

# Ơi

VIETNAM

02-2019

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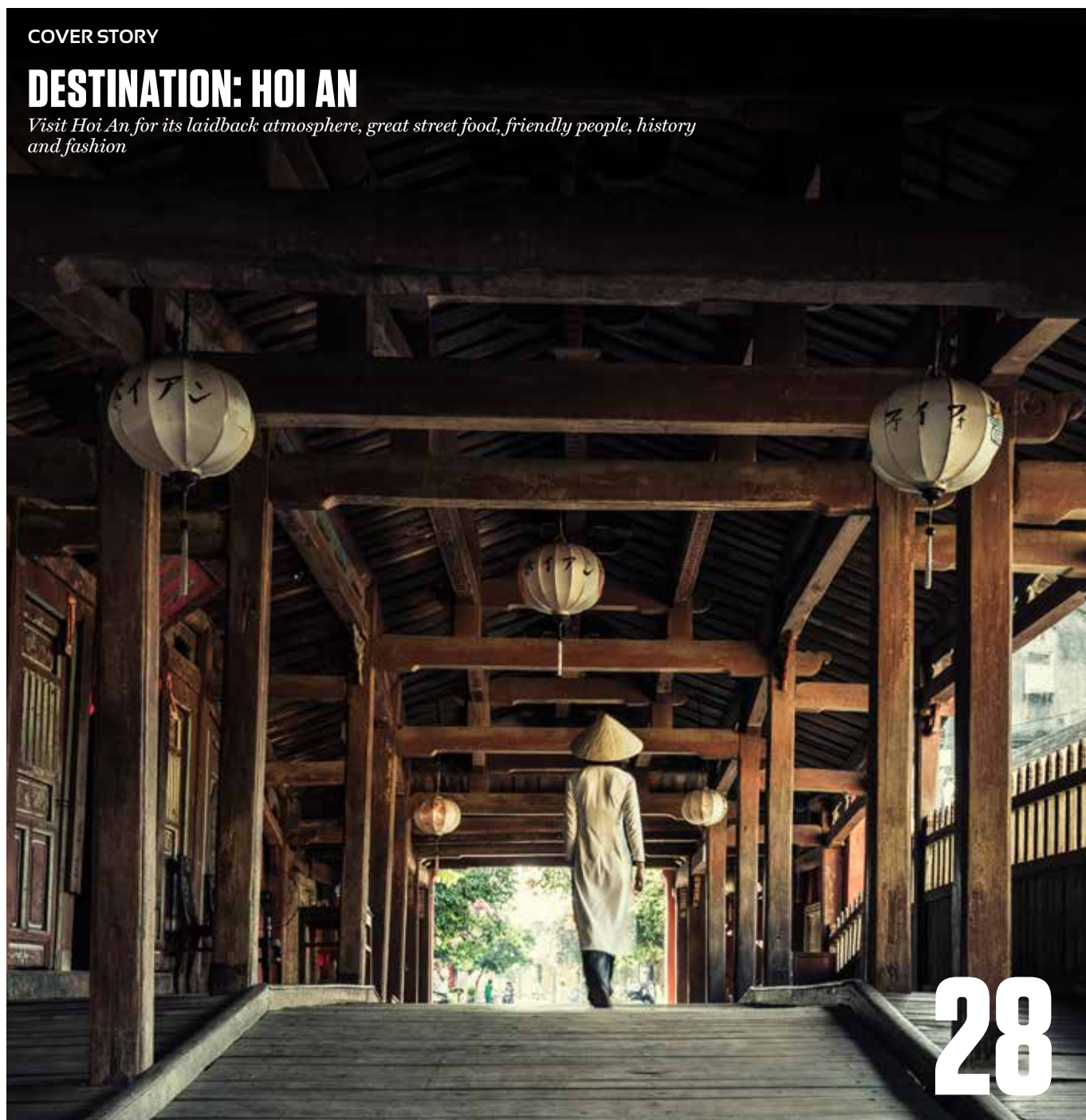


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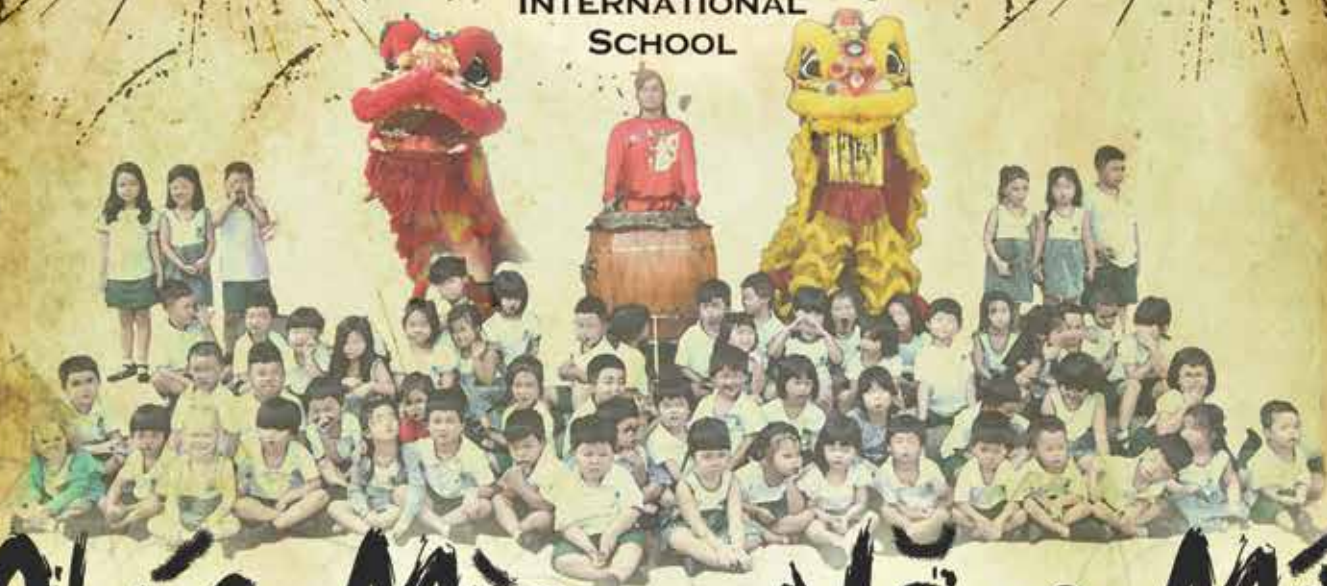
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Chúc Mừng Năm Mới  
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## Pet of the Month



Yuki 2 is a beautiful white and ginger cat with a lovely disposition. Given his gorgeous light blue eyes, we think he may be part Siamese.

**YUKI 2 WAS TAKEN TO SAIGON PET CLINIC** as a stray and then was fostered for some time in the clinic, together with another cat named Tom. At first Yuki 2 was very scared and the staff had a hard time handling him. His favorite place to hide was on top of the air conditioning unit, making it difficult to catch him. With patience, the staff member who fed the two cats daily was able to begin handling Yuki 2. He has come a long way since then, and now he thoroughly enjoys spending time with people and getting a cuddle.

At one point Yuki 2 was adopted, but the adoption did not work out (through no fault of Yuki's) and he had to be returned. He is currently in the ARC cat room with several other cats. Yuki 2 gets along well with the other cats, but would prefer to be with people. He has been neutered, is up-to-date on his vaccinations, and is ready for his forever home. ■



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# TROI OI!

## The country in numbers



# 571 MILLION

**JOURNEYS WERE MADE ON PUBLIC BUSES LAST YEAR, DOWN BY 21 MILLION TRIPS FROM 2017.**

The municipal Department of Transport attributed the decline to several reasons, including the degradation of the city's public bus fleet. Costs, such as new vehicles, fuel and worker wages all increased, while their proposals to raise bus ticket prices were not approved, resulting in unstable operations on some routes for bus companies, greatly affecting their service quality. Moreover, the number of bus routes also decreased in 2018. To date, Ho Chi Minh City has ditched seven routes, including five subsidized routes, whose ticket prices are partially covered by the city's budget, and two routes without subsidies. On top of that, the development of ride-hailing Grab also put greater competition on buses as passengers tend to prefer the tech-based service for short distances due to convenience, maneuverability and little difference in price.

# TWO

**-WHEELED AMBULANCE SERVICE TAKES OFF IN JAMPACKED HO CHI MINH CITY.**

More hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City are now interested in using scooters to swiftly respond to emergency calls after the model was successfully piloted by a downtown hospital. Motorcycles have proven effective in making their way through the narrow alleys and crowded streets where regular ambulances would have a hard time reaching.

After three weeks of putting a fleet of motorcycle ambulances to use since early November, the Saigon General Hospital in District 1 said emergency response time has been reduced to three to five minutes for patients in the downtown area, and ten to 15 minutes for calls from District 4 and District 7.

Each two-wheeled ambulance is operated by a doctor and a nurse, who can either diagnose and provide treatment on the spot or determine that hospitalization is required, in which case they will remain at the patient's side until a four-wheeled ambulance arrives. Following the success of Saigon General Hospital's piloted scheme, a number of public hospitals in Thu Duc District, District 1, District 2 and District 4 have sought approval from the municipal health department to launch similar services.



# USD172 MILLION

**DOUBLE TUNNEL SYSTEM OPENS TO TRAFFIC IN SOUTH-CENTRAL VIETNAM.**

The Cu Mong Tunnel System consists of two 2.6-kilometer tunnels running parallel under the Cu Mong Mountain Pass, which separates Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Provinces. It lies on National Route 1, a 2,360-kilometer artery that stretches from Vietnam's northern border area to its southernmost tip. In the immediate term, only one of the two tunnels of the system, a two-lane road with a maximum speed of 80 kilometers per hour for both carriageways, is open to traffic. It now takes only six minutes to make a journey through the ten-meter-wide tunnel, compared to half an hour for a ride on the Cu Mong Pass, notorious for its road crashes. The Cu Mong tunnel pair is Vietnam's third-longest underground road passageway, following the 6.3-kilometer Hai Van Tunnel in the central region and the 4.1-kilometer Deo Ca Tunnel in the south-central part of the country.





~800

#### IPHONES CONFISCATED.

Two Hanoians will be jailed for six to eight years for smuggling over 800 iPhones from Hong Kong. According to the indictment, Viet hired Cuong to work for his company for a monthly salary of VND15 million in 2017 and asked him to fake customs papers to smuggle batches of iPhones 6S Plus from Hong Kong into Danang. Investigations also revealed they had illegally transferred 617 other iPhones from Hong Kong into Vietnam through the airport a week before.



~900

#### FLIGHTS A DAY, THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF TAN SON NHAT AIRPORT ESTIMATES THAT THE AIRPORT WILL SEE THIS TET.

The peak of the season will fall on January 20 to February 15 with 134,207 passengers each day, an increase of 17,500 passengers compared to the same period last year. The number of daily flights will increase by 8-10%. Before the Tet Holiday starts, on February 2, the airport will see a record 900 flights, an increase of 73 flights on last year. Vietnam Airlines announced that it will increase 1,956 flights for this Tet. Vietjet Air will also add 1,000 more flights while Jetstar Pacific will add 1,014 flights. The number of staff, security and general services has been improved at Tan Son Nhat Airport such as toilet expansion, more seats in the waiting area, more check-in counters and escalators. Several shops will be closed to give more space for other services and construction inside the airport will be halted 15 days before and 10 days after the Tet Holiday.



#### 7 TESTED POSITIVE FOR DRUGS LAST MONTH IN A HO CHI MINH CITY POLICE INSPECTION OF TRUCK DRIVERS.

Police in Ho Chi Minh City have carried out an inspection of multiple trailer truck drivers in a three-day period, after which several tested positive for drugs and were slapped with a fine or sent to local rehab centers. The inspection took place for about two hours, during which they were given a clinical urine test. The result revealed that four people had consumed drugs before driving. In one specific case, a 28-year-old truck driver and his assistant both tested positive for drugs. Officers also found a machete and several tools commonly used in the consumption of synthetic drugs inside their vehicle. According to an officer, the drivers who were found using drugs were escorted to the police station to have their identity verified. Those who have a legitimate place of residence were slapped with a fine and will be subject to regular supervision from local authorities. The others were sent to a rehabilitation center in Cu Chi District in the same city.



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# Let's Talk About Sex

The shifting terrain of sex education in Vietnam

Text by **Rebecca Jones**



---

## LAST MONTH TWO YOUNG

Vietnamese men Le Hoang Thach, (30) and Le Huynh Ha (28) caused a storm on social media with a video in which they called on young women to stop having abortions. Part of a wider campaign entitled *Me oi! Dung giet con!* (“Mama don’t kill me”). The video and the campaign faced a fierce backlash from women across the country, many of which criticized the pair for their approach to the issue. Few, however, dispute the statistics. According to reports, many pregnancies in Vietnam end in abortion, with the rate of termination highest here than in any other Asian country, and top five worldwide.

Equally, abandoned children are also a growing issue, for example, Linh Son pagoda in District 4, which earlier this year appealed for volunteers to visit the large number of babies now under its care. Among a number of issues including poverty and sex selection, many respondents to the *Me oi! Dung giet con!* campaign pointed to a lack of sexual education as key reason behind Vietnam’s high abortion rate. As in many countries all over the world, sex remains a taboo subject here in Vietnam, where pre-marital sex is not yet entirely accepted within society.

According to Nicholas Compton, a health education teacher at The American School (TAS) in District 2, parents remain largely reluctant to talk about sex with their children, believing that such discussions may only encourage them to do it.

He says: “I think the general consensus is that, ‘if we talk about it we’ll plant seeds in their head and they’ll go do it.’ But of course many studies

have shown that talking about sex with teenagers doesn’t actually increase the likelihood that they will go and have sex at an earlier age—that’s bogus.”

## Contraceptives Unpopular

However, while levels of awareness of sexual issues may be low among young people, both Nicholas and French gynaecologist Dr. Jean-Claude Tissot at the Centre Medical International in District 3 do not believe that the situation is so dire that young people are not aware that sex leads to babies.

Dr. Tissot comments: “No, no. I don’t think that is the case. Any girl from 15 will know that babies do not grow from ‘the rose’, as we say in France [for girls]. However, this knowledge is not necessarily translating into the use of birth control like condoms or the contraceptive pill.”

According to Dr. Tissot, the contraceptive pill is especially unpopular in the country thanks to persistent myths that it can lead to infertility, while the weight gain and mood swings that are often associated with it are undesirable. The coil, or IUD device, is the most popular form of contraception among Vietnamese women, however typically those that have already had children.

For younger women, this leaves condoms and, despite drives to encourage condom use to tackle growing rates of HIV and AIDS in recent years, they are yet to catch on. Indeed, the *Me oi! Dung giet con!* campaign prompted a satirical counter strike in the form of a, “Dad! Remember to wear condoms!” Facebook group, which was roundly praised by critics of Thach and Huynh Ha.

## Change is Coming

Change is, nonetheless, coming. At TAS, Nicholas teaches a comprehensive sexuality syllabus to his 14 to 18 year old students, in which he says that learning how to use condoms is one of the most popular classes: “Condoms are the ‘hit’ of the class, for sure. The kids are really curious about how to use them and they’re surprisingly not shy about it. No one ever really tells you how to put a condom on—I know my parents didn’t. By exposing kids to them in a friendly, safe, educational environment, we hope it will encourage them to use them when the time comes.”

