *hen* (baby clams) to make *com hen* (a delicious rice dish with chopped mint leaves, pork rinds, herbs and veggies, topped with baby clams then mixed all together with chili paste and a spoonful

of broth). While no one can match my mom's home cooking, I'm hoping that Beo Gap Nuoc will come pretty close!

Our travel column this month features tips for complaint resolution — a topic that my fiancé and I always argue about — when to complain and when to let it go. It's especially harder here because I end up having to translate his complaints to the staff which then makes his complaint my complaint. It's just messy. In a recent customer service snafu, I reviewed a plane ticket I bought online only to find out that the "ine" was missing from my name, making the ticket out to "Christ." The customer service agent told me I would either have to pay for another ticket or pay a fee to correct the name. Despite my protests that the mistake wasn't mine (while I admittedly have a big ego, I definitely did not think I was the Christ), we couldn't resolve the situation via phone. She asked for my number with a promise to phone back, but never did. At check-in the following week I had to pay a fee because they wouldn't accept that "Christ" and I were the same person. Overall, I feel constructive criticism is helpful but keeping quiet and accepting bad service perpetuates it. I'll definitely use some of the tips from the column the next time I have a customer service issue.

In our Travel and Leisure section, travel writer Ishay Govender covers the picturesque city of Cape Town. While at the moment, South Africa is making headlines for all the wrong reasons (with the Oscar Pistorius murder case), Ishay shows us the truly beautiful side of the legislative capital of South Africa, with its wonderfully European feel set against a gorgeous mountain backdrop.

Finally, congratulations to our Oi Photo Contest winners, Dieu D. and Duong Q. All of our entrants did such a great job at capturing the Love / Romance theme, garnering well over a thousand 'likes.' We have terrific prizes lined up for our May Photo Contest on the theme "Indochina." We can't wait to see all your entries! ■

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor



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Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



MAY 6

What: Business Luncheon

Where: Opera III & IV, Caravelle Hotel, 19 - 23 Lam Son Square, D1; 12pm - 2pm

About: The British Business Group Vietnam (BBGV) is hosting a business luncheon about British entrepreneurs' success in Vietnam with two speakers Joe Woolf, CEO of Atlas Vietnam and Stephen Kerslake, CEO of The Caterers Vietnam. Woolf and Kerslake will discuss entrepreneurial DNA, entrepreneurs' qualifications, skills and experience, market, strategy, competition, resourcing and sustainability. Entrance fee is VND950,000 for members and co-host members and VND1,200,000 for non-members.

Contact: Email Tran at officemanager@bbgv.org



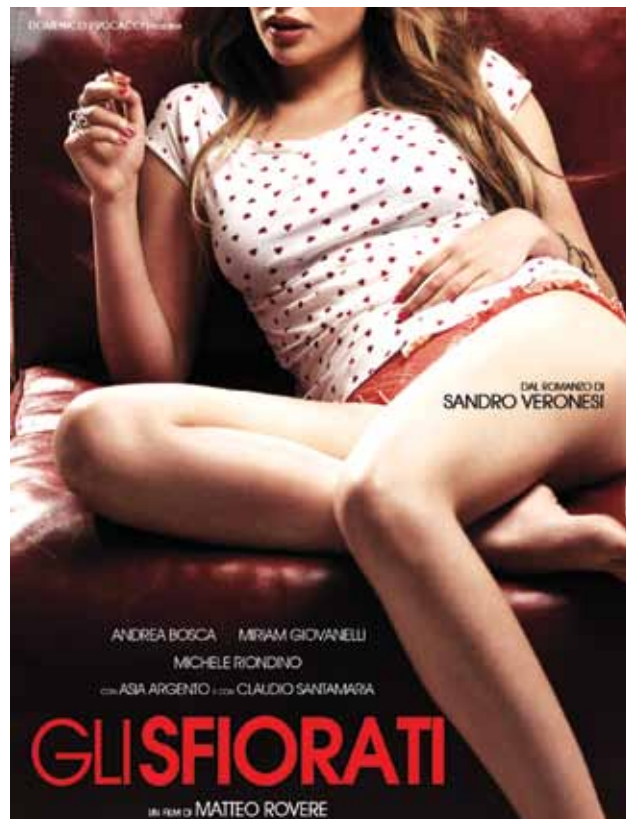
MAY 7

What: Arty Cooking

Where: VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2

About: VinSpace Art Studio, in collaboration with Saigon Cooking Class by Hoa Tuc, is hosting a special Vietnamese cooking class combined with an Arty event. The cooking class will focus on four of the best Hoa Tuc signature Vietnamese dishes while the Arty event will show you how to make your own Arty travel recipe book.

Contact: Contact info@vin-space.com or i.briosca@saigoncookingclass.com for more info



MAY 7 & 21

What: Open Air Cinema

Where: Pendolasco, 87 Nguyen Hue, D1; 7:15pm

About: Cinema Paradiso features open air Italian movies, all subtitled in English. *Così Ridevano* will be shown on May 7 and *Gli Sfiatori* on May 21.

Contact: Email info@pendolasco.vn for more info



MAY 8-10

What: Digital Photo and Sign Show

Where: Tan Binh Exhibition & Convention Centre, Tan Binh

About: Digital photo, photo cameras and camcorders, lenses, photo finishing equipment, photo processing equipment, photographic films, signs, moving image displays, video-walls, electronic messaging and display, digital message boards, installation services, digital signage servers, and more will be showcased at the exhibition, open for trade visitors and the public.

Contact: Call Petty at (04) 3773 8658 or email info@digitalphoto.com.vn



MAY 8

What: Landscape Painting

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

About: Using the images provided or images of your own you will develop your own landscape painting. An instructor will help you, sharing tips and techniques.

Contact: Email info@vin-space.com for more info



MAY 8-9

What: The Creation

Where: Opera House, 7 Cong Truong Lam Son, D1; 8pm

About: *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn is an oratorio that tells the story of God's creation of the world in six days according to the *Book of Genesis* of the *Old Testament*. The work is structured in three parts and scored for soprano, tenor and bass soloists, chorus, and a symphonic orchestra. For the recitatives, a harpsichord will be used. Conductor Maestro Lars Notto Birkeland will be accompanying the singers during the performances.

Joseph Haydn was one of the most prominent faces of the Classical period. He is widely considered to be the 'Father of the Symphony' due to his great contributions to musical form.

Contact: Call Huong at 3823 7419 or visit www.ticketbox.vn for bookings



MAY 8-11

What: International Jewelry and Watch Vietnam

Where: Tan Binh Exhibition & Convention Centre, Tan Binh

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

Contact: Visit www.vietnamjewelryshow.com for details

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MAY 9

What: Saigon Hash House Harriettes

Where: Caravelle Hotel, 19-23 Lam Son Square, D1; 2pm

About: The Hash House Harriers is an informal gathering of once-a-week runners. The objective of a Hash run is to follow a trail, laid in shredded paper or flour, laid by 'Hares' prior to the start of the run. Unlike a normal cross-country run, the hares build in checks to slow down the FRB's (front running bastards) so that the rest of the pack can catch up. These take the form of checks, back checks, false trails and so on, where the trail stops and the pack has to fan out to pick it up again. Since Harriettes refers to female participants of a hash, this hash chapter will be organized by women but men are welcome to participate.

Meet every Sunday at the Caravelle Hotel. Bus leaves promptly at 2pm, returning usually around 7-8pm. Hash fees cost VND220,000 for expats and VND150,000 for locals.

Contact: Email hashgeek@saigonhash.com for more info



MAY 9


What: CanCham CSR Golf Open

Where: Twin Doves Golf Club, 68 Tran Ngoc Len, Binh Duong

About: This event will see more than 100 participants including CEOs, senior executives, business leaders and decision makers. Cost per golfer is VND2,600,000 for CanCham and co-host members and VND2,800,000 for non-members, inclusive 18 holes of play (with caddy), an assortment of goodies, a mid-way BBQ with beverages and plenty of prizes to be won. Shotgun start at 11:30am followed by a gala dinner buffet. Proceeds will go towards CanCham's CSR program.

Contact: Call 3824 3754 or email em@canchamvietnam.org for more info



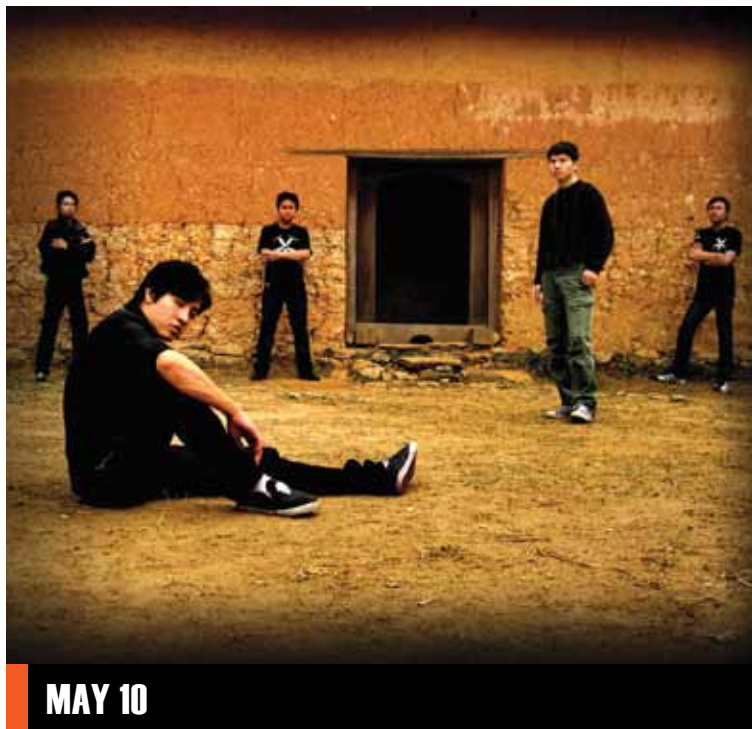
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www.wildlifeatrisk.org



MAY 10

What: Rock Concert

Where: Hoa Lu Stadium, 2 Dinh Tien Hoang, D1; 6:30pm

About: The Rock Concert is another version of RockStorm, held nationwide during the last few months of the year. Japanese audio veteran and sound engineer Masaaki Azuma will be back, following his involvement with RockStorm 2013. The concert will feature famous bands such as The Wall, Hai Bot of *Quai Vat Ti Hon* (Tiny Monsters), Microwave, *Ngu Cung* (Pentatonic), Oringchains, Black Infinity and PAK band. Ticket price is VND120,000 and VND95,000 when booked in advanced.

Contact: Call 093 458 2326 for more info



MAY 16-18

What: Black Comedy

Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

About: Saigon Sound System and Dragonfly Theatre present the award-winning play, *Blue/Orange* written by Joe Penhall and directed by Ryan Burkwood on May 16 at 7pm, May 17 at 2pm and 6:30pm, and May 18 at 7pm. The black comedy is an evocative tale of race, mental illness and the impact of the controversial issue of care in the community. Reserved seating tickets are VND300,000 if booked before midnight on May 12 from www.ticketbox.vn. Tickets can also be purchased for VND350,000 at the door.

Contact: Email dragonflyvietnam@gmail.com or call 090 888 0091 for details



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MAY 17

What: Charity Auction and Gala Dinner

Where: Park Hyatt Saigon, 2 Lam Son Square, D1; 6:30pm - 11:30pm

About: Proceeds of the auction will go towards Operation Smile which was founded on the strong belief that every child born with a facial deformity has the right to smile. Through a global network of medical volunteers, it has provided free reconstructive surgery and medical care for children living in pain and isolation - hoping for a better future. Admission to this event is VND3 million per person.

Contact: Visit www.operationsmile.org.vn for details



MAY 17

What: The Cairos land in Saigon

Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4; 8pm

About: Loud Minority presents Aussie outfit, The Cairos, to HCMC. After building up an army of loyal fans in their native Queensland, The Cairos managed to cause a significant buzz on a national level to attract major label interest. Over the last few years, The Cairos have honed their skills and worked hard at their craft, while sharing stages with the likes of Julian Casablancas, The Temper Trap, The Middle East, You Am I and other indie rock elite. All attendees will be entered into a draw on the night for 10 lucky winners to receive free entry to all Loud Minority events in 2014. Tickets cost VND150,000 (advance) and VND200,000 (door). Free entry for students with valid ID.

Contact: Visit www.ticketbox.vn to purchase tickets

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MAY 22

What: Creative Figure Painting

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

About: In this session, you will paint the figure from a creative point of view, combining abstract and traditional approaches. No previous experience needed.

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



MAY 22

What: Guitar Recital

Where: IDECAF, 28 Le Thanh Ton, D1; 8pm

About: The French Institute in Vietnam and IDECAF present a guitar recital with Gabriel Bianco, who has established himself as one of the most active guitarists of his generation. His constantly-updated repertoire comprises both original works and transcriptions covering all periods of classical music. An eight-time First Prize winner at the most prestigious international competitions (notably at Vienna, 2006, GFA in San Francisco 2008, Madrid 2011), Gabriel Bianco gives recitals all over the world (Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, Central Conservatory of Beijing, at Bucharest with the Romanian National Orchestra, among others). Admission is VND100,000, VND50,000 for students.

Contact: Call 3823 9968 for details



MAY 24

What: International German School (IGS) Open House

Where: International German School, 12 Vo Truong Toan, An Phu; 12pm - 4pm

About: Learn more about IGS's curriculum, school team and teachers, and tour its facilities. Lots of fun awaits kids. The day provides an opportunity for Vietnamese parents to understand how IGS offers their children a chance to learn in a German curriculum, gaining an opportunity to go to Germany to study.

IGS, as a school of cultural exchange for Vietnamese and German students, offers all German speaking people in HCMC, or families interested in German education, the opportunity of a skill-based education.

Contact: Call 3744 6344 or email info@igs-hcmc.de for details



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MAY 24

What: Saigon Charity Bazaar

Where: The Deck, 38 Nguyen U Di, D2; 10am - 4pm

About: Step up to The Deck for their bi-annual charity bazaar benefiting the VinaCapital Foundation program Heart Beat Vietnam, which funds crucial heart surgery for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and The Deck Charity. What started in 2006 on the shoulders of two Dutch ladies and 10 vendors has become a community event in the years since, with crafters and charities such as Vietnam Quilts, Mekong Creations, Grace Cookies, and Operation Smile among the 45 vendors who will be present. Small entrepreneurs with local and unusual products are encouraged to participate.

Contact: Email domlampel@hotmail.com or call 3744 6632



MAY 28

What: AmCham Palooza Party

Where: Novotel Saigon Centre, 167 Hai Ba Trung, D3; 6pm - 8:30pm

About: A platform to develop new friendships, networking opportunities and information exchange. People from all age groups welcome. Free admission for members and VND100,000 for non-members.

Contact: Email contact@amchamvietnam.com for details



MAY 31

What: Bourbon Street Jazz Festival

Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4; 4pm - till late

About: A music and food festival with a focus on Bourbon Street, New Orleans style Cajun food, coolers, music and dance. The artists will include international musicians such as Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges, Japanese jazz singer Shun Sakai, Taste Like Chicken, The Blues Brothers, Hot Tzigani Project and The Wanderlusters. The ticket price is VND500,000 and includes VND200,000 for the purchase of food and beverages. Free entry for children under 12 years.

Profits from the event will go to underprivileged kids and help provide continued social and economic development in Dong Ha Town, Quang Tri Province, by supporting the employment of workers, some with disabilities, at the Kids First Enterprise factory where wheelchairs are manufactured.

Contact: Visit www.bourbonstreetjazzfestival.com for details

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MAY 31

What: Wedding Show

Where: New World Hotel, 76 Le Lai Street, D1; 9am

About: From 9am to 9pm, a wedding exhibition called Aisle of Style will take place with free entry. Those who book and pay for your wedding at New World Saigon Hotel before June 7 will receive a 20 percent discount or by June 30 a 15 percent discount.

You can also enjoy brunch at Parkview Restaurant while viewing a fashion show from local wedding gown and accessories designers from 11am to 3pm. The fashion show and brunch is priced at VND550,000 per person.

From 6:30 pm to 9pm, see the latest wedding gown collections in a designer fashion show. Plus, preview the hotel's new signature wedding dishes in a dinner prepared by its executive chef. Priced at VND500,000 per ticket served with champagne and free flow of house wine. Tickets are required. When you purchase a ticket for the show and dinner and book your wedding at New World Saigon Hotel, you will have the chance to win your entire wedding free of charge.

Contact: Email wedding.saigon@newworldhotels.com for more info



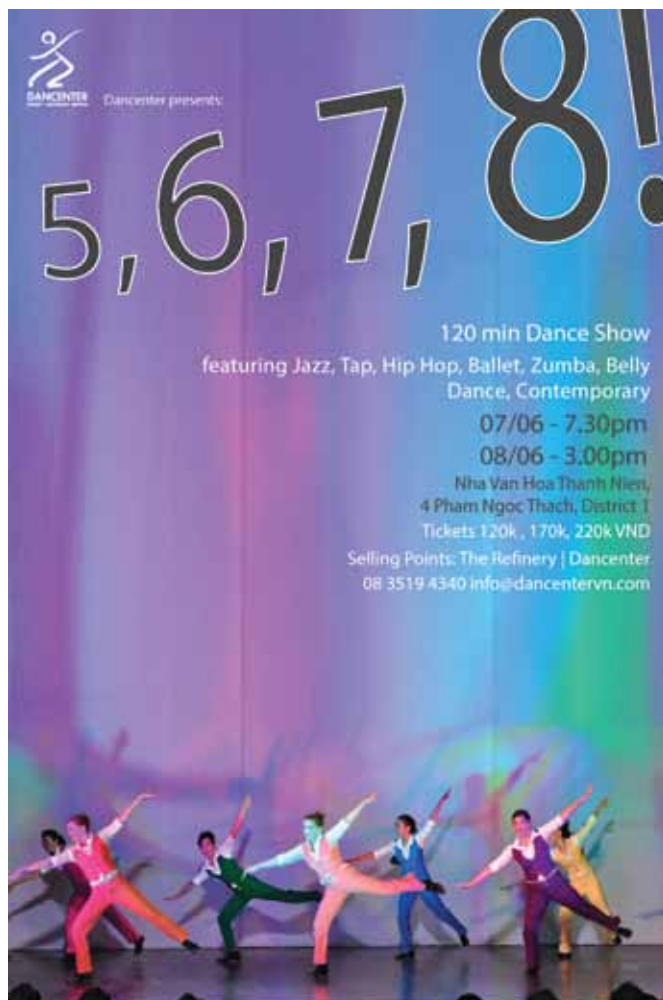
JUNE 7

What: Saigon Summer Ball

Where: InterContinental Asiana Saigon, 39 Le Duan, D1; 7pm till late

About: Saigon Summer Ball features a Moët Chandon Champagne reception, an exquisite dinner, auction items and dancing to live music and DJs. Bringing together many of the key people from the international and Vietnamese social and business worlds, the event is primarily designed to be a night of great celebration and style with the added benefit of raising much needed funds for development work. Tickets cost VND3,300,000.

Contact: Email saigonsummerball@saigonchildren.com for more info



Troi Oi

The country by numbers



30

lakes will soon be built to prevent flooding in HCMC. As the city's vulnerability to climate changes are becoming increasingly apparent, the city is taking steps to solve the ever-increasing flood problems.

Do Tan Long, head of the Irrigation Management Office of HCM City's Steering Centre of Urban Flood Control Program, said that the People's Committee will work to build 30 lakes in the second half of this year with the hope of alleviating seasonal flooding. Large lakes will be built on the outskirts of the city while smaller ones will be placed in inner-city areas.

Money for the project will come from both public and private funds, according to Long. "The city will utilize its budget to build large lakes and raise funds from residents for the smaller lakes." Once established, the lakes are predicted to reduce floods by "around 30 percent".

Researchers at the National University Ho Chi Minh City's Geoinformatics Center found that many areas of HCMC are sinking at a rate of 20mm per year. The trend, which began in 1996, has been increasing steadily since 2004. Based on estimates from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, "many parts will sink a further 12-20cm by 2020".



40cm

swallowed the wire two years ago after a dare. The doctors performed key-hole surgery, lasting around 30 minutes, to take the object out.

of electric wire was removed from a local man's bowel last month. Dau Van Phu was admitted to Nghe An General Hospital after he developed stomach pain, nausea and fatigue. Doctors from a hospital in the north-central province of Nghe An said the 35-year-old man



450,000

small fish were released into the Tau Hu – Ben Nghe canal, which had recently been cleaned, to enrich and develop aquatic resources. This annual event helps promote public awareness to protect the environment. The staff from the department of fisheries also delivered pamphlets with content aimed at helping local residents better understand the need to protect the biological diversity in the country.



2nd

tallest building in HCMC is set to be finished sometime this year. Once completed, the Vietcombank

Tower's spire will put the building's height at 206m, just under 60m short of the Bitexco Financial Tower's 262m.

200

historic buildings have been lost to development. A Vietnamese-French urban research agency has found that at least 207 heritage buildings in downtown Ho Chi Minh City have been destroyed

or defaced in the last decade. Dr. Fanny Quertamp Nguyen, Director of the Center for Prospective and Urban Studies (PADDI), an agency set up by Rhône – Alpes Region and HCMC, said only 96 have been preserved. A survey by French and Vietnamese experts in 1993 had determined that 377 structures in Districts 1 and 3 were heritage sites.

Ton Nu Thi Ninh, a former Vice Chairwoman of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, cited the razing of three old buildings for the construction of Vincom, a major shopping mall, in District 1 in 2011, as an example of the fact that economic profits are prioritized.

To Kien, an architect who graduated from the Singapore University of Technology and Design, said many countries face a similar dilemma of preservation or development, and the best way is to achieve a balance between modernization and preservation, even if that means slower economic growth.



USD6

is the new fee to enter Hoi An's Old Town. Hoi An officials opened new ticket booths at each entrance into the Old Town and have introduced a new rule: To enter all visitors must now buy a

VND120,000 ticket. Previously, you needed the ticket only to see certain sights within the Old Town, not just to wander the streets.





8,500

foreigners so far have visited Vietnam by way of American luxury cruise ships Voyager of the Seas and the Celebrity Millennium. Saigontourist's

General Director Vo Anh Tai told newspapers his company has served more than 80 visits from international luxury cruise ships this year.

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The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC and beyond...



COOL SUMMER

Choosing Dalat as a destination for your summer vacation is an idea worth considering because Dalat Edensee, a luxury resort in the pine city, has just launched a promotional program named **Huong Mua He**. With prices ranging from VND5,490,000 for two people, those staying three days and two nights are eligible for free additional services.

After a tiring day walking, you can relax at La Roseaie Spa with two gift vouchers included in the package, including Swedish relaxation massage, Vietnam traditional massage, massage Thai style, Revival Aromatherapy treatment, special herbs or hot stone therapy. The promotion package also includes a romantic dinner for two at the VIP restaurant every night. If you wish to stay longer, it's just VND1,990,000 per additional night for two people. **Huong Mua He** is valid from May 5 to August 25, 2014.

In celebration of its third year anniversary, Dalat Edensee is offering a special discount of 10 percent and a gift to all customers who book this package in May. For more info, contact Dalat Edensee at (0633) 831515 or email info@dalatedensee.com



POOLSIDE BBQ BUFFET

Pullman's Danang Beach Resort's Azure Beach Lounge offers in this whole month of May a poolside BBQ buffet every Wednesday and Friday from 5:30pm for VND525,000, including liquid nitrogen ice cream and two beers/soft drinks per person. Selection includes a variety of barbecue specialties such as beef, chicken and seafood. The poolside BBQ buffet offers a romantic setting for dining, with its scenic gardens, sparkling blue waters, and mesmerizing views over the East Sea.

For more info, call (0511) 3958888



BBQ AND BEER

Quan Ut Ut, located at 168 Vo Van Kiet, D1, is Saigon's newest restaurant with specialties including American BBQ favorites, cashew-smoked pork ribs and burgers alongside fresh draft and imported beer. Open daily from 4pm till midnight.

