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Director **HUYEN NGUYEN**

Managing Director **JIMMY VAN DER KLOET**
jimmy@oivietnam.com

Managing Editor & Art Director **CHRISTINE VAN**
christine@oivietnam.com

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

Staff Photographer **VY LAM**
vy@oivietnam.com

Graphic Designer **LAM SON VU**
lamson@oivietnam.com

Online Intern **TAI FOSTER-KNAPPE**

For advertising, please contact:

English  **0948 779 219**
Vietnamese  **0932 164 629**

General **advertising@oivietnam.com**

Inquiries **info@oivietnam.com**



This Month's Cover

Photographer: **Gabi Pham**

Model: **Liisimari Randjärv**

Scarf: **Liisi Silk** (Learn how to make silk scarf paintings in our cover story, page 48)

M.U.A: **Duy Vu**

Hair: **Mei Nguyen**

Stylist: **Jolie Nguyen**

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Chịu trách nhiệm xuất bản:
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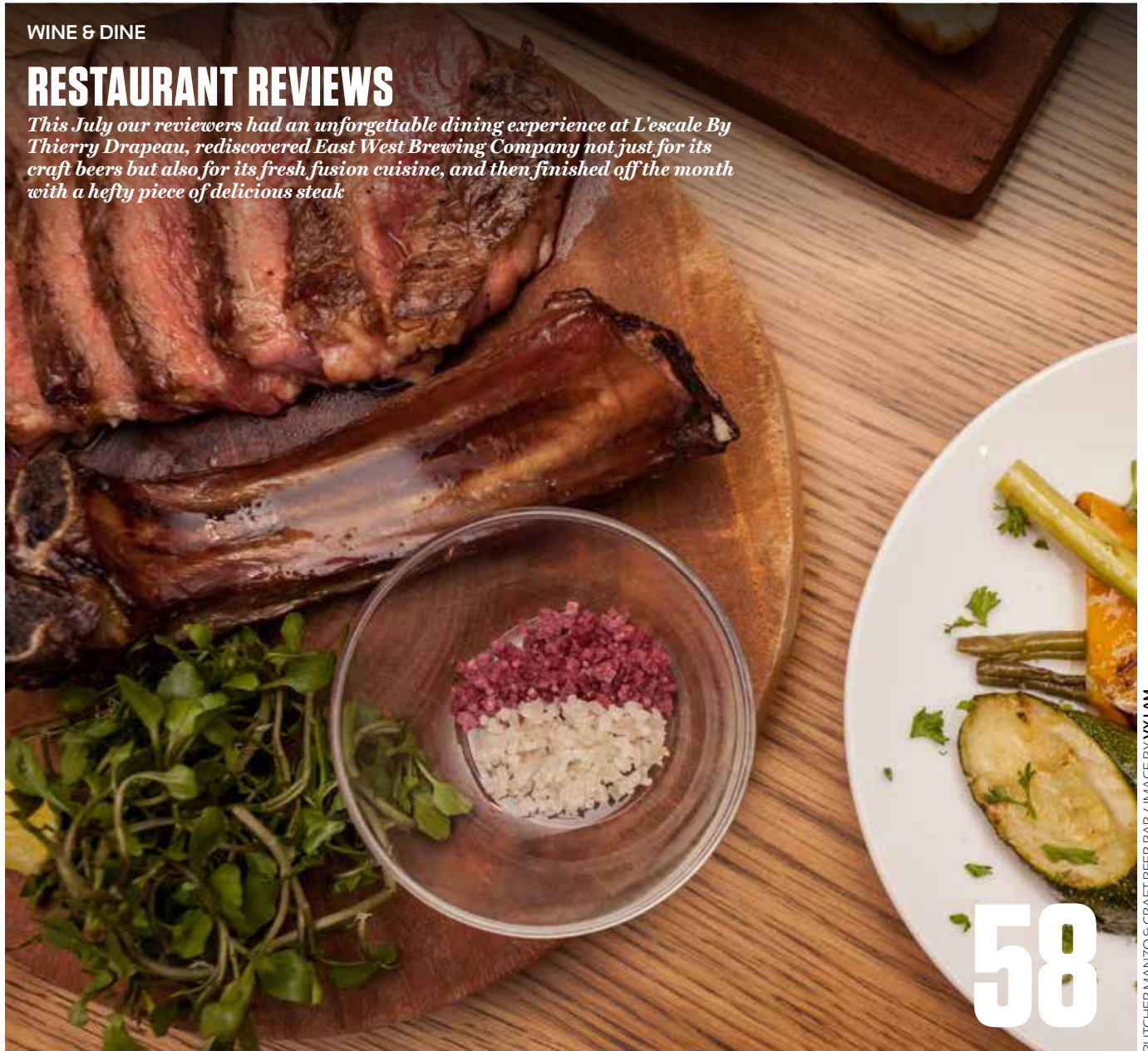
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BUTCHERMANZO & CRAFT BEER BAR / IMAGE BY VY LAM

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IMAGE BY VY LAM

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JULY 5

What: International Conference On Leadership And Management In Higher Education In A Globalized World

Where: SEAMEO RETRAC (35 Le Thanh Ton, D1)

About: The conference will be once again a global platform for discussion, collaboration and intellectual exchange among educational leaders, academicians and professionals in related areas of higher education from all over the world. The main goal of this 2018 conference is to update the participants with trends and practices in leadership and management in higher education; thereby, they can be better prepared to face challenges at their workplace. The conference is also aimed at addressing critical issues related to the identified sub-themes of the conference by covering a wide range of topics relating to innovations and best practices in higher education leadership and management. Specific objectives of the conference are: To provide a professional platform for knowledge exchange, experience sharing and update of current trends in higher education leadership and management among speakers and participants. To provide academicians and professionals with unique opportunities for presenting and exchanging research-based results related to innovations and best practices in leadership and management in higher education from global higher education institutions.

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What's on this month...

UNTIL JULY 20

What: Ninth Annual Gallery Anniversary Group Exhibition

Where: Craig Thomas Gallery (27i Tran Nhat Duet, D1)

About: This year's anniversary show will be particularly special as it will include two exciting young artists who are new to the gallery and who will be joining CTG for its upcoming group exhibition of 16 Vietnamese artists in New York City in September.

Among the artists whose work will be showing are long-time gallery favorites like Luong Luu Bien, Pham Huy Thong, Lieu Nguyen and Nguyen Minh Nam. In addition, Hue-based artist Truong The Linh will show one of the works of the collection that he has spent the past year creating. As always, there will be a couple surprises at the show including the latest master work from acclaimed Saigon-based artist Lim Khim Ka Ty with whom CTG has been working with since shortly after her graduation from art school in 2004.

Also, Hanoi-based artist Nguyen Trong is making a new work exclusively for the anniversary show and this will be the first time his work has been on public display in Saigon.

The addition of Minh to the gallery's roster of artists is a continuation of CTG's efforts to have the gallery represent a full range of artists working in Vietnam's three primary art centers of Hanoi, Hue and Saigon.

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THE BULLETIN

Promotions and news in HCMC and beyond...

InterContinental Phu Quoc Long Beach Resort Opens

Opened last month, InterContinental Phu Quoc Long Beach Resort is located on Long Beach, one of Vietnam's most stunning white-sand beaches, enjoying glorious sunset views. The resort features an exclusive beachfront, six restaurants and bars, 459 luxuriously appointed rooms, suites and villas, as well as state-of-the-art meeting facilities, while seamlessly combining the sophisticated and cosmopolitan essence of the InterContinental heritage with the rustic charm of the resort's surrounding local area and culture. In each of the elegant rooms, suites, and villas, the deep bathtubs, walk-in rain showers, floor-to-ceiling windows and spacious balconies ensure an ultimate escape in relaxation.

InterContinental Phu Quoc Long Beach Resort includes the highest bar in Phu Quoc, INK 360, boasting breathtaking panoramic ocean and mountain views. Additional dining venues include Lava, a fine-dining seafood and specialty imported meats restaurant. Sora & Umi serves authentic Japanese and Vietnamese cuisine with the focus on the restaurant's numerous live cooking stations. By the pool, Ombr serves homemade Italian cuisine and gelato alongside fresh juices and healthy bites. Beachfront restaurant Sea Shack serves comfort food, while beers and ciders are served in the Library area stocked with books. Mercado is the place for coffee, tea and pastries, as well as themed picnic baskets including Traditional Vietnamese Delicacies,



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Guests are able to indulge in serene spa treatments at the award winning HARNN Heritage Spa, designed by Vietnamese architect Vo Trong Nghia, and inspired by traditional Asian medicine and naturopathy. The 250-sqm Planet Trekkers children's club arranges numerous recreational activities and enriching excursions designed to both entertain as well as broaden the horizons of children of all ages. The resort also boasts the dedicated Kids Can Cook cooking school.

The resort's Conference Centre features over 2,000 sqm of indoor event

venues. The 870 sqm Grand Ballroom hosts up to 600 guests for banquets, a purpose built auditorium seats 130 delegates, and multiple break out rooms all offer state of the art audio-visual equipment.

InterContinental Phu Quoc Long Beach Resort's Opening Special Offer starts from VND6,500,000++ per room per night, with a minimum 2 night-stay, and includes: VND2,500,000 credit to spend at the resort's restaurants, bars and spa; daily breakfast for 2; and airport transfers. For more info, visit www.phuquoc.intercontinental.com, or call +84 283 978 8888. ■

Exhibition of World Press Photo Contest



The Exhibition of World Press Photo Contest will officially return to Vietnam after 15 years of absence. This event honors winning photos from more than 73,000 works in the 61st World Press Photo Contest, which is organized and sponsored by Canon and the Dutch Postcode Loterij. The exhibition is held at



the Vietnam University of Fine Arts (42 Yet Kieu, Hanoi) until July 6th. The event is in line with other activities to celebrate the 45th anniversary of Vietnam-Netherlands friendship, organized by the Dutch Embassy and Consulate.

This year, the exhibition includes 130 works of various topics (contemporary

issues, environment, news, nature, people, sports, etc.). The award-winning authors and works of World Press Photo Contest, which are well-known in Vietnam, including the picture of Phan Thi Kim Phuc (also known as "Napalm Baby") taken by photographer Nick Ut (1972), the picture of Son Doong Cave taken by Carsten Peter - a German photographer (2010), or the "The Pink Choice" album depicting lives of Vietnam's gay couples by Maika Elan (2013).

The winners of the 2018 World Press Photo Contest were announced in Amsterdam last April with the highest prize to Venezuelan photographer Ronaldo Schemidt with a masterpiece that made audiences unable to control their feelings. ■

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Bear This In Mind

Endangered species and conservation laws for Vietnam

I recently overheard someone shouted, "I accidentally ate pangolin meat!" He ate pangolin meat without knowing what a pangolin was and that it is an endangered species and trading it is illegal. This sad story made me believe that while many living in Vietnam are concerned about the preservation of endangered species they are not necessarily aware of the current status of each species under international and Vietnamese laws. I decided to take time to review the laws and explain what some of the commonly traded endangered species are in Vietnam.

Pangolin

Pangolins are cute wild animals whose appearance is similar to anteaters, but the former are covered with scales. They are the only mammals in the world with scales. And sadly, they are facing extinction if the trade of this mammal is not stopped.

Pangolins are hunted and traded because of their meat and because some people believe their flesh and scales have medicinal virtues (in particular, to heal asthma and certain types of cancer). It is reported that one specimen may be sold up to USD1,000 or more in Vietnam.

There are different species of pangolin around the world, but the species that you would meet in Vietnam is the *Sunda pangolin* also named *Manis javanica*.

This species is protected by Vietnamese law and trading it, whether of alive or parts of the body (like scales), is illegal. Vietnam, like almost all countries in the world, has become a party to the CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), which is today the common reference for the list of endangered species.

Vietnam penal code, passed by the National Assembly in 2015, absolutely prohibits trade in species listed in the CITES as threatened with extinction, which is the case of the pangolin. This means that the persons who might offer you to try pangolin meat or to heal your asthma with pangolin scales are criminal offenders. You should be aware that you are dealing with persons that may be arrested by the police and sentenced to jail or other kinds of sanction (like a fine). If, nevertheless, you try eating pangolin or buy the scales, the risk of jail time might not be as high as for traders, but you might still face criminal prosecution, which means arrest and fined or other sanctions depending on the circumstances of each case.

If you are offered pangolin meat or scales, my best advice is to report this information to the nearest police station.

Loris

Loris are said to be the "cutest animal in the world." This small primate looks like a teddy bear and is also threatened with extinction. The species *Nycticebus* (spp.) are listed as such by the CITES and the penal code of Vietnam provides for the same prohibitions as for the pangolin.

In addition, cases of animal abuse have been reported in Southeast Asia. To defend themselves loris have a special system, they secrete an allergic substance from glands under their arms. They must raise their arms up to secrete this protective substance. Some loris had their glands cut off by their owners in order to make them look cute and inoffensive when they raise their arms up to the amusement of tourists.

Bear

You certainly have heard—if you live in Vietnam—that bear bile is traded for its supposed medicinal virtues. Two species of bear are common in Vietnam and listed in the CITES as species threatened with extinction: the *Ursus thibetanus* and the *Helarctos malayanus*. Trade in these species of bear is a criminal offense and being involved in such trade, even as a simple end consumer, is a breach in the law.

Rhinoceros

Sadly, it is now too late for rhinos in Vietnam: the last specimen is reported to have died in 2010. Vietnam used to have a decent population of wild rhinos. The disappearance of rhinos in Vietnam is mainly due to illegal hunting for the rhino horn, which is used for traditional medicine

mostly in Vietnam and China. The trade of rhino or rhino body parts is also strictly prohibited in Vietnam. Under the penal code, the illegal possession of from 0.05 kg to less than 1 kilogram of rhino horn is a criminal offense that may lead to 1 to 5 years in jail.

Vietnam has set a tough legal framework to help combat species extinction. As often in this country, law enforcement might not be totally efficient. Let's hope this column can help spread the word on protecting endangered species! ■



A member of the Paris Bar, **Antoine Logeay** has been practicing law first in France, mainly in litigation and arbitration, then in Vietnam for three years as an associate of Audier & Partners based at its Hanoi office. 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.





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~741 KILOGRAMS OF GARBAGE WAS COLLECTED ALONG Coc Cheo and Bang Ang Beaches in Ha Long Bay. The management board of Ha Long

Bay coordinated with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Center for Supporting Green Development (GreenHub) to organize the trash collection event. This is the fourth time the program has been held since it was first initiated in June 2016, aimed at developing a green and rubbish-free Ha Long Bay. This year's event was attended by more than 100 volunteers, who were divided into two groups to collect trash at Coc Cheo and Bang Ang Beaches stretching a total length of 200 meters. Jake Brunner, program coordinator of IUCN Vietnam, believed that the goal to turn Ha Long Bay into a green tourist destination is achievable as long as local authorities, businesses, and international organizations keep contributing to the effort.

85-YEAR-OLD VIETNAMESE MAN EARNS MASTER'S DEGREE.

He even braved the stormy weather traveling over 30 kilometers on the bus to go to school. Le Phuoc Thiet received his master's degree to the rapturous ovation of over 500 people, including his fellow postgraduates, many of whom are the same age as his grandchildren. After leaving Vietnam for the US in 1975, Thiet and his wife returned to their hometown of Quang Nam in 2013 in order to facilitate the latter's treatment of dementia. Two years later, at the age of 82, he enrolled in a master's degree program at Duy Tan University, citing the purpose of preventing the decrease of memory. His wife passed away shortly after his enrollment.



7,000 DEAD SEA TURTLES WERE FOUND IN SIX WAREHOUSES. The wildlife trafficker was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in

prison for smuggling and processing more than 10 tons of sea turtle. In 2014, Education for Nature Viet Nam (ENV), a non-governmental organization focused on the conservation of nature and protecting the environment, detected a sea turtle trafficking ring led by two brothers—Hoang Tuan Hai and Hoang Minh Cuong—in the central city of Nha Trang. Hai and Cuong allegedly led the trafficking ring that bought dead sea turtles from fishermen and then processed and exported the finished products to China. However, investigation police failed to collect enough evidence to prosecute Cuong. So, only Hai has been charged. ENV vice director Bui Thi Ha said the trial against Hai would restore public trust in the judiciary.

5G TECHNOLOGY WILL BE INTRODUCED TO VIETNAM IN TWO YEARS, according to Ericsson's head of network solutions in Vietnam, Laos,

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Vet Visit

5 questions every pet owner should ask their vet

We all love our pets and work hard to keep them healthy and happy, but sometimes we don't know where to start. Working together with your trusted vet is a vital part of being proactive about preventative health. Here are some important questions we can ask to learn more about our pets.

1) Should my pet have tests for hidden diseases? What lab work do you recommend for my pet?

It's generally recommended that we screen all pets annually from the age of 6 onwards, even if they appear healthy to us as there are many diseases that can become serious and even life-threatening if left undetected—yet very easy to prevent if we catch the warning signs. Our pets often can't tell us when they're ill and frequently hide any symptoms until they become serious—this is where regular blood analysis really helps as we can develop an accurate baseline and quickly spot any changes.

A standard blood screening would include a Complete Blood Count (CBC) that will look at red and white blood cells, a Biochemistry Profile that monitors organ function (such as livers and kidneys) and electrolytes, which can help distinguish hormonal disorders. Not all blood tests are the same so make sure you look carefully at what is being tested with your pet.

2) How often should I schedule examinations?

As our pets effectively age 7 years for every human year it's recommended to have your pets examined by your vet every 6 months (imagine not seeing a doctor for more than 3.5 years!) as their health status changes much more rapidly than us humans. You may even save money when you can work with your veterinarian to tweak your pet's care in order to prevent health problems from occurring—changing his diet, for example, to help prevent or reverse obesity.

3) What diet should I feed my pet, and how often should he/she be fed?



Seiko

This is a really important question to discuss with your vet as the answer can vary so much depending on their age, breed, species and current weight—there is no 'ideal' diet for dogs or cats! There are a whole number of recommendations for different diets and our pets are complex and have some very important requirements (for example, a vegetarian diet for a cat is fatal) that we need to understand. Your vet should be able to work with you to develop a feeding plan that can include dry/wet/homecooked food to suit your lifestyle while maintaining your pet's nutrition requirements.

4) Are there supplements or natural remedies that would help my pet?

There are a huge range of supplements and natural products available both in Vietnam and overseas that seem to cater to every possible scenario with our pets. There are some very good supplements such as Glucosamine and Chondroitin for joint disease, EFAs (essential fatty acids) that can make a big difference with some skin conditions and even probiotics for when our pets suffer from a bout of gastric upset. On the other

hand, healthy pets should not need vitamins or supplements on a regular basis. If in doubt, ask your vet.