Other topics covered in Nicholas’ class include gender identity, body image and consent—all of which he says present interesting pre and misconceptions that he takes as his first task to dismantle.

“Kids get ideas from a lot of places. These days that includes online porn, which makes them feel insecure about their bodies and fosters unrealistic ideas about intercourse and consent. But when we talk about these things you see the kids react really positively. I think the more we talk about all areas of sex, the healthier young people’s attitudes and behaviors will be.”

Taboo subjects are difficult to approach: or else they wouldn’t be taboo. However, as seen in countries such as the UK—where the rate of teenage pregnancy has halved since 2005 due to the introduction of mandatory sex education in schools—talking about social issues is often the only way to affect change. Education is, as ever, essential to ensure young people make the right choices for themselves today, and tomorrow. ■

---



# LOL



*Angee, Jwyansa and Tu*

Meet the trio that's making Saigon a funnier place

Text by **Daniel Spero**  
Image by **Vy Lam**



## STARTED IN MID-2017 BY

Adam Palmeter, a stand-up comedian who has since returned to his native country, Vu Minh Tu, Jwyanza Hobson and Angee The Diva took the mantle and ran with it, expanding Saigon Funny People from comedy showcases to include dating events, storytelling, dance parties, variety shows, drag shows and more. With a stable of more than 40 performers, both Vietnamese and expats, Tu describes the group this way, “We aim to provide diverse entertainment to people for an affordable good time.” Or as Angee puts it, “Saigon Funny People is your hub for underground entertainment in Saigon.” To which Jwyanza adds, “We encourage people to get onstage and have fun performing. We do.”

Not only do they have fun, but they stay active. Saigon Funny People hosts an open mic at Indika each Monday night (a free beer to anyone with the courage to perform), a monthly storytelling event known as The Strange and a monthly variety show called Saigon Sound Series, both at Heart of Darkness, as well as a monthly all-female comedy showcase at Bann Bar known as BannShe; and that’s just scratching the surface. Wanna dance, sing, play a tune or speak your truth? Looking to connect with the LGBTQ community or in the mood for a speed dating session? Saigon Funny People hosts something for you. They’ve held Christmas bashes, costume parties and many other one-off events. To attend or perform at one of these events is simply to connect with one of the three.

## The Dynamic Trio

Tu is a spunky Vietnamese girl. She exudes femininity, yet delivers fierce lines in a way that would garner punk scene approval. When Tu takes the stage she bites back at topics like sexuality and expat entitlement, yet her start in comedy came from a much different place. “I started exhibiting symptoms of depression. Uy Le (another local comedian), one of the friends I got to know from a hypnosis workshop, suggested I try stand-up comedy and the first step was to join a comedy workshop. I took the workshop for one month and on September 16, 2017 I

performed stand-up comedy at Yoko café. Since then I have been performing consistently.”

As she builds her name, comedy has taken Tu flying all over Southeast Asia for stand-up gigs, and she names Ali Wong and Sarah Silverman as her influences. “Doing comedy offers a rare chance to question and examine everything in a more lighthearted manner. I like sex jokes because I enjoy sex, everyone does I hope, but still it’s a taboo to talk about, especially in the context of an Asian country like Vietnam.” That being said, in the current cultural environment is there any pushback when she pushes the envelope? As Tu explains, “The impact of PC culture has definitely affected comedy. However, most of the time non-PC jokes fail to entertain, not because audiences are a bunch of tight-ass judgmental social justice warriors, but because making good non-PC jokes requires fine craftsmanship and sharp observation and a ruthless conviction to deliver, which is very difficult. My style is not to be PC, so come at your own risk.”

While Tu’s comedy is edgy, she is a delightful doyenne of the Saigon comedy scene like her counterpart, Angee The Diva. A native Hawaiian, boisterous and bold, with a hair revolution for each performance, Angee has called Saigon home for the last two years and is often the emcee for the events. Starting stand-up in the fall of 2017, she describes her origin: “I attended a show and was the only one interacting with the host. I guess I said some funny things because after the show the showrunner asked if I’d like to get into comedy. About a month later I did my first show and killed. The next night I got to fill a spot on an all-women’s international show. After that, I realized pretty quickly that this was exactly what I was meant to be doing.”

With influences such as Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Dave Chappelle it’s no wonder Angee describes her comedy as: “Raunchy, unexpected and real. A good deal of it is on the fly. It’s derived from my actual experiences, so I usually take notes about something I find funny, then work the joke out before I perform it, usually at an open mic for

the first time. I reflect, then tweak as needed. If you’ve ever felt like throwing out your kids, blowing up your job, or strangling a random person on the street but restrained yourself, you can come live vicariously through my stories!”

Whereas Angee and Tu have found the stage more recently, Jwyanza comes from a performance background. Born in Puerto Rico but raised in New York City, he cut his teeth in the ‘90s NYC punk-metal scene as a guitarist and bassist before eventually moving to southern California and joining the band Crisis in 1998. They cut an album, released in 2004, entitled *Like Sheep Led to Slaughter* and toured to support it. Then while living in Los Angeles he decided to give stand-up a try. “While doing a field study of an LA subculture for an anthropology class I wrote a small set and performed it at Marty’s on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood to a whopping two people, but I really liked it. It’s a lot different from music. You can play music in front of an audience that doesn’t like you and not care. In comedy... not so much. My comedy leans into political and social issues, so I’m always trying to find the audience’s line, and then I intentionally cross it and try to bring the audience with me,” he says.

Although he comes across as upbeat and affable, with influences like Bill Hicks and George Carlin, Jwyanza does like to dabble in darker takes on social phenomena. As he describes it, “It helps me to embrace the darker part of myself, which I think is healthy. At the end of the day, we’re all figuring our comedy and ourselves out. The best part of comedy is overcoming your fears and turning anxiety into energy. I love it when I feel something is important or dear to my heart and it gets laughter or applause. That means, ‘I feel you man!’ I live for that.”

While Tu, Angee and Jwyanza are witty and facetious on stage, they are equally approachable off it, serving them well as they’ve built their comedy careers. ■

*Whether you would like to participate or spectate, to learn more about upcoming events check them out on Facebook or Instagram @SaigonFunnyPeople.*





# The Happening

## New works by Saigon-based artist Pham Thanh Toan

Text and Images Provided by **Craig Thomas Gallery**

**PHAM THANH TOAN BURST** like a phenomenon onto the contemporary art scene of Saigon in 2018. Born in 1992, Toan exhibits a preternatural confidence and ability with his bold, over-sized canvases. He first exhibited at CTG ([www.cthomasgallery.com](http://www.cthomasgallery.com)) in 2018 and CTG will be taking a collection of his work to Los Angeles in late 2019. *The Happening* was conceived as a chance to give Saigon art lovers another look at this exciting young artist's latest work before he begins preparations for his LA solo show.

### Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up in Quang Truong (Quang Trach, Quang Binh)—a poor, mountainous, hard-to-access part of the country that is very deprived. It was not until I was 18 years old that I really stepped out of my native village and went to Saigon to study for myself. I also experienced many difficult jobs in my early years. We were very poor materially speaking. I would regularly go down to the creek most days to catch fish

and snails for my family. Almost every family meal had some contribution by me.

### What are your earliest childhood memories?

I used to draw pictures of dogs, chickens, houses and fruits on the ground. One time my dad saw that I was able to draw well; he told me to draw a portrait of my mom and dad when they were married. The drawing was kept and hung up by my dad. After some time, it was damaged because it was not preserved properly. My dad did give me a gift for having done it though.

### When was the first time you composed any kind of art?

The first time I painted was in year four of school when I drew a lion (in Picasso's style of drawing). At that time I didn't know anything about art at all. Later, I used to draw flowers and still life paintings during years seven and eight at school. I stopped painting until the time I entered the Fine Arts University of Ho Chi Minh City. At that time I painted a

lot and was very creative at night in the dorm. The first painting I drew was a girl swimming with the fish in the ocean. The second one was a portrait of my paternal grandfather.

### When did you first know that you wanted to be an artist?

One day I was feeling pretty sad and I happened to wander by the gallery of the Fine Arts University of Ho Chi Minh City at 5 Phan Dang Luu Street. I walked into the gallery because I had liked drawing when I was young. When I came in, I liked it right away. I then went to the classrooms to see the students studying. I was enthralled. When I came back to my room, I decided to quit the military academy I was attending so that I could study to be an artist.

### Out of all the paintings you have done so far, do you have one or two that you are especially proud of?

The first painting that I always remember is *The Afternoon Bell*. It was memorable because it was the first painting I painted in at the fine arts school. It also had a story that two-thirds of the teachers in the school did not believe I painted it since I was in the first year at that time. So the teachers did not mark it thinking that there was someone else drawing it for me. I had to do another painting while bearing suspicious looks from my friends as if I were a sinner; at least that is how it





Nhung Lo Den - *Black Holes*  
Oil - 220 x 450 cm



Su Ham Muon - *Avarice*  
Oil - 200 x 290 cm

seemed to me at the time. Later on, my teachers apologized for not believing me. I then got the absolute highest score for the redrawn painting.

The second painting is *Crossing Through the Holy Land*. When I created the work, I didn't know how it would look when it was done. But the picture kept dragging me into its world and I was swept inside the piece as if in a dream. When the piece was done, I didn't even understand why some parts of the picture were drawn like that, especially the chandelier area. After I finished and posted it on Facebook, a Catholic priest immediately asked to buy it. Then, a Catholic art collector also wanted to buy it. I was

very surprised because the painting depicted some bizarre obsessions but the priest still wanted to own it. He said there was tremendous holiness hidden behind the painting.

**You seem to have a very good knowledge of art history that I don't think you picked up just from your studies at the Fine Arts University. How did you gain so much knowledge?**

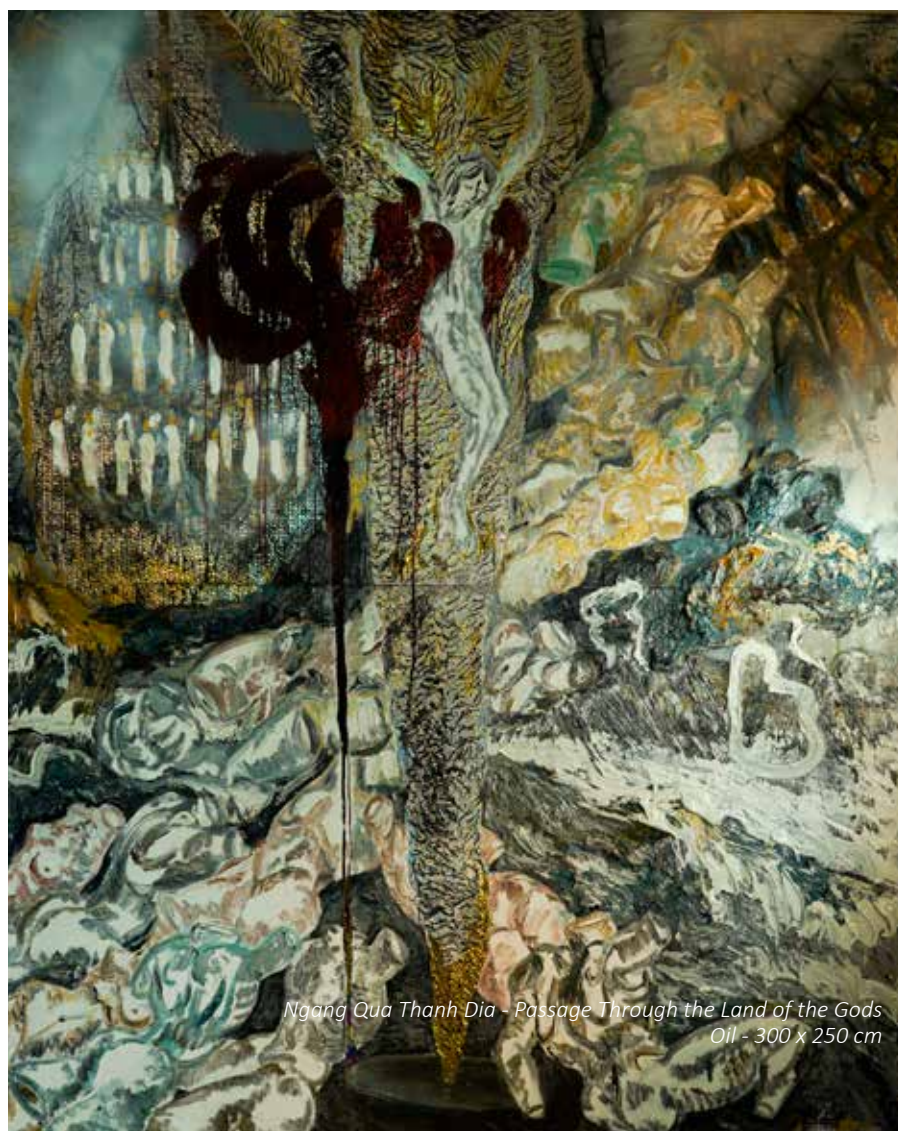
At school, they only train you to be an art official, not really a working artist. What I want is to devote myself to my art. At school, I was trained very well at the foundational level. From the foundation that I learned, I started reading books about European fine arts to learn from famous artists. I read articles about each artist's life to understand more about the path I have chosen. Later on with technology, I began to use Instagram and Google to look for the best contemporary artists in countries like Germany, the United States and China to understand where the current contemporary art trends are flowing so that I can blend into them and keep my work from being outdated.

**Do you continue to do research and how does this affect the work you are doing?**

I am always researching because I am still quite young. I don't want to stop researching and creating because I will lock myself up if I do. I want to apply the things that I learn and combine them with my creativity and my basic painting skills. Only then can I find what I need.

**Do you know where you would like your career to be in the next 5 or 10 years?**

I always wonder about this. I believe that just by having a goal, planning with your partners and working in a serious way, I will have good results. I want my paintings to be in international contemporary museums of countries like Germany, the United States, Singapore, etc., and in the collections of major collectors around the world. I hope the work that I can do together with Craig Thomas Gallery will be a great influence for young artists in the country to pursue a career in contemporary art. ■



Ngang Qua Thanh Dia - *Passage Through the Land of the Gods*  
Oil - 300 x 250 cm



A woman with dark hair is standing in a room, holding a small, thin branch in her right hand. She is wearing a rust-colored, long-sleeved top with a wide neckline and wide, high-waisted trousers in a muted green color. The background is a simple, light-colored wall with a potted plant on the right and a dark cushion on the left.

# The Earth Song

Behind every Kaia design is a story...  
And we are the storytellers...

**THE STORY OF SUBTLE AND** delicate vibes of nature, where natural feelings can be evoked by the graceful silhouette of a leaf, by the curves of a body and by the harmony of the Earth and Heaven. At Kaia, freedom and environmental friendliness are given top priority. Linen is chosen because of its natural fiber, the whole process of which, from raw material to finished product, impacts the environment positively. With its unique characteristics, 100 percent natural linen gives the wearer absolute comfort, even on the most sensitive skin. The sophistication and durability of the fabric awake every sense of the wearer.

Fashion trends evolve every day. For Kaia, however, emphasis is given to the development of sustainable products with long-term values instead of impermanent, eye-catching but inapplicable products. Attention is paid to every detail, every seam and the quality of the material. Kaia gives you a comprehensive picture of a positive, sustainable environment for the smart and knowledgeable dresser.

