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VIETNAM

MARCH 2013

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Can I buy you a dance?

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An epic locomotive journey
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TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

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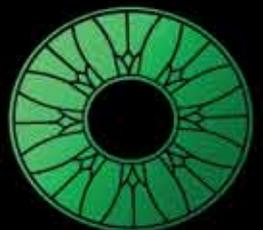
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Ho Chi Minh City

35-37 Ngo Duc Ke (1st floor), District 1
S17-Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh,
Phu My Hung, District 7
(New Clearance Outlet - 1st floor, D7 shop)

Hanoi

13 Hang Bac, Hoan Kiem
58 Hang Trong, Hoan Kiem
9 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho



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Non-profit organisations

mekong-quilts.org | mekong-creations.org

Handmade products by women we support in Vietnam and Cambodia

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Vietnamese students are finding that an education abroad brings a higher salary at home

A photograph of a train traveling through a landscape with rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The train is moving from left to right, and the camera is positioned on the train, looking out over the tracks. The train consists of several passenger cars and a blue locomotive at the front. The landscape is hilly and appears to be in a rural or semi-rural area. The sky is filled with white and grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day.

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Editor's Note

ISSUE NO. 1
MAR 2013

Thank You!

IF YOU'RE READING this, you've picked up the very first issue of our new publication and are amongst the first on what we hope will be a long and thrilling journey that you'll take with us, the Oi Vietnam team.

Most of you are probably asking, "What does *Oi* mean and why did we choose this unique name?" Well, we believe this simple two letter word in the Vietnamese language is intriguing because it has so many uses such as when one is trying to get someone's attention, for example *em oi! anh oi! chi oi!* or it can emote surprise or shock as in *Troi oi!* And when used after a person's name like Christine oi, it's a sign of endearment. But let's not forget that *Oi* is also an interjection, used to convey emotion, in both British and Portuguese vernacular. And who hasn't heard of it used as an enthusiastic response to Aussie! Aussie! Aussie!? We wanted a word that would encompass this amazing city while also representing the many diverse nationalities that call it home. So this was how we arrived at the birth of *Oi Vietnam*.

Inside this, our first issue, you'll find stories and photos of our great city in all its gritty yet beautiful splendor that we hope will inspire and intrigue you as much as they have us.

Whether you're spellbound by the tale of an extraordinary train journey from Hanoi to Berlin, moved to download a new iPhone app recommended in our tech column, share the frustration of an expat father trying to make sense of childbirth

the Vietnamese way, inspired to try some of the city's more tempting food aphrodisiacs or tempted towards a wardrobe makeover by our fashion section, we're sure everyone will find something that resonates with their lifestyle within these pages.

Oi will be published monthly in Ho Chi Minh City. But there's a lot more to come from us than just a printed publication. We're online at www.oivietnam.com, where you'll find timely information about things to do, live events to catch, and more content about the city we simply don't have enough pages to print.

And be sure to "like" our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OiVietnam2013) and follow us on Twitter ([oi_vietnam](https://twitter.com/oi_vietnam)) to be kept up to date with news about the city.

We are proud to stand alongside HCMC's existing English language titles while offering our own vision of the accelerating dynamism of this city. Most important of all to the *Oi* team, however, is that we deliver our readers inspiring, entertaining content in print and online. So your feedback is invaluable. If you like what you're reading then let us know — and tell your friends and colleagues to check us out as well. Or even if you don't, we want to hear from you! Drop us an email to editorial@oivietnam.com. And if there is something about your city you always wanted to know, then share it with us and we'll try to include it in a future issue.

Let the journey begin!

CHRISTINE VAN

Managing Editor



This Month's Cover

Photo by: Quinn Ryan Mattingly

Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events

MARCH
5-7



What: Mekong Environmental Symposium 2013

Where: InterContinental Asiana Hotel, D1

About: This will be the first event organized by the German Aerospace Center, DLR and the WISDOM Project, and it will serve as an international platform for governmental decision-makers, scientists and other organizations active in the Mekong context. Focus at the symposium will be on the most pressing issues in one of the world's largest transboundary river catchments.

About 300-350 participants from China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam are expected to attend.

Contact: Visit www.mekong-environmental-symposium-2013.org

MARCH 7

What: Open Mic Night

Where: Broma, 41 Nguyen Hue, D1

About: It's time once again to whip out your bejeweled mic and set the stage on fire with the song of your choice. Paranormal Band will also be there to show you how it's done.

Contact: For more information call 3823 6838 or email bromasaigonbar@gmail.com

MARCH 7-10

What: Creative Stitches Hobby Crafts-Glasgow

Where: Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center, 799 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

About: An opportunity to see original work in watercolors, oils, sketches and creative images in glass and ceramics to eye catching furniture designs and bespoke fashion wear.

Contact: Email info@ichf.co.uk or visit www.ichf.co.uk



MARCH
9



What: Maryvonne Le Dizes plays the violin

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

About: Maryvonne obtained her graduate diploma at Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in 1958. She was the first woman to win the First Gold Paganini Prize in Gena in 1962, and won the First Prize at the international Competition of American Music at Carnegie Hall Rockefeller Foundation in New York in 1983.

During her performance in Vietnam, she will play Arcangelo Corelli Francesco Geminiani La Folia Benjamin Britten Simple Symphony, op.4 for string orchestra, I. Boisterous Bourree, II. Playful Pizzicato, III. Sentimental Sarabande, and IV. Frolicsome Finale.

Contact: Email info@hbso.org.vn or call 3823 7419

MARCH
9 & 10



What: Madagui Trophy
Where: Cat Tien National Park, Lam Dong Province
About: The sixth edition of this adventure racing will have 3 categories – Ultra, Extreme and Adventure – with departure time beginning at 2am, 5am and 7am, respectively. Disciplines for all levels will include mountain biking in the forest, jungle running, an adventure down river and an orienteering race. This year also sees a new entry level for kids aged six to twelve. Event organizers, Viet Adventure, have organized this annual race as a vehicle to raise funds to fight deforestation with social and environmental programs.
Contact: Visit www.vietadventure.vn

MARCH 10

What: Saigon Cyclo Challenge
Where: The Crescent
About: The only live cyclo race in the world, this event offers unique chances for team building, demonstrating a corporate commitment to the community and giving to a good cause – Saigon Children's Charity. This year introduces the very first Charity Grand Bazaar with 40 stalls and a Cyclo Décor Challenge Road Show.
Contact: Space is limited. Email Van at hoangoan@saigonchildren.com for info

MARCH 16

What: AIS Open Day
Where: Middle & Senior School (Head Office) East-West Highway
About: The school's "Experience an IB World school at its best", will provide parents who are interested in international education with the opportunity to visit and tour AIS's main campus in Thu Thiem in District 2. Visitors to the Open Day will be able to participate in interactive classroom-based activities with the teachers; listen to presentations by the school's leaders and other benefits.
Contact: enrolments@aisvietnam.com | www.aisvietnam.com

MARCH 16

What: Capture the Flag
Where: Red Bar, 70-72 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 at 2pm
About: Come play Capture the Flag with Wake Up Saigon. Capture the flag is a traditional outdoor sport where two teams each have a flag (or other marker) and the objective is to capture the other team's flag, located at the team's "base," and bring it safely back to their own base. Meet at Red Bar for rules and instructions before turning downtown into a game! Afterwards they'll head back to Red for food and drink specials and to trade war stories.
Contact: For further information visit their FB page: [Facebook.com/WakeUpSaigon](https://www.facebook.com/WakeUpSaigon), or email at info@wakeupsaigon.com

MARCH 16, 23 & 30

What: Public Speaking Workshop
Where: ERC Institute, 88 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan District, 8.30am – 4.30pm
About: This hands-on workshop will cover why some people present better than others and will discuss how to keep the audience interested, receptive to information, and also how to deal with nervousness. Victor Burrill, head of ERC Solutions, will do the training.
Contact: Visit www.erci.edu.vn

MARCH 15

What: Bridges – Dialogues towards a Culture of Peace
Where: Ho Chi Minh City Open University (97 Vo Van Tan, D3) at 2pm
About: The 4th ASEAN Bridges event follows the Bridges series by enhancing science, technology and education as a basis for peace and development. The events aim towards a better cooperation for the advancement of peace, freedom and security in the region with the active involvement of the young generation, ASEAN's key to the future. 2010 Fields Medal Laureate Prof. Ngo Bao Chau will be the keynote speaker this month and will discuss the topic of "How We Learn". A native of Hanoi, Vietnam, Chau has made decisive advances in modern mathematics on the frontier of number theory and representation theory. The talk will also be broadcasted live on the internet.
Contact: For further info and free seat reservations call 3930 6539 or email Dao Vu Bich Diem at anhdiemquan@yahoo.com



MARCH
24

What: Dodgeball Tournament
Where: TBD
About: Saigon Dodgeball is holding its annual tournament this month. This classic American schoolyard sport attracts expats and locals alike. Now is the time to register for the tournament and play your way to glory. Registration costs VND200,000. Teams will be determined based on skill level, and anyone is welcome, no matter if you are an expert or a novice.
Contact: Visit saigondodgeball.org to sign up

Troi Oi

The city by the numbers



VND650 million

was the highest recorded bonus paid for Tet this year by a foreign company in the southern province of Dong Nai. Even though this bonus represents a slight decrease from last year's top bonus of VND700 million, the average bonus for Vietnamese citizens is up 8.7 percent this year.



60 million

per kilogram - that's how much Salangane swallow (*yen sao* in Vietnamese) farmers can earn for the edible nests of these unique birds. Since the birds began roosting in a shack on the outskirts of the city, farmers have been erecting crude shelters for the birds hoping to cash in on the nests, which the birds make with their saliva.

1 new frog species was discovered near Ho Chi Minh City this year by Jodi Rowley, an Australian amphibian biologist. Rowley named the large green frog "Helen's flying frog" after her late mother. She explained she and her team came across the huge green frog sitting on a log.

2 is Hanoi's position in the top 100 cities for best hotel rooms in a study conducted by travel metasearch website Trivago. London was marked as one of the worst cities for hotels due to overpriced minibars, slow service, and unsavory breakfasts. Hanoi was ranked behind the German city of Dresden, a destination travelers applauded for fantastic views, tasty food, and affordable prices.

3 Vietnamese satellites will be orbiting the earth after Vietnam launches its latest into the atmosphere this summer. The satellite, made in conjunction with French scientists, will be launched 670 kilometers above the planet's surface, and will be used by Vietnamese engineers to conduct scientific experiments. On what? We don't know.

VND1.1 billion

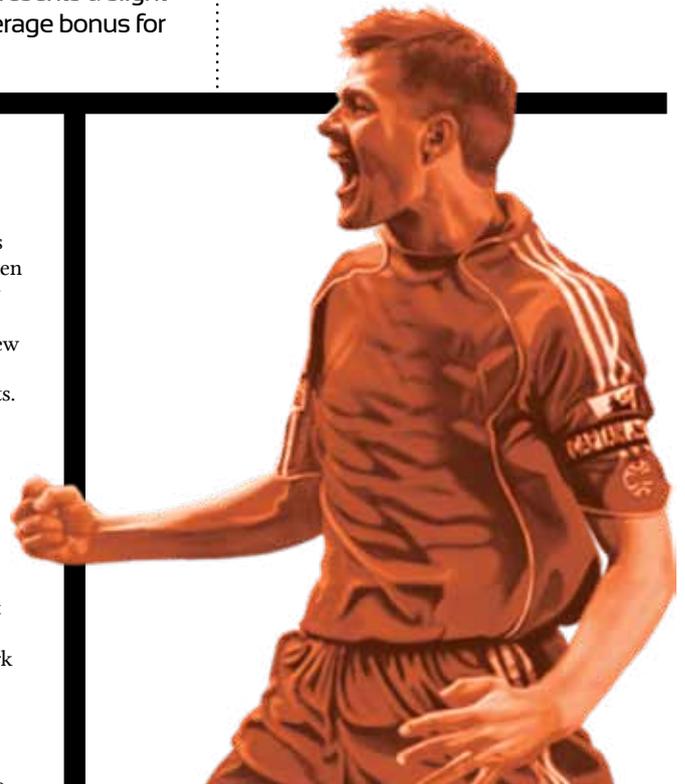
must be allocated per bed if investors want to develop five-star hotels in Kien Giang Province, home to the popular tourist destination Phu Quoc island. The steep investment is a part of a new series of regulations put in place to ensure the implementation of projects.

1, 8, 9,

Can Gio and Cu Chi districts will be included in a zoning plan to develop piers and wharfs in an effort to boost river tourism in 2013. The city will initially build a pier in the tourist park named Mot Thoang Viet Nam (A Glimpse of Vietnam) in Cu Chi along with upgrading other piers in Vam Sat and Dam Doi in Can Gio District, Tam Thon Hiep and Can Gio Biosphere Reserve.

**43/2012/
TT-BGTVT**

is a new circular by the Ministry of Transport where building new wooden tour boats equipped with sleeping cabins will be prohibited beginning May 1, 2013. Any new boats must be made of steel, aluminum, glass-fiber reinforced plastic, reinforced cement or reinforced concrete.



US\$37.5 million

was paid to The IMG Group (USA) by Vietnamese TV stations when IMG sent its representatives to Vietnam to participate in an auction for the rights to three seasons worth of Premier League programming for 2013 – 2016.

What's Hot & What's Not?

HOT

NOT

PARIS BAGUETTE

Spreading like wildfire around Ho Chi Minh City with its unique sandwiches, cakes and brunch menu, and strong espresso coffee styles.



HIGHLANDS COFFEE

For deleting its entire western menu from all but two cafes and offering overpriced *banh mi* in its place... right when Starbucks comes to town. What were they thinking?

SAMSUNG GALAXY S III

Finally a phone almost as good as the iPhone... And cheaper... Which is why it's selling like crazy all over Asia. Best of all, they're not as attractive to street thieves as an iPhone...



THE IPHONE 5

Nice handset, but left everyone wanting more...like a Galaxy III for example...

THE CHICAGO TIMES

For having the courage to remove an offensive opinion piece by Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Joel Brinkley that made wildly inaccurate comments on Vietnamese culture, issuing an apology to their online readers.



JOEL BRINKLEY

For seeing farmed rats skinned and on sale at a market, and concluding that Vietnamese people not only hunt down common house pets (as well as any other animal they can find), but also that this somehow made them aggressive invaders of neighboring nations. He then touted this as fact in his Chicago Times article. Pure idiocy.

HALF-VIETNAMESE "LITTLE PSY" HWANG MIN-WOO

The patently talented 7-year-old dancer from the Gangnam Style video, has already performed solo internationally and is now making his acting debut in a new Korean/Vietnamese joint film production called Saigon Cinderella.



INEXPLICABLE KOREAN MEGAHIT GANGNAM STYLE

Has finally ceased to be a topic of any interest whatsoever – the hype dropped off immediately after the Youtube clip hit a billion views, and the world can finally move on.

N2 HEAVEN'S INSTANT ICE-CREAM PARLOUR ON BA HUYEN THANH QUAN

Where customers make their tropical fruit selection, add it to the mix, and watch it transformed to ice-cream before their very eyes with a burst of liquid nitrogen.



THE SWARM OF BIKE-RIDING ICE-CREAM MERCHANTS ENCIRCLING THE CATHEDRAL AREA

Mostly for the loudest and least melodious ice-cream man theme tune in existence. When is some bright spark going to invest in a real ice-cream truck in this town?

Stranger than Fiction?

Pay Up, It's not Your Fault

Traffic accidents are no laughing matter. Just ask Devan Willemburg. While traversing the circle on Dien Bien Phu, Devan was hit by a taxi and knocked from his motorbike. Protective gear mitigated his injuries, but did not protect him from an angry mob. They converged upon Devan to berate and coerce him into paying the cab driver because they believed he has more money being a foreigner even though it was the taxi driver's fault. The lone local woman who came to his aid was threatened in addition to a verbal stoning.

Crashed and Cashed Out

Traffic accidents, part 2: The case of the Jekyll & Hyde samaritans. A man named Steve was on his way home from a bar when he crashed his motorbike knocking himself unconscious. Two men happened by and graciously transported him and his motorbike to the nearest hospital where Steve was treated for some minor injuries and released. Unfortunately for Steve the samaritans cleaned out his wallet forcing him to phone friends to come pay the hospital bill.

Explicit Status

In a disturbing trend, more and more people are falling victim to a new breed of menace called a phrapist. These scoundrels post sexually explicit status updates to another person's Facebook or Twitter account while posing as the owner of that account and using their phone. The phrape generally occurs while the unsuspecting targets are not paying attention. For instance, when they go to the bathroom at a bar or house party. In most of these cases the victim knows their phrapist.

The Bulletin

New in HCMC...



STARBUCKS DEBUTS

In one of the most anticipated openings in recent memory, Starbucks opened its doors to HCMC coffeeophiles at 2pm on February 1, 2013. To say that the world-famous café had buzz would be an understatement, spawning no less than 18 Facebook pages, the largest of which had more than 23,000 likes and 34,000 talking about it, even before the store had even opened. (The official Facebook Page www.facebook.com/starbucksvietnam has almost 7,000 likes and points to the official website, www.starbucks.vn).

After a private opening ceremony on the morning of February 1 for invited guests, about 200 coffee lovers lined up under the midday sun for a taste of the first Starbucks in Vietnam. After 30 minutes, there were still more than 200 locals and tourists waiting outside (and enjoying free coffee shots) while the first 200 were being served in the smart, airy ground floor store with ample seating along with a smaller seating area overlooking the Nga 6 Phu Dong roundabout upstairs.

Early adopters were eager to find out how much a cup of coffee would cost, a hot topic on online forums, with pundits speculating that a coffee would be closer to USD2 as in India rather than US\$4 as in China. The wait revealed a Grande Cappuccino to be VND75,000 with a Tall Coffee of the Day costing VND50,000. The most expensive menu items are the frappuccinos, with the Venti Java Chip and Green Tea Cream / Chocolate Chip Cream maxing out at VND105,000.

Chris, visiting from London, said, "A cup of Starbucks averages US\$4 in the States [which is] quite high for here, but I think people look at it as a status thing."

Vy, 29, said, "Even though the price is higher than Vietnamese brands, the Starbucks name is famous and that'll bring a lot of people in."



Bistro Guido Expands Offline

Popular with hungry expats, Chez Guido is no longer just online. Established in 1991 as a physical restaurant at the Continental Hotel, it then evolved into an online only food delivery outlet, and is now coming full circle with the opening of Bistro Guido. The eatery offers the same menu as its website counterpart with a huge selection of international, Asian and, of course, Italian dishes.

261 Nguyen Thuong Hien, Binh Thanh District, 3550 1706 / 3550 1724, www.chezguido.com



Icon68 Shopping Center Opens

A five-story mall called Icon68 Shopping Center has opened in the Bitexco Financial Tower. Occupying the bottom floors of the building, it houses fashion, home and leisure shops, cafes, international restaurants and a seven-screen cineplex. The highest-profile tenant will be UK brands Topshop and Topman. The tower is located at the junction of three main streets - Hai Trieu, Ho Tung Mau and Ngo Duc Ke.



St. Patrick's Day Events

Don't forget to share in the luck of the Irish at Saigon's best know Irish bars – Bernie's Bar & Grill and Sheridan's. Expect wonderful live music, great food and much more. To find out more, contact them directly at:

Bernie's Bar & Grill, 19 Thai Van Lung, D1, 3822 1720
www.berniesbar.com.vn

Sheridan's Irish House, just a reminder that Sheridan's has relocated to a new spot, 24 Ngo Van Nam, D1, 3823 0793



New David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

An off-shoot of its main location in District 5, this will be the clinic's second branch under the name DSCC headed by Dr. Paul Dalfonso. Dr. Dalfonso is trained in chiropractic medicine (treating spine and joint pain), rehabilitation, physiotherapy, spinal decompression therapy, kinesio taping, and laser pain management.

41 Duong Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7, 5410 6242, www.saigonchiropractic.com



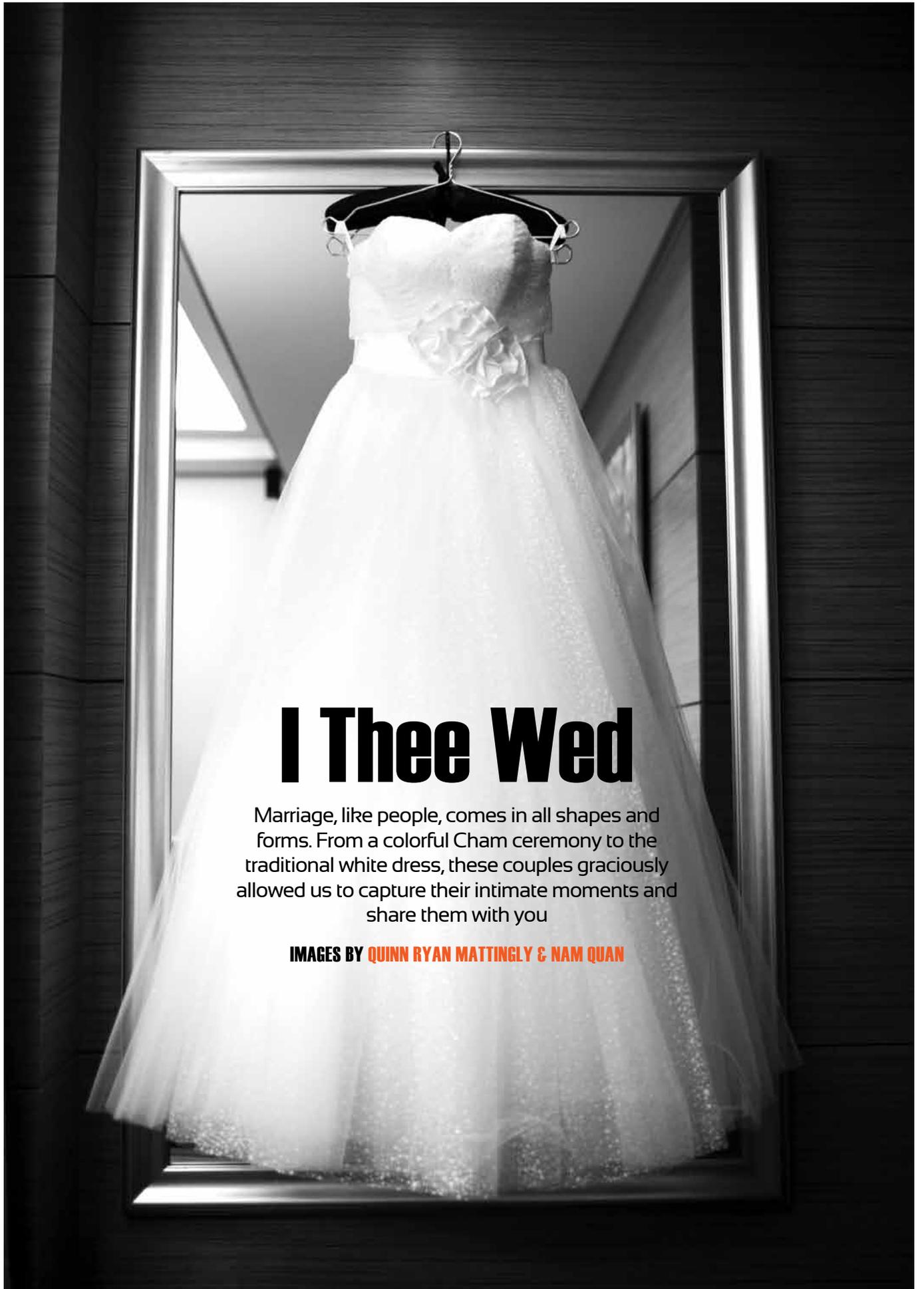
You can 

Save Vietnam's endangered wildlife with WAR

-  Observe and feed rescued wildlife at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station and other WAR rescue facilities.
-  Name a wildlife.
-  Support food for wildlife.
-  Volunteer.
-  Shop and save.