For further info, visit www.quanutut.com or call 0914 4500.



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EVENT PLANNER

Centerpiece is a new independent event planning company run by expats that leverages the vibrant social scene in Ho Chi Minh City. What makes Centerpiece stand out from other event planning companies is the attention to detail, transforming an ordinary party into a unique event. They can organize a party of any shape or size, from a corporate event to a private party, to the wedding of your dreams.

For further info, visit www.centerpiece-vn.com



NEW FASHION LABEL

RB&K (www.rbkandco.com) was born in 2014. The collection « Fragrance » was created from experiences and observations Rebecca Bargas, founder and fashion designer of RB&K, had while working with various luxury labels like Chloé or Kenzo. RB&K grew up in the crossroads of Europe and Southeast Asia, describing itself as cultural chic with the perfect mix of Asian spices and the traditions of Europe to create simple, elegance fashion. The brand bills itself as “a new generation of creative fashion wear with the flavor of new fragrance.”

MOTHER'S DAY PROMO

This Mother's Day, show your love and pamper your mother with a variety of indulgences at InterContinental Asiana Saigon (corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1). If you would like to offer her a culinary trip around the world, Market 39 restaurant offers a feast of market fresh staples at the buffet. Dishes include seafood, gourmet salads, international delicacies, a live carving station and desserts.

Mother's Day Brunch is priced at VND1,599,000++ per person including free flow of Veuve Clicquot Champagne, cocktails, house wine, beer and soft drinks. Buffet dinner is priced at VND1,098,000++ per person including free flow of house wine, beer and soft drinks.

Trattoria style Basilico restaurant also offers a dinner buffet with menu especially for this occasion for VND999,000++ per person including free flow of draught beer, soft drinks and one glass of white/red wine.



HOLIDAY PACKAGE

Amiana, the new 5-star luxury beach resort in Nha Trang, has just launched the Amazing Amiana Summer Holiday Package special for VND1,890,000++ per person per night (twin-share) in Deluxe Room or VND3,780,000++ a Deluxe Room per night inclusive of buffet breakfast. Valid from now until August 29, the package also includes a complimentary indoor game for children and swimming lessons for children from eight years old.

Discount 10-20 percent for sport activities at resort, minibar, spa service. Additional benefits for long stay include complimentary airport transfer and one dinner for stays from two nights, add on 15 mins spa rituals including sauna, steam and Japanese hot pool for stays from three nights. Add a further 10-20 percent off on long stay packages from four to seven nights or more.

Children under 12 years old sharing with extra bed at VND420,000++ child/ night including breakfast. Third adult or children above 12 years old sharing with extra bed at VND735,000++ person/night including breakfast. Special rate for upgrade to Ocean Front Villa at VND1,050,000++ per room/night.

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DISCOVER HOI AN

Explore the great heritage of Hoi An and discover authentic Vietnamese cuisine and hospitality at Boutique Hoi An Resort with their special Discover Hoi An package. The package is priced at VND6,340,000 nett including tax and service charge for two persons for two nights in a Superior room with daily breakfast.

The package is valid from May 1 to October 31, 2014, and includes round trip airport transfers, Vietnamese set lunch or dinner at Le Café Restaurant per person per stay, daily shuttle bus service to Hoi An's Old Town, free wireless internet in the room and throughout the resort, welcome cocktail at Le Salon per person per stay, free bike rental, 15 percent discount on all spa treatments, 15 percent discount on F&B at the resort's outlet only. Additional night charges (with daily breakfast) are as the internet rates subject to availability. Upgrade to next category room will be charged at VND700,000 per room per night.

For more info, call (84) 0510 3939 111 or visit www.boutiquehoianresort.com

Lean In
Like A
Queen

17 Lessons from the Last Queen of Vietnam's Daring Negotiations

KIM DO

A BOOK FOR CAUSE

Lean In Like a Queen: 17 Lessons from the Last Queen of Vietnam's Daring Negotiations written by Kim Do is for all women – and men – who want to avoid common mistakes and increase their success in their own negotiations, whether at work, in business, or in their personal life. The book is available as a Kindle edition at Amazon.com. Profits from this book will be given to women-empowering charities in Vietnam, millions of whom are “leaning in” everyday to survive basic problems including poverty, lack of education, and domestic violence.

Born in Saigon, author Kim Do is a Vietnamese-American. Having practiced international and corporate law for nearly 20 years, she has lost jobs and fortunes in more than one financial crisis, and nearly gave up the corporate ladder recently to take a quiet early retirement. Yet she was inspired by Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* to forge ahead and achieve a senior position at a top global bank's Vietnam office, as well as to complete the research and writing of this book (her first).



CRUISING VIETNAM

Cruise line brand Princess Cruises will be sailing to Vietnam for a new season of cruise trips and offering a wide array of itineraries. The Sapphire Princess will stop at Ba Ria Vung Tau (Phu My) and Nha Trang. Princess Cruises will be introducing the Sapphire Princess to Southeast Asia for a four-month season from November 2014 to February 2015.

The itinerary includes a seven-day Vietnam and Thailand trip including Ba Ria Vung Tau (Phu My) and an 11-day Southeast Asia trip in which the Sapphire Princess will visit Ba Ria Vung Tau (Phu My) and Nha Trang.

Highlights of offerings include the line's signature innovations such as its popular "Movies Under the Stars" pool-side theater and The Sanctuary, an exclusive top-deck retreat. The 116,000-ton Sapphire Princess carries 2670 passengers and features more than 200 suites and mini-suites with private balconies, Lotus Spa, Sterling Steakhouse, Sabatini's trattoria, wine bar, patisserie, pizzeria, boutiques, and Internet café among other amenities.

Princess Cruises' Southeast Asia itineraries will offer more destinations than on any other cruise line, stopping at seven countries and 16 ports in Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Brunei. Cruise lengths will range from three to 11 days, providing passengers with a wide array of vacation experiences.

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A Symptomatic Approach

Our experiment with drugs

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

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

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

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

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

He gave us three types of medicine:

1. Paracetamol: According to Thanh this is a simple pain reliever that most pharmaceutical companies carry. They look different simply because they are produced by different pharmaceutical companies. This is for our headache.

2. Spasmaverine: "A muscle relaxant that should take care of your stomach ache," says Thanh. "It can also be used to treat period cramps for women."

3. Maxdotyl Sulpiride: "This one is for your headache," says Thanh again. This one, unlike the other two, requires a prescription from a doctor, but he has seen many doctors prescribing this same drug for people with headache or vertigo, so he's sure it's fine.

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

A Third Opinion

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

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

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

Dr. Lague adds: "In France, medical professors always teach their students that 90 percent of the time, an accurate diagnosis can be achieved simply by asking a lot of detailed questions. However, the leftover 10 percent requires careful





"By law, these druggists are only allowed to sell and manage pharmaceutical stocks and cannot consult"

examination. None of the two pharmacists asked the required questions."

According to Vietnamese pharmaceutical law Reg # 34/2005/QH11, while the owner of a private drugstore needs a university degree in pharmacy, the pharmacist attending the counter who does the actual selling is only required to have a diploma in pharmacy which can be acquired directly after high school and takes two years to finish. By law, these druggists are only allowed to sell and manage pharmaceutical stocks and cannot consult.

"While these symptoms do not appear

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

The Sand Master

Art greater than the sum of its parts

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



SAND ART USUALLY summons up images of intricate sand castles and sculptures created on wide open beaches that exist for only a short time before being washed away by the tide. However, Vietnamese sand art is anything but. This decade old art is created in tiny workshops around the city.

"If I had a thousand dong for every person who has asked me what Vietnamese sand painting is, I would probably be a billionaire by now," says Nhat Quang, one among the four who created the famous

collection of sand portraits as national gifts to the 21 APEC heads of state in 2006. "Only when I actually show them the process of how Vietnamese sand paintings are created, do they actually start to grasp the essence of what it is."

Raised by artists, Quang's parents regularly acquainted him with famous artist friends in the hope he would slowly absorb their experience and techniques. Graduating university with a degree in art, it was in those college years that he first

heard about a new discipline called sand painting and later on encountered it during his work at Kim Sa, the art company that set the standard in the sand painting industry.

"I was hired as an art instructor," he explains. "I didn't have the necessary skill then, but years spent in university and at the knees of my elders had given me the eye of an artist and a foundation that those first sand art 'workers' did not necessarily have. I was paid VND1.8 million per



month. In 2005, that was just about enough for gas, coffee, and two meals per day, but I was fuelled by something more than that. You see, I was suddenly in love.

"At the time, sand art was something that was still very new and most people had never even heard of it. For an artist, dedicating himself to something so new with no history or guarantee of success is a risky move," Quang adds. "Once I acquired the skill however, I found I simply could not let go.

"The process of training for sand painting is harrowing, requiring far more patience, dedication, and commitment than any other forms of painting. To work with something as fickle as sand, one has to dedicate himself to even the smallest detail and be prepared to redo all his work for even the tiniest mistakes. To love sand painting is to never look back. That's what I always tell my students. When my family found out I want to specialize in sand art, they protested and we fought many times, but I've never looked back."

In 2006, following the collapse of Kim Sa, Quang was invited by Y Lan, the creator of Vietnamese sand painting, to work in a team of four and create the collection of sand portraits as gifts to the international leaders at APEC 2006. Upon completion of this project, he joined his current art company, My Art (27B/5 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1), and has been its managing director ever since.

Counting Sand

Quang pours his materials into flat and

thin glass containers, using a wand-shaped 'spoon' to pour layers and layers of multi-colored sand in a meticulous and painstaking process that takes days to complete until a painting takes shape and can be seen through the glass. Depending on the size and complexity, paintings can range from a few hundred thousand dong to the tens of millions. The sand, taken from all corners of Vietnam and bearing a limitless gamut of colors, is poured, woven, threaded, pressed, coaxed until, held in place only by the pressure of countless grains of sand on top of each other, they create a unified vision of beauty. A true painting with defined shapes, strokes and colors, but instead of oil paints or powder, it is with sand that the artist recreates his vision in still life.

"It usually takes us four to five days to completely 'paint' one sand painting," says Quang. "But that's only the creation process. The real work starts weeks or sometimes months before that."

Pointing at the various sand bowls on his desk, he continues: "The sand that we use cannot be bought. We sand artists cannot simply go to art supply shops and ask for a bag of blue sand and a bag of red sand and maybe that other bag of skin color sand too. The sand that is actually sold in the market is used for construction. It is coarse and unrefined and its variations of color too lacking for even the most experienced artist to mold into something worth looking at. There is only one place where we can find

the tools of the trade: out in the nature."

Every other month or so, painters organize sand collecting expeditions.

"We go to coastal towns like Phan Thiet or Nha Trang for most of our needs and take back truckloads of sand. Nha Trang has a lot of fine white grains, but in terms of colors, Phan Thiet is the place to go. There are other places for special types of sand or colors that can't be found anywhere else in Vietnam as well."

When all the sand is finally brought back, the next step is the treatment process. Bags upon bags of sand, already categorized based on their colors and texture, are put through days of sifting, grinding, filtering, drying and bleaching under the sun until they are transformed into appropriate materials for painting.

"Few people actually understand the hard work and dedication that goes behind a single sand painting," says Quang. "Even fewer look into each grain of sand that make up the tiniest part of the painting and wonder where it comes from. The artist, on the other hand, remembers all of that. We know this grain came from the sand dunes of Ninh Chu, exactly one meter under the surface, and that grain came from Tru Beach of Nha Trang, collected right at the first touch of dawn when the sand is still wet with the sea and the salt, before the place is swarmed with swimmers and tourists. We remember all of that. We know where they come from. We see the stories behind the littlest details in our creations." ■

THE MYTH:

Is it true that Ben Thanh Market will be demolished to make space for a new shopping mall?



NO, this is not true because Ben Thanh Market is one of the most recognizable symbols in Ho Chi Minh City and has been so for the last 50 years and will continue to be so for a long time. This rumor, however, has been circulating for quite some time. An official decision to tear down Ben Thanh Market and replace it with a modern shopping mall in 1970 was the closest it ever came. There was even a design contest held to choose the best design for Ben Thanh 3.0 (Ben Thanh Market 1.0 is where the Old Market near Ho Tung Mau stands, and Ben Thanh Market 2.0 is its present location). The winning design was a blueprint created by architect Huynh Kim Mang. This design, however, was never put to application due to the simple reason that it was too expensive for the government coffers. The total cost to construct Huynh Kim Mang's aesthetically bold and ambitious vision in real life was a then whopping VND2 billion.

In 1985, the market underwent renovation overseen by Professor Hoang Nhu Tan. This renovation was strictly a maintenance job however and the base work as well as overall structure of the

market remained unchanged. In 2008, yet another incident gave new life to the rumor that Ben Thanh Market would be replaced by something newer and swankier. This time, it was the blueprint of the future Saigon metro line and a vague request made by a subdivision of the city government to clear out space for the future Ben Thanh - Suoi Tien metro line and Ben Thanh central metro hub that restarted the old rumor. Ben Thanh Market, because of its well-placed location, sits at the central hub of the planned metro system and will see traffic coming in from five out of the six metro lines. Despite the request to 'make space' being incredibly vague, common sense would have that empty space for this incredible amount of traffic must be created and that old structures, in this case, the market, will have to make way. When the 1500 merchants who make their fortune from the market voiced their objection, the city government representative made it clear that this was simply a suggestion made by an investor and there was no concrete plan to ever follow through. ■

"Ben Thanh Market is one of the most recognizable symbols in Ho Chi Minh City and has been so for the last 50 years and will continue to be so for a long time"



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Name: Thong Nguyen VUU

Graduated: Class of 2011,
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Smooth Criminal

The life and death of Vietnam's Al Capone

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

TO THIS DAY, an entire decade after his execution, Nam Cam's legacy as Vietnam's most notorious criminal mastermind endures. His execution in 2004 not only tore down an entire criminal empire, but also led to the total shutdown of an entire police department, and the downfall and political exile of high ranking military generals who few people dare speak of even now. His death created mass media blackout campaigns and in its wake left a power vacuum in Saigon's underworld that eventually turned District 4 into a bloody massacre for all those who wanted to take over the empty throne.

For all his infamy and the high-profile crime cases, most of Nam Cam's life remains a mystery. Few know how he started and even fewer know how he went from being an ordinary man to the king of the underbelly.

Born as Truong Van Cam in 1947 in the slums of District 4, Nam Cam was the youngest and only son to laborers who worked day and night to feed a family of four living in a thatched hut. They were poor and illiterate, like the majority of those who lived in the district back then. Lacking the financial resources to pursue an education, Cam started working at seven to help support the family. He walked circles around Ben Thanh Market, selling small packs of washing powder to middleclass Vietnamese, often earning only 10 dong for a full day's work.

When he turned 14, he got his first job as a bouncer for a gambling joint in "Khu Da Heo, hem 100, khu Cau Muoi," (Pig Skin alley, Salt Bridge area which no longer exists) in District 1, ran by his brother-in-law Bay Sy. A year later, over territory dispute, Bay Sy stabbed a man to death and Nam Cam, in a fit of criminal chivalry and perhaps for the sake of his pregnant older sister, took the blame and the prison sentence for Bay Sy. Because he was only 15, he received a light sentence of three years.

At 18, he was released and for the next few years he worked a blue collar day job, found a girlfriend, got married, had his second kid (the first was an illegitimate child he had in his early teens). He was the

picture of mediocrity with a simple future. However, a thirst for more was starting to grow; he wanted to escape the poverty he was born into. The District 4 of Nam Cam's youth is not the same as the up and coming modern neighborhood of today. Back then, it was a swampland dotted with a hive of thatched huts and poor provincial laborers who were servants to the richer folks over in District 1.

Bridging the Gap

Countless trips over the Ong Lanh Bridge connecting the two districts had shown Nam Cam a much different facet of life. He had seen richness. When he was young he couldn't yet perceive the unbridgeable gap between the rich and the poor. But now that he was older, he began to understand.

In his early 20s, he experimented with running gambling rings, but lacked success, being an unknown. When he hit 30, he met Tam Phan, an ex-gambling don who used to run the entire Saigon casino networks before 1975, and it was from him that Nam Cam learned the business and gained the reputation he needed to climb up the hierarchy. He soon became a businessman, a manager. His stints in prison taught him the brutal consequence of unwise choices and that even among criminals, thinkers do better than brutes.

He started branching out to other businesses such as money laundering, smuggling and trafficking drugs. He did what few other criminals before him dared to. He started dabbling in politics and connected with high profile politicians. In the shadow, and over the years, he became the uncrowned king of Saigon.

While his execution wasn't a surprise, few journalists dared write about it. Despite his admission of guilt, doubts and questions remain. Not all the details of Nam Cam's own court case were aired publicly and while everyone knew who the criminals involved were, names were never officially released.

Even now conspiracies about Nam Cam still abound, as well as suspicion that perhaps even the king of the underworld was only a pawn in a much greater game. ■









INDOCHINE



THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

The French influence on Vietnam is still evident today, albeit small. Baguettes are sold in the street, old men on push bikes speak French and wear berets and colonial style architecture stands throughout the inner city. It's an obvious dwarf of colonial times and the Vietnamese are definitely carving a new future and moving in their own direction but the little things are still there. Attempts to rid the city of evidence left behind from French colonial rule can be seen in the changes of street names, but affirmation of this period is still seen (for now) in some of the more elaborate architecture within the city. Much of the Vietnamese food that we gorge on in delight today has been heavily affected by colonialism in Indochina, however with these influences come new flavors, ingredients and combinations that give an entirely new taste to traditional Vietnamese food, while highlighting their historical tastes as the Vietnamese people have put their own stamp onto the food and influences of the French.

THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Tricolor threads in the fabric of modern-day Vietnam

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM

IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



THIS YEAR MARKS the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu which led to Vietnam's independence after nearly seven decades of French rule. While the French controlled Vietnam for less than one tenth the time the Chinese did, the vestiges of colonization can be seen almost everywhere, from the ubiquitous baguettes and pale yellow Franco-Annamite villas to the subtle loanwords with Francophone roots. To be sure, the colonial era is filled with stories of terrible abuse and racism, a system designed to benefit the few on the backs of the many. This month, *Oi* aims to divest culture from cruelty, history from horror, in highlighting the legacy left from this period of Vietnam's history.

"I think that the Vietnamese are fortunate in that they are culturally broad-

minded. During the wars, they made a differentiation between the policies of foreign governments and administrations and the culture. The culture is not at fault. When we fought the First Indochina War, we never made the mistake of lumping together French culture and the wrong policies of French colonial administration, so we never boycotted baguettes and red wine and filtered coffee... We don't have a track record of wanting to get rid of vestiges of colonial times that are part of our history. And personally, I say well, other things may not be so rosy, but French colonial architecture and French cuisine, [people like] Alexander Yersin, are among the positive heritage left to us by the French colonial times," notes former ambassador and current Vice-President of

the Vietnam Peace Committee, Ton Nu Thi Ninh.

PARDON MY FRENCH

Growing up with parents who were part of the Indochine generation (my father studied in Nantes and my mother taught French at the all girls' Gia Long school in Saigon), we washed our hands with *xa-phong* (soap, from *savon*) in the *lavabo* (wall sink). My sister played with her *bup-be* (doll, from *poupee*) while I ate *bich-quy* (cookies, from *biscuit*) while adjusting the *ang-ten* (antennae, from *antenne*) on our tiny TV.

Ever since Jesuit father Alexandre de Rhodes visited Vietnam in the 1620s and laid the groundwork for a Latin-based writing system which replaced the variant character-based Chinese one in use since

the 13th century, the language has been inextricably tied to French. No matter which side of the linguistic debate you may fall on — the one side partly attributing Vietnam's high literacy rate to the fact that it's one of the few Asian countries to use what some deem an easier-to-learn script, or on the side of academics like the late Gail Kelly, Professor of Comparative Education (State University of New York at Buffalo), who pointed out that the reformed Vietnamese script actually separated following generations of Vietnamese students from their own national literature because they could no longer read it — it's undeniable that the French have left an imprint on the Vietnamese language, with upwards of 400 words that have found their way into modern Vietnamese.

There are the obvious ones, simply a transliteration from the French like *ban-cong* (balcony, from *balcon*) or *pho-mat* (cheese, from *fromage*), but then there are shortened words borrowing a single syllable. A Vietnamese person might take some money out of his *bop* (wallet, the first syllable from *portefeuille*) to leave a *bo* (tip, second syllable from *pourboire*) at a restaurant. Or order their eggs *op-la*, a truncated form of *oeuf au plat* (literally, 'eggs on a dish,' or more

"Banh xeo is probably the farthest removed from the original dish, but I much prefer the Vietnamese 'crepe' compared to the French"

commonly, fried eggs) or yell *ep-phe* (spin, from *effet*) as they're hitting a slice shot in tennis. Even the dish known the world over for being quintessentially Vietnamese, *pho*, may ironically be a take on the French "*pot-au-feu*," the classic, rustic French beef stew. One of the many theories puts the turn-of-the-century origin of the dish in the Hanoian kitchen of the Vietnamese lover of a French officer, as she attempted to make the celebrated meal of slow-cooked meat, vegetables and spices. Unable to get the

flavors quite right, she added local spices like star anise, cinnamon bark, cardamom, cloves and fennel and *voilà*, Vietnamese "*feu*" was born.

HAUTE CUISINE FOR THE PEOPLE

When the French came, they brought with them strange ingredients and new cooking techniques. Baguettes, flans, yogurt and coffee are now ubiquitous, but there are a few Vietnamese dishes which may not be so obviously French-inspired. Chad Kubanoff, a chef trained in classical French cuisine and now Vietnamese street food expert, says, "*banh xeo* is probably the farthest removed from the original dish, but I much prefer the Vietnamese 'crepe' compared to the French. The added texture and freshness brought by the Vietnamese cooking style have turned a relatively monotone dish into a new exciting creation, filled with contrasting flavors and textures. It's also a step towards a more balanced and healthy meal with all of the raw herbs and vegetables, compared to the sugar and carbohydrates loaded into the French version." Vinh Ton That, previously the head chef at Bobby Chinn Hanoi and Shri, agrees that the Vietnamese have put their own take on the French crepe. "Instead of plain flour, milk and butter, the



ingredients have been substituted by corn flour, water and oil. But still, the concept is very similar."

Another of Chad's favorites is *bo kho* (beef stew). "It's a dish that most travelers don't expect to see or taste in Vietnam. It is very 'un-Vietnamese' in its richer flavor and full-bodied broth. Also serving a broth-based dish with a baguette is very rare to see in this country, definitely an ode to its French roots. Another nod to the French is having a piece of pâté or cheese stuffed in bread, as is the concept of eating eggs and bread for breakfast."

Chad also talks about the more subtle influences of the French on Vietnam's culinary landscape. "Many French dishes were replicated in Vietnam's own style, not really with French culinary techniques, but with their own techniques and using ingredients that they already knew. Look at *café sua da* with its condensed milk and also the *banh kem sau rieng*. Other than using a durian flavored cream filling instead of a pastry cream, we're basically looking at a standard cream puff."

Vinh additionally points out that thanks to the French, "a lot of dairy products [have been introduced] that are used especially for cakes or desserts such as butter, milk, cream, vanilla, and so on. I believe we have a great deal of cakes that are inspired by the French as well as a lot of vegetables and fruit products such as potatoes, asparagus and strawberries, just a few of the ingredients that are now used so frequently in local cooking."

LES BEAUX ARTS

The arts is another area where French influence can be seen. According to art expert Sophie Hughes, "Vietnam is quite unique in Asia because its fine art has been heavily influenced by the French. The birth of modern Vietnamese art is considered by most art historians to have taken place at the French run L'Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de L'Indochine, an arts school founded in 1925. In fact, the artists who are now considered the 'four pillars of modern Vietnamese art' — Bui Xuan Phai, Nguyen Tu Nghiem, Nguyen Sang and Duong Bich Lien — were all graduates of the school."