Every habit takes time to change, and for us, the Earth Song collection is a milestone, a destination for a future where we will be creating miracles for life and beauty coming from humility and stability.













**Kaia / Born in Saigon**   
Floor 1, 89 Dong Khoi, D1  
Block 2 - Oishi Town, 28  
Thao Dien, D2  
45/2 Hoang Dieu, Phu Nhuan  
[www.facebook.com/kaiasaigon](http://www.facebook.com/kaiasaigon)







Destination:

# Hoi An



# The Origin of a Journey

From fabric to dye and sewer to wearer, the story behind fashion and eco label Metiseko is a tapestry of culture, beauty and heart

Text by **Grace Homer**  
Images Provided by **Metiseko**

## DO YOU HOW THE CLOTHES

you're wearing right now were made? More specifically, do you know where the fabric your clothes are made of was produced? For the majority of us, clothing is often towards the bottom of the list when we think about making sustainable choices in our lives. Even if we do make a conscious decision to buy clothes produced in workshops with fair working conditions and wages, this is just one small section of the entire process that results in that piece of clothing in your wardrobe. Making a success of a 100 percent sustainable fashion brand is not easy. In the flagship store's courtyard café nestled in the serene surroundings of water fountains, lush greenery and stunning clothes in the heart of Hoi An's UNESCO-listed Old Town, Erwan Perzo, the founder of leading Vietnamese brand, Metiseko, explains his holistic approach to sustainable fashion.

Founded in 2011 by French *Viet Kieu* Erwan Perzo and Parisienne Florence Mussou, Metiseko is a high-end Vietnamese fashion and homeware brand with a strong sustainable ethos, both socially and environmentally. So how did Metiseko start?

"I had the original idea to create a fair-trade label that focused on the touristic market but with very good design in terms of inspiration from Vietnam but also, importantly, with quality products done in an ethical way," explains Erwan. With this in mind, while studying at a specialist business school creating projects for developing countries in his home country of France, Erwan directed all of his projects and internships towards the textile industry in developing countries. He spent the next few years working with underprivileged

communities in Mongolia and Vietnam among other developing countries.

The final year of business school saw Erwan developing his professional business project after being inspired by his experience working with NGOs in Vietnam; this project would become the successful brand known today as Metiseko.

"I believe in English, the correct translation would be 'syncretism'—the result of two cultures combined," he says of the meaning behind the *metisage* (a French word that forms part of the brand's name). "We wanted to take inspiration from Vietnam in our prints but reintegrate it into French textile and fashion design." Metiseko works directly with French fashion designers such as Linda Mai Phung, a French *Viet Kieu* fashion designer based in Saigon, who also works in ethical fashion processes. "I noticed tourists who wanted to buy something Vietnamese in fashion would buy an *ao dai* but then would never wear it back in their home country," Erwan explains, "we wanted to create a fashion brand that has a strong Vietnamese cultural inspiration but is wearable by everybody while being high quality and locally produced."

Put simply, the textile design comes from Vietnam and the fashion design comes from France, creating a perfect union of two different, yet beautiful, cultures.

## 100 Percent

As Vietnam grows economically, there is an emerging environmental consciousness spreading throughout

the country. However, even with this awareness, sustainability is not always a high priority when it comes to fashion in Vietnam. Drawing comparisons between organic food production and the fashion industry, Erwan explains the issue: "The fashion world has succeeded in making us believe that it is quite normal to have three-dollar t-shirts; the textile world is a very unknown world from manufacturing, dyeing, printing, weaving and even growing the raw fabric such as cotton." He continues by highlighting the lengthy processes involved in the end result of a simple item of clothing. "There are so many steps; the human involvement and the whole supply chain is amazing. There is so much work behind a piece of fabric so in the end, having a three-dollar t-shirt just doesn't make sense."

For Metiseko, eco-friendly, socially responsible and sustainable practices are at the very heart of their brand. The raw organic cotton used for their clothing is supplied from India where it grows naturally; Metiseko makes sure to only work with Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)-certified suppliers in India. The other fabric used for Metiseko's clothing is silk, which is produced, dyed and hand-screen printed locally in Bao Loc. The cotton is dyed and printed in Binh Duong Province using AZO-free dyes, which do not contain the common protein that is harmful to the skin. Keeping a close eye on these processes, Metiseko's fabric never comes into contact with any other conventional fabrics.

Being a smaller enterprise, the supply chain was not easy to set up because Metiseko's production numbers often don't reach the minimum quantities required to be able to produce. However, this did not stop Erwan from striving to create a 100





Ms. Ha and Mr. Long



Mr. Trinh and Ms. Quynh





percent sustainable brand. “There are many ways to be a sustainable fashion brand; we choose to work with certified producers because of our size it is too difficult to certify the whole supply chain by ourselves.” He continues to explain that they aim to be completely transparent with each step in the supply chain, “many brands which claim to be fair trade are only fair trade as the manufacturing stage; you don’t know where the fabric has come from, been dyed or weaved.”

### Born in Hoi An

Besides intelligent sourcing of fabrics, using dyes without harmful proteins and ethical printers, Metiseko’s most notable part of the process is the manufacturing workshop in Hoi An. Hoi An is where Metiseko began; the flagship store sits in Hoi An’s Old Town as well as two other stores in the town and the final stage of the production process, manufacturing, has been done here since Metiseko was first founded in 2011.

But why Hoi An? “In Vietnam, I have never been in the shopping mood as there is nowhere to walk around and shop,” says Erwan, referring to the busyness of Saigon and Hanoi. “When I came to Hoi An, I noticed everyone walks and it’s very peaceful. It is UNESCO-protected and one of those cities that is very careful about the environment. Its architecture also carries the ‘metis’ aspect, combining French colonial buildings with Vietnamese heritage.” Explaining how it all just clicked, “both with principles and values but also business opportunities, it just made sense. We are very proud to have been born in Hoi An.”

In order to operate a fair-trade manufacturing workshop, Metiseko puts a number of processes and benefits into action. Expanding on the production process, Erwan explains:

“We don’t do chain production where every sewer does only one part of the garment. All of our sewers create one garment from the beginning to the end. We optimize quality over time and our workers are fully trained on the conception of a garment from A to Z. One dress can take 15 hours to make.”

Metiseko also provides health insurance, fair wages and a social union; at the end of every month, 2 percent of the total salary is paid by the company into a scheme which allows employees to decide how best to spend the money—this may be scholarships for employees’ children, financial support for special events, among others. “The workshop is clean, air-conditioned and well lit; the working hours are no more than 44 hours per week,” he adds. On top of this, Metiseko also provides language lessons in English, French, Korean or Chinese to all members of their team, from sales and accounting through to their workshop staff.

Each of Metiseko’s collections draws inspiration from an aspect of the Vietnamese culture, environment or traditions. The latest collection, *CQI-Origins*, features four themes or prints—Red Tree Garden, Aquatic Garden, Tropical Garden, and Lush Garden—all inspired by Vietnamese flame tree, Vietnamese koi carp ponds, tropical fruits and the jungle atmosphere, respectively. “The main inspiration for *CQI* Collection was going back to Metiseko’s roots. The photoshoot happened in Hoi An and represented a tropical Vietnamese summer where Metiseko was originally created,” explains Audrey Charles, Metiseko’s Artistic Director.

Having moved to Vietnam 10 years ago, Audrey began working with sustainable projects including Vietcraft, which represents the craftsmanship of the northern provinces in Vietnam. She was involved in creating Lifestyle Vietnam, the country’s first international home and trade fair in 2010, and began working with Metiseko almost three years ago. “Each collection varies in color ranges, themes and prints according to the subject and the inspiration behind it,” says Audrey. “One day you may be walking down the street or having a coffee and you see something and think ‘Ah!’ Then you go deep into the subject, read about it and talk to Vietnamese friends to learn more.”

Hoi An is a constant inspiration for both Erwan and Audrey. Now with six stores open, three in Hoi An and three in Saigon, and an online store that offers worldwide shipping, Metiseko has plans to hold off on opening another store and instead focus on new collections and revamping their online platforms. “Now is a consolidation time,” Perzo explains, before adding with a grin, “well, I say that every year and every year I open a new store so we shall see.” ■

For shop locations, visit [metiseko.com](http://metiseko.com)



Erwan & Audrey



# Repast Hoi An

Uncovering Hoi An's fascinating history through food

Text and Images by James Pham

**WHILE HOI AN IS FIRMLY ON** the tourist map for a lot of things—a ridiculously photogenic Old Quarter replete with colorful Insta-ready lanterns and artfully faded walls, an absurd number of tailor shops churning out designer-inspired garments in a day, and a unique mix of architectural influences that recall its history as a bustling medieval port town—what it doesn't have is a widely-known reputation for being a foodie destination.

Wanting to see whether there was more to the Hoi An food scene than simply feeding hungry tourists in between fittings and spa treatments, I set out to learn about some of Hoi An's most defining dishes.

I started with *cao lau*, perhaps the dish that best encapsulates what Hoi An is all about. Practically the opposite of *pho*, *cao lau* is all about thick, chewy noodles with a miserly amount of broth that's almost more gravy than soup, all topped with slices of sautéed pork, fresh herbs, and crunchy crackers.

The Vietnamese translation means “high floor”, perhaps recalling traders sitting in eateries along the riverside looking down on the busy port while downing a bowl of noodles. During Hoi An's heyday between the mid-1500s to the early 1800s, it's said the town's population doubled to 10,000 residents between the northern and southern monsoons as merchants from China, Japan, Holland, Portugal and beyond took advantage of the natural shelter Hoi An provided. Could some of these have put their mark on *cao lau*, a dish that hardly seems Vietnamese?

Instead of wimpy, boiled noodles, sturdy *cao lau* leans more toward Japanese udon or soba. There are indications the Chinese also may have had something to do with the dish as the Chinese characters for *cao lau* translate to “high steamer”, pointing to the way the noodles are made, while Chinese five spice powder gives the char siu pork its smoky flavor. Some Japanese and Chinese adventurers settled permanently in Hoi An, establishing communities evidenced today by the iconic covered Japanese Bridge and the many Chinese assembly halls scattered throughout the Ancient Town. However, neither lay claim to *cao lau*.

Perhaps the origins of *cao lau* reach back even further, to the Champa

Kingdom which ruled over this stretch of coast between the 2nd and 15th centuries AD. Mainly seafarers, the Cham used Hoi An as their commercial capital while building impressive towers and temples in nearby My Son, their spiritual center. Today, it's said that 80 or so ancient Champa wells remain around Hoi An, once used to supply freshwater to foreign sailors. The most famous of these is Ba Le whose clear water, together with ash from trees that grow on the cluster of Cham Islands just 12 km off Hoi An's coast, were traditionally combined to make the lye water used to soak the rice for *cao lau* noodles.

One morning, I made my way to the Ba Le well and was surprised to find, despite its lofty reputation, an unassuming brick structure adorned simply with a small plaque. I looked down into the well, past the fluorescent moss-covered walls and into the dark water below, trying to divine what it was about this very location-specific set of ingredients that leads to *cao lau*'s distinctive texture. While the ash is no longer from the Cham Islands and the water is from other alum-rich, local sources, this unique combination still means *cao lau* is rarely ever served anywhere outside of Hoi An.

The *cao lau* noodles are also sometimes fried and added to *banh beo*, dainty rice flour cakes individually steamed in little bowls, giving them a perfect circular shape just like the water plants they're named after. It's said that these cakes may have originated from Hue, just two hours up the coast, although it's hard to imagine something so simple being served to royalty. For a taste of the Hoi An version, I made my way to the home of Lo and Tu, an older couple who have been making *banh beo* from scratch for years. In the early morning, Mr. Lo grinds rice into powder in their tiny kitchen, a small, solitary window shedding light onto the heavily soot-stained walls, a result of the wood fire used to steam up to 600 cakes a day (both for sweet and savory *banh beo*). Mrs. Tu cooks the topping, a thick slurry made of shrimp and pork to serve customers who gather on plastic

stools in their living room.

By the time Champa rule faded and French colonization began, Hoi An's Thu Bon River silted up and port activities moved up the coast to Danang. Hoi An reverted to a poor backwater town until the 1990s when adventurous travelers and UNESCO inscription once again brought prosperity to the area. As I sat down to a plate of chicken and rice, I wondered if all those ignominious years spent in neglect taught the people to be thrifty in their ways. If so, it would certainly explain Hoi An-style chicken and rice which owes its magic to extracting every bit of flavor possible from the free-range chicken that's the star of this dish. After boiling the chicken, the stock is used to cook the rice, aged for at least a year to dry it out, ensuring it soaks up as much of the stock as possible. The result is firm, plump grains that don't stick together like regular rice, topped with shredded chicken and a salad of fresh herbs and sliced onions. The bones and innards are used to make a gravy as well as a side soup to wash it all down.

I spent the next few days willing myself to get hungry fast enough in between second breakfasts, lunches, afternoon snacks, early dinners and late night feedings. I sampled dishes that made use of local ingredients like the incredibly aromatic, organic herbs from the Tra Que village fertilized with local seaweed that accompany sizzling *banh xeo* crepes, or the tiny clams harvested from the brackish waters of the Thu Bon and its tributaries. I visited the baguette shop serving what Anthony Bourdain described as a “symphony in a sandwich” and munched on open-faced fried wontons topped with sweet and sour shrimp, pork, and peppers.

Everywhere I looked, the town of Hoi An was an open kitchen, putting their own spin on yum, from the older woman hand-forming discs of dough into translucent rose-shaped dumplings at the back of a 150-year-old house to a woman fussing over the many ingredients that go into *mi quang* noodles, a hodgepodge laborer's meal which originated in the province where Hoi An is located.

Much more than shopping and beaching, Hoi An had in fact proven itself a formidable culinary destination, serving up an array of flavors just as unique and colorful as the town itself. ■





*Banh Beo Co Tu*



*Cao Lau at Victoria Hoi An*



*Chicken Rice at Com Ga Xi*



*Banh xeo at Ba Le Restaurant*

## IF YOU GO

Cao Lau Thanh (26 Thai Phien) serves wonderfully gritty noodles under the shade of a big tree after 4pm.

Co Tu's banh beo can be found tucked down an alleyway across from ÉMM Hotel Hoi An after 3pm at 98/50 Nguyen Trung To.

Com Ga Xi at the entrance of an alleyway at 47/2 Tran Hung Dao serves up some of Hoi An's best chicken and rice. Continue down the alley and follow the signs to the Ba Le well. The nearby Ba Le Restaurant (45/51 Tran Hung Dao) also serves a great combo of sizzling crepes, shrimp spring rolls, and grilled pork skewers, all accompanied by herbs from Tra Que.

Head south of the Old Quarter to the nearby river island of Nam Cam where you can snack on minced clams and rice crackers while lazing in a hammock looking over the Hoai River, a tributary of the Thu Bon.

To try all of these specialties in one place, Spice Viet Restaurant (187 Ly Thuong Kiet) utilizes mainly organic, locally-sourced ingredients in its classic Vietnamese menu in a spacious, contemporary setting.