Wildlife At Risk (WAR) is a non-profit organisation based in Ho Chi Minh City
 Tel: +84 3899 7314 Fax: +84 3899 7316 Email: info@wildlifeatrisk.org
www.wildlifeatrisk.org



I Thee Wed

Marriage, like people, comes in all shapes and forms. From a colorful Cham ceremony to the traditional white dress, these couples graciously allowed us to capture their intimate moments and share them with you

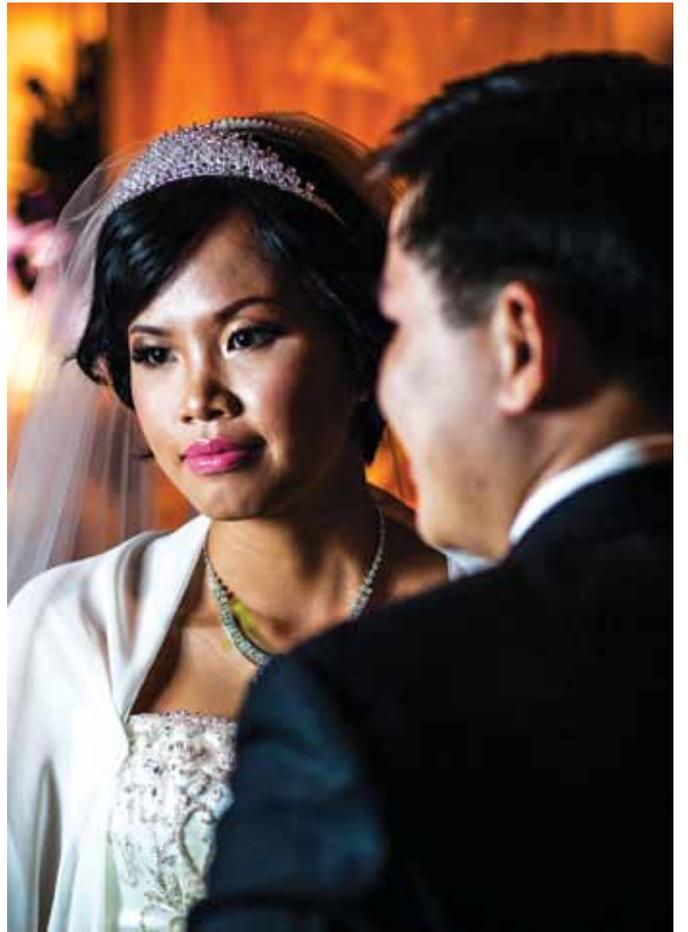
IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY & NAM QUAN



IMAGES OF JEREMY AND MAY'S WEDDING BY NAM QUAN



IMAGES OF SARYAN AND ABUSAMAD'S WEDDING BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



IMAGES OF TUAN & HUONG'S WEDDING BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

No Parental Guidance Required

Surprising reasons why doctors in Vietnam strongly recommend C-sections to expecting Vietnamese mothers

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

I HAVEN'T QUITE gone native in Ho Chi Minh City – it's still cornflakes for breakfast – but I've pretty much surrendered as far as the international lifestyle goes. I don't live in the swankier districts on the other side of the river, and I only rarely open a menu that lists dishes I'm familiar with. Instead, I'm holed up in the labyrinthine back streets of Cholon, and I survive on the tofu & braised pork my mother-in-law prepares when I've been good.

Those concessions are the easy ones; others have been more difficult to swallow. When my wife told me that our decision to 'throw caution to the wind for a while to see what happens' had turned up some fairly immediate results, I very quickly worked out that this wasn't going to be as much of a "we're pregnant" scenario as it would have been in my own country.

Having a meaningful voice in childbirth decisions presupposes your ability to converse fluently on the relevant issues with those responsible for providing your choices. It also presupposes that the same concerns are going to be important to both parents. While I was starting to browse the international hospital websites and wondering if antenatal classes were available for parents in this city (they are: Family Medical Practice offers a range of birth education services), my wife was more concerned that the hospital be close to home in case of emergency, and was quite taken by the notion of giving birth in the same building where she herself came into the world.

I saw the wisdom in conceding on that point. Nevertheless, I had some clear ideas about how I wanted the birth to go. There were to be no cold doctor's hands or slaps on the bottom; I wanted to be beside my wife during the delivery and to be involved; I wanted to take a few non-graphic photographic records of the event; and when it came to the delivery, we both preferred a natural birth.

Production Line Birth

I didn't realize how difficult it was going to be to have a decisive voice in the matter. In retrospect, I should have seen it coming – we'd had to put up with soul-grinding Whitney Houston ballads and the *Hawaii Five-0* soundtrack for our wedding because the venue had been unable to accommodate a personalized music selection; at the local

hospital, things were much of a piece. With the sheer volume of daily births (the national fertility rate in my daughter's birth year was 1.89 children born per Vietnamese woman), the production line mentality was startlingly obvious, thinly veiled as it was in translation.

It also didn't take long for the doctor to convince us that a cesarean section would be necessary – we were told that the baby's anticipated birth weight would make a regular birth dangerous. We agreed, although if we'd been given any other reason we might have been less inclined to believe it: just days before the birth, *Sai Gon Tiep Thi* newspaper had published an exposé on the very hospital we were to deliver at, stating that 82 percent of doctors there had admitted to recommending C-section births to expecting mothers in order to reduce potential responsibility in case of a medical misadventure. With natural births, complications are more likely to occur during the procedure itself, whereas with a cesarean, any problems are more likely to arise after the doctor has hung up his gloves – leaving the next physician in line to deal with any complaints.

C-section births, as it happens, are said to have become almost *de rigueur* in Ho Chi Minh City, and it's become something of a cliché that the 'too posh to push' phenomenon alleged to be on the rise in Western countries has taken hold something wicked in this town – at Tu Du Hospital, the city's best-attended maternity venue, a full 50 percent of newborns are "from their mothers' wombs untimely ripped," significantly more than the highest-reported figures in the United States (38.6 percent in the state of Florida) and twice the rate of the UK, where national medical policy generally only offers elective C-section births with considerable reluctance.

There are various theories as to why this is the case in Vietnam – a fertility specialist I chatted with once, Dr. Vo Hoang Nhan of the Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, confided to me that many of his patients seem to believe that Vietnamese women are 'too small' to give birth naturally, and expect that the stretching involved will render them less desirable to their husbands. A staff member at the highly-reputed Hanh Phuc Hospital also mentioned to my brother-in-law that they have so many births to deal with on a daily

basis, they simply wouldn't have the time to deliver them all naturally.

Choosing A Good Due Date

The *Tiep Thi* exposé offered another fairly plausible theory on what influences Vietnamese parents in choosing a C-section delivery. The first is the commonly-held presumption that the operation is simply easier-going on the mother than the alternative; and the second is that expecting mothers (amongst a generation that has generally had an easier lot in life than their parents did) have a profound fear of the pain of childbirth. The third is possibly more culturally relevant: local superstitions are such that the temptation amongst Vietnamese families to exploit C-section delivery to force a birth date considered more auspicious and portentous of good fortune can be enormously compelling.

I surprised myself by actually sympathizing with that last point – when given the option to make our birth appointment for the 15th or 16th of March, I voted for the latter for fairly unscientific reasons. Given that my daughter would have to undergo a Cesarean birth, I figured it best to beware the Ides of March.

That was the last input I had on the matter. On the day itself, everything was out of my hands. I wasn't allowed to take pictures anywhere in the hospital for a start, and only one family member was allowed in the delivery theater. Without speaking passable Vietnamese, I would have been useless in there – and so that duty fell to my mother-in-law. My little girl was neatly sliced out and placed on a rack with several other newborns – when I went to find her, I couldn't tell her from the others at all, her mixed ethnicity buried beneath her baby wrinkles. Fortunately, my wife's name had been written on her leg in permanent marker.

Back in the 1970s, Leonard Orr's wildly popular rebirthing-breathwork technique held that the root of human suffering lies in the trauma of the birth experience – the transition from the warm, comfortable womb to the harsh realities of the human realm. Two years on, my daughter doesn't show a whiff of psychological harm from her entry on stage. The same cannot be said, perhaps, for her poor old dad. ■





Taxi Dancers

Not in the mood to go out dancing with your lady?
Then hire these men to do it for you...

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO** IMAGES BY **QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**

SON, A STRAPPING 29-year-old man, has been a dancer for three years. He started working in a dance hall as a waiter serving drinks while he was in school, but figured out that the dancers were the ones earning more money. He soon learned some steps, quit university and went to work as a dancer. He wouldn't disclose how much he earns, but offered, "It's much better money than I would be making if I finished my degree and got a normal job. I love dancing and I'm out in these clubs 7 nights a week and I never dance for free."

Son is what you would call a "taxi dancer."

The term and profession first appeared in 1913. Support for Prohibition was gaining

and cities all over America were shuttering bordellos and red light districts. To serve the demand for nightlife, San Francisco's Barbary Coast neighborhood opened up a type of dance hall that came to be called a Barbary Coast dance hall, staffed by women who made a commission from every drink they encouraged male customers to buy. But when Prohibition became law, the halls began charging the men to dance with the women. The more time a customer spent dancing with a woman, the more he paid, like a taxicab, hence the name, taxi dancer. They reached their zenith in the 1920s and 1930s before starting to fall out of fashion at the end of World War II.

However, a large, older female Vietnamese population that desires a steady supply of dance partners, and men who view dancing as a way to make money and have fun at the same time, are keeping Son and his profession alive and kicking in Vietnam.

According to Giang, who manages several similar dance halls in Ho Chi Minh City, there are two clubs in town that offer female taxi dancers, but the rest offer male dancers for female clientele. The majority of them are located in Districts 1 and 3, numbering 15 in total.

Girls Just Wanna Have Fun

On a recent visit to Café Phi Truong in Go Vap



District, the crowd is almost entirely comprised of people over the age of thirty. Phat, a taxi dancer who is 53, has been frequenting these halls since he was a young man.

“Back then I was a customer and I used to go and dance with the girls in the clubs,” he explains. “But after the war things changed and the clubs were forced to go underground. They became mainstream again about 15 years ago.”

Ngoc and Dung, two friends in their 30s, have similar motivations. Ngoc, who was introduced to the scene by Dung, has been going to these clubs for two years. She goes to see her friends and enjoys dancing for exercise as well as socializing. She also hopes to find a boyfriend in the process.

“After I got divorced I decided to start going out again and I found Café Phi Truong,” says Dung, a veteran clubber. “I got to socialize, exercise, and after being (divorced) I got to look for a new boyfriend.” She goes dancing every night of the week and almost always goes here.

“Occasionally I’ll go to a different club when this one is hosting a birthday party or other event that I’m not interested in attending. Otherwise, this is my club. And I always dance with the same two dancers, or I don’t dance.” Dung adds that she even

supports the dancers and has them living under her roof.

Footloose and Fancy Fees

Protocol is straightforward at these clubs. Café Phi Truong’s customers pay VND40,000 for entry, VND45,000 on weekends and

“It’s much better money than I would be making if I finished my degree and got a normal job. I love dancing and I’m out in these clubs 7 nights a week and I never dance for free”

holidays. Hiring dancers costs VND200,000 for 3 dances. After the initial 3 dances, customers may buy single dances for VND50,000. Additionally, dancers are paid VND1 million per month to show up 5 nights a week. The average dancer earns VND10 million a month. Good dancers can earn much more.

The love life of a dancer is often as

unconventional as the job. “Many dancers have girlfriends,” explains Son. “But they often get jealous because we always have lots of women competing for our time.” He keeps it simple by staying single, and mixing business with pleasure.

Rivalries form between dancers as well as customers, according to Giang. “Often times the jealousy is so intense it erupts into violence when a dancer favors one woman over another, or a wealthy customer spends her time, and money, on a particular dancer. Several years ago the café had one of its dancers stabbed to death by another dancer who was shunned by a wealthy patron.”

Other stories from Giang include housewives who sneak off to clubs that operate both day and night. Under the guise of going shopping they would head to a club, change into a dress hidden in their bags, do their hair and makeup in the bathroom then dance for an hour or two. And right before it’s time to head home, they rush to the market to fill up some grocery bags. In some instances, the women go shopping prior to going to her club and pay one of the cleaning women there to watch their groceries while they dance. She also sees many women playing hooky from work or simply sneaking around behind their husbands’ backs. ■

Mood Food

When you want to move from the kitchen to the bedroom, skip the Vietnamese standbys of cobra blood, tiger penis and snake wine. Try these deliciously potent dishes instead

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN



Oysters from Square One Park Hyatt

DOWN THROUGH THE ages, certain foods have been considered aphrodisiacs, a term derived from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. But while scientists have refuted the idea that any food has the ability to boost libido or fertility, conventional wisdom says otherwise. Traditionally, people have viewed foods as sexy because of their shape (think bananas, avocados and carrots), their link to reproductive organs (eggs and caviar), their ability to stimulate the body's circulation (chilies, chocolate and garlic), or their nutritional value and exotic factor.

Oysters

"Oysters are a romantic product, for a romantic evening," says Soren Lascelles, *chef de cuisine* at Park Hyatt Saigon's Square One. Not only are these shellfish a great source of zinc (related to the production of testosterone), but the ability of some types

of oysters to change their gender from male to female and back again has led to the belief that they allow one to experience both the masculine and feminine sides of love. According to legend, Casanova had raw oysters for breakfast every morning.

Unleash your inner Casanova with a platter of live Canadian oysters, simply eaten with shallot vinegar and lemon.

VND110,000 per oyster or VND1,290,000 for a full dozen at Square One, Park Hyatt Saigon. Tel: 3520 2359

Bananas

It's not only its shape which makes the banana one of the world's most suggestive foods. Believed to be the Edenic forbidden fruit in Islamic tradition and still a feature of Indian fertility offerings today, bananas are packed with potassium, needed for the production of sexual hormones, and B

vitamins which increase energy and are a mood enhancer.

Learn how to combine all the same nutrients with a Vietnamese twist in the healthy yet tasty Banana Blossom Salad, dressed up with carrots, green pepper and peanuts, one of the dishes on the Sunday menu at Saigon Cooking Class.

US\$45.50 for a half-day gourmet class, including market visit. Tel: 3825 8485

Salmon and Asparagus

The pink flesh of salmon virtually screams love. Their heroic attempts at swimming upstream to spawn also means that these fish live and die to reproduce. In addition, salmon is an excellent source of Omega-3s which increase levels of serotonin in the brain, often called "the happy hormone," enhancing moods.

Surprisingly, the asparagus has been said



Clockwise from left: Banana Blossom Salad by Saigon Cooking Class, Caravelle's Ginger Mango Cocktail, Opera's Strawberry Frasier, Carvelle's Crispy Skin Seared Salmon on Crushed Baby Potatoes



IMAGE PROVIDED BY PARK HYATT

to “stir up lust in man and woman,” by 17th century English herbalist Nicholas Culpepper. In 19th century France, grooms consumed three courses of the pencil-shaped vegetable during prenuptial dinners. Chock full of potassium, fiber and vitamin B6, asparagus increases blood flow and stimulates the nervous and circulatory systems.

Try these two delectable ingredients on the same plate with the Crispy Skin Seared Salmon on Crushed Baby Potatoes, Sautéed Highland Mushrooms, Steamed Asparagus and Truffle Sabayon at the Caravelle’s Reflections Restaurant for VND475,000. Tel: 3823 4999

Ginger and Mango

France’s most famous mistress, Madame du Barry, served ginger to her paramours, most notably King Louis XV. It reportedly rendered them completely submissive. What she may not have known is that ginger is high in

vitamins and increases circulation, thereby warming up the body.

The aphrodisiac qualities of the mango have been extolled by everyone from Kramer (on the *Seinfeld* episode simply called “The Mango”) to Indian poets, who waxed romantic, calling them “sealed jars of paradisaical honey.” High in antioxidants and vitamins A, C and E, mango therapy is commonly used in Asia to increase virility.

The Caravelle’s Ginger Mango Cocktail combines both these fresh ingredients with Hennessy, tonic, lime and a dash of grenadine syrup for a vibrant, refreshing boost to your evening.

Available at the Saigon Saigon bar (VND198,000), on the 9th floor of the Caravelle Hotel.

Strawberries

Strawberries, described in art and

literature as “fruit nipples,” rate high on the aphrodisiac scale because of their heart-shaped appearance and because their abundance of tiny seeds suggest fertility. The only fruit to have its 200 or so seeds on the outside, strawberries contain more energy-producing Vitamin C than any other berry. An old French tradition even has cold strawberry soup served to honeymooning newlyweds for breakfast.

Pastry chef Bertrand Sommereux at the Italian restaurant Opera, serves up a Strawberry Frasier, moistened cakes filled with sliced strawberries and pastry cream, all covered with a delectable sheet of almond paste.

VND690,000 for a small cake. Medium and large sizes also available. Tel: 3520 2357

Want to make these dishes for your own romantic evening? For the recipes and cooking tips, see www.oivietnam.com ■

Self Service

When it comes to customer service here, you're on your own

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGE BY **NAM QUAN**

“Whether it is in retail, or restaurants, my experiences here have ranged from some of the worst in the world to some of the best”

THE 21ST CENTURY has brought waves of tourists to Vietnam, attracted by the nation's undeniable charm, delicious food, cheap souvenirs and natural beauty. According to the HCMC Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the city welcomed some 365,000 international tourists in November 2012, up 14 percent year on year, taking the total foreign tourist arrivals in 11 months to nearly 3.47 million, up 12 percent. But 95 percent of those same tourists won't make a second trip back. One of the reasons? Bad service.

Bewildered visitors often turn to their close compatriots, the expats, for answers to this question: Is Vietnamese service really that bad, or was I just unlucky?

“Whether it is in retail, or restaurants, my experiences here have ranged from some of the worst in the world to some of the best,” says Robert Stockdill, director of content of InsideRetail.asia, drawing from ten years' of experience as an insider in the international retailing business. “Shopping malls are still a relatively new concept in Vietnam and international brands have only been sprouting up in any number for the last five years or so. So you have a huge lack of training and experience which runs from management down to store staff.”

His experience as a long time expat in Asia and Vietnam is slightly different to that of usual tourists. He talks not of petty market tricks performed by roadside peddlers, but of long-ingrained vices within the system. In shops, for instance, he has lost count of the number of times he has asked for a product only to be given a closed response of, “Sorry, run out.”



“No one suggests I try another branch. No one asks if they'd like me to have it ordered in. No one offers to phone another store and see if they can locate the product,” he continues. “Sometimes people will make a call but only if I ask them to, as if to suggest they could never have thought of it themselves.”

To a Westerner, it seems like common sense to find a way to save a sale when a product has run out. But to untrained Vietnamese, they all too often fail to think beyond wanting to answer a question as simply and quickly as possible.

Robert says he has had good retail experiences in stores as well, but is puzzled by such basic mistakes.

The lack of a commission-based incentive coupled with the language barrier becomes a deterrent to better serving a client, explains Nguyen Quang, who works as a salesperson at



a clothing boutique.

Give and Take

Pham Minh Trang has been behind the customer service desk of a car showroom in downtown Saigon for the last fifteen years and has her own question to ask. “Ever thought about why it goes on for so long? In the West, companies with this kind of [bad] service don’t live past their second birthday. But it goes on here, for years. There are a lot of reasons for this, but I think the crux of the problem is the Vietnamese consumer’s behavior.”

She says Vietnamese consumers don’t complain nearly as much as they should. No complaining means that owners or managers are not aware of the problems, therefore no solution or training is brought forth and that keeps the service standard remaining low.

“We grumble, but we don’t do anything. A

Western consumer might raise social media hell. The Vietnamese consumers just shrug it off as another daily hardship to endure, then go right back to the store if it has good prices. It goes back to *Bao Cap* time.”

Bao Cap is the Vietnamese name for the subsidy market era Vietnam was in before its transformation into a consumer market. During *Bao Cap*, food and necessities were paid for with stamps. The dynamic was not that of seller and customer, but of giver and taker. Naturally, service quality was never part of the equation.

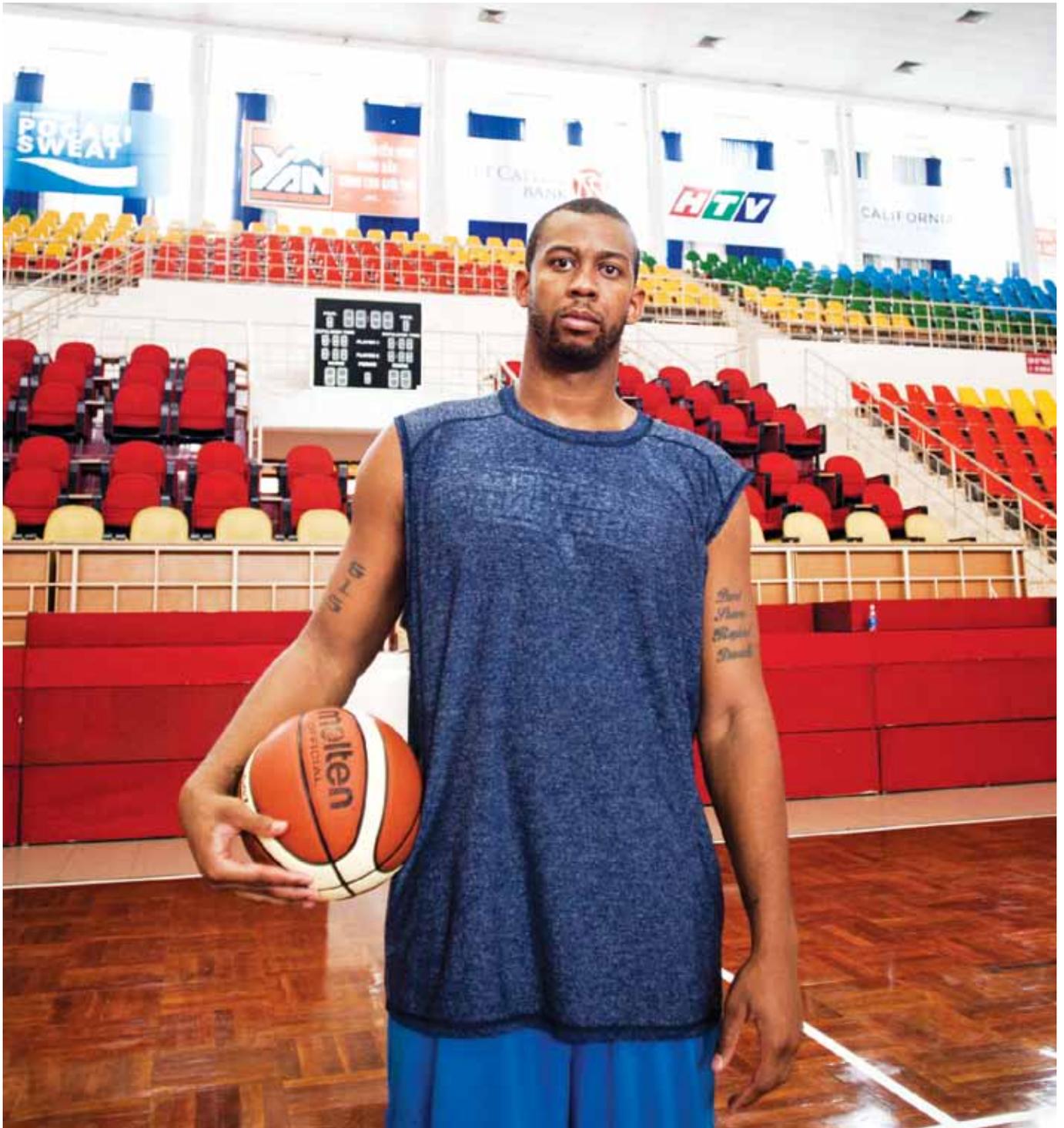
“Gradually, we train ourselves not to complain and to accept what was given. When the model changed to the consumer market, we took this mentality with us. We don’t complain as consumers,” Trang further explains. “We don’t expect complaints as goods and service providers. Consequently, we see no

cause to change for the better. We accept bad service as normal service.”

Forty-six percent of the country’s population is aged over 30, meaning that half of Vietnamese people can recall the days when they had to wait in lines to pay for a bag of rice and some vegetables with their monthly stamps.

Trang cites other factors, too. Vietnam didn’t have consumer protection regulations until 1999, and this regulation was never deemed suitable for implementation until the 2010 addendum.

She remains optimistic about the future of service levels here though. “Vietnam is a young country. The young bring changes. Already there are voices urging for improvements and plans for long-term development. It will be the companies with good service that succeed in the end.” ■



Heat Beat

Now into their second season, we find out how Vietnam's only pro basketball team is doing, and get a one-on-one with their newest American import

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**

THE SAIGON HEAT was the ASEAN Basketball League's (ABL) hottest team through the first month of the season. In a dramatic turnaround from last year's 0 - 7 start to their inaugural campaign, the Heat jumped out to take sole possession of first place with a 92 - 89 nail biter over the San Miguel Beermen for their third straight victory and a 3 - 1 record on the season.

Spearheading the surging Heat is the frontcourt combination of Dior Lowhorn and David Palmer, who are first and second in the league in scoring, respectively. Lowhorn's physical play in the post, combined with David's size and red-hot 3-point shooting (18 of 30 for 60 per cent) keeps pressure on opposing defenses. Add their combined 24

“The fans really love basketball and this is one of the loudest arenas I’ve ever played in. It has to be in the top two or three”



rebounds per game to that and they become a matchup nightmare for teams.