5) What flea and tick treatments and heartworm treatments do you recommend?

Parasites cause us a huge headache here in the tropics, not to mention they carry a host of nasty diseases. Here, more than ever, prevention is so important as treating these diseases can be very difficult, expensive and frustrating, not to mention dangerous. There is a range of great products available in Vietnam now. For dogs Bravecto is a great, easy and highly effective option for ticks and fleas, Frontline or Advantage/Advocate are good options for our cats and last one month.

To make the best out of your relationship with your pets a proactive approach to healthcare and partnering with your vet before our pets are sick allows us to keep them healthy for longer, prevents a huge number of unseen problems and allows us all to focus on the reason we keep and care for our pets: love, affection and companionship! ■



Nevena Stefanovic studied at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Belgrade, Serbia and Wroclaw, Poland. Her primary interest are companion animals internal medicine and surgery. Nevena is now working as a veterinary surgeon at Animal Doctors International Clinic, HCMC.

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Starstruck on Phu Quoc

The perfect summer getaway at La Veranda
Resort Phu Quoc

Text by James Pham

Images Provided by La Veranda Resort Phu Quoc MGallery by Sofitel



PHU QUOC HAS RECENTLY popped up on the travel world's radar as Vietnam's next up-and-coming beach destination, with a handful of international chains making their belated appearance. But as the Grand Dame of Phu Quoc, the first 5-star international hotel to open on the island, La Veranda Resort MGallery by Sofitel has a thing or two to show the upstarts how it's done.

Tucked down a quiet lane on pretty Truong Beach, just minutes from the main town of Duong Dong and the popular Night Market, La Veranda is all about Heritage, Serenity and Signature. Conceived as a 1920's Indochine-chic mansion by the sea by founder Madame Catherine, La Veranda features period furnishings, high ceilings, and hand-stenciled accents, a throwback to a time when travel was synonymous with glamor. The serene surrounds are home to just 70 gorgeously-appointed rooms, tucked behind magnificent, mature gardens for a sense of intimacy so often missing in larger resorts. A highlight of our Deluxe Garden room was throwing open the louvered doors and inhaling the tropical scents wafting in from the garden. We felt La Veranda's elegant signature touch throughout our stay, from the ruby red welcome tray with a fruity cocktail, a shot of sim liqueur (a Phu Quoc specialty) and a raspberry meringue cookie, to coming home to delectable afternoon treats

thoughtfully left in the room.

Our days are spent lounging on La Veranda's pretty stretch of white sand beach and tanning by the sapphire blue pool with a good measure of lazy afternoon board games on the veranda, fans whirring overhead. We notice other families playing Giant Checkers on the lawn or building sand castles on the beach, part of the resort's Very Important Kid summer program.

One evening, after visiting the Night Market and noshing on its eclectic array of grilled seafood and handmade ice cream, we return to La Veranda for a proper dinner. We opt for a casual meal at Le Jardin, and sink into oversized chairs while sipping on a refreshingly spicy concoction of pear, ginger and Phu Quoc pepper. With the doors thrown open to the ocean breezes and the sound of waves washing up on shore, we savor a fine summer feast of BBQ pork ribs, meaty and falling off the bone, accompanied by a tropical slaw and a generous portion of fries. It's the kind of meal you eat with your hands and your heart.

Wanting to explore the island, we sign up for La Veranda's Bai Sao excursion, visiting Star Beach on the island's southeast coast. Known for its crystalline waters and fine, sugar-like sand, Bai Sao figures in on almost every island tour. However, like the resort

itself, the excursion is stylishly exclusive and wonderfully intimate. We're escorted to Paradiso, a beach club at the northern end of the beach, separated from the circus-like atmosphere of the southern end by a stretch of undeveloped jungle. Under the shade of palm trees, we stretch out on comfy sun loungers and order non-stop lime sodas and fruit shakes. The calm, shallow waters make for family-friendly good times, as does the occasional ice cream man who rides by on his scooter touting frozen treats.

Back at La Veranda, we finally make it to The Peppertree for a beautifully presented buffet breakfast. Considerately open until 11 am, the spread is a gorgeous mix of East meets West, with restaurant-quality dishes so well-prepared, each could easily stand on its own. But taken together with a cooler full of at least 12 healthy drinks, including a smoothie of the day and fresh juice blends, La Veranda's breakfast is a standout. We claim a table on the veranda, eye level with the palm fronds and overlooking the beach, a lasting vignette of the perfect summer holiday. ■

This summer, Deluxe Garden rooms start at just USD160++/night, including a host of complimentary activities for the whole family. Visit www.laverandaresorts.com to explore the resort's summer packages for your family

1969

A look back in pictures
and in words of Old
Saigon

Text and Images by **Michael Burr**





Sai Gon Girls

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1969,

11 days after my 23rd birthday, I stepped off a Braniff 707 at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Saigon to begin my one-year tour of duty in the U. S. Air Force. My father, who had served in the U S Army in WW II, gave me some sage advice: "Do not join or let yourself be drafted into the Army." At the time they were also drafting into the Marines and I knew I didn't want to go down that road so I elected to enlist in the Air Force reporting for basic training on May 1, 1969. They were looking for people with an AA degree or better (I had a BA) to be trained as English language instructors in Vietnam. Not wishing to spend 18-24 months in some Air Force tech school I volunteered. After a six-week course on how to teach English as a foreign language and 30 days leave it was off to Vietnam.

Fortunately, the assignment came with a lot of free time. We worked one of two shifts; 07:00-12:00 or 13:00-18:00; five hours a day, six days a week with Sundays off. I had developed an interest in photography in my latter years of college and had been working as an apprentice in a photography studio between graduation and being drafted. I put these budding skills to good use, spending a large portion of my off-duty hours roaming the streets and alleys of Saigon shooting over 1,500 black & white and color photos. Saigon was, and still is, a very rich visual environment and I thoroughly enjoyed the many hours I spent capturing street life during that era.



Cho Lon Pharmacy

This was my first trip outside the US and for a “country boy” raised in a rural area of upstate New York it was quite an eye-opener; almost like being sent to another planet. The sights, sounds and smells were very foreign yet at the same time very intriguing and as the year rolled on and I became more acclimated I found myself spending more and more time on the streets shooting. Saigon is where I honed my street-shooting skills,

learning to capture fleeting moments and preserving them in time.

I arrived in the country with a Pentax H3v camera body, a completely manual camera with no built-in light meter and three lenses; I think a 35mm f/2, a 50mm f/2 & a 135mm f/3.5—all gifted to me by my former boss. I very quickly learned how to “eye-ball” exposures and enjoyed a pretty good success rate using traditional techniques, for example,



Orange Vendor

After one disastrous experience having my color slides developed in Saigon (the color was way off), I started sending my color film to Australia in those Kodak yellow mailers. Fortunately, only one roll failed to make it back.

On September 22, 1970 my tour was up and I returned to the US. After my 30 days leave I reported to my new duty station and in May of 1971 I was discharged from the Air Force. I became a hippie, moved to Puerto Rico where I lived for nearly six years before returning to the US in the autumn of 1977 to pursue a career in professional photography in California, which lasted until May of 2016. In November of 2003

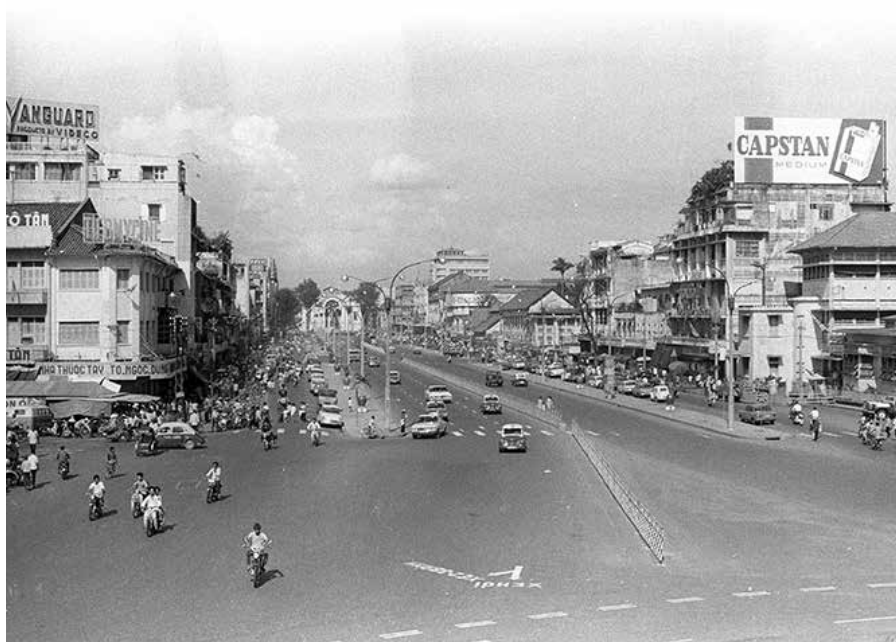
I returned to Vietnam for the first time since 1970. I made two subsequent trips in 2005 and 2006 visiting Cambodia and Laos as well. Based on those experiences I decided that when I was able to retire I would come and live in Vietnam. I emigrated here on March 1, 2017 and love every minute of it. I'm comfortably ensconced in a penthouse apartment in the Co Giang Ward in District 1. Since moving here I've been to Cambodia, Singapore and Bali, and in March I escorted two people from the US around Vietnam from Hanoi to the Delta and on into Cambodia by boat. I plan to live out my days traveling around Southeast Asia creating more beautiful photos. ■



Water Taxis at Bach Dang

the Kodak guides on how to evaluate exposure based on film speed and lighting conditions. Film was purchased at the Cho Lon Main PX on Nguyen Tri Phuong. B&W film was usually readily available; color slide film not so much so 75 percent of my shots are in B&W.

One of my roommates was also an avid photographer. We converted the bathroom in our BEQ (Bachelor Enlisted Quarters) into a darkroom by blocking out the window and sealing off the door once inside. B&W film was developed in daylight tanks in 90° Saigon unfiltered tap water, not the most optimal conditions. Photographic paper and chemicals were sent to me by my former boss in the US. Prints were made by placing a small 35mm-only enlarger on the toilet seat and the developing trays on the shower floor. The biggest print we could make was an 8"x10". These were sent back to the US or given to our colleagues and Vietnamese friends.



Dai Lo Le Loi

Muscling Through The Competition

With six IFBB pro cards up for grabs, find out who's got the guts to win

Interview by Daniel Spero
Image by Vy Lam



FLEX YOUR MUSCLES AND strike your best pose because on Saturday, August 18th Jon Lindsay's Muscle Contest International comes to Ho Chi Minh City (www.musclecontestinternational.com) with a shot at an International Federation of Body Builders (IFBB) pro card on the line, allowing competitors to move from smaller regional contests to larger national or international contests, like a national championship or the Mr. Olympia contest. If you need a reference to what this contest is going to be like, find a copy of the film that launched Arnold Schwarzenegger's career, *Pumping Iron*.

Oi sat down with one of the judges and organizers of the muscle contest, Ben Dell, who was Mr. Canada 1993, to discuss some of the particulars of this year's contest. Ben is a long-time Ho Chi Minh City resident and owner of Ben Style health food restaurant in District 1.

What was the impetus for bringing a muscle contest to Vietnam?

This is something that most bodybuilders, especially in Asia, at the moment don't have. So, it is something very big because this muscle contest is recognized by one of the bodybuilding federations, IFBB. Last year we had the same competition here, just to try it without the pro card, and we wanted to see how it works and if the athletes would be interested in it. But this year is legit, just like the way we do it in the US. This year we are giving an IFBB pro card, so with that pro card they will be able to compete in any international competition.

How would someone qualify to get into a contest like this?

Here, there is no qualification at this moment because this is the first year. Normally, like for next year, they should show that they have competed before. Let's say in North America, there are certain levels that you pass before you get into a contest like this, let's say at a regional, and then you



go to NPC (national championships), then you go up to get the pro card, and then you want to make it to the end, which is the Mr. Olympia contest. But obviously we have weight classes and judging criteria that they should follow, like certain poses that the athletes should know.

What are some of the criteria?

Some of the basic ones, like men's physique, they're based on height and weight, so if your height is 175cm, then you should not be more than 75kg. You should be wearing shorts, one inch below the belly button and no lower than 1 inch above the knees. They get called to the stage by number, they walk in and do certain poses, and the criteria says they should have a lean, symmetrical figure, muscle definition, and then present yourself, like with a smile, to the judges, and then they get a score. The presentation is very important. No matter how much hard work you put into having the body you have, posing is everything. We have 71 different categories for six divisions. We will give 6 pro cards to the overall division winners.

What kind of a turnout do you expect?

As far as the audience, well over a thousand people will show up. We have guest posers coming from other countries for a pro show that many people want to see. At this moment there are around 100 competitors, but this is a time now in Vietnam when we have local competitions, we have a Vietnam national bodybuilding competition, and then the coming Southeast Asian championship in Siem Reap. We have many competitions, that's why some haven't had the chance to register, but 150 to 200 more could register.

Is this the same as a bodybuilding contest you would see anywhere else?

Everything that we do is based on what we would do in the US, but there are certain changes that have to be made because of cultural things, such as the bikini competition. You cannot call it bikini here, so we have to call it beach body, and the glutes (the bottom) must be covered at least 50 percent. Another change is that some athletes when they do a back pose like to bend over backwards to show the judges their glutes and hamstrings, so here that's too far because it could be considered as disrespectful.

What prizes can competitors win?

We are working on financial rewards, but the first thing for athletes is getting that pro card, because that opens the door to being able to compete in IFBB contests in Singapore, the Philippines, Brazil, even America. If they get that card they can simply walk in and compete. And here, the person who gets that will be the first person in Vietnam to get a pro card, so that will bring sponsors and money, magazines, products, a different level of income for them.

Anything else you'd like to add?

It's a very, very tough journey. People see the person standing on the stage and that shape, that physique; they don't realize what they go through. 16 weeks before the contest they start dieting, cardio, exercise, dos and don'ts—it's a lot that they have to do to get on the stage. It's all about the journey. Standing in front of a lot of people, posing, flexing your muscles, it's not easy at all. We encourage everyone because a lot of guys are scared to step on the stage; they may get a panic attack. They should have the mentality that if you believe it, you can achieve it. ■



Standing Up



Text and Images courtesy of **Thuhang Tran**
and **Sharon Orlopp**

A woman shares her traumatic past and an incredible story of overcoming polio in the aftermath of war

THIS BOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A HISTORY of the American War. This is my own personal history based on facts, memory, and creative license. This is my story as I remember it. Dates, scenes, locations, and conversations are based on my recall, as well as on conversations with others about the events. Some names and other identifying details have been changed.

My memoir is my gift to you—particularly for those who feel invisible, underappreciated, underutilized, made fun of, disrespected, and not valued. Hope is the fuel that made the difference and kept me alive. Unwavering determination kept me focused on my future and enabled me to continually

reinvent myself due to constantly changing circumstances. Personal reinventions during my moments of darkest despair provided powerful new beginnings.

I hope that my journey as a person who is an immigrant and differently abled will build bridges of interconnectedness and cultural understanding and give inspiration to treating all people with dignity, respect, and inclusion.

The following are excerpts from Thuhang Tran's memoir titled *Standing Up After Saigon: The Triumphant Story of Hope, Determination, and Reinvention* (Brown Books Publishing Group):

Shattered Dreams

Memories of my childhood 43 years ago are seared into my brain like a branding iron stamped on the flesh of a cow. I remember the events vividly, as if they happened yesterday. My heart thunderously pounds in my chest as I share my story with you.

My new rattan suitcase with red leather trim sat in the corner of the living room. It was filled to the brim with hope of a new life.

Mom and I had spent several days shopping for new clothes for my trip to West Germany. She carefully packed each item with love and care. My favorite outfit was a big orange-and-white polka-dot shirt and pants. This colorful, cool pantsuit was the last item packed. Mom placed my travel documents on top of my mod looking outfit. I was scheduled to leave Saigon on June 14.

I needed to be brave. I was five years old, and I was going to travel from Saigon to West Germany for polio rehabilitation therapy. My leg muscles had atrophied, and my left leg bent at an odd angle, like a broken pencil, as I crawled along the floor. My clothing

had ragged holes in the knees from my aggressive movements to keep up with my older brother, Quang Phuong, my sister, Linh Phuong, and the neighborhood kids.

I was forced to crawl awkwardly like an infant while I yearned to run free and fast like other children. I used to walk and run until I developed a high fever at age two and a half. My siblings and I had been vaccinated for polio, but when I became ill, my leg muscles weakened. My parents were shocked when the doctor said that I had contracted paralytic polio.

Dad constantly researched polio treatments with the hope that I would someday walk again. I tried acupuncture and monthly electric shock treatments, *chay dien*, to activate my leg nerves. Nothing helped. Dad heard about the Kenny regimen, a new polio treatment involving hot, moist packs with exercises to strengthen unaffected muscles. A West German foundation provided this revolutionary Kenny treatment. My family and I were ecstatic when I was accepted into the program.

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I was relentless, so finally Mom agreed that I could go to kindergarten. I was eight years old at the time and much older than the other children in the class. After a few months, I moved from kindergarten to first grade.

Miss Lanh, my first-grade teacher, was very understanding, and she encouraged me to take the test to move to second grade. I can still clearly see Miss Lanh in her beautiful traditional Vietnamese clothing, with a form-fitting silk tunic over pants, called *ao dai*, that she wore every day to school. Miss Lanh was someone who stood up for what she believed was right. I admired her and wanted to grow up to be just like her.

Miss Lanh helped me learn after school so that I would be well prepared to take the test to go into second grade. She was someone who believed in me and wanted to see me continue to learn and stay in school. I passed the test and moved to second grade quickly, where I was with students my same age.

Mom worried about how other children would treat me. When I started attending school, some kids stared, snickered, and made fun of me, but most were nice, and I made some friends. However, one boy started picking on me. He would grab my backpack and throw it. Then I would have to retrieve it with my slow, awkward squatting movement by wrapping one arm around each leg and moving one foot at a time about four inches.

At first, when this boy threw my backpack, I cried. The male teacher didn't seem to notice or care, even when I sobbed loudly. Then I became angry when it happened. I started thinking of ways to stop this boy from tormenting me.

Before reunification, girls wore a white *ao dai* to school, and boys wore black pants with a white shirt. After reunification, they required girls and boys to wear the same school uniform—black pants and a white shirt. Clothing was an expensive luxury, so most children only had one or two school uniforms. I had two school uniforms. Each night, Mom washed the uniform I had worn that day and strung the pants and shirt on a wire in the yard to dry.