ÉMM Hotel Hoi An ([www.emmhotels.com](http://www.emmhotels.com)) makes a great base from which to explore Hoi An's vibrant food scene, just a 5-minute bicycle ride from the Ancient Town. The hotel's 92 generously-sized rooms and scenic outdoor pool offer a retreat that's stylish and modern with bold colors and clean lines yet comfortable and affordable with all the amenities you need while on the road.



*Mi Quang stall*





# Human Connections

At Four Seasons the Nam Hai, the staff shines as brightly as the resort itself

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**  
Images Provided by **Four Seasons Resort The Nam Hai**

**FOUR SEASONS RESORT THE NAM HAI, HOI AN, VIETNAM** ([www.fourseasons.com/hoian](http://www.fourseasons.com/hoian)) is a place of unparalleled luxury, but the resort seems to know its distinction lies elsewhere. In a catalogue of their locations around the world, a thick volume that includes pictures of all its global locations from Kuwait to Kyoto, the book leads with a word of praise for its staff. "Our greatest asset, and the key to our success, is our people," reads the first page of the book. It's this guiding principle that would lead the Four Seasons to find people like Chef Nguyen Thai Ngoc (more about our cooking class together shortly) and to create a place where hiring and retaining people is a part of an institutional practice rather than something exceptional.

To say Four Seasons is nice an understatement. The resort's handsome villas would be hard to equal elsewhere. The living quarters are cleverly partitioned into a foyer, an office and a sitting room by changes in elevation, like a terraced hillside. Dark colors prevail within, accented neatly by pockets of





color like the hidden, honey-colored floor lighting and the white of the bed curtains. The grounds are immaculate and rich in greenery. This is perhaps the most palm trees I've seen in one location. But Four Seasons makes full use of its close proximity to Hoi An's charming Old Town and offers many opportunities to go visit the UNESCO World Heritage site.

The walls of Hoi An, in that audacious shade of yellow that characterizes the city, are always splendid. "This is where my father was born," Chef Ngoc said walking down Phan Boi Chau street toward the city's market. In the Hoi An Central Market, Ngoc is greeted by local residents who beckon him to visit them to see the day's offerings: fresh herbs, live chickens, generous cuts of pork and fish as you'd see in any of the nation's traditional wet markets. Pausing to identify the ingredients, he stops to solicit a sample and makes sure I can smell the freshly picked herbs. Fresh greens are of utmost importance in Vietnamese cuisine, Ngoc tells me while also imparting a Vietnamese idiom: "A meal without vegetables is like a funeral without music, no drum or horn."

The inside of the market itself is a massive open floor plan with vendors at their own selling areas laid in a grid like city blocks. Ngoc took me to one vendor where he bought vinegar, and pointed to an adjacent spot explaining that this is where his mother and a younger version of himself used to sell their goods. We walked through the Hoi An Central Market stopping to identify the various ingredients: the chrysanthemum, the yellow curls of banana flower, the long green shoots of lemongrass like the ones Four Seasons uses in its spa treatments.

Ngoc took a blade of grass from the pile glowing green in the morning light

and broke it open inviting me to smell it. The citrusy scent soothes and calms the pre-coffee mind at least long enough to carry one through the walking tour to our rest stop at the Hoi An Roastery. Waiting for a *ca phe phin* to drip to completion, Ngoc talks about the neighborhood, the market, the importance of good conversation when having coffee in Vietnam. We're far outside of the manicured premises of Four Seasons itself, but the moment—the deep interest in and enjoyment of the immediate experience; the thoughtful, generous staffer that care for you as friends do—feels very much within the resort's world.

The Nam Hai Cooking Academy seeing distance of reception. I learned that we would be making one of my favorite dishes, *bun cha*. My ineptitude at cooking seemed portended by my first step: to make the meat patties one needs to apply oil to their hands to minimize viscosity. "But not that much," Ngoc said gently looking at my overly shiny hands. In the hour we cooked, even with my less than skillful work, we cooked a four-course meal. Surprisingly, like each of the meals I enjoyed at the Resort, it was a feast for all the senses: stunning color, great presentation and superb taste.

The exquisite meal was a small indication of the hotel's broader high caliber guest experience. In terms of sheer luxury, Four Seasons is a Hoi An destination standout, from the back-to-back deliciousness of the Off the Skewer grilled meats theme night to the re-discovery of a childhood joy of swinging at the AntiGravity Yoga class. Personal attention characterized much of my stay. Staff greeted me by name and were always proactive about



making sure I knew about each of their amenities, like when the the gym staff offered to ready the sauna for me as I was finishing my workout.

In a broader sense, travel is uniquely about people in a special way. People travel to see something new. They might read something or do some research online, but to understand a place as those who live at the destination do, they'd need to find someone there. They'd need to find someone who both knows and loves the area, and will also stop for a coffee and a chat. In other words, they'd need a Chef Ngoc. Through its philosophy, Four Seasons The Nam Hai has built a place for the Ngocs of the world, and home for those who want to meet them in a lovingly made destination. ■





# The Champa Kingdom

Cham-inspired travel  
combining culture and comfort

Text by James Pham

Images by James Pham, Ngoc Tran and Denis LeBlanc

My Son

**KNOWN AS INTREPID SEAFARERS,** the Champa Kingdom developed international trade routes that allowed them to accumulate wealth and political power as well as forge ties with other regional kingdoms and with South Asia and China. Together with the Khmer and Dai Viet kingdoms, a maritime route starting from Thang Long, near the Red River in Vietnam's north, spread further northwards up to China, southwards through the Malacca Straits and the South Asian islands and westwards to India and then on to the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Mediterranean.

For this reason, port-cities were crucial for the economy including the port of Great Champa (Hoi An), Vijaya (Qui Nhon), Kauthara (Nha Trang), Panduranga (Phan Rang) and Malithit (Phan Thiet). For history buffs looking to combine Champa culture with creature comforts, Vietnam's scenic coastline offers up both in stunning fashion.

## Hoi An, Tra Kieu and My Son

The center of the Champa Kingdom from the 2nd to 13th centuries CE, the Thu Bon River Basin (Quang Nam Province) included three main centers: Hoi An with its river-mouth port as the economic center; Tra Kieu, 20km to the southwest was its political hub and center of royal power; and My Son, the royal religious center, a further 30km inland.

Rediscovered in 1885, the 2 km diameter semi-circular valley of My Son contained 72 religious monuments of brick and stone, most dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. The oldest remains date back to the 7th century, although other evidence suggests that construction on the site began up to 300 years earlier. Monuments continued to be erected until the 13th century, providing a historical record illustrating up to six styles of ancient Champa art, with the golden age considered to be somewhere around the 10th century. While the Cham monuments themselves are quite uniform, featuring red bricks that were hand-rubbed resulting in very thin joints, the decorations remain magnificent.

Listed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 1999, a site visit should begin with the two world-class exhibition halls at its entrance, with excellent, user-friendly exhibits providing background information on the sanctuary's history as well as the evolution of Champa art, including examples of hair styles, sampots and sarongs and dances and musical instruments. A sleekly lit board shows the terrain of the site chosen for the sacred Hon Den (Mahaparpvata) mountain to the south and the sacred Thu Bon (Ganga) River to the north, and the dense group of temples in which each building is given a letter / number designation.



Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture

While touring the site, look for the two main representations of Shiva found either in human kingly form or as the ubiquitous linga (a phallic symbol) mounted inside a square yoni, its female counterpart. Another theme to notice is the zoomorphological deities in the carvings, including the comically menacing lion-faced *makara* guardians and the elephant-headed Ganeshas





Kate Festival - Phan Rang

combining the strength of an elephant and the intelligence of man.

The relatively small size of the complex makes for an easy half-day trip just an hour's drive from Hoi An. All the temple groupings are connected by scenic, fairly level brick paths that wind their way through beautiful, thick forests.

My guide for the day has been traveling to the site for more than 20 years and it was fascinating to hear how the area has developed before and after its becoming a World Heritage Site. On the way back, we also made an unscheduled stop at the Museum of Sa Huynh—Champa Culture, a curiously large building with 2,000+ year old artifacts from the Sa Huynh culture, one that pre-dates even the Champa Kingdom and which occupied some of the same territory.

### Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture

Housing approximately 400 works, the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture is home to the finest collection of Cham sculpture anywhere in the world. Conveniently situated right on the city-side of Dragon Bridge over the Han River, the museum reportedly started off as an abandoned sculpture garden of sorts. It's said that a French resident in Quang Nam deposited Cham sculptures he acquired from his travels here and local residents added to it, ostensibly due to some kind of superstition against having Cham artifacts on their property. This impromptu sculpture garden then formed the core of the first museum's collection, established in 1919 by Henri Parmentier. The building itself is quite beautiful with original floor tiles in place. Look for some of the subtle architectural elements, like the stylized lotus-like mouldings that are drawn from Cham art.

The museum is divided into a series of rooms named after the area where the works were found: My Son, Tra Kieu, Dong Duong, etc. Additionally, decorative design, the shape of hair

curls, costumes, etc. help classify the various styles. The museum received a 2,000 sqm extension, much of it currently empty, but museum officials assured me they have much more in storage that will be rolled out in the next year as part of the celebrations around the museum's 100th anniversary (commemorating the year that an agreement was signed to establish the museum, instead of when it was actually opened). There are also plans to address some unfortunate water damage and on-going construction in some of the galleries.

Nevertheless, each room is very well documented with additional placards to explain key pieces. Careful observers will find it fascinating to see the influences visible in the sculptures, for example the horse-riding polo players (Quang Tri gallery), a Cham interpretation of a sport popular in India at the time or the seated bodhisattva, a wonderfully detailed deity found at Dong Duong, the largest known Buddhist monastery in Champa. The My Son gallery with its life-sized guardians and the Tra Kieu gallery with its massive pedestal featuring a cistern, lingam and bas relief friezes as well as a gorgeously intact apsara dancer forever captured in graceful mid-dance are soaring highlights of all the collections.

### Kate Festival, Phan Rang

The largest of all Cham festivals is Kate (pronounced "kah-tay"), held yearly in October just outside of Phan Rang (the dates are based on a lunar calendar, so change every year). While it's often mis-called the Cham New Year, it's primarily religious in significance, a time of year to return to the Cham towers to pay homage to the deified Champa kings of old. "We value kings that were not powerful and rich but powerful and useful, the ones that helped the people," says

Cham writer, Inrajaka.

The first day of the ceremony includes an opening dance and musical performance in the blazing mid-day sun at the local soccer stadium in Huu Duc, just outside of Phan Rang. Thousands turn out for the procession that includes priests, drummers and villagers. At the stadium, crowds pack the bleachers and the perimeter of the field as young girls in colorful dress perform a fan dance that lasts just under an hour, marking the opening of Kate. As Kate is a time when many return to their hometowns, it takes on a festive quality as families and friends get together for much drinking and storytelling. This year, a soccer game featuring local clubs and more dancing and music followed the official ceremony.

On the second day, the crowds make their way, laden down with offerings, to the well-preserved temple of Po Klaung Garai, three brick towers set on a hillside. Legend has it that this king won a battle against invading Khmer forces by suggesting a tower-building contest instead of fighting, with the temple bearing his name evidence of his peaceful victory. By 7:30am, dancers and musicians open the ceremony. If you want a good vantage point, you'll have to arrive early as the tiny performance area fills up quickly. The priests then perform a ritual of bathing of the statue of the king and changing its raiment. Very few can enter the small space, with most families staking out a patch of ground on the surrounding hillside to lay out offerings of food which are later eaten on site or brought to a second nearby tower, Po Rome, or even down to the beach to share with family and friends.

While the Cham people are extremely hospitable, few outsiders attend Kate other than photographers and invited friends. Westerners are few and far between, although the ones that do attend are warmly welcomed. Even Vietnamese in nearby Phan Rang don't usually go. If you do attend, wear plenty of sunscreen and bring a hat as there is not much shade where the events are held. ■



My Son



# The Motherly Gate

A pilgrimage to Hoi An's recently reopened gate can usher in an auspicious childbirth for expecting mothers

Text and Images by Jesus Lopez-Gomez

## TUCKED AWAY IN A QUIET

pocket in Hoi An's Hai Ba Trung street sits a reflection pool dotted with lily pads and a few lotus flowers. The pool acts as a mirror. It bears an upside down, blue-ish representation of the aged yet elegant gate. Previously closed to the public, the almost four-century-old Tam Quan Gate was reopened to the public in December.

The entire site is a nearly 15-meter-long section of wall with two smaller doors and a larger centered door. The wall is mostly gray with orange accents and blue ornamentation. The wall's flared roofs and the temple-like turrets that dot the top of the wall are meant to mimic a classic Vietnamese architectural style that is today common to the nation's pagodas, according to Vietnam's tourism body. In an announcement on the site's reopening, the Vietnam Administration of Tourism noted that the site was originally built in 1626 in another location. It was physically moved to its current location on Hai Ba Trung street.

The VND5.3 billion restoration last year is the third in the gate's history. In 1848 and 1922, local authorities completed major updates to the structure. The gate was officially recognized as an ancient treasure by the French Institute for Eastern Archeology in 1930. At this time, the gate was considered one of Hoi An's more coveted architectural treasures on par with the famous Japanese Bridge and the Trieu Chau clubhouse, the ancient worship site of the city's Chinese residents.

Sometime during the 20th century, the gate was allowed to fall into disrepair

and was closed to the public before reopening at the end of 2018. The gate is part of Hoi An's Muoi Hai Ba Mu Temple. The site's name translates to "Twelve Midwives" in English, and it's named so for the 12 fairies that are said to teach children their first skills such as sucking and smiling, according to *Pictures from History*, an online library of historical images from Asia's past. The image appears with a photo of the gate dating back to 1930.

Vietnamese culture carries with it detailed and sometimes complex rituals surrounding childbirth and care of women who've just given birth. In some parts of Vietnam, a special ritual honoring these fairy mothers is performed when a baby is a month old.

Similarly, the gate has historically been a destination for parents who wish to secure blessings for their



children. They visit the gate with their children to view the gate's 36 heavenly protectors and 12 mystical midwives who are said to help shepherd newborns through childbirth and protect new mothers from evil.

The temple is set back about 30 meters from the busy Hai Ba Trung street which, in spite of its motorized transport ban, is busy with another kind of traffic: strolling pedestrians. The space around the temple proceeds normally in a pleasant casualness; in a January afternoon when we visited Hoi An, a woman hung laundry a stone's throw from the ancient relic. Passing through the gates brings one to a schoolyard where playing children play in the shadow of the old sentry. ■







Whale spirit - Bridget March 2018 - Watercolour - 60 x 24cm



Three fish - Bridget March 2019 - acrylic on canvas 39 x 50cm



Spirit of the night - Bridget March 2019 - acrylic on canvas 39x50cm

# Feel the City

For her next exhibition, artist Bridget March is taking a completely new direction

## WELL-KNOWN FOR HER

watercolor and acrylic paintings of landscapes, architecture and artifacts of Vietnam and for her illustrated books on Sapa, Hoi An and Saigon, Bridget has taken an abstract approach to describing the *Spirit of Hoi An* in a series of new watercolor and acrylic paintings that are sparkling with color, symbolism, secrets and clues.

"It is no longer satisfying enough for me to create pictures of the way Vietnam looks; I want to describe how it feels and to say much more about its ancient and modern cultures through color, pattern and symbolism," says Bridget. "The viewer will engage more deeply and will have a more emotional response to the spirit of this fascinating old trading port than with my earlier paintings of its buildings and landscapes."