In that game, the Heat went into the half down by four and dug a ten-point hole in the third quarter before picking things up. Led by David, Lowhorn, and guard Jai Reyes, who added 22 points, the Heat took the lead less than three minutes into the final frame. They stretched the advantage to as many as six during the fourth, but Beermen bigs Gabe Freeman and Brian Williams wouldn’t let the Heat deliver the knockout blow. They kept it close right until the end, when Reyes drained two key free throws to close out the scoring. Freeman’s last second three went long at the buzzer.

The Heat’s chemistry on the court, and success in the standings, is only part of the story. The crowd at Tan Binh Stadium has fully embraced the team and clearly gives them a boost with their raucous support. Whether clapping their bright red thunder sticks, stomping their feet, or just yelling at the tops of their lungs, the Heat faithful are like a sixth man on the court.

Player Spotlight

For Westerners, North Americans in particular, the sport of professional basketball elicits images of glitz, fame, fortune, and all that goes with being a professional athlete in a game that enjoys worldwide popularity. But while being a player for a team in the ASEAN Basketball League is vastly different

than the NBA or a league in Europe, it’s no less special.

The Saigon Heat’s newest American import comes by way of China. David Palmer, who hails from Nashville, Tennessee, and played college hoops at the University of Iowa and Northern Kentucky University, is now in his third pro season. The 6’11/254lbs (2.10m/115kg) power forward/center, who scored 20 points and collected 12 rebounds in a win over Thailand on January 17th, came to Saigon after the Heat’s new head coach, Jason Rabedeaux — who coached David in China — inherited the team.

“Coach Jason felt I was a better fit for his system than another American they had on the squad, so he called my agent and I was intrigued at the idea of playing in the ASEAN league,” says David.

He acknowledges some striking differences between being a pro athlete in Saigon to his other stops in Europe and China, most notably the language barrier.

“We also don’t drive around in expensive cars; we take taxis everywhere we go,” he adds. While he has spent some time shopping and taking in the local sites and cuisine, most days are a regimen of practice and rest where players live in District 11.

David exhibits a reserved demeanor, but he lights up when he receives a pass in the low post as well as when he starts talking about the Heat’s fan base.

“The games speak for themselves,” he says.

“The fans really love basketball and this is one of the loudest arenas I’ve ever played in. It has to be in the top two or three.” The Heat’s big man also joyfully explains that the fans seem to be picking up the game judging by the way they know when to cheer.

David seems to relish playing for the team’s owners, Henry and Connor Nguyen. “It’s great to work for them, because if they hire you it means they trust you. They stay out of the way and don’t meddle and just let us do our job. The word is getting out on the international circuit that the ABL is a great place to play. There’s excellent competition and the league is growing so fast.”

David regularly returns home in the offseason to be with family, but he doesn’t keep track of the NBA from afar, stating that he doesn’t follow any players or teams. “They don’t pay me so I don’t root for them,” quips David.

While the imports are here to earn a paycheck, he knows there is more to their job than scoring points and grabbing rebounds. The Heat are part of the Saigon Sports Academy and in addition to interacting with the fans and promoting the game in Southeast Asia, they’ll be running youth clinics to teach the game to the Vietnamese.

“We make great money, and with the cost of living here it’s a great situation. But it’s more than that. We are part of building something here,” says David.

Get in on the game, check out when their next match is at www.saigonheat.com. ■

Blogging Buddies

Find out how a passion for traveling and technology brought a group of eclectic personalities together

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NAM QUAN

THE SETTING

A noisy restaurant on Ham Nghi, DI on a Monday evening



THE BLOGGERS

Ayeshah of The Khaness of Nam
a Swiss / Pakistani ex-media personality

Barbara of The Dropout Diaries
a writer, editor and street food guide

Jaime of Breakaway Backpacker
on a two year, 29 country trip around the world

James of Nomadic Notes
a location independent website designer

Jodi of Legal Nomads
a former lawyer turned consultant and food writer

Leah of Start Somewhere
a branding, building and fundraising consultant

How has travel blogging helped you connect with others?

Jodi: Technology allows us to slide in sideways into existing communities, to know that they even exist. Before I go to a country, I'll connect with others on travel blogger groups on Facebook. Once, I had the hiccups in the airport in Kuwait and tweeted as much; two minutes later someone walked up to me, having seen the airport's hashtag and noticed that I was the only person hiccuping in the corner.

Jaime: I've had readers who've reached out to me. One girl read on my blog that I was coming to Germany and emailed me to say, "I have an extra room, you're welcome to stay with me." It sounds weird, but it really isn't.

Leah: I "office hop" which means I'll set up a temporary office for two to three months

in a new country, working during the day and exploring in the evenings or weekends. This forces me to live like a local, so getting recommendations from people who travel like I do, like other bloggers, is really helpful in getting my bearings. It shortens the learning curve.

Ayeshah: It's tough to make friends in a new country, but having common ground with other bloggers certainly helps. Months after I had moved to Ho Chi Minh City, I still hadn't explored very much. Also, being Muslim, I found it hard to know what I was eating since there seems to be pork in just about everything here! But connecting with other bloggers led to my first street food experience.

How often do you search out other bloggers in a new country?

James: I was in Cambodia two weeks ago



Ayeshah



Barbara

and spent most of my time with fellow bloggers. A month before that, I was in Thailand and it was the same thing.

Leah: I normally find mutual friends through Facebook and Twitter as well, in countries where I'll be going.

Barbara: I search out travel bloggers and travelers in general. People connect with me as well. I might give them advice like, "Don't stay at that hotel, it's horrible and far away from everything." A family with three kids recently contacted me and they're going to end up staying with us this week. Lots of interesting things happen because I have a blog.

How weird is it to meet up with people who seem to know you but that you've never actually met face-to-face?

Barbara: I don't think it's weird at all. Take tonight's meet up. I knew Jodi and James from Chiang Mai through other bloggers. Jodi rounded up some friends, including Emily, one of her readers and Jaime, and he brought along a friend he had first met in the Philippines. Leah contacted me via Twitter to say, "Let's meet up." It happened really organically.

Jodi: There's an unspoken self-imposed system of checks and balances with meeting with other travel bloggers, because we're all part of a niche group. No strange experiences to speak of!

Leah: I think bloggers are used to talking about themselves. And travelers in general seem to be more relaxed and free with their time. And when you've come to the realization that you don't want a normal 9 to 5, and meet others who feel the same way, there's an instant connection.

What makes blogger connections unique?

Jodi: Because we're from the same industry, there is a common ground in worldview. As a result, I find myself skipping the regular introductory questions and jump straight into the good stuff. You already have one thing in common and that makes it so easy to find out you have other things in common. You also never have to explain or justify your life choices in the way that you would to many other people you meet. It's a different dynamic.

Jaime: Yeah. It's as if you already know someone, especially if you've been following their blog for years. It's almost like we live in three different worlds: there's the world back home, the travel blogger world, and the city you're currently in.

Are these types of internet-spawned friendships "real"?

Leah: Definitely. When you have a shared connection, then that's worth more than 50 drinks in a bar somewhere. After the college years, it may take years to form a close friendship. But with fellow travelers

or bloggers, you share more intense, spontaneous experiences than if you had met randomly. You're already several steps more connected than the average person.

Ayeshah: It's like any other friendship, I think. Some people are only used to sharing superficially. To take it to the next step and actually develop friendships, a lot depends on the culture the blogger comes from.

Jodi: I just met Jaime the other day, but we've since had lunch and dinner together, and now we're here. If that happened back home, you'd be considered a stalker! Plus, it's common to see the same people again and again. Every time, it's a mini family reunion with everyone bringing someone new to the table. It's wonderful to be perpetually expanding your circles of friends, meeting new people and deepening the friendships you already have.

Traveling or moving to a new country often includes a difficult adjustment period, filled with daunting obstacles to overcome, possibly including a language barrier, navigating unfamiliar streets or simply knowing where to eat or shop, which is why being able to connect with people with shared interests can be a tremendous help in getting adjusted and minimizing loneliness and homesickness. This space is dedicated to featuring various special interest groups around the city, some traditional and others not as much so.

Would your club like to be featured in this column? Email us at clubs@oivietnam.com ■



James



Jaime

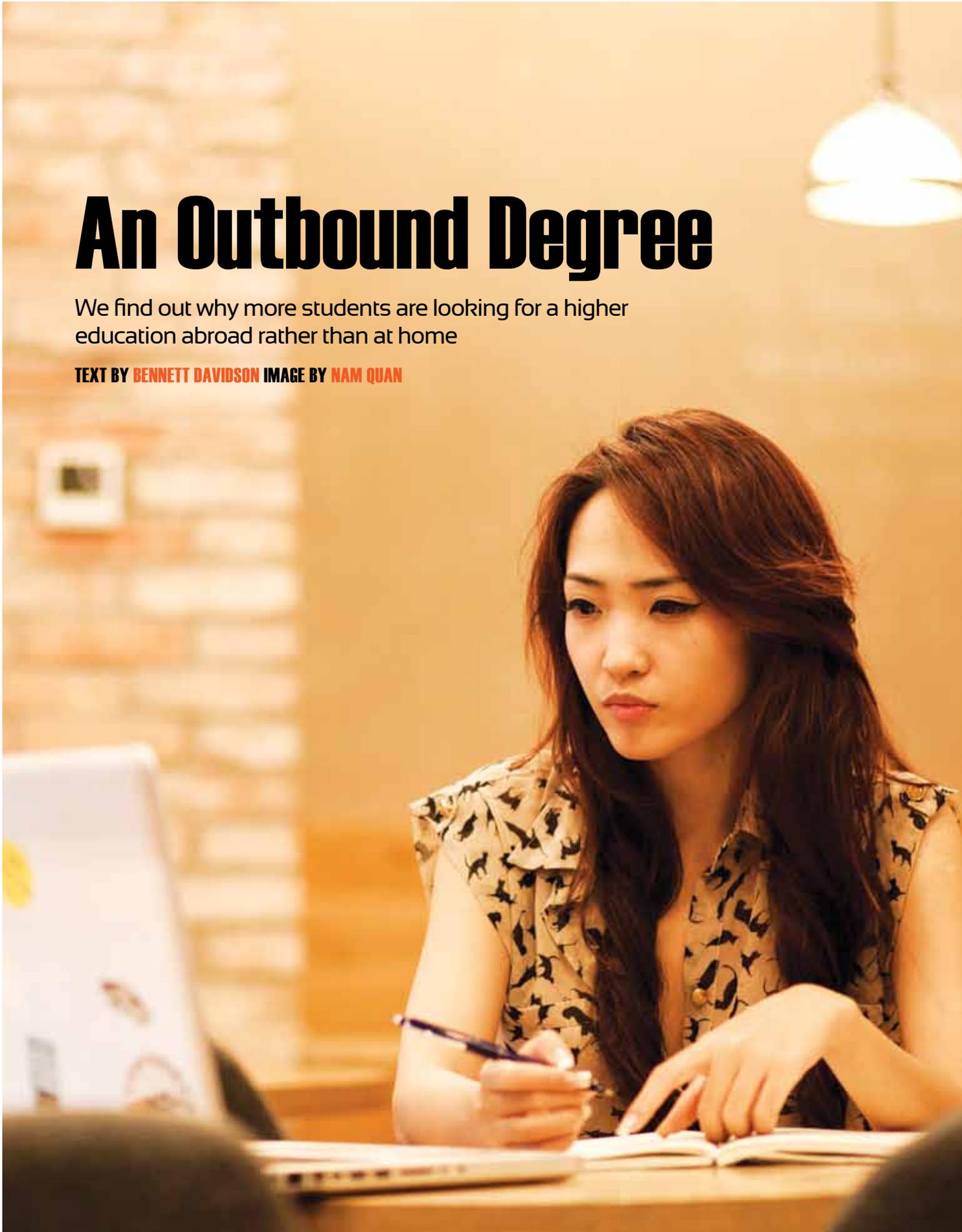


Jodi

An Outbound Degree

We find out why more students are looking for a higher education abroad rather than at home

TEXT BY **BENNETT DAVIDSON** IMAGE BY **NAM QUAN**



IN 2011, THE Ministry of Education and Training published a startling report. Over 100,000 Vietnamese students studied abroad in nearly 50 countries - and 90 percent of them paid for it themselves. In the last ten years, increasing numbers of students have been hitting the books in order to leave their home country to pursue an education abroad. In addition to the myriad English language centers that now dot Vietnamese cities, institutes like Yola and Summa, which provide preparatory courses like the SAT (a standardized test for college admissions in the United States), TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language), and IELTS (International English Language Testing System), have begun to be common sights as well. What is it about a foreign education that draws students to such unfamiliar lands?

"Many students who travel to the US, UK, and Canada are doing so to reconnect with family members they have there," says Pham Thai Pham, a counselor from GET (Global Education Consulting & Training). "Some students don't plan on returning to Vietnam when they study abroad, but the ones that do expect to find a good job with a high paying salary."

Pham counsels students who want to study abroad, and helps them find the destination that best serves their needs. Companies would rather hire someone who has had professional experience abroad, which saves them the trouble of having to train candidates from the ground up. In general, Vietnamese students receive a controlled theoretical education - with little to no practice involved - which puts them at a disadvantage when competing with foreign-trained peers.

"Students who study abroad often receive both a practical and theoretical education," she further explains. "That means schools might provide business students with opportunities to intern with a local business while they study theory in the classroom."

Money & Visa Woes

While some students are thinking of emigration and future employment, others are looking to temporarily broaden their cultural horizons during their time abroad. Thu Nguyen, a student at an international high school, views life in the United States with an open, yet realistic mindset: "I want to experience life in another country, meet diverse groups of people, and experience something new on my own. Of course, there will be new challenges to face, like adjusting to the climate, dealing with differences in language and culture, and getting used to things like the transportation system, but I hope to enjoy my experience and return to Vietnam to get a good job with a high salary."

In order to prepare for her fast-approaching departure date, Thu is studying for the SAT and TOEFL.

Vinh Le Tuan, an architect and prospective student, was denied a visa because his lawyer had misinformed him about a small technicality in a single financial document. He spent the next three months toiling with paperwork and traveling to and from Hanoi, only to have his next interviewer at the US consulate issue him a visa without going over his paperwork. Many find the path to a visa similarly bewildering and arbitrary.

In 2011, almost 15,000 Vietnamese students traveled to America to pursue their education. The popularity of the United States is second only to Australia, which attracted some 25,000 students last year. The visa process dissuades many academic hopefuls from studying in the US; not only are they required to provide an acceptance letter from their university before they are granted a visa, but they also have to prove that they can pay for their time there.

“Some students don’t plan on returning to Vietnam when they study abroad, but the ones that do expect to find a good job with a high paying salary”

This means that they have to provide their family's financial records, showing that they have adequate funds to pay for tuition and life in the States. But that's often easier said than done.

Demonstrating financial records is often tricky for Vietnamese students, because their parents may not always have the salary to match, and many times paperwork is obscure or simply non-existent. Families can seek out agencies to provide them with financial documents to satisfy the US consulate, but oftentimes students are simply advised to seek out education programs in other countries.

"We advise some students to study in Malaysia, Singapore, and the UK because they can get a visa easier than in the United States," says Pham.

Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore also have universities that have partnerships with accredited universities in Europe and the US. Viet Nguyen is currently an urban planner in Ho Chi Minh City, but he has his sights set on getting an MBA in France.

He's pursuing a double degree in business: for the first year, he will study at CFVG, the French-Vietnamese Center for Management Education, and then plans to study at ESPC in Paris, one of the best business schools in France. Viet expects to use top notch facilities in France, and to form relationships with some of the best professors in the world before returning to Vietnam.

"Students who study in foreign countries are also more likely to be hired by foreign companies who have branches in Vietnam," he says. "Foreign institutions have a more pragmatic approach to education. Students who have the means to study abroad should do so - it's in their best interest." ■

What Star Trek Has Taught Us About Travel

Although created in 1966, this television show would somehow become a predictor of how we should travel in the 21st century

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

AS A KID IN the early 80s, I remember rushing home from school in time to get my *Star Trek* fix, eager to see what trouble the valiant crew of the Enterprise would encounter that week. Would it be hyper reproductive furballs, gladiator-style death battles or some near fatal malfunction of the dilithium crystals? And more importantly, what color alien would Captain Kirk inevitably have to seduce in the name of intergalactic diplomacy?

While I wasn't what you'd consider a hardcore Trekkie, I was nevertheless smitten by the travel bug from a young age, so the lure of "boldly going where no man has gone before" had an irresistible appeal. What travel junkie wouldn't jump at the chance to explore new worlds, unfettered by space or occasionally even time?

That spirit of exploration has driven me to travel the planet, everywhere from Nepal to Namibia, Thailand to Tanzania, Japan to Jordan. But recently, I've been thinking of what else *Star Trek* has taught me about travel.

A recurring theme throughout the series was the Prime Directive, an unassailable mandate which forbade interference with the normal and healthy development of alien life and culture.

I found myself questioning to what extent travelers and expats affect the culture of the place they're visiting or conversely, allow that culture and experience to affect them?

Better Stay at Home

After more than 10 years in the corporate world, I recently met up with a former colleague here in Ho Chi Minh City and told her I had completely changed my life. I was working less (and as a result, earning significantly less), just making ends meet, but for the first time in my adult life, really had the time to explore my surroundings, connect with locals and ferret out places not found in guidebooks.

She visibly grimaced. "I don't want to live like that," she pronounced as we walked

through her all-marble lobby past a huge pool and a Domino's Pizza. In fact, with all the glitzy cupcake shops, pilates classes, and 1.5 kg hamburgers available here in the city, it's easy to craft a life virtually indistinguishable from one in fashionable London or vibrant Sydney, or any other modern metropolis.

We've probably all been guilty at one time or another of going to a beach resort in some exotic destination where the only locals ever encountered were the ones who made our beds or served our meals. Somehow I don't think the crew of Enterprise would've been impressed.

In response, the independent travel movement - people moving away from packaged experiences, toward more authentic interactions - has grown significantly in recent years. Bootsnull, a popular site for indie around-the-world travel, encourages travelers to adopt a manifesto which focuses on discovery over escape, interactions over transactions and seeking to understand, not judge or romanticize, other cultures.

Travel fiction writer James Michener once said, "If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay at home." Just because we *can* live a life removed when we're abroad, surrounded by all that's familiar and comfortable, does that mean we *should*?

Poet Gael Attal eloquently observed, "A ship is safe in the harbor, but that's not what ships are built for."

Digital nomad, Barbara Adam agrees: "While living in Chiang Mai, we hung out with fellow travelers and expats quite a bit. Through Twitter and Facebook, someone even organized a complete Thanksgiving dinner just for travelers! But looking back, I'm disappointed to say that after living there for seven months, we hadn't made many local friends other than saying 'hello' to people at the market. We were living in a bubble of sorts. It was easy to forget why

you travel which is to meet the locals."

Live Long and Travel

On the other end of the spectrum, there's the danger of making too great an impact on the place you're visiting. My Thanh Pham, a couchsurfing ambassador for Ho Chi Minh City, expresses her growing concerns after years of meeting hundreds of visitors and hosting dozens of travelers.

"Originally, couchsurfing was about sharing travel experiences. It was a great way to practice English while learning about other cultures. But recently, it's changed. Now, it's almost like a dating site," she explains. "Vietnamese girls are using it to find Western boyfriends. I know a few young Vietnamese who have quit school entirely, just to hang out with Westerners, both hosts and surfers, partying and drinking all day... I now see that it's a two way street. [Meeting travelers.] I've learned a lot about Western thinking and culture. But I've learned that we need to be able to share our own culture while not losing ourselves."

While not under the Prime Directive, modern-day travelers have a choice to make: Embrace authentic travel experiences despite all the accompanying inconveniences and discomfort? Or settle for an artificial, superficial hologram of the real thing? And what impact do we seek to have on host cultures? One of mutual learning and appreciation? Or one of imposing Western-centric values and an unsustainable sense of entitlement?

While the original series only lasted three seasons and ended more than forty years ago, the crew of Enterprise were way ahead of their time. They came, they observed, they interacted, they sought to understand, all while respecting the cultures they visited. Thankfully, the spirit of *Star Trek* lives on in intrepid travelers across the globe, seeking their own adventures, boldly going where they've never gone before. To my fellow indie travelers, may you live long and prosper. ■



N BINH DAN
T VỚI NHAU
Cáo
BÁCH
6



BUST A MOVE (Along the bridge between D5 & D8): Inspired by a mobile music cart passing by, these boys decided to get down and show their best moves

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Images by **Quinn Ryan Mattingly & Nam Quan**



LOOKING AHEAD (From top): On Pho Duc Chinh, Di Ba Thao prays for a good 2013; Ms Oanh selects the best fish cakes for her lunch in an alley in Phu Nhuan; Mr Tuan samples the live stock to replenish his fish tank at home



FOR THE VIETNAMESE, there's much more to life than what's inside the four walls they call home. In contrast to the often sterile and deserted neighborhoods of the West where life is lived almost exclusively behind closed doors, Vietnam's cramped city dwellings and a powerful sense of community means life here seamlessly spills out onto the streets. Wander along any of the city's many avenues and back alleys and you'll discover people on the pavement animatedly huddled around a game of Chinese chess, getting their hair cut (and ears cleaned), washing vegetables and clothes or simply and unabashedly sprawled out for a midday nap.

In Ho Chi Minh City, all kinds of work that we, as Westerners, would expect to find "inside" workshops and garages take place "outside" right on the sidewalk - motorcycle and bicycle fixing, welding, carpentry and shoe repair. Needless to say, the Vietnamese are not self-conscious; they are very relaxed about putting their life on display. They just do whatever they need to do, whenever they need to do it and wherever they need to do it. And these were the candid moments our photographers captured.

Beautiful in its vibrancy, honesty and at times grittiness, street life is alive and well and remains an intrinsic thread to the fabric of the city.





HARD AT WORK AND PLAY (Clockwise from top left): Ong Hai surveys the night's inventory; Foghorn Leghorn sussing out the competition; A workman not shy about airing out his dirty laundry; Little Thuy and her brother play taxi driver and lottery seller near their house in D8



OPEN AND CLOSED (Clockwise from top left): Businesswoman Ms Loan with her jars of coffee beans and tea leaves waiting for customers; We didn't have the heart to wake him up to ask for his name; While closed for business, the structure and shelves of this motorbike shop remains for the night doubling up as makeshift beds for wanderers; Co Tam pours out the remains of her soup sewage.





AIR (Top): After finding a hole in his tire, Cuong heads to the nearest mechanic for a quick fix.
HAIR (Bottom): Khanh helps his mother look younger and prettier by pulling out her gray hairs.



LADIES OF LEISURE (Top): Ba Tam & Ba Nam like to drink tea and gossip about the neighbors every morning. It's what keeps them alive and healthy they say.
A CAREFUL LISTENER (Bottom): Mr Thanh likes to sit outside his house and hear his birds sing, a welcome respite from his wife's nagging from within.



SMILING THROUGH IT ALL (Clockwise from top left): Chinese chess is a team sport here in Vietnam, everyone gets to tell you that you've made the wrong move; Shoeman Tri can spit shine any shoe; Almost eight decades old, Ba Nguyen says the key to a long life is to rely on others' kindness



THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD:
For anyone who desires an adventure,
follow the road and don't look back.



7 Countries, 6 Trains, 18 Days

From the craggy mountains of northern Vietnam to the cobbled streets of Berlin, one traveler embarks on an unforgettable journey across the world by locomotive

TEXT AND IMAGES BY **DEBBIE CLARE**

THE LAST FEW hours in Vietnam are a blur - cleaning out the fridge, locking the windows, chucking out the rubbish, having one last shower, turning off the hot water, final email checks, shutting down computers, leaving notes about unreturned borrowed things, and a lot of walking from room to room trying to remember what we think we have forgotten. No matter how much time is spent planning and preparing for this epic journey, the final moments can only ever be filled with mind-spinning measures of excitement and anxiety.

And there it is - a humble little green carriage, parked like the giant version of a child's toy, waiting for its imaginary passengers to board. One lone carriage, powered by a connecting cab, rusted and beautiful, ornate and somewhat prehistoric, waiting for us to climb on board and begin our journey. As we climb those steep steps up into the vehicle, it's hard to believe we are literally stepping out of one chapter and into another, the first step of a 7,771-kilometer journey by land from Hanoi, Vietnam to Berlin, Germany.

Goodbye *bun cha*, goodbye *banh cuon* and goodbye Vietnam.

The Planning Stages

If you're going to travel backwards across the world, it makes sense to plan backwards too, although it's only natural to fight your instincts when they tell you not to book your train tickets until you've got your visas. However, it just doesn't work that way; it has to be tickets first and visas after. With an invaluable wealth of information, the acclaimed Seat 61 website helped my boyfriend and I choose a route that would take us to places we had never been before - China, Mongolia, Russia, Belarus and Poland - before reaching our final destination in the German capital.