We didn't have enough money to buy pencils or pens, so we made bottles of ink at home with a purple fruit, *hat mong toi*. It was a fruit like pokeberry that was used to dye fabric. After boiling and mashing the fruit, we poured the liquid into a bottle. We used a dip pen as our writing tool. We placed the dip pen in the bottle of ink and then wrote a few letters, let the paper dry, and then dipped the pen again into the ink. We had to be careful writing to make sure that the fruit ink didn't absorb onto the page underneath the page we were writing on, or our hands were slapped with rulers by the teacher.

One night, I decided to make two bottles of ink. The next day at school, when the boy grabbed my backpack, I decided that enough was enough. I opened the extra bottle of ink and hurled

it at his white shirt. Instantly, his shirt transformed into a bold, purple burst of color. He started crying and wailed, "I only have one shirt for school."

The teacher roughly grabbed me by my shirt collar and dragged me to the front of the classroom.

He asked, "Which hand did you use to throw the bottle of ink?"

I told a small lie because I didn't want the teacher to hurt the hand I wrote with. "I used my left hand."

"Open your left palm right now."

The teacher grabbed his large wooden ruler and raised it way above his head. He paused for dramatic effect and then aggressively hit me on my open palm.

Pain seared from my hand to my shoulder, but I was determined not to cry. He continued to thrash my palm with forty lashes. My palm was bright red and swollen with blisters. I remained stoic. I did not want to give him the satisfaction that he had hurt me.

The lashes on my palm were one of my most painful images of a victim being victimized a second time. When I cried each time the boy threw my backpack, my teacher ignored me, and I felt invisible. When I chose to do something about the bad behavior, I was victimized again. It was a weird dynamic that I have since seen repeatedly.



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Dad encouraged us to Americanize our names. He said that Americans had difficulty pronouncing our names correctly. The Vietnamese naming convention lists a person's last name first. Because Americans do the reverse and put their first names first and their last names last, Dad said that he was often being called by his last name. Dad Americanized his name and changed it from Tran Van Chinh to Chinh Van Tran.

After thinking about Americanizing their names, Quang Phuong chose the name Peter since Phuong and Peter both start with P. Linh Phuong changed her name to Lynn because Linh and Lynn are pronounced the same.

I tried several different attempts at a name change. I tried shortening my name to Thu and also to Hang; both were often mispronounced. One time at school, one of my classmates suggested an American name for me: Susan. I liked the sound of it and adopted it. One afternoon, I was driving my electric scooter that I had borrowed from the disability services center at school, heading toward the cafeteria. I heard someone shouting, but I continued to the cafe. One of my classmates rushed to my side and said, "Hey, I called your name, but you just ignored me."

I replied, "I didn't hear you call."

He said, "I called you Susan."

I didn't even think twice and answered, "No, it's Thu Hang."

And then I realized that the name Susan wouldn't work. I decided to simply put my two names together; I became Thuhang rather than Thu Hang.

Even though Dad was demanding about assimilating into American culture, he was also well connected with many Vietnamese people in San Antonio. He had founded and was president of the San Antonio Vietnamese Association. He worked extremely hard to keep Vietnamese culture intact within our community. He inspired me to believe that I could be proud of my Vietnamese heritage while learning about American culture and norms. He taught me to cherish both Eastern and Western cultures.

When Dad had heard that we were approved to move to America, he immediately researched polio treatments and surgeries. He spoke with several doctors ahead of time and set up appointments for me to meet with them once I arrived in San Antonio. Within my first thirty days of being on US soil, I was examined to determine whether I would ever stand up and walk.

The possibilities of my new life stretched beyond my wildest dreams and imagination.

The first doctor I visited in San Antonio was Dr. Rick Barohn, a neurologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Barohn completed his medical and neurology residency at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.¹⁰ Dad had met with Dr. Barohn before I arrived in America. The two of them hit it off instantly due to their Air Force connection. Dr. Barohn was warm, friendly, and gregarious.

He confirmed my diagnosis as polio and referred me to Dr. Bob Jones, a physiatrist.

A physiatrist is a doctor who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation for patients who have movement or mobility impairment due to illness or injury. Physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians have extensive knowledge of nerves, muscles, bones, and the brain. When I visited Dr. Jones, he evaluated my range of

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motion while I demonstrated how I moved around. His notes from our visit indicated that my left knee was severely deformed and bent at a thirty-five-degree angle. An interpreter in the examination room ensured that we understood each other accurately.

Dr. Jones said, "I wish I had seen you when you were ten or eleven years old. We could have improved your mobility and maybe helped you walk normally."

With a quiver in my voice, I tentatively asked him, "Can you help me walk now?"

He replied, "I think we can definitely help you walk; it will probably be with the aid of braces and crutches."

With tears welling up in my eyes, I softly said, "Thank you. This has been my dream for a long time."

Dr. Jones stated that an orthopedic surgeon would have to straighten my left leg. This required surgical intervention consisting of cutting the bone above and below my knee and inserting steel bolts and screws so that my knee could bend and move correctly so that I could be in an upright position. He mentioned that I would spend six months in a leg cast and possibly up to one year in physical therapy.

Because he specialized in rehabilitation of the whole individual, he advised that standing upright after squatting on the floor for the past seventeen years would change my breathing and communication, which would impact my speech capabilities. He indicated that I also needed speech therapy.

Dr. Jones asked if additional physicians, residents, and medical students in graduate school could meet me. He said that they rarely had patients with polio. Soon the examination room was filled with doctors asking many questions and watching as I demonstrated my movements to get across the floor. Throughout my surgery and recovery, I received many visits from different doctors and residents.

Dr. Jones recommended Dr. David Anderson, an orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Anderson concurred with Dr. Jones's assessment and scheduled my surgery at the Medical Center in San Antonio. I couldn't believe that I had only been in the United States for two months, and I was scheduled to have surgery to help me stand upright and walk. It was a dream come true!

The night before my surgery, we had a special dinner at home as a celebration. Dad cooked his specialty—steak and baked potatoes with all of the toppings. Mom was extremely nervous about my surgery and was constantly praying the rosary and asking God to bless me. Peter and Lynn were excited for me. We all sat down to a great meal and thanked God for our blessings.

As I packed my suitcase for the hospital, I thought about the symbolism of new beginnings, adventure, expanded horizons, and, most of all, hope. I packed lightly because I was going to be in the ICU for two to three weeks, and then I would be moved to a rehabilitation facility for several months.

As I was wheeled into the operating room, I noticed that the room was filled with many physicians and nurses. Dr. Anderson also pointed out the medical school residents standing above us on the second floor watching through a plate-glass window. I felt a little bit like a celebrity. The operation took a grueling ten and a half hours. My family waited nervously in the waiting room to hear from Dr. Anderson.

When the doctor approached my family, Dad jumped up from his chair and asked how I was doing. Dr. Anderson indicated that the surgery was a success, but I would be heavily medicated for the next few days to ensure a smooth recovery. I barely remembered the male nurse who checked on me in the recovery room. I tried to stay focused and open my eyes, but I quickly fell back to sleep. ■



ABOUT THE BOOK

A true story of familial love and triumph through adversity, Thuhang Tran and Sharon Orlopp document decades in the lives of Thuhang and her father, Chinh Tran. Thuhang was born in 1970 in Saigon, near the end of the American War. She contracted polio as a toddler, and though her family sacrificed much to seek treatment, their efforts were halted by the reunification period. Chinh was an air traffic controller at the time, and was lost in the evacuations from Saigon, separated from Thuhang and

the rest of his family and presumed dead. The story follows Thuhang and Chinh through their respective struggles, from Thuhang's battle with polio and the impact of her father's absence, to Chinh's immigration to the US and his desperate 15-year mission to be reunited with his family.

To purchase the book *Standing Up After Saigon: The Triumphant Story of Hope, Determination, and Reinvention*, visit www.standingupaftersaigon.com.



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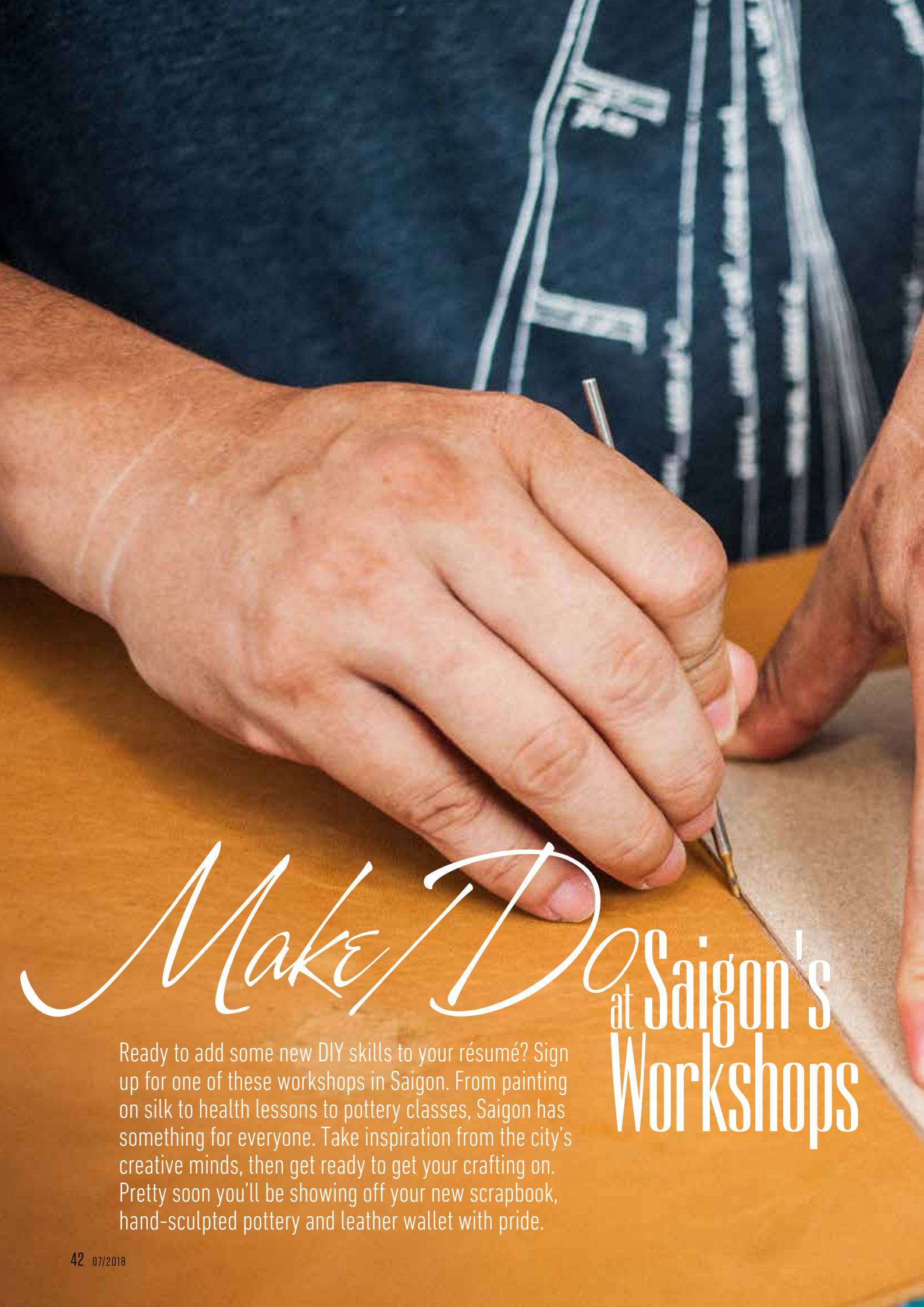
NOI Boutique was found by Linh Pham and her business partner Luke Ferris. Designer Linh Pham grew up in Hanoi with an appreciation for Vietnamese silk and traditional designs, therefore the brand was born from her love of traditions and passion for innovation. Pham draws her inspiration from time-honored patterns and elements to create sensual, contemporary designs to free up the wearer.

Clothes: **NOI Boutique** (234 Le Van Thinh, D2)
(www.facebook.com/noiboutiquevn)
(www.instagram.com/noiboutiquevn)
Photographer: **Tse**
Model: **Chiem Truc Anh**
Makeup: **NOI**









Make Do at Saigon's Workshops

Ready to add some new DIY skills to your résumé? Sign up for one of these workshops in Saigon. From painting on silk to health lessons to pottery classes, Saigon has something for everyone. Take inspiration from the city's creative minds, then get ready to get your crafting on. Pretty soon you'll be showing off your new scrapbook, hand-sculpted pottery and leather wallet with pride.



Bring On The Bacteria

Making your own fermented foods for better gut health

Text by **Rebecca Jones**

Images by **Vy Lam**



FOOD HAS THE POWER TO HEAL.

For some this is common sense, however, for many others it is a radical statement. Arguably, those in developed countries are likely to fall into the latter camp, as decades of drug-focussed medicine has led us to believe that antibiotics are the answer to all ailments. The consequences of this are well documented, with antibiotic resistance emerging as a significant global health threat.

Part and parcel of this over reliance has been the loss of traditional methods of healing, particularly those that involve the gut. Only in recent years have doctors began re-examining the role our digestive

systems play in our overall wellbeing, a remarkable lag considering the gut is in fact one of the most complex systems in the body after the brain.

May Ly, founder of Enlightened Foodie, explains: "Around 80 percent of our immune system is found in the gut, which is what keeps us healthy and free from illness. About 90 percent of serotonin is produced in the gut too, which is an important chemical that helps regulate our moods, appetite and sleep. All of these crucial factors are impaired by a damaged gut."

May runs a number of workshops through Enlightened Foodie designed to

help people understand more about their guts and the foods they can incorporate into their diets to heal them. These courses include the Ultimate Gut Health Workshop, in which participants learn how to make two types of fermented foods: red cabbage sauerkraut and fermented carrot sticks.

May, a mother of three boys, runs these three-hour sessions from her bright and breezy home in Thao Dien, where I was invited to take part in the experience that also includes a sumptuous vegan lunch that participants can easily recreate at home. Before we got started, though, May shared her journey with me over a cup of

kombucha—a delicious fermented tea that was the launch pad of Enlightened Foodie.

“I got interested in bacteria when my youngest son was diagnosed with clostridium difficile. He was prescribed courses and courses of antibiotics that were making him worse and worse and then my doctor in Sydney recommended I start making kombucha using scoby—a type of fermented yeast and bacteria. It was amazing; after two weeks his symptoms started improving and in two months it had completely cleared up.”

May now makes a stunning variety of kombucha—from passionfruit to

strawberry mojito, ginger, turmeric and black pepper—however as her workshop attests, her interest in bacteria did not stop there. Having already successfully treated her own blood sugar spikes with the paleo diet, she began feeding homemade fermented foods to her family. The results she saw were impressive; not only was her youngest son healed, but she says her eldest son’s autism was remarkably improved.

She now refers to her fermented food shelf, which takes pride of place in her dining room, as her family’s “medicine cabinet.” She says she has also helped

friends to improve their children’s health, including one whose severe tic entirely disappeared after fermented foods were introduced into his diet.

As we all finely chopped the cabbage for our sauerkraut, May explained that this is because the bacteria created through fermentation increase the availability of the vitamins in the food, and help our bodies to absorb them. In-fact, she claims that the fermented carrot sticks that Ultimate Gut Health Workshop participants learn to prepare have around 300 percent more vitamin c than fresh carrots.

“These days we’re told that bacteria



is bad—but actually we need all sorts of bacteria to be healthy. In a state of wellness, our bodies are naturally equipped to battle out the bad guys—it is able to heal itself if it has the right environment. Fermented foods help to create that environment by re-introducing all of those beneficial bacteria. It’s time we welcomed the bugs back into our lives!”

May is also a proponent of whole, unprocessed foods, which she makes the mainstay of her family’s diets. Lunch was an example of a typical family meal in her household: pumpkin bone broth (another ‘super food’ with numerous health benefits) baked sweet potato fries, wild black rice

salad, raw green salad and roasted rainbow vegetables—all followed by mango and chia seed puddings for dessert.

“Whole foods really are the key to a healthy life. I know it can be difficult with kids—we don’t always know what they’re eating at school or at friends’ houses—but at home I focus on unprocessed foods. Of course it’s important we all have the occasional treat, like bread or a bit of chocolate, but if you eat whole foods most of the time you’ll just feel so much better.”

May adds that the most important ingredient in any meal, though, is ‘love’, which she stressed to us as we prepared our carrot sticks. Indeed, in all of her

workshops May collects the scraps from participants’ chopping boards for a communal “love jar” that is given to the winner of her Gut Health Quiz, which rounds off the morning. While I didn’t take home the prize, I did leave with a completely new appreciation of bacteria, which I am now eagerly observing in my fermenting carrot sticks. ■

To find out more about Enlightened Foodie workshops and health coaching, visit www.enlightenedfoodie.com or see www.facebook.com/enlightenedfoodie. The Ultimate Gut Health Workshop and lunch costs VND2.4 million, including all materials and recipes.

Become a Potter

There's nothing quite like drinking coffee out of a cup you made from scratch

Text by **Daniel Spero**
Images by **Vy Lam**

DOWN A SMALL HAMLET

teeming with vegetation cascading off balconies is the Hey Camel Ceramics studio. The only indication that this address is different from the other residential homes is a small sign in the front window. But once inside the distinction is clear, with the first floor filled not with home furnishings, but with plants and ceramics; bowls, cups, vases and more.

Started over two years ago by Leandro Marcelino, a Spaniard originally from the Canary Islands, and built by word-of-mouth on social media, during the week Hey Camel Ceramics is a professional ceramics operation making custom orders for local businesses and residents, such as hotels looking for vases for their rooms or a couple moving into a new house in search of original statement pieces. However, at the weekend they run workshops. This is what I was there for. I asked Leandro if he had any advice about my first experience with making pottery: "Just sit down and relax and let the teacher explain the techniques to you, and just follow that to make something you want."

We headed to the back room of the first floor, what at one point was a kitchen and dining area, but is now loaded with supplies and a large wooden table big enough for 6 to 8 people to sit around, with spinning plates in front of each space. Again there are plants everywhere, giving a relaxing, natural feel, with sunlight pouring through a piece of clear polycarbonate sheeting on the roof.

Our group took spots around the large table. We consisted of six Vietnamese high school students and me. I asked Leandro if this was a normal type of group, but he said usually it's

mixed: 50 percent foreigners, 50 percent Vietnamese, sometimes groups of friends and sometimes families, sometimes older folks and sometimes younger kids. Every workshop has a different mix with a different dynamic.