Vietnam is such an inspiring environment for artists, writers and photographers. Images of the people, places, weather, moods, rituals and markets of this country have flooded social media, been published in magazines and books worldwide and are attracting sketchers and painters from all over the world to come and share the wonder of it all. After six years of travels in Vietnam, five solo exhibitions of her work and opening her own gallery in Hoi An, Bridget has now found a new way to express what she feels about the color, vitality and culture of this ancient town.

The *Spirit of Hoi An* exhibition will be on view at Anantara art space (1 Pham Hong Thai, Hoi An) from March 9- April 9, 2019. Visit [marchgallery-hoian.com](http://marchgallery-hoian.com) & [www.artspacehoian.com](http://www.artspacehoian.com) for more info. ■





# Cat Lives Matter

A refuge for stray and abandoned cats in Hoi An

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**

Images Provided by **Vietnam Cat Welfare**

**SINCE 2012**, UK NATIONAL and Hoi An animal welfare advocate Emma Bolton Nguyen has worked to create a better world for the city's cats both through the animal shelter she operates alongside her husband and through educational work with local residents.

Emma said one of the common misconceptions she has to address is a feeling that animals are objects and don't register emotions the same way people do. "They don't understand animal feelings," she said. "We try to explain to them animals need compassion."

Emma and her organization, Vietnam Cat Welfare ([vietnamcatwelfare.org](http://vietnamcatwelfare.org)), not only houses and treats the city's population of neglected and sick cats, they work with pet-owners who seek guidance on how to care for their pets, be that a cat or a dog. Owners who show an interest in their pet's welfare aren't far from understanding that the pet





with a security camera in part for this reason, Emma said.

Owners whose cats have disappeared sometimes call on VCW to check Danang's cat detention center and see if their pet has ended up in the trafficking center. "A Vietnamese has to (go and check), not a foreigner," she said. If a cat belonging to an owner has been caught, Emma said owners may be asked to pay a fee of around VND500,000, more if the ransomers learn the cat owner is a foreigner.

VCW is organizationally wedded to a feline friendly vegetarian restaurant, Jack's Cat Café ([www.facebook.com/jackscatcafe](http://www.facebook.com/jackscatcafe)) in a Hoi An garden. The café is named after Jack, the first cat Emma house and cared for. The cat gave birth to a litter of kittens as she and her husband were developing a reputation for working with felines in need, and Vietnam Cat Welfare was born. The organization started from the most basic knowledge of cat care; Emma gave the first cat the name "Jack" because she thought it was male and didn't think to check the gender.

Today, VCW works with a network of trained veterinarians to rehabilitate Hoi

An's cats. Their success stories regularly appear on the group's Facebook page, like the cat named Pongo who was born with no eyes and has been trained to navigate by sound and smell (to find the litter box). Another cat named Creeper was found badly emaciated and biting his own legs. A tailored medicine and therapy regimen brought him to a thriving state.

One post recalls the story a cat formerly cared for at Vietnam Cat Welfare resting on a windowsill in a bucolic countryside. The regal looking, long-haired white cat is named Princess. Emma's group found the cat tied up and beaten, likely unable to evade them due to her being deaf. Today, she lives with new owners in France.

Currently, VCW cares for about 70 cats. The group takes in about 100 cats annually, Emma estimated, half of which are placed with new owners. Vietnam Cat Welfare is a charity organization that relies on a combination of donations and volunteers to conduct its work. It is in the process of becoming a registered Vietnam charity. It currently holds a charity license from the UK. ■

has emotional needs like their owners. Emma said usually that point doesn't need to be pushed very hard. "They usually get it."

Other times, Vietnam Cat Welfare (VCW) has been called to assist owners who deeply understand the importance of their pets and have had it foregrounded in a horrifying, though not uncommon, situation—the abduction of their pet. Sale and trade of dog meat is still more common, Emma said, but the abduction and ransom of the city's cats is still a risk that area cat owners face. She disclosed that a criminal enterprise of cat trafficking centers around a holding center in Danang. This center feeds a supply of cats for consumption in Vietnam's northern region. Sometimes cats will be taken by traps set up around the city. Other times, they will simply be seized. Vietnam Cat Welfare does not list its address and monitors its facilities







## Cleaning Danang's beaches and re-moulding plastic perceptions

Text by **Rebecca Jones**

Images Provided by **Precious Plastic Da Nang**

**LIVING IN SAIGON, WHERE THE** end of every trading day sees a tsunami of single use plastic piled high in drains, and where the river is becoming increasingly clogged with cups, straws and bags, it is easy to despair at the seemingly unstoppable negative impact humans are having on waterways.

Currently, the world's biggest garbage patch is floating in between Asia and North America: the Great Pacific Garbage Patch contains some 80,000 tons of trash—much of it single use plastic—that makes its way daily onto the shores of South East nations, including Vietnam.

This constant influx of trash poses huge challenges for Vietnamese coastal towns like Danang, where citizens battle daily to keep shoreline plastic pollution under control. Vera Novikova, a Russian national that is part of a new clean-up group in the town: Precious





Plastic Da Nang ([www.facebook.com/PreciousPlasticDaNang](http://www.facebook.com/PreciousPlasticDaNang)), explains:

"The main beach (My Khe Beach) is usually quite clear, especially during the high tourist season in the summer. I think every morning the expensive hotels pay people to go and clean it up. The smaller beaches don't get so much attention and they are getting more and more full with trash."

In October 2017 this situation prompted a diverse group of foreigners to found Precious Plastic Da Nang, an offshoot of a global initiative that is working with coastal communities all over the world to transform beach plastics into treasure. As Vera explains, the activities of the group are manifold:

"Regular clean ups of the smaller beaches are important. During the peak season we do maybe one clean-up a week on the weekend, which we advertise through Facebook as well as by word of



mouth among friends and colleagues. Many of us are teachers so we also encourage our students to come along.

"But the bigger part of the project is machines that we are building at the University which can shred and re-mould plastics into new, recycled products that we can then sell, with profits going back into the project. Right now we are getting funds together for the second machine."

As the above suggests, this high tech approach to beach waste has won the support of many in the local community and the group is allowed to freely use a space within The University of Da Nang. As well as housing the machines here, Vera and others also hold regular workshops with students, raising awareness of the enormous threat plastic pollution poses to the world's oceans.

### Changing Habits

According to one of the group's founding members Haylie Laursen, this practical approach to beach pollution is key to the Precious Plastic initiative, which seeks to find workable, long-term solutions to the mounting plastic crisis. Education, they hope, will ultimately lead to prevention:

Haylie says: "Precious Plastic Da Nang is a community of people working towards a solution to plastic pollution in Vietnam. Our goal is really to educate the youth of Danang so they can go on to educate others. From day one we have always said that we want to get it to a point where it is run and operated by locals so that the project continues even after we have moved on."

The pair reports mixed success to date. Haylie says that while many locals will 'like' the group's Facebook page, actually getting them to attend clean-ups is another issue. However, she adds that two local girls have now joined the group and this is driving more participation at

the local level.

The challenge remains, however, divorcing people from the plastic tea cups, straws and bags that have become such a central part of daily life here in Vietnam that avoiding them is a difficult task. Again, though, progress is being made, with authorities beginning to acknowledge the tons and tons of ocean-bound plastic waste that bubble teashops in Danang generate each year.

Alongside clean-ups and lectures, the group also hosts regular art events that Vera—a keen photographer and artist—helps to organize. Working in collaboration with Sasa Team, a marine life group in Vietnam, she has staged photo shoots that explore the issue of pollution in a stylized and thought provoking way. She features these on her personal Instagram page, [beautyisintheeyeinc](https://www.instagram.com/beautyisintheeyeinc).

"The photo shoots help us to look at plastic pollution in a different way; asking how it informs who we are, both personally and within communities. This was something I first started thinking about when I lived in Shanghai in China. There I first came to understand the terrible impact we are having on the world.

"From the train window on my way to work I would see the factories and coal plants belching toxic smoke and the greasy rivers full of trash. I came to Danang specifically to be a part of this group; to try to help stop this beautiful place from becoming something like this."

Change is never an easy thing to affect, especially across cultural and language barriers. However, both Vera and Haylie are hopeful, claiming to already be seeing progress with young students who are starting to direct the behavior of their parents. As they continue their efforts, they hope for a time when Vietnam's youth will be leading the anti-plastic charge. ■



Dressed to  
*Celebrate*





Most Vietnamese people wear new clothes to celebrate Tet to promote a fresh beginning to the year. Although Western-style outfits are more convenient for daily chores, the traditional tunic reappears each Tet. These tunics add to the festival's formal atmosphere. Long ago city ladies had their *ao dais* made from colorful silk brocades and lampas. French influence popularized velvets in shades of burgundy, dark green and dark blue. While town women wore five-paneled *dao dais*, or *nam tas*, women in the countryside had front-opening four-panel *ao dais* called *tu thans*. The rural *tu thans* were made from hemp-based fabrics, normally in a brown or brownish-fuchsia color. With Vietnamese people's innate pride in their culture, it will not be long before the city is full of women in colorful *ao dais* celebrating Lunar New Year this month.











Model: **Nguyen Thuc Thuy Tien**  
Clothing: **Thuy Design House**  
([www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse](http://www.facebook.com/thuydesignhouse))  
Photographer: **Chanh**  
Make up: **Xi Quan Le**



# Wine & Dine

CHAQUITOS - SAIGONITA / IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN











# Hoi An on a Plate

## Spice Viet Restaurant serves up lighter, fresher fare

Text by **James Pham**  
Images Provided by **Spice Viet**

**ONE OF THE JOYS OF HOI AN** is uncovering its surprisingly robust culinary scene. While part of the foodie experience is wandering down alleyways in search of a single-dish food stand that may or may not be open or even uncovering your own hole-in-the-wall find, sometimes you just want to enjoy it all with minimum fuss.

Spice Viet Restaurant (187 Ly Thuong Kiet, just next to EMM Hotel Hoi An) takes out the traveling component but leaves all the flavor by serving up Hoi An's most iconic dishes in one beautifully contemporary space featuring atmospheric dark woods, lots of live greenery, and pretty displays of fragrant, dried spices. The carefully curated, 3-page menu also

includes favorites from all around Vietnam as well as vegetarian dishes.

Opened in July 2018, Spice Viet Hoi An has already gained buzz for building on the freshness and simplicity that Vietnamese cuisine is known for by using sustainable, organic produce, most locally-sourced within a 30km radius of the restaurant.

We peruse the menu and spot a number of tantalizing dishes that we haven't seen on any other restaurant menu including Vietnamese smoked duck breast, chicken stewed with lotus seeds, and a green papaya salad topped with grilled flank steak in a tamarind dressing.

In the end, we settle on dishes from

Hoi An and Hanoi, starting with a fried wonton appetizer topped with a sweet and sour sauce and a beautifully presented chicken & rice. While wontons can be found everywhere in Vietnam, usually in a noodle soup, Hoi An has its own version, using crispy fried wonton skins as a base for a topping of shrimp and pork in a tangy sauce with crunchy bell peppers and onions. Simple and delicious, it's wonderfully unique to Hoi An.

For our other main, we head north to Hanoi for *cha ca la vong*, pan-fried chunks of boneless fish marinated with turmeric and galangal. The beauty of this dish was in the freshness of the fish and herbs, including dill, not commonly





Cha Ca Hanoi



Chicken and Rice



Hoanh Thanh Chien



seen in Vietnamese cuisine outside of northern Vietnam. Spice Viet gets all its herbs from nearby Tra Que, famed for growing fresh, organic produce using locally-sourced seaweed to fertilize the plants instead of chemicals.

Just five minutes from Hoi An's Ancient Town, we were thrilled to go on a culinary journey through Vietnam, surrounded by intricate latticework and flowing fabrics that created distinct dining spaces, allowing for both large tour groups and more intimate gatherings.

Spice Viet Restaurant also has branches in Hue (15 Ly Thuong Kiet) and Saigon (157 Pasteur, D3). The Saigon location is bright and open, making it a great venue for corporate functions and private parties. Spice Viet Saigon also features elevated versions of street food and home-cooked favorites rarely seen on a restaurant menu, including fried rice flour cakes with egg and shredded green papaya and betel-wrapped chargrilled beef served on a personal-sized clay brazier. ■





# Pretty Betty

Tam Le is set to make her mark on Saigon's food scene

Text by **James Pham**  
Images by **Ngoc Tran**



Tam Le



## EVERYTHING ABOUT THE

night so far has been surreal. Our table comprised of furloughed Americans, cousins from London, a PhD student from Hue and a Saigonese photographer are listening to a spirited account of how one diner unexpectedly found himself locked in a martial arts battle with a Thai prisoner. In the kitchen, the bartender is dusting margarita glasses with Vietnamese chili salt while MasterChef Vietnam Season 1 runner-up Quoc Tri places the finishing touches on Hue-vos Rancheros, a hand-pressed corn flour tortilla topped with an umami bomb of *bun bo Hue*-inspired braised beef and a fried quail egg. Above a soundtrack of Gipsy Kings, our hostess is regaling the room about her personal hero, Richard Montañez, the janitor-turned-inventor-turned-executive who came up with the idea for Flamin' Hot Cheetos. Hijinks ensue.

The whole evening feels like an episode straight out of *Ugly Betty*, the beloved American TV comedy about an unlikely Mexican-American heroine who ends up conquering the fashion world with her humor, irrepressible optimism, and wisdom beyond her years. The star of tonight's Saigonita, a home-hosted concept restaurant reinterpreting Mexican cuisine using Vietnamese ingredients and dishes, isn't quite Latina, although her high cheekbones, sun-kissed complexion and gauzy peasant dress seem more Honduran than Hue.

"I'm 100 percent Vietnamese and I've got the DNA test to prove it," laughs Tam Le, long accustomed to Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese alike questioning her ethnicity on a daily basis. Vintage, black-and-white photos on the fridge offer up further proof that her family indeed hailed from Hue before her parents immigrated to Texas. Growing up in Houston, home to the third-largest Hispanic and Vietnamese populations in the US, Tam felt at ease among her Mexican friends, sharing



Hue-vos Rancheros

similar family-centric values and aspects of "non-White" culture. She also found similarities in the food, growing up on pho and fajitas, a culinary kinship born out of "lime and cilantro" as opposed to "lemon and parsley."

Her fascination with food intensified when she moved to health-conscious New York City. "I started making my lunches from scratch and a co-worker asked if I could make him one, too. That was the first time I realized that people would actually pay to eat my food."

After stints in Turkey and the UK, Tam eventually landed in Singapore. Regular business travel to Saigon rekindled a love for Vietnam, a country in which she had never lived but nevertheless felt like home. "I just love Vietnam so much," she gushes. "Each city or region will have a dish so specific to it that elsewhere people may not have even heard of it. The climate allows us to grow so many different types of produce and raise different types of animals. It's like having access to a farmer's market every day, and being able to pick up things based on the season. In America, people don't really think about the farmer or the



Saigonita dinner

vendor. Here, you're more conscious of what's seasonally available. It's not like everything is available everywhere all the time."