"The French teachers at the school introduced materials such as oil paint, techniques such as linear perspective and styles such as neo-classicism and Impressionism. They also introduced the idea of the individual 'artiste' in society. Previously there were highly skilled artisans and craftsmen who worked in collectives or craft schools and produced works that focused on teaching moral tales or historical legends. The school and the work coming out of it reflected a shift from a traditional society ruled by Confucian principles into a modern one where the role of the individual was valued. Students were encouraged to use modern European ideas as a means of evolution from traditional Vietnamese art. Lacquer was introduced as a subject at the school and as a result shifted from being a craft material to a fine art, making Vietnam the only country in Asia to make fine art works



from lacquer."

HANGING ON TO THE PAST

Colonial era architecture is perhaps the most obvious reminder of the Indochine period, seen through the faded yellow buildings with white trim and blue shutters scattered throughout the country. Magnificent, ornate edifices like the Notre Dame Cathedral (inaugurated in 1880) or the Saigon Opera House (modeled after Paris' Petit Palais) immediately spring to mind, but architecture lovers equally appreciate the more subtle structures like the Museum of Fine Arts building or the Dragon House (Saigon's Ho Chi Minh Museum) which fuse European elements like pillars and archways with Eastern ones, most notably the dragons on the roof.

Tim Doling, writer and local historian, says: "The French made an important contribution to Vietnam's urban fabric, from urban planning to architecture, including early structures influenced heavily by ethnic Vietnamese architecture, grand neo-colonial edifices intended to reflect the glories of empire and later 'Indochinois'-style buildings which fused both Eastern and Western architectural styles. The French influence may still be seen today in a number of modern structures such as Union Square in HCMC's District 1 which has been sympathetically designed to harmonize with its immediate surroundings."

Sadly, many colonial-era heritage buildings are disappearing, the victims of neglect, economy or extreme modification.



obviously aesthetically pleasing but they also represent a brutal time where the French badly mistreated the country they were colonizing. In that sense, I don't blame the Vietnamese people for not feeling sentimental about it. The sentiment comes from foreigners really. We're the ones who want the buildings to stay."

Urban artist Bridget March says that "it is the nature of people to want to hang on to the past — it gives us a sense of security. We like familiar things. We like to surround ourselves with memories of the good and the bad as reminders, as wayfinders. For instance if we don't hang on to some remnants of French colonialism, it may be more difficult to tell the stories about, and value, the struggle for independence. In our own lifetimes we collect the memories and the souvenirs of all those who have influenced our lives — our grandparents, parents, siblings and the things that have changed our lives such as education, foreign adventures, traumas, love and loss. I think our cities should be the same."

Tim concludes: "There needs to be a balance between the needs of modernization and redevelopment and protection of the city's remaining architectural heritage. It's not about celebrating the colonial era which, of course, was a traumatic period for the Vietnamese people, but rather about helping people to understand their past better. Preserving and re-using old buildings where it is possible to do so is also environmentally sound. But above all, these old buildings bring charm and character to the city and emphasize its uniqueness. Many of them are historically significant and this can be a magnet for tourists which helps to regenerate neighborhoods and provide more jobs for local people." ■

"I think one of the biggest ironies is if you go to any travel agency all over the world, they will sell Saigon on its colonial charm. And yet, its colonial charm is being knocked down every day," remarks Sophie.

In his upcoming book, *Exploring Ho Chi Minh City*, a book of history walking tours, Tim notes: "Since I started writing the book in 2011 I've had to amend the text on numerous occasions to reflect the demolition of what I would regard as heritage buildings. The art deco apartment block at 213 Dong Khoi, another unlisted structure which even appears in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, is being demolished as we speak. Then there's the related issue of unfettered modification of historic buildings, such as the original 1868 Chambre de Commerce building at 11

Me Linh Square which has been re-fronted several times so that it now bears little resemblance to the original."

But when it comes to preservation, the question is: Whose responsibility is it to hang on to the past?

"These problems were highlighted at a seminar by the Ho Chi Minh City Architects Association and they stem from the fact that as yet the city's development strategy doesn't include a master plan or legal framework to conserve historical structures and sites. It's really important that someone takes an inventory of what's still there and protects the surviving buildings before it's too late. And of course only the government has the power to do this," says Tim.

Sophie adds: "Those buildings are

History Education

For those interested in a deeper understanding of how Vietnam's past is reflected in its present:

- **Chad Kubanoff** (backofthebiketours.com) leads street food tours created and managed by professional chefs.

- Experience major shifts in 20th and 21st century Vietnam through the eyes of artists with **Sophie Hughes** (sophiearttour.com)

- **Tim Doling** leads specialist history tours of HCMC. Contact him at 0128 579 4800 or email: tim.doling@bcm.fpt.vn

- **Bridget March** (bridgetmarch.com) can be found painting cityscapes along with budding artists in HCMC and Hoi An and soon Sapa (starting early June)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: City Post Office, St. Joseph's Seminary, Nghia Nhuan Assembly Hall, Hanh Thong Tay Church



SAVING THE SOUL OF SAIGON



The ongoing battle to preserve the city's heritage buildings

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM

IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

ONCE REFERRED TO as the "Paris of the Orient," Saigon offers glimpses of the past through its shady, tree-lined avenues and its charming heritage buildings, be they Chinese or French-inspired. A tangible part of what makes the country distinctive, these buildings are part of a cultural heritage just as unique as its sidewalk coffee culture, the art of water puppetry or the haunting melodies of Northern *ca tru* folk music.

Unfortunately, that history is fast disappearing with every heritage building torn down to make way for commercial spaces, every villa abandoned for lack of resources or interest, every renovation that eats away at the soul of these grand edifices. Saigonese have a saying: Live in District 3, eat in Cho Lon, play in Saigon (District 1). However, these very areas are in danger of losing what makes them so unique.

A study conducted between 1993 and 2013 by PADDI, the Ho Chi Minh City Urban Development Management Support Centre, found that of 377 heritage buildings catalogued in Districts 1 and 3, more than 56 percent had been demolished, degraded or significantly altered.

Oi gathered a panel of experts to discuss the challenges, successes and failures of preserving the country's heritage buildings.

THE PANEL:

● **Dr. To Kien**, Senior Research Scientist, Singapore University of Technology and Design

● **Pascal Bourdeaux**, French historian and representative of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Ho Chi Minh City

● **Ton Nu Thi Ninh**, academic, diplomat, parliamentarian turned socio-cultural & educational advocate

● **Chu Pham Dang Quang**, Urban Conservation Researcher

What are some of the challenges in preserving heritage buildings?

TN: The first challenge is to identify and build consensus around what needs to be

conserved. Identifying these targets among experts and specialists is fine, but if the public shrugs their shoulders, it will be very hard. Secondly, how much of a building needs to be conserved? It is not necessarily 100 percent. Then there's the whole issue of resources. The more complicated the conservation work is, the more expertise and research you need and that costs money.

PB: The main challenges are to promote discussions with the residents to know how they live and how they want to adapt their city to modern evolutions. What historians and researchers in social sciences can contribute is to collect materials, pictures, maps, narratives of daily life and so on that can help in the study of urban space which is crucial to defining the future orientation of the city.

TK: The redevelopment threat is intense and increasingly challenging. For example, according to a recent inventory, there are 1,586 French villas in the French Colonial Quarter of Hanoi, and most of them are in a state of deterioration due to no maintenance and the fast rising number of inhabitants. Up to about 10 households share the same villa. Additionally, many valuable old buildings have been badly modified in forms of "redevelopment" or "adaptive reuse" in a negative way for commercial purposes.

Conservation is sometimes seen as a luxury, often promoted by non-residents who like seeing these old buildings. Whose responsibility is it to preserve heritage buildings — Vietnamese or foreigners? The government or the people?

PB: This is definitely a shared responsibility: local authorities to attract people, local people to show why they are attached to these specific sites, tourists that must respect the sites and their inhabitants.

TN: It's true that in times of hardships and deprivation, conservation might appear as a luxury. But once you pass that threshold, time is of the essence. If you wait too long, the things you want to conserve won't be there anymore. The responsibility belongs

to the Vietnamese themselves first and foremost. Expats can only help. If it's the expats who care — talk about it, write about it — but the Vietnamese don't, then it won't go anywhere.

The situation of the ancient town of Duong Lam (50 km from Hanoi), designated as a national relic for its centuries-old mud and wood houses, illustrates the challenges of community involvement. A number of residents, unhappy with severe restrictions on construction, recently signed a petition asking the government to revoke their heritage status just months after receiving UNESCO's Award of Merit for Cultural Heritage Conservation. What successes, though, have you seen in the region?

TN: Duong Lam village illustrates the cost of conserving heritage. The people had to live in small houses; when their children got married and they wanted to rebuild or renovate, the procedures were too complicated. Being designated a heritage site didn't bring any benefits to the actual people, materially or in spirit. Ticket revenues weren't filtered down to the people.

On the other hand, Hoi An is a great example of having inclusive participation. City officials had the policy of involving the locals, and the result is now practically the entire town is behind the tourism initiatives. Con Dao, with its French colonial prison and limited tourism, is also a very special product where you have history and natural beauty. It's an example of combining natural heritage conservation with historical conservation.

CQ: Some of Saigon's heritage villas belong to organizations with the resources to maintain them like embassies, foreign representative offices, wealthy citizens, etc. But some privately owned villas like Ly Club Saigon have been successful at retaining their character while giving them new life, mixing the classical with the modern but respecting the original architecture.

What are other countries doing regarding conservation that Vietnam may be able to learn from?



Ly Club

CQ: France has tightly controlled conservation policies which provide tax breaks [the Malraux Law allows expenses of repair, maintenance and improvement of recognized buildings to be deducted from income for tax purposes] supported by state and local government. France also has a national architecture organization which catalogues, evaluates and monitors restoration works.

TK: In Singapore, tourism was re-introduced during the 1985 recession to revive the economy. With this new conception of conservation empowered by economic pursuit, restoring and re-adapting the old, underused, dilapidated buildings became lucrative investments due to increased land value and proximity to the city center.

Some have the conception that *bao ton* (preservation) is synonymous with *bao tang* (museum), equating conservation with putting something in a box and not doing anything with it. What can be done to educate people and investors on the value of these heritage sites?

TN: Taste is a matter of individual choice. Some may be completely uninterested in the architecture of old buildings. To those, you need to put it as, "This is your past." You can build the present and future several times over but you cannot build the past over. If you destroy the past, then there are only memories in the heads of certain people who then will die.

There are many places where you can make piles of money. It's too easy to say, "I'll do it on Dong Khoi or Nguyen Hue streets." But it's all filled now. Stop it! Set your eyes and your sights elsewhere. Don't tell me the only place where you can make money is that little triangle of land in downtown Saigon. It's ridiculous.

In the end, if we want to conserve, then we have to be better — better at economics, better at tourism, better at innovation. I'm not against people making money, but please come up with smarter solutions.



Historian Tim Doling points out that heritage buildings have their own intrinsic value. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, they each have a story to tell. Preserving them can also make sound economic sense. "By making it a living instead of dead heritage, we can turn it into a valuable tool, first of all for revitalizing neighborhoods. Heritage-led regeneration is a major growth industry. It can increase property values and encourage the growth of heritage tourism. It has been shown repeatedly in other countries that 'heritage tourists' stay longer and spend more money than other types of tourists, so by making serious efforts to develop heritage tourism, this city could potentially benefit financially. In addition, people enjoy living and working in them as well as visiting them. They also foster a sense of community; they create a sense of place."

However, in order for real inroads to be made, the right people need to get involved. At a recent seminar on urban conservation, Nguyen Trong Hoa, President of the Ho Chi Minh City Institute for Development Studies said that "there's always been a disconnect between the experts and the ones who are actually tasked with implementation. Perhaps we just need to talk louder. We should be making these arguments directly in the office of the city's officials."

As far as we the people are concerned, will we be the generation that will save these beautiful reminders of the past? Or the one that will allow them to disappear? ■



Still Standing

Visit **Tim Doling's** top five favorite heritage buildings in Saigon:

- Built in 1863, **St Joseph's Seminary** (6 Ton Duc Thang, D1) features somber architecture in an otherwise noisy city.
- Look for the traditional Khmer motifs in the **City Post Office** (2 Cong Xa Paris, D1), installed three decades before French urban planner Hébrard made the "Indochinois" fusion architecture popular.
- The **Fine Arts Museum** building (97A Pho Duc Chinh, D1) fuses oriental and Western art deco elements.
- **Hanh Thong Tay Church** (53/7 Quang Trung, Go Vap District) is an extraordinary Byzantine-style church, the only one in Vietnam.
- **Nghia Nhuan Assembly Hall** (27 Phan Van Khoe, D5) was showered with amazing artworks by wealthy businessmen and leaders and remains one of the most underrated temples in the city.

For more on these and other heritage sites, see www.bistoricvietnam.com



COLONIAL CLONE

Carving out a little corner of France in the tropics

TEXT & IMAGES BY JAMES PHAM



Dalat Train Station

INDOCHINA IN THE latter half of the 19th century was not a good place to be a colonist. In fact, it was downright deadly.

"One cannot acclimatize to the colonies: each day brings a further diminution of strength... Cochinchina is a terrible man-eater," proclaimed General Theophile Pennequin. Colonists bound for Indochine (a French portmanteau of India and China, pointing to the region between those two countries) received what amounted to a death sentence, recalling that Parisian doctors "took leave [of us] as if they might never see us again."

An observation published in an 1892 report summed up the dire situation: "The soil is excellent, the water abundant year round... One could become rich in a year, were it not for the fact that one dies in six months."

Many succumbed to climate-related illnesses including malaria and death-dealing bouts of nostalgia. With the mortality rate for colonial troops due to disease twice as high as in France's North African colonies, it was suggested that four and a half years was the longest any European could hope to survive in the region. Others deemed this estimate too long, predicting an inevitable death in no more than two.

UP OR OUT?

The only hope for severely ill colonists was to escape from the very thing making them ill — Indochina itself — a complete change of environment, whether horizontal or vertical.

Horizontal repatriation involved long and expensive transport, itself a deadly option: a slow steamer to Saigon's hospital; a 12 day,

4338 km journey to the French convalescence center in Yokohama, Japan; or an arduous 10,000 km ocean crossing back to France in less than hygienic conditions where it was not uncommon for 50-60 patients per sailing to perish en route.

Vertical relocation, seeking cooler climes and living conditions similar to home but nearby, was clearly the better option — cheaper, faster, easier — with hopes of arriving alive. Built on the prevalent presumption of the day, that "like meat, Europeans keep better in the hills," colonial hill stations were already *de rigueur*, like Darjeeling in British India, Bogor in Dutch Indonesia and Baguio in Spanish-colonized Philippines.

All told, the French would ultimately set up a network of hill stations, including Bokor



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: French villa, Dalat greenhouse, Dalat Train Cafe, Ana Mandara Villas

"With the increase in families settling down in Dalat, came a culture of leisure and socializing previously unknown, away from the suffocating heat of the lowlands"

in Cambodia, Sapa in Tonkin and Tranninh (where the Plain of Jars is located) in Laos, but the jewel would forever be Dalat.

In the search for this Utopian home away from home, Swiss-born doctor Alexandre Yersin, noted for discovering the bacillus causing bubonic plague, nominated the Lang Bian plateau in the Annam highlands as a site for a future sanatorium, "a vast, barren plateau featuring rounded hills".

Over the next 20 years, other explorers likewise scoured the country for the perfect spa location with places like Ba Ria (near Vung Tau), Bavi (near Hanoi) and Ba Na (near Danang) nominated and subsequently dismissed. In the end, the Lang Bian region won the hill station race, favored for its salubrious climate and altitude and large undeveloped land area allowing for future expansion.

The problem now was converting this inaccessible, high altitude plateau into a corner of France, a disease-free space for European domestic life. The isolated location meant huge convoys of porters were needed to bring supplies to the area. A paved road between Phan Rang and Dalat was built in 1899 but labor shortages were common

due to colonial abuse and horrible working conditions. As if that wasn't enough, emerging medical data showed that the malaria-carrying *anopheles* mosquito did not go into shock at 1500 meters (the altitude of Dalat) as had been believed.

THE PRICE OF EARTHLY PARADISE

Still, work forged ahead on what was to be Indochina's European escape, exacting horrific human tolls. By 1908, a colonial source estimated that approximately 20,000 workers, both ethnic Vietnamese and highland minority (and prison convicts), had lost their lives, mostly to disease, in building routes connecting Lang Bian to the outside world. In *French Colonialism on Trial*, Ho Chi Minh noted: "Requisitions [of labor] are nothing more than ill-disguised deportations... where death awaited. Underfed, going in fact days without food, the requisitioned or those serving the *corvées* either revolted or fled, provoking a terrible repression on the part of the guards, and dotting the road with their corpses."

Yet, for Dalat to ever succeed, rail and roads were imperative. As early as 1898, Yersin predicted that "Europeans will find

a climate reminding them of France, mere hours by train from Saigon". It was decided that Dalat would employ cog technology to overcome the steep gradients, emulating the Darjeeling line in India. His vision, though, would have to wait for more than three decades. Work started and sputtered, with frequent stoppages due to high construction costs and a reluctant and diseased workforce who could not be enticed even by quadrupled salaries.

Only with World War I did Dalat get its mojo back. The U-boat menace and the Great War in general meant colonists were now staying in Vietnam much longer and therefore needed a cool retreat. Over the next few decades, Dalat turned into a thriving resort, offering visitors a cure from homesickness, malaria and anemia, a respite from Indochina itself.

With the increase in families settling down in Dalat, came a culture of leisure and socializing previously unknown, away from the suffocating heat of the lowlands. Rowing parties, tennis tournaments, horse races and hunting (gaurs, tigers, panthers, bears and elephants) marked the heady heights of the 1930s.

Part of Dalat's appeal was in its ability to grow fruits and vegetables reminiscent of home, a welcome change from imported canned goods. So prized was European produce that fresh artichokes were considered the ultimate in hostess gifts as were melons, pears and grapes. In Dalat's temperate climes was seen the potential of turning the area into Indochina's French pantry, with experimental gardens soon yielding red lettuce, Brussels sprouts, radishes and strawberries, not to mention European varieties of flowers along with coffee and tea.

Because the city was basically created from a vast expanse of nothing, it was an urban planner's dream. All public and administrative services could be housed in a single quarter. Houses were electrified and had indoor plumbing. Residential areas were set away from noisy and unclean areas. Early plans stipulated "all houses for Europeans in Dalat must be surrounded by a garden, and enjoy sufficient aeration and views". Among the city's many planners was Louis-Georges Pineau, a proponent of preservation. His 1932 plan called for "protecting Dalat's natural beauty, enlarging its artificial lake, developing gardens, establishing zones adapted to the site and the climate" and open spaces of all sorts. Providentially, many of the city's villas were built during the time his plan was in effect.

Dalat enjoyed another surge in popularity when world war once again stranded many Europeans in the colonies. It reached its zenith in the first half of the 1940s, aided by a new road putting Saigon just six hours away by car or by daily return train trips. By 1944, the city registered 750 private villas, numerous government offices and the summer estates of Bao Dai, the last emperor of Vietnam, enjoying 20,000 permanent residents and the same number of annual visitors. After decades of backbreaking work, death and disease, a little piece of France had finally emerged in the hills of Dalat. ■

Indochic

FINDING YOUR OWN CORNER OF FRANCE IN MODERN DAY DALAT

BON APPETIT

Located just up the hill from the city's art deco train station modeled after the Deauville-Trouville station in Normandy, the Dalat Train Villa and Cafe (dalattrainvilla.com) is situated in a cluster of colonial-era stone villas. Now managed by train enthusiast Curtis King, the adjoining cafe is a whimsically restored 1910 train carriage, serving up rather good Vietnamese and international fare (mains from VND79,000). Train lovers will want to pair a visit to the cafe with a nostalgic trip to the train's only stop of Trai Mat, a little town 8 km away whose main attraction is the mosaic'ed Linh Phuoc Pagoda (VND43,000 one way, leaving on a regular schedule when there are at least 20 passengers). If Curtis is around, ask him about his experiences driving steam trains, doing the hobo ride in China and exploring all 11 of the stations from the original 84 km Dalat - Thap Cham route.

Built in 1922, the **Lang-Bian Palace** (now the Dalat Palace Hotel) emerged as the place for European luxe in the burgeoning city, complete with a first-class French restaurant, riding facilities and a dancing hall, all while overlooking what is now Xuan Huong Lake. For the wealthy but not quite wealthy enough to afford a trip back to the metropole, the Dalat Palace Hotel offered a replica of home. The hotel's signature restaurant, Le Rabelais, has a feel of a posh Parisian salon, and serves up the produce of Dalat with a French twist, like the Dalat artichoke flower salad with aioli sauce. Or for a wonderfully refined experience, come for afternoon tea, which includes French favorites like macaroons, éclairs, bon bons and madeleines in addition to savory sandwiches. (3 - 5pm daily, VND330,000 per person)

Because Dalat's Vietnamese laborers and residents came from all over the country, locals today are hard-pressed to name one dish that is a specialty of the region. Instead, home cooked meals make use of the fresh produce, like artichoke soup with short ribs. Try this simple but hearty soup at Le Café de la Poste, just next to the Dalat Palace Hotel (VND190,000).

BON VOYAGE

Get a better view of the Lang Bian Plateau by heading outside the city where you'll see Dalat's agricultural machine in full force with rows upon rows of greenhouses filled with flowers, fruits and vegetables. **Wild Vietnam** (wildvietnam.com; USD25) takes visitors to Dalat's countryside, past Koho minority villages, strawberry fields and artichoke flowers growing in the sun, and where much of the natural beauty which drew colonists to the region is still intact. Stops on the full day motorbike tour include a fascinating look at how silk is made, an

opportunity to try weasel coffee (with a visit to where the civets are kept) and a trip to the scenic Elephant Falls.

The hills of Dalat along with its cool temperatures are ideal for hiking. "French people... who took an automobile or were carried for even the shortest distance on the way here, are able to hike in Dalat, for the fun of it, between 10 and 15 kilometers a day on the many beautiful paths and forest walks," noted one colonial inspector. The gorgeous three-needle pine forests surrounding Tuyen Lam Lake make for a moderate day trip. Phat Tire Ventures (phattireventures.com; USD37) takes hikers by boat past beautiful lake views featuring new and old villas with tiered flower and vegetable gardens before entering the fragrant forests for a climb to the top of the locally named "Noc Chua" summit where a light lunch awaits.

BONNE NUIT

A concentration of colonial-era villas can be viewed along panoramic Tran Hung Dao street, otherwise known as Dalat's French Quarter. A few of the buildings are derelict, while most have been converted to residences, boutique hotels or coffee shops. However, why just look when you can actually stay? Ana Mandara Villas Dalat Resort & Spa (anamandara-resort.com; villa room doubles start at USD119) is a breathtaking collection of 17 unique colonial-era villas, each originally constructed between the 1920s and '30s and fully restored to the tune of VND120 billion. Care was taken to keep as much of the original character as possible, from the small stones for the pathways to using painted tiles reminiscent of the era. Rooms in the villa share beautifully decorated common spaces including spacious sitting rooms, outdoor terraces and open fireplaces for those cold Dalat nights. The discreetly landscaped seven hectare grounds are perfect for long, healthy walks.

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat Resort & Spa can also have you traveling like the bourgeoisie during Dalat's golden era in its own 1936 Citroen convertible. Set itineraries for a city tour, rural expedition and a scenic tour visiting Tuyen Lam Lake and Lang Bian Mountain start at USD40 per person.

BONS LIVRES

Two books are required reading for those who want to understand how Dalat came to be. The beautifully illustrated *Da Lat — And the Map Created the City* by Olivier Tessier and Pascal Bourdeaux of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (paperback, 225 pages, Nha Xuat Ban Tri Thuc) combines research taken from archives kept in Vietnam, France, Switzerland and Japan, marking the 120th anniversary of the foundation of Dalat. *Imperial Heights: Dalat and the Making and Undoing of French Indochina* by Eric Jennings (hardcopy, 376 pages, University of California Press) is an exhaustive tome of research tracing the city of Dalat from conception to 1975, and was the main source of historical information for this article.