Once settled in we began with a small round disc of clay, a size smaller than a baseball. Leandro instructed us to smash the clay in our hands, but to keep its shape. Then we set it in the center of the spinning plate in front of us, making an indent in the center as we began to create the shape of a cup or bowl out of it. All of the high school kids went for

a cup, so I decided on a bowl. Once we had the shape we were then instructed to use a wire clay cutter to create a smooth top to our cups or bowl, whereby you spin the plate and then lower the cutter. After this a needle tool—what looks like a glorified corn holder—is used to etch small grooves at the top of the bowl.

The next step is taking another piece of clay, the same as the first piece, but this time rubbing it in our hands until it's long and thin, like the dough for a baguette. That is then stuck onto the top of the bowl and then combined by kneading it together with our fingers,





thus increasing the size and depth of the creation. Once the clay is fully combined and the bowl has its shape, the next step is to use the wire to cut the top smooth before using a small grater tool to comb grooves on the exterior. Then a blunted tool is used to smooth the exterior.

Once the bowl is shaped and smooth, the room gets a little toasty as the seven of us participating in the workshop used hairdryers to dry and harden the clay. Once the clay is dry enough the staff brought out brushes and paints, and after a bit of instruction, let us paint. I went with carob brown on the exterior, butterscotch

yellow on the interior and black on the rim. Holding true to my skill level as a child with a coloring book, I mostly stayed within the lines, minus a few yips.

After painting our cups and bowl the workshop was finished. The staff collected our creations so that during the week they could finish them by adding a glaze and firing them in a kiln. They then contact participants by email or text after a few weeks, once their piece is ready to be picked up.

There is tranquility to working the clay in your hands, to creating symmetry, to smoothing surfaces or

grading others, to painting and drying the clay. So if you are looking for a relaxing weekend morning activity, and want to produce a piece of art with an interesting mix of people, book a seat at Hey Camel Ceramics. ■

Hey Camel Ceramics is located at 116/19A Tran Quoc Toan, D3 and uses only locally sourced clay. Workshops are every Saturday and Sunday morning from 10-12:30 at a cost of VND450,000 per person. Visit their Facebook page: "heycamelceramics" or call 0128 528 2367 for more info.

Paint A Scarf

Change fabric into a beautiful piece of art

Text by Carly Naaktgeboren

Images by Vy Lam



WHEN IT COMES TO VISUAL ARTS,

I'm not particularly gifted. Having dyed clothing in the past, my abilities usually led to a greenish brown swamp color. That's why I was a bit apprehensive when I arrived at Liisimari's silk scarf painting workshop at The Hive in Thao Dien. However, after meeting Liisi, I knew I was in talented hands.

Liisimari was born and raised in Estonia. She holds a Masters of Arts in Education from the Estonian Academy of the Arts and a Bachelors of Oil Painting from University of Tartu. She is also skilled in watercolor, blacksmithing, Chinese painting and ceramics. However, Liisi discovered her true artistic passion at age 14 when her mother taught her how to paint silk scarves.

The day we met, she was dressed fabulously in a jumpsuit featuring one of her creations. Liisi showed me various funky *ao dais* she has designed and sold—wearable art is kind of her thing.

Since moving to Vietnam, she has been painting scarves on a regular basis for two years. The process is freer and lighter than oil painting and the delicacy of each piece is what draws her to the practice. Her mother is an artist as well, and silk painting is a popular art medium in Estonia. This style of silk painting uses a wide variety of colors and “there are no wrong answers,” says Liisi.

Her inspiration comes from nature, with orchids, lotus flowers, palms and wolves often making appearances in her work. She refers to the styling of many of her silk scarves as cosmic, inspired by space and filled with explosions in the universe.

Liisimari and her husband, Arius, set up the workshop together. They were warm and welcoming, immediately making me feel comfortable and not at all like I was going to embarrass myself. Plastic wrap had been carefully placed over a long table that held everything we'd need: nearly 40 bottles of paint, a water spritzer, paint brushes, cups, and rubber bands.

Liisi showed me an example of what we would be making and I was curious as to how everything would meld together to create one final piece. She then handed me the silk we would be using. This specific silk for the scarves is shipped in from the US. It has to be a bit rawer and lighter to the touch than the composite silk used for pillowcases and *ao dais*.

Liisi put on some soothing music and we spread the material out on the table. Then came the fun part: picking out the colors. She told me to choose four or five, and I was very particular as I didn't want them to clash. She recommended a very bright color to create an “explosion” so I selected hot pink. I then settled on magenta, violet, emerald and teal. We used eye droppers to take the silk paint from the paint jars and transfer it onto the palette.

She showed me how to tie rubber bands around various small sections of the scarf. These would be where we make our “explosions.” I opted to do quite a few of these and because I was concerned about balance, I made sure they were spread evenly across the silk. Next, Liisi dipped a brush in the hot pink and painted above the rubber band. Taking a

darker color, she expanded onto the rest of the fabric. Then, she took the spritzer bottle and lightly sprayed where she had just painted. The colors spread in watery drops, blooming gracefully across the fabric. It was now my turn to start painting, and I did so under her watchful eye, but she also allowed me creative freedom.

Once I had painted about half the scarf, we sprinkled salt onto the fabric. This creates texture as the salt melts into the paint, giving it an oceanic touch. I then continued to paint the rest of the scarf, spritzing and sprinkling as I went along.

With the paint portion complete, we then needed the help of a hairdryer to speed up the drying process. Liisi showed me how to gently hold the dryer far enough away from the fabric to not damage its delicate nature, but close enough to not take too much time. When the fabric had dried, we pulled off the rubber bands to see large circles of color blossom. It was gratifying to watch something I was uncertain about come to fruition.

We were nearing the final stages. We had to brush off the remaining unmelted salt and then gently iron the scarf. Ironing the scarf fixes any color that doesn't set properly and, of course, gets out the wrinkles left from the rubber bands. After ironing, my scarf was complete. It turned out to be, dare I say, a visually luminous and fluid piece of fashion, reminiscent of a jewel-toned sea. Liisi and Arius told me it's one of the best they've seen, and I'm pretty darn proud of it. ■

In addition to her silk scarf/fabric painting workshops, Liisi also teaches children's art, as well as mommy-and-me workshops and classes. Visit her Facebook page: “liisisilk”, for more info.





Learning to Leather

The art of leatherworking

Text by **James Pham**
Images by **Vy Lam**

WE MAKE AN ECLECTIC BUNCH, sitting in a sunny D2 café on a Saturday afternoon: a motherly insurance worker, a young French architect, a vivacious quality assurance inspector and a writer. Together, we're the Etsy version of the Breakfast Club.

What's brought us here is a love of the handmade, turning raw materials into something useful, something more than the sum of its parts which in this case is leather and waxed string.

"I love that leather is flexible," says

Thanh, our workshop instructor. "You can use it for almost anything. Also, our hands are so amazing. From a simple concept, our hands somehow find a way to make it come to life. With machines there's a limit. The creativity of the human mind is boundless."

After earning a degree in Interior Design from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Architecture, Thanh found herself bored after a year stuck behind a computer. After a short course on leatherworking at the Women's Cultural Center, countless YouTube videos and much trial and error, Thanh decided to channel her trained aesthetics and attention to detail into starting her own leather workshop, Freewill Leather, some three years ago.

"I found that I could work with leather all day and not feel bored," she says. "There's something so natural and malleable about leather, requiring a completely different set of skills than working with fabric." Her parents nurtured her newfound spark. "Follow your passion," they counseled. "Then you'll stick with it. When you work for money, you'll only find yourself chasing after the next higher-paying job."

To the soundtrack of slow French jazz in the sun-drenched café, Thanh patiently helps us learn the skills of grooving, measuring, cutting, punching, stitching and edging. We set off to work on our individual projects – a leather wallet for everyday carry for the beginners, a more complicated



coin purse for those with some leatherworking experience.

Clustered around a long table covered with cutting mats, awls, snaps, mallets and other paraphernalia, we look like a table of elves gone slightly awry, brows furrowed, lips pursed in concentration, each lost in our own little world.

Happily, Thanh floats around the table, offering a word of encouragement at a crooked stitch, suggesting to turn a seam vertically to better eyeball its straightness and sharing further insight into certain techniques. “When you hand-make something, you can make adjustments that machines cannot,” she says as she shows us to start stitching further down the side. “That way, you can double-stitch where the side meets the flap, strengthening the point of contact where the product gets the most use,” she says wisely.

During the week, Thanh and her four helpers make everything from wallets and notebooks to crossbody bags and gorgeous luggage tags stamped with a map of Vietnam in her small Binh Thanh leather studio. “I just love it when customers get exactly what they want. They can edit dimensions, choose their own colors, have something engraved and find other ways to inject their own personality into the product, rather than just buying something ready-made,” she says.

Teaching the workshops is simply an extension of her bespoke philosophy.

“I remember being very nervous,” she

recalls of her first attempts at leading workshops six months ago. “But as people experienced making leather products with their own hands, they were so appreciative. The whole experience was incredibly positive. Working in the studio requires total focus, but teaching involves both creativity and enthusiasm which I love.” ■

Thanh offers weekend workshops in various spaces around the city. See more at [freewill.lthr](https://www.facebook.com/freewill.lthr) on Facebook.





WELCOME TO CO-SPACE

(104A Xuan Thuy (5th floor), Thao Dien, D2), a co-working space for women. This bright open office opened last November as the first co-working space exclusively for women in Ho Chi Minh. All kinds of women utilize the Co-Space office area. Members include designers, start-ups, professors, and a CFO. They also include stay-at-home moms that need a quiet space to answer emails and get personal work done without the distractions of home life.

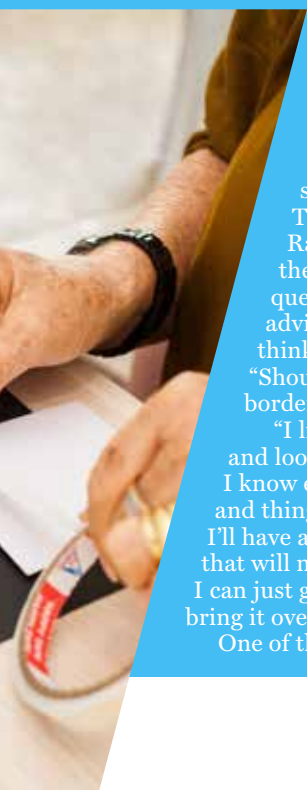
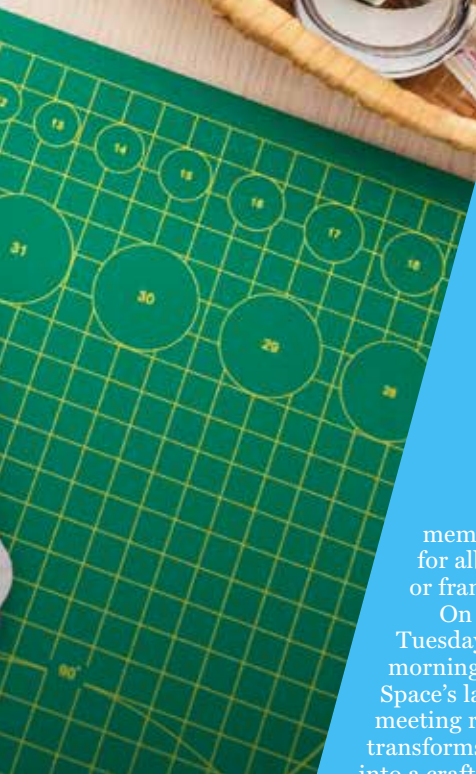
As well as being a natural networking space, Co-Space offers members and the public participation in a wide variety of workshops ranging from business related topics like Facebook Ad workshops and Search Engine Optimization workshops to creative ventures like photography. One workshop in particular attracts weekly regular attendees—the scrapbooking workshop. The class provides, paper, stickers, tools and other supplies. Attendees need only bring their treasured photos, which they will transform into beautifully preserved

Page Turner

Get creative with your life story and memories with scrapbooking

Text by **Kaitlan Spencer**
Images by **Vy Lam**





the workshop with a large storage container full of scrapbooking supplies. She put her container down in the corner and pulled out a huge scrapbook. She is leaving Ho Chi Minh City after six years and has asked each of her friends and the families that she met in the city to make a page for her to remember her time in Saigon. She flipped through the mismatched pages full of smiling kids, handwritten notes, holidays and dear friends. “I just tell them to bring pictures and show up on Tuesday morning. I tell them, ‘Rachel will help you.’”

Rachel’s mother-in-law had arrived the night before from Australia with a fresh stock of stationery. The participants eagerly flipped through the new selection, pulling out card for their pages.

“There are two scrapbooking shops in the city, but they’re both extremely expensive. It’s easier to bring supplies from Australia or the US when we have the opportunity,” Rachel explains.

Memory albums, not unlike today’s scrapbooks, started to appear in the 18th and 19th centuries when it became trendy for college-age women to create a visual representation of their daily lives through an album. They included class schedules, ticket stubs and guest lists. Friendship albums were also popular—collections of notes, drawings and the eventually accessible photographs.

Scrapbooking as we understand it today with custom papers, stickers, albums, scissors and tools began in the US in the early 80s. It grew in popularity as not only a personal way to preserve memories but as a social network for people to come together and “scrap book.” Throughout the world, people gather in homes, scrapbooking shops, and at conferences to share their memories and their daily lives. The Co-Space scrapbooking group reflects that tradition of community.

Rachel’s mother-in-law attended the class on her visit, creating a page of family photos. In a jet-lagged fog she taped a piece of accent paper on crooked. There was a chorus of disapproval from herself and Rachel.

“Oh no!”

“Oh no!”

“It will be fine!” One of the regular attendees sat down next to Rachel’s mother-in-law and tried to convince her to take a more avant-garde approach to her page and embrace the crooked lines.

With a skeptical look Rachel said, “Her style is a little more out there. I prefer things to be,” she drew two straight lines with her hands, “symmetrical.”

Most of the attendees are expats who have built communities of families living and growing together in the city. One regular taped and assembled while she rattled off all the things she had to do at home. At the end of her list she concluded, “Then I thought, I’m going to scrap book. That’s a good use of my time.”

“These are my in-laws,” one attendee said, pointing to her photographs. She had stopped Rachel to ask if her color choices were “too much.”

“I think the pattern is busy so how about we put a solid color for half. Maybe a cream or a green.” Rachel made her way to the paper and began shuffling through the pile. She passed a couple options over and soon the page was a perfect balance of pattern and solid, a backdrop for smiling families.

Rachel, who had not scrapbooked for ten years before moving to Vietnam, rediscovered her love of the hobby through the loss of a friend. Co-Space member and photography teacher Michelle passed away in February this year. Before she passed away she was planning the scrapbooking workshop with Co-Space founder Anne. After she passed away Anne asked Rachel, who was also Michelle’s student, if she could facilitate the scrapbooking workshop. Co-Space is honoring her memory by donating 10 percent of the scrapbooking workshops to Michelle’s chosen charity: St. Joseph’s Charity School.

Scrapbooking is a weekly workshop and will continue in August after the summer break. It runs every Tuesday morning from 10:30am-12:30pm. The fee is VND500,000 for members and VND600,000 for non-members. Visit www.co-spacevn.com for more info.

memories for albums or frames.

On Tuesday mornings, Co-Space’s large meeting room transforms into a craft area with long tables covered in paper, scissors and tape. Each participant finds a work area and is soon surrounded by scraps and layouts. The group’s facilitator, Rachel, walks around the room answering questions and giving advice: “What do you think of this color?” “Should I switch the gold border for the floral?” “I like to walk around and look at things because I know exactly what stickers and things we have so usually I’ll have an idea of something that will match with the page. I can just grab it quickly and bring it over,” says Rachel.

One of the attendees entered



Connect The Dots

Founded in 2015, GUNICH (www.gunich.vn; 73bis Ham Nghi, D1; 182 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3) is a fast fashion brand based in Ho Chi Minh City.

The name GUNICH is a portmanteau of the words: Gout, Unique and Niche. Their new collection called Polkaholics captures the spirit of today's young and spirited women.

Model: **Katya** (Elite Models Vietnam)

Photographer: **Huy Nguyen**

Makeup Artist & Hair: **Jay Le**

Lighting: **Hong Duc Pham** (Duc Pham studio)

Props: **GUNICH Team**







Wine & Dine

EAST WEST BREWING COMPANY / IMAGE BY VY LAM







Up *Beefing It*

True to its name, MANZO celebrates all things beef

Text by **Michael Arnold**
Images by **Vy Lam**

OIZUMI FOODS IS A BIG NAME in Japan—they run over 300 restaurants and *izakaya* pubs throughout the country—and they've been taking steps to set up base in Vietnam since opening Pizza Logic at Takashimaya back in 2016. **Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar** (17/13 and 17/14 Le Thanh Ton, D1) is their next move, and it's a brand new direction for Oizumi in more ways than one: while MANZO may be an established



meal is rounded off with a couple of simple sides so as not to distract from the main dish—a tray of fluffy homemade bread (VND60,000) and a plate of BBQ grilled vegetables (VND88,000).

The trick with aged beef is to serve it at exactly the right time. Our Sirloin steak was two-weeks aged, seeming very pink and tender and with a warm, wholesome aroma. We'd expected the meat to be relatively dry, but there was nothing to suggest by texture that the beef was anything over a day old—the taste, however, was absolutely richer and heavier with umami than is usual, making this preparation a must-try for steak fans.

MANZO represents a stepping stone towards even more offerings from Oizumi—Tanaka hinted that further concepts are certainly in the works—so diners in Saigon can expect ongoing adventures in localized Italian cuisine served with Japanese attention to quality to be launched in good time. In the meanwhile, take the chance to stop in at Butcher MANZO to see what your steaks have been missing. ■



brand back home, Saigon's version is something new, featuring a new menu, a craft beer bar, and introducing Japan's popular aged beef to eager consumers here for the first time.

Manager Motoki Tanaka from Kobe, who moved to Vietnam only recently, is excited to front an eatery that has attracted a broad variety of customers since its grand opening on May 4th. "We're selling steak, but we're somewhat distinct from a steakhouse," says Tanaka. "We're more of a 'nikubaru' venue, which loosely translates as a 'pub with meat'—it's a concept that is quite well-known in Japan. Downstairs is more of a bar, but you can head upstairs if you want a meal that's a little more formal. This is why so many different kinds of customer are coming. That's what makes it interesting for me."

The pride of MANZO's menu is the aged beef, prepared by Quy Nhon local Luc, the restaurant's head chef, who worked extensively in kitchens in Japan and studied the technique with Oizumi's grand chef. "The flavor of aged beef is totally different from the regular kind," says Luc. "It often has a nutty hint, and has a richer aftertaste. The moisture within the meat is evaporated off over a period of time, resulting in a stronger, richer flavor."