Once we decided that these were the countries we wanted to roll through, we started to look at the various booking options. None seemed as user-friendly and

unrelentingly helpful as Real Russia, a UK-based company that specializes in all things Trans Siberian, and with their help we decided to limit ourselves to no more than three consecutive days on the train for the sake of hygiene, sanity and adventure. Therefore, with stop-offs included, our entire journey would be spread over a total of 18 days.

Visas

While many travel companies, including Real Russia, offer an in-house visa service, we realized it would be slightly cheaper to apply for each one at the relevant embassies in Vietnam ourselves. It was the infamously tricky Chinese visa that began to cause us the most concern. It's not possible to purchase train tickets from Hanoi to Beijing without having a Chinese visa, and it's not possible to obtain a Chinese visa unless you have evidence of a hotel booking confirmation in China. And finally (here's the confusing part), the Chinese visa, if granted, is valid for one month from the date of *application*, and therefore, it's not possible to apply for the visa anytime. It has to be timed just before you're due to leave Vietnam.

Having weighed all of this up, we decided to recruit a Vietnamese travel agent to go through the Chinese visa application process for us, and it worked out just fine. With our Chinese visas firmly planted in our increasingly weighty passports, we could finally purchase the final set of train tickets for the first leg of our journey.

Beijing Bound

As our train rattles out of Hanoi along Long Bien Bridge, I wave down at the motorists speeding alongside us. We depart at night so the city glows and twinkles along the banks of the Red River, and soon, as we get further away from the city there are fewer and fewer lights, until we find ourselves traveling slowly through the total blackness of north Vietnam's rural countryside.

Our cabin is small and basic, yet wonderfully quaint. Plastic flowers judder about in a ceramic vase that has been glued to the table, and while the curtains and walls are a dated-looking yellowy-beige, everything is clean, comfortable and endearing. We drink Son Tinh liquor, watch a film and fall asleep.

It takes only four hours from Hanoi to reach Dong Dang, the border with China. And following a stress-free visa check and textbook exchange of personal statistics with an armed Vietnamese guard, we are guided to a much longer and modern version of the train we'd just left. Above us a large painting of Ho Chi Minh shows him waving down at us, and it's time to say goodbye to Vietnam.

China: It's huge. Hours and hours and hours pass and we see nothing but massive city after massive city. Some of them are already functioning while others are on the verge of being built from scratch, and they go on forever. You can sleep for a few hours and look out of the window only to see more of the same, and wonder how many cities there are in China, and how many there will be in a few years, if not seconds, from now.

We're sharing our compartment with a Vietnamese boy and his grandfather. We play chess, converse in Vietnamese and exchange facts about ourselves. Eventually we run out of words and do nothing but play chess and say things the other person doesn't understand.

We walk the length of the train and realize we're the only Westerners on board. Having lived in Vietnam for several years we're used to standing out, so we take it in stride. The menu placed before us is quite rightfully written only in Mandarin, and aside from thinking that some of the words look like houses, trees and faces, we have no idea what anything means, so we politely wave at the waitress and point to someone else's good-looking dinner. A fresh version of noodles and beef in broth appears before us and it's glorious. If train food was like this in England no one would ever drive anywhere ever again.





IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Horse herding in Mongolia

The day and a half spent on this train is easy; it's just chess and Scrabble, eating and drinking, staring out of the window, sleeping and watching films. The furthest we walk is to the restaurant carriage and back; the journeys after that are only a matter of meters, possibly in single figures, as we use the bathroom or water boiler.

Soon we're minutes away from Beijing and our bags are repacked and strapped to our backs. We look around in awe and wonder if we have ever seen so many tall buildings before and forgotten what life without humidity is like. We join a mammoth taxi queue and show the driver instructions to get to the hostel written in the local dialect. A short while later we're at a *hutong* (alley) and staggering towards our hostel with the hefty weight of our rucksacks weighing us down.

Beijing Downtown Backpackers Hostel is located on a charming street extremely close to many of the most popular tourist destinations in the city. We're sharing a mixed dormitory with eight other people and wash for the first time in days before locking up our valuables and heading to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Having seen these iconic buildings and spaces in the press for so many years, it feels extremely surreal to stand amongst them and meet them in person. We walk and walk and walk until eventually resting our tired feet with a cocktail at the Emperor Hotel's rooftop Yin Bar – a stunning place to watch the sun set over the Forbidden City.

On the whole, Beijing is extremely user-friendly and welcoming. Booking a tour of the Great Wall is easy, and the public transport system is affordable and relatively easy to understand, though having a Mandarin-speaking friend by your side, as we did, does help.

One of the highlights of this stop-off included a visit to the 798 Art District, a German-built industrial sprawl that is home to a number of decommissioned military factories since turned into cool galleries, startling

performance spaces, boutique retail stores and a smorgasbord of cosmopolitan cafes and eateries that are heaven (or hell) for those who can't say no to a cheesecake. It doesn't feel like you're in Asia anymore, it feels more like Berlin – a glimpse into this city's past and our future.

We unapologetically hand ourselves over to the thrills and spills of tourism, and wander to the infamous Donghuanmen Night Market, haggling with street vendors whose displays of barbecued tarantulas, minced dog and cat, and seared unknown animal penis penetrate none of our senses other than those of our eyes and our noses. We also try the world famous local delicacy, Peking duck, in the upmarket and extremely popular DaDong Roast Duck restaurant. It's tasty, but not quite the unmissable culinary experience it's claimed to be. With waits of up to an hour and a bill that'll crush your budget, it's best to stick to the streets!

Other pursuits include the obligatory trip to the Great Wall. It's simply epic and as breathtaking a life experience as one's ever to have. Luckily, we decline to join the masses at the popular *Jinshanling* section of the wall in favor of the much more beautiful and less crowded *Mutianya* segment. Taking a ski lift to the top, we spend three hours hiking the historic structure before descending via toboggan. At CNY 280 (approx. US\$50, booked via Beijing Downtown Backpackers Hostel) this is the best of the Great Wall trips.

Magnificent Mongolia

I'm quite sure that Charles Bukowski wasn't traveling the Trans-Mongolian Express when he named his book of poems *The Days Roll Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills*, however, no other words more accurately describe what it is like to travel across the endless expanse of Mongolia.

Like China, it goes on forever. The country feels so incredibly otherworldly that it's easy to convince yourself that you're no longer on Earth. Indeed, the Gobi Desert, which acts as

the stunning backdrop for the majority of our journey through Mongolia, looks like the set of *Star Wars IV* when Luke Skywalker returns home to find his village destroyed.

The landscape is of such epic proportions that it often seems that the curve of the planet is visible over the horizon, occasionally a yurt or cluster of yurts break up the scene. Horses – sometimes 50 of them – gallop alongside the train before changing direction and melting into the distance, while at other times there's just one, loaded down with a rider and luggage. Everything is big, panoramic, with lots of space between it. And once you see the sunset, no words can aptly describe what it's like to experience Mongolia.

Sizzling hot plates in the shape of a cow are placed before us, and a small mountain of purple sugared cabbage accompanies it. We are in the Mongolian food car and it's not a million miles away from a moving version of Benjamin Horne's office at the Great Northern Hotel in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*. We're surrounded by wood carvings, Mongolians, Russians, English, French and Americans. We play Scrabble, drink wine, watch films and stare at everything outside until Mongolia's sun drops into a pocket of sky and vanishes.

The train comes to a halt and I wake up to blackness. Apart from snores, the only other sounds are those of heavy feet in the hallway and shouts from outside. I quickly dress and then slide open the door of our compartment. I can't believe what I'm seeing. Snow. A *lot* of snow. Just a couple of days ago we were walking across Beijing in flip flops, shorts and t-shirts, and now, men and women wearing large fur hats and thick winter jackets are precariously making their way to the train through deep snow.

Reaching Russia

A terrifyingly large woman wearing heavy army boots stares down at me with a fierce look on her face. She is flanked by a soldier and another official, and scans my face against the mini version inside my passport. The guard



A rusting old boat on the snowy beach of the Bolshie Koty settlement



A view of Bolshie Koty, Irkutsk, Russia from the daily ferry boat on Lake Baikal

enters our compartment and looks under the bench and in the shower room for any possible stowaways. Eventually they leave, satisfied that we are not a threat to Russia. And the wait begins.

The wait for the toilet, that is. Throughout the entire journey, all of the trains have strict toilet rules; all toilets are closed about 30 minutes before arriving at and departing from a station. This shouldn't be too much of a problem since all you have to do is work out when the next stop is, based on the timetable that is displayed in every carriage.

However, it's not always possible to read the timetable because sometimes they're written in Mandarin, Mongolian or Russian. All of the times on the Mongolian timetable are based on Beijing time, and all of the times on Russian train timetables are set to Moscow time – even if you're some seven time zones away from Moscow on the other side of the country. No one really knows what time it is. Even if you set your watch to Moscow time and your phone clock to the time at your destination city, it all becomes one big guessing game.

Add into the mix the challenge of border crossings. When you hand your passport to the official in the middle of the night, you usually have to wait at least three hours before it's returned to you and the train starts moving again. During that entire time the toilets are locked and there really is nowhere to go. Except of course if you happen to have a washbasin in your compartment.

In the Land of Giants

Without stops, it takes about three days to arrive in the Siberian town of Irkutsk, by which time our bladders are preparing to rebel against being tested to their full capacity all too regularly. We are also desperate for a proper wash. There are no showers on the train from Beijing to Irkutsk, the sinks are very small, and after traveling across snowy terrains there is no longer any hot water coming out of the taps. The novelty of washing with baby wipes has worn off and we just want to smell

like adults again. And so was invented the Awkward Train Shower: A person showering stands naked next to the sink in the adjoining 'bathroom' while the other person fills the kettle from the shared water boiler at the end of the carriage and pours it into the compartment sink. The washer then mixes it with cold water and pours it over themselves with a cup. It takes about six or seven of these 'circuits' to complete a full body wash.

We arrive in Irkutsk clean and refreshed, ready for our next adventure. Stepping off the train for the first time in three days is challenging; we haven't walked more than about 100 metres during that time, so when we load our rucksacks onto our backs and stagger off the train onto the platform, it becomes an effort to remember how to walk again. But not only how to walk, how to *speak*. Everything is so *Russian*. Everyone is so *big*. Having lived in Vietnam for so long we were used to being the giants, though now the giants are all around us, and we cower under them like ants, wondering if we are to be trampled on.

A tall, slim man approaches us with a beaming smile. Dmitri, our guide and soon-to-be friend, warmly welcomes us.

After collecting our train tickets, withdrawing money and being bundled into the back of an eight-person transit van, we're standing on the side of an icy road on the edge of a town called Listvyanka, next to the oldest lake in the world. While that fact, and the fact that it contains 20 percent of the world's total unfrozen freshwater reserve are extremely impressive, it's the sheer length and breadth of the lake that really brings its utter vastness into perspective. Lake Baikal is longer than England. And Vietnam. It's a comparison that we can actually measure in our minds, but it's almost too overwhelming to comprehend.

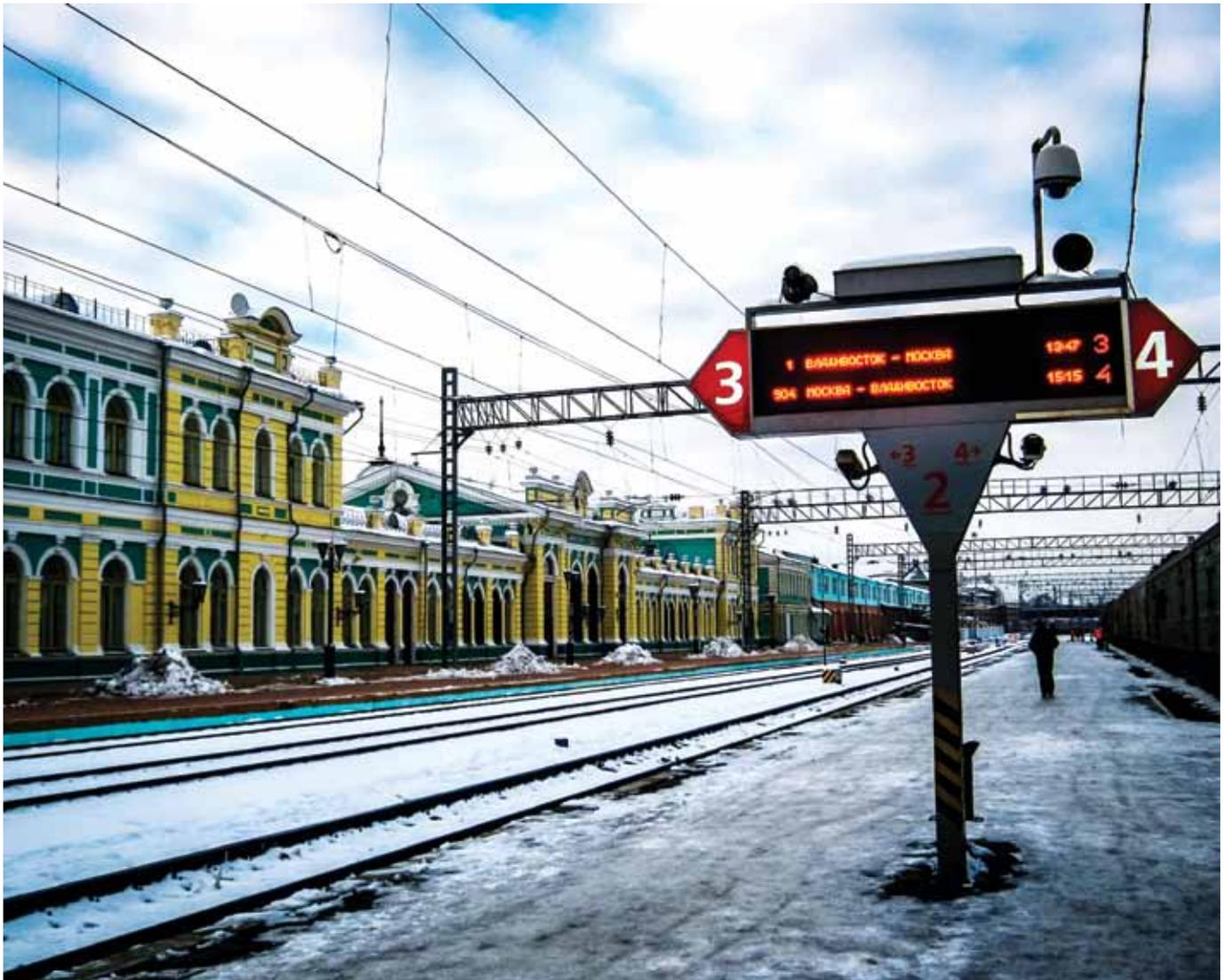
And it's cold. So very, very cold. Our thin jackets and t-shirts are as useful as chocolate teapots, and by the time we reach our homestay we're scared. Some weeks before leaving Hanoi, we had booked ourselves onto a 20-kilometer trek 'along the shores' of Lake

Baikal. However, in our summery Vietnam minds we had imagined a flat footpath before us, with just a few autumnal leaves obstructing the way. With a bellyful of homemade Russian donuts, jam and tea, we make our way outside into the snow and ice, and find our guide full of the joys of spring, ready to embark on this journey.

Everything is white, the snow is deep, our boots are heavy, and it is steep. We hadn't anticipated the steepness, the voluminous amounts of snow, the mountains, the sub-zero conditions, the heavy boots, or it being so cold that the water inside our bottle would freeze into a thick block of ice. We walk, and we walk some more, and sometimes we stop to allow our heart rates to slow down, but mostly we walk. After three hours we're tired and still cold, and after five hours bruises start to form where our boots press against our ankles. After six hours we're dizzy with exhaustion, and after seven hours we want to hand ourselves to the snow and just give up. By the eighth hour it isn't funny anymore. We are truly broken. Our limbs feel like they have been pummelled beyond repair, our muscles scream with every step, and the effort to lift one foot and place it in front of the other feels like the hardest thing either of us has ever been charged with. Annoyingly, Dmitri practically skips across the snow for the entire duration, and other than glowing red cheeks there's no way of telling that he's just walked 20 kilometres in his slowest time ever of eight and a half hours.

Tired beyond belief, we sleep in a tiny log cabin in a deserted village called Bolshie Koty. It's deserted because no one in their right mind lives in Bolshie Koty during the winter. And winter has arrived very suddenly, just two days before we stepped off the train in Irkutsk. In October, the population of Bolshie Koty is about 30, and the three of us, plus our cabin host Alex, seem to be the only souls there.

Formerly a gold mining village in the early 1800s, Bolshie Koty is a settlement on the shores of Lake Baikal consisting of about 20 houses. During the winter it can only be accessed



The snowy platform at Irkutsk train station

by foot or by ferry, and we nearly cry with happiness when we hear that the last remaining ferry is set to leave the shores of Bolshie Koty for Listvyanka the next afternoon.

Russian Hospitality

The train journey from Irkutsk to Yekaterinburg is relatively brief compared to the previous stints - a mere 48 hours. We share our compartment with a Russian policeman who spends much of his time standing outside the compartment in the hallway like a bouncer, arms folded, staring straight ahead through the window, expressionless. Despite the language barrier and not knowing more than two or three words of each others' languages, he reveals himself a true gentleman. He plays chess with us, leaves the compartment when we have dinner and returns to give us chocolate just as we finish our mains, points out of the window and tells us stories in Russian.

The train is more modern than the previous one and some of the doors between carriages open electronically. There are flat screen TVs in every compartment and the toilets are more spacious, comfortable and clean. The restaurant car is still pretty old-fashioned though, all dark and gothic, making us feel like we're inside a haunted house. During this journey a small child called Sonja becomes fixated by my partner's bald head, and visits us in our compartment several times a day to

climb up onto the bench and pat it.

Out of the window we see nothing but a slew of trees and villages, trees and villages, trees and villages, but mostly trees.

Yekaterinburg is a Disney city, like nowhere we have ever been before. Constructionist architecture meets palatial grandeur meets Western civilization. We know we're closer to Europe now and it really feels like it, in everything we see. A walk through a shopping precinct in the city center sees old favorites like H&M and Next sitting together like old friends, while the iconic yet functionless radio tower spikes the sky with its lofty heights. Yekaterinburg is a city of padlock hearts, the railings that run over bridges and alongside rivers are decorated with these declarations of love. These symbols of love and promise are clamped onto the metal balustrades for all eternity, and they are everywhere. The public transport is, as in Beijing, cheap and efficient, and although the city has parks, lakes, rivers, shopping centers and varied offerings in the form of tourist destinations, it is possible to walk its entire length in just a couple of hours.

We stay for two nights and enjoy the company of an old friend who shows us around the city. We sleep in a two-bedroom hostel that could otherwise be mistaken for a normal three-bedroom flat in an unremarkable apartment block. However, the owner has cleverly turned it into a rather unassuming but perfectly functional hostel. With only

two rooms, make sure you book your stay at Domino Hotel well in advance.

The Smelly Express to Moscow

We leave Yekaterinburg at about 5am and are driven to the train station at breakneck speed by an early morning boy racer with a penchant for European techno. We reach the station in less than five minutes, and board the train to Moscow an hour later. It's a tough stint. We share the compartment with two burly Russian men who occupy the top two bunks. They eat a freshly roasted chicken and the entire compartment is thick with the smell of it. Soon after, the compartment becomes thick with the smell of burly Russian flatulence and I am forced to evict myself into the hallway for fresh air. Except it's not really very fresh air, because the space between train compartments is the designated smoking area, and the smoke just drifts through the open doors and into the carriages and their compartments. I'm ready to be in Moscow, and count down the 24 hours on board the smelly express.

Godzilla's is a backpacker's hostel situated within walking distance from Red Square, the Kremlin, and pretty much everything else that a tourist would want to see. Being one of the most expensive cities in the world, Moscow can be hard to fully enjoy, however, there are ways of getting around this.

There are free daily walking tours that operate on a donation-only basis and take in all

“The city before us, our final destination on this trip of a lifetime, is our new home. From Southeast Asia to Europe, we step into reverse-culture shock, stunned by a renewed sense of familiarity yet nostalgic for life by train”



The shimmering city lake in the centre of Yekaterinburg, Russia

the sights. When armed with a guidebook it's extremely easy to walk from iconic building to iconic building. Eating and drinking in Moscow is very hard to do on a budget, and so taking advantage of the relatively low-priced offerings at tube station bakeries is the way forward for a cheap, filling albeit unhealthy fix.

One of the most memorable yet troubling lowlights of our two-day stay in Moscow occurs at a visit to the state circus. Naively, we assume it to be a human circus, featuring trapeze artists, magicians and stilt-walkers, however, it's an animal circus. The featured creatures are forced to perform extremely unnatural acts under flashing lights and against the soundtrack of a live band. Fully-grown bears are clamped onto the backs of galloping buffalo, poodles dyed bright colors ride zip wires across the auditorium, and 'dancing' seals, who are clearly distressed and unhappy, are among some of the many troubling sights.

Berlin or Bust

It's a long walk from the beginning of the platform to our carriage, and under the early morning light and drizzling rain it feels like our journey's coming to a premature end. The sign on the side of the train says 'Moscou - Berlin - Paris' and we reluctantly board after looking through the window and seeing how disappointing our compartment is compared to all the previous ones.

We're in a very small room that consists of three fold-down bunk beds on one side, and three fold-down chairs on the other. We feel cramped enough before our Russian cabinmate joins us, and although we can't understand what she's saying, we know it's something like, "How can this be a room for three people? How could this happen? What are we going to do?" And we agree with her. The only thing to do is sleep. We slide sideways into our bunks and remind ourselves not to try and sit up through fear of knocking ourselves out on the bunk or ceiling above. Those 24 hours pass quickly, and the only remarkable events are the Belarussian officials who politely check our visas. Aside from forgettable train stations, we see nothing of Belarus or Poland, the downside of traveling by night.

I arrive in Berlin feeling happy and excited, while my other half arrives in a state of despair. The Russian woman's snores failed to penetrate my ultra-strong earplugs, though they were violent enough to keep him awake and cause him to swear and groan his way through the night.

The city before us, our final destination on this trip of a lifetime, is our new home. From Southeast Asia to Europe, we step into reverse-culture shock, stunned by a renewed sense of familiarity yet nostalgic for life by train. We both agree we could have spent longer traveling the world by land, but after 7,771 kilometers, Europe, we are home. ■

TRAINS

From: **Hanoi to Beijing** (1.5 days)
Changing at Dong Dang and Nanning
Price: US\$433 per person
Ticket class: Standard

From: **Beijing to Irkutsk** (2.5 days)
Price: US\$754 per person
Ticket Class: 1st class

From: **Irkutsk to Yekaterinburg** (2 days)
Price: US\$256 per person
Ticket Class: 2nd class
Services: 3 meals included

From: **Yekaterinburg to Moscow** (24 hours)
Price: US\$169 per person
Ticket Class: 2nd class with air conditioning

From: **Moscow to Berlin** (24 hours)
Price: US\$289 per person
Ticket Class: 2nd class

ACCOMMODATION

Downtown Backpacker's Hostel, Beijing
backpackingchina.com

Homestay, Listvyanka
baikalwander.com

Domino Hotel, Yekaterinburg
dominohotel.ru

Godzilla's Hostel, Moscow
godzillashostel.com/moscow

TOURISM

BEIJING

Forbidden City,

Admission: CNY40 (US\$6.4, quoted till next Mar 31); CNY60 (US\$9.6, Apr 1 to Oct 31)

Tiananmen Square
Free admission

Mutianyu Great Wall Tour,

Admission (including transfers, entry, cable car, toboggan and lunch): CNY280 (US\$50, booked through Beijing Downtown Backpackers Hostel)

Beijing Dadong Roast Duck Shop
various prices, dadongdadong.com

IRKUTSK

Tailored tours to suit you, with Russian, German and English-speaking guide
Dmitri, baikalwander.com

Guide price: US\$160 per person for a 20 kilometre walk, breakfast, lunch (x2), dinner and accommodation for one night

YEKATERINBURG

You can get free walking maps - which include sightseeing and culture - from the Ekaterinburg Tourist Information Service or by visiting ekaterinburg.tv

MOSCOW

City maps can be found in any hotel or hostel, and most of the city's tourist attractions are within easy reach of the city center. You can also book a free walking tour to take in all of the sights by visiting moscowfreetour.com

Trip The Light Fantastic

This season is full of delicate fabrics and pale feminine hues, but among the quieter trends that have walked down the runways of the West - a bold streak of neon from Gucci, Burberry Prorsum, Kenzo and Fendi, among others, have given a welcome break to the more neutral collections out there.

If you are up to the challenge SS13 is all about mixing strong colors, not being afraid of turning up the volume a little with fluorescent mustards, electric blues and combining neon purples and reds. Here in Saigon there are plenty of progressive Vietnamese fashion designers who aren't afraid to trip the light fantastic and dress Saigonese bright enough to do the fashion weeks of Europe and America justice.