CHAMPIONING CHAMPASAK

An ancient city in Laos rises to the heritage challenge

TEXT BY JEAN-CHARLES CASTEL



IMAGE PROVIDED BY SAGV

IMAGINE FOR A moment traveling back 1,000 years to explore complex palaces and temples nestled in the mountains where nature and humanity lived in harmony. Where a vast landscape of the legendary Khmer Empire was created on the Mekong River using the mountaintop and river bank as an axis to lay out geometric patterns of shrines and waterworks extending over some 10 kilometers. Champasak, in southwestern Laos, has been preserved as today's gateway to this ancient past. Although often compared to Angkor Wat in Cambodia, it is much less well known. Champasak's secrets and its stunning concentration of sanctuaries – the largest in Southeast Asia – are known only to archaeologists.

This area is of major scientific interest since it dates to the Pre-Angkorian period, which lasted from the 5th to the 8th centuries, and is largely unexplored. You can find the largest treasure trove of information about it in Champasak. The region offers us a unique window into that world, helping us understand the currents and pressures that led to the first urban revolution in Southeast Asia. It was here, more than 1,500 years ago, that people went

from autonomous individual village life to building the first of their cities, complete with a royal administration. The ancient city of Champasak was most probably the original capital of the Chenla State, the first Khmer Kingdom. Beyond this, aerial photography has shown a very dense ancient occupation of the entire plain in a radius of 40 km around the site. Champasak is the ancestor of Angkor, an ancient road linking Champasak to Angkor bearing witness to the strong ties between the two sites.

The monumental religious complex of Vat Phou in the very heart of the site was founded in the 5th century but what visitors can see today dates back to the 11th century. Most of the previous remains are no higher than foundations while others are buried underground which makes protecting and restoring them difficult.

Situated on the right bank of the Mekong River, the site had long been cut off from the rest of the world. Until 2011 there were no access roads from Pakse. This isolation helped maintain its natural environment and preserve traditional wooden architecture, as well as many remarkable brick buildings from the French era. The site also contains

an important historic record of the Hindu religion above and beyond its role as a Buddhist pilgrimage site. Its annual religious festival in February or March attracts tens of thousands of pilgrims. UNESCO named it a Heritage Site in 2001 thanks to its historical, religious and natural qualities.

USD8 A MONTH PER AGENT

Recognizing the exceptional nature of the site was the easy part. However, because the site is made up of a group of villages in a poor and isolated rural area, the difficulties were yet to come. When the Lao authorities wanted to create a World Heritage Site Office, the only workers they could find were local residents. The lack of financial and human resources was telling in the face of the challenge of managing a region of its size and importance. Archaeological remains, for example, cover over 1,000 km², whereas the World Heritage Site Office human resource manager had a monthly budget of only USD8 per agent to ensure protection patrols.

The question of institutional piloting is no easier. The UNESCO site counts more than 60 villages in four districts. It is very difficult to implement building permit controls on such a large scale, especially since the village chiefs are not trained to deal with heritage problems.

Champasak today has become a living lesson in heritage management in a poor rural context. Local staff have learned to use extremely simple tools. The rule book, for example, is only four pages long. The computerized inventories and city planning documents are all open source, so maintenance is free.

Archaeology, architecture, landscape: local staff are present on all fronts and go into villages to teach the residents about the wealth of their heritage and offer solutions to avoid unnecessary demolition. However, their greatest enemy is time. The economy is growing at such a pace that little time is left for those who wish to preserve this precious and fragile heritage. ■

BIO: *Jean-Charles Castel* is the Head of the French Priority Solidarity Fund for Southern Lao Heritage, World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou - Champasak

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG





Eat Like a Breton

From galettes to cider, sample the cuisine of Brittany right here in Saigon

TEXT BY **MICHAEL ARNOLD** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

THE HUMBLE PANCAKE, one of the oldest dishes in the world, isn't usually the first that comes to mind when speaking of *haute cuisine*. Simple, inelegant, and fairly easy to make, it's the one generally unremarkable meal that's found in almost every culinary culture. There are, however, certain places on Earth where pancakes serve as a modest base for extraordinary poetics of cooking – Vietnam, to an extent, being one of them. Yet even the delicious *banh xeo*, for all its crispiness and fresh herbal garnishes, cannot hold a candle to the sheer diversity of the Breton *galette*, the buckwheat version of the French *crêpe* that is the staple of provincial Brittany. *Galettes* serve as a clean slate for a whole realm of possible recipes – but with the rich, pungent tastes of Breton cuisine generally little-known outside of the region, they're most often seen as curiosities buried in the lost folds of French

bistro menus.

Whether it's out of a sense of chest-beating nationalism or just plain homesickness, **La Crêperie's** (17 Le Thanh Ton, D1) mission to popularize the fine fare of the Breton motherland in Asia has been largely welcomed, and the Ho Chi Minh City restaurant has proved successful enough for the franchise to expand into two locations in Cambodia this year. Part of the winning formula is the eatery's almost fussy dedication to quality – while importing cereals here may seem counterintuitive, La Crêperie's buckwheat is brought in direct from home so as to achieve the most authentic taste – as is the cider, for which the region is otherwise famous. Likewise, while the French-sailor-themed décor may strike experienced diners as seeming a tad kitsch (even the wine racks have prows), this too is a quintessential reflection of the

character of Brittany, inescapably framed by its wild coastline – there are more lighthouses standing on Breton crags than there are in the rest of France put together, and it's seafood more than anything else that dominates the region's cuisine. The lighthouse is the emblem of the restaurant; images of lighthouses struck by crashing waves hang throughout the venue, and with the lower walls lined in brick like rustic French homesteads, you're within the right frame of reference for sitting down to a meal deserving of the region.

Questions of authenticity aside, La Crêperie's menu does make some concessions to the local Vietnamese culinary sphere. The Brittany rolls (VND95,000) are an obvious tribute to Vietnam's spring rolls, made out of rolled *galettes* and sliced into bite-sized portions. The similarity ends there, however, with the range of fillings (beef &



“That there is the essence and purpose of this restaurant – no matter how familiar you may be with this particular mode of cooking, La Crêperie is home-style food”

spinach, caramel pork, and spicy chicken) served warm and chewy with a chunky consistency that takes on a rich barbecue tone from the near-crispy shell pan-fried in butter – eat them quickly, as they’re at their best when they’re warm, and don’t forget to use the dipping sauces.

The range of *galettes* serving as mains offers a microcosm of the breadth of Breton cooking, and the inherent intensity of tastes for which the cuisine is properly known are exploited in full. For a more Western palate, the *La Bigoudène* (VND185,000) with its crispy edges folded into a neat square over its ham, emmental cheese, egg, and salad filling, is a classic dish served drizzled with a bracing French dressing – it’s somewhat reminiscent of a *banh xeo*, but closer in taste to the somewhat more pedestrian *croque madame*. For a more exotic variety, the *La Piano* (VND245,000) is more odiferous with its rich, gamey smoked salmon, spinach,

egg, cream, and mustard – a combination that should be particularly pleasing for local diners but which should equally delight non-Asian patrons with finely-honed tastes.

Dessert is pancakes again, although these are the true flour-based *crêpes* more familiar to fans of French cuisine, although again leaning towards the richly resonant flavors associated with Brittany. *Crêpes* taken with ice cream and chocolate sauce are pleasant enough, although diners would be well-rewarded with a *Le Baromètre crêpe* (VND95,000) served with apple, salted butter, and caramel. A complex dish characterized by an understated, slightly burnt butterscotch flavor brought on by the caramel and with a hint of cinnamon, the apples are not too sweet and cooked at their best, set off by the subtle salty taste of the base.

Take a meal at La Crêperie like a true Breton with cider in a bowl (VND95,000)

– the restaurant serves imported *Val de Rance* fresh from a northeastern brewery near Mont Saint Michel – or try a simple homemade lemonade (VND45,000) with its strong, definite flavors to match those of the dishes – served with local honey and tasting just like grandma made it, no matter where she’s from. That there is the essence and purpose of this restaurant – no matter how familiar you may be with this particular mode of cooking, La Crêperie is home-style food. As the venue’s current manager Mickael Guego puts it, “This is all just typical Brittany, this is my home right here, in Vietnam. Every week, every Friday evening, my mother cooks this for me.” In representing honest-to-goodness Breton culture here in Saigon, La Crêperie offers a window to the region that’s just hard to find in other venues serving more generic French cuisine. ■



IMAGES PROVIDED BY SHANG PALACE

Chinese Delights

Classic Cantonese food

TEXT BY JULIAN AJELLO

WHEN ENTERING **Shang Palace** (17 Ly Tu Truong, D1), the first impression is one of elegance. The dining area is formal, but lovely. While the restaurant is widely known for its *dim sum*, we visited to try some of their classic Cantonese dishes. Shang Palace's executive chef, Kim An, hails from Malaysia and learned his craft in Kuala Lumpur under the tutelage of a chef from Hong Kong. He explains that cuisine in China is as varied as the country itself. While Cantonese cooking is well-known around the world, it isn't as spicy as others from China such as Szechuan or Hunan cooking. "Cantonese is much less strong, even a little bland for some people," says Kim An. "But we get very creative with our ingredients and can prepare things in many different ways."

We experienced a set menu prepared by Kim An that started off with steamed

prawn dumplings (VND75,000 for four). Normally reserved for lunch, *dim sum* makes a tasty starter to whet the appetite. A limited selection of *dim sum* appetizers is available on the dinner menu ranging in price from VND60,000 to VND100,000. The seafood dumpling soup (VND75,000 each) came out next and was also delicious and light; both were served in modest portions. Hearty eaters might prefer to opt for an extra order of *dim sum*.

Our favorite dish, and the most interesting we encountered, was the mantis prawns in chili salt and pepper (market price). If you've never seen one before I recommend you see the live ones in the tank. Their appearance is hideous to the point of looking alien. But looks, as they often can be, were deceiving. Once boiled and separated from their shells, the prawns are deep fried in a light batter reminiscent

of tempura. Laid back in the shell they were served with a layer of chili salt and pepper. "They're babies, even at 300g!" Kim An jokes. For the uninitiated, mantis prawns yield very sweet, tender meat. They do distinguish themselves in taste from their famous cousins, the tiger prawns.

For the main course the chef served us seafood noodles (VND250,000). Imported from Hong Kong, the egg noodles are boiled, strained, and then pan-fried leaving them crunchy on the outside yet tender on the inside. The texture was not altogether different from cake. They received a generous coating of brown gravy along with *bok choy*, prawns, mushrooms, squid, and scallops. Definitely the heartiest of those we saw, this selection is plenty to share with another, perhaps for three depending on the size of the meal.

To finish up the meal, Kim An prepared chilled cream of mango with ice cream (VND90,000). The mangoes were from Thailand, and thus much sweeter than the native variety here in Vietnam. The vanilla ice cream was from New Zealand and was coated with poppy seeds, which was an interesting twist. Chopped strawberries finished the dessert off with a pleasant, tart flavor.

Cantonese cooking is a departure from many of the spicy cuisines China has to offer. While there are many wonderful dishes to try, it's helpful to request recommendations from the chef, and even to ask him to prepare his favorites. ■

>>The List

Wine & Dine

bakeries

ABC Bakery & Cafe

The Bakery serves more than 30 different baked products ranging from baguettes to pizza slices, along with a wide selection of drinks such as coffee and fruit juices.

223-225 Pham Ngu Lao, D1

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

Cheesecake Ngon 🍷 Oi's Pick

Cheesecake Ngon is a small boutique-style cheesecake shop. They use only top quality local and imported ingredients that give their cakes their signature smooth, creamy taste. They can provide cheesecakes for all occasions: birthdays, functions, cafe/restaurant supply or even just a single slice. With a range of flavors including passionfruit, raspberry, strawberry, lemon, coconut and of course original and a price starting at VND40,000 per slice.

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

Fly Cupcake

The shop specializes in various flavors of cupcakes.

74E Hai Ba Trung, D1
06 Pham Ngoc Thach, D1
www.flycupcake.vn

Givral

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

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

Gourmand Shop

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

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

Harvest Baking



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

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

Kinh Do Bakery



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

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

La Doree

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

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

L'amour Bakery & Cafe

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

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

Nhu Lan Bakery

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

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

Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

Paris Baguette

Korean chain Paris Baguette offers fresh baked products such as cakes, pastries, bread, as well as assorted coffee and tea drinks. They also serve sandwiches and salads.

Nguyen Thi Minh Khai corner Cao Thang, D1
Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, D1
2 Cao Thang, D3
www.parisvn.com

Pat'a Chou

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

cakes for every occasion.

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

Savouré Bakery

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

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

Ahoy Beer Club

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

79 Nguyen Cong Tru, D1

Allez Boo



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

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

Alpha

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

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

Bernie's Bar & Grill



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

19 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1720

Blanchy's Tash

This cocktail lounge is a perfect place to relax with friends, meet with colleagues or just enjoy a cocktail or two. With plenty of

seating around the central bar as well as tables for couples or larger groups, plus a more intimate VIP area with comfortable sofas, you will find the right space for any occasion.

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

Blue Gecko



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

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3483
simon@hcm.vnn.vn
www.bluegeckosaiagon.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
dorutudose@gmail.com

Boston Sports Bar



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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1
6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar



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

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

Cargo Bar

Cargo Bar is a dedicated music and arts venue designed and committed to delivering diverse entertainment, along with a good drink menu.

7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4
www.facebook.com/cargosaigon

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

Chill Skybar

Offers the most stunning panoramic views of Saigon and a wide range of wines and cocktails personally prepared by Vietnam mixologist Le Thanh Tung. Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1
www.chillsaigon.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, DI
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, DI
9822 4206
brotzeit.co/kumholink

Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 OI's Pick

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

104 Ho Tung Mau, DI
09 8376 3372
fifi291182@yahoo.com
4pm-4am

Chu Bar

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

158 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 3907
7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

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

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

Cold Beer Club

The bar features Beer of the Day Promotion all day, and also offers a 2 for 1 deal on the beer of the day. Prices start at VND30,000. The upstairs room can accommodate big groups.

64 Ton That Thiep, DI
3914 3999

Eon51

Eon51 includes a fine dining restaurant, a champagne lounge, a cigar bar and a heli pad cocktail bar. Spread on three levels, Eon51 is a destination for bespoke private and corporate events in Saigon.

Levels 51-52, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI

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

Game On

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

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

Ginger 60

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

60 Ton That Thiep, DI
093 772 1011

Go2

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

187 De Tham, DI
3836 9575

Hair of the Dog

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

194 Bui Vien, DI

Hard Rock Café

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

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

Heaven Bar Saigon

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

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

Ice Blue

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

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

Kim's Tavern

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

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

Last Call 🍷 OI's Pick

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

59 Dong Du, DI
3823 3122

Le Pub

In a brawny Australian snub to the effete vestiges of French Colonialism that pervade in Saigon, Le Pub is a hearty Oz-styled pub proudly located in a small alleyway between Pham Ngu Lao and Bui Vien st, Opposite the Chua Au lac arch,



American Chinese Food

Full Menu




www.woknroll.vn

We wok hard for you!

SUPER FAST DELIVERY!
0122-690-8881

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

Scan for the full menu



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

Open 11am to 11pm
North & South Indian food

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



where it is a magnet for backpackers and blokey expats. The manager and staff are friendly enough too, I suppose.

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

Lion Brewery and Restaurant

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

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

Long Phi

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

207 Bui Vien, DI
3837 2704

Lush

Lush has a highly distinctive, modern look, with different areas catering to different needs, including a VIP space with plush couches for chatting with hot new friends.

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

M52 Bar

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

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

Miss Saigon 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

8A/ICI Thai Van Lung, DI

Number Five Bar

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

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

O'Brien's 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

Phatty's

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

46-48 Ton That Thiep, DI

Purple Jade

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

First floor- InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duau
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon



RED Bar
 RED offers one of the longest Happy Hours in Saigon, from 9am - 9pm, with live music available from Monday - Saturday. This multi-level bar has a non-smoking floor and a function room along with a top quality pool table and soft-tip dart machines. A menu of Eastern and Western dishes also includes wood-fire pizzas.
70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1
2229 7017

Saigon Saigon Bar

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

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

Saigon Retro 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

Shots Bar

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

207 Bui Vien, DI

Slate

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

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

Spotted Cow

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

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

Storm P

Storm P restaurant and bar is named after the famous Danish cartoonist Robert

Storm Petersen, and it's the only Danish restaurant in Vietnam.

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

Vasco's

Stylish bar, restaurant and cocktail lounge in a converted colonial style house.

European and Asian fare downstairs with extensive wine list and cocktails. DJs perform upstairs at night.

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

Wine Embassy

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

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

Xu Bar

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

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

cafés

ABC Bakery & Cafe

ABC Bakery & Cafe has over 30 different kinds of baked goods such as baguettes, danishes, whole cakes, sliced cakes and even pizza. Together with its range of baked items, it is also has Western and Vietnamese coffee and juices.

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

Achaya Cafe

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

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

Aisha Lounge

Aisha offers a menu studded with various Vietnamese drinks and food – although the belly dance show does evoke the spirit of the interior design.

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

AQ Coffee

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

32 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 8344
7:30am - 11:30pm

Angel-in-us Coffee

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

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

Blue Cafe

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

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

Bobby Brewer's

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

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

Boulevard Cafe

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

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Bukafe - Cafe

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

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

Café Ban Sonate

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

53 Dang Dung, DI
3290 6004

Caffe Fresco

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

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

Café Terrace

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

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

Cafe Vuon Kieng

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

10B Ton Duc Thang, DI
3823 3279

Cake Durian Duiro

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

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

Centrofarms Coffee ☕️ Qi's Pick

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

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe features an architecture that blends classic and modern elements. Featured drinks include Cryptic frappe (the combination of coffee and Orion cake, banana and fresh cream), Cryptic soda (soda, flavored orange peel, lemon and fresh cream) and Cryptic yogurt (with yogurt, mango, strawberry, peach). This place also holds acoustic and art performances.
343/6 To Hien Thanh, D10

DeJa Vu Cafe

☕️📶
 It is easy to mistake this cafe for someone's home as the tranquil atmosphere will have you tension free in no time. The peaceful setting is ideal for dates or low-key social events. Make sure to catch the live bands that frequent the cafe.
314/2 Dien Bien Phu, D10
6276 6966
info@dejavu.vn

Elle Cafe

☕️📶
 Keeping in line with the sense of style that comes along with the Elle fashion label

brand, the menu and décor of Elle Cafe sets it apart from the competition.
Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 45 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
6291 8766

Fe Cafe

Fe Cafe brings you all kinds of scrumptious coffee, along with Vietnamese food and dessert. It offers breakfast, lunch, dinner and offers delivery as well. The interior is a mix of alternative and fancy, with wooden furniture, soft backrest pillows and decorative paintings.
26 Ly Tu Trong, D1
090 878 3788
www.facebook.com/fecafe.vn
7:30am - 11pm

Gemmi Coffee

This cafe serves a variety of food like salads, chicken dish alongside coffees and other beverages. Provides live solo piano music every night from 8pm.
193 D3 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

Hatvala

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

☕️📶
 Separated from the bustle of nearby Ben Thanh Market by a tiny alleyway, ID is a retro café opening a door to an earlier Saigon.
34D Thu Khoa Huan, D1

Imagine Coffee shop

☕️📶
 One of the walls of this rustic cafe is

literally covered with books. An easy place to get lost for an evening with prices below VND100,000.
58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan
090 956 0105
www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop
09 0956 0105
nguyenmaihoa@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

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

LightBox Cafe

☕️📶📶📶
 This stunningly designed cafe also doubles as an event and photography studio, so make sure you dress to impress at this location because you never know who might snap your picture. They also serve vegetarian cuisine with prices ranging between VND300,000 - VND500,000.
179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan
3517 6668
www.lightbox.vn

L'Usine

L'Usine is a retail, café and gallery space occupying two locations in the center of D1. Its retail space is dedicated to Vietnamese designers and more established brands from abroad as well as stocking a wide range of stationary and home ware items. The café in both locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.
151/1 Dong Khoi, D1
708 Le Loi, D1
www.lusinespace.tumblr.com
9am - 9pm

Lo 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

MZ Coffee

A cafe in a colonial villa that was built in the early 20th century. It boasts a broad selection of coffee, from fine Vietnamese condensed milk coffee to Italian Lavazza espresso, cappuccinos and lattes as well as wines and beers.
56-56 A Bui Thi Xuan, D1
39255258
www.m-zing.com

NYDC

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

Onset Cafe

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

Paris Deli

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

Passio Coffee to Go

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

Phuong Cac Cafe

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

Phúc Minh Coffee

Phúc 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 Huoc 4, D7

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

Retrobite Diner Cafe

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

6 Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3521 0673
retobite.vn@gmail.com
7:30am - 11pm

Soho Coffee

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

Starbucks Coffee

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

Stella Restaurant & Cafe

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

The Blue Cafe

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

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of

tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon

Ground floor – InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Tram Coffee ☝️ Oi's Pick

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

The Myth Cafe

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

Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

The Serenata Cafe

The Serenata Cafe is a peaceful, relaxing oasis in a French Colonial house. This cafe embraces nature with plants, fishponds, and small fountains, and offers music in the evenings.
6D Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
3930 7436

Vecchio Cafe

The interior features Italian ornate décor, dim lighting and antique furniture, enhanced by Italian music. Offerings include pasta, soup, chicken dishes, salad, beef dishes, gelato and beverages such as smoothies, fresh fruit juices and tea.
39/3 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

Windows

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

Yogen Früz

Serves frozen yogurt with 20 different kinds of fruits for you to choose from. This place also provides an environment where customers can relax and be social.
B3-15B Basement Vincom Center B, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1
www.yogenfruz.com.vn

Zoom Cafe ☝️ Oi's Pick

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

chinese

Dragon Court

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

Dynasty

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

Hung Ky Mi Gia

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

Kabin

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

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

Ming Court

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

Ocean Palace

A place for those who love Chinese food. The large dining room on the ground floor can accommodate up to 280 diners. Up on the first floor are six private rooms and a big ballroom that can host 350 guests.
2 Le Duan Street, D1
3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

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

distinctive dining experience.

12 Duong 26, D6
3755 1577
www.7kyquan.com

Shang Palace Restaurant

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

Shi-Fu Dim sum

Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant specializing in dim sum, with modern Chinese décor and over 68 dim sum dishes.
139A Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 1111
www.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

Annamite

Annamite specializes in French cuisine within a modern setting.
21 Tu Xuong, D3
6277 8332
www.annamite-restaurant.com

Au Manoir de Khai

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

Augustin

Augustin is a romantic and charming French restaurant located just steps away from the Rex Hotel. Serves lunches and dinners and offers 10 percent discount on a la carte menu items.
10D Nguyen Thiep, D1
www.augustinrestaurant.com

Bon Appetit

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

Bonjour Restaurant

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

Cordon Blue

A unique French venue decorated with blue

and green shades serving high-quality French cuisine on the outskirts of the inner city.

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

La Cuisine

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

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

La Creperie

La Creperie is the first authentic Brittany French restaurant that serves savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and the best apple cider in Saigon.

1777 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 7070
infosgn@lacreperie.com.cn
Mon-Sun 11am-11pm

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

L'essentiel offers a quiet intimate dining experience downstairs with space for private functions and alfresco dining on an upper floor. The menu changes weekly, the food is fresh and the wine list carefully collated.

98 Ho Tung Mau, D1
0948 415 646

Le Bordeaux

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

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

Le Bouchon De Saigon

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

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.lebouchondesaignon.com

Le Chateau de Saigon

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

45A Le Quy Don, D3
www.lechateaudesaigon.com

Le Jardin

Le Jardin is a gorgeous enclosed garden space that allows eaters to follow the example of the French colonists a century

ago and pretend they're actually in Paris. Whether dining outside under the shaded terrace or within the old, warmly-lit villa, the cuisine, decor, and general mood of the place is like a Stargate direct to France.