"It's an old European technique," explains Tanaka. "Before there was refrigeration, meat would be hung in cool caves to dry. That's the origin of it. The technique was further developed in Japan, and it's quite popular these days. So we decided to bring it to Vietnam also as it's new in the market here. Japanese people are classically good at the finer details. Taking great care, doing things carefully, that's our strong point. That's what makes our beef such good quality."

We visited Butcher Manzo on a warm Friday evening—the restaurant has a bright and highly visible street presence, located very close to the Thai Van Lung intersection. The

downstairs bar area is intimate and features a gold-lit marble and brick motif—there are seven popular local craft beers on tap, including the rising star from Danang, 7 Bridges. Upstairs, the brick décor continues throughout the dining area, which is similarly modest in size, and features a private room seating six and a pleasant terrace area behind a glass partition for smokers.

The menu is Italian-inspired (predictably enough: "MANZO" means "beef" in Italian) and is certainly broader in range than you might expect for a dining area above a bar. MANZO's concept does border on fine dining, and this is particularly evident in its star dish. We try a 500g portion of prime Sirloin beef steak (at VND1,600/g), served sliced and medium rare on a carving board. We pair this with the house red wine—a Casa Subercaseaux Chilean cabernet sauvignon (VND108,000/glass), an easy wine with a friendly character that pairs absolutely well with the steak. MANZO boasts a simple but well-chosen wine selection, with around 15 whites and 20 reds, all selected by a professional sommelier for this specific menu. The





San Diego *Meets* Saigon

The marriage of Southern California and Vietnamese cuisines for a fresh and bold take on fusion

Text by **Daniel Spero**
Images by **Vy Lam**

Grilled shrimp vermicelli



Grilled Teriyaki Chicken Sandwich

ALREADY HAVING CEMENTED ITS REPUTATION FOR their incredible selection of craft beers, however, **East West Brewing Company's** (181-185 Ly Tu Trong, D1) food is not to be overlooked. We visited the huge industrial chic space that manages to avoid hipster territory with an upbeat soundtrack and high ceilings, natural light streaming in from the two-storey windows and skylights from the outdoor beer terrace above. Backed by a neat wall of gleaming vats where the in-house magic happens, East West feels authentic in its approach to both its beer and its new bold lunch menu.

I ordered a large coffee vanilla porter (500ml, VND135,000), which recently won a Silver Medal in the 2018 Australian International Beer Awards (AIBA), before opening the food menu. The concept is to take two different food cultures—San Diego with its Southern Baja California influence, and Saigon with its traditional southern Vietnamese staples—and a few sumptuous twists. Thankfully, the prices are affordably still Vietnamese, from VND50,000 for soup of the day to VND165,000 for *carne asada* tacos or teriyaki salmon with broken rice.

Further adding to East West Brewing Co's lunch experience, each dish is paired with a craft beer recommendation. Head Chef Matt Venzke explained how he and head brewer Sean Thommen worked diligently to create the best pairings, analyzing the ingredients and flavors of each, beer and food,



Spicy garlic tiger prawn tacos

until they found the perfect palate match. So if you have an eastern dish like *bo kho* (VND75,000), you'll know that the Belgian Dark goes best, or if you choose a western dish like the blue cheese mushroom burger (VND155,000), then pair it with a Belgian Blonde. There are also quick, affordable set lunch options (appetizer, main and dessert, starting at VND175,000) available that are perfect for business meetings.

To start we ordered the tuna poke salad (VND130,000) as an appetizer. The tuna was fresh, the cabbage and mixed greens had a sweet, subtle dressing, and along with the edamame and ripe avocado it made for a light, healthy start. I'm not usually into seaweed, but it helped expand the complexity of the dish. After this came spicy garlic tiger prawn tacos (VND145,000). Spicy, but not overpowering, the large prawns were succulent, while the corn, *pico de gallo* and cilantro built an intricacy of piquancy. I was ready to revert to my collegiate days and have 10 more.

Rather than overindulge in tacos, we moved on to a grilled chicken teriyaki sandwich (VND130,000). The bun was soft and chewy, the chicken breast juicy and tender, the thin slice of pineapple a sweet complement, while the bacon and wasabi aioli layered in savory textures and tastes. I didn't expect the french fries, which are hand cut and seasoned with a

homemade spice blend, to be anything special, but they were remarkable. East West Brewing Co. may be winning awards for their craft beer, but for french fry connoisseurs out there, these have to be among the best in Saigon.

At this point we thought we'd move on to dessert, but Head Chef Matt came back over with King's Flight (a sample tray of craft beer, 10 x 160ml glasses) and grilled shrimp vermicelli (VND125,000) to try. Usually I have *bun thit nuong* at Vietnamese restaurants, it's a good measure for me. While many base ingredients were similar to what you'd get in a Vietnamese restaurant, East West Brewing Co's large grilled prawns, which are completely peeled, were such a delectable alternative to pork.

I'd originally had my eye on the cookie ice cream sandwich (VND130,000), however I simply didn't have any room left, and there was still the sample tray of craft beers to get through. But with a choice of ice cream flavors sandwiched between homemade cookies, an apple slice side and drizzled with a beer caramel sauce, I'll be returning to try it along with a few other items I couldn't get to, like the chicken tostadas (VND125,000) or the sautéed beef with mustard greens and kale (VND165,000).

While a lot of people head to East West Brewing Company for their artisanal handcrafted beer, the food is definitely a co-star, not the supporting cast. They also have an extensive dinner menu (visit their website for the full list) and on the weekends do a brunch from 11am-3pm called Kegs 'n Eggs, where VND500,000 gets you a brunch buffet and for an extra VND350,000 free flow craft beer. Additionally, they host brewery tours, and at times have live music and other exciting events. Visit www.eastwestbrewing.vn for more info. ■



Tuna Poke Salad





Cruising of the Soil

Text by James Pham
Images by Vy Lam

A Michelin-star experience at L'Escale By Thierry Drapeau

Assorted cheeses

A SHIVER OF DELIGHT STRUCK food lovers in Asia when Michelin released its first restaurant guide to Bangkok just a few months ago. However, in a case of “so close, yet so far”, a Michelin-starred meal for gastro-minded Saigonese still meant getting on a plane to Bangkok, Singapore or Hong Kong.

“Maybe within 5-10 years,” says Herve Beal, proprietor of New York Steakhouse Saigon as well as New York Steakhouse Phnom Penh and Ocean Prime Phnom Penh, of Saigon’s prospects for the world’s most famous dining guide. “The Vietnamese have started to become educated about food; they know what Michelin is. Perhaps 15 years ago was too early for a Michelin-starred restaurant to open here, but now it’s time.”

He’s speaking of his newest venture, **L’Escale By Thierry Drapeau** (90 Quoc Huong, D2), a collaboration with Chef Drapeau, the current holder of two Michelin stars for his restaurant La Chabotterie in Vendée, western France.

Ever since the two began working together on guest appearances at some of Saigon’s top hotels more than 10 years ago, the team of Beal and Drapeau have ruminated on the idea of opening

their own fine dining establishment. “I would never have opened a restaurant like this without a Michelin-starred chef,” says Beal. “With Thierry having two stars, that’s even better. He’s not a chef-consultant, he’s actually part owner and is here for 10 days every two months tweaking the menu, identifying trends and working with the team.”

Opened in December, L’Escale promises to faithfully transport Chef Drapeau’s highly-regarded dishes from sleepy Saint-Sulpice-le-Verdon inspired by the surrounding French coast and countryside to the leafy suburbs of Saigon.

“Everything is exactly the same,” maintains Chef Drapeau, overseeing the meticulously-kept back of house in his intimate, 7-table namesake restaurant. A black-suited maître d’ welcomes guests to the playfully chic restaurant, swathed in sumptuous pinks and greys and featuring whimsical food / fashion sketches by famed Dior illustrator René Gruau. “We’ve even found a local woman in Long An who can butcher our ducks exactly the way they’re done in France,” adds Beal. “She drives them to the restaurant on her motorbike, but other than that, the quality is the same. We had a caviar menu here in



Halibut in champagne cream



Iced nougat



Trio of sweets



Appetizers

on the side.

Chef Drapeau's renowned artistic flourish shines in his Scallops in jasmine oil starter, bright bursts of carrots three ways and a squid ink crisp combining to recreate a vibrant underwater scene.

Most of the set menus include a trip to the hallowed cheese cellar, a glorious ode to French and English cheeses, while dessert spans from decadent, in the form of a very rich Chocolate bar with crunchy salty caramel and light yuzu cream, to the demure, a Creamy iced nougat with nods to Vietnamese terroir in a mango marmalade and creamy Dalat yogurt sorbet.

While a Michelin guide for Saigon may for now be a pie in the sky, a Michelin-starred dining experience at L'Escale is certainly ripe for the taking. ■

A three-course set menu is available for lunch at VND850,000 per person, as well as 4-, 5-, and 7-course menus for lunch and dinner. Dishes can also be ordered a la carte.



Scallops in jasmine oil



March and the same menu in France."

"Maybe the only difference is that the diners at La Chabotterie take longer to eat," laughs sous chef Pham Hung Cuong, who along with a Vietnamese maître d' spent two months training at Chef Drapeau's restaurant in France. "What impressed me most was how methodical Chef Drapeau is, even when it's full service. His approach to cooking is extremely creative. He comes up with new dishes, not just reproducing them."

More importantly, Saigon diners can rest assured that nothing gets lost in translation as Chef Drapeau re-creates his signature *terroir et mer* (soil and sea) cuisine at L'Escale. Showcasing his flair for earthy flavors married with impeccable technique, the Roasted duck with raspberries combines sweet, earthy and tart flavors, including a playful black olive-stuffed raspberry ravioli, while his delicate Antarctic halibut swims in a light-as-air champagne cream made with his very own vintage of Duval-Leroy champagne. Likewise, the Chicken egg stuffed with truffle is a standout, the black gold oozing out of a lightly poached egg served over mushrooms two ways, with an earthy, intensely flavorful mushroom cream soup



Chocolate bar with chocolate sorbet



Chicken egg stuffed with truffle



Roasted duck with raspberries



SAMOSA, SAMBUSA, OR samboksa is a fried or baked dish with a savory filling, such as spiced potatoes, peas, cheese, minced lamb or minced chicken. Its size and consistency may vary, but typically it is distinctly triangular in shape. Indian samosas are usually vegetarian, and often accompanied by a mint chutney. Samosas are a popular entrée, appetizer or snack in the local cuisines of the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia,

Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, the Indian subcontinent, the Horn of Africa, East Africa, North Africa and South Africa. Due to cultural diffusion and emigration from these areas, samosas in today's world are also prepared in other regions.

In India, cinema and samosa are almost synonymous. Sounds funny but let me tell you an interesting correlation between the two. Whenever we went out to watch Bollywood movies in

cinemas in India the whole experience was incomplete without eating samosas teamed up with hot masala chai (tea), for me a combo to die for.

In Saigon we don't get Bollywood films in cinemas, so watching Indian films is restricted to the home. Friday nights at home are super special as they are Indian cinema nights complete with the experience of indulging in piping hot samosas and hot masala chai from my home kitchen. ■

INGREDIENTS

Ingredients For Making Samosa Pastry:

- 2 cups of maida or all purpose flour
- 4 tablespoons of ghee or oil
- 5 to 6 tablespoons of water
- 1 teaspoon of carom seeds (ajwain)
- Salt as required
- Oil for deep frying

For The Samosa Stuffing:

- 3 medium-sized potatoes
- ¾ cup of green peas (fresh or frozen)
- 1 green chili + ½ inch ginger, crushed to a coarse paste
- ½ teaspoon of cumin seeds
- ¼ teaspoon of red chili powder

- 1 pinch of asteofoetida
- ½ tablespoon of oil
- Salt as required
- 1 teaspoon of coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons of dry pomegranate seeds or 1 teaspoon of dry mango powder

Making Samosa Pastry:



1 Place the flour, carom seeds and salt in a bowl. Mix well and add ghee or oil.



2 With your fingertips, rub the ghee/oil into the flour to get a breadcrumb-like consistency.

3 The whole mixture should clump together when joined.

4 Add 1 or 2 tbsp of water. Begin to knead adding water as required.

5 Knead to a firm dough. Cover the dough with a damp cloth and set aside for 30-40 mins.



Making Samosa Stuffing:

- 1** Steam or boil the potatoes and peas till they are completely cooked.
- 2** Peel the boiled potatoes and chop them into small cubes.
- 3** Heat oil in a pan. Add the cumin seeds and crackle them.
- 4** Add the ginger- chopped green chili sauté till the raw aroma of ginger goes away.
- 5** Add the peas, red chili powder, coriander seeds, dry mango powder and astofetida, stir and sauté on a low flame for 1-2 minutes.
- 6** Add the potato cubes and sauté for 2-3 minutes with frequent stirring. Set the filling aside to cool.



Ruchita Obhan was a former advertising professional and is now a self-styled home cook by passion. She recently won the "Home Chef" category in a charity cook off event in Saigon. Having hosted countless house parties across four countries, including Vietnam, she became passionate about culinary art.

Follow Ruchita:
Facebook Page: ruch bytes and
Instagram: ruch.bytes.

Shaping And Making Samosas:

- 1** Knead the dough lightly again.
- 2** Divide the dough to 6-7 equal pieces.
- 3** Take each piece and roll in your palms first to make a smooth ball.
- 4** Then roll it with a rolling pin.
- 5** Cut with a knife or a pastry cutter through the center of the samosa pastry.
- 6** With a brush or your fingertips, on the straight edge of the sliced pastry, apply some water.
- 7** Join the two ends bringing the watered edge on top of the plain edge.
- 8** Press the edges until they are sealed well.
- 9** Stuff the prepared samosa cone with the prepared potato-peas stuffing.

**Frying Samosas:**

- 1** Now heat oil for deep-frying in a wok or a deep pan. Once the oil becomes hot, gently slide the prepared stuffed samosas & quickly reduce the flame to low.
- 2** Turn over in between and fry the samosas till golden. Drain samosas on paper towels to remove excess oil.



- 3** Fry the samosas in batches. For frying the next batch, again increase the temperature of the oil, add the samosas and then lower the flame, thereby decreasing the temperature of the oil.

Serve hot with fresh coriander chutney and tamarind chutney.



Alfredo de la Casa has been organizing wine tastings for over 20 years and has published three wine books, including the Gourmand award winner for best wine education book. You can reach him at www.wineinvietnam.com.

Fallen Idols

It's not all about reputation and name recognition anymore

I LOVE BORDEAUX WINES,

I have always loved them, perhaps it's because my wine training started with Bordeaux wines back in London. I will never forget when I was invited to a trade tasting session of St Emilion wines and how I fell in love with the wines.

Time led to the discovery of amazing wines from Medoc, Pauillac, and the rest of Bordeaux. Something similar happened when I toured Italy, enjoying amazing wines from Barolo, Brunello, Amarone...

However, for the last three years, or vintages if you prefer, my love affair with all those idols from France and Italy kind of ended. I keep trying them, my eyes still in love, but I find nothing but uninteresting wines at high prices. With very few exceptions, and Chateau Le Puy is one (thanks Catherine Guo for bringing such a jewel to Vietnam), most Bordeaux wines that I try are just plain standard, with almost no complexity, poor length and definitely no wow effect.

The same has happened with the many Brunello, Amarone and Barolo wines that I have been trying, where is that wonderful feeling that such wines used to provide?

Between trade and private tastings and what I buy, I tend to try over 2,000 wines a year, so it is not that I have a far

too limited exposure to what is being produced, but the opposite. I was in Vinexpo, the largest wine trade exhibition in Asia, just a couple of weeks ago, a great opportunity to try and discover, but again I was disappointed, very!

I was starting to get worried that my palate has either become far too picky or I have simply lost it. So I decided to talk to and try wines together with a few people from the trade and it seems that the general consensus is that wineries in those areas, producing such iconic wines, have such a good reputation and demand that they have been getting far too relaxed, and are no longer producing the wines they used to.

In the case of Italian icons, it seems that the combination of a series of bad harvests plus the new trend by which wineries are making "modern" wines that are ready to drink earlier than usual (so that they can sell them quicker) is resulting in relatively disappointing wines, that somehow are still maintaining their high prices.

This makes me wonder, if these wineries continue to relax and operate based on what they achieved in the past, how much longer before people realize and start buying the great wines being made, usually much cheaper, in other areas outside of Bordeaux and Piedmont. ■



Wine & Dine

ROOFTOP BARS



Liquid Sky Bar

A casual destination to escape and unwind in the sun. In the evening, the space transforms into a rooftop lounge where guests and locals will come to socialize, dance or just let loose. On the mezzanine level, comfortable lounges and a flow of cocktails create a casual and fun atmosphere. It is the perfect spot to watch the sunset over the horizon.

21F - Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, DI / 028 3822 0033



Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar

Set on the fifth floor, Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar makes up for its modest height with breath-taking views of Vietnam's French colonial structures such as Saigon Opera House and People's Committee Hall. Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar is also fitted with an elevated stage and dancefloor, hosting live Latino bands and salsa performances at 20:00 onwards.

141 Nguyen Hue, DI



Social Club Rooftop Bar

Part of the Hôtel des Arts Saigon, Social Club Rooftop Bar is a great place to overlook Saigon's glittering skyline sipping on a cocktail and unwinding. Things become more vibrant with the ambient music and DJs at sunset. Social Club Rooftop Bar has the highest rooftop infinity pool in the city.

76 - 78 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Dist.3
Tel: (+84) 28 3989 8888

SUNDAY BRUNCHES



Indulgent Sundays @ Nineteen

A legendary buffet in the Heart of Saigon. Sensational cooking and an intimate, lively atmosphere are guaranteed. Authentic cuisine from around the globe, prepared by award-winning chefs, with fresh seafood as the highlight of the brunch. From noon to 3pm, with options from VND 890,000++ without drinks to VND 1,490,000++ with a free flow of Champagne, cocktails, house wine, and beer.

19-23 Lam Son Square, DI
hotel@caravellehotel.com / 028 3823 4999



Le Meridien

Centered around three distinctive dining venues - Latest Recipe, Bamboo Chic and Latitude 10 - Le Meridien offers three brunch packages, prices range from VND1,500,000 to VND2,500,000 and include Oriental and International cuisine.

3C Ton Duc Thang, DI
028 6263 6688 - ext.6930
www.lemeridiensaigon.com



MICROBREWERIES & CRAFT BEER BARS



BiaCraft

BiaCraft is renowned for its extensive selection of craft beers. The back to basics décor only serves to enhance the laidback ambience which BiaCraft prides itself on.