Top | DIEU ANH
VND679,000

Pants | HA LINH THU
VND1,299,000

Pants | CASHEW
VND1,095,000

Dress | HA LINH THU
VND1,500,000



Jumpsuit | CASHEW
VND1,819,000



Dress | ICE
VND1,550,000



DESIGNER FORUM
Mai & Flo | Ha Linh Thu | Dieu Anh
165-167 Le Thanh Ton, Q1

CASHEW
38 Ly Tu Trong, Q1

ICE
Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, Q1

Make up: Kenny Lieu

Models: Cu Ngoc Quy, Nguyen Dieu Tu

Photographer: Quinn Ryan Mattingly

Stylist: James Allen

Assistant Stylist: Ngan Nguyen

Electric Accessories

When it comes to your wardrobe and home don't understate with neutral shades, instead make a bold statement with eclectic neon colors. Go forth and stop traffic with this month's essentials.

COMPILED BY **JAMES ALLEN**

01 ITEM OF THE MONTH



Blue Top | MAI & FLO
AT DESIGNER FORUM
VND900,000
165-167 Le Thanh Ton, DI

IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Bag | FURLA
VND9,990,000
Vincor Centre
70-72 Le Thanh Ton, DI



ANNA VO | VND1,920,000
23 Dong Khoi, DI



ANNA VO | VND360,000
23 Dong Khoi, DI



CHARLES & KEITH | VND1,259,000
Vincor Centre, 70-72
Le Thanh Ton, DI



PEDRO | VND1,999,000
Vincor Centre, 70-72
Le Thanh Ton, DI



COTO LIFESTYLE | VND70,000
www.coto-lifestyle.com



ACCESSORIES WORLD | VND450,00
Vincor Center A (Eden Mall)
171 Dong Khoi, DI



EUGENIE AT ANUPA | VND450,00
9 Dong Du, DI

His Love of Food

There's a whole lot of love in Thierry Mounon's story of bringing his unique style of French cuisine to Ho Chi Minh City

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



THIERRY'S LA VILLA in District 2 opened its doors on Valentine's Day 2011. Less than six months later, with so many diners raving about their dining experience online, it took top spot on Trip Advisor's rankings and has remained there ever since.

It's not easy earning a number one ranking on Trip Advisor, and it's stressful staying there, explains Thierry. "First thing every morning I open my page on Trip Advisor and see how we've done."

The secrets to winning the hearts and stomachs of Ho Chi Minh City's expat community and a healthy share of the tourist dollar are authenticity, passion and training.

"You need to be proud of what you are doing. In a restaurant you cannot do the job without a lot of passion," he tells *Oi*. It's a pride he instills in his staff who he trains regularly so they stay abreast of the changing menu and maintain consistent standards of service. "We train our team as we would train them in France."

They're tutored in gastronomy as well as service. Most of the staff have tasted a majority of the restaurant's dishes, and last year Thierry took his restaurant manager to France to experience French cuisine in its birthplace.

Our Meal

La Villa is housed in a stunning white French villa that was originally built as a private house. It features tables outdoors dotted around a swimming pool, and a more formal dining room inside with high ceilings, an exhibition of German artworks (available for sale) and an imposing curved staircase leading to Thierry and Tina's residence. Tina, who recently gave birth to their first child, is his wife and manages front of house and marketing for the business.

The restaurant's intimate space seats only 50 diners to ensure personalized service - so bookings are advised, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings.

We found dining at La Villa was more of an experience than a meal, largely due to Thierry's commitment to authenticity. "I cannot forget my heritage," says the chef, who hails from the south of France, a fact reflected in many of his dishes.

Adding to the experience is a continuous teaser of fresh warm breads proffered soon after being seated, expertly baked by Thierry's godfather - a retired pastry chef.

This is followed by a tasting plate of three delicious appetizers, our favorite being baby tomatoes dipped in caramel and served on a skewer - a sort of savory mini version of a toffee apple. It's moorish with the soft juicy tomato exploding in your mouth when you crunch through the hard toffee shell.

La Villa offers several degustation menus that showcase Thierry's southern expertise and range in price from VND730,000 - VND1.73 million. But we decided to choose our own starters and mains, all washed down with a bottle of 2007 Nova Roma



Some of the temptations to be had at La Villa, including the Caillette (bottom left)



Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape - which seemed like a bargain at about VND1.5 million.

Our favorite starter was a Caillette - a dish Thierry makes using his grandfather's recipe. It's a meatball comprising of pork meat, pork liver mixed with pork fat, thyme, rosemary, tomato and spinach and stuffed with goat's cheese before being roasted. Caillette is a specialty in the south of France, and the Mounon family's version is tender, tasty and smooth, an indulgence for pork lovers.

La Villa's main course offer is broad, with a large range of fish and meat dishes to satisfy any dietary desires. The dishes we enjoyed have since been replaced by a new menu, but based on our experience, we'd highly recommend the roast Australian lamb tenderloin with thyme, rosemary stuffed tomato and snails ratatouille, or the Iberian Black pork *lomo* in sesame crust with broad bean puree, tarragon flavored juice and crispy pancetta.

Afterwards, there are plenty of sweet

desserts to choose from, but you'd be mad to miss the cheese trolley. The staff here know their cheese and can recommend from a dizzying array of cheese blocks before slicing to choice; it's a dose of theatre to round the night off. Well almost round it off. Thierry's team also serves a complimentary tasting plate of sweets - in our case a melt-in-the-mouth macaroon, together with a meringue and a soothing dose of homemade limoncello.

Starters here range from VND290,000 to VND490,000 for the seasonal pan fried scampi, *mizuna* salad and *beluga malossol* caviar cappuccino. Mains from VND410,000 to Canadian lobster for VND1.8 million if you're really feeling adventurous with the credit card.

La Villa offers something very special for the romantic night out, a special occasion or for tourists with discretionary income - an escape from the chaos of downtown Ho Chi Minh City. ■

LA VILLA

RATING:



5 Stars

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082 / 090 812 8860

reservation@lavilla-restaurant.com.vn

Open Monday to Saturday

Lunch from 11.45am to 3pm (last order 1.30pm)
Dinner from 6.45pm to late (last order is 9.30pm)

HOW OI REVIEWS RESTAURANTS

Oi reviews restaurants anonymously. If our reviewer likes them we return to interview the owner so we can tell their story. Our reviews are independent and our own and are not vetted or approved by the restaurant prior to publication

Saigon Cooking Class



IMAGE BY NAM QUAN

bakeries

Brodard Bakery

  Brodard Bakery has been operating in Saigon for over 30 years. It provides finely crafted cakes for all occasions in addition to ice cream, pastries, chocolate and tarts.
95 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 2416
brodardnguyenhue@brodardbakery.com
www.brodardbakery.com
6am - 10pm

Cakewalk Cupcakes

  Small boutique cupcake shop offers cupcakes with panache. Traditional cupcakes as well as new, creative flavors are sure to satisfy everyone who is compelled to bend to the will of their sweet tooth.
84 Nguyen Cong Tru, DI
6295 9087
helena@cakewalkvn.com
www.cakewalkvn.com
10am - 9pm

Givral

The cakes and tradition of this unique cake shop have captivated generations of Vietnamese customers. With many outlets throughout the city, this particular store was reopened in 2010 on its original site at Vincom A, built on the old Eden complex.
171 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 8659
www.saigongivral.com
6am - 10pm

Harvest Baking

  Harvest Baking offers a delivery-based bakery service with a charitable focus, teaching young Vietnamese hopefuls how to bake delicious breads and cakes through their food training program.
30 Lam Son, Tan Binh
3547 0577
harvestbaking@yahoo.com
harvestbaking.net
7am - 5pm Monday-Saturday

Kinh Do Bakery

  Kinh Do Bakery makes reasonably priced baked goods to-go, such as cakes and cupcakes, tarts, sandwiches, Vietnamese "banh bao", Western-style hamburgers and mini-pizzas and gelatin-based desserts.
128A Hai Ba Trung, DI
3829 6552
kinhdobakery.vn
6am - 10.30pm

La Doree

Providing patrons with over 50 varieties of cakes, along with a rich sandwich menu from luxurious French-designed premises. La Doree is the best place in town for macaroons.
216 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3822 1718
www.ladoree.com
7am - 9.30pm

Nhu Lan Bakery

One of the most famous and prestigious local brands of bakeries in the city, Nhu Lan Bakery supplies bakery products, cakes, bread, ham, sausage, poultry, roasted pork, and dried foods.
50 Ham Nghi, DI
3829 2970
www.nhulan.vn
4am - 12am

Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

Pat'a Chou

French-style bakery with charming décor. Specializing in baguettes, fresh croissants of various varieties, small quiches, and cakes for every occasion.
74B Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 8179
ngllvivan@gmail.com
www.pat-achou.com
5am - 10pm

Savouré Bakery

Shops have a wide selection of cookies, sweet and savory breads and cakes including cashew chocolate, taro and orange. Custom cakes can be ordered for weddings and holidays.
Unit E3, 1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3914 3773
www.savourébakery.com

Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

The bakers at Schneider's offer fresh, healthy, delicious breads, cakes, and pastries, introducing Ho Chi Minh City to eight centuries of German baking tradition.
27 Han Thuyen, DI
2229 6910
www.schneiders-finest.com
9.30am - 9pm

Tous Les Jours

  A Korean owned French-style bakery franchise serving fresh baked bread and popular pastries, all baked on-site.
180 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8302
6am - 11pm

bars

Allez Boo

  A popular bar in Saigon featuring tropical bamboo decor, multiple levels and a DJ spinning funky beats. This unique bar offers a wide range of beers, shakes, spirits cocktails and food throughout the day.
187 Pham Ngu Lao, DI
6291 5424
allezboo@hcm.fpt.vn
24 hours

Aito Heli Bar

 From the 52nd floor of the Bitexco, you can enjoy sweeping panoramic views of the city's skyline. Try the tapas tasting platters, sip on French Champagne, or choose from the selection of fine wines, local and international beers available.
Level 52 Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6291 8752
info@altosaigon.com
www.cirussaigon.com

Bernie's Bar & Grill

 An Irish bar and restaurant serving international cuisine like pizza, burgers, pasta and more. Celebrates happy hour from 5 to 7pm, and frequently provides live music.
19 Thai Van Lung, DI
3822 1720
www.berniesbar.com.vn
7.30am-11pm

Blue Gecko

  Blue Gecko provides a classic bar experience complete with a pool table,

darts board, cold beer and friendly staff. Guests can watch live sports and relax in the comfortable ambience of the bar.

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

Bootleg DJ Café

 Modern, moody, and minimalist cafe bar with reasonable prices by day, chic lounge with DJs playing by night. Has a limited menu of sandwiches and other health-conscious Italian fare.
9 Le Thanh Ton, DI
090 760 9202
dorutudose@gmail.com
9.30am - 1am

Boston Sports Bar

  Located in the heart of the backpacker area, Boston Sports Bar is open 24 hours and provides guests with a modern bar-going experience. The bar boasts a pool table, live sports on LCD TVs, and western food.
28/4 Bui Vien, DI
6656 6388
bostonpizzavn@gmail.com
24 hours

Carmen Bar

Carmen Bar features a small cavern-like entrance with rough rock walls decorated with ambient lighting. With an exclusive range of drinks and cocktails, guests can relax while enjoying tunes from an excellent Flamenco band.
8 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3829 7699
5pm - 11.30pm

Charm Bar

Unassuming expat bar in the central city with table soccer and an upstairs floor for private functions. Charm holds an understated air of class within the expat bar district, and is the favorite of its series of regular patrons.
58 Huynh Thuc Khang, DI
3915 3826
thecharmvg@yahoo.com

Chilli Pub

A fun place to unwind, Chilli Pub has friendly staff, light pub food, weekly quiz nights (Mondays), darts and televised sport.
104 Ho Tung Mau, DI
8376 3372

Chu Bar

 At this beautiful, laid back venue, tourists and locals alike can sit around Chu's large oval bar or on luxurious padded benches. It has a full cocktail menu as well as a short menu of snacks and sandwiches.
158 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 3907
7am - Midnight

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

  Located near Turtle Lake, this stunning bar offers panoramic views of Saigon. Guests can peruse an extensive international wine list or choose from an array of creative cocktails and international beers.
Level 667, Hai Nam Building, 2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc, D3
090 944 5544
12pm - Late

Ginger 60

 A low-key expat bar with an extensive drink menu and live music in a friendly atmosphere.
60 Ton That Thiep, DI
093 772 1011

4pm - 12am

Go2

  Go2 is a popular nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.
187 De Tham, DI
3836 9575
9am - 5am

Hard Rock Café

  Memorabilia from Hard Rock's iconic collection adorns the walls of Hard Rock Café Ho Chi Minh City and there is live music most nights. Located in the Kumho Plaza complex.
39 Le Duan, DI
6291 7595
www.hardrockcafe.vn
11.30am - 2am

Ice Blue

 A small, atmospheric, emphatically English-style pub, Ice Blue is a popular meeting place for Ho Chi Minh City's expats with reasonably priced drinks, friendly staff and a cozy atmosphere. Great place to play darts.
54 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 2664
icebluepub@yahoo.com
3pm - 1am

Kim's Tavern

  An expat bar on the edge of the downtown shopping district renowned for friendly, attractive staff, cold beer, and a relaxed 'local pub' environment.
20 Huynh Thuc Khang, DI
090 777 5141
4pm - 1am

Lindo

  Cozy sports bar with big screen TVs and restaurant quality meals. The Sunday afternoon "Sausage Sizzle" and other weekend events make this an appealing venue for expats any day of the week.
149 Ton That Dam, DI
3915 3149
4pm - 11pm

Long Phi Oi's Pick

One of the staples in the backpacker district, Long Phi is a no-frills bar that doubles as a cheap diner serving some fairly decent French and European cuisine.
207 Bui Vien, DI
3837 2704
6pm to very late, Tuesday - Sunday

M52 Bar

  A bar catering primarily to foreigners. Offers a simple setting for a night of drinking in the company of friends.
34 Ton That Thiep, DI
3821 0151
5pm - 12am

Number Five Bar

Number Five Bar has become notorious for its "all you can drink" draught tiger beer offer. Attractive waitresses are always enthusiastic contestants on the billiards table.
44 Pasteur, DI
3915 3150
heinzvn@gmail.com
3pm - 1am

O'Brien's Oi's Pick

Two-storey Irish-themed bar & restaurant furnished to high standard. O'Brien's promotes a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. Known for its excellent food



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

Having lived off and on in Vietnam since 2007, **Barbara Adam** now works online as a corporate communication consultant while blogging about food and other things at **TheDropoutDiaries.com**, and runs street food tours through **Saigon Street Eats** along with her Vietnamese husband

All About *Di Nhau*

Learn the ins and outs of sidewalk drinking



IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

FOR MONTHS I was excluded from the post-work *di nhau* sessions. My Vietnamese colleagues would tell me - usually the next day - how they sat around on tiny plastic chairs on the sidewalk, drinking, downing a range of tapas-like snacks and swapping tall stories with the boss. One of only five foreigners working at the company, and the only one who had never been asked to join the boss for an after-work drink, I felt quite left out.

Eventually, my boss extended an invitation and there I was finally in the in-crowd, settling into a baby-sized chair at 2am as delivery guys behind us organised sky-high stacks of newspapers on their motorbikes.

Completely unaware of the conventions of these gatherings, usually the domain of men, I committed *faux pas* after *faux pas*, cementing my boss's belief that inviting a big

foreign woman out drinking was a bad idea.

Get Into The Drink

A *nhau* session usually starts with a beer order. Watch what the host orders and drink the same brand he does. Locals consider Heineken to be a 'high class' beer, so cans of Heineken on - and under - the table is a sign that these revelers have class.

The host will often order a few of his favourite dishes, along with what he thinks the assembled drinkers will enjoy. Anyone can order anything they like, even though they're not paying, but it would be very impolite to order the most expensive dish just because it's expensive.

The key thing to remember when going drinking with Vietnamese people is that every sip of beer should be toasted. Initially, the toasts will be the famous "*mot,*

hai, ba, vo (pronounced yo!)" The toasts are often shortened to simply "*do*" and the ritual gets messier as the hours pass by, especially when a stronger spirit is introduced.

Whoever presents the bottle of tequila, rice wine or scotch is usually in charge of the distribution of the fiery liquor, and everyone generally shares one shot glass. The bottle owner will pour and down the first shot, and will then pour another one for his nominated victim, who, out of respect, is expected to drink.

And it's about now that the drinking games begin. The most popular game is for one drinker to lift his glass, shout out someone's name and then offer a challenge of "100 percent," meaning the intended person has to match the challenger in emptying his glass. If you're picked, it's sometimes possible to negotiate it down to 50 or 20 percent.

While it's acceptable not to drink alcohol at all, trying to switch from beer to soft drinks can be met with a bit of ribbing - anything from good-natured jesting to relatively aggressive insistence that you drink more.

While a drinking session can simply be a group of friends splitting the bill evenly with the richer or more generous ones perhaps throwing in a little extra, they can also be 'hosted' with whoever doing the inviting also doing the paying. If you're invited, don't try to grab the bill, but graciously allow the host to pay as he would graciously allow you to pay if you'd issued the invitation. It's considered poor form to even try to see the total of the bill.

Leaving early is an option if you want to stop drinking, although if you're out with your boss, it could be considered quite rude to leave before he has had enough. However, if leaving seems the only way to avoid lethal alcohol poisoning, by all means leave. Just apologize profusely and confess to being very weak.

Curious about a dish or food-related custom that you'd like to see featured in our column? Email us at food@oivietnam.com ■

menu, this is a fun place to socialize while shooting pool, playing darts, or chatting with the friendly staff.

74/A3 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 3198
www.irish-barsaigon.com
11am - 1am; Sundays 4pm - 1am

Olive Bar

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

17A6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
090 973 3304
pierehanh20@yahoo.com

Phatty's

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

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1
3821 0796
info@phattysbar.com
www.phattysbar.com
9am to midnight

Qing

Qing is a great place to relax and imbibe. Upstairs guests can enjoy an ethereal spa experience and then head downstairs for a unique, classy place to drink.

110 Pasteur, D1
3915 2979
frackqing@yahoo.com

Red Bar & Restaurant

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

3rd Floor, 70-72 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
2229 7017
8am - 2am

Saigon Retro

One of the newest expat bars on the block, offering home-cooked western fare upstairs and friendly bar service downstairs. Live sport on screen, including English Premier League.

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

Sheridan's Irish Pub **Oi's Pick**

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

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

Slate

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

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

Spotted Cow

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

111 Bui Vien, D1
3920 7670
spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com
11am - 12pm

Storm P

Storm P restaurant and bar is named after the famous Danish cartoonist Robert Storm Petersen, and it's the only Danish restaurant in Vietnam.

5B Nguyen Sieu, D1
3827 4738
Storm-saigonvn@yahoo.com
www.stormp.vn

10am - late

Vasco's

Stylish bar, restaurant and cocktail lounge in a converted colonial style house. European and Asian fare downstairs with extensive wine list and cocktails. DJs perform upstairs at night.

74/7D Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 2888
vascosd1@vascosgroup.com
www.vascosgroup.com

cafés

AMI Café

A dimly-lit atmospheric venue hosting live music and with a fully-stocked bar.

133 Hai Ba Trung, D1

AQ Coffee

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

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

Bobby Brewer's

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

45 Bui Vien, D1
3920 4090
www.bobbybrewers.com
6.30am - 11pm

Café Ban Sonate

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

53 Dang Dung, D1
3290 6004

Caffè Fresco

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

121 Le Loi, D1
3821 1009
info@fresco.com.vn
www.fresco.com.vn
6am - 12am Monday through Saturday

Café Terrace

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

Ground Floor & First Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3821 4958
8am - 10pm

Café Vuon Kieng

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

10B Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 3279
7.30am - 11pm

Chi's Cafe

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

40/31 Bui Vien, D1
3836 7622
9am - 10pm

Ciao Cafe

An icon in downtown HCMC, Ciao café features two floors serving simple food,

coffee, smoothies and ice cream – and an opulent lounge bar on the top floor. Antique tiles mix with velvet curtains and stylish paintings to make this a memorable chill out environment.

74-76 Nguyen Hue, D1
40 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
38231130
ciaocafe.vn/en/brand/1-ciao.html
7am - 11pm

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

39 Le Duan, D1
3824 4903
www.coffeebean.com.vn
7am - 11pm

Cosmo Lounge

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

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 5848
8am - 9pm

Cooker's Nest

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

13 Tu Xuong, D3
2241 2043
cookrucafe@yahoo.com
8am - 10.30pm

Crêperie & Café

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

Galaxy Co, 5 Han Thuyen, D1
7am - 10.30pm

Elle Cafe

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

Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 45 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
6291 8766
7am - 11pm

Geisha's Coffee and Tea House

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

85 Pasteur, D1
3829 4004
enquiry@geishacafe.com
www.geishacafe.com
8am - 10pm

Hi-End Coffee

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

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

Highlands Coffee

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

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1

i-Box Cafe

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

135 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 6718
8am - 10pm

ID Café

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, D1
7.30am - 11pm

Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 0443
cafebartkesera@gmail.com
keserakesera.com
6am - 11pm Monday through Friday; 7.30am - 11pm Saturday

Kita Coffee

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

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

Kopi Beans

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
6684 4788
kopibeans@yahoo.com
www.kopibeans.com.vn
8am - 10pm

L'Anmien Dining Cafe

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

76A Le Lai, D1
38212718
7am - 10pm

The Living Room

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

40-42 Dong Du, D1
3822 0377
robert.clark@thelivingroom.com.vn
10am - 3am

L'Usine

Proof that international, independent retail is possible in Ho Chi Minh City, L'Usine serves top-quality espresso coffee and great European café food. Guests can also peruse clothing and art deco items.

First Floor, 151 Dong Khoi, D1
6674 3565
info@lusinspace.com
www.lusinspace.com
9am - 9pm

Le Tokyo Baum

Popular Japanese cake café with quiet seating area, specializing in orange cakes.

46 Nguyen Van Trang, D1
3926 0388
8am - 10pm

NYDC

NYDC offers a modest selection of wholesome western dishes and desserts - steaks, burgers, fish and chips - and gourmet caffeine addicts will cue up for the enormous elephacino.

Ground Floor, Metropolitan, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 7955
marketing@nydc.com.vn
www.nydc.com.vn
7am - 11pm

May Coffee

A superb, friendly, and inexpensive little café most notable for its perfect view of the Cathedral tower bells and close

proximity to the post office.

1 Cong Xa Paris, D1
3827 7099
www.maycoffee.com
7.30am - 11.30pm

Paris Deli

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

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3821 6127
9am - 10pm

Passio Coffee to Go

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

112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 0100
093 346 8007
hdd310@gmail.com
www.passiocoffee.com
6.30am - 11pm

Princess and the Pea

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

63/18 Pasteur, D1
093 635 3179
princess.and.the.pea.pasteur@gmail.com
8am - 10.30pm

Regina Coffee

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

84 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 4204
www.facebook.com/coffeeregina/info
7am - 11pm

Soho Coffee

Two level local cafe chain serving light meals, coffee and local chilled drinks.

185 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3839 5038
gopy@soho.vn
www.soho.vn
7am - 11pm

Stella Restaurant & Cafe

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

119-121 Bui Vien, D1
3836 9220
www.stellacaffe.com
7am - 11.30pm

Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

26B-C Le Loi, D1
3825 1270
office@trungnguyen.com.vn
www.trungnguyen.com.vn
7am - 10.30pm

The Serenata Cafe

The Serenata Cafe is a peaceful, relaxing oasis in a French Colonial house. This cafe embraces nature with plants, fishponds, and small fountains, and offers music in the evenings.

6D Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
3930 7436
7am - 11pm

Windows

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

do well.

12 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
38238408
7am - 12am

chinese

Dragon Court

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

11-13 Lam Son Square, D1
3827 2566
10am - 2.30pm; 5pm - 2am; Sundays from 8am.

Hung Ky Mi Gia

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

20 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3822 2673
8am - 1am

Kabin

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

Renaissance Riverside Hotel,
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033
www.marriott.com
12pm - 2.30pm, 6pm - 10pm

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 2828
www.libaisaigon.com
11am - 2.30pm; 6.30pm - 10pm

Shi-Fu Dim sum

Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant specializing in dim sum, with modern Chinese décor and over 68 dim sum dishes.