31D Thai Van Lung, D1
3825 8465

Le Paris

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

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

Le Steak de Saigon

Drawing inspiration from French steakhouses, Le Steak de Saigon serves imported and local meats, with beef fondue and table-side beef tartare as the most recommended. Aside from table service, the restaurant offers take-out and delivery as well.

15 Dong Du, D1
3822 4593
www.lesteakdesaigon.com

L'Olivier

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

Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1

3824 1555
www.sofitel.com

Le Rendez-Vous de Saigon

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

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

The Refinery

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

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

Ty Coz

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

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

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

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

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

indian

Ashoka

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

for people booking in groups.

17/10 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1372
www.ashokavietnam.com

Baba's Kitchen

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

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

Bollywood

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

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

Bombay Indian Restaurant

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

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

Ganesh

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

15B4 Le Thanh Ton, D1

8223 0173

www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com

Indus Indian

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

2G Thi Sach, D1
3521 0324

Mumtaz

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

226 Bui Vien, D1
3837 1767

The Punjabi

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

40/3 Bui Vien, D1
3508 3777

italian

1960 Presidential Club

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

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

Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style

service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.

Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, D1
3520 9099
6.30am - 10.30pm

Capricciosa

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

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

Casa Italia

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

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



Ciao Bella

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

11 Dong Du, D1

3822 3329

tonyfox56@hotmail.com

www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



Chef Mamma's

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

A43 Truong Son, Tan Binh

Da Vinci's

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

Open 11am - 10pm.
Call 083 943 4982 or
SMS your order to 093 328 4624

Good Morning Vietnam

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

197 De Tham, D1
3837 1894
www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com

La Hostaria

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

evenings with candlelight and light music.
17B Le Thanh Ton, DI
3823 1080
www.lahostaria.com

Lucca 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Margherita 🍷

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

Opera 🍷

Located at Park Hyatt Hotel, Opera is a contemporary, casual trattoria-style restaurant that specializes in authentic pizza made fresh from a wood-fired oven, pasta and homemade Italian dishes prepared from one large open kitchen.
Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, DI
3520 2357

Pendolasco

There leafy garden is perfect for all those people looking for some fresh air away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It also has a fully air-conditioned dining room. Offers large selection of Italian wines and Italian dishes such as wood fire oven pizzas, pastas, grilled food, among others.
87 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.pendolasco.vn

Pizza 4P's 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Pomodoro 🍷

In this family-style, simply-decorated trattoria restaurant with an arched ceiling and an all-brick interior, a fine Italian menu pleases diners with 12 different pizzas along with pasta dishes, parma ham with a spicy tomato chutney, and a highly-recommended French onion soup. Ideal option for a simple, reliable, and thoroughly pleasant night out with no complications.
79 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8998
www.pomodoro-vietnam.com

Sarpino's Pizzeria 🍷

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

Scoozi

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




japanese

Achaya Cafe

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

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

Aka Taiyo

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

Ajisen Ramen 🍷

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

Aki Japanese Restaurant

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

Baby Spoon 🍷

Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.
47 Phan Chu Trinh, DI



Blanchy Street 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
11am - 10:30pm

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

Ichiban Sushi 🍷 Oi's Pick

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting.
204 Le Lai, DI
www.ichibansushi.vn

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

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

Kissho

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

Kuru Kuru Shusi

A Japanese restaurant that features a rotating conveyor belt for the buffet, offering 50 different selections. It also offers an a la carte menu.
129 Nguyen Du, DI
www.kurukuru.com.vn

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, 1/1 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

Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.
117 Vo Van Tan, DI
3930 9185
www.musmus.net

Osaka Ramen



Traditional Japanese noodle restaurant offering traditional Ramen dishes as well as Japanese/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
67 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI
10am - 10pm

Robata Dining An



The restaurant has a downstairs bar and a second floor with private rooms that have sunken tables, sliding fusuma doors

and tabletop barbecues. Popular with the Japanese expats, the menu serves up healthy appetizers, rolls, sashimi and An specialty dishes like deep fried chicken with garlic salt sauce An style (VND100,000).
15C Le Thanh Ton, DI
www.robata-an.com

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant



  Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.
99 Suong Nguyen Anh, DI
6291 1036
sakurasaku.vn

Sumo BBQ

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


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

Sushi Bar

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



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

Sushi Dining Aoi

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



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

Sushi World

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



28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3911 0147
www.sushiworld.com.vn

Tokyo Deli



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

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

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

Vietnam Monde

Good for receptions, team meetings, relaxation, family dining, banquet and other special occasions. The recommended dishes include Kobe beef imported from Japan, Tepan Steak, Sashimi and Sushi. Average price per person is between VND100,000 to VND300,000.

7bis Korea Sailing, Ben Nghe Ward, DI
0838220187

Vui Vui

Vui Vui is a Japanese restaurant specializing in barbecue and Japanese-style hot pot. Offers a variety of set lunches including Yakidori, Kimuchi Pokka, Sukiyaki and Purukogi. The restaurant has two floors with each floor accommodating approximately 100 guests.



125A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
www.vuivui.net.vn

Wainosuke

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


37 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3821 4016
www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Yoshino

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

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

Yuki

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

99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, DI
3824 2754



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 Duang, 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

Mr 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



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 Bui, DI
3829 4297

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

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

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





Indaba Restaurant

Indaba Steakhouse combines German style steak and Italian coffee under one roof. Expect a fusion dishes like Indaba Spring Rolls, Mexican BBQ Spare Ribs, and Grilled Duck Breast served with sesame sauce, steamed rice and salad. The quaint and cozy restaurant is decorated in soft hues of red and black, complemented with soft jazz music. A German Viet Kieu with experience in restaurants in Germany helms the kitchen.



35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
www.facebook.com/indabacafe
Contact them at 3824 8280 or
visit www.facebook.com/indabacafe

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
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

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

thai

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

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.

Tiny Treasures

Bite size deliciousness from Hue and the southern coastal town of Phan Rang

TEXT BY JAMES ALLEN IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

TUCKED AWAY IN Tan Binh District, **Beo Gap Nuoc** on 118 Truong Cong Dinh is a compact little restaurant specializing in Hue and Phan Rang cuisine. The name translates to “algae meets water,” an idiom meaning two things are destined to be together. Dishes from the two regions are served in small portions, designed to entice the palette and keep you interested until the very last bite. Every element has a function, all helping to build a crescendo of flavors and this delicious tradition was kept alive during our evening in Tan Binh.

Not wanting to waste any time, we unwrapped a few little *cha lua* (Vietnamese pork roll, VND5,000 for one) packages to nibble on, a relatively simple snack and a good way to tide us over while we waited for the main event. No sooner had we finished when the first plate of *banh thap cam* (VND45,000) arrived along with a large rice cracker covering a warmly spiced plate of baby clams (*hen xuc banh da*, VND45,000). The latter was demolished as soon as it touched the table. Which is not surprising as each tiny clam is covered in a subtle, spiced flavor quite unlike your average

Vietnamese dish, hinting towards something decidedly more Thai or Indian in origin. The scooping of the clams was so enthusiastic, we ordered seconds.

We then focused our attention on the *banh thap cam*, a mixed selection of pretty little morsels of rice flour or cassava based dumplings filled with powdered shrimp, green beans or assorted minced meats and seafood. Smother them with *nuoc mam* and dig in; if you’re lucky you’ll love everything, otherwise be fearless and after a bit of trial and error you will certainly know what to order next time.

Next up, *banh xeo* (VND50,000 for four), but not the extra large variety you are probably more used to. These miniature versions were crunchy and filled with shrimp, pork and squid as well as the usual mound of bean sprouts. While we preferred the bigger version, which encourages a more communal deconstructive eating technique, the ones here had a thicker batter that allows for a crispier taco-like shell, giving you more time to roll, dip and eat before the whole thing falls apart.

The final dish, *banh can thap cam* (VND60,000), was new to us. Similar in

shape to a *banh beo*, a circular little piece of fried battery goodness topped with all manner of ingredients, a *banh can* is closer to that of an egg white omelet with the key ingredients of pork, shrimp and meat concealed from view within their warm centers. Eating it was somewhat of an experience, and thanks to a helpful waitress, we soon discovered that we needed to mix one spoon of each of the three accompanying sauces into a separate bowl for the eventual big dip. The sauces were *mam nem* (a zingy pineapple-infused fish sauce), *mam dau phong* (a tasty fermented peanut concoction), and a citrus-based chili sauce for sweetness and punch. A heady trio, and when combined with firm thin strips of sour mango, freshly picked greens and herbs as well as the compact little *banh can*, the result is beyond words.

At Beo Gap Nuoc everything is delivered to the table at its freshest, from the mound of lettuce and herbs to the oil used to fry the *banh xeo*, each ingredient is handled and cooked with respect and generosity, a fact that is more than evident with every bite. Get there hungry, it’s worth the drive. ■



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 chilli music.

1st floor, 39 Le Duan, D1
3823 4423
091 233 9138
www.kohthai.com.vn
11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai



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

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 7506

Mai Thai



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

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

Malee Thai



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

37 Dong Du, D1
3829 3029
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Spice



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

27C Le Quy Don, D3
3930 7873
www.spicevn.com

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.thaiaexpress.com.vn

vietnamese

3T Quan Nuong



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

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1
3821 1631

An Khue Quan



Serving a well-selected series of dishes from both northern and southern regions

of Vietnam in an area where international diners are likely to be in abundance – and therefore well attuned to the foreign palate.

92B Le Lai, D1
3925 9583

An Vietnamese Bistro



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

71/5-6 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3825 8275

Banh Xeo 46A



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

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1
3824 1110

Banh Xeo An La Ghien



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

74 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
3833 0534
www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en

Barbecue Garden



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

135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 3340
www.barbecuegarden.com

Beefsteak Nam Son

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

188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3930 3917
www.namsonsteak.com

Binh An Village

Open every day for dining and other banqueting services, Binh An Village serves traditional country cuisine such as in house fried spring rolls, fresh lotus shrimp salad, selective grilled seafood and meats served with sticky pineapple rice. A jazz band is available for booking for private functions. It also offers special arrangements such as a Saigon boat cruise, D1, traditional Vietnamese folklore music and more.

1163 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
3556 6099
saigon@binhanvillage.com

Bonbon

Offers authentic Vietnamese cuisines as well as a modern global menu. It boasts hand-selected steaks and a world-class wine list. The restaurant is designed to be multi-functional, with the ability to continually change the layout and atmosphere for high-end group events, intimate romance or casual dinners.

Kumho Building, 39 Le Duan, D1
info@bonbonrestaurant.vn
6291 7788

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

Bo Nong

This performance venue features a traditional cultural show with Vietnamese cuisine. Established by Frenchmen Thibault Detraz and Jeremy Gremillet, who aim to bring the French passion for fusing live entertainment with dining.

143 Nguyen Trai, D1
www.bo-nong.com

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.

73 Ly Tu Trong, D1
6276 2609
www.bunsaiгон.com.vn

Cha Ca La Vong

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

36 Ton That Thiep, D1
3915 3343

Cuc Gach Quan

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

10 Dang Tat, D1
3848 0144

Five Oysters

Serves local cuisine with an emphasis on seafood and beers starting at VND10,000. Open daily from 9am until late.

090 30 12123
www.facebook.com/FiveOysters

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
www.goldfish.vn

Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

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

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

Highway 4



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

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

Hoa Tuc



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

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1

3825 1676
www.hoatuc.com

Hoang Yen

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

7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
148 Hai Ba Trung, D1
Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5
CR1- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.hoangyencuisine.com

Hum

Hum is a vegetarian restaurant where food are prepared on site from various fresh beans, nuts, vegetables, flowers, and fruits. Food are complemented with special drinks mixed from fresh fruits and vegetables.

2 Thi Sach, D1
3823 8920
www.hum-vegetarian.vn

Khoai Restaurant

Specializes in dishes from Nha Trang.

3A Le Quy Don, D3
www.rhoairestaurant.com

Lang Viet 🍷 Oi's Pick

Lang Viet combines water puppet theater with Vietnamese northern cuisine. There are two performances in the evening (5pm and 6:16pm) and last for 45 minutes, with an option of a la carte dining, set menu or buffet afterwards. During the day, the restaurant serves breakfast and lunch, starting at 10am to 2pm. Their sister restaurant, Pho Xua, was once visited by Former President Bill Clinton in 2000.

36 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 9266
www.langvietxua.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

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 Phan

Nam Phan is a 200 seat restaurant that is accents Vietnamese cuisine with live classical music.

34 Vo Van Tan, D3

Nam Phat Restaurant



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

21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, D1
3910 6488
nhahangnamphat@gmail.com

Marina Saigon



Marina Saigon is one of the leading

seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.

172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3930 2379

Maxim's Nam An



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

13-15-17 Dong Khoi, D1

Mitau

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

52 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 0767

www.mitauhue.com

Nghi Xuan



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

Propaganda Bistro

Offers Vietnamese cuisine such as spring rolls and Vietnamese street food with a Western twist. Serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant features hand-painted wall murals.

21 Han Thuyen, D1

3822 9048

www.facebook.com/Propaganda-Saigon

Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

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

17a Ngo Van Nam, D1

3829 1515

(deliveries: 3602 2241 or 091 400 8835)

Quan An Ngon

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

138 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

3827 9666

www.quanngon138.com

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.

9th Floor, 12D Cach Mang Thang Tam, D1

3823 2232

Saigon Vegan



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

378/3 Vo Van Tan, D3

3834 4473

SH Garden restaurant



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

4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, D1

6680 0188

shgarden.com.vn

Song Ngu



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

70 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1

3832 5017

Temple Club



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

29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1

3829 9244

templeclub.com.vn

Thanh Nien Restaurant



With its attractive home-style layout, pretty garden for outdoor dining, and warm, yellow-toned interior for the buffet, it's a charming venue for tourists and a familiar favourite for long-timers. It's intentionally decorated like a private home, walls decorated with floral artworks, and the garden surrounded by bamboo.

11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1

3822 5909

www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien

Thang Bom Quan

Serves hot pot and special style BBQ.

49 Pho Duc Chinh, D1

Tib Restaurant

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

187 Hai Ba Trung, D3

3829 7242

www.tibrestaurant.com.vn

Tin Nghia

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

9 Tran Hung Dao, D1

3821 2538

Vietnam House



Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine.

This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.

93-95 Dong Khoi, D1

3829 1623

www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

(other) asian

Crawfish King

Crawfish King serves special menus with crawfish, lobster, mantis shrimp, American-style chicken wings, oysters, fruit beer, sea urchin and more. Offers free delivery for customers in D1 and D3.

63 Truong Dinh, D1

6272 7888

www.facebook.com/crawfishking63

7am - 12am

Lion City



This is a Singaporean franchise to watch with interest – since its humble beginnings in 2006 with the rather more unpleasant name Singapore Frog Porridge, it has risen in strength to become the most prominent representative of the cuisine in the city, and its growth has continued to be remarkable.

45 Le Anh Xuan, D1

3823 8371

www.lioncityrestaurant.com

Long Monaco 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

Ground Floor, Etown 1

364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh

www.longmonaco.com.vn

western/international

27 Grill

27 Grill is an open kitchen run by Danish chefs Casper Gustafsen and Camilla Bailey and is known for its steaks. It also offers a spectacular view of the city. Opens from 5:30pm - 11pm.

Roofop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1

www.chillsaigon.com

Al Fresco's



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

16 Nguyen Thi Nghia, D1

3926 0036

www.alfrescosgroup.com

8.30am - 11pm

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)

Ben Style 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

302 Co Bac, D1

090 691 2730

Beirut

Offers Lebanese and Mediterranean food with belly dancers every night from 8:30pm to 10pm and Latino dancers from 10pm to midnight.

74/13D Hai Ba Trung, D1

www.beirut.com.vn

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

Burger Oi

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

Call 083 826 5426 or

SMS your order to 093 836 3030

Chuck's

Chuck's offers American comfort food

lière pancakes, omelets, burritos, fries, tacos, burgers and hotdogs.

27 Tran Nhat Duat, D1

Crab Pot

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

65 Pham Ngoc Thach 6, D3

Gartenstadt

Gartenstadt serves German cuisine including sausage, sauerbraten, and pork knuckle. Known amongst locals and expats for its long teakwood bar, Gartenstadt is home to imported Schneider Weisse and Krombacher beer, as well as a large collection of choice schnapps. Private dining options are available on the second floor, including balcony seating overlooking scenic Dong Khoi Street.

34 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3623

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, Bitemco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

Jaspas Wine & Grill

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

74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3827 0931
alfrescosgroup.com



MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Khoi Thom

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

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
www.khoithom.com

La Fenetre Soleil

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

4 Ly Tu Trong, D1

La Habana

Offering authentic Spanish cuisine and a wide choice of tapas, as well as Cuban cocktails, La Habana is a den of Cuban-Spanish inspired architecture located on inner-city Cao Ba Quat.

6 Cao Ba Quat, D1

3829 5180

www.lahabana-saigon.com

Ly Club

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

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

Margherita

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

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
3837 0760

Market 39

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

Ground floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duang
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Mogambo Bar & Grill

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

50 Pasteur, D1
3825 1311

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

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

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

Parkview

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

New World Saigon Hotel
76 Le Lai Street, D1
3822 8888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

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

Quán Ut Ut

Quán Ut Ut is Saigon's newest restaurant hotspot. Specialties include American BBQ, cashew-smoked pork ribs and burgers alongside fresh draft and imported beer. Open daily from 4pm til midnight.

168 Vo Van Kiet, D1
www.quanutut.com
3914 4500

Reflections

Reflections Restaurant is a fine dining

restaurant with a menu that draws inspiration from every corner of the globe. It holds events showcasing Michelin-star Chefs, wine pairing dinners and other culinary luminaries.

Level 3, Caravelle Hotel, 19-23 Lam Son Square, D1
0838234999

Saffron

The first thing that will strike you when you enter Saffron is the terracotta pots. Located 50 meters from Ciao Bella, a popular Italian restaurant on Dung Du, this restaurant offers Mediterranean food, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness. Guests are welcomed with complimentary Prosecco, fresh baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus.

51 Hai Ba Trung, D1
382 48358

Shri

Shri offers unparalleled panoramic views of the city. Menu offers a broad range of dishes to suit most tastes with modern European styled starters, mains and desserts as well as a wide selection of grills and salads. Wine list is consists currently of over 270 bins with selections from both the Old and New World, with France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria as well as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Argentina and Chile all represented.

Level 23, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
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

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
www.elbowroom.com.vn

The Hungry Pig

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

144 Cong Quynh, D1

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
www.xusaigon.com

White Forest

Set in a modern décor, the restaurant serves authentic Italian and French cuisine accompanied by a good selection of European wines and cocktails. Happy Hour cocktails from 2pm - 7:30pm where it's buy one get one free. Order take-away online at vietnammm.com, foodpanda.vn, and eatvn

14 Bis Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
0122 428 5237
www.whiteforest.com.vn

Zest Bistro & Cafe

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

5 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 5599

Zoom Cafe

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
7am - 2am daily

>>The List District 2

BAKERIES

Sweet and Sour

Offers custom made cakes, pies, tarts, brownies and cupcakes. It welcomes visitors to an open kitchen where they can watch and be a part of what makes its sweets special. Provides catering for special occasions.

AVA Residences, 40/4 Nguyen Van, D2
3519 3167

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

Buddha Bar

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

7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080

CAFES

Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

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

Shalom Coffee

Shalom Coffee is available for all your coffee and chocolate needs, warm snacks, cold refreshments, breakfasts and lunches. **53 Vo Truong Toan, D2**
www.coffeeshalom.com

RESTAURANTS

FRENCH

Le Bacoulos

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

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

Gastro'home

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

La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day.

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

Trois Gourmands

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

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards. Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups. **33 Tong Huu Dinh (Street 53), D2**
3744 4177
www.ashokavietnam.com

ITALIAN

Pendolasco – Thao Dien

Expect excellent classic Italian cuisine – wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu – cooked with a focus on fresh flavours and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy. **36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2**

62532888
www.pendolasco.vn

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice. **43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132**

JAPANESE

Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

Bottles of sake fill shelves along the wall behind the sushi bar, and unique Japanese paintings add a nice visual touch. Since opening four months ago, the restaurant has attracted a diverse clientele, from locals to expats. **14E1 Thao Dien, D2**
3744 6782

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu **River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2**
6683 5308

THAI

Baan Thai

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

Jasmine Thai

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

VIETNAMESE

Banlian Tree

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

Frangipani Hoa Su

Frangipani Hoa Su offers authentic Vietnamese cuisine with a variety of dishes from different parts of Vietnam ranging from pho, bun bo Hue to mi quang. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. It also has an open space and a VIP air-conditioned room together which can hold a maximum capacity of 500 people, making it an ideal venue for different types of events and functions. **26 Le Van Mien, D2**
frangipani.restobar@gmail.com

WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

Blue Crab 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

Mekong Merchant

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

Snap Cafe

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

The Deck

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

Vino

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

>>The List District 7

BAKERIES

Dunkin' Donuts

This American doughnut and coffee franchise offers munchkins, croissants, donut sandwich and toasted sandwiches - along with the popular sugar raised, glazed chocolate mochi, glazed, chocolate coconut, cinnamon, Boston kreme, Bavarian Kreme, strawberry-filled or chocolate frosted donuts. **59 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**

Savouré Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season. **Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**
5412 2469
www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

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

Ruby Soho

A popular district 7 spot with excellent and cheap range of cocktails, good food and great music! Listen to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Ramones or Beck while downing an ice cold one. **S52-1 Sky Garden 2, D7**

Sala Beer

Enjoy Asian and European dishes at Sala Beer and choose and enjoy more than 50 famous beer brands from around the world. Ground floor White House Hotel **R2-25 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Phuoc 1, D7**

The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks. **R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7**

CAFES

Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake. **105 Ton Dat Tien, D7**
www.baskinrobbins.vn

Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food. **SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7**
www.budsicecream.com.vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf serves some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes. **Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7**
www.coffeebean.com.vn

FB Deli Coffee

FB Deli Coffee features a unique black and white design and signature coffee beans imported from Italy. Guests can also enjoy many varieties of homemade cakes, along with Tiramisu, muffins, and sandwiches. All cakes 50% off from 7 to 10pm. **SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7**

The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area. **SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**

MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent

Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu. **101 Ton Dat Tien, D7**
www.mof.com.vn/en

NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC,

The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular mudpies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.
107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.
SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5411 1186

CHINESE

Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant

Serving China's little-known spiciest cuisine, the dishes of China's reddest province and the preferred taste of Chairman Mao, Huong Vien is well-decorated although a bit on the pricey side, with dishes averaging VND180,000.
559-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7

Ming Dynasty

Ming Dynasty serves authentic Chinese food in a setting reminiscent of an old Chinese palace. Specialties include dim sum, shark fin and abalone and dishes from Quang Dong.
23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7

INDIAN

Ashoka

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

Spice India

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

ITALIAN

La Cucina

La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.
Reviewed in Oi April 2013
Block 07-08 CRI-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 7932

Sarpino's

Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.
351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7
www.sarpinos.vn

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

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

JAPANESE

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary

eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.
SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7

THAI

Nathalie's Phu My Hung

Nathalie's Phu My Hung is situated in an ideal location on a central corner in the district 7 high-profile metropolitan area. Serving delicious Thai cuisine in charming and romantic surroundings, the restaurant has two floors with a unified, simple decor and warm colourful tones throughout.
S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7
5410 0822
www.nathaliesrestaurant.com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000 VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.
R1-72 Hung Gia I, 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

Berru

Berru is a family-run Turkish restaurant offering a variety of Turkish specialties on the menu including kebabs, koftas, mezzes and soups. This is one of the few halal restaurants that imports all of their halal meat.
SC 3-1 Khu Pho My Khang, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

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

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

EL CAMINO

A small bar & restaurant situated in the

heart of Phu My Hung. Relaxing outdoor saloon featuring inexpensive Spanish tapas and small plates from gourmet ingredients. Affordable selection of Spanish & French wines.
137 SB-02 Khu My Phat, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

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

El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambience and genuine atmosphere.
Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7
3825 1879
www.elgaucho.com.vn

Le Taj

Le Taj offers French cuisine and features a luxury atmosphere of black and white design. Besides a wide variety of menu choices, Le Taj brings you to the ultimate luxury appetite garnished with 24k gold leaf. Le Taj also impresses its guests with a large wine cellar featuring 150 types of international wine that adds to the dining and entertainment variety.
06 Phan Van Chuong, D7
090 535 0221

Salt & Pepper

Salt & Pepper Restaurant mainly serves Italian dishes.
103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.saltpepper.com.vn

Scott & Binh's Restaurant

This unassuming little bistro is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike. With a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and various other international dishes, this is an ideal guilty hideaway from Vietnamese cuisine for just one meal at least.
15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

supermarkets

100%

100% Alimentation.Generale.De.Qualite is the latest high-end grocery store to grace the streets of An phu. With a rustic charm 100% provides customers with 100% safe, natural and local products all sourced and manufactured in Vietnam. The shop only offers products that reach international food safety requirements and runs food events at the store. All products are available to order online at www.100percentvn.com.
26b Thao dien, D2

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.
41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630
SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1

An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more
43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.
No. 17, Street 12, D2
www.classicfinefoods.com



Le Cochon D'or

LeCochon D'or shop sells European and International meat that include ham, sausages, pate, terrine, and smoked specialties. A taste of home, because you and your taste buds deserve it! Customizes service available including door-to-door delivery.
64 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 3856
8am - 7pm
www.ngp.com.vn

Metro

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

Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.
S54-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

Bacchus imports from most of the world's wine regions and supplies wholesale and retail customers. It encourages wine tasting in its Pasteur store using the unique Enomatic system, and staff are skilled in advising on wine matches with food.
158D Pasteur, D1

Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.
94-96 Le Lai, D1

Boutique 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

Shop Thai Duong

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

The Warehouse

A premium wine importer, distributor, and retailer supplying wines from all over the world, the Warehouse also offers spirits, wine accessories, glassware and refrigeration to complement their customers' choices.
15/5 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Vinifera

Established in 2002, Vinifera is one of the most reliable wine distribution companies in Vietnam. Offering prestigious wines from around the world at a great value.
15C7 Thi Sach, D1

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY PAUL BRUINS



Greenmarket Square, Cape Town



On The Road Back

IMAGES BY **QUACH TUNG DUONG** TRANSLATED BY **NPD KHANH**

I USED TO visit Dalat when I was young. In those days, the city was a relatively unknown tourist destination my parents sometimes brought me to. Two years ago, I decided to get on my motorbike and make the trip from Nha Trang (where I now live) to Dalat. With a camera and a churning eagerness in my heart, I prepared myself for the 140 km journey, with 30 of those winding through dangerous mountain switchbacks. The reward, however, was sometimes misty, sometimes sun-filled green stretches of road.