90 Xuan Thuy, D2



East West Brewery

Saigon's Local microbrewery located in the heart of District 1, HCMC. Offering a taproom, restaurant, and rooftop beer garden where customers can enjoy local brews and food crafted with ingredients from the East to the West.

181-185 Ly Tu Trong St. District 1, HCMC 091 306 07 28
booking@eastwestbrewing.vn www.eastwestbrewing.vn
facebook.com/eastwestbrewery



Rehab Station

Gastropub in a lovely quiet alley, serves Asian fusion food, 15 kind of different craft beer from most of the popular breweries in Vietnam, along with 60+ imported bottle beers, mostly from Belgium.

02839118229 hello@rehabstation.com.vn
facebook.com/rehabstationsg/

CAFÉS



Bach Dang

An institute that's been around for over 30 years, Kem Bach Dang is a short walking distance from The Opera House and is a favorite dessert and cafe spot among locals and tourists. They have two locations directly across from each other serving juices, smoothies, shakes, beer and ice cream, with air conditioning on the upper levels.

26-28 Le Loi, D1



Café RuNam

No disappointments from this earnest local cafe consistently serving exceptional international standard coffee. Beautifully-styled and focussed on an attention to quality, Café RuNam is now embarking on the road to becoming a successful franchise. The venue's first floor is particularly enchanting in the late evening.

96 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

www.caferunam.com



Chat

A quaint cafe with a red brick wall on one side and a mural of everyday life in Saigon on the opposite. A friendly staff serves smoothies, juices, and a good array of Italian-style coffee such as cappuccinos and lattes for cheap, prices start from VND15,000.

85 Nguyen Truong To, D4



K.Coffee

Accented with sleek furniture and dark wood, this cozy cafe serves fresh Italian-style coffee, cold fruit juices, homemade Vietnamese food and desserts. The friendly owner and staff make this a great spot to while away the afternoon with a good book or magazine.

Opening time: 7AM- 10PM (Sunday closed)
86 Hoang Dieu, D.4 - 38253316/090 142 3103



La Rotonde Saigon

Situated in an authentic French colonial structure, this relaxed café is the perfect haven to escape the hustle and bustle of District 1. The east meets west interior décor is reminiscent of Old Saigon, and is greatly complemented by the Vietnamese fusion cuisine on offer.

77B Ham Nghi, 1st Floor, D1



The Workshop

The cafe is located on the top floor and resembles an inner city warehouse. The best seats are by the windows where you can watch the traffic. If you prefer your coffee brewed a particular way, there are a number of brewing techniques to ask for, from Siphon to Aeropress and Chemex. Sorry, no Vietnamese cà phê sua da served here.

27 Ngo Duc Ke, D1



Le Bacoulos is a French brasserie located in the heart of Thao Dien. Following the brasserie tradition, Bacoulos serves typical French food at affordable prices.



French Restaurant

Daily Set Lunch
at **VND180.000**

2 courses + 1 soft drink
Le Bacoulos french bistro,
13 Tong Huu Dinh
Thao Dien. Q2. HCMC

02835194058



The open-air premises include a bar and terrace and there is an air-conditioned dining room.

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.

13 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
028 3519 4058
www.bacoulos.com



L'Escale by Thierry Drapeau

Chef Thierry Drapeau a 2 star Michelin chef in France takes his inspiration from the surrounding countryside and its top-quality ingredients, then adding an artistic flourish to his fine regional cuisine.

90 Quoc Huong, Thao Dien, D.2
028 3636 0160
manager@restaurant-thierrydrapeau.asia
www.restaurant-thierrydrapeau.asia



Le Jardin

This place is consistently popular with French expats seeking an escape from the busier boulevards. It has a wholesome bistro-style menu with a shaded terrace cafe in the outdoor garden of the French cultural centre, Idecaf.

31 Thai Van Lung, D1



Ty Coz

This unassuming restaurant is located down an alley and up three flights of stairs. The charming French owner/chef will happily run through the entire menu in details and offer his recommendations. An accompanying wine list includes a wide range of choices.

178/4 Pasteur, D1
www.tycozsaigon.com



Also Try...

La Cuisine

A cosy restaurant just outside the main eating strip on Le Thanh Ton, La Cuisine offers quality French food in an upmarket but not overly expensive setting. Suitable for special occasions or business dinners to impress. Regular diners recommend the filet of beef.

48 Le Thanh Ton
028 2229 8882

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.

39 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
028 3744 4585

La Villa

Housed in a stunning white French villa that was originally built as a private house, La Villa features outdoor tables dotted around a swimming pool and a more formal dining room inside. Superb cuisine, with staff trained as they would be in France. Bookings are advised, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings.

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
028 3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn



ITALIAN



Carpaccio

Rebranded "Carpaccio" after many years under the name Pomodoro, this Italian restaurant still has a simple, unpretentious European decor, sociable ambiance and friendly welcome. A small corner of Italy in Saigon.

79 Hai Ba Trung street, D1
+84 90 338 78 38



Ciao Bella

Hearty homestyle 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
028 3822 3329
tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.ciaobellavietnam.com

Ciao Bella



La Forchetta

La cucina La Forchetta is located in a hotel building in Phu My Hung. Chef Gianni, who hails from Sicily, puts his passion into his food, focusing on pastas and pizzas with Italian meat and fish dishes as well delicious homemade desserts. Most of the tables are outside, so you can enjoy a relaxing outdoor dinner.

24 Hung Gia, PMH, D7
028 3541 1006



Also Try...

Casa Italia

Filling, hearty Italian fare served with a smile in the heart of District 1. Authentic pizza and a comprehensive range of pasta, pork, chicken and beef dishes offers something for everyone. Located a stone's throw from Ben Thanh Market.

86 Le Loi, D1
028 3824 4286

Opera

The luxury Park Hyatt Saigon is home to Opera, an authentic Italian dining experience open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Try their famous lasagna and tiramisu. Head chef Marco Torre learned his craft in a number of Michelin-star restaurants throughout different regions of Italy during a 14 year career. Dine on the deck alfresco or inside in air conditioned comfort.

2 Lam Son Square, D1

Pendolasco

One of the original Italian eateries in Ho Chi Minh City, Pendolasco recently reinvented itself with a new chef and menu, and spawned a sister eatery in District 2. Set off the street in a peaceful garden with indoor and outdoor eating areas, separate bar and function area, it offers a wide-ranging Italian menu and monthly movie nights.

87 Nguyen Hue, D1
028 3821 8181

Pizza 4P's

It's too late to call this Saigon's best-kept secret: the word is out. Wander up to the end of its little hem off Le Thanh Ton for the most unique pizza experience in the entire country – sublime Italian pizza pies with a Japanese twist. Toppings like you wouldn't imagine and a venue you'll be glad you took the time to seek out.

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



JAPANESE



Chaya Restaurant

Chaya, a new small Japanese Cafe is coming to town. We are here to bring the best Japanese atmosphere to Saigon customer. At Chaya, customer can relax on the Tatami, taste some delicious Sushi Roll, Japanese sweets or local cuisine while enjoying Japan historically decorated space. Most of our ingredients are imported directly from Japan, especially Kyoto Matcha. Welcome!

35 Ngo Quang Huy Street, Thao Dien, District 2
0938 996 408 (Vietnamese)
0939 877 403 (Japanese)
chayavietnam.com
Facebook: chayavietnam



Gyumaru

Gyumaru is a quintessentially minimalist Japanese dining experience rotating around the style of meat meal Westerners would be quick to link to a gourmet burger, but without the bread. Fresh, healthy, innovative cuisine in a relaxed, cozy environment and regular specials including quality steaks.

8/3 Le Thanh Ton
028 3827 1618
gyumaru.LTT@gmail.com



Ichiban Sushi

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting. Featuring one of the most eclectic Japanese menus in the city. The current Japanese venue to see and be seen in – everyone who's anyone is there.

204 Le Lai, D1
www.ichibansushi.vn



Kesera Bar & Restaurant

An Ideal place for your city escape and enjoying Japanese fusion foods. We have the best bagels in town, fine wine and cigars in a custom cabinet and is a must-do for anyone visiting the city.

26/3 Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe Ward, Dist 1
028 38 270 443



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
028 3930 0039
www.sushidiningaoi.com



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, D1
028 3823 3333



VIETNAMESE



Five Oysters

Five Oysters serves authentic and excellent Seafood & Vietnamese food with 5G Green beer at VND12,000 as well as a promo of VND10,000 per fresh oyster daily. There's also a rooftop, a great place to start or end the night! Recipient of Certificate of Excellence 2014-16 from Tripadvisor and Top Choice 2015 by Lianorg.com. Recommended by VNexpress.net, Lonely Planet, Utopia and Saigoneers.

234 Bui Vien, D1



Ngoc Chau Garden

Generally, Ngoc Chau Garden is genuine authentic Vietnamese Restaurant with simply beautiful food. They concentrate on traditional food of South Viet Nam, especially home-cooked, value for money. There for, the food, drink and the atmosphere make you comfortable during family's meal time. It's a really nice blend as you're setting into Ho Chi Minh City and Viet Nam.

116 Ho Tung Mau, phuong Ben Nghe, quan 1, Tp.HCM.

028 6687 3838

<https://facebook.com/ngocchaugarden.hotungmau>



Red Door

Red Door offers traditional Vietnamese food with a contemporary twist. The restaurant is also a platform for art talk, science talk, and social talk; where ideas and passions are shared.

400/8 Le Van Sy, D3

012 0880 5905

Facebook: Reddoorrestaurant



River Restaurant

Tasty Vietnamese food by Saigon River side. The River Restaurant has its' own vegetable garden and a play area for kids. There is a pool table and a futsal table.

199bis Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien Ward, D2, HCMC

Tel: 0907 65 66 67



Also Try...

3T Quan Nuong

Tasty BBQ venue situated above Temple Bar. The venue has a traditional, rustic theme with old-style furniture and a quaint Vietnamese decor, making this a nicely atmospheric restaurant and a great place to dine with international friends new to the cuisine. The menu features a number of local favorites.

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1

028 3821 1631

Banh Xeo 46A

Fun Vietnamese-style creperie popular with locals and expats alike for its tasty, healthy prawn pancakes, along with a number of other traditional dishes.

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

Cha Ca La Vong

If you do only one thing, you'd better do it well – and this venue does precisely that, serving only traditional Hanoian Cha Ca salads stir-fried with fish and spring onion. Delicious.

36 Ton That Thiep, D1

Com Nieu

Famous for its inclusion in the Anthony Bourdain *No Reservations* program, the venue is best known for its theatrics. Every bowl of rice is served in a terracotta bowl that is unceremoniously shattered upon serving. Unforgettable local food in a very pleasant traditionally-styled venue.

59 Ho Xuan Huong, D3

028 3932 6363

comnieusaigon27@yahoo.com

comnieusaigon.com.vn

Cuc Gach Quan

Deservedly one of the highest ranking Vietnamese restaurants in Saigon on Trip Advisor, this delightful restaurant serves up traditional, country-style foods and contemporary alternatives in two character-filled wooden houses located on opposite sides of the street from each other. Unique food in a unique setting and an unbelievably large menu.

10 Dang Tat, D1

028 3848 0144

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

028 3823 8920

www.hum-vegetarian.vn

May

Fine Vietnamese fare served in a character-filled three-story rustic villa located up a narrow alley, off the beaten track. Watch the chefs prepare authentic food from a varied menu in an open kitchen.

19-21 Dong Khoi, D1

028 3910 1277

Mountain Retreat

Home style cooking from the Vietnamese north in a quiet alley off Le Loi, Mountain Retreat brings a rural vibe to busy central D1. The breezy and unassuming décor nicely contrasts the intense northern flavors ideally suited for the international palate.

Top floor of 36 Le Loi, D1

+84 90 719 45 57

Nha Hang Ngon

Possibly the best-known Vietnamese restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Hang Ngon serves up hundreds of traditional local dishes in a classy French-style mansion.

160 Pasteur, D1

028 3827 7131

www.quananngon.com.vn

8am - 10pm

Temple Club

Named after the old-style Chinese temple in which the venue is located, the ancient stylings of this impressive restaurant make for an unforgettable evening spent somewhere in Saigon's colonial past. Beautiful oriental art that will please all diners and great local cuisine.

29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1

028 3829 9244

templeclub.com.vn

The Hue House

Located on the 10th floor roof of the Master Building, The Hue House opens up to a breezy space with views over the city. The décor is simple yet elegant – bird cages repurposed into lamps, bonsai centerpieces in pretty ceramic bowls and lots of greenery. The menu highlight unique ingredients only found in Hue, like the Va tron fig salad with shrimp and pork, assorted platter of rice cakes meant to be shared, the sate-marinated ribs come with a plate of crunchy greens and mixed rice, originally grown by minority groups in the Central Highlands, and many more.

Rooftop Master Building

41-43 Tran Cao Van, D3

Opening time 10am-10pm.

0909 246 156 / 0906 870 102

INTERNATIONAL



Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar

Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar

Manzo means "Beef" in Italian and as the name implies, it's a "Meat Bar". Manzo also offers several different dishes matched with local craft beer and selected wines, set in a classic European bar atmosphere. Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar was established in the heart of HCMC on Le Thanh Ton Street in District 1.

17/13 and 17/14 Le Thanh Ton street, District 1, HCMC

028-2253-8825

www.butcher-manzo.com



Madcow Wine & Grill

Mad Cow combines the feel of an edgy grill with the casual tone of an urban wine bar to create a stylish, laid-back atmosphere. Guests can enjoy a delicious meal on the 30th floor of the award winning 5 star Hotel, Pullman Saigon Centre, and look out over vibrant Ho Chi Minh City. Mad Cow's expert culinary team brings each cut of meat to flavorful perfection on handmade charcoal grill. Aside from grilled delights, delicious tapas are on offer – sourced locally and created fresh every day.

30th Floor, Pullman Saigon Centre

(0)28 3838 8686



twenty21one

A new casual dining venue with an innovative tapas menu divided into two categories: Looking East, and Looking West, with dishes such as

Crispy shredded duck spring

rolls and Bacon-wrapped

dates stuffed with Roquefort

blue cheese There are two

dining levels: an upstairs mezzanine and downstairs are tables with both private and exposed positioning (open-air streetside; and a terrace by the pool out back).

21 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

TWENTY21ONE



Saffron

The first thing that will strike you when you enter Saffron is the terracotta pots mounted on the ceiling. Located on Dong Du, this restaurant offers Mediterranean food, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness. Prepare to order plates to share and don't miss the signature Cheese Saganaki! Guests are welcomed with complimentary Prosecco, fresh baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus.

51 Hai Ba Trung, D1
(0)28 3824 8858

Also Try...

Blanc Restaurant

How to listen with your eyes? Blanc Restaurant employs a team of deaf/hearing impaired waiters. Try a new dining experience and order your dishes from the a la carte menu in sign language; communication will take on a new form.

178/180D Hai Ba Trung, Da Kao, D1

02862663535

www.blancrestaurant.vn

FORK Restaurant

Open from 11 am till 11 pm everyday, Fork Saigon gathers Spanish tapas and asian one going from 50.000 VND to 160.000 VND. It offers an expensive list of international wine and 16 available by the glass. A mixologist corner is also present with Gin and Vodka base in addition to local craft beers and seasonal white or red sangria. A set lunch at 190.000 VND served Monday to Friday from 11 am to 3 pm is also available. It allows you to pick any 3 three items between a large selection (Montaditos, meat, fish and vegetable), iced tea and dessert of the day included.

15 Dong Du, D1

028 3823 3597

info@forksaigon.com

www.forksaigon.com

Noir - Dining in the Dark

Can you differentiate beef from duck? Mystery meals are served in complete darkness by blind/visually impaired waiters. Select from one of the three-course set menus from the East, West or Vegetarian. Mystery wine pairing available too. Discover with taste and smell, embark on a culinary journey of the senses.

178/180D Hai Ba Trung, Da Kao, D1

02862632525

www.noirdininginthedark.com

Tomatito Saigon

This sexy tapas bar is Chef Willy's casual interpretation of the prêt-à-porter concept. Willy has a very personal perception of style, that is reflected in all his creations. His universe is colorful, funky and eclectic.

171 Calmette, Dist 1, Ho Chi Minh City

www.chcmc.com/tomatito

www.facebook.com/chcmc

+84 (0) 2862 881717



Travel & Wellness

GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS







Nature's *Wonderland*

In the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, there is a paradise unlike any other: the Galapagos archipelago

Text by **Stephanie Nell-Gamos**



WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN THE Galápagos Islands, my initial thought was, “Have I landed on Mars...?”

This reaction may have owed to a very early morning flight and a slow awakening; nonetheless, as I stepped out onto the hot tarmac at Seymour Airport on Baltra Island I believed that maybe I had actually landed on another planet.

Before embarking on my Galápagos voyage, I had done the background research, familiarized myself with the flora and fauna, and even watched the David Attenborough movies to better understand life on the islands in real-time. But no amount of study could have prepared me for the absolute magic that the Galápagos Islands hold.

Part of Ecuador, the Galápagos Islands are an archipelago that sit along the equator approximately 600 miles west of the mainland. The Islands were formerly a refuge for pirates hoping to plunder gold and silver carried by ships from South America back to Spain, and were fittingly named after the thousands of giant tortoises that once roamed them, as tortoise translates in Spanish to *galápagos*. The islands were made famous in 1835 following a visit from naturalist Charles Darwin, whose study of wildlife on the islands featured heavily in his development of the theory of natural selection.

As I was whisked away from the airport and onto the ferry to the mainland of Santa Cruz, I could not believe my eyes. Simply staring off into the sea offered a plethora of magnificent hues of blues and aquamarines, the colors so vivid I felt as if there were an assault on my senses, as though it couldn't possibly be real. Multicolored crabs could be seen holding onto black lava rocks basking in the sun. The water was so clear you could see small schools of fish flittering through the current in unison.

By the time I reached Santa Cruz, I was in awe of the seemingly endless and untouched vegetation, so lush and green as far as the eye could see. And just as I was taking all of this in with splendor, my driver suddenly pulled over our car and exclaimed “*galápagos!*” To my astonishment, there snacking on the flourishing landscape without a care in the world, were the first giant tortoises I had ever seen. The size and magnitude of these reptiles in person is unbelievable. With some weighing up to 600 lb, four feet in length and living for 100 years on average, the giant tortoise truly is an evolutionary feast for the eyes.

Following the tortoise pit stop, we carried on driving around the island, through Puerto Ayora, the largest town in the Galápagos Islands, and onto my place of residence for the next few days, Pikaia Lodge. I had seen the photos and researched the property I would be staying at, however, as we pulled up towards the hotel, I felt like I was entering a James Bond film in the role of a Bond Girl—damsel in distress on



see sea lions napping on (yes, literally *on*!) marine iguanas, both of them living alongside crabs, cormorants, Galápagos penguins and blue footed boobies.