## Me Gusta Mucho

Entirely self-taught, Tam applies her self-styled "Hermione-like determination" to devouring cook books and kitchen memoirs, experimenting with some of her favorite ingredients and flavors like tonight's TAMaLe (see what she did there?), a filling of pork and prawn modeled after Hue's steamed *banh nam* cakes, but wrapped in masa and corn husks she brought back with her from a recent trip to the US.

"People often talk about authenticity in food, but with food, everyone's borrowing from everyone," she says as she serves up Al Pasteurs on an eclectic collection of mix-and-match plates. "Just look at the Al Pastor," she says of the iconic pork tacos found everywhere on the streets of Mexico City. "The spit-roasting of the meat was actually brought over by Lebanese immigrants to Mexico where Mexican shepherds adapted it using pork instead, all served over a tortilla." Tam's version uses fish sauce-marinated pork, similar to what you'd find on *com tam*, along with chunks of



Al Pasteur





TAMaLE



Cay caliente

pineapple caramelized with brown sugar.

Much like her looks, it's hard to pinpoint where Tam's love for all things Mehico and her obsession with food came from. "Both my parents are computer programmers, and my dad's thing was instant ramen noodles," she sighs. "When I proposed a family trip to Mexico City, my sisters were like: 'What are we going to eat?'"

Undaunted, Tam recently quit her job working in branding for the food and beverage industry to pursue food full-time. "I was really scared at first, but thought it through and realized that I probably wouldn't get this chance again. Living in New York or Singapore, you're focused on survival without a lot of extra to buy dishes and kitchen equipment. But I want to do this and see where it goes. If it doesn't work out, I can find a job here or in New York, and if that's the worst case scenario, that's okay."

Just before we get served a dessert called "You Go, Flan Coco" (extra points if you get the *Mean Girls* reference), a pandan-coconut flan layered over an espresso brownie, Tam drops a bombshell that tonight would be the second-to-last Saigonita.

It turns out that this Latina-esque girl from Texas who speaks Vietnamese with a Hue accent will finally be able to bring her exciting brand of cooking to a wider audience as Head Chef of a brand new restaurant called Dialect. "It's set to open by the end of March next to Renkon on Hai Ba Trung and will be designed by The Lab who also designed Anan, Nest by AIA, and Bunker Breakfast & Bar, so we're in good hands," she enthuses. "I know I'm not the traditional candidate for Head Chef, but I'll bring the passion as well as the curiosity to discover my own heritage via food to this New Vietnamese restaurant with a small, well-thought out tasting menu."

No longer confined by the four walls of her apartment, Tam hopes to make an impact with her refreshing take on New



Tri Tom Tam



Vietlote

Vietnamese cuisine. "I do want more people to experience my food and hopefully rethink what Vietnamese cuisine is. It doesn't have to be cheap or any less complex and respected as, let's say, French cuisine. I'll be able to tell the story of the richness and beauty of Vietnamese cuisine and ingredients to a wider audience and hopefully showcase the country's diverse range of dishes."

But what about the stories, the passion, and the endearing quirkiness



You Go Flan Coco

that have been a trademark of Saigonita these past few months? "Don't worry. The dish names will still be playful and punny," she assures. "But instead of fusion, this New Vietnamese food will really profile our country's beautiful and diverse resources and flavors."

Viva Vietnam! ■

Tam is organizing a final Saigonita event at El Camino on Wednesday, February 27. For more info, see Saigonita's Facebook page or follow Tam on Instagram at @Tam\_Le.



# Same Same *or* Different



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](http://www.wineinvietnam.com).

Aside from making your food shine, a well balanced wine list can inject individuality and boost your bottom line

## EVERY NOW AND THEN I

am hired as a consultant to design a bar and restaurant's wine list. What all my clients have in common is that they all want to have an outstanding wine list, and they all want to be successful in bringing wine lovers to their premises, however, what they want to have on their wine menu differs considerably, and more often than not, it also differs to what I recommend.

As a consultant I usually have 3 big battles to fight.

The first one is about "wine by the glass." Most restaurants offer just a few wines by the glass, and almost all the time just the cheap ones. I understand their policy: the less wines available by the glass the less bottles they have to open, and the less likely that they have to throw wine away because it was not sold. Likewise, the cheapest the

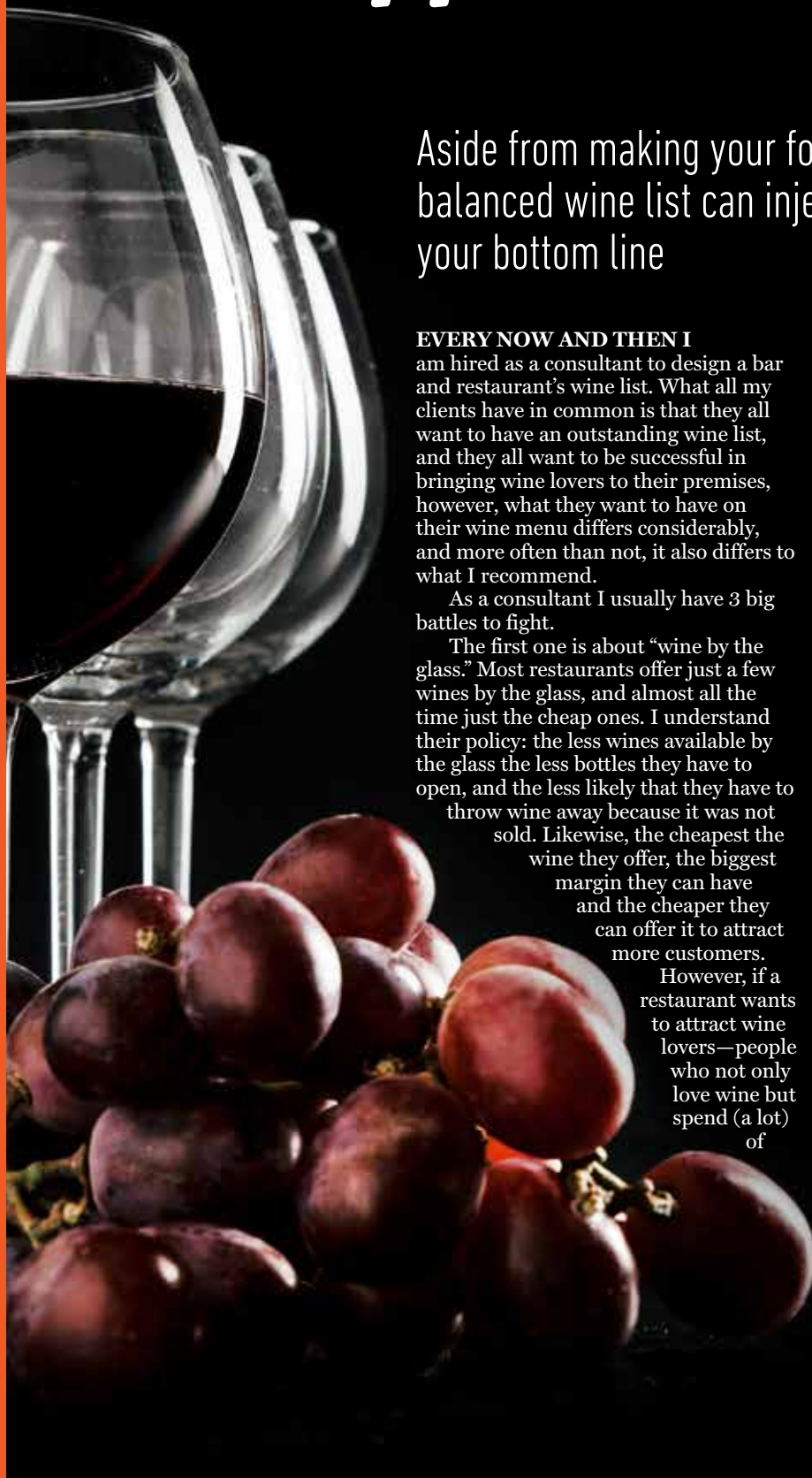
wine they offer, the biggest margin they can have and the cheaper they can offer it to attract more customers.

However, if a restaurant wants to attract wine lovers—people who not only love wine but spend (a lot) of

money on wine—they could not make a bigger mistake than having just a few and inexpensive wines by the glass. I go to many restaurants, with very few exceptions like Luby or Mad House, which do not have nice quality wines available by the glass, I am usually forced to drink a beer, which is preferred to having a cheap wine. I am not the only one.

My second battle is about the number of suppliers to have. I work with most of them, and even the biggest ones cannot provide a perfect wine list. My strong recommendation is for restaurants to work with at least 10 suppliers, and get the best each have to offer. It is a terrible operational mistake to go for a single supplier, which some do as it is easier for them, but they should put customers first.

And my third fight is about regions and grape varieties. Everyone wants Champagne, Bordeaux and the usual suspects. And although I am in favor of having the 12 to 20 usual suspects (Burgundy, Bordeaux, Rioja, Barolo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, etc.) because there is a demand for it, but if you want to attract wine lovers, your wine menu must have some wines that are different: different unusual grapes and/or different unusual regions so that wine lovers, who always want to discover new things, will find yet another reason to visit your place. ■





# 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, D1 / 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, D1**



### 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

## 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/

## Also Try...

### Winking Seal

Winking Seal offers a revolving selection of craft beers brewed by the bar. Enjoy their Happy Hour from 7pm to 9pm or come by on a Saturday night to join the beer pong tournament on their rooftop terrace.

**50 Dang Thi Nhu, Nguyen Thai Binh Ward, D.1**

### Tap & Tap Craft Beer

Tap & Tap is the first bar of its kind in Thao Dien. This is a self-serve craft beer bar using the 'Pour My Beer' digital tap system. You can pour as much or as little as you like and sample 20 different kinds of beers in their open air bar and courtyard.

**94 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, D.2**

### Heart of Darkness Craft Brewery

Heart of Darkness are prolific brewers - having brewed over 170 different styles of craft beer since they opened in October 2016.

**31D Ly Tu Trong, Ben Nghe Ward, D.1**

### Belgo Belgian Craft Beer Brewery

Inspired by the beer culture of Belgium and Vietnam, Belgo built a unique place inspired by Belgium architecture with its own brewery, offering typical Belgian dishes combined with a local twist.

**159A, Nguyen Van Thu, Da Kao Ward, D.1**

### Pasteur Street Brewing Company

They opened their first Tap Room 'The Original' in January 2015 and now have 5 tap rooms spread out in D.1, 2 and 7. Pasteur Street Brewing Company distributes its beers to approximately 150 locations in Vietnam.

**Address 1: 144 Pasteur Street, Ben Nghe Ward, D.1**  
**Address 2: 144/3 Pasteur Street, Ben Nghe Ward, D.1**  
**Address 3: 29 Thao Dien, Thao Dien Ward, D.2**  
**Address 4: 120 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien Ward, D.2**  
**Address 5: 67 Le Van Thiem, Tan Phong Ward, D.7**





# 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 Bui, D1

[www.caferunam.com](http://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



## 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](http://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](mailto:manager@restaurant-thierrydrapeau.asia)  
[www.restaurant-thierrydrapeau.asia](http://www.restaurant-thierrydrapeau.asia)

## Also Try...

### 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, l'edecaf.

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](http://www.tycozsaigon.com)



We are Smoky BBQ ribs online restaurant.  
Beef brisket (at least 1 kg): 650.000 VND/kg  
Beef ribs (2.3 - 3.2 kg): 600.000 VND/kg  
Pork ribs (1.8 - 2.4 kg): 450.000 VND/kg

Facebook page: Long's Smoke House  
Delivery: (+84)968.790.890  
Email: [longsmokehouse@gmail.com](mailto:longsmokehouse@gmail.com)





# ITALIAN



## 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*



## Italian Trattoria Oggi

Italian Trattoria Oggi is a perfect place for either a dinner, night out or special party in the breathtaking resort setting and distinctive interior, where you can enjoy the best that American and Australian beef has to offer together with premium wines.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang Street District 1  
(0)28 3823 3333

www.lottehotel.com/saigon

*Oggi*

## 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

### Pasta Fresca

Hidden on a rooftop in District 1, in a secret garden in District 2 and now also found in District 3, Pasta Fresca offer vegetarian friendly pastas.

Address 1: 28 Thao Dien Street, Thao Dien, District 2  
Address 2: 13/1 Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe Ward, District 1

### Pendolasco

One of the original Italian eateries in Ho Chi Minh City, Pendolasco recently reinvented itself with a new chef and menu, and spurned 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

*Chaya*



## 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

*Gyumaru*

## Also Try...

### 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



## SaiGon Grill

Located on the rooftop of Saigon Royal Building, Saigon Grill has an absolutely fantastic view over the city. Classical BBQ with beef, pork and seafood by a small charcoal grill at the table and friendly staff. Enjoy our great BBQ with a glass of wine.  
Rooftop 7th floor, Saigon Royal Building  
91 Pasteur, Ben Nghe Ward, D1  
Opening time: 4pm-11pm  
0916622662  
www.saigon grill.vn



## 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

## 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  
commnieusaigon27@yahoo.com  
commnieusaigon.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



## 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**



## Tomatito Saigon

Tomatito won the award for Best Restaurant of Saigon 2018. 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.

**1st Floor, 171 Calmette, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City**

**www.tomatito.vn**

**www.facebook.com/tomatitosaiagon**

**+84 869 388 864**



## 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 8358**

## 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**

### 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**

### 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**





# Travel & Wellness

KAYANGAN LAKE / IMAGE BY JAMES PHAM









# *Blueprint to Paradise*

Can conservation and tourism co-exist in Coron?

Text and Images by **James Pham**







**WE SLIP INTO THE GLASSY,** emerald waters of one of Asia's cleanest lakes, our hands feeling our way past smooth underwater boulders. Crystal clear visibility reveals a moonscape beneath the surface of Coron's Kayangan Lake. Encircled by soaring, vegetation-clad granite cliffs and with no other tourists around, it's quiet, even sacred, like the inside of an old cathedral. As we swim further out, we hit alternating pockets of warm and cold water, the result of thermoclines created by a mixing of fresh and saltwater.

"The lake is 70% freshwater, 30% saltwater, and 10% pee during high season," laughs Joyce, our guide for the day, sporting a fun pixie cut to match her vivacious personality and broad smile.

We scamper back up the 170 steps for one of the most beautiful vistas in all the Philippines, looking out over Coron Bay, dotted with leafy karst islands surrounded by electric aquamarine waters. It reminds us a little of Vietnam's Halong Bay, but with much more to do including diving WWII-era wrecks and hiking more than 700 steps up Mt. Tapyas with its giant white cross and sweeping views.

Located in northern Palawan, Philippines, Coron (meaning "cooking pot" for its surrounding rugged topography) is both the name of the town, confusingly located on Busuanga Island, and the island of Coron, just across the bay. Coron belongs to the Calamian Island group which in turn is part of nearly 1,800 islands that make up the Palawan archipelago, called by Jacques Cousteau as Earth's "last frontier" for its incredible diversity. While most visitors to Palawan are more familiar with El Nido, having been the paradisiac setting for everything from *The Amazing Race* to *The Bourne Legacy*, sleepy Coron is fast becoming a tourist hotspot for its pristine beaches, turquoise waters, limestone cliffs, and some 20 blissfully secluded islands.