Dalat mesmerizes with its fair weather and blooming flowers. The Madreado bloom during spring time. Wild sunflowers bloom in October. Orchid trees blossom on the sides of the streets in February, and countless other temperate flowers bloom year round.

The many villas where I've stayed or drank coffee in reflect French architecture. I remember the early mornings where

it was just me and my camera in the mountains of Dalat, waiting for the first ray of sun to arrive, that moment when the sun kissed the horizon, over the stretch of far-off mountains, above the vast expanse of early morning mist that blanketed the city. I waited for the moment when the first few beams of sunlight touched the tops of a green sea of pine trees.

I will be back to this place, to these familiar streets, to this city whose beauty changes along with the seasons.

BIO: Given a Nikon film camera at the age of 14 by his father, Nha Trang-based photographer **Quach Tung Duong** has been in love with landscape and street photography ever since, with a special attraction to Dalat. Having worked for **What's On Nha Trang**, Duong specializes in product photography and shooting interiors. Find him on Facebook at **Baliwkail** or via phone at 090 526 9521. ■





The Mother City

A beginner's guide to Cape Town, the city where two oceans meet at the very tip of Africa

TEXT BY **ISHAY GOVENDER**

CLOAKED IN A cloth of white clouds as the early afternoon collects at the edges of a pleasant summer day, Table Mountain looks every bit the pretty setting for the perfect, posh high tea. It's a ritual the locals know very well. When the cloth lifts, against the contrast of a vivid blue sky, the wrap-around mountain elicits sighs of admiration from everyone. We, the residents of the Mother City, never seem to tire of living around the foot of this rock, recently voted one of the Seven New Wonders of the World. It's a

primitive fascination – man, mountain, sky and ocean. Juxtaposed against the city's title as World Design Capital 2014 and the various "number one destination in the world" awards, no less from *The New York Times* this year, the sheer force of Cape Town's rugged beauty provides inspiration for the city's artisans, thinkers, dwellers and game-changers.

As the most visited city in South Africa, Cape Town has been welcoming visitors both local and foreign long before the awards arrived. Technically a mere

20 years old, South Africa is a young democracy. While the transformation curve, as we've remerged into the world beyond the horrors of apartheid and social segregation, has been achingly steep and the internal politics rocky at times, Cape Town is well-known for its hospitality. This is solely because of the residents that a friendly attitude from waitstaff and passers-by can be expected. Working through the legacy of inequality has left behind a residue of social issues from street children and beggars to those



IMAGE PROVIDED BY CAPE TOWN TOURISM

just barely surviving above the poverty line. While the guidebooks and safari companies that lure foreigners to Cape Town's shores may wish to gloss over the realities of township life and the everyday struggles faced by many, visitors would benefit more from a holistic, inclusive approach. The fine coastal homes and the endless beach bars and cafés along the Atlantic seaboard, in Camps Bay particularly, reflect the living conditions of a minority. But, there remains a lack of snobbishness in the area, and it sees visitors from most walks of life frequenting the beaches and restaurants.

Book a well-organized township tour, and eat in the home of a local too if you can, for a more complete picture on Cape Town life. The Maboneng Township Arts Experience, for example, showcases local art in the homes of residents in Langa and provides intimate insight into lives ordinarily missed over bigger attractions. Township tours are meant to empower and not encourage 'poorism' or exploitation of locals, so do choose wisely.

Contact: Iain or Michael at
www.coffeebeansroutes.com

Maboneng Township Arts experience:
www.maboneng.com

City of Beauty

Without a doubt, visitors to Cape Town are after slices of natural beauty – flora, wildlife and breathtaking views. The city does not disappoint. A first time visitor would do well to ride on the ubiquitous big-city favorite, the hop-on hop-off bus for an initial orientation of the best of the city. A similar bus also takes visitors on parts of the famed wine route. A self-drive is highly recommended (remembering to keep on the left-hand side of the road), as roads in general are good and drivers courteous. A starting point, weather permitting, should be a cable car ride up Table Mountain for the finest views. Join locals on an early morning or late afternoon walk up Lion's Head, an adjacent mountaintop. But do exercise caution – the walk is steep and narrow at points, so it's best not to attempt it alone or in the dark. If you're looking for a little more adventure, you can perform a 30-minute tandem paraglide from Lion's Head, or Signal Hill too.

A ride along the Atlantic seaboard from Sea Point to Hout Bay and up the winding mountain path of Chapman's Peak provides plenty of photo opportunities and a few picnic spots along the way. The Cape suffers terribly from veld fires, especially in summer; so do be wary of throwing lit cigarettes and leaving unattended campfires.

An ideal route would involve driving onwards to Cape Point, the very tip of Africa where the Atlantic and Indian oceans converge in forceful splendour. Don't feed the baboons, as per all the warnings, but do stop to feed the African penguins at Boulder's beach in Simon's Town. Many of the beaches along the



Lion's Head

IMAGE BY BRUCE SUTHERLAND



Table Mountain

IMAGE BY PAUL BRUINS

way provide the ideal conditions for kite surfing too.

Hop On Hop Off Bus tours:
www.citysightseeing.co.za

Table Mountain Cable car:
www.tablemountain.net

Paraglide from Lion's Head:
www.paraglide.co.za

Feed the penguins:
www.sanparks.co.za/parks/table_mountain/tourism/attractions.php#boulders

Bo-Kaap

The hilly roads that lead to the base of Table Mountain and the area known as the Bo-Kaap, or 'above/upper Cape,' is

dotted with small, closely grouped candy-colored council homes that have become a must-see attraction. The Cape Malay people who live in the Bo-Kaap are mainly direct descendants of the slaves and laborers who were brought to work in the Cape just after the Dutch arrived in the mid 1600s. 'Malay' is a misnomer, as roots can be traced to Java, Indonesia, Ceylon and the east coast of Africa, Madagascar in particular. The Malays brought with them specialist skills in tailoring, construction and, notably, the Islamic religion, which remains the predominant faith in the area today. It's surprising that apart from academic texts, very little has been accurately written in popular form about the Malays and their history. A new book, *Bo-Kaap Kitchen* (Quivertree), transports you into the intimate lives of



Central Business District



City Hall

Mandela Rhodes Place. Nearby, are the South African Parliament, the Iziko South African museum, and the Planetarium.

Not to be missed is Greenmarket Square, a flea market stocked with curios from across Africa. It's a good place to bargain, chat to vendors and people watch from one of the nearby cafés. The Grand Parade, Cape Town's oldest public square on Adderley Street, is the place that Nelson Mandela addressed South Africans on his first day as a free man. It was also where Capetonians gathered, leaving flowers and letters in his honor when he passed away. As a daily open market, the Grand Parade is a hub of activity, used often for large gatherings. Notable attractions include the train station, City Hall and the Castle of Good Hope.

If you're looking to party all night, Long Street is your top bet. It's packed shoulder-to-shoulder with boutiques selling local designs, cafés, bars and clubs. This is the place to be seen over weekends – naturally, a street-wise sensibility should be exercised with large cameras, wallets and handbags, especially at night.

Bree Street has undergone a metamorphosis over the last four years and is now the home of bars, a bakery and restaurants frequented by locals. To mingle with them, go to Jason's Bakery for a bacon croissant, &Union for a craft beer and live music and Public Wine Bar (which operates as a bespoke meat merchant too) for a glass of superb wine and charcuterie or *biltong*, the dried meat snack adored by South Africans.

If you're particularly intrigued by city life and hanging out with locals and artisans, the recently gentrified neighborhood of Woodstock, containing a large food and clothing market every Saturday on Albert Road is one you should not miss. Walk along Albert Road to visit second-hand ramshackle furniture shops and new bicycle-parts/sandwich dens. It's a fascinating mix of the old and the very new.

Jason's Bakery:

www.facebook.com/JasonBakery

&Union: www.biergartencpt.tumblr.com

Public Wine Bar: www.publik.co.za

Neighborgoods market:

www.neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za

Cape Town is a thriving blend of African, European and Asian history and energy. Locals remain positive that long after the awards and nominations, visitors will continue to arrive, because in some way, the Mother City houses the spirit of all of us.

BIO: *Ishay Govender-Ypma is a travel, culture and food writer based in Cape Town, the Mother City. She spends her time weaving stories on the road, cooking with locals and for clients and friends at home. If you're ever in Cape Town, look out for her specialized Fab Food Tours at www.foodandthefabulous.com ■*

the people living here today by sharing their heritage recipes and stories. This is a souvenir worth lugging back home.

As you ascend the slopes into the Bo-Kaap, the views out over the neighborhood and across the city become ever more rewarding. While visitors enjoy having their photographs taken against the colorful backdrops of the houses, popular too with the fashion industry, Hollywood and Bollywood, a walking historical tour is highly recommended. Not only will your local guide thread together the history of the Malays, and life up until today, you may also be able to dine with a local family, or even stay with a family. Don't be surprised if you meet one of the locals featured in *Bo-Kaap Kitchen!*

For tours and home visits, contact Shireen

Narkedien at shireen.narkedien@gmail.com

The Revitalized CBD

A gargantuan effort from various parties has elevated Cape Town's central business district in the last 10 years from ailing, abandoned and economically depressed to a thriving, polished center with a hip buzz. Visitors to Cape Town can enjoy spending time with locals on the lush green lawns of the Company Gardens (dating back to the 1650s), and walk to the St. George's Cathedral, the Anglican church where Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu sat as the head for many years. St. George's Mall, a pedestrianized area leading back to the Foreshore, is dotted with coffee shops, boutiques, the luxurious Taj hotel, and luxury apartments at



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

Complaint Resolution

How to extract the best in travel customer service



CUSTOMER SERVICE IN Asia seems to come in extremes – cloying as in multiple waiters hovering over your table, or non-existent with a side of don't-need, don't-care attitude. I succumbed to a McDonald's meal the other day and was annoyed to find I had to put my order in outside the restaurant then take the paper to a girl with a mobile keypad waiting inside, all before being able to get to the counter to pay for/pick up my food. On the upside, one of the workers later noticed that the tip of *one* fry was burnt, and unprompted, she came back with a complimentary order of new fries.

Customer service when you travel

(especially in Asia) is much the same, but unless you're staying in high-end properties (read: properly-trained staff) or are on a more exclusive tour, chances are you'll find workers who are unable, unempowered or simply uninterested in helping you resolve your issue. I found myself in this situation twice in the last month. First, a friend was booked on an 8:10pm flight to Hanoi on a budget carrier. He received a text message saying his flight had been changed, not to the next available flight, but to the last flight of the day. (In a cost-cutting measure, some carriers will do this if there aren't enough passengers on a flight.) I advised him to

get to the airport early anyway to ask to get on the next available flight to which the ticket agent promptly refused, saying it was full. With a bit more coaxing, she found a supervisor who magically found a seat. Lesson: Always be calm and courteous when dealing with service personnel. They're likely following a process set by the higher-ups. Do your homework and know what options are available. And appeal when you feel you've exhausted all present means. In his recently released book, *How to Be the World's Smartest Traveler (and Save Time, Money, and Hassle)*, consumer advocate Chris Elliott suggests knowing



when to complain:

● ***If it's something that can easily be fixed in real time, like the wrong food order at a restaurant or a hotel room with a noise problem.***

● ***If you lost a significant amount of time or money because of something that the travel company directly controls, like a reservation system or a staff decision.***

● ***If the problem is so significant that it could affect future guests or passengers, even if it wasn't a terrible inconvenience to you.***

He also advises quick action. "Instead of writing a letter or calling when you get home, mention your problem before you check out, deplane, or disembark. Frequently, the person behind the counter is empowered to fix the issue on the spot. If you leave without saying something, you'll have to deal with an outsourced call center where operators have 50 ways or more to say 'no.'" Keeping a paper trail and meticulous records is also imperative.

"When you're having the vacation from hell, record-keeping is critically important. Take snapshots of the bedbug-ridden hotel room or the rental car with a chipped windshield. Keep all emails, brochures, tickets, and receipts. Print screenshots of your reservation," writes Chris.

Service Fail

In my second customer service snafu, I booked a flight to a bucket list destination at rock bottom prices. AirAsia had just

started flying to the Maldives and I snagged a round trip flight from Saigon for mid-May for USD400. In my head, I was already ensconced in an overwater bungalow watching the colorful fish swim by as I sipped on an equally colorful cocktail of some sort. Unfortunately, in early February, a friend (note: not the airline itself) sent me a link to an article announcing that AirAsia was suspending its flights beginning March 1. I quickly sent AirAsia an email with all my flight information, using the contact form on their website. Weeks went by with no communication, much less a refund. My next option was to make a long-distance call to one of their call centers (conveniently, none located in Vietnam). Perpetually on hold and 30 minutes later, as I watched the credits vanishing on my phone, the apologetic agent asked me to fill in the exact same online form as I had before. Fail. It was time to escalate.

I sent out a few tweets to their Twitter account and within minutes had confirmation that my case was being fast-tracked, promising "a more substantive response to your problem and an appropriate resolution within 14 days". A few days later, I received an apology email and a refund. "First and foremost, we sincerely regret to inform you that effective from 1st March 2014, flights to/from Maldives have been suspended. The withdrawal of Maldives from our route network is due to the challenging business conditions which include the depreciation of Asian currencies against the US dollar and the chronic lack of hotel room supply in Maldives, resulting in cancellation of

thousands of bookings by travel operators. This has affected the viability of sustaining our renowned low fares," it read in part, 27 days after flights had been suspended and presumably months after the decision had actually been made. While in the end, the case was resolved satisfactorily, I still can't believe the airline never contacted me directly regarding a ticket to nowhere. Had my friend not given me a heads up, I cringe to think what would've happened had I made a non-refundable hotel booking, or even checked my flight status the week I was supposed to go.

In my book, I'm marking this down as a customer service fail. Airlines are quick to take your money (literally, in seconds), but have the tendency to drag their feet in giving it back to you. In his book, Chris compares the pros and cons to lodging your grievance via paper letters, emails, social media and online chats. Because I had exhausted the email then call center route, social media worked well for me. Chris says that the pros to using social media are that "the whole world sees your grievance when you post it online with a call-out to the company. Excellent for shaming a company into giving you what you want, but can also backfire when you ask for too much". The flip-side is that "social media requests generally aren't taken as seriously, and they may be referred to more conventional contacts, such as a company website or phone number".

Whatever your grievance, be smart and persistent about finding a resolution that you can live with. After all, travel is *supposed* to be fun! ■

Joie de Vivre!

A little corner of Paris in Hanoi



A professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*, Bridget March specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and small town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget is currently offering art classes and sketching tours in Hoi An until the summer. For more of Bridget's work including news of her upcoming book visit brushwithasia.blogspot.com.



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

"LET'S MEET OUTSIDE the 'big church' near the lake," I said. What a surprise I received when I arrived. On previous visits to Hanoi I had somehow managed to miss St. Joseph's Cathedral. I must have been too busy being dragged around the 'big' tourist spots or losing my way in the maze of streets of the Old Quarter. But, this time, determined to find the 'big church' I arranged to meet a friend there to do some sketching together. I was early so I was able to soak in the unexpected atmosphere of this quiet corner of the city for a little while.

As soon as I entered the secluded square, which is dominated by the modest facade of the church, I was transported back 20 years to a misty evening spent in Montmartre in Paris. The church bells marked the quarter hour. There is something about the scale of the buildings, the layout of the streets and the crooked trees that is reminiscent of that romantic quarter of Paris that was the haunt of so many artists. Here,

there are the same muted colors of green, gray and brown, and I began to imagine that this collection of streets and bars in Hanoi could easily be the center of a modern day art movement for the talented young artists of Vietnam if they wished.

The church itself is rather underwhelming in size. It is styled on the massive Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, as is the Notre Dame Cathedral in Saigon. It was built in the 1880s on the site of the demolished Bao Thien Pagoda, an ancient and sacred meeting place which, coincidentally, had been constructed about the same period as the Paris cathedral.

In front of St. Joseph's is a charming railed garden that is home to a small statue of the Virgin Mary - Queen of Peace. But I suspect that this corner of Hanoi has not always been a haven of tranquillity. There must have been some unrest when it was declared that the old pagoda was to be demolished to make way for the invading French. Hearts

would have been broken as 700 years of tradition and community was so wilfully destroyed. Later, in 1954 the church and all its property were confiscated. It was over 40 years before the church was, once again, permitted to reopen for services. Maybe it is the fear of more conflict that caused the church and the little Madonna to both be surrounded by protective railings.

Today, this square is peaceful. The street that leads to the church (*nha tho*) has a collection of international restaurants, local cafes and shops housed in two slightly faded rows of pretty shophouses, some of which have been there for many years. My friend says that nothing much changes in this neighborhood where he founded his business nearly 20 years ago. The bells chime the hour with the same flat two-tone sound that can be heard at every church in France, big or small. It all adds to that haunting feeling that I could easily be walking those cobbled streets of Montmartre once more. ■

hotels

HO CHI MINH CITY

TWO STAR

Ball 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

Cat Huy Hotel

Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D 1
39208717

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, D 1
35218462

THREE STAR

ACEM 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, D 1
38224495

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
5411 1008

Catina Saigon

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

109 Dong Khoi, D 1
38296296

EMM Hotel Saigon

The 56 air-conditioned guestrooms at EMM Hotel Saigon include laptop-compatible safes and minibars. Complimentary wireless and wired high-speed Internet access and in-room refrigerators are provided. 32-inch LED TVs are equipped with premium cable channels. All accommodations provide desks, safes, and direct-dial phones.

157 Pasteur, D3
01663221322

Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is

located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.

73 Hoang Van Thai, D7
www.ibis.com

Sunland Hotels

Located about 35 minutes from Tan Son Nhat Airport, Sunland is a three star hotel with 90 rooms and suites. The hotel also comprise a Sky Bar and Sun Coffee Lounge.

302-304 Vo Van Kiet, D1
9922 3833
www.sunlandhotel.vn

Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa

Three-star Tan Hai Long Hotel offers 106 rooms and suites, all boasting a view of the city and Ben Thanh Market. Its conference room can accommodate up to 110 people with modern facilities. It also houses two dining venues, the La Terrasse Restaurant and L'emotion Lounge Bar & Coffee.

14-16 Le Lai, D1
www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn
38272738

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most famous as the location where much of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* was written in room 214.

132-134 Dong Khoi, D 1
38299201
www.continentalsaigon.com

Norfolk Hotel

Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.

117 Le Thanh Ton, D 1
38293415
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Novotel Saigon Centre

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

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

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

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

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

Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

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

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

InterContinental Asiana Saigon

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

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

Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

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

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

Majestic Saigon

One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.

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

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
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.hotelnikkrosaigon.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

Pullman

The 306-room hotel features a contemporary design, a wide range of technological facilities, four bars and restaurants and five meeting venues. Offers signature services including Welcomer, optimal connectivity with the Connectivity by Pullman concept (free high-speed wifi throughout the hotel, Quadriga's Personal Media Network mobile application), the Co-Meeting offer for business event and functions and Fit and Spa Lounge by Pullman.

148 Tran Hung Dao, D1

Renaissance Riverside Hotel

A five-star hotel located in the heart of Saigon's business and entertainment district. The hotel's 336 rooms and suites offer an incredible view of the Saigon River as well as over the city. Each guest room is designed and furnished with discerning business and leisure travelers in mind. Choose a deluxe room or suite with large desk and ample lighting, in-room coffee and tea service, high speed internet, safe, well-stocked mini-bar as well as the jack bag (connectivity kit).

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sgnbn-renaissance-riverside-hotel-saigon

Rex Hotel Saigon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this

recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.

141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1
38292185
www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

*****  **O'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

Softel Saigon Plaza Hotel

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

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

Windsor Plaza

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

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

CON DAO ISLAND

Six Senses Con Dao

True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.

Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son

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

Blue Moon Hotel & Spa

Located in the heart of breathtaking Dalat, the Blue Moon Resort & Spa is designed to complement the natural beauty of the "City of Eternal Spring." Built opposite the popular and tranquil Xuan Huong Lake, Blue Moon is centrally located and convenient to Dalat's eating, shopping and entertainment spots. Much more than just a comfortable night's sleep, Blue Moon Resort & Spa invites you to experience true hospitality.

4 Phan Boi Chau, Dalat 67, Vietnam
www.blumoonhotel.com.vn/blumoon2

Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa

Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa is perched on an idyllic location overlooking Tuyen Lam lake and gently undulating hills. It has four categories of rooms, including VIP villas, all with stunningly furnished rooms, spacious balconies offering sweeping mountain and/or lake view, and subtle finishing touches.

Tuyen Lam Lake, Zone VII.2, Dalat
(063) 383 1515
www.dalatedensee.com

Dalat Green City Hotel **O's Pick**

Budget hotel in the center of Dalat. Five minutes from most major attractions in Dalat. Quiet. Newly refurbished. Beautiful mountain and city views from the rooftop. Features free WIFI, TV, snack bar in all rooms. Coffee shop downstairs. Airport pickup by private car. Motorbike rental. Tour information. Laundry. Computers in lobby for public use.

172 Phan Dinh Phung, Dalat
(063) 3827 999
www.dalatgreencityhotel.com

Dalat Train Villa & Cafe **O's Pick**

Located near the Dalat Train Station, the Dalat Train Villa is for short or long staying guests. The villa is a restored 2-story French colonial-era villa. Next to the villa is a French train car, which has been renovated into a bar/cafe/restaurant. Romantic venue. From the lake, take first left after Dalat Train Station.