139A Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 1111
info@shifu.vn
www.dimsumhouse.vn
7am - 12am

french

Alibi Restaurant and Bar

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

5 Nguyen Sieu, D1
3825 6257
ask@alibi.vn
www.alibi.vn
10am - late daily

Au Manoir de Khai

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

251 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3930 3394
aumanoir@khaiilkcorp.com
www.aumanoirdekhai.com
9am - 10pm

Bon Appetit

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

78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
090 789 8345
9am - 2.30pm; 5pm - 10pm

Bonjour Restaurant

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

150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1
3926 0699
bonjourresto.com
7am - 10pm

Cordon Blue

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

38 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3822 5216
info@cordonblue.vn
www.cordonblue.vn
10am - 2pm; 5pm - 10pm

La Brasserie de Saigon

Set in a trendy space featuring art nouveau décor and intricate iron spiral staircases, La Brasserie de Saigon presents authentic French cuisine with a modern twist under the eye of Iron Chef Vietnam David Thai.

38 Dong Du, D1
012 046 99154
contact@labrasseriendesaigon.com
11.30pm - 2.30pm; 6pm - 12am

La Camargue

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

74/17 Hai Ba Trung, D1
11am - 2pm; 6pm - 10.30pm

La Creperie

La Creperie serves up typical food from the Brittany region like savory galettes, crepes, ciders and fresh oysters, in a relaxed atmosphere.

17/7 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 7070
hochiminhcity@lacreperie.com.cn
www.lacreperie.com.cn
11am - 11pm

La Fourchette

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

9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 8143
www.lafourchette.com.vn
12pm - 2.30pm, 6pm - 10pm

La Nicoise

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

56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 3056
7am - 9pm, closed Sunday evenings

Le Bordeaux

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

72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh
3899 9831
090 393 6633
bordeaux@hcm.vnn.vn
restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn
11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm

Le Bouchon De Saigon

Red and white checked tablecloths and closely set tables make Le Bouchon de

Saigon the place to go for a casual, classic French bistro experience.

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
3829 9263
098 520 5100
alexis@lebouchoudesaigon.com
www.lebouchoudesaigon.com
11am - 2.30pm; 5.30pm - 10pm

L'Olivier

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

Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555
www.sofitel.com
11.30am - 2pm; 6pm - 10pm

Minh Kha Café (K Café)

Located in the bustling backpacker's area of Saigon, K cafe caters to expatriates offering a wide range of western foods.

28 Do Quang Dau, D1
9765 52042
paolo@kcafevietnam.com
www.kcafevietnam.com/En/index.php
10am - 10.30pm

Ty Coz

conscious eaters who crave Indian standbys like spinach naan and chicken tandoori.
40/3 Bui Vien, D1
3508 3777
11am - 11pm daily

italian

Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.
Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, D1
3520 9099
6.30am - 10.30pm

Casa Italia

Italian owned & run, Casa Italia's menu ranges from home-style cooking that includes steaks, seafood, a large variety of homemade pastas, jumbo salads, appetizers and the best pizzas.
86 Le Loi, D1
3824 4286
www.casaitalia.com.vn
10am - 11pm

Good Morning Vietnam

Italian restaurant with a unique menu including traditional Italian dishes. The restaurant is conveniently located in a beautiful old house in the heart of Saigon, well integrated in the local architecture.
197 De Tham, D1
3837 1894
www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com
9am - 12am

Lucca ✓ *Oi's Pick*

A Brooklyn-style Italian eatery upstairs with an adjoining bar. Downstairs is a relaxing cafe offering generous breakfasts, simple cafe fare for lunch and some of the best espresso coffee you'll find in the city.
88 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3915 3692
8am - 11pm

Opera Restaurant

A contemporary, casual trattoria-style Italian restaurant overlooking the Opera House, Opera is located within Park Hyatt Saigon specializing in authentic pizza baked in a wood-fired oven, pasta and homemade Italian dishes.
1st floor Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, D1
3824 1234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com
6am - 11pm

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients.
125 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3821 6677
yvonne.trinh@sarpinos.vn
www.sarpinos.vn

japanese

Ajisen Ramen

One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.
120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
3822 0522
info@ajisen.com.vn
www.facebook.com/Ajisen.Vietnam
10am - 10pm

Aki Japanese Restaurant

A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes.
15/9 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 9083
11.30am - 2pm; 4.30pm - 11pm

Cam On Restaurant

Cam On specializes in Japanese health food, with a dedication to helping men and women maintain their beauty and health by providing quality cuisine with natural ingredients.
30 Thai Van Lung, D1
3823 3955
www.cam-on.asia
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 10pm

Dragon Hotpot

Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine. Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines.
122-124 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3825 8842
info@dragonhotpot.vn
dragonhotpot.vn
11am - Late

Inaho Restaurant

This unique venue specializes in traditional sushi & sashimi as well as hot pot dishes. Couples can retreat to the upstairs area; it's far more private than the downstairs bar.
4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3829 0326
11am - 2pm, 5.30pm - 10pm

K Cafe

K Cafe Sushi is a large Japanese restaurant; an ideal place to gather for a business lunch or for a social dinner.
74A4 Hai Ba Trung, D1
38245355
090 391 2522
K-cafe@hcm.vnn.com
www.yakatabune-saigon.com
11am - 2pm, 5pm - 11pm

Osaka Ramen

Traditional Japanese noodle restaurant offering traditional Ramen dishes as well as Japanese/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
67 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
10am - 10pm

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.
99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
6291 1036
info@sakurasaku.vn
sakurasaku.vn
11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Sumo BBQ

Sumo BBQ is a rising star amongst Japanese venues in Saigon, offering smokeless table BBQ and a unique buffet/a la carte concept: get whatever you want from the menu, as much as you like. Free birthday beer specials on arrangement.
300 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 4757
sumobbq.com.vn
10.30am - 10.30pm

Tokyo Deli

Tokyo Deli's menu consists of a wide range of distinctive and delicious meals, prepared by specialists to create pure Japanese flavor. The menu is always being changed and improved.
240 Le Thanh Ton, D1
5404 2244
info@tokyodeli.com.vn
tokyodeli.com.vn
11am - 11pm

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ

It provides a fusion of Asian cuisines with dishes from Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Their menu is interesting and diverse, with many delectable seafood options.
42 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3823 3232
vickis.com.vn
10.30am - 3pm; 5pm - 10pm

Yuki

Yukie is a popular Japanese restaurant located in the backpacker area of District 1. Offering authentic Japanese cuisine at affordable prices.
99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
3824 2754
yoshio440yso@gmail.com
yukirestaurant.mysite.vn
10am - 2pm; 4pm - 10pm

korean

Hana Restaurant

Japanese-Korean fusion in the heart of D1. Hana has contemporary decor with a private, open feel. Its broad menu includes both cooked and raw fish in addition to traditional hot pot with fish eggs, rice and vegetables.
8 Cao Ba Quat, D1
3829 5588
9am - 10pm

Kimsine

A place to enjoy Korean style dishes in the city center. Kimsine's menu is extensive, offering everything from instant noodles to chicken's feet.
8A/5D2 Thai Van Lung, D1
7306 4045
094 467 2281
jymimil1@hanmail.net
10am - 3am

Mi Han Quoc

This franchise has gained popularity in Ho Chi Minh City for having successfully adapted the spiciness of Korean cuisine to the local Vietnamese palate, serving perfectly balanced noodle dishes.
92 Ham Nghi, D1
3914 1565
info@mihanquoc.vn
www.mihanquocvn.com
8am - 11pm

Seoul House

Seoul House is a well-known two-story Korean restaurant with a simple, cozy atmosphere. Its menu contains Korean favorites like Banchan, hotpots, grilled meat, clay pot mixed rice, and kim chi tofu soup.
33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4297
091 979 5033
seoul.house@yahoo.com.br
7am - 10pm

steakhouses

Corso Steakhouse and Bar

Corso Steakhouse and Bar operates under an open kitchen concept, bringing together an exciting menu of Asian and European dishes with a focus on grilling. Guests can choose from a wide variety of wines and spirits.
117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5368
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn
6pm - 11pm

Dragon Steak

Specializing in generous portions of Wagyu cuts; they're so enormous that the restaurant runs a cheeky competition - finish one within half an hour, and it's free.
138 Ton That Dam, D1
3821 0288
info@steak.vn
www.steak.vn
11am - late

El Gaucho ✓ *Oi's Pick*

Serves great Argentinean steaks, hamburgers and more. A great place to entertain clients or friends from overseas. With outlets in Hanoi and Bangkok too.
5D Nguyen Sieu, D1
38251879
www.elgaucho.asia

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American Chinese Food
Full Menu
www.woknroll.vn
SUPER FAST DELIVERY!
0122-690-8881
We wok hard for you!
Spicy Orange Chicken

New York Steakhouse

Serves some of the best rib-eye, New York strip and tenderloins in town. Also has an extensive wine list to complement each cut.
 25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
 www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99

Not a traditional steakhouse per se, but Pho 99 is known for its excellent filet mignon steaks made out of Cu Chi beef. Also serves great pho.
 139 Nguyen Trai, DI
 3925 2791
 6am - 2.30pm

Wild Horse Salon

Cowboy-themed western steakhouse with an impressive exterior on trendy Thai Van Lung. Wild Horse serves high-quality Tex Mex/American cuisine with enormous servings.
 8A/IDI Thai Van Lung, DI
 3825 1901
 10am - 2pm; 4pm - 11.30pm

Spice

Spice Thai restaurant has been a favorite among the locals in Saigon since 2003. This multicultural eatery offers Thai food & seafood in a décor fusing Oriental & Mediterranean artifacts.
 27C Le Quy Don, D3
 3930 7873
 thaifood@spicevn.com
 www.spicevn.com
 11am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10pm

Thai Express

Thai Express is the world's largest Thai restaurant chain. Enjoy fantastically authentic Thai cuisine at reasonable prices in a relaxed, contemporary atmosphere.
 8A Le Thanh Ton, DI
 6299 1338
 www.thaiexpress.com.vn
 10.30am - 10pm

vietnamese

An Vietnamese Bistro

An Restaurant offers exquisite dishes from the North, Central, and South of Vietnam, served by well-trained waiters and waitresses dressed in traditional Southern clothing.
 71/5-6 Mac Thi Bui, DI
 3825 8275
 11am - 10pm

Banh Xeo 46A

Although known for a wide range of Vietnamese specialties, the local pancake stuffed with herbs and prawns is its tastiest dish.
 46A Dinh Cong Trang, DI
 3824 1110
 10am - 9pm

Bo Ne Le Hong

Bo Ne Le Hong is a popular Vietnamese restaurant specializing in beefsteak. It has a rich, diverse menu, and also offer fresh fruit juices.
 489/27/39 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan
 3990 5106
 11.30am - 22.30pm

Cha Ca La Vong

This venue only serves Cha Ca, a traditional Hanoi dish. Cha Ca is a salad made out of pieces of fish and spring onion stir-fried in a hotpot.
 36 Ton That Thiep, DI
 3915 3343
 7.30am - 10pm

Hoa Tuc

Set in what used to be Saigon's opium refinery, Hoa Tuc serves up contemporary Vietnamese cuisine in a Parisian, art-deco atmosphere.
 74 Hai Ba Trung, DI
 3825 1676
 hoatuc@gmail.com
 www.hoatuc.com
 10.30am - 10.30pm daily

Hoi An Restaurant

Elegant restaurant in the style of the ancient town of Hoi An, specializing in the cuisine of that area.
 11 Le Thanh Ton, DI
 3823 1049
 hoian@orientalstarsgroup.com
 www.orientalsaigon.com.vn/hoian
 11.30am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10.45pm

Luong Son

Exotic beer garden style eatery famous for its barbecue beef. Luong Son also serves fear factor items such as scorpions, grubs, ostrich meat and crickets.
 31 Ly Tu Trong, DI
 3825 1330
 lsq.reservation@gmail.com
 www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan
 10am - 10pm

Mandarine **Or's Pick**

Mandarine is an elegant Vietnamese restaurant serving predominantly foreign clientele in a quiet, centrally-

located side street. Its award-winning menu is influenced by French and Vietnamese cuisine.

11A Ngo Van Nam, DI
 3822 9783
 mandarin@orientalstarsgroup.com
 www.orientalsaigon.com.vn/mandarine
 11.30am - 2pm; 5.30pm - 10.45pm

Marina Saigon

Marina Saigon is one of the leading seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
 172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
 3930 2379
 marinaseafood@ngocsuong.com.vn
 ngocsuong.com.vn
 10am - 11pm

Maxim's Nam An

Large and lavishly decorated, Maxim's Nam An restaurant serves Vietnamese cuisine in style. The carved wooden booths, completed with silk curtains, are a romantic hideaway for couples or small groups.
 13-15-17 Dong Khoi, DI
 3829 6676
 10am - 10pm

Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.
 160 Pasteur, DI
 3827 7131
 quananngon@hcm.vnn.vn
 www.quananngon.com.vn
 8am - 10pm

Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.
 4 Phan Chu Trinh, DI
 3822 2788
 pho2000.com.vn
 6am - 10pm

Pho 24

PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.
 71-73 Dong Khoi, DI
 3825 7505
 info@pho24.com.vn
 www.pho24.com.vn
 7am - 11pm

Royal Revolving Restaurant

The Royal Revolving Restaurant is a unique restaurant experience. Experience stunning views of the city while you spin around in the sky. The restaurant offers more than 50 Hong Kong inspired dishes and a bar that serves coffee and cocktails.
 3823 2232
 nhahanghoanggia@yahoo.com
 6am - 10am; 11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Saigon Vegan

Saigon Vegan is located in a casual and inviting space with high ceilings, dark wood tables, and lots of natural light. Guests can choose from over 100 vegan dishes, all of which are either soy or vegetable based.
 378/3 Vo Van Tan, D3
 3834 4473
 8.30am - 2pm; 4pm - 10pm

Sh Garden restaurant

Established in the 1930s, the Terrace restaurant is located at the corner of two of the oldest boulevards of Saigon, Nguyen Hue and Le Loi, where romantic memories of Saigon float around. This restaurant offers a variety of delicious traditional Vietnamese dishes.
 4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, DI
 6680 0188
 shgarden@gmail.com
 shgarden.com.vn
 10am - 11pm

Tin Nghia

A charming little venue serving vegetarian cuisine. Its quaint appearance hides the fact that it was the first international vegetarian restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City and an important center of the city's vegetarian culture.
 9 Tran Hung Dao, DI
 3821 2538
 7.30am - 1.30pm, 4.30pm - 7.30pm

Vietnam House

Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine. This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.
 93-95 Dong Khoi, DI
 3829 1623
 vietnamhouse@vietnamhousesaigon.com
 www.vietnamhousesaigon.com
 7am - 11pm

western/international

Al Fresco's

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

Beirut Shisha Bar

The Beirut Shisha bar offers fine Middle Eastern cuisine with imported meat to guarantee impeccable flavor. Shisha is the perfect way to relax after a long day in the city.
 74/13D Hai Ba Trung, DI
 3822188
 beirutbar.com
 4pm - late

Black Cat Restaurant

Originally envisioned as a fast food Vietnamese sandwich place, Black Cat Saigon now serves international food with a focus on burgers, most famously its "Big Cheese" featuring 500g of beef.
 13 Phan Van Dat, DI
 3829 2955
 www.blackcatsaigon.com
 7am - 11pm

Blu Bar and Grill

Blu Bar provides a wide range of Asian and Mediterranean specialties for breakfast, lunch, and dinner along with many unique beverage options.
 53 Vo Trung Toan, D2
 3744 4111
 7am - 11pm

The Burger Corner

Tasty, fresh homemade burgers with a range of ingredients aimed at satiating both foreign and local palates. Menu includes local 'rice burgers' and prices are well below those of international chains.
 43 Nguyen Hue, DI
 3821 0094
 www.theburgercorner.com.vn
 8am - 9.45pm

Café Central

Located in Sunwah Tower on Nguyen Hue Boulevard, Café Central Nguyen Hue is a dining destination for locals, expats, and tourists alike with a menu offering authentic Vietnamese cuisine and a large selection of international dishes.
 Ground Floor, Sunwah Tower,
 115 Nguyen Hue, DI
 3821 9303
 ccnh@vtinvestment.com
 cafecentral.wm vietnam.com/index.php
 7am - 12am

Hog's Breath Café

An Australian family diner and bar concept.

thai

Golden Elephant

A cozy and relaxing Thai style restaurant, serving an extensive collection of Thai specialties including noodles, curries, rice, stir-fries, soups, and a good range of seafood.
 34 Hai Ba Trung, DI
 3822 8554
 saigonssr@vnn.vn
 saigonssr@vnn.vn
 11am - 10pm

Jasmine Thai

A quiet, candle-lit affair complete with the ethereal tones of traditional music, guests can enjoy variations on dishes prepared in the Thai culinary tradition.
 85 Quoc Huong, D2
 35190038
 5pm - 9.30pm Tue-Sun

Koh Thai

Stunning Thai-chic decor and unique Siam cuisine make Koh Thai one of Saigon's most authentic and memorable Thai restaurants. Located in the Intercontinental complex, Koh Thai serves Asian inspired cocktails in a trendy lounge environment with chill music.
 1st floor, 39 Le Duan, DI
 3823 4423
 091 233 9138
 www.kothai.com.vn
 11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai

Lac Thai is a large, three-floor restaurant offering a wide range of Thai cuisine with signature dishes like Pad Thai, Tom Yum Koong, Chicken Satay and many others.
 71/2 Mac Thi Bui, DI
 3823 7506
 lacthai@hotmail.com
 9am - 9pm

Mai Thai

Mai Thai is a Thai restaurant offering an extensive menu with many Thai favorites. This two-storey restaurant features traditional decorations and friendly service.
 13 Ton That Thiep, DI
 3821 2920
 11am - 2pm, 5pm - 10pm

Malee Thai

A cute, central Thai venue decked out in royal purple decor, Malee is an intimate restaurant serving a wide range of consistently tasty dishes, although without the full effect of Thai cuisine's signature burn.
 37 Dong Du, DI
 3829 3029
 dttimphung2003@yahoo.com
 11am - 2pm; 5pm - 11pm

Renowned for quality steaks, seafood and other western fare served in an informal environment. Smoke-free indoors.

Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
3915 6066
090 381 8700
info@hogsbreathcafe.com.vn
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn
8am - 12am

Jaspas Restaurant

An easy-on-the-tongue and easy-on-the-eyes restaurant, stylish interior decorations and friendly service have led many patrons to rate this Australian-managed venue as being well-suited for family and business dining.

33 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 9925
012 262 68641
g.murphy@alfrescosgroup.com
www.alfrescosgroup.com
7am - 11pm

Jaspas Wine & Grill ✓ **Oi's Pick**

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

74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3827 0931
jaspas-hcm@alfrecogroup.com
alfrescosgroup.com
8.30am - 11.30pm

Khoi Thom

Khoi Thom, which translates to "fragrant smoke" features bright, colorful, Latin-American decoration inspired by renowned Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta. This unique eatery offers a hybrid of Vietnamese and Mexican flavors.

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
3930 0233
khoithom.com
10am - 11pm

Margherita

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

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
3837 0760
8am - 11pm

Mogambo Bar & Grill

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

50 Pasteur, D1
3825 1311
mogambo@saigonnet.vn
7am - 11pm

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

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

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

Subway

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

121 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4118
7.30am - 12am

Strata

Located on the 50th floor of the Bitexco tower, Strata offers a stunning dining experience with views over the city and a dessert bar with coffee and tea. Popular with tourists and locals seeking a unique location for a special occasion.

Level 50, Bitexco Financial Tower,
2 Hai Trieu, D1
086 291 8750
www.cirussaigon.com
10am - 10pm

Swiss Chalet

Authentic Swiss, German and Austrian home-style dishes served in a distinctively Swiss design environment with masses of polished pine and checked table cloths. Comprehensive wine list and moderate pricing make this a home away from home for Europeans.

54 Pasteur, D1
3915 3983
heinzvn@gmail.com
9.30am - 11pm

Warda

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

71/7 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
info@wardavn.com
8am - 12am

ZanzBar ✓ **Oi's Pick**

Long-standing modern European restaurant renowned for its dark amber interior design, unique European-inspired cuisine and varied wine list. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

41 Dong Du, D1
3822 7375
info@saigongourmetgroup.com
www.zanzbar.com/index.php
7am - 1am

Zoom Cafe ✓ **Oi's Pick**

Zoom cafe serves Tex-Mex and Vietnamese cuisine as well as running a Vespa tour service from within the cafe.

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



Saigon's favorite Indian restaurant is pleased to welcome Saigon's newest publication!

Baba's Kitchen
164 Bui Vien, District 1
phone: 083-838-6661 & 083-838-6662

Open 11am to 11pm
North & South Indian food
Halal & vegetarian dishes
Of course we can cater!
order online at vietnammm.com & eat.vn
"Baba brings India to Vietnam"

Pierre's Kebab in District 7





IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Ann Ha is Head of Social@Ogilvy and runs her own fashion and food blog at AnnHa.com

Wedding Belles

For some brides, choosing the right dress is equally as important as choosing the right groom



FOR MY BIG day, I was determined to scrap the idea of a traditional white dress and replace it with something completely different. I was looking forward to a wedding outfit that would be comfortable, fashionable and most importantly, more *me*. Dieu Anh (www.dieuanhspace.com) was the perfect person to achieve this. I've known Dieu Anh since I first saw her collections in Zen Plaza, her one-off pieces were unique, fun and bold. I quickly fell in love with the image she portrayed – that of a strong independent woman who knows what she wants in life and who likes to have fun with fashion. And as a supporter of local designers, the match was perfect. So it was only natural that she would design my wedding dress.

Together, we went through a four month process of building the concept which eventually resulted in two outfits. The first

dress needed to show off my best features – my shoulders and arms. We found a beautiful floral blue patterned material with a touch of sparkle, which Dieu Anh then mixed with a strong red fabric. Thankfully she included a high split to avoid me looking like a cupcake and also to reveal a bit of flesh. In order to complete the look, yet still keen on making me look more like a bride than a party-goer, she made a hair piece to fit in my up-do. I finished off the look with patterned suede cobalt platforms from Aldo.

My second choice of a casual white pantsuit didn't go well with the groom, or the audience. But I was confident it wouldn't look masculine and choosing pants is great for a wedding because they are tailored, practical and different enough to make a statement. We opted for an extremely low halter neck for the back, and a low cut front

to show off some cleavage. To further soften the look and to elongate my legs, she went for a delicate off-white fabric with stripes of the same tone.

Something Bling

Dieu Anh then spent many long nights hand sewing silver metal pieces onto the neck line for a bit of bling. The hat was a concept we took from the Vietnamese youth union uniform. And finally, super high t-strap peep-toe pumps with crystals all over the heels from Steve Madden pulled the outfit together. This ensemble saw me all the way from our very first dance, a LMEAO flash mob that took 10 lessons to learn, and stayed with me throughout the after-party until the sun rose on the first day of my new married life and a serious hangover.

It really was worth putting in the extra work with Dieu Anh to create two unique outfits for the big day.

What fashion forward topics would you like to read about in our monthly column? Email us with your ideas at fashion@oivietnam.com ■

TIPS FOR DESIGNING YOUR OWN GOWN

- Find a designer you have great chemistry with, someone you actually like
- Do your research. My bridal bibles were Pinterest, www.brides.com, www.theknot.com, and all the *Vogue* and *L'Official* fashion trend reports
- Understand your shape and dress for it
- Create texture by blending and mixing different fabrics
- Styling is everything

Hipster Chic

This month's mission was to reveal one particular group of young'uns whose hipster get-ups were so effortless we had to find out more

COMPILED BY **JAMES ALLEN** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN**



MIN KO

20
Graphic Design Student

HAT | VND60,000
Hoang Hoa Tham Market

GLASSES | VND200,000
www.thaobao.com

SHIRT | VND100,000
*Vintage Ralph Lauren at
Hoang Hoa Tham Market*

JEANS | VND400,000
Cheap Monday

SHOES | VND1,500,000
Creepers

BAG | VND1,200,000
Hoang Hoa Tham Market



KIM

19
Writer for 2! Magazine

Top | VND500,000
Mango (sale)

Skirt | VND400,000
Own design

Shoes | VND1,000,000
Sophie and Sam (Europe)

Bag | VND500,000
Accessorize



RIC

21
Interior Design Student

GLASSES | VND70,000
Ho Xuan Huong

OVERSIZED SHIRT | Gift
USA

JEANS | Gift
USA

SHOES | VND800,000
Le Van Sy

The List Fashion



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

eyewear

Dilusso

Selling many famous eyewear brands under Italian manufacturers such as Dolce & Gabbana, RayBan, Versace and Bvlgari. Provides high-quality products at an affordable price.

29A Dong Khoi, DI
3824 6469
090 921 0192
www.dilusso.com.vn

Eyewear Hut

Eyewear Hut offers prescription glasses, contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses and other devices. They also stock popular brands such as Luxottica, DeRigo, Charmant, Marcolin, Dolce & Gabbana, D & G, Tom Ford, Salvatore Ferragamo and more. Also caters to kids.