The area received even more attention when Travel + Leisure magazine named Palawan the "world's best island" in 2017, a distinction also awarded to the Philippine island of Boracay five years earlier. However, in a twist of fate, the ensuing influx of travelers and unchecked development led to it being labeled a "cesspool" by the Philippine president who last year took the drastic step of completely closing down Boracay for six months of massive rehabilitation. It re-opened this past October, albeit with a slew of new rules, including a cap on overnight visitors and a ban on raucous parties and single-use plastics.

Compared to Boracay, Palawan receives a million fewer annual visitors, mainly due to lagging facilities. Even still, tiny Coron, barely more than a fishing village itself, already struggles with problematic water and sanitation issues.

"Last March, the government arranged a meeting with the travel industry in Coron and asked if we could take in the extra visitors from Boracay," remembers Jay Sijera of Calamianes





Image by Al Linsangan

Expeditions Ecotours. “But all of our hotel rooms were already booked out until the next year.” Not that there’s ever been that many hotel rooms to begin with.

### Turtle Net

The town is walkable from end to end in about 15 minutes and because most of the attractions are off-shore, there’s a permanent, uncrowded vibe.

Like most other visitors to Coron, we spend our days exploring the surrounding islands where our greatest pleasures consist of snorkeling the crystalline waters teeming with healthy marine life and gorgeous coral gardens, feasting on grilled fish and fresh coconuts, and trying to come up with names for all the different shades of blues and greens. We swim under a low limestone archway which opens up to a hidden lagoon, take dueling Instagram snaps on deserted Malcapuya Beach, and let the water lap at our toes at the Bulog Island sandbar.

One morning, though, we take a break from island hopping and kayak the quiet coastal mangroves instead. We



pass groups of young men, waist deep in the brackish water, some fishing while others collect sand for the many on-going construction projects around the island. Just as my flabby arms begin to give out, more accustomed to powering a keyboard than a kayak, we pull ashore in front of a simple, thatched hut. Sitting outside weaving a crab trap is Norio, one of nearly 2,000 indigenous Tagbanua who call Coron their ancestral home with the authority to manage and preserve the island’s marine and land resources.

On the porch of his stilt house shared with some of his 10 children, Norio tells us a little about his life as a fisherman, getting up when the cocks crow to catch crab and fish which his wife takes to market to trade for goods and other food stuffs. In the evenings, after tending the chickens and three pigs, the family gathers around a small portable television powered by a car battery hooked up to solar panels.

Everywhere we look, life in Coron seems to move at a slow and steady pace, like the imperceptible rising and falling of the tide. In the afternoon heat, a group of kids play a game of pick-up basketball on a makeshift gravel court by the boat dock, backed by a giant, idle Ferris wheel. Even the town dogs, known colloquially as *askals* (a mashup of *asong kalye* meaning “dogs of the street”), plop down right in the middle of the road, forcing what little traffic there is to go around them. And don’t even think about trying to upload an InstaStory on what the locals call the “turtle net.”

### The Lost Frontier?

But that may all soon change. Driving in the hills around town, a colorful contrast of scrubby vegetation poking through red, manganese-rich soil, we notice shells of buildings going up with signs announcing imminent resort openings. Closer to town, an empty lot overrun by weeds has been marked as the site for a future McDonald’s, Coron’s first international franchise.

The signs are there. Change is coming





to Coron. It's now a matter of making sure the last frontier doesn't become a lost one. Some, like Vietnamese-Australian David Vo, see the silver lining in the promise of increased tourism. "There are ten times more tourists compared to when I moved here in 2011," he says, now settled with a local wife and a pizza joint. "There are obvious signs of growth—more cars, homes being converted into shops. More restaurants, even McDonald's, mean people will have more of a choice. More competition will lead to better services and products."

Returning from a four-year stint in Manila last year, Jay initially felt sad at all the changes he witnessed in Coron. "There was more construction and the town was busier at night. But then I realized that tourism brought jobs here so people wouldn't have to leave to find work."

While more pesos translate to more prosperity, there is concern about how a boom in tourism might forever change life in laid-back Coron. "I never lock my door now," says Joyce. "There's no crime here and hardly any motorbike accidents. But more people coming will mean higher prices and more trash. The tour guides get together every month to clean up the ocean and last month we collected 20 sacks of trash," she says.

Taking heed of warning examples

like Boracay, Coron is already instituting sustainable measures against the impact of increased tourism. Paper bags have replaced plastic ones while programs aimed at raising environmental awareness are in place, as are natural conservation regulations. "Ten years ago, even tour guides were throwing plastic into the sea. Now they're helping to collect it," says Al Linsangan, Executive Director of the Coron & Calamianes Cultural Conservation Networks Inc. "Coron was once a hotspot for illegal and overfishing. Now we have more than 30 protected areas where no fishing or snorkeling is allowed, the most in the Philippines. Coron can be a model of conservation together with tourism, instead of just one or the other."

Another of Coron's environmentally-friendly initiatives are its electric tricycles. One late afternoon, we hop aboard a particularly snazzy one playing a happy Jack Johnson soundtrack bound for Maquinit, one of only a handful of saltwater hot springs in the world. We pass school kids in crisp uniforms and shops selling cashew nuts (one of the few crops to grow in Coron). Suddenly, we veer off the main road and onto a deeply rutted dirt path leading to the pair of 40°C pools set amidst mangroves by the sea. "The locals call this 'Abortion Road,'" says Henry, our affable driver. He seems

to rethink sharing this bit of trivia and follows quickly with a shy, "I'm sorry, sir."

Three years ago, Henry moved to Coron from Cebu with his young wife in search of opportunity where life was quiet and crime-free. His days are spent ferrying tourists, sacks of rice, and blocks of ice around town in his electric tuk-tuk, a sustainable but expensive mode of transportation. "The tariffs for gas and electric tricycles are the same," he laments in confident English learned on YouTube, "but it costs more to charge the batteries than to buy gas." Once his wife finishes college, he hopes to trade his electric tricycle in for a gas-powered one instead.

Perhaps without realizing it, Henry has succinctly summed up the sustainability issue that faces Coron, writ small. While managing resources, being eco-friendly and limiting mass tourism all sound good, it ultimately comes with a price.

That's why Al favors positioning Coron as a high-end, low-impact destination, suggesting a model like Bhutan where foreign tourists are required to spend at least USD200 per person per night on accommodation, meals, licensed guides and internal transport. "That way visitors can enjoy Nature with lots of space, but they will have to pay."

He also highlights the importance of local management of resources, like the municipally-owned snorkeling gardens whose entrance fees boost the local economy. "As the landscape changes, it leads to cultural erosion and a loss of local identity," he warns. "The players now aren't necessarily local anymore."

But for Al and many others, it's a price worth paying. "Other places are beach, beach, beach. Here we have everything: lakes, hot springs, reefs, wrecks, indigenous peoples, the only savannah lands in Palawan. Coron is incredibly special. That means we have a responsibility to protect this place." ■



## IF YOU GO

We enjoyed our stay at the Corto del Mar ([www.cortodelmar.com](http://www.cortodelmar.com)), an easy 5-minute walk to the center of town. The 32 rooms and suites around a central swimming pool gave off a Spanish hacienda vibe with distant sea views. Rooms were spacious and clean while Wi-Fi was available in the lobby. The garlic aioli that accompanied the welcome fries was wonderfully addictive. Doubles start at USD96 including a hearty Western or Filipino breakfast set.

All our tours were organized through Calamianes Expeditions Ecotours ([www.calamianes.com](http://www.calamianes.com)). Run by the husband-and-wife team of Al and Mae Linsangan, pioneers of ecotourism in Coron, the company offers well-organized private as well as join-in tours around Coron. Our group of four found the private tours very reasonably priced, including a morning of kayaking and two days of island hopping. Delicious lunches are prepared using ingredients from the couple's own farm.

To explore the town of Coron, including the Maquinit Hot Springs or to do a city tour, contact Henry Beltran ([cantanciobeltran@yahoo.com](mailto:cantanciobeltran@yahoo.com)). His electric tricycle was new and comfortable and he was just an all-around nice guy to be around.



# >>The List Business

## INSURANCE

### OUR OFFICE LOCATIONS

**Administration Office - Ho Chi Minh City**  
Ruby Tower | 81-83-85 Ham Nghi | Dist. 1

**Sales Office - Ho Chi Minh City**  
Pax Sky | 159C De Tham | Dist. 1

**Sales Office - Hanoi**  
VCCI Tower | 9 Dao Duy Anh | Dist. Dong Da

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Pacific Cross Vietnam is a specialist provider of global health and travel insurances, designed to provide not just basic cover, but also a wide range of benefits providing peace of mind for you, your family and your employees.

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**21st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, DI**

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#### IF Consulting to Insurance in Asia

IF Consulting has for 20 years provided advice to individuals and businesses in assessing health/accident risk and finding the best suitable solution. The company is independent and Vietnam-based.

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[www.insuranceinAsia.com](http://www.insuranceinAsia.com)  
[advice@insuranceinAsia.com](mailto:advice@insuranceinAsia.com)

#### Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual is a 100% US-owned general insurer licensed to provide insurance services directly to Vietnamese individuals and state-owned enterprises as well as motor insurance.

**15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza,**  
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Offers the very highest levels of compassionate, competent and professional veterinary medicine and surgery to all pets in Ho Chi Minh City with international veterinary surgeons. Upholding international standards, the team works tirelessly to help clients with the support of a dedicated surgical suite, digital X-Ray and comprehensive diagnostic facilities.

**1 Tran Ngoc Dien, Thao Dien, Q2**  
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[animaldoctors.vn](http://animaldoctors.vn)

#### 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**  
**www.sasakihospital.com**  
**028 2253 1179**



# >>The List Travel



## Ana Mandara Villas | Dalat

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises 17 restored French-style villas from the 1920s and 1930s, preserving the original design, décor and charm; and set in the cool climate of the rural highlands of Central Vietnam. Striking views of the surrounding town and countryside abound from all areas of the gently sloping hillside property. Some of the villas have been converted into 65 guest accommodations, with each villa comprising between three and five ensuite rooms.

[www.anamandara-resort.com](http://www.anamandara-resort.com)



## Anantara Quy Nhon Villas

Surrounded by mountain on three sides and overlooking the Bay of Quy Nhon, Anantara Quy Nhon Villas offers beachfront basking and adventurous discoveries. Laze by the pool snacking on gourmet street eats served by your butler. Luxuriate with a synchronised four-hand massage at Anantara Spa. Explore surrounding ruins, fisherman's villages and uninhabited islands just off the coast.

**Bai Dai Area, Ghenh Rang Ward, Quy Nhon City, Vietnam**

+ 84 256 3840 077

[quynhon.villas@anantara.com](mailto:quynhon.villas@anantara.com)



## Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

Fronting the scenic Saigon River and only 5 minutes walking to famous Opera House, Dong Khoi Street and Le Thanh Ton Street for shopping, dining and entertainment, Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon, the most beloved 5-star hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, combines natural beauty and sheer opulence to provide the best for the discerning traveler. The breathtaking resort-setting and its distinctive architectural interior gives a feeling of luxury and tranquility.

**2A-4A Ton Duc Thang Street District 1**

(0)28 3823 3333

[www.lottehotel.com/saigon](http://www.lottehotel.com/saigon)



## Mia R

With its own private white sand beach, cliff-top ocean views and jungle clad mountains as a backdrop, Mia resort has carved out its own little piece of tropical heaven in Nha Trang. Mia features a variety of accommodation options, each with fantastic ocean views, nestled among manicured gardens. There are great dining options, a relaxing spa and gym.

**Bai Dong, Cam Hai Dong, Cam Lam, Khanh Hoa**

02583 989 666

[www.mianhatrang.com](http://www.mianhatrang.com)

[info@mianhatrang.com](mailto:info@mianhatrang.com)



## Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa

With 280 ocean view rooms and suites and six signature restaurants and bars, including Altitude – the highest bar in Nha Trang. Amenities include outdoor swimming pool with infinity edge and reflection pool area, Shine Spa with 9 luxurious treatment rooms, Sheraton Fitness with 24-hour access, Sheraton Club Lounge, Linh@Sheraton, Sheraton Adventure Club, and a purpose-built Cooking School.

**26 - 28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa**

0258 2220 000

[www.sheratonnhatrang.com](http://www.sheratonnhatrang.com)



**R** For full review, please visit: [www.oivietnam.com](http://www.oivietnam.com)

## Also Try...

### Boutique Hoi An Resort

Explore the rich heritage of Hoi An at Boutique Hoi An Resort. Discover authentic Vietnamese cuisine and hospitality, unwind in the swimming pool surrounded by lush tropical gardens or indulge in a massage at our hotel spa. Our villas are directly on the beach facing the sea with large terraces for the ultimate in privacy and relaxation.

**34 Lac Long Quan, Cam An, Hoi An**

+84 (0)235 3939 111

[www.boutiquehoianresort.com](http://www.boutiquehoianresort.com)

### Cham Garden Restaurant

Cham Garden Restaurant is located inside Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort. Set in the midst of a lush tropical garden, this cozy and quiet restaurant serves Asian Fusion, Vietnamese and Western Cuisine. The ideal place for a romantic and exquisite dinner.

**32 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Phan Thiet**

+84 252 3741 234

[www.chamvillas.com](http://www.chamvillas.com)

[www.facebook.com/chamgardenmuine](https://www.facebook.com/chamgardenmuine)

### InterContinental Nha Trang R

InterContinental Nha Trang is a luxurious modern beachfront hotel where an enriching urban retreat harmonized beautifully with its surroundings. Right in the heart of Nha Trang, a 40-minute scenic drive from Cam Ranh International Airport, experience the perfect blend of local charm and nature.

**32 - 34 Tran Phu, Nha Trang**

(0258) 388 7777

[www.nhatrang.intercontinental.com](http://www.nhatrang.intercontinental.com)

### La Veranda Resort Phu Quoc MGallery by Sofitel

Discover the elegance of colonial Indochine style on Vietnam's Phu Quoc Island with a stay at this 19th-century seaside mansion. An award-winning beachfront resort, it has 70 well-appointed rooms, an organic spa and fine-dining restaurants ideal for romantic getaways, spa breaks and family holidays. Experience an inspired summer at La Veranda with 05 offers starting from USD155+.

**Tran Hung Dao Street, Duong Dong Beach, Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam**

(0)297 3982 988 - [contact@laverandaresorts.com](mailto:contact@laverandaresorts.com)

[www.laverandaresorts.com](http://www.laverandaresorts.com)

### Pullman Danang Beach Resort R

Located on the stunning white sands of Danang beach, the stylish Pullman Danang Beach Resort is an oasis of activities and facilities for the modern traveler. With an idyllic setting on the silver shores of Central Vietnam, this luxury resort is perfect for a family holiday or romantic beach getaway.

**Vo Nguyen Giap, Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang**

0236 395 8888

[www.pullman-danang.com](http://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](http://www.theislandlodge.com.vn)



# >>The List Health & Beauty

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**244A Cong Quynh, D1**  
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Moc Huong Spa is equipped with modern Indochine decoration supported by top-ranked professional physiotherapists in Vietnam with dedicated. All branches are the ideal places to relax after a long or stressful day. There are wide range of relaxing and treatment services available, from skin care to body care..