1 Quang Trung St, Ward 9, Villa #3

Softel Dalat Palace

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

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

DANANG

Furama Resort Danang

The Furama Resort enjoys a stunning beachfront location on one of Vietnam's finest beaches, fringed by natural pines and coconut palms. Two four-storey wings overlook the ocean on one side and a freshwater swimming lagoon and manicured tropical gardens on the others.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

Fusion Maia

It is the first all-pool villa-style resort in the destination and offers 87 pool suites, spa villas, and beach villas each with modern, open-plan living and private courtyard with swimming pool. Customize-your-stay options and

breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

Pullman Danang Resort

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.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

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
info@novotelhalong.com.vn

TUAN CHAU RESORT

Tuan Chau Resort is constructed in the style of classical French and modern Vietnamese architecture. This is the ideal place to find white sands, blue ocean, and the rejuvenative energy of the Vietnamese tropical sun.

Tuan Chau Island, Ha Long City

HANOI

Hilton Hanoi Opera

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

1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

Intercontinental Westlake

Superbly situated on the serene waters of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities, and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveler.

1a Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi

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.

K5 Nghi Tam, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

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

Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

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

HOI AN

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

Boutique Hoi An Resort **O's Pick**

Boutique Hoi An Resort offers 82 rooms and villas, with all rooms facing the sea with private balconies. Other facilities include spa with 3 treatment rooms and 5 massage pavilions, fully-equipped gym, restaurant, lobby lounge and pool bar and conference facilities accommodating 80 guests for dinner functions and 130 guests for cocktail parties.

Group 6, Block Tan Thinh, Ward Cam An, Hoi An City
www.boutiquehoianresort.com

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

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

An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang

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

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

Six Senses 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

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



VISITING BANGKOK?

**THEN PLAY THE ULTIMATE LIVE ESCAPE GAME!
THE FASTEST GROWING ENTERTAINMENT
CONCEPT IN THE WORLD!**

Bangkok's most popular attraction - ranked No 1 on Tripadvisor - offers challenging fun for everyone:

- * Families
- * Couples
- * Companies and events
- * Pro gamers
- * Tourists and travellers

Escape Hunt is an exhilarating attraction in Central Bangkok - a luxurious themed adventure set 100 years ago where you play the part of a famous London detective solving the greatest mystery of your life in old Thailand - choose from murder, robbery or even a bomb to diffuse! You need to combine your skills as a team to find clues and solve puzzles against the clock - to escape the room in time - then relax for a chat and photos over an English cup of tea.

The Escape Hunt Experience is based on the classic "escape the room" games made popular years ago online but now for real. Locked in a room with objects and puzzles, you feel like you're actually inside the computer game while doing your best to escape. One of their lovely game masters is on hand to impart some clues if you get stuck.

Escape Hunt is also now running in:

- * Jakarta
- * Phuket
- * Singapore

Also coming soon for this global brand are:
Amsterdam, Lisbon, London, Manila, Surfer's Paradise, Sydney and more...

Go to Escapehunt.com to find all their locations and book your experience now!



VIETNAM FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES

**BRING THIS
FAST-GROWING
WORLD CLASS
TOURIST ATTRACTION
TO VIETNAM!**

Escape Hunt is now actively seeking capable and motivated franchisee partners in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Nha Trang. Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Yangon and also available locally.

- * Low entry cost
- * Great returns
- * Comprehensive support
- * Fun atmosphere

Escape Hunt is seeking entrepreneurs with a passion for games and people to establish The Escape Hunt Experience stores in cities worldwide. They offer a full set-up package, supply new games on an ongoing basis, provide a fully maintained website and online booking service and even give marketing support. In just 10 months, Escape Hunt has spread to 10 countries worldwide. Join now to get early Founder Franchise benefits.

FOR FRANCHISE ENQUIRIES, EMAIL PAUL@ESCAPEHUNT.COM OR CHECK OUT ESCAPEHUNT.COM/FRANCHISES

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'Amnien, this resort offers an exclusive haven of luxury and relaxation in a spectacular beachfront location right in the heart of Mui Ne. The only property in the Mui Ne district with full conferencing facilities and a range of exclusive villas – and it has an impressive wine cellar.

Mui Ne

Princess d'Annam

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

Hon Lan, Binh Thuan
06 2368 2222

Muine Bay Resort

Located in the Mui Ne Bay and overlooking the Hon Lao pristine island of blue sea, Muine Bay Resort includes 103 rooms in 4-stars standard of which 32 bungalows designed and inspired by the Cham Tower.

Khu pho 14, Mui Ne Ward , Phan Thiet
www.muinebayresort.com
0622220222

The Cliff Resort and Residences

Offers 128 rooms equipped with a myriad of amenities such as 3D smart TV, safe and mini bar as well as private bathroom. It boasts an extensive lap pool, a kid's pool and pool bar as well as submerged on deck swimming pool chairs. Its restaurant serves a selection of local seafood specialties and Western cuisine.

Zone 5, Phu Hai Ward, Phan Thiet
www.theciffresort-binhthuan.com
0623719111

The Sailing Beach Resort

Offers a contemporary setting in sensual tropical harmony that befits its bay host. All 192 rooms, with spacious private balconies affording stunning ocean views, are scattered across tropical vegetation, ponds and rests steps from an endless beach.

107 Ho Xuan Huong, Phan Thiet
www.thesailingbay.com

WindFlower Beach Boutique Hotel

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

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

PHU QUOC ISLAND

Chen Sea Resort & Spa

Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers.

Bai Xep, Phu Quoc
07 7399 5895

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

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

62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc
07 7384 6999

La Veranda

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

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc
07 7398 2888

Paris Beach Resort 🍷 Or's Pick

Owned and managed by a friendly and hospitable French-Vietnamese woman and her French husband, the resort is located about a 15-minute taxi ride from the airport. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a private beachfront, recreation room, bicycles and a restaurant serving local and French food. Each room or bungalow has air conditioning, a mini bar, cable TV and free Wi-Fi. They also offer tours around the island.

Cua Lap, Duong To, Phu Quoc
www.phuquocparisbeach.com

QUY NHON

Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquility, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam.

Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

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

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen

VUNG TAU

The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is Vietnam's first largest integrated resort and ultimately will include an 1,100-room five-star hotel, a world-class casino, restaurants, high-tech meeting space, an exclusive VIP area, as well as a variety of beach-front recreation activities. The first 541-room tower of this development opened in July 2013 with its casino including 90 live tables and 614 electronic game positions. The second 559-room tower is on track to open in 2015.

Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District
Tel: (64) 3788 888
www.thegrandhotramstrip.com

serviced apartments

Diamond Island Luxury Residences

Diamond Island Luxury Residences offers 68 fully-furnished apartments, ranging from two- to four-bedroom units with private balconies providing panoramic views of the stunning surroundings. Each apartment comes with a fully-equipped

kitchen, en-suite bathrooms, separate work and living areas. Each lavish space features plush interiors, modern amenities, elegant furnishings and carefully chosen trimmings and fixtures, creating a luxurious harmony of comfort and tranquility that will have you relaxed and recharged, and functioning at peak performance.

No 01 – Street No.104-BTT, Quarter 3, Binh Trung Tay Ward, D2
096 829 3388 / 3742 5678
www.the-ascott.com

InterContinental Asiana Saigon Residences

It's a 31-floor tower with 260 rooms; the Residences offers superb panoramic views of downtown area and is part of the Kumho Asiana Plaza - the city's finest integrated complex featuring commercial, hotel, residential and a diverse choice of dining and dining outlets. They will also benefit from the preferred amenities at the InterContinental Asiana Saigon next door.

Corner of Le Van Huu & Nguyen Du
3520 8888

The Landmark

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

5B Ton Duc Thang, D 1
38222098

Norfolk Mansion

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

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

Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases. **53 Vo Truong Toan, D2**
www.riverside-apartments.com

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

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

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

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

8A Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1
3822 8899
www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
38229197

Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

628C Hanoi Highway, D2
6255 9900

www.somerset.com/vietnam

The Landmark

The Landmark features serviced apartments, offices, luxury dining, sports clubs, swimming pool at the rooftop of the building with great views of the Saigon River. It offers one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units for rent. Amenities offered include wireless broadband Internet access, 100 percent power backup, room service, maid service and laundry, 24-hour reception and airport shuttle service.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D1
www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

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

Buffalo Tours

A premium travel agency that helps travelers customize their itinerary and destination packages. From corporate to small tour packages available.

81 Mac Thi Bui, D1
www.buffalotours.com.vn

Exotissimo Travel

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world! Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office.

A District 1 presence will re-open soon.

41 Thao Dien, D2
www.exotissimo.com
anphu@exotissimo.com

Inside Asia Travel

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

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

Saigon River Tour

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

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1

Living

IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



MY LIFE AS... a gray hair plucker

INTERVIEWED BY NGUYEN THI THAO, NGUYEN THUY LINH, LAN NGO
AND JEREMY DE NIEV IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



HELLO, SIT DOWN please! Oh, my name? My name is Hang. How old am I? I was born in 1987, so please don't call me chi (older sister), it makes me sound so old! This is one of the first grey hair plucking shops in Hanoi. It's been open for three years now. I've been working here for about a year after one of my friends introduced me to the job.

I was born in Hanoi, and I started looking for work after I graduated from high school. For a while, I worked part-time as a sales associate in a clothes shop. For that job, I needed to have a high school diploma and good sales skills. But this is the best job I've had by far. I live nearby, so it's super convenient for me. And while I'm here, well, I'm just here. The work is really easy and suitable for girls.

I had to do a week of training before I

could become an official staff member. A normal day starts at 9am and ends at 7pm, but the number of customers varies day by day. Most of our customers are office workers and are pretty evenly split between women and men. To work here, you have to be honest, self-disciplined, and there's definitely no listening to your own music while working. In our store, we only play easy-listening music.

I get along well with my co-workers; we're like brothers and sisters. And the owner is really friendly. He's easygoing, and he lets us choose whether we want to work full-time or part-time. For Tet he even took all of us out to eat together.

One of my favorite things about working here is getting to know the regular customers. They talk a lot while



"Actually, some customers really like me; they think of me as a daughter or granddaughter. In the old days, only little kids would pluck their parents' or grandparents' white hair right? So customers tend to see me in that light. Nobody ever looks down on me"

I'm plucking their hair, you know, they share about their family and their lives and stuff. But my boss warned us beforehand, "Don't get too close to the customers," so we're always careful to keep things professional. Actually, some customers really like me; they think of me as a daughter or granddaughter. In the old days, only little kids would pluck their parents' or grandparents' white hair right? So customers tend to see me in that light. Nobody ever looks down on me.

Personality in Every Strand

When I first started my salary was VND1.8 million a month, but after one year I'll get VND2 million. I get a raise every year on the anniversary of the day they opened the shop, and then some bonuses for working

extra days. It's enough for me. I live with my family and don't have to pay rent, so I've still got lots to go to the café with my friends. And it's a fair salary, I think. After all, each head takes a different amount of time. For example, say someone comes in and I spend two hours plucking their hair. That works out to VND60,000 an hour. Plus, I never have to work overtime. There was one day when it was time to close the shop but one of the customers only had half of his head plucked. We just asked him to come back the next day to get the rest of his head plucked. Well, he came back, and we took care of it.

Some of my friends were surprised at first when I told them about the job, but when they come and see what I do, they like it. My parents think my job is pretty okay. After they came to see the store, they

gave me permission to work here. This shop is different from other hair shops. We specialize in plucking white hair, and no customers ask for other services [a reference to massage/sexual services available at many hair salons for men]. The customers here know how to behave.

You know what keeps me going every day? I find it interesting that with every head of hair you need to pluck, you have to adapt and find your own technique. There's thin hair, thick hair, curly hair, all types. And we've got a different type of tweezer for every different kind of hair. And you know what? After all this plucking, I've come up with a theory. I can guess someone's character from the type of hair they have. Thick-haired people? They're hard-headed. [Laughs]

My dreams? I've only been here a year, so it's a little early for me to start thinking about other jobs. I used to take English classes in the evening, and I'm thinking of starting them again. These days, just about every job requires a foreign language. Mainly though, I dream about the family I'll have some day. My dad owns a motorbike repair shop, so maybe one day after I get married, my husband and I will open our own motorbike repair shop. [Sighs and smiles]

Additional editing by Gerard Sasges
*Excerpted from **It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam***
Today, available in paperback on Amazon or as an e-book on iTunes (scan code). ■



Brain Overload

Are 'digital natives' really effective multitaskers?



Adrian Watts is the Deputy Headmaster and Director of Academic Studies at the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)



I THOUGHT THE topic of multitasking might be useful to parents because at some stage in your child's development you are going to hear the phrase, "You don't understand, I am doing my homework. We (digital natives) can listen to music, chat, Facebook, watch Youtube, text and do homework all at the same time. Our brains are different to yours; we can multitask."

'Digital native' is a term used to describe people born during or after the widespread introduction of digital technologies and who, through interacting with digital technology from an early age, have a greater understanding of its concepts.

The question is can our children *really* multitask?

Multitasking in this context refers to looking at various multi-media at the same time. This has become a part of everyone's life that's grown rapidly. For most of human history this has not been an issue, but today it is one that we need to think about. In the late 1990s the first research introduced us to a new state of mind, Continuous Partial Attention which refers to the desire to be a live node on a network and not miss anything going on in our social media world. Hence, the need to always be connected; being alive is being connected, paying continuous partial attention to anything else.

This research has been built upon by many universities and from these studies we can see why multitasking has increased. Researchers believe that this is because of Partial Media Displacement. What this means is that as new technologies are created they take the place of the previous technology, for example radio has been replaced by TV. However, in the rapidly changing 21st century new technology emerges more quickly and what has happened is that instead of stealing time from old technology as in the past, new technology gets placed on top of existing, double or triple booking the same time space, leading to the need to multitask. Results show that heavy social media users have on average four sources open at any one time and spend up to 40 percent of what they define as work time following social media.

Terrible at Everything

Researchers from Duke University and The Kaiser Family Foundation have found that developing brains can become more easily habituated than adult brains to constantly switching tasks and are less able to sustain



attention. Hence when adults are not supervising computer use, and children are left to their own devices, the impetus isn't to do homework but to connect. The research from these leading sources clearly shows that students often juggle homework and entertainment but this does not come without consequences, as this 14-year-old student describes: "I'll be reading a book for homework and I'll get a text message and pause my reading and put down the book, pick up the phone to reply to the text message, and then 20 minutes later realize, 'Oh, I forgot to do my homework.'"

Research from Stanford, MIT, Michigan and California State all produced shocking results that support the quote above. They discovered that multitaskers are terrible at every aspect of multitasking. They're terrible at ignoring irrelevant information; they're terrible at keeping information in their head organized and they're terrible at switching from one task to another. Evidence from psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience suggests that when students multitask while doing schoolwork, their learning is far spottier and shallower than if the work had their full attention. They understand and remember less, and they have greater difficulty transferring their learning to new contexts.

It's clear from these studies that there are negative effects of divided attention on learning. Scientists show that the brain simply cannot do two complex tasks at the same time. It can do very simple tasks that don't compete with each other for the same mental resources. However, doing homework while texting, emailing or posting on Facebook and other

social media sites are a problem, because each of these tasks is very demanding, and each of them uses the same area of the brain, the prefrontal cortex.

There are four major issues arising from multitasking by students when doing their homework. Firstly, the assignment takes longer to complete because of the time spent on distracting activities. Secondly, the mental fatigue caused by repeatedly dropping and picking up a mental thread

"Researchers are beginning to demonstrate that multitasking while learning is negatively associated with students' grades"

leads to more mistakes. Thirdly, students' subsequent memory of what they're working on is impaired if their attention is divided. Finally some research has suggested that when distracted, our brains actually process and store information in different, less useful ways, which can result in less flexible use of acquired knowledge.

Researchers are beginning to demonstrate that multitasking while learning is negatively

associated with students' grades. They found that students who could not resist the urge to use Facebook during their observation periods had lower grade point averages than those who didn't go on the site.

So the answer to the question "Can students multitask?" is a categorical "no!"

However, it's not all bad news. Researchers at the University of Washington believe we have the opportunity to take control of the situation. They suggest that we approach multitasking as a skill and teach the tools that will help students to focus, avoid distraction, and judge what they pay attention to as they're exposed to distractions. They feel it's a matter of training the brain. In recent studies involving introducing students to mindfulness, researchers found that those trained concentrated for longer periods of time, were more focused, and could ignore irrelevancies. The students felt they gained control and no longer felt that they had to deal with everything immediately. They had more time and could make skillful choices. Other studies that allowed students to build in tech breaks to periods of work, found that over time, students were able to extend their working time to 20, 30, even 45 minutes, as long as they knew that an opportunity to get online awaited in the future.

A piece of advice from one researcher is: "Parents can draw a line when it comes to homework and studying, telling their kids, 'This is a time when you will concentrate on just one thing.'"

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Oi. ■

>>The List Education

education

SCHOOLS [CHILDREN]



ABC International School (ABCIS)

Inspected and judged an outstanding school by British Government Inspectors (October 2013), the ABCIS is one of the few schools worldwide awarded this Department for Education rating. Progress of students puts the ABCIS among the top 8% of schools in the world. Providing education for 2-18 year olds in a supportive and friendly environment, it delivers a culturally adapted version of the British National Curriculum supported by Cambridge & AQA IGCSE and AS/A levels. Students are prepared for Universities in the UK, USA, Australia, Korea and Canada.

Enquiries and Admissions
Tel: 5431 1833/34/35/36
Email: office@theabcis.com
www.theabcis.com



American International School

Founded in 2006, American International School (AIS) is a private, coeducational, university-preparatory school for students from preschool to grade 12. The language of instruction is English. The school offers standard American curriculum with a complement of performing arts, visual arts, music and sport programs.

Elementary School (102C Nguyen Van Cu, D1)
Middle School (35 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh)
High School (781/C1-C2 Le Hong Phong, D10)

APU International School

Operating since 2004, APU International School is a private coeducational international school enrolling students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Instruction is conducted in English, but there is an English Language Development (ELD) program available to students who require it. It is currently a member of the College Board, and is an official SAT testing site.

Elementary (501 Lac Long Quan, D11)
Middle and High School (286 Lanh Binh Thang, D11)
www.apu.edu.vn

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).

Xi Campus (Kindergarten)
190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)
APSC Compound
36 Thao Dien, D2
Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)
East-West Highway, D2
3742 4040
www.aisvietnam.com



British International School (BIS)

Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body from pre-school to Year 13. The school is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers with recent UK experience. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISIA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam.

An Phu Primary Campus
225 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2
3744 4551
apprimary@bisvietnam.com
An Phu Secondary Campus
246 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2
3744 2335
apsecondary@bisvietnam.com
Tu Xuong Primary Campus
43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D3
3932 0210
txprimary@bisvietnam.com
www.bisvietnam.com



Canadian International School

Now in its fifth year of operation with a student population of 700 students in grades K-12, CIS- VN has received approval from the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam and the Department of Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City to accept both Vietnamese nationals and expat nationals. The school's language of instruction is English.

No 86, Road 23, D7
www.cis.edu.vn



Deutsche Schule Ho Chi Minh City International German School

Deutsche Schule (IGS) offers a German curriculum from Early Years to Grade 12 which is approved and supported by the German government. IGS is staffed by native German, Vietnamese and English speakers who have many years of teaching experience. We offer a link between Vietnamese and German culture, an international program with German standards and the immersion of German culture into everyday life.

12, Vo Truong Toan, An Phu
08 37 44 63 44
info@igs-hcmc.de
www.igs-hcmc.de



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



European International School HCMC

The European International School Ho Chi Minh City (EIS) offers a supportive and challenging academic education from Early Years to Grade 12 (K-12) an. EIS promotes inter-cultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. Its motto is "Educating Global Citizens".

Thao Dien Campus
730 F-G-K Le Van Mien Street
Thao Dien, D2
www.eishcmc.com



Fosco International School

Caters to pre-school children from 18 months to 4 years and elementary students from 5 to 12 years. It offers enrolment opportunities to both local

and expat children providing childcare services, comprehensive pre-school and kindergarten programs and an internationally aligned elementary school curriculum.

40 Ba Huyen Than Quan, D3
3930 5930
www.fis.edu.vn

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.kidclubsaigon.com

Kinderworld International Kindergarten

KinderWorld International Kindergarten has been in operation since November 2006 and offers both international and local kindergarten services for children aged 1.5 to 5.5 years old.

The Manor Building, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 3036
enquiry@manorhcmc.kinderworld.edu.vn

International School Saigon Pearl

ISSP is an elementary school for children 2 to 11 years of age. Offers an academically rigorous American curriculum. The school has several smartboards, projectors and an independent IT suite that allows students the opportunity to interact with technology to enhance learning.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
082227788
www.issp.edu.vn

L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

33/19 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 6844
www.latelier-anphu.com

Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3744 2639
www.montessori.edu.vn

Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2
3744 4709
noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn



Renaissance International School Saigon



Renaissance is an International British school providing an inclusive curriculum based upon the British curriculum complemented by the International Primary Curriculum and International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each student is offered an education tailored to meet his or her individual learning needs. It is a family school providing a stimulating and secure learning environment with first-class facilities including a 350-seat theatre, swimming pool, mini-pool, play-areas, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171 ext 120/121/122
www.renaissance.edu.vn



Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families.

SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood – Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.

78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
www.ssis.edu.vn



The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

The most established school in Ho Chi Minh City is celebrating 20 years of success in 2013. ISHCMC is the only school in HCMC with full accreditation to teach all three IB programs to students from 2 to 18. ISHCMC is fully accredited by both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC), two of the most prestigious international accreditation organisations. ISHCMC has 975 students from over 50 different nationalities enjoying recently upgraded facilities.

28 Vo Truong Toan, D2
www.ishcmc.com



Saigon Star International School



Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.

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



Singapore International School at Saigon South

Commenced operations in August 2008, The Singapore International School at Saigon South (SIS @ SS) is a purpose-built international school campus that has a capacity of 625 students. It operates classes from kindergarten to senior high school. No 29, Road 3, Trung Son Residential Area, Binh Chanh
www.saigonssouth.sis.edu.vn

Vstar School

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.

Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7

Smartkids

An international childcare centre provides kindergarten and pre-school education for children between 18 months and six years old. A fun and friendly environment, the school focuses on learning through play. 1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2
www.smarthidsinfo.com

SCHOOLS [ADULT]

Cetana PSB Intellis International College

PSB College offers a suite of internationally-recognized diploma programs from business, marketing, hospitality to finance. 144-146 Le Lai, D1
www.psbcollege.edu.vn

RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering. 702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Universal English Center

UEC was founded in 2009. Now with 600 students drawn from 17 different nationalities, the class is served by over 35 native English speaking teachers who are committed to providing a culturally diverse and engaging classroom atmosphere. The center offers a wide range of classes from beginner levels through IGCSE, SAT, IELTS, TOEFL. UEC also provides support to students aspiring for a place in international schools. R4-55-56-57 Hung Gia 5, D7
www.uec.edu.vn

VLS Vietnamese Language School

Imparting genuine fluency in Vietnamese since 1994, VLS is one of the city's best-organised and most professional training centers devoted to the Vietnamese language, with classes for all levels. R4 -28 Hung Phuoc 2, Le Van Thiem, D7

EDITORIAL

WEDDING

COMMERCIAL



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PHOTOGRAPHY

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+84 (0) 128 569 8144



ladieswear

Anupa Eco Boutique **Or's Pick**

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, D1

www.anupa.net / facebook: anupaluxury

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, D1

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, D1

Valenciani **Or's Pick**

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

1F/12 Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1

3821 2788

090 785 5788

menswear

Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, D1

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

gyms

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.

APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
www.aissportscentre.com

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated

gyms.

personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

Body By Jovie

Body By Jovie is a boutique personal training center and yoga studio, catering to individuals demanding diversity, challenge and results. It specializes in one on one session and also offer a full range of classes such as yoga, TRX suspension class, belly dancing, Zumba and outdoor boot camp.