San Cristóbal, meanwhile, features thundering mountains built up by years of volcanic ash on one side of the island, and the most picture-perfect, sea lion-clad beaches on the opposite side. There are islands like Floreana, whose waters are so crystal clear that you can see sharks, sea turtles and rays swimming in the bay from atop the Baroness's lookout, and later snorkel with playful groups of sea lions at Post Office Bay.

The enchanted isles are just that, a safe haven for all those who live and visit the Galápagos. While I may have been amiss thinking that I had landed on Mars, the Galápagos does feel like a fantasy land, but not another planet exactly—more like Eden. They are like no other place on earth, and I hope it remains this way forever. ■

her way to the villain's headquarters. An architectural masterpiece, this ecofriendly accommodation astounds all those who enter its gates. Boasting arguably the best views in Santa Cruz, its own private yacht for excursions, contemporary but environmental designs and fabulous food, Pikaia Lodge impresses. After being blown away by Pikaia, I set off for a boat tour of the islands.

Following my explorations on the mainland, I was fortunate enough to join an island cruise aboard the MV Eclipse. Cruises in the Galápagos allow travelers to see more distant islands like Fernandina or Isabela, as passengers sail overnight and wake up in a new destination, ready to explore. My time aboard the Eclipse was just that—an exploration. Every day was a new island, bay or cove, an adventure and a learning experience.

Naturalists will take small groups of 8-12 passengers on various activities such as snorkeling, walking/hiking, kayaking and *panga* (zodiac boat) rides over the course of the day. There is always something to see and do, and travelers are never bored. In fact, you are so engaged in all of the different environments, vegetation and wildlife each day that you welcome the opportunity for an afternoon siesta on the ship's sun deck.

Wildlife as Unique as The Islands Themselves

All of the islands in the Galápagos are unique, differing in landscape, plant life, and animals. Most islands have species and foliage that are exclusive to that particular island and not found anywhere else on earth. Animals in the Galápagos do not fear humans, which at first is hard to wrap your head around. But with few predators on the islands, the animals live in leisure.

They are fascinating creatures, living in perfect harmony, and are ever-evolving and making use of what each island offers. For example, on Isabela you'll

5 Must-See Galapagos Animals

With an animal population that attracted no less an authority than Charles Darwin, the Galapagos Islands are among the world's most exotic wildlife playgrounds. And because the majority of Galapagos animals are not native to the islands (most species originally floated to the island on logs or plant beds), the resulting population is as diverse as it is fascinating.

Blue-Footed Booby

Their distinctly colored appendages are for more than great photo ops. In an elaborate mating ritual, males display their feet by lifting them up and down while strutting before the female. It's an impressive ritual, but I can tell you from personal experience (and my wife can corroborate) that it's less successful for human males.

Iguanas

Galapagos land iguanas belong to a genus known as *conolophus*, which is Greek for "spiny crest." (One look at the picture at left and you can probably guess why.) Visually the iguanas are something to behold, but don't tell that to Darwin, who called them "ugly animals," before elaborating, "from their low facial angle they have a singularly stupid appearance." Not cool, Darwin. Not cool.

Sea Lions

They may be named after lions, but these guys probably have more in common with your family dog than the ring of the jungle. Known as the islands' "welcoming party," sea lions can often be found sunbathing on the shore (though I sometimes worry they're not using enough SPF) and have a playful nature that makes them a hit with travelers.

Giant Tortoises



If you haven't seen them in person, believe me: "giant" is an apt name for these behemoths, which can weigh nearly 900 lb and reach lengths of 5'9"! Their historical importance looms perhaps even larger: Darwin's observation of differences between highland and lowland species helped him develop his theory of evolution.

Penguins



The best-dressed bird in the biz isn't exclusive to arctic climates. A cousin of South Africa's banded penguins, Galapagos penguins are the only breed to live above the equator. They're able to survive there thanks to the cool temperatures brought in by ocean currents.

A Distinctive Experience

on the SASCO "Amazing Rail Tour"

Text by **Phuong Mai**
Images by **Lieu Lam**

TRAVELING ON TRAIN ALWAYS gives visitors a distinctive and unique experience. With Amazing Rail Tour, travelers will have a fascinating journey exploring Central Vietnam, where Vietnam's cultural traditions still endures.

Hop-on/hop-off is a flexible way to travel without a fixed schedule, allowing tourists to visit many sites within a day. In Vietnam, this concept is relatively new. SASCO Travel Tourist (a part of SASCO) has recently operated the first hop-on/hop-off train route in Vietnam between Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Binh. This route has been nominated



as one of the 25 most stunning railway routes in 2016 and ranked in the top 10 most splendid rail tours in Asia 2018.

Amazing Rail Tour will pass by the "hottest" tourist destinations in Vietnam, departing from Ho Chi Minh City, stopping by Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Da Nang and ending up in Quang Binh. Tourists will experience high standard trains with multiple facilities to enhance comfort and relaxation. Tourists will also have a chance to enjoy the Central Vietnamese cuisine onboard, prepared by Mon Ngon Viet Nam company, which was founded by chef Vo Quoc.

Amazing Rail Tour is perfect for visitors who prefer a flexible itinerary when discovering Southern and Central Vietnam's history and culture. ■

SASCO Travel
Tan Son Nhat International Airport
Ward 2, Tan Binh
(028) 3848 7167
Hotline: 0904 513 834



A Better Way to See Halong Bay

Text by **James Pham**

Images Provided by **Hai Au Aviation** and **L'Azalée Premium Cruises**

THERE'S SOMETHING

undeniably magical about Halong Bay. Despite the sometimes off-putting news of trash in the water, long lines of boats doing exactly the same itinerary, and new rules seemingly enacted at whim

suddenly closing off the top decks of boats and governing where you can and cannot swim (currently there's just one approved swimming spot in all of Halong Bay, on Titov Island), many of us are still drawn to its mesmerizing seascapes of

thousands of untouched, jungle-draped islands rising from emerald waters. Blessed with awesome natural beauty, it's no wonder that 10 million people visited Halong Bay last year, making the UNESCO World Heritage Site Vietnam's



later this year, making it even easier to get to Halong.

Once on the water, though, many visitors face the irony of being able to choose from literally hundreds of boats yet only five routes through Halong and nearby Bai Tu Long Bay. This means that instead of the brochure-promised experience of being alone among thousands of uninhabited islands, visitors instead find themselves in one long, bottle-necked procession of boats following the same route and hitting the main attractions all at the same time.

With the launch of L'Azalée Premium Cruises (www.lazaleecruises.vn/premium-private-cruise) earlier this year, those with deep pockets can really have the bay all to themselves aboard a luxury junk that looks more at home on the Mediterranean than in Halong. Sleeping just two passengers, the ultraluxe single-cabin boat boasts five crew members including a butler and a private chef who prepares gourmet meals a la minute on the sundeck. Best of all, guests can choose where they want to stop and the captain will devise a custom itinerary aimed at visiting Halong highlights when fewer tourists are around for a truly exclusive experience.

Another way to get a different perspective on the bay is aboard a scenic seaplane flight with Hai Au Aviation (www.seaplanes.vn/en). Despite having cruised through the bay numerous times, I was truly shocked at how the islands looked from above, forming rows upon rows of seeming mountain ranges, looking very much like the undulating body of a “descending dragon,” the meaning of “Halong.”

In upcoming months, Hai Au Aviation is looking to add flights to Cat Ba Island and up-and-coming Co To Island known for its blissfully quiet beaches and clear, blue water.

With all these new developments, it's perhaps time to think about a return to Halong Bay. ■

third most visited destination, behind Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

Last year's *Kong: Skull Mountain* brought additional international attention to the bay, with its dreamy, otherworldly vistas prominently featured in many of the blockbuster's scenes. Tours have even popped up visiting some of the movie's filming locations.

Also, Halong Bay, along with the broader northern coastal province of Quang Ninh, is featured front and center in this year's National Tourism Year by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. Under the banner “Ha Long – Heritage, Wonder, and Friendly Destination,” more than 50 events have been planned through January 2019 in the province, including photo exhibitions, a massive carnival, culinary festivals, travel expo and sporting events.

But perhaps the biggest game changer is a new highway expected to open this month, promising to halve the travel time between Hanoi and Halong Bay, from four hours down to just two. This will likely entice more people with

limited time to visit on a day cruise. Another highway is under construction to the new international airport in Van Don, 50 kms from the bay, set to open



>>The List Business

INSURANCE

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A12-A13 Nguyen Huu Tho, Kim Son Project, D7
028 6298 9203

New Pet Hospital & Spa

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53 Dang Dung, DI
www.newpethospital.com.vn
028 6269 3939

Saigon Pet Clinic

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33, 41 street, Thao Dien, D2
www.saigonpethospital.com
028 3519 4182

Sasaki Animal Hospital

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38-40-42 Nguyen Thi Thap, Him Lam, D7
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>>The List Travel



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www.anamandara-resort.com



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(0)297 3982 988 - contact@laverandaresorts.com
www.laverandaresorts.com



Mia R

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02583 989 666

www.mianhatrang.com
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32 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Phan Thiet
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www.chamvillas.com
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32 - 34 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
(0258) 388 7777
www.nhatrang.intercontinental.com

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Vo Nguyen Giap, Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang
0236 395 8888
www.pullman-danang.com

The Island Lodge R

Newly-opened, The Island Lodge is a 12-room Indochine-themed lodge set on Unicorn Island (Thoi Son). Mekong River view rooms and bungalows are scattered around the grounds, but the jewel is the open air restaurant/lounge fronting 50 meters of riverfront along with a French restaurant. There's also an infinity swimming pool and Jacuzzi.

390 Ap Thoi Binh, Thoi Son, My Tho
0273 651 9000
www.theislandlodge.com.vn

>>The List Health & Beauty

DENTAL



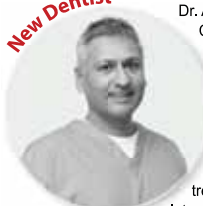
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Kids & Education

Alternatives on the Horizon

Beyond the IBDP and the AP Program

TWO OF THE MOST POPULAR high-caliber programs around the world are the IBDP and the AP, which are regarded by many schools, colleges and universities as valid indicators of high academic quality and performance. Most international schools classify themselves as either IB World Schools or American AP School, with some intrepid ones combining both programs in their curricula. According to the *Journal of Advanced Academics*, the enriched curricula of both programs are “meant to bridge the transition between high school and postsecondary studies by offering academically prepared students a more rigorous high school experience.”

All these international programs, including the Cambridge International Examinations, IGCSE or A-levels are gaining popularity and finding a niche in particular countries and regions. Hayde's research published in the *Introduction to International Education Book*, found out that the rapid growth of the IB in East Asia and around the world establishes the IB as perhaps the key agent in international education, while the College Board tells us that over the past decade, the number of students who graduate from high school having taken AP courses has nearly doubled.

After having had experience in several programs and curricula and having gone through the changes and adaptations to new demands in society and education over the last two decades, many educators, including me, started to epistemologically and pedagogically wonder about the the structure of these programs, particularly their final assessments, and above all, what the role of teachers' on-going assessment and professional judgement is on students' final reporting.

This paper is an invitation to reflect on the importance and significance of the road rather than merely the final destination. What is being presented corresponds to an alternative being implemented at the International School Ho Chi Minh City American Academy (a Cognita School in Vietnam), which focuses on the whole learning process and not just a proficiency final exam.

About The Final Performance Exams

For both the IBDP and AP Program, most of the educational efforts are oriented towards the final exam provided by their respective institutions. With this in mind, teachers are under constant pressure to prepare students for a test that will determine whether they are qualified or not for college credit or university-level studies. Through the school year students are exposed to a variety of teaching methodologies, assessment strategies and varied didactic approaches intended to help them master the content, pass the exam and possibly get some college credit. Both programs agree that taking a higher level and increased rigorous class prepare the students with the





of a year? Will a teacher's personal judgement and on-going assessment be taken into consideration? Very likely in many universities or colleges, the answer is no. There is still a marked misconception that a final test result is a very "objective" predictor of college success. And yet, schools end up limiting years of student achievement to the score on one test. Is this fair for the student? Is this fair for the teacher and institution who have invested so much time and effort in their holistic education to reduce everything to just one checkpoint? What about multiple data points to make an informed decision about student learning? Where do we leave all the qualitative information we have about students that can tell their "true" story?

However, since one of our objectives as an academic institution is to prepare students for college, we need to continue providing students with opportunities to find their own path in order to be ready for a life away from the comfort of a high school setting. Therefore, taking into account all these considerations and after a meticulous research for high performing college level classes for our students, at the International School Ho Chi Minh City American Academy in Vietnam, we decided to incorporate a new model of *dual enrollment* which is an organized system with special guidelines that allows high school students to take college-level courses where they are considered as regular college students. But, why do we think it goes beyond the IBDP and the AP Program?

An Alternative On The Horizon

One way to overcome the stress of one-exam checkpoint only could be a program that also values the process, places only partial weight on final

skills to tackle future demanding academic college life in terms of time management, study skills and expectations, however, whether we like it or not, the final exams still mean a lot.

It is also accepted that many admissions officers look at the transcripts for patterns of self-demand and higher expectations, in which case, the AP and IBDP classes play an important role; however, very unlikely they look at their performance in their respective classes to grant credit. Rather, admissions officers typically review the official exam report from either the AP College Board or the IBO to do so. The exam results, are therefore great differentiators. In Asia, for example, recent research on IB schools shows that "particularly DP schools, tend to prioritize cognitive attributes in order to maintain or boost their reputations because of the competitive market situation in the region, and parental and student aspirations for access to highly ranked international universities," according to *Journal of Research in International Education*. The pressure on results comes from different fronts and whether we want to accept it or not, it is an imperative goal for our students to succeed in these exams and for teachers to make any effort to help them do so.

Research indicates that both AP and IBDP exams have internal consistency and reliability, therefore, their results can be seen as "valid" and "objective indicators" of students' learning. However, we know that learning is far more than a set of answers to specific questions in a particular exam. Additionally, there are many teachers with exceptional cases where students score low on these exams with no apparent reason for such performance. Yes, we can ask for a revision of the exam, and then we may get a slight change, but still they may get a no-passing grade. When something like this happens, both students and

teachers usually end-up with unanswered questions, a bitter taste and probably some guilt for their performance. As educators, we know of multiple factors that affect test performance other than lack of skills, knowledge and competencies; we talk about, for example, test anxiety, which is a normal disposition to a perceived threat or concern. However, there is also the "X-Factor" which is that thing we cannot really find an explanation for and has nothing to do with a specific variable, but probably is a combination of many factors including illness, stress, unfamiliarity, parental/societal pressure, etc.

But what do we do when we have these cases of low performance in an exam but exceptional performance and dispositions throughout the course





Alex Aristizabal, PhD. is the Associate Director of Teaching and Learning / SUPA Chemistry Instructor at International School Ho Chi Minh City - American Academy

exams and offers students a broad spectrum of courses from traditional “hard-core” academics like Physics, Chemistry, Economics to more diverse and 21st century-oriented courses like Entrepreneurship, Economic Ideas and Issues, Gender and Literary Texts, Forensic Science, etc. These characteristics and some others are met and provided by the Syracuse University Project Advanced Program (SUPA) which corresponds to one of the many dual enrollment programs currently in place in the US. This program in particular (supa.syr.edu):

- Offers innovative and challenging Syracuse University courses to qualified high school students at their local high schools, during their regularly scheduled high school day.
- Increases students’ college readiness by providing college readiness tools, programs, and services.
- Provides continuous professional development for teachers and ongoing dialogue between the University faculty and the high school teachers.
- Conducts extensive ongoing research and evaluation in support of systemically improving instruction and smoothing the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

As an adjunct instructor of SUPA Chemistry and having had previous experience both in IB DP and AP, I would like to highlight the following advantages of SUPA:

- For a SUPA Class, not everything is the final exam. As a matter of fact, the final exam is only a small percentage of the whole grade, usually only 20%. The on-going learning assessment, internal evaluations and class projects constitute a great deal in the final grade of the student. The journey can be more important than the final destination.
- The SUPA course content is the same as the equivalent college course. Instructors are not allowed to waterdown academic quality. For example, a student in any

SUPA class is as prepared as any AP or IB DP student in their corresponding subject.

- When students pass the class and are officially enrolled in the course, they automatically earn college credit, which is transferable to several colleges and universities in the USA and world-wide institutions that accept U.S.A university credits.
- Class offering is versatile and allows students to take classes not traditionally taught in a high school setting.
- There is continuous communication with the Associate Professor in Syracuse. They provide the final exams and carry-out classroom observations and conferences with our high school students.
- As adjunct instructors we are entitled with the privileges of a part-time faculty member and therefore have access to their resources like library and online databases for research. Students are also officially registered and can also have access to these resources.
- In the case of chemistry, every summer there are 2 scholarships for instructors to carry out chemistry research over the summer and be involved in hands-on practical work.
- There is a collaborative network of over 200 partner schools and 800 certified instructors.

Some Potential Limitations

As any other program there are some limitations that may affect its adoption in some schools. These are perhaps the ones we have found the most relevant:

- *Class offerings are limited by the availability of qualified instructors.* In order to become an instructor there are some qualifications and professional criteria that must be met by instructors. For example, it is expected in many cases to have a Master’s degree in the corresponding area or significant experience teaching at a higher level.
- *All instructors must attend the initial seminar at Syracuse*

University. Even though the training itself has no cost, there are costs associated to transportation and hotel in Syracuse.

- *Not all schools are accepted to be part of SUPA.* Schools must go through a selection process and meet the requirements for acceptance.
- *It is not as recognized as AP or IB DP.* This is true, but upon passing the class, students earn college credit. On the contrary, even with 5 on AP or 7 on IB DP, there is no guarantee that all colleges/universities will grant credit for the class.
- *Students pay for credit hour.* It could be bit more expensive than an AP or IB DP Exam, but still it is cheaper than the actual class in college.
- *Instructors must teach the class at least once every three years to remain active.* When this criteria is not met, instructors must go back to Syracuse for a Summer Training.

Conclusions

As we can see there is no perfect program in education, but at least this is a field concerned with continuous improvement and the development of meaningful student learning. SUPA has proven to have some advantages over the IB DP and the traditional AP, which we also offer, and certainly is increasing its popularity among students, particularly for the versatility in class offerings. What SUPA provides is a class environment that values teachers’ professional judgment, internal on-going evaluations and the journey more than a final destination or exam. Teachers follow a college-level curriculum, but their authentic on-going assessments count. As a faculty member, teachers’ professional judgment, their methods, experiences and internal assessments are valid indicators of student achievement and success, their voice is heard and their results validated.