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**Branch 3** 61 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, Dist2, 0283 519 1052  
**Branch 4** 26 Ngo Quang Huy, Thao Dien, Dist2, 028 3636 7208



For full review, please visit: [www.oivietnam.com](http://www.oivietnam.com)



# Kids & Education







# Learning Through Drama And Performing Arts

How Drama classes lead to happier and more socially engaged students, and The American School's long tradition in quality art performances

Text and Images Provided by **TAS**



**DRAMA AND PERFORMING ARTS** have always been a breath of fresh air to many of The American School's students. If you google "the benefits of drama and performing arts," you will see what the dramatic arts can help students achieve in the long run. Staying faithful to our motto: **"Developing Academic Excellence and Strength of Character,"** The American School strives to develop our students' character through comprehensive Performing Arts education where students are able to build teamwork and communication skills, develop creativity, and express themselves.

## Benefits of a TAS Performing Arts Education

With Drama classes, our students first and foremost learn how to express themselves both verbally and through body language by transforming themselves into different characters in numerous situations. Their creativity and imagination are boosted as they are exposed to plays, musicals, and devised work, helping them learn to trust their ideas, think outside of the box, solve problems and be more confident going

into uncharted territories.

With an ever-changing world and an increasingly competitive working environment, cooperation, concentration and communication skills are essential in building our foundation for success. Drama classes deliver all of those important ingredients to our students, within the familial comfort of a place that they can call home. A successful drama production is not just one person's work, but it's the fruit of long days of engagement, discussions, feedback and rehearsing among a group of performers. Each individual must learn how to focus the mind, the body and the voice to deliver the best quality of performance on their part, while communicating their creative ideas to the rest of the group and working with other performers to create a cohesive outcome.

But the most important lesson that our students can get from signing up for a role in any of the Drama classes' productions is always empathy. In this turbulent and often scary time, kindness and empathy have never been so precious to be embraced and demonstrated. By

putting themselves in the characters' shoes, our students get the chance to relate to different situations, backgrounds and cultures; learning how to show compassion, tolerance and inclusivity for others that are different than themselves.

## What Makes TAS Performing Arts Education Stand Out

Part of what helps our students learn so much from Drama and Performing Arts, as well as what makes The American School's Performing Arts education stand out from the rest, is the variety of study options for students and the professionalism that our Drama department always tries to project, even though the productions are just within the school. There are **5 high school drama electives** available to students, which is different from most international schools here in Ho Chi Minh City. These electives include introduction to theater, theater history, musical theater and directing and, with the development of our new campus—lighting and sound design. And the projection of professionalism can be witnessed by the choice of judge for last December's TAS Talent Show: **Nguyen**





## Khac Hung, The Voice Kids Vietnam Judge.

Our attempt to create the best environment that nurtures future art performers, along with the wonderful productions of famous plays and musicals by our talented students and Drama teachers throughout the years naturally shape the identity of The American School's academic curriculum as a whole: a place with a notable tradition in quality art performances among many other international schools in Vietnam; a place where drama lovers get a chance to embrace their appreciation for Arts and Culture, and where the shy kids learn to discover their hidden voices inside their heart and soul.

## Upcoming Productions And Shows

The American School's students will carry on this long tradition with another brand new musical production this year: **High School Musical**. The Disney classic that marked the teenage years of many viewers will be brought to life here at The American School on three consecutive dates: Tuesday, 12th March 2019 at

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

If you are interested in knowing more about The American School's Drama and Performing Arts tradition, as well as our academic program in general, then our upcoming **Open Day** is the perfect opportunity for you. Visit our school on **March 16 and April 20, 2019, 9am-12pm** and discover an international school that offers students more than just knowledge written on paper.

6:30pm; Wednesday, 13th March 2019 at 4:30pm; and Thursday 14th March 2019 at 6:30pm. For tickets, please visit the school website at [www.tas.edu.vn](http://www.tas.edu.vn).

But what's more exciting during this first month of spring, is the trip of our young company of performers—Urban Lights—to **Perth Fringe World Festival in Perth, Australia**. A fringe festival is a festival of drama, dance and performance, and the Perth festival is the third largest fringe festival in the world. Urban Lights' performance at this worldwide stage is called *Me. Asian?*, a play that explores how a generation of Asian teenagers navigate the clash between technology, the West and tradition and what it means to truly belong in the 21st century. The story is told from the perspective of our students, educated in a Western system

and permanently attached to the internet. Verbatim interviews taken from different generations of family members and the stories of the performers themselves have been interwoven with physical theatre, cultural music and dance forms to create a storytelling experience unlike any other.

And don't forget The American School's Arts festival in May—a week-long festival of the arts including a second musical, a middle school play, performances written and directed by students, musical performances and concerts, a school-wide art exhibition, busking and introductory classes to some lesser known art forms. All are the exciting activities that once again secure The American School's status as a leading international school in Drama and Performing Arts education. ■



# The Doctors *Who Face Death*

Inside the mind of an intensive care unit doctor, where life and death are separated by a thin line



**I DIDN'T IMAGINE I'D END UP** working in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) when I first studied medicine. I was thinking of going into surgery, because I love anatomy and I don't mind the blood. But there was one time when I visited my uncle working in a hospital, and he introduced me to a doctor who showed me around the department. I loved it—the adrenaline, the challenge of the patients, the sudden shifts in tempo. A patient can come through from ER at any moment while the nurse is shouting she needs something five minutes ago, and you have to move immediately. I realized I like this environment a lot, working with acute patients.

I started my residency in a hospital near my home. It was tough. The first thing I realized is that I knew nothing about medicine. After seven years in medical school, I had all the theory, and the grades—but when you see your first patient, you just think... what do I do now? That's when you realize you have to start to understand medicine again. Because the patient hasn't read the books. The patient presents with symptoms—"I have a headache, a fever, my back is painful..." You have to figure out what's going on. The books just say "this disease comes with these kinds of symptoms", but seeing a patient is a whole different thing. The patient cries, gets annoyed, is a good person or a bad

person, may have had the symptoms for a while and been very uncomfortable, but doesn't know what it is or when it started. That's the human contact side of medicine, and it is difficult to teach and understand. Many residents quit within the first three months.

But ICU is a special area of medicine, because for a patient to be admitted to ICU, there must be a chance that the patient will die. That is more or less the condition of entry. We live constantly in the ICU with this kind of thing, and death is very common; it is very normal.

When I was a supervisor, I had a first year resident (who after this became a great doctor) but on that first day, after we finished the doctors' meeting, I assigned her first patient, who was in a very serious condition. Everyone knew this patient was going to die. But we know that this is part of ICU. Five days later, the patient died, in the morning, and I saw her crying. So I sat her down and asked, "What's going on?" She said, "Oh, I miss my patient, I worked so hard with him, I thought he was going to make it..." So I had a really tough talk with her. I told her, "This happens, this is ICU. The patients die. All the patients here on these beds have a chance of dying. It could be 50%, 20%, 80%, 90%—but any of them could die. Suddenly or not. You are constantly living with that. You have to talk to the

family about that. But you can't be too involved."

It's the first lesson you learn in ICU. You can't be too involved with the patients.

I once read an article about we Latin American people. We have a problem as humans, with death. We know that all of us are going to die at some moment. We buried our fathers, our fathers buried their fathers, our sons will bury us, this is life. Death is the only 100% certainty. The article showed that Latin American people have a problem living with that. When we doctors say, yes, your father, your son, your mother, your uncle, your friend will probably die, it could take a few hours or days, but it's impossible to do anything because the damage is too severe. We have a problem accepting that.

In Latin America we don't accept euthanasia. It's a crime. Because we can't tolerate death; it's overwhelming for us. We always hope a miracle will happen, to change the facts of the situation. Sometimes it's very difficult.

In the ICU, we often have very young patients who have suffered a car or motorbike accident that destroyed their brain, themselves, and died.

We humans can die in two ways. Our heart stops, or our brain stops working. But the brain dead have a problem if their heart is still beating. The body is warm, you look at the monitor and





**Dr. Julián Alberto Strati**  
ICU and Emergency Medical Doctor at  
Family Medical Practice

With a passion for anatomy and the adrenaline and drama of trauma cases, **Dr. Julián Alberto Strati** pursued a career in ICU (Intensive Care Unit), working for many years at the Hospital Interzonal General de Agudos in Buenos Aires. He studied a second specialty in pneumology at Muñiz Hospital to complement his understanding of the common lung conditions suffered by his ICU patients.

you have the pulse, everything. That is very complicated for the family to understand. What is lying on that bed is a thing, it's not a person. The person is gone. We can sustain that situation, but there is no way back. But even so, it can still be difficult to understand.

The problem sometimes is not that the patient survives, it's *how* the patient survives. Which person you give back to the family. Sometimes the patient is not the same. The brain can have contusion, hemorrhage, damage. You do a lot of work with the patient, the patient improves, the patient is still alive—but not the same. If the person is lying in bed, in a coma, or opens their eyes but without consciousness, we give that patient to the family and say, “This is your son, 22 years old, but more like a plant, a vegetable.” And that is the worst part because in the beginning the family says to you, “I want my son to live...” But sometimes, what is life? If I give you the same person before the accident with a couple of scars, nothing else, that's one thing. But if I give you a person who can barely open their eyes, without a part of their skull, lying in bed... that's another thing entirely. Some families have the resources to keep their sons, their siblings alive with all the comforts at home, and perhaps they will. But others do not have those resources. It's very expensive to keep a person living. You even need a nurse to

change their pants—and again, is that your son?

One of the treatments we can offer is comfort. At the end of the day, we are not gods, and the human body has its limits, medicine has its limits, and we doctors have our limits too. Sometimes the only thing we can offer the family, for the patient, is comfort. They don't have to have pain, they don't have to suffer at all. Because believe me, nobody dies easy, nobody dies in a good way. This is from the movies. People only die sadly, and it's a very traumatic moment. And the only thing you can offer the family is to say OK, he or she won't suffer anything, feel nothing, never realize what's going on. There are drugs we can use to put the patient in a coma. They are anaesthetics, hypnotics, used to decrease consciousness. We use drugs that are 80 times stronger than morphine, and in higher doses, to ensure the patient doesn't feel anything. After that, it depends on what you want to believe. But for sure, the patient won't suffer their death. That is the best we can offer for the last time, for the family, for the patient.

In the ICU, I have become used to death; I have seen people from 15 years to 99 years old pass away. Over time, it still affects you. Some doctors burn out and have to go back, see other kinds of patients, stay in another part of medicine. It's worse when the doctors in

ICU start not to care. I've seen doctors burn out, and become—not a butcher, that's a very strong word—but they start not to care whether the patients live or die. It's just another bed. “OK, the patient in bed number 4 died, great, we need that bed.”

Or even worse—they start to feel like a god. You decide if the patient lives or dies. That is when you are overwhelmed by the power of this position, because with the patient, the ventilation, the drugs, all the monitors, if the patient needs those things to live, you are the person who can shut it down and say “OK, the patient has died.”

The only way to protect yourself from this kind of burn-out is to always remind yourself, “I am human, I can make mistakes.” Sometimes we doctors start to think, “I'm a god, I can manage this without any problem, it's easy for me...” and when we make a mistake we realize, “this is not so easy, I'm human.”

You can imagine facing the family after making a mistake with a patient. It's very tough. That is why the most important thing about being a doctor is humility. I am a doctor, nothing less; I am not God, not perfect, I am human. This is a profession, it's work. We like to be doctors, to be with patients, treat the challenges, fight disease. But always the best doctors are those with the greatest humility. ■



# >>The List Education

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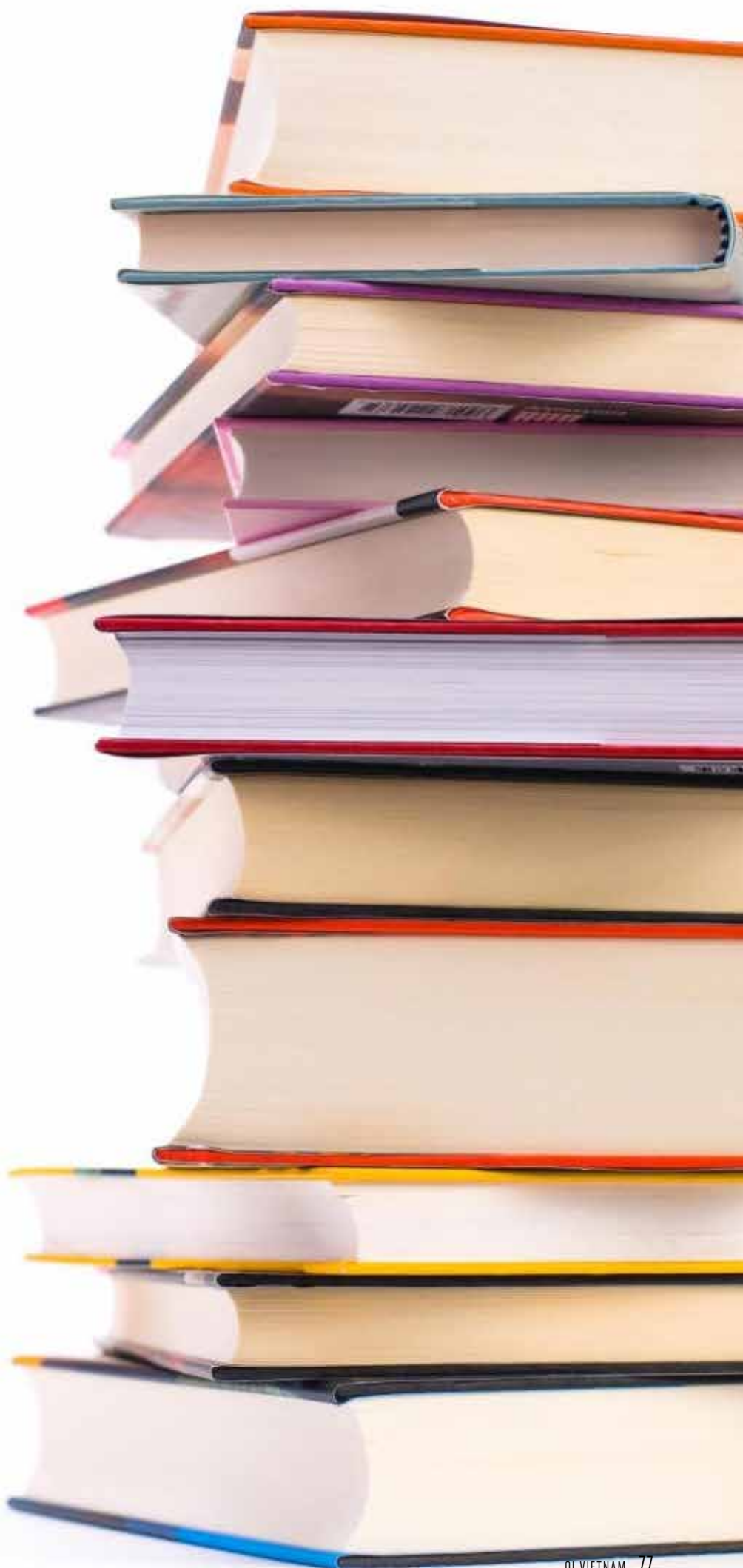
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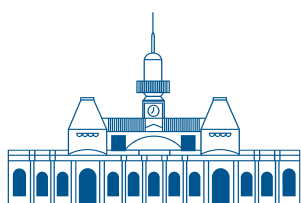
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ISBN 9 786049 166719