Riverside Residence, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

info@bodybyjovie.com

7am - 9pm (Weekdays) and

7:30am - 7pm (Saturdays)

California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5

28-30-32 Le Lai, D1

5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

Christina Eberlin Yoga Teacher

Christina graduated from Virajati 300hr yoga teacher training in Thailand. She is offering private yoga classes and group classes. For more information you can reach her at

Christinaeberlin@gmail.com
or 093 849 2461

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs.

Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326

www.cyril-and-you.com

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

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

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba®Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbaAtomic®.

Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Stry Garden 2, D7), Cyril&you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khien, D1).

093 406 0735 or 6680 7226

zumba.nutrition@gmail.com

www.zumba-saigon.com

Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about

nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1

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

Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0255

Spa InterContinental & Healthclub

Guests will have access to a 20-meter outdoor lap pool complete with a sundeck, a 160-square meter spacious fitness centre with the latest generation cardio and resistance equipment, plus a personal program of fitness classes.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
spa@icasianasaigon.com
8am - 9:30pm

The Health Club

The Landmark Health Club is located on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark serviced apartments, and offers a fully equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, and a squash court. It also features male and female changing facilities and saunas.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D1
hc@thelandmarkvietnam.com

The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness center 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

X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
www.xrockclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

161-161A Hai Ba Trung, D3
www.acc.vn

Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several

animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2

www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2
6660 6602

www.dakhoaanphu.com

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2000

www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com

8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10



Centre Medical International

Centre Medical International was created in 1992 by Pr Alain Carpentier and Dr Duong Quang Trung, director of the health service of HCMC. In the heart of the city, just near the Notre-Dame Cathedral, French and Vietnamese doctors provide high quality medical service in 12 specialties: General and tropical medicine, Cardiology, Gynecology, Traditional oriental medicine, Ophthalmology, Speech and language therapy, Osteopathic medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychomotor Therapy, and Dietetics. All our profits are dedicated to the Heart Institute which helps deprived Vietnamese children to pay their cardiac surgery.

1 Han Thuyen, D1

3827 2366

www.cmi-vietnam.com



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

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
www.saigonchiropractic.com

Diag Center International
Situating 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

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
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital
Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.
2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1

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

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

Saigon Acupuncture
Practitioner Christopher Booth, M.S., L.Ac., is now accepting new patients. Chris treats the following conditions with acupuncture: Chronic and Acute Pain, Neurological Disorders, Gynecological Disorders, Emotional & Psychological Disorders, among others.
161 Hai Ba Trung, D3
saigonacu@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/saigonacupuncture

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

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

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

Dang Luu Dental Centre
Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.
34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh

Digital Dental Clinic
Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.
R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Elite Dental
With an atmosphere more reminiscent of a luxury hotel, this is one of the largest high-quality dental clinics in HCMC, established to answer expat demands for superb dental techniques and professional staff.
57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3

European Dental Clinic
Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.
17-17A Le Van Mien, D2
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

German International Dentistry
German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.
1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

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

Minh Khai Dental Clinic
French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.
199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1

Naomi Dental Clinic
A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Mikio.
R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7 5410 3937

Saigon Smile
With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.
96 Tran Nao, D2 6674 4255
8am to 8pm

Saint Paul
Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi

Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.
50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1 3835 6159

Smile Dental Center
Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.
173 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5413 6635

Starlight Dental Clinic
Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.
2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3 3822 6222

Westcoast International Dental Clinic
Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.
27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1 3825 7485

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital
The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.
135B Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cho Ray Hospital
Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.
201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh
Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.
1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh

DialAsia International Hospital
A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.
253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

FV Hospital
FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.
6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.
A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.
63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

Traditional Medicine Hospital
This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the

natural world which firmly belongs to this region.
179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

Tu Du Hospital
Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.
284 Cong Quynh, D1

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics
Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.
15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap

nails

Classic Nails
Located near Ben Thanh Market, Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation.
4 Phan Boi Chau, D1 3825 7047
9am - 8pm

Fame Nails
A place for your nail care near Ben Thanh Market. Besides classic manicure and pedicure, it also offers deluxe spa manicure and pedicure, nail art and enhancement, and services including waxing, facial, eyebrow shaping and eye lashes extension.
18 Pham Hong Thai, D1
www.famenails.com

Kelly Pang
Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.
214C Nguyen Trai, D1

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue
Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.
103 Nguyen Hue, D1

spas

An Nam Spa
Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.
26-28 Dong Du, D1

Dermal Essentials
Dermalogica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermalogica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.
108 Pasteur, D1

Eden Spa
Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.
19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 3815
097 810 6868



Flamingo Spa

Flamingo Spa is an authentic Thai spa where all ingredients used are imported from Thailand. Guests arrive in a clean and friendly atmosphere for an optimal relaxing experience. Men, women and couples are welcome, and they offer a wide range of massages along with a sauna, jacuzzi facilities & VIP rooms.

13B Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 1074
091 243 9601
FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com
Open 10:30 am to close 11:30pm



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

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

Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanness environment, Indochine spa provides your senses with natural energy. Indulge yourself for a unique and amazing experience.

69 Thu Khoa Huan st., D. I, HCM
3827 7188
indochinespa@gmail.com
www.indochine-spa.com.vn
Open: 10:00-22:00

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, D1



Kyoto Spa & Hair Salon

Body massage
 Foot massage
 Hair cut women and men
32 Dong Du, Ben Nghe Ward, D1
(Spa & Hair Salon)
8A/4D1 Thai Van Lung,
Ben Nghe Ward, D1 (Spa)
0902 983 089
loan_royal@gmail.com
www.spakyotohcmc.com.vn



Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1

L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638

La Cochinchine Spa



Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1812

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3
100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7



Maison Mikio Boutique Salon

District 7's Premium Boutique Salon. Two floors providing full beauty services nestled in a quiet residential area in Phu My Hung's Garden Plaza 2 Complex. Equipped with a cafe, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.

Garden Plaza 2 Complex
8 Ton Dat Tien, Quận 7
5412 4773

MIMI Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events - and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dong Khoi, D1
090 387 6666

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609

Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being.

9C Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 7118

Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services



at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

54 Dong Du, D1

Spa InterContinental

Spa InterContinental is a contemporary spa that has two double and five single treatment rooms, each with a private bathroom, a foot reflexology area, and luxurious changing and shower rooms.

Combining the fresh, local traditional herbs and plants, an ambient lighting, soft scents and soothing sounds with the best of international brands, Spa InterContinental offers guests the professional spa expertise and a truly sensory experience.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9999

spa@icasianasaigon.com
8am - 9:30pm

The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

The Prime - Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with imported machines from Europe. The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy - and a Prime special service package.

192 Le Lai, D1

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

76C Hai Ba Trung, D1

Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom - Mai, Bamboo, and more.

2 Lam Son Square, D1

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

home & furnishings

AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.

219 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

91-93 Nguyen Hue, D1
3915 3491

Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.

71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 8811

Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

158 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

15C Thi Sach, D1

Gomo

Typical of the large furniture warehouses in North America and Europe, Gomo sells contemporary items for your home and office.

7/30B, Road 13, Binh Hoa
Thuan An Town, Binh Duong
(0650) 376 5115
www.gomo.com.vn

Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3914 3553

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

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, D1

Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.

31A Le Thanh Ton, D1

Vscential

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Vscential
2388B Pasteur, D3
www.vscential.com

Business & Tech

■ IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



Children of the Dragon

From a long career in the military to a second calling as a philanthropist, meet the founder of Les Enfants du Dragon

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **CHARLINE SAUDEMON**

MEET THE CHILDREN of the dragon. They may not be offspring of real dragons but their parents are fully intent on making sure their kids inherit the spirit and greatness of this mythological creature. The children's 'parents' are Marc de Muynck and Dr. Buy Huy Lan, a dentist based in France, founders of the NGO Les Enfants du Dragon.

Officially created in 2009 as a French NGO under the charter and full patronage of both the Vietnamese government and the French consulate, Les Enfants du Dragon aims to help those in need through various humanitarian projects and partners. Unlike other NGOs of the same size and scope, Les Enfants du Dragon does not specialize in any specific area. With 11 core members, a dozen volunteers, the support of local governments, other NGOs,

and numerous fundraisers, the association tries to support in all aspects. It has built houses, bridges, ensured clean water supply to poor localities, provided scholarships and bicycles, opened free English and French courses for children, supported teacher training projects, supplied walking sticks for the elderly, entertained sick children and organized camping trips for orphans. Instead of narrowing it to just one focus and limiting its own members, it acts as a branch connecting various partner organizations and through its many programs aims to channel its reach to make the most impact.

"The name came from the myth of how Vietnam was created, it told that the founding father, who was a dragon, and the founding mother, a fairy, together had a hundred children and these children

became the first kings of Vietnam," Marc explains of the meaning behind the name. "These very same kings laid the foundation of ancient Vietnam as a country and people and their names are still honored to this day."

Paid in Smiles and Tears

Marc visited Vietnam for the first time in 2001. He was 51 then and had just retired from a long military career. He was on a mission, albeit of a different sort than the ones he used to carry out, bearing charity gifts from France to an orphanage in Sa Dec, located in the Mekong Delta.

"There are problems here the likes of which I was not aware of back home. Poverty. Illiteracy. Children without parents. People that need help," he says of his first impressions. Despite that,



there was something about the rough, dusty Southeast Asian country that stuck with him, a “certain good feeling that is somehow unique and enduring”. The feeling endured and was the main drive to create Les Enfants du Dragon.

“After that first three month holiday in Vietnam, I went back home and joined an NGO called Volunteers of the World. I did many projects with them and helped many people in Rangoon and Mandalay, Myanmar. I started running with many other NGOs and humanitarian projects. For many years I worked with Maison Chance, Karuna, and Coup de Pouce Humanitaire. I helped all kinds of people, from orphaned children to homeless vagabonds, to people ridden with diseases whose cures they couldn’t afford,” says Marc. “Eventually though, I became... dissatisfied. I did not really find my place. Very often, a volunteer is only a pawn which is given a specific task and is involved little or not at all in the projects or the decision-making.”

He had two choices - one was to quit volunteering altogether, the other to find a way to help people the best he could and in a way that he wanted. Marc’s decision was clear: “I can’t imagine my life as a retiree in laziness or in third age leisure clubs. People would often ask me, how do I go from being a lifelong dedicated military man to a lifelong dedicated humanitarian? I have only one answer to that. To forgive myself.

“People can only feel true happiness when they help those who aren’t as fortunate in life as they are, when people bring joy to children whose parents are no longer there”

Perhaps I want to repay the world for what I’ve taken from it. Perhaps I want to deny my past self. Either way, in my opinion, people can only feel true happiness when they help those who aren’t as fortunate in life as they are, when people bring joy to children whose parents are no longer there.”

In 2007, after cancer surgery, he returned to Vietnam, got in contact with the many friends he had made during his first trip and started various projects from helping upgrade a nursery in his residential neighborhood in Ho Chi Minh City which was often flooded during torrential rains, to building houses for poor people in the southern province of Dong Nai. These

projects eventually laid the foundation for the birth of Les Enfants du Dragon in 2009. Since then, it hasn’t been a smooth road, but it has been one that is infinitely fulfilling in ways that matter the most.

“None of us volunteers get paid in any way of course except in smiles... and sometimes in tears too,” says Marc. “We have a good team now. Good morale and partnership. We are doing good work and we will continue to do even more good work to people who need us most. We started because there was poverty and suffering in the world. We won’t stop until they disappear.”

For more info, visit www.lesenfantsdudragon.com ■



Dear Hadrien,

I've been living in HCMC for nearly four months now. Last week, I finally bought a motorbike to travel to work, but (and I am a bit ashamed to tell you, and please don't tell my mum!) I have already been involved in a traffic accident. As I was only partially at fault, and no one was badly injured, I just apologized, picked up my motorbike and drove off. Later on, my friend warned me that I could have been in a lot of trouble if the police had been at the scene. I realize this is probably true, so what can I do in order to avoid potential liability if something like this happens again?



A member of the Paris Bar, **Hadrien Wolff** has been practicing law in Vietnam for more than seven years, currently as a partner of Audier & Partners based at its HCMC office. Having gained extensive legal experience in the Netherlands and Cambodia, **Marijn Sprokhereef** is an associate at the Hanoi office of the same firm. **Audier & Partners** is an international law firm with presence in Vietnam, Myanmar and Mongolia, providing advice to foreign investors on a broad range of legal issues



AN ACCIDENT IS unfortunately something that many of us already have or may experience at some point in the future while living in Vietnam. Your friend was entirely right when he told you that an accident like yours may have negative consequences. In order to avoid, or at least to mitigate those consequences, it is good to know something about your rights and especially your obligations under Vietnamese law as a driver.

A good starting point for that is the Law on Road Traffic, which describes the hundreds of traffic rules for vehicles and their operators participating in road traffic in Vietnam. This law makes it clear, for example, that in order to drive a "standard" motorbike with a capacity of 50 cm³ or more, you need to be at least 18 and physically fit, and you must have a proper and valid driver's license.

When driving around on your motorbike in the streets, you will need to carry the

following documents: a vehicle registration document, a category A1 or A2 driver's license and a civil liability insurance certificate. The Law on Road Traffic states that all those directly involved in a traffic accident must immediately stop their vehicles, keep the conditions at the site of the accident unchanged and, except for some emergency situations, remain at the scene until the arrival of the police.

It's good to know that if you consider purchasing a new motorbike, under Vietnamese law you are, in principle, required to register it with a local traffic police division. As a foreigner, you need to fill out a vehicle registration form and produce a valid identification document, a residence card with a term of one year or more, your work permit (if applicable), a so-called letter of introduction from a competent Vietnamese organization or agency and vehicle papers, which includes a vehicle transfer deed, a document

confirming that you paid your vehicle registration and a document that proves the origin of the vehicle. I agree this process is quite burdensome so you may want to consider either asking a trusted Vietnamese friend to help you or you can simply buy a second-hand motorbike.

One way to limit negative consequences in case you ever become involved in a traffic accident again is to make sure that you are properly insured. Under Vietnamese law, motor vehicle owners are required to purchase insurance for civil liability, which covers loss of property, physical injury and death of third parties caused by your vehicle. If you become involved in a road accident, please keep in mind that you are required to promptly inform the nearest police station, as well as your insurance company. Furthermore, you should realize that driving without a valid driver's license may be a reason for your insurance company not to cover any damage caused by the accident.

Returning to the Law on Road Traffic, I assume you already know that drivers as well as passengers on motorbikes must wear a helmet. But did you also know that drivers are not allowed to drive on sidewalks (even in HCMC!) and that they are not allowed to use an umbrella, a mobile phone or an audio device while driving? And your only legal excuse to carry more than one person on your motorbike would be that you are carrying someone who is sick and needs emergency medical treatment, that you are escorting somebody who has committed an illegal act or that you are carrying a child under the age of 14. So keep that in mind and drive safely!

Every month, **Hadrien and Marijn** answer legal questions from Oi readers. If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com. ■

Silicon Valley Vietnam

Overseas Vietnamese should be investing in tech startups, not just sending remittances



Anh-Minh Do is the editor at TechInAsia.com for Vietnam focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh also organizes events at Evecoo.vn



IN 2013, OVERSEAS Vietnamese (or *Viet Kieus*) remitted an estimated USD11 billion into Vietnam. In 2013, Vietnam's GDP was USD170 billion. That's right; *Viet Kieus* send back so much money that it's equal to about six percent of Vietnam's overall GDP. And although Vietnam's GDP is still growing by roughly five percent per year, USD11 billion is still huge. Some of this money should be intelligently going to Vietnam's entrepreneurs. And it is. Right now, there are over 3600 businesses in this country that are owned by *Viet Kieus*, with a total capital of over USD8.6 billion. For perspective, the total annual income of *Viet Kieus* is estimated to be USD50 billion. Only a small percentage of that USD8.6 billion is going into technology. *Viet Kieus* are now a seminal part of Silicon Valley. It's

clear that the Vietnamese community overseas has done well and the biggest connector is their deep ties to Silicon Valley - 13 percent of Silicon Valley's Asian engineers are Vietnamese. Asian engineers, in total, account for 11 percent of The Valley's total engineer population. Although that's small compared to the Chinese and Indian populations (Chinese account for 51 percent and 23 percent are Indian), the phenomenon has had subtle effects on the startup ecosystem back in Vietnam.

Trung Dung, the cofounder of OnDisplay, sold his company for just under USD2 billion. Trung went to the US from Vietnam at the age of 17 with only two dollars in hand and after a successful career as an entrepreneur in the States, he has returned to Vietnam to start Mobivi. It's a startup that tackles

the mobile payment industry. Trung is not the only *Viet Kieu* that has had success in The Valley. Recently, Klout was acquired for over USD200 million, its cofounder is Binh Tran - a *Viet Kieu*. There's also Misfit Wearables, lead by founder Sonny Vu, who does most of the design and engineering for its wearable devices in Vietnam. Sonny shows that you can manage a team in two countries successfully, taking advantage of the labor and skills in Vietnam while leveraging Silicon Valley connections over in the US. The list goes on.

What's the motivation for *Viet Kieus* to get involved in Vietnam? It's because the engineering talent is leveling up and the local market is also waking up. Vietnam's software industry was worth over USD2 billion in 2012. That number is largely influenced by major outsourcing companies. In addition, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are developing a strong middle class population. By 2020, Vietnam's middle class will double to 33 million people. On top of this, it is arguable that Vietnam is one of the ideal jumping off points to attack markets across Southeast Asia. Both Thailand and Singapore are a bit too advanced for the rest of the market, while Indonesia and the Philippines have infrastructural issues - but Vietnam sits in between these worlds. The key is that *Viet Kieus* will have an easier time adapting and connecting to the Vietnamese people in their motherland. Yes, there are legal barriers, but they can be overcome. Of course, there is red tape and lots of headaches connected to investing in Vietnam. But the fact is if you really want something, you can make it happen. People like Trung Dung and companies like OneCapitalWay, which is funded mainly by *Viet Kieus* living in The Valley, are examples. There are even things like the Silicon Valley project, lead by the Ministry of Science and Technology, that want to make this easier too. The resources are now in place. The people are ready. Are you? ■

The Ties That Bind

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



ON APRIL 25, fifteen staff members from SCS Vietnam, an accounting and tax service firm, visited Sunrise Special School 2 for a storytelling and activity afternoon. Sunrise Special School 2 is a high school and vocational training center for students with intellectual and physical disabilities, and is one of the many schools supported by the Loreto Vietnam-Australia Program.

The students warmly greeted the visitors and introduced themselves, proudly showing off their classrooms and work. After the students and SCS staff were well acquainted, the real fun began! The students were organized into small groups for story time and were so engrossed in the tales that they couldn't take their eyes off the colorful pictures. After the stories had been read, the students excitedly participated in craft activities related to the stories. Colored paper, crayons and art materials filled the rooms as the students began busily creating their artwork. Upon completion the students giggled excitedly knowing that they could take these home

to show their parents.

The bonds formed that day between the students and SCS team are ones which will nurture lifelong memories for all involved and is the driving force behind SCS's Corporate Social Responsibility Program. SCS employees are no strangers to engaging in charity work. In recent months they partnered with the Loreto Program in attending a bike distribution project in Tra Vinh Province and organizing a Talent Quest with students from Nguyen Dinh Chieu School for the Blind. – By **Steph Giles** ■

SCS Vietnam (www.scs-vietnam.com) provides corporate establishment, accounting and taxation services in Vietnam. Loreto Vietnam-Australia Program (www.loretovietnam.org) is a registered International Non-Government Organization that began operating in Vietnam in 1997 and has since reached out to over 25,000 underprivileged and disabled children in Ho Chi Minh City, Tien Giang, Tra Vinh, Ca Mau, Phu Yen and An Giang.

"The bonds formed that day between the students and SCS team are ones which will nurture lifelong memories for all involved"



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consulates

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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

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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
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Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 0130

Iceland Consulate

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
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3823 7050
www.india-consulate.org.vn
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3825 1888
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08 6258 6473
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Japanese Consulate

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08 3933 3520
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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
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www.nordcham.com

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Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

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3822 5174
www.mfa.gov.sg

Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1

South Korea Consulate

107 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 5757
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

Sweden Consulate

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3823 6800
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Switzerland Consulate

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3744 6996

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insurance

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23 Phung Khac Khoan, DI 3824 5271

Realty World

Focuses on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office buildings, and villas.
111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh. 3899 4979

Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.
Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI. 3825 8598

The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.
369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9

recruiters

Opus Recruitment

Opus group was originally a unit under KPMG Thailand that defected to run independently, focusing on quality executive searches.
2A Rolanno Offices, 128 Nguyen Phi Khanh, Tan Dinh, DI

Navigos Group & Vietnam Works

Navigos Group provides recruitment solutions in Vietnam. Services include VietnamWorks (which posts about 200 new jobs per day) and Navigos Search (the leading recruitment firm in Vietnam).
130 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI

Odgers Berndtson Vietnam

A global firm specializing in the recruitment of senior level executives, the firm employs experienced professionals from specific market areas to provide discreet access to industry leaders.
Suite 1609, 1st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, DI

relocation

AGS Four Winds (Vietnam)

Global leader in international removals & relocations, with 128 offices in 78 countries, they can move you to/or from any location worldwide.
5th Floor, Lafayette De Saigon, 8A Phung Khac Khoan, DI 35210071
ags-vietnam@agsfourwinds.com
www.agsfourwinds.com

Allied Pickfords

One of the largest and most respected providers of moving services worldwide, AP assumes complete responsibility for all moving services through a single point of contact.
District 1. 0122 5141 848

Asian Tigers

Pan-Asian moving firm with a perhaps unrivalled level of experience and expertise in packing, storing and moving a family's treasured belongings throughout this region and beyond.
9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, D4. 3826 7799

Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.
60 Nguyen Van Thu, DI

JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.
1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4. 3826 7655

Logical Moves

They offer your belongings the best protection available with the latest technology, experienced staff and equipment. With door to door services,

Logical Moves is all about quality service, best prices and well-arranged time. They have moved offices and household goods for many well-known international companies in Vietnam.
3941 5322
www.logicalmoves.net

Santa Fe Relocation Service

Door to door relocation service which promises to take the stress out of moving personal possessions from one city - or country - to another. Also offers pet relocations, records management, home search and immigration help.
www.santaferelo.com
info@santaferelo.com.vn

shipping

HL Shipping

A worldwide freight forwarder offering dedicated, integral services in the international trade market providing a reliable, customer-oriented, and cost-effective coverage of all shipping needs, including a comprehensive assessment of all costs and assurance of on-time delivery for each segment. Competent service in English direct from the MD Jeff Tran.
29 Huynh Van Banh, Ward 17, Phu Nhuan 3995 6117

Logitem Viet Nam

Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.
23 Tran Nao, Binh An, D2 3744 2281

Sagawa Express Vietnam

A subsidiary of Sagawa Holdings Group, this firm specialises in providing solutions to general logistics issues in Vietnam, and it has a general logistics certificate unique in this country.
169 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh 3840 9330



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Faces & Places



Meandering Through the City

A recent exhibition that presented the innovative urban policies of Ho Chi Minh City and Lyon through their large urban projects, urban management of public spaces, mobility, and the role of nature in the city. With over 300 pictures, display panels, videos, 3D animations and touch-screens, the exhibition offered a chance to rediscover these two metropolises through their major modern challenges.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**



Color Me Run

A five km run that takes off with a colorful explosion. Color bombs, color cannons, and color mortars blasted runners along the route. At the end of the rainbow was a huge music festival with Kelly Rowlands (formerly of Destiny's Child) and Timomatic (of Australia's Got Talent) headlining.

IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**



Hue Festival

The festival showcased art performances representing different sub-cultures and ancient capital cities in Vietnam, with an emphasis on Hue royal court music and folk songs. There were also fashion shows and art performances by art troupes from 20 countries at venues inside the Citadel, An Dinh Palace and outdoor stages around the city.

IMAGES BY **DOAN QUANG**



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