As a further internal research project, we would like to have students take the AP exam after taking a corresponding SUPA class and find out the success rate for comparison purposes, however, we haven’t had these cases yet. ■

A Course For The World

Building a path to quality education for the future

Interview by **Christine Van**
Images Provided by **The American School**

A GLOBALLY COMPETENT

student is one who can investigate the world, weigh perspectives, interact with diverse audiences, and take action. To develop these competencies, students need learning experiences that build over time, developing their academic understanding and empathy along with their confidence to take action. That means educators in diverse contexts also need to develop their skills as global influencers.

Meet Chelsea Armstrong, Middle-High Principal, and Karen Jacobi, College & Guidance Counselor, at The American School who are helping today's students seize tomorrow's opportunities.

What are The American School's (TAS) core philosophy on teaching and its curriculum?

Chelsea: Our core philosophy on teaching can be found in our mission statement: The mission of The American School, a private Early Childhood to Grade 12 college preparatory school, is to educate

the whole child incorporating mind, body, and spirit. The school provides the tools, opportunities, and human resources to inspire and promote inquiry and development of self-confidence. The students will be equipped to become leaders with inquiring minds through critical thinking, writing, reasoning, investigating, problem solving, and collaborative experiences. A strong partnership of motivated students, caring faculty and parents, affirms and challenges each person within a dynamic American educational program enriched by a multicultural setting in Vietnam. TAS promotes high standards of excellence by enhancing student learning for leadership in a global world.

It is incredibly important to us that our students leave TAS as well rounded people ready to give back to the world. Yes, we stress academics, but community involvement, athletics and the arts are equally important to us.

We use international best teaching practices to create inquiry based,

hands-on, student driven learning experiences to reach the US Common Core State Standards.

Karen, describe the role of a school counselor at TAS? What is the counseling theory or approach that you most closely follow?

Karen: At TAS we are fortunate to have both an academic as well as a social emotional counselor and we work together as a team. Ly Nguyen is our Social Emotional counselor. Among her many responsibilities; she works with students to help them develop positive relationships, coping strategies, and overcome common obstacles that can sometimes get in the way of students' academic and personal success. From the standpoint of my role as the College Guidance Counselor, I meet with students to discuss their plans for the future, parental expectations, past academic history and personal goals. The planning considerations for students include:



1. An awareness of both their personal and academic strengths.
2. Researching careers and college/university majors through interest inventories and websites such as College Board's My Big Future at bigfuture.collegeboard.org.
3. Selecting high school courses that are appropriate to their goals and talents.
4. Understanding the importance of grades and assessments including PSAT, SAT, TOEFL, IELTS, PTE and assisting students in finding resources to make the most of their abilities.
5. Meeting with college and university representatives at local education fairs and asking good questions regarding application requirements, specific majors and programs offered, scholarships and costs, university size, demographics/diversity and student life.
6. Preparing a résumé that details student achievement and extra-curricular activities. Résumé help teachers in writing letters of recommendation and help students with the university application process.
7. The nuts and bolts of university applications including The Common App, and other state specific application websites and meeting all deadlines while maintaining good grades in the final year of high school.
8. Finally, the visa process and planning for the next big life adventure

Saigon is a community growing in diversity with many nationalities. Explain how TAS reaches out to people from various demographics to ensure all students and community members are included in learning.

Chelsea: TAS has a diverse student and teacher population. It is deeply important to the school that all members of our community feel safe and accepted



within the school. We create this sense of comfort through our advisory program, a daily meeting session where all students are placed in small groups of fewer than 10 and are paired with one teacher advisor. Kindness, tolerance, social skills, team building, and other topics are discussed in this safe space. TAS also works to include our parents through newsletters and monthly parenting classes offered by our counseling team.

Karen: Cultural differences in an international school setting are a given. The students at TAS are positive role models for the adults in that most of them have been immersed in cultural exchange since they were very young and focus on the similarities rather than the differences between people. A significant percentage of our students are "third culture" kids—those who are living in a culture that is not native to them and being educated in an American curriculum. Language can be the biggest hurdle and TAS students receive support through dedicated ESL teachers. By the time students reach grade 10, they are expected to have reached a level of English competency that places them on par with their peers

in North America. With the exception of Vietnamese culture and foreign language classes, all of the instruction is delivered in English by native English-speaking teachers. We have an amazing local staff who work with teachers and administrators when we need to bridge the gaps in communication with parents.

What does a WASC accreditation mean for a school? What happens if a student in middle school attends a non-accredited school and wants to transfer to TAS?

Chelsea: WASC accreditation is deeply important to our school. The accreditation process keeps our team continually growing and seeking out ways to improve and be the best school we can for our students. Our accreditation status allows graduates access to colleges and universities in North America, Canada, Europe and Australia. If a middle school student came to TAS from a non-accredited school we would give the student our entrance exam and have an interview to determine if TAS would be a good fit for his/her education.

Tell us about TAS's Advanced Placement Program and its importance in helping students move on to universities. With the school's recent graduating class, what percentage are going on to universities and where?

Chelsea: TAS has a strong AP program that allows students an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school. AP courses are an awesome addition to a student's transcript and are sure to impress college admissions officers. For the next school year, we will offer the following AP courses: Language and Composition, World History, Psychology, Studio Art, Calculus, Statistics and Physics.

Karen: Each of the 20 students of the graduating class of 2018 plan to attend college or university. Some applied to as many as a dozen schools and others applied to only one. The rate of acceptance was very high and students





Chelsea Armstrong
Middle-High Principal at
The American School



Karen Jacobi
College & Guidance Counselor at
The American School

tended to take scholarship and finances, as well as a school's reputation into account when selecting their top choice. This year, scholarship awards totaled \$1,358,700 USD. The following is a list of the schools where the class of 2018 plan to attend: Baylor University, US; Georgia State University, US; Concordia University, Canada; University of Calgary, Canada; Wake Tech College, US; Drury University, US; Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Vietnam; University of Sydney, Australia; Monash University, Australia; Northwest Community College, British Columbia, Canada; Hult University, US; Orange Coast College, US; LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore; and Auburn University, US.

Chelsea: In addition, TAS class of 2018 was accepted at more than 40 universities with more than USD1million in scholarships. Some of them even received the acceptance from more than 10 universities. To have this result, Karen's role is very important.

What unique role do you think middle school counselors play in supporting students' college readiness? How can counselors work to ensure that all students, no matter their background, have the opportunity to access college?

Karen: The importance of middle school is often underestimated. While universities are concerned only with high school transcripts, the habits and values that are created in middle school translate directly to high school success.



Parents, teachers and school counselors ideally work together to create a culture where students see education as the key to their future. Every family have unique circumstances that makes planning for higher education very strategic—there is no “one size fits all” approach. The great news is that there are many options that take finances and academic strengths into consideration. There are several branches of international colleges and universities right here in Ho Chi Minh City that offer direct transfers to their parent schools in Australia and the US. Community colleges in the US

and Canada are also a good option, offering lower cost tuition and relaxed admissions policies for the first two years, with transfer to major universities. Many universities award significant scholarships to students with excellent academic records. The options are as varied as the students applying. I enjoy working with families to tailor the experience of searching for the best college or university “fit.”

Currently in the US, special area courses (PE, Art, Music) are being defunded and closed because they aren't considered essential to education. What's your opinion on this and how do these courses contribute to student achievement in general and to the attainment of core curriculum standards?

Chelsea: It breaks my heart to hear about the defunding of arts programs at schools in the US. TAS has long-standing Music, Drama, Dance, Arts and Physical Education programs. I have seen how these courses can excite, challenge and celebrate students in ways you can't always see in the traditional content area classrooms. We are preparing our students for a world where critical thinking and creativity are crucial to success. In the years to come, we will continue to put as much emphasis on the Arts as our general education programs at TAS. ■

For more info on The American School, visit tas.edu.vn





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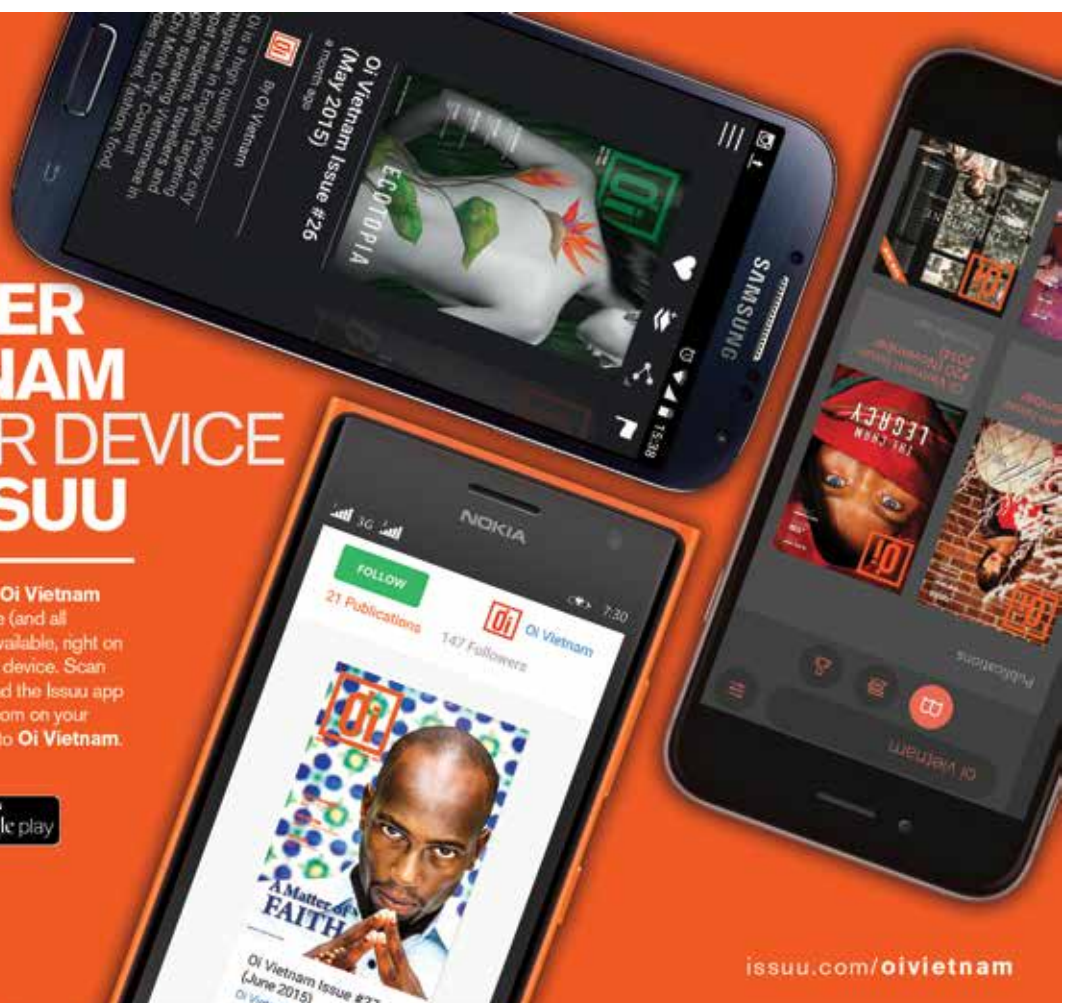
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Baby's First Test

Raising awareness about early screening tests for newborns because early treatment will help your baby grow up healthy

IT'S SOMETIMES SAID THAT

“an ounce of prevention is worth a whole pound of cure.” Early identification of an illness or condition will almost certainly lead to better medical outcomes for a developing child. This is the essence of why newborn screening is so important—it is an opportunity to catch a problem in its earlier stages and identify it before it potentially gets worse or causes further complications.

Newborn screening has been around since the 1960s in Western countries. Due to technological advances throughout the years, the scope of this screening has expanded. In Vietnam, it has already been going on for a number of years, although the newborn screening center was only formally established in 2014.

Newborn screening is important because affected babies do not show any problems at birth and look “normal.” By

the time any symptoms appear, the baby's development may already have been impaired. Thus, newborn screening allows the conditions to be identified early. With early detection, the conditions can be treated or managed in most cases.

A standard screening involves a series of tests that are administered to newborn babies to identify illnesses that may cause a serious medical condition and could affect the child's growth and development if left untreated. Because the test is performed before an individual has any observable symptoms, it allows for a condition to be identified and managed before any problem occurs.

It's important for parents to understand that newborn screening does not diagnose an illness in itself—it is rather used to identify children who need further confirmatory tests. Children who test positive are referred to a pediatrician who

will conduct an examination and make a diagnosis.

The usual procedure is to take a very small amount of blood from the heel of a newborn 24–48 hours after birth. The timing of the test is very important—doing it too early may decrease the sensitivity of the tests, and doing the test later after the newborn period may not be as accurate.

There is no universal format—different countries have different illnesses tested for under newborn screening programs. In Vietnam, public reports suggest that it is usually done as a matter of routine. There are a number of tests available (depending on the facility), but most of them come with a fee—whereas the government provides two free newborn screening tests to detect for Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency and for congenital hypothyroidism in newborns. There are sometimes issues with parents



Dr. Agnes R. Viay is an integral team member of the pediatrics team at Family Medical Practice, bringing with her a wealth of experience in childcare. She oversees FMP's Saigon International Mother & Baby Association (SIMBA) program, which hosts weekly meetings to discuss a range of pre- and post-natal topics with new and soon-to-be mothers.

being reluctant to have the test done, usually as a result of lack of knowledge or misinformation.

When a baby is lacking in the G6PD enzyme, they may develop bleeding and anemia if exposed to certain food or drugs. It's very important to know if this is the case so a parent can avoid foods that will cause these symptoms. Congenital hypothyroidism is a condition resulting from a lack of thyroid hormones—if left untreated, it may lead to growth failure and intellectual impairment.

Some international hospitals in Vietnam offer a broader range of tests to check for more metabolic diseases. Likewise, a hearing screening is done prior to discharge—early identification and intervention of hearing loss can prevent severe psychosocial, educational, and speech delay. There is also a critical

congenital heart disease screening that is usually performed during the first 24 hours of life. It's a simple procedure and check of the baby's O₂ saturation (level of oxygen in the blood) with a probe. This test determines if there is any suspicion of a congenital heart disease, so that an early diagnosis can be made.

Common screening tests can include:

- Tandem Mass Spectrometry
 - Fatty Acid Oxidation Disorders
 - Organic Acid Disorders
 - Amino Acid Disorders
 - Hyperalimentionation
 - Medium Chain Triglyceride Oil Administration
 - Treatment with Benzoate, Pivalic Acid, or Valproic Acid
 - Liver Disease
 - Presence of EDTA Anticoagulants in blood specimen
 - Carnitine Uptake Deficiency

- Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH)
- Galactosemia (GAL)
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH)
- Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency (G6PD)
- Biotinidase Deficiency (BIOT)
- Cystic Fibrosis (CF)
- Sickle Cell Anemia (Hb S/S)
- Sickle-C Disease (Hb S/C)
- S-beta Thalassemia (Hb S/bTh)
- Hb Variants (Var Hb)

At Family Medical Practice, we have a comprehensive newborn screening package available in Hanoi, but this procedure is not usually requested in Ho Chi Minh City, although it can be arranged on request. Parents must remember that timing is critical, as the tests must be performed within 48 hours. Parents must remember that timing is critical, as the tests are ideally performed 24–48 hours after birth. ■

>>The List Education

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS



ABC International School (ABCIS)

Inspected and judged an outstanding school by British Government Inspectors (January 2017), 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.



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www.kinderacademy.edu.vn
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Kinder Academy
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The International School Ho Chi Minh City - American Academy

ISHCMC - American Academy is a U.S. curriculum secondary school, preparing students aged 11 to 18 years old for success at universities worldwide. Early university credits, through SUPA and AP courses, a 1:1 University Counseling Program, and an extensive EAL program sets our graduates on the road to success with 100% acceptance rate and U.S. \$1 million scholarship fund to overseas universities.



16 Vo Truong Toan, D2
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www.aavn.edu.vn



The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

ISHCMC is a leading school in HCMC with a rich history, yet is always innovating. Students from over 50 nationalities are taught in modern learning environments by trained IB educators specializing in inquiry-led teaching. This, paired with international-standard safeguarding policies ensures that all children are safe and supported to reach their potential. ISHCMC students develop a life-long passion for asking questions and searching beyond what is asked in the classroom, ultimately becoming true 21st century citizens equipped for the future. The 2017/18 academic school year will see the new Secondary Campus open and the continued refurbishment in the Primary Campus.



28 Vo Truong Toan, D2
+84 (28) 3898 9100
admissions@ishcmc.edu.vn
www.ishcmc.com



The American School

The American School (TAS) is an international school that has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 21 nationalities. TAS provides an American-based curriculum with rigorous performance standards and a variety of academic offerings including Advanced Placement courses, university credit courses through our partnership with Missouri State University, and an Intensive ESL Program for English Language Learners. In 2018, The American School will open its new, sprawling mega-campus in District 2's An Phu Neighborhood. This purpose-built facility will house up to 1200 students from pre-nursery through grade 12. This is an exciting time in the growth of the school!

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Campus 1:
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www.wonderkidsmontessori.edu.vn

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www.bisvietnam.com

Renaissance International School Saigon

Renaissance is an International British School offering the National Curriculum for England complemented by the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), Cambridge IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each pupil is offered an education tailored to meet their individual learning needs. It's a family school providing first-class facilities including a 350- seats theater, swimming pools, mini-pool, drama rooms, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

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.

www.ssis.edu.vn

STEPS Special School

STEPS (Support Teach Encourage Person with Special Needs) Special School caters to children with Autism, ADHD/ADD, Speech Delay, Intellectual Disability, Behavior Difficulty and Deaf. Our mission and vision is to nurture all children with Special needs in a safe inclusive and supportive environment through education, therapeutic interventions and community acceptance. We offer full - day, half - day, after school program, and school assistance.

18A Vo Truong Toan, An Phu Ward, D2, HCMC.
(028) 2253-4728
www.steps.edu.vn
Steps2017vn@gmail.com





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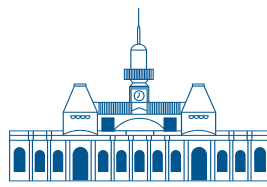
INFO@SMALLCHANGEVIETNAM.COM

Small Change operates as a revenue generating social enterprise believing that the more money it makes the greater the social impact it can have. Small Change's first initiative is with Streets International, a U.S. 501, non-profit corporation, founded to provide scholarships for their culinary and hospitality training programme for disadvantaged youth in Vietnam.

AsiaLIFE
www.asialifemagazine.com

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