135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 1695
www.eyewearhut.com.vn

Eyewear Plaza

The largest shopping center for eyewear in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 1,000 products including sunglasses and prescription glasses.

33 Nguyen Du, DI
3829 5051

Oakley

Decades of Oakley innovation have led to a full array of market-leading products including performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics. The company continues to build on its heritage of authenticity by reinventing products from scratch to achieve superior quality and genuine innovation that delivers the unexpected.

28 Ton That Thiep, DI
3821 5712
www.oakley.com

Sunwear Boutique

With many locations around the city, this luxury eyewear store supplies many designer brands, including Burberry, Vogue, Blue Bay, and many others.

89-91 Nguyen Du, DI
3824 4397
info@sunwear.com.vn
www.sunwear.com.vn

ladieswear

Axara Paris - Saigon Center

Axara may have seduced the whole world, but its 2010 launch in Vietnam at the Vincom Centre is still making headway with modern young Vietnamese women entranced by its romantic, glamorous designs.

65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7655
www.axara.com

Banana Shop

Banana Shop provides everything a girl needs to be noticed in Ho Chi Minh City. Whether it be undergarments, shoes, bags, or jewelry, Banana Shop delivers with unique products from Hong Kong and the United States.

128 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3829 0061

Bebe

The shop sells its brand of women's clothing and apparel, dresses, jumpsuits, shoes and bags.

1st floor, Saigon center, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 4011
www.bebe.com

Cao Vinh Fashion

Specializes in formal Western-style shirts, Cao Vinh is distinctive if for

nothing else than its simple, intriguing website allowing customers to specify design elements.

69 Pasteur, DI
3824 5645
090 817 9129
lancaovinh@yahoo.com
caovintailors.com

Cashew

Fashion shop chain with 4 boutiques in HCMC. Specializes in women clothes and accessories. Designed by their own designers. Familiar brand in HCMC catwalk and Vietnam fashion industry.

38 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6683 9669
info@cashew.vn
www.cashew.vn

Diva Silk Boutique

Diva is all about silk, oriental glamour, luxury, and a feminine charm to match. The products in this little shop comprise both locally-woven first-grade silk garments and those imported from Thailand.

146 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 7153
divasilk2005vn@yahoo.com

Esprit

Hong Kong-based lifestyle apparel brand offering affordable casual streetwear from a two-story shop in the heart of downtown HCMC.

58 Dong Khoi, DI
3827 6085
www.esprit.com

Eva Gopa

Office fashion, street-style fashion, and evening dresses for women.

11E Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
3910 3877
boutique@evagopa.com
www.evagopa.com

Fit

Caters to women in their 20s.

44 Luu Van Lang, DI
info@fit.com.vn
fit.com.vn

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specialized in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, DI
3925 1495
www.gayavietnam.com

Kelly Bui

Launched in April 2010, the shop sells the most recent collections by the brand. The collections shown on the website are the same as those in-store.

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3936 9386
info@kellybui.vn
www.kellybui.vn

Khai Silk

Khai Silk is a favorite among local celebrities for its high quality tailoring, fabrics and service.

81 Dong Khoi, DI
3822 2856
khai-khaisilk@khaisilkcorp.com
www.khaisilkcorp.com

Kiwi Fashion

Kiwi offers contemporary designs at an affordable price. It was founded by former Vietnamese model Kim Hong Phung and houses the latest fashion trends exclusively designed by Josphine Geralda, one of the leading designers in London.

74C-74/1 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 8214
3822 1191

kiwifashion1@yahoo.com.vn
kiwi-london.com

La Bella

A Vietnamese fashion shop that carries dresses, skirts, tops and a large selection of bags and purses.

58-87 Pasteur, DI
3823 0172
9am - 9pm

Lyn Around

This is the Saigon branch of the international high-class fashion label Lyn Around. It is famous for its girly girl and street style.

1st Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 6575
www.lynaround.com

L'Usine

The central retail space offers famous fashion brands from around the world with full rotating stock.

First Floor, 151 Dong Khoi, DI
6674 3565
info@lusinespace.com
www.lusinespace.com

Maison de Bunga

Maison de Bunga is a specialty women's clothing store specializing in designers with floral motifs, hats, bags, and other accessories.

81 Pasteur, DI
3943 0990
maison@bungadebunga.com
www.bungadebunga.com

Mango

Mango is a Spanish fashion design company with over 2,000 stores around the world. Ho Chi Minh City is home to several of its branches. Mango sells fashion clothing for women including dresses, skirts, tops and accessories.

Unit 1-2, 1st Floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, DI
3914 7464
96 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3824 6624
mango.customerservice@maisonco.com
www.maisonco.com

Misa Collection

Well-known for tailoring bespoke ao dais.

67 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3829 4007
098 330 0469
hochauhang@yahoo.com

Ngan Private Collection

A collection of multi-brand fashion labels created by one of Vietnam's highly recognized fashion designers. Dedicated personal styling consultant available for those in need of their own stylist.

23 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6290 9391
www.nganasia.com

Shin

Vintage style ladies fashion, clothes and accessories by local designers.

122 Ly Tu Trong, DI
090 935 2369
lethithantruong@gmail.com
www.shinhouse.com

Sifa Fashion

Known for selling office wear for women.

192 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3825 0618
sifafashion.com

Song - Valerie Gregori McKenzie

French bohemian chic designs that caters to sophisticated women.

75 Pasteur, DI
3824 6986

song.stores@asiasongdesign.com
www.missongblog.blogspot.com

Sophilita

A simple Italian fashion brand with several branches in Vietnam, Sophilita mainly sells office, street, and casual, womenswear.

15C Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
6275 9019
thuthao@anacogroup.com
www.sophilita.vn

Umbrella

This fashion label caters to a higher end market with tailored bags to accessories.

35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
6276 2730
www.umbrella-fashion.com

Valenciani

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

1F/12 Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 2788
090 785 5788
adrian.ngn@gmail.com
www.valenciani.com

menswear

An Phuoc

An Phuoc Garment Manufacturing was established in 1992 with 50 workers and 40 sewing machines, specializing in manufacturing for exporting enterprises. Now it has transformed itself into a garment export company featuring handmade clothing and shoes.

182 Hai Ba Trung, DI

Maschio Shop

Colorful retro men's fashion, one of the quirkiest fine-quality local fashion stores in the central area.

168 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3829 2975
dungthaiba@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/pages/Maschio-We-Do-Fashion-Like-No-Others/146752785396111

Mizada

Since its inception in 2004, Mizada has become one of the leading luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. Mizada caters to both women and men with products such as T-shirts, jeans, coats, scarves, and much more.

105 Le Thanh Ton, DI
6673 4199
ntmzada@yahoo.com
www.mizada.com.vn

San Sciario Manhattan

Fashionable, smart menswear from the Viet Tien Garment Company, specializing in garment manufacture and trade equipment since the mid 70's.

1st Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, DI
3864 0800
090 316 6364
vtec@hcm.vnn.vn
www.viettien.com.vn

Santo Nero

Centrally-located purveyors of international Santo Nero brand "Italian gents wear".

23 Ly Tu Trong, DI
attilio.bottero@santonero.com
www.santonero.com

Veston Huy Hoang

Men's tailored fashions, specialising in suits. Expect to Pay: \$200 and upward for a suit, fabric included. Obviously, the better the quality of fabric, the higher the price. 70% of customers are foreigners.

65 Pasteur, D1
3822 4609
090 865 4988
thinphuhoang@gmail.com

shoes & accessories

Adidas Performance Store

Sells running shoes and sportswear by the famous German brand.
2nd Floor Bitexco Tower, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 2894
66 Le Loi, D1
3824 1455

Asian Fish

Serves made-to-order classic souvenirs, original ao dai designs, and is highly popular with Japanese customers. Also sells bags, sunglasses and clothing.
39/9 Mac Thi Bui, D1
3822 1839
nguyenlethanhhuyen@yahoo.com

Avocado

Airy and spacious shop for handbags and accessories.
117 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
0123 999 0099
www.shopavocado.com

Bam Skate Shop - VVT

Bam Skate Shop stocks a wide range of international brands for those in search of skating equipment and apparel.
228 Vo Van Tan, D3
090 878 9820
bamsk8shop@yahoo.com
www.bamskateshop.com.vn

Cara Diamond & Jewelry Vincom

One of the better-appointed jewelry counters at Vincom B, Cara sells boldly-designed pieces at reasonable rates.
Shop B28, First Floor, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1
carajewelry@yahoo.com
www.carajewelry.net

Charles & Keith

Singapore-based fashion retailer specialising in shoes, handbags and accessories at a mid range price point.
17-18 Nguyen Trai, D1

Compa Jewelry store

Compa Jewelry Store specializes in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds from the finest quality of raw materials that meet international standards. Compa Jewelry is also a manufacturer and importer of gemstones and fashion jewelry.
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3915 2151
www.compajewelry.com

Doc Martens

Small central-city outlet of the popular international Doc Marten brand with an extensive stock of the latest styles.
39 Le Loi, D1
3821 4931

Hong Anh Collections - LTT

Using fabrics such as silk and taffeta, the brand caters to a younger crowd. Stocks clothing, handbags, jewelry and neckties.
75 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3542
honganh@hcn.fpt.vn
www.honganh.com

Ice Accessories

ICE and ICE Accessories are the newest brands from Duy Anh Trading Co., Ltd. under the creative direction of Adrian Anh Tuan. This high end fashion hub is now open at the Saigon Centre. Each ICE collection offers 100 types of fashionable designs and colors.
Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
3521 0881
ice@duyanh.com
www.facebook.com/ice.brands

Ipa-Nima

With a focus on handbags and a design-first philosophy, Hong Kong expat Christina Yu's Ipa-Nima brand translates fashion trends into edgy accessories, steeped in soul.
77-79 Dong Khoi, D1
3515 3980

www.ipa-nima.com

ITALY Shoes Shop

Modest Italian-style mens shoes at local prices in the central area.
186 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3827 9813

Kim Ngon Jewelry

A counter in Tax building that buys and sells jewelry made from gold and gemstones.
A37-A39 Counter, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4874
thienlambi@yahoo.com

Kimsong

An open storefront that sells gold and gold-related jewelry
50 Le Loi, D1
3823 4414
090 821 3245

Kita Diamonds

Quality diamonds specialist with a professional showroom.
82 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 1510
kita@kitadiamonds.com.vn
www.kitadiamonds.com.vn

Lam Boutique

The shop sells clothing for women only and most of the items on offer are European casual vintage style with a touch of street chic. The clothes are made by the shop and has become quite popular among Vietnamese celebrities.
1st Floor, 71 Mac Thi Bui, D1
090 671 2309
www.lam-boutique.com

Le Hang Crystal Jewellery

With almost 20 years of experience in the design field, Le Hang's experienced group of staff create jewelry from fragments of Swarovski crystals.
101 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 3596
lh@phalehang.com
phalehang.com

Lua Exclusive Boutique

Prestige shop that sells exclusive Vietnamese silks.
83 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3822 5292

Pandora

Pandora designs, manufactures and markets hand-finished and modern jewelry made from genuine materials such as sterling silver, pearls and gemstones at affordable prices.
6 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3241
www.pandora.net

PNJ Nguyen Hue

PNJ was the first local jewelry company exporting products overseas. Since 1995, PNJ jewelry products have been introduced in Hong Kong Jewelry Fair, as well as exported to Denmark, Germany, US, Australia and is now entering the Dubai market.
Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 4854
www.pnj.com.vn

Puma

One of a network of Puma shops around town, this has a far more limited range than some of the other outlets, but scores on its convenient location.
1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 7464

Saigon Jewelry Company Ltd

Formerly known as the Saigon Jewelry Holding Company, SJC specializes in manufacturing and trading gold and jewels. The brand is well-recognized throughout Vietnam as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.
1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8844
info@sjc.com.vn
www.sjc.com.vn

Sapa Shop

Certainly one of the grooviest souvenir shops on Le Loi, much of the stock comprises ethnic handicrafts brought down direct from breathtaking Sapa.
76 Le Loi, D1

Shoes Hanoi

Cheap, centrally-located shoe store with babywear boutique at the doorway. Since 1929, they've been making and selling shoes for both men and women.
107 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5753
tienvu107@yahoo.com

Sophia Jewellery

Fine jewelry sold in an annex to the lobby of the Oscar Saigon Hotel.
68A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 8513

Tran Quoc Lan

Custom-makes shoes and sells shoes of all kinds.
97 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5453
quoclan97@yahoo.com.vn

Tuyet Lan

Tuyet Lan's tailor will help you design your own garment or choose from a colorful selection of exquisite hand-embroidered pieces.
91 Mac Thi Bui, D1
3827 7038
090 392 6286
tuyetlan_shop@yahoo.com

Viet Thanh

People still hunt Mekong crocodiles for their fine leather, and there's a healthy home-grown crocodile leather industry with this venue being one of the more upper-class of these establishments. Sells wallets, belts, handbags, keychains, and other small leather goods.
137 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 2735
info@vietthanhcrocodile.vn
www.vietthanhcrocodile.vn

tailors

ANH SILK

A little fashion shop near the Sheraton hotel selling both men's and women's clothing and with a fast turnaround tailoring service for silk garments.
151 Dong Khoi, D1
2211 9116
divasilk2005vn@yahoo.com

Cao Minh

Founded by Mr. Ly Minh in 1948, who dedicated his entire life to custom-tailoring works. Cao Minh Garment Private Enterprise was the first in Vietnam to successfully export its suits to Japan.
77 Mac Thi Bui, D1
3824 2547
info@caominh.com
www.caominh.com

Kim Dung Embroidery Tailor

Tailored outfits and specializing in Asian garments as well as Western suits and dresses for both domestic and foreign customers.
129 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 2077
012 7773 8146

Lam Tailor's

Considered the tailor of choice in the diplomatic community here, it had the honor to tailor a suit for President George W Bush when he was in Vietnam several years ago. They import their fabrics from England and Italy.
158C Dong Khoi, D1
3824 3830

Lam Vy

A small tailor shop near Ben Thanh market. Female tailor who specializes in shorts, skirts, business shirts and dresses.
217 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5087

Minh Doan Tailors Shop

Specializes in suits for men and women.
120 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1687

Phuong Anh

The shop stocks fine embroideries and brocade, with a 24 hour turnover tailoring service.
B4, 2nd Floor Tax Building, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
38213115
090 380 9758
fonganh@hcm.fpt.vn

Tailors Nhut

Well-known tailor for men's business and event suits as well as ladies' business wear. Pre-tailored products are available in-store.
232 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3822 5338

Viet Tien Garment Company

The company was established in 1976, and has been successfully manufacturing garment, textiles and accessories for fashion industry.
178 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 4350
www.viettien.com.vn
tailornhut@yahoo.com

watches

D & D

Purveyors of fine watches on Saigon's central strip - one place to go to avoid questionable merchandise.
68 Nguyen Hue, D1
093 847 1846

Luu Hung Phat

There's no shortage of vendors of watches in this part of town, but not many that can afford a plum spot on the central district's richest shopping strip.
56 Dong Khoi, D1
3824 4777
090 380 8909
mrshimphuong@gmail.com

Rhythm Showroom

An authorized importer and distributor of the Japanese Rhythm brand into Vietnam. Rhythm has 16 stores in HCMC; this Tax Building showroom is known as Shop Dang Nghi.
Ground Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3891
info-dovi@dongviet.vn

Swiss Watch

Straightforward, quality swiss watch products for the discerning Dong Khoi shopper.
41 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 6126
091 392 5212

Tan Tan Watch

Luxury watch retailers selling from a shop within the Kimdo Hotel foyer. Selling luxury branded watches such as Citizen, Movado, Enicar, Raymond Weil, Frederique Constant, Alfex, Mido, and Tissot - Swiss.
Kimdo Hotel, 133 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 8297
www.tantanwatch.com

Thanh Phat Watch

Thanh Phat Watch is a famous long-standing wholesaler and retailer with many watch stores throughout the city. They specialize in selling high-end watches from Switzerland and Japan, such as Rado, Longines, Montblanc, and many more.
Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Centre, 135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3231
phuongthanphat@yahoo.com

Topten

Topten has been an exclusive distributor of the luxurious Swiss watch brand Tissot since 2006. This outlet is a luxury watch showroom in the foyer of the Sunwah building.
Ground Floor, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9279
contact@toptenco.com.vn
www.toptenco.com.vn

Q: I currently have a verbal contract with my landlord that I'd be renting my apartment for one year. I paid 4 months in advance (and I have a receipt), but recently, she told me that she wants to take it back for someone else. Other than getting back my deposit, am I entitled to any other compensation for her breaking the contract early?



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

A member of the Paris Bar, **Hadrien Wolff** has been practicing law in Vietnam for six years, currently as a partner of **Audier & Partners**. He specializes in banking and corporate law, regularly advising major foreign banks and assisting foreign investors in setting up joint venture companies with Vietnamese partners in sensitive sectors such as media, power and natural resources



IN VIETNAM, CIVIL transactions between individuals and organizations are governed by the Vietnamese Civil Code and a lease contract is no exception.

One of the fundamental principles of the Vietnamese civil law, underlying any civil transaction, is the liberty given to the parties to decide on the substance and the form of their contracts. As an exception, the law requires certain specific transactions to be in writing as a condition of their validity and sometimes to be subject to formalities such as notarization, certification and/or registration with an authority or agency.

A lease for a residential house and/or apartment is one of those contracts that must be made in writing and, if the term of the lease is at least six months, must be notarized or certified. Consequently, your verbal lease contract with your landlord with a term of one year is in principle not valid.

There are ways to correct the lack of compliance with requirements applicable to the form of a contract: upon receipt of a request from you and/or the landlord, a court may provide the parties with a period of time to conduct the required formalities.

But as of now, and until you proceed with a court and comply with the formal requirements applicable to a lease contract, there is actually no lease contract between you and your landlord, but only a non-binding verbal arrangement.

Therefore, the landlord may ask you to return the apartment and you may not rely on your oral arrangement as a binding contract to challenge the validity of that request. As another consequence of the lack of validity of your lease contract, you may not ask for damages for unlawful termination of the contract by the landlord.

Similarly with respect to the deposit, and from a strict legal perspective, you

may not rely on your oral arrangement to request its reimbursement. But don't worry! Vietnamese law provides that when a contract is invalid, *the parties must restore everything to its original state* and each party must return to each other party what it has received. Consequently, there is a legal ground for you to rely on in case your landlord hesitates before giving you back your deposit.

However, do not place too much hope in your chance of success if you plan on using that legal ground to request the reimbursement of the rent since you moved in. There is a big chance that a judge will not rule in your favor since it is not possible for you to give back to the landlord the use of the apartment for the time you have already lived in it.

If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com ■

The List Business

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

banks

Asia Commercial Bank

Established in the June of 1993 with the goal of becoming a commercial joint stock bank to the largest retailers in Vietnam.

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
39290999
acb-er@acb.com.vn
www.acb.com.vn

Bank of China

The first Chinese commercial bank listed in both the mainland and Hong Kong, it became the first Chinese bank operating in modern Vietnam in 1995. The Bank of China provides a full range of financial services.

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9949
service_vn@bank-of-china.com

Citibank

One of the leading foreign banks in Vietnam, Citibank has branches in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and a nationwide partnership network that covers all of Vietnam's 64 provinces.

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3824 2267
094 801 6318
ngatuyet.dao@citi.com
www.citibank.com.vn

Commonwealth Bank

Commonwealth Bank is one of Australia's leading banks, now located in Ho Chi Minh City. It offers a range of banking services including business banking accounts; home, personal, and business loans; along with foreign exchange and international trade services.

65 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 1525
012 1861 8695
customerservice@commbank.com.vn
www.commbank.com.vn

HSBC

HSBC has been in Vietnam for 140 years. The Bank first opened an office in Saigon in 1870, and its current network includes one transaction centre, one branch and five transaction offices in Ho Chi Minh City.

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3724 7247
globalbankingvnm@hsbc.com.vn
www.hsbc.com.vn

Mizuho Corporate Bank

Mizuho Corporate Bank offers cutting-edge solutions that leverage its comprehensive financing capabilities to meet the needs of major domestic and global companies.

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8260
www.mizuhocbk.com

Standard Chartered Bank

Standard Chartered Bank was formed in 1969 through the merger of two separate banks, the Standard Bank of British South Africa and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China. Standard Chartered Bank provides a wide range of personal and business related banking services.

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 0000
Contact.SCB@standardchartered.com
www.standardchartered.com

Shinhan Vietnam

Korea's 100-year-old most prestigious banking institution now serving HCMC's largest expat community. The bank has followed a systematic program of increased commitment to its Vietnam

operations.

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3829 1581
www.shinhan.com.vn

Vietcombank

One of Vietnam's most visible banks, Vietcombank has a phenomenal number of branches around the country for easy access to cash - targeting primarily, of course, the local community.

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 4797
webmaster@vietcombank.com.vn
www.vietcombank.com.vn

insurance

ACE Life Insurance

One of the world's largest multiline property and casualty insurers, insurance products include universal life insurance, term life, whole life, riders, and global personal accident.

21st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8989
www.ace-life.com.vn

AIG Vietnam

AIG's presence in Vietnam dates back to the 1920s, although modern operations began back in 2005. They offer a wide range of personal and commercial insurance products.

9th Floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1
3914 0067
vniinfo@chartisinsurance.com
www.chartisinsurance.com.vn

Baoviet Insurance Corporation

BaoViet is now the leading financial insurance group in Vietnam with more than 145 branches across 63 provinces.

23-25 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 0247
097 676 0570
service@baoviet.com.vn
www.baoviet.com.vn/Trang-chu

BHNT Great Eastern

Life assurance & financial plans for customers of various age groups. The company's focus is on promoting health and longevity - they have the perfect incentive to do so, really.

Level 8, 25 Bis Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
6288 6339
wecare@lifeisgreat.com.vn
www.greateasternlife.com

Liberty Mutual Insurance

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

15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1
3812 5125
www.libertyinsurance.com.vn

LIG Insurance

LIG Insurance specializes in the provision of non-life insurance. The company provides property and casualty insurance, along with customer relations management and automobile claims support services and long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

Unit 809, 8th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9968

McLarens Young International

McLarens Young International is a global claims service provider that helps our clients achieve timely and equitable claims resolution. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, we have over 300 offices and affiliates in more than 80 countries.

9th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3821 3316
hochiminh@mclarensyoung.com
www.mclarensyoung.com

Prudential Vietnam

Prudential Vietnam is one of the leading life insurers nationwide, also providing a variety of financial solutions, with over 200 customer service centers, branch offices and general agency and business partner offices.

Unit 25F, Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3910 1660
www.prudential.com.vn

information technology

Asia Pacific Solutions

A software development and IT support service company, services include developing all kinds of engineering systems and implementing software solutions.

Suite 1201, 12th Floor, 111A Pasteur, D1
3825 1041
aps_info@aps-vn.com
www.aps-vn.com

NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME and large enterprises from consultation to maintenance, especially those entering the Vietnam market for the first time.

11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1
3827 3646
www.vn.ntt.com

Oracle Vietnam

Oracle offers an optimized and fully integrated stack of business hardware and software systems, lowering the cost and complexity of IT implementation and management.

Suite 25 & 26, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9186
Ha.Vu@oracle.com
www.oracle.com/as/corporate/contact/vietnam-316254-en-as.html

Prism Smart IT

Prism is a foreign-owned Information and Communications Technology company that offers IT Managed Services and Total Business Solutions to companies throughout Vietnam.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 6416
info@prism.com.vn
www.prism.com.vn

law firms

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With an organized network of legal services in the major cities and countries of Asia, The Apex management system represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.

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3822 2942
012 6479 9212
www.apexlaw.co.kr

Baker & McKenzie

Baker & McKenzie is a law company with over 72 branches around the world, including offices in Australia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Canada, and the United States. Has a team of 4000 highly trained and insightful lawyers.

12th Floor, Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1

www.bakermckenzie.com

Indochina Legal

Involved in numerous corporate and financial transactions and dispute resolution proceedings, Indochina Legal is part of a global network of leading independent law firms with an in-depth understanding of the legal and business environment of Vietnam.

Unit 1108, 11th Floor, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9525
www.indochinalegal.com

J&P Law Firm

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Level 7 - Room 702, 81-85 Ham Nghi, D1
3910 0619
www.jnplaw.com

Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.

Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ward 6, D3
3822 7161
091 612 0802
www.lawlogos.com

Nishimura & Asahi

Nishimura & Asahi is one of Japan's premier full-service law firms, covering all aspects of domestic and international business and corporate activity.

Unit 704, 7th Floor, Sunwah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 4432
h_oguchi@jurists.co.jp
www.lexmundi.com

Phuoc & Partners Company

Phuoc & Partners is an independent law and consulting firm with integrated legal and tax practices. The firm enables clients to reduce their administrative overhead and focus on core business activities.

Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ward 6, D3
3823 5895
info@phuoc-partners.com
www.phuoc-partners.com

PricewaterhouseCoopers

A huge international firm represented in Vietnam since 1994, PwC boasts a thorough understanding of the transitional economy of Vietnam and a wide knowledge of policies and procedures covering investment, tax and accounting, and consulting throughout the country.

4th Floor Saigon Tower, 29 Le Duan, D1
3825 1947
stephen.gaskill@vn.pwc.com
www.pwc.com/vn/en/index.jhtml

TMF Group

Whilst TMF offer a range of corporate services, their main line of business lies in assisting expanding international firms in complying with local regulations and smoothing out the hurdles in setting up in a new destination.

Unit 501, 5th Floor, Saigon Trade Center, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3910 2262
www.tmf-group.com

VCI Legal

A relatively young law firm, VCI Legal is staffed with a team of lawyers and specialists who have many years of practical experience and an in-depth understanding of the legal system and business environment in Vietnam.
Suite 501, 5th floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1
 3827 2029
 contact@vci-legal.com
 vci-legal.com

marketing

Admaker

Advertising and marketing company specializing in creative design, media placement, production, promotion, events, and public relations. This talented and diverse team combines expatriate creative directors and local resources and suppliers.
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 3910 3500
 www.admaker.com.vn

Ambrij Vietnam

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14-16-18 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
 3824 8364
 manish@ambrij.com
 www.ambrij.com

Bates 141 Vietnam

The Vietnamese brand of a global WWP social media marketing company. Bates 141 has bases in 11 countries across Asia and counts HSBC, Unilever, Avon, and more amongst its ranks of prestigious clients.

7th Floor, Vietnam Business Center, 57-59 Ho Tung Mau, D1
 3821 8632
 tue.nguyen@batesasia.com | www.bates141.com

Edge Marketing

Particularly dynamic local marketing firm, committed to a "highly productive collision of creativity and technology". The firm's international staff bring local and foreign perspectives to each campaign.

1Bis Ngo Van Nam, D1
 3911 1190
 www.edge-asia.com

Ogilvy & Mather

An international advertising agency, O&M aims to be "the most local of the internationals and most international of the locals" in the advertising market.
12th Floor, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ward 6, D3
 3821 9529
 www.ogilvy.com

Purple Asia

Purple Asia stands out as one of the most unique advertising design firms in the city, with a commitment to making brands perform better on the hard-to-crack local market.

Melody Tower, 422-424 Ung Van Khiem, Ward 25, Binh Thanh
 3898 1005
 www.purpleasia.com

Saatchi & Saatchi - The Lovemarks Company

This world-class international advertising firm has grown from strength to strength in Vietnam, picking up some major clients and showing exponential growth in the local market.
3 Phan Van Dat, D1
 3824 1207
 www.saatchi.com

XPR Brand Communications

XPR Brand Communications focuses on integrated approaches to marketing and close business relationships with clients, offering a professional creative process through its line of event management and marketing promotion services.

37 Dang Thi Nhu, D1
 3821 0779
 www.xpr.com.vn

media

GroupM - MEC Media

The focus of GroupM is the intelligent application of physical and intellectual scale to benefit trading, innovation, and new communication services to bring competitive advantage to clients and companies.
Level 6, 111A Pasteur, D1
 3821 2233
 tim.scott-hunter@groupm.com
 www.groupm.com

S3 Studios

The first international calibre, full-service production house and studio in Vietnam, S3 is designed to accommodate commercial photography, film & video productions and events.
1K Ngo Van So, D4
 3941 1179
 www.s3studios.asia

real estate agencies

Blessing Properties

Blessing Properties provides real estate services for expats in Ho Chi Minh City. Their English-speaking staff can help you find an apartment, house, or office for rent.
4th Floor, 85 Dien Bien Phu, D1
 3602 381
 094 875 7172
 phucdc@yahoo.com
 www.blessingproperties.com

Colliers International Vietnam

Globally, Colliers International is a leading commercial real estate services company offering comprehensive expertise to investors, owners and tenants around the world.
Bitexco Office Building, 7th Floor, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1
 3823 3529
 3823 3530
 www.colliersmn.com/vietnam

Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

C&W entered the emerging Vietnam real estate market with the intention of setting a new benchmark for the industry. Their primary focus is on consultancy, brokerage, and investment across the retail, office, and hospitality sectors.

Level 2, Pathfinder Building, 52 Dong Du, D1
 6291 4707
 www.cwr.com.vn

House Link

House Link offers a wide array of apartments and houses for lease all over Ho Chi Minh City. They seek to serve the extensive needs of expatriates who are living in Vietnam for an extended period of time.

23 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
 3824 5271
 info@houselink.vn
 www.houselink.vn

Knight Frank

Knight Frank Vietnam is an integrated global real estate advisory firm whose mission is to create wealth for its clients by maximizing the value of their property assets.

Suite A, 7/F, VTP Office Building, 8 Nguyen Hue, D1
 3822 6777
 www.knightfrank.com.vn

Posh Real Estate

Posh Real Estate has been serving Saigon residents since 2010, and they offer 24 hour services to those seeking luxury and serviced apartments.

Ruby 1 Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh
 3514 9451
 090 308 3213
 www.posh.com.vn

Realty World

Realty World is a leading real estate business in Ho Chi Minh City, focusing on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office

buildings, and villas.
111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh
 3899 4979
 info@thegioibatdongsan.com.vn
 thegioibatdongsan.com.vn

Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.
Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
 3825 8598
 090 396 8097
 info@savills.com.vn
 savills.com.vn

Sotheby's International Realty

The exclusive representative of the prestigious Sotheby's brand in Vietnam with luxury properties and professional sales agents in Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City.
Suite 1905, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, D1
 3520 2000
 www.sothebysrealty.com.vn

The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.
369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9
 090 319 8901
 thuong@thenest-vietnam.com
 www.thenest-vietnam.com

recruiters

Opus Recruitment

Formed in 2003 to service the needs of local and multinational companies, the Opus group was originally a unit under KPMG Thailand that defected to run independently, focusing on quality executive searches.

2A Rolanno Offices, 128 Nguyen Phi Khanh, Tan Dinh, D1
 3827 8209
 info@opusasia.net
 www.opusasia.net

Navigos Group & Vietnam Works

Navigos Group provides recruitment solutions in Vietnam. Services include VietnamWorks (which posts about 200 new jobs per day) and Navigos Search (the leading recruitment firm in Vietnam).

130 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
 3925 5000
 contact@navigosgroup.com
 www.navigosgroup.com

Odgers Berndtson Vietnam

A global firm specializing in the recruitment of senior level executives, the firm employs experienced professionals from specific market areas to provide discreet access to industry leaders.

Suite 1609, 1st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
 3827 8777
 phu.nguyen@odgersberndtson.vn
 www.odgersberndtson.com

relocation

Allied Pickfords

One of the largest and most respected providers of moving services worldwide, AP assumes complete responsibility for all moving services through a single point of contact.

Second Floor Satra Dong Khoi, 58 Dong Khoi, D1
 3823 3454
 www.alliedpickfords.com

Asian Tigers

Pan-Asian moving firm with a perhaps unrivalled level of experience and expertise in packing, storing and moving a family's treasured belongings throughout this region and beyond. The largest fleet of trucks and the most warehouse space of any mover in the Far East, with door-to-door services.

9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, Ward 13, D4
 3826 7799

sales@asiantigers-vietnam.com
 www.asiantigersgroup.com

Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.
60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1
 hikhoshi_han@crowlinevn.com
 sg.crowline.jp

JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.
1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, Ward 12, D4
 3826 7655
 hcmcity.vietnam@jvkrasia.com
 www.jvkrasia.com

Logical Moves - Vietnam

Logical Moves offers a full range of removal and storage services.
369/4 Nguyen Tat Thanh, Ward 18, D4
 3941 5325
 info@logicalmoves.net
 www.logicalmoves.net

M&P International

M&P International is a specialized freight-forwarding and shipping agency. They specialize in designing logistics infrastructures which provide a compromise between cost, speed, and reliability.

Ground Floor, Thien Son Office Building, 5 Nguyen Gia Thieu, D3
 3930 2747
 www.mpivn.com

Sinorko Vietnam Company

Sinorko Container Liner Services currently covers over 60 ports across 16 countries including China, Japan, Russia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and more.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1
 3821 4446
 www.sinorok.co.kr

Santa Fe

Santa Fe is world-renowned for Global Relocation Services. From an individual move across town to global corporate relocations, the firm provides customised services to meet customer-specific needs.

8th Floor, Thien Son Building, 5 Nguyen Gia Thieu, D3
 3933 0065
 info@santaferelo.com.vn
 www.santaferelo.com

shipping

HL Shipping

A worldwide freight forwarder offering dedicated, integral services in the international trade market providing a reliable, customer-oriented, and cost-effective coverage of all shipping needs, including a comprehensive assessment of all costs and assurance of on-time delivery for each segment. Competent service in English direct from the MD Jeff Tran.

29 Huynh Van Banh, Ward 17, Phu Nhuan
 3995 6117
 info@hlshipping.com
 www.hlshipping.com

Logitem Viet Nam

Warehousing, shipping and transportation, 100% Japanese owned.
23 Tran Nao, Binh An, D2
 3744 2281
 cara@logitem1.com
 www.logitemvietnam.com

Sagawa Express Vietnam

A subsidiary of Sagawa Holdings Group, this firm specialises in providing solutions to general logistics issues in Vietnam, and it has a general logistics certificate unique in this country.

169 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh
 3840 9330
 090 900 3649
 nimura@sagawa-global.com
 www.sagawa-vtm.com.vn



HL Shipping

HL Shipping Co., Ltd.

29 Huynh Van Banh St., Ward 17, Phu Nhuan Dist., Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
Tel : (84-8) 3 995 6117 - 2 217 1588 - 2 216 9288 - 2 216 9388
Fax: (84-8) 3 995 6118 - 3 995 4943 Email: info@hlshipping.com
Website: www.hlshipping.com

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- Shipping Agency
- Trading
- Container Trading & Leasing





IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Lauralynn Goetz, B.A., M.M.Ed. US, is a director of an early childhood education center in Vietnam.

Selecting a School

How to pick a good school for your child



I HAVE TAUGHT at three international schools in Ho Chi Minh City and have been an outside service provider for an additional six international schools and preschools here too. I read with interest recent submissions to an English Language Google Group, An Phu Neighbors, as they discussed private education for their children.

A parent posted a list of private schools operating in this city, ranked from best to worst by a local research group, seeking feedback on the order.

The first response was from a parent who advised: "When it comes down to it, most of us want the same basic things for our children. We want them to be safe, happy [and] to have friends. In the end, however, many of us will settle for knowing that we,

as parents, have made choices that ensured our children became happy, successful and ethical members of society."

Another parent challenged that finding, replying: "As a person who has lived in Vietnam for over five years, as a parent of a child [and] as an education professional, this list does not make any sense."

I agree with this comment, but let us consider still another contributor: "Just be aware that every child is different and has a different experience at school. For example, some children may thrive in a smaller school and some may crave a larger school environment. If a child is in the wrong school for them, their parents may view the school as not doing a good job, whereas if the child enjoys school those parents will

rate the school highly. I'm not saying that the list is wrong, just reminding everyone to think objectively."

"Interesting graph, but unfortunately I would rate it as trash and nonsense as long as the demographical data and sources are not revealed. Perception is perception and not based on facts. The graphs would most likely be different if the study had been conducted in Phu My Hung or District 2," another person commented.

Visit Before Choosing

Finally the managing director of the research group, who has been living in Vietnam for 19 years and now with two children, clarified his group's survey. Completed in 2011, the question was: "Thinking about the reputation of these schools, which three schools do you believe are the most reputable?" They polled 151 Vietnamese parents with children under 18 not attending any international schools in Ho Chi Minh City, and only schools where English was the main language were included.

One cannot question the veracity of the survey's results, but the response of the An Phu Neighbors Group also represents the diverse perspectives that parents and educators have on such a personal and important topic. There are cultural perspectives such as a British versus American curriculum, choosing a school with an International Baccalaureate (IB) program or not, budget considerations, proximity (very important in terms of a child's travel time to school) and the child's English or other language proficiency.

All these must be factored in and my final advice is to visit the child's potential classroom, teacher and teacher assistants for a visit before enrolling.

Have an educational dilemma for our experts? Email us with your question at education@oivietnam.com ■

The List Health & Beauty

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

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.
8 Truong Dinh, D3
3930 6667
www.vietnamchiropractic.com

Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.
273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10
3834 9941

Center Medical International

Center Medical International is an outpatient clinic fully-equipped to provide international standard comprehensive and specialized medical services. All physicians are either French or Vietnamese.
1 Han Thuyen, D1
3827 2365
info@cmi-vietnam.com
www.cmi-vietnam.com

Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.
8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
3823 8454
customercare.sg@columbiaasia.com
www.columbiaasia.com/saigon

Diag Center International

Situated in Ho Chi Minh City, Diag Center International is a diagnostic testing center, which consists of a team of thirty Vietnamese staff, and operates under French medical biologists and assisted by a group of Vietnamese medical technicians trained in France.
146 An Binh, D5
3838 1551
labgroupint@hcm.vnn.vn
www.diag-center.com/english/english.htm

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.
2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 1860
clinic_stc@hanhphuchospital.com
www.hanhphuchospital.com

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.
273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 5954
vienydhdt.com.vn

Lotus Clinic

Lotus Clinic was established in 2007 as

the first Japanese medical clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.
Lancaster Bldg , 22 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3827 0000
info@lotus-clinic.com
www.lotus-clinic.com

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.
167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551
www.internationalsos.com

Perfect Skin lab

More than just a spa, this District 1 venue is a genuine skin lab that caters to each customer's unique characteristics and needs. The lab is the latest concept developed by Dermal Essentials, the elite distributor for Dermalogica, a skin care system researched and developed by The International Dermal Institute in Vietnam.
1st floor, unit 9-10 Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 0372

Stamford Skin Center

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.
254 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3932 1090
090 845 3338
info@stamfordskin.com
www.stamfordskin.com/index.php?lang=en

Uc Chau Cosmetic Surgery

This central clinic performs straightforward cosmetic treatments, including enhancing the nose bridge, breast enlargement, eyelid folds, and wrinkle removal.
25 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
2212 3396
2212 3398
www.thammyucchau.vn

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.
79 Dien Bien Phu, D1
www.victoriavn.com

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.
Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0758
care_reception@vietnammedicalpractice.com
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com

dental

2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.
125 Le Thi Rieng, D1

3925 6501
implant@nhakhoa2000.net
www.nhakhoa2000.net

Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.

34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh
3903 6636
info@nhakhoadangluu.com
www.nhakhoadangluu.com

Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.
R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2276

Elite Dental

With an atmosphere more reminiscent of a luxury hotel, this is one of the largest high-quality dental clinics in HCMC, established to answer expat demands for superb dental techniques and professional staff.
57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
3933 3737
EliteDentalVietnam@gmail.com
www.elitedental.com.vn

German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.
1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 3777
www.gid-dentistry.com

Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.
Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9446

Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.
199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1
3925 3399
nhakhoaminhhkhai@gmail.com
www.nhakhoaminhhkhai.com/index.php?lang=language

Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.
50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3835 6159
nhakhoasaintpaul@gmail.com
www.nhakhoasaintpaul.com

Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.
173 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6635
info@smiledental-vn.com
www.smiledental-vn.com

Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening

and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.
2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222
starlightdental@gmail.com
www.starlightdental.net

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.
27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485
benthanh@westcoastinternational.com
www.westcoastinternational.com

hairstylists

Art Hair

A small-time local Korean community hairstylist with a highly-regarded service, presenting an ideal opportunity to be styled after the fashion of the most glamorous country in Asia.
R4-1 Hung Phuoc Villas, D7
5410 3154
090 663 2580

Hair Salon Nguyen The Hien

Nguyen The Hien is an upscale Vietnamese hair salon catering to both men and women. Named after its award-winning hairstylist and designer, the salon is decked out in stylish, modern décor.
102 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 2275

Hairlab

Hair salon without a hint of Asia, bright & clean with all the proper hair-tech on the first floor of the Saigon Center.
1st floor, unit 9-10, Saigon center,
65 Le Loi, D1
3910 4576
093 799 0880
henrybao76@yahoo.com

His Salon - Gentleman's Barbershop

Popular men's salon with very good service and complimentary beer.
29 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 9455
tamsalon@hcm.cnn.com

Hung Pasteur

This salon offers a complete range of beauty treatments and services using quality imported products, drawing in a host of local celebrities and wannabes.
182 Pasteur, D1
3823 1118
090 391 9375

Just Men

A full-service salon for men. A spa and salon specializing in the unique styling and maintenance needs of men only. Masculine all-wood interior and dark brown Mercedes-style chairs. Specialising in hair, facial, massage, and relaxation for men.
40 Ton That Thiep, D1
3914 1407

Kim Hair Salon

An affordable hair salon in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. The range of services is focused on different hair treatments, but also includes manicures and pedicures.
2B Chu Manh Trinh, D1
3825 8643
090 823 9011

Masa hair

Beauty salon, make up, facial care and hair services - hair treatments and

restoring damaged hair.

111 Ham Nghi, D1
3821 1282
093 777 5862

My Duyen

Cutting, perms, combs, hair washing, and dyeing - full services out of trendy Thai Van Lung.

20 Thai Van Lung, D1
091 927 7126

The Salon

Prominent ladies' salon & sanctuary - the sister venue to the well-known His Salon with its touts out on Ton That Thiep. Services include hairstyling, shampoo, hair removal, manicures, and pedicures.

Ladies' hair & bodycare sanctuary.

64 Ton That Thiep, D1

3914 3999

www.thesalon.com.vn

Vamp Hairline

Vamp Hair Line is a high-class Japanese hair salon offering quality hair care services.

9th Floor LANT Building,

56-58-60, Hai Ba Trung, D1

7303 3330

012 2768 8614

info@vamhairline.com

www.vamhairline.com

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5

090 588 6086

info@cthospital.vn

www.cthospital.vn

Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5

3855 4137

bvchoray@hcm.vnn.vn

www.choray.vn

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh

3803 0677

giadinhhospital@columbiaasia.com

www.columbiaasia.com

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

3930 0828

dialasia-vn@hcm.vnn.vn

FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

5411 3334

information@fvhospital.com

www.main.fvhospital.com

Hoan My Hospital

Private hospital with a wide range of

specialist areas, running for 15 years on Phan Xich Long.

Private owned hospital, has been run for 15 years

60-60A Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

3990 2468

3995 9862

www.hoanmysaigon.com

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.

63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

3925 3620

sihospital@hcm.vnn.vn

www.sihospital.com.vn

Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

3932 6579

Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, D1

5404 2829

web.admin@tudu.com.vn

www.tudu.com.vn/en

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap

3989 4989

vuanhhospital@hotmail.com

www.vuanhhospital.com.vn

nails

118 Nail & Beauty

118 Nail and Beauty is a salon and spa providing full services including oil, hot stone, foot and body massages, along with skin/nail care.

118 Pasteur, D1

3821 5313

090 372 8338

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, D1

6291 5477

012 2805 6789

kellypangnail.com

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, D1

2211 4956

pharmacies

Curewel International

Involved in marketing and distribution of pharmaceuticals, as well as personal healthcare products, throughout Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius.

49/3 Bis, Tran Quang Khai, D1

38484493

curewel@hcm.fpt.vn

www.citawebdesign.com

Pharmacy Nguyen Hue

Small western medical pharmacy right in the central city CBD area, selling both domestic and imported medicines.

81 Nguyen Hue, D1

3829 3058

spas

www.hpoxygenspa.com

Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan

3842 2218

090 395 1902

oanhuyh1501@gmail.com

www.huongsenspasaigon.com

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, D1

3827 2737

jasminespavn@vnn.vn

www.jasminespa.com.vn

KL Spa - Thi Sach

Modest spa located in the La Jolie three-star hotel. Open for walk-in customers as well as hotel guests, offering basic inexpensive services.

4D Thi Sach, D1

3521 8999

www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn

KL Spa - Le Lai

KL Spa is one of the city's more luxurious spa venues located in the Tan Hai Long hotel. It features four VIP rooms for deluxe service, with a high-end multimedia setup, private sauna room, and bathroom. Two quiet massage rooms are also available and can serve up to 8 guests.

Level M, 14-16 Le Lai, D1

3827 2740 ext 2222

klspa@tanhailonghotel.com.vn

www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn/web/index.php/rl-spa

www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn

Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1

3822 1515

L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7

5413 6638

www.lapothiquaire.com

La Cochinchine

Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1

3825 1814

info@lacoichinchine.net

www.lacoichinchine-hcm.net

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3

3932 5181

100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

3822 2158

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7

5413 6638

www.lapothiquaire.com

MIMI Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events - and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dong Khoi, D1

3824 5666

090 387 6666

info@mimiclinic-spa.com

www.mimiclinic-spa.com

Mirra Spa

Located on a quiet & green street in the heart of the city, Mirra Spa is distanced from the noise & pollution to provide a peaceful escape from the stress & pressure of everyday life.

IIA Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
3925 6863
mirraspa.com

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609
miumiuspa@yahoo.com.vn
www.roneko.asia/miumiu

Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507
oasis_spa2011@yahoo.com
1st & 2nd Floor, 92 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3821 6469
090 337 0507

Qing Spa & Relaxation

Foot & body, facial, hair, eye treatments with relaxation packages and manicures / pedicures. Situated above a bar of the same name.

1st Floor, 110 Pasteur, D1
6675 1887

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1
6650 4806
saigonspa@yahoo.com

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

54 Dong Du, D1
6299 0964
090 684 2965
sensespa.vn@gmail.com
www.sensespa.vn

Spa Tropic

Established since 2002, Spa Tropic is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most reputable boutique day spa, recognized in international travel publications such as Travel + Leisure, Conde Naste, Lonely Planet, and Newsweek 'Four Thing To Do While in Ho Chi Minh City'.

79 Phan Ke Binh, D1
3910 5575
www.spatropic.com

Thann

Thann provide a range of natural hair and skincare products formulated from botanicals derived by combining the art of natural therapy with modern dermatological science.

Level 2, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1
098 362 4497
www.thann.info

Thalgo La Beaute Marine

Thalgo is on the cutting edge of spa treatments, and is renowned for its products and skilled therapists.

40C Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 4990
090 360 6366
chauminhnguyet2001@yahoo.com
www.thalgo.com

The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of

skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 5318
www.thebodyshop.com.vn

The Prime – Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with imported machines from Europe. The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy – and a Prime special service package.

192 Le Lai, D1
3925 5743
spaformen@theprimespa.com
www.theprimespa.com

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

76C Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 2554
torthaisaigon1@hotmail.com

V Spa

V Spa offers skin care and body treatment services enhanced by modern technologies with leading pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

15B/25 Le Thanh Ton, D1
6291 8179
6291 8176
info@vspa.vn
www.vspa.vn

White Lotus

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, The White Lotus Spa is a natural green oasis of tranquility, named after a flower that embodies elegance, spirituality and relaxation. Sensitive, personalised care that benefits both body and mind.

7/2 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3824 2451
info@whitelotusspa.com.vn

www.whitelotusspa.com.vn

Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom – Mai, Bamboo, and more.

2 Lam Son Square, D1
3824 1234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

YKC

One of the longest established spa in the city, YKC is popular for its professional service, and complete range of services from nails to massages.

209 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3829 2791
www.ykcsa.com

Yuan

Despite being labeled as a foot massage establishment, Yuan actually has a full range of services. Customers usually make appointments. Yuan is especially geared towards Japanese expats.

1588 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0795

Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8782

Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1
6291 6835
www.zestspa.com.vn

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I wanted to be an engineer!
Don't let traffic accidents ruin our children's future

CHILDREN ALSO NEED A HELMET.

Bộ Giáo Dục & Đào Tạo | World Health Organization | AIP

The List Shopping



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

art & crafts

Art Arcade

Art Arcade displays a wide range of original Vietnamese artwork in a charming passageway off of Dong Khoi. 151 Dong Khoi, DI 3824 4076

Beeline

Small shop with cute stuffs. Special traditional hand-embroidered bags, shoes, clothes, and souvenirs. 60-62 Mac Thi Buoi, DI 3822 2364 155 Dong Khoi, DI t_sweetmemory@yahoo.com

Cao Lien Huong

Artistic & traditional handicrafts on Saigon's heritage street. 49 Dong Khoi, DI 3521 0445 091 806 0608 saigonsouvenir@yahoo.com

CD Paragon Leather - Caodong Boutique 2

Attractive leather souvenirs & handicrafts Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI 3915 1778 caodongdesign@yahoo.com.vn www.caodongdesign.com.vn

Chon Nhan Production & Trading

Chon Nhan Production & Trading specializes in making high grade fine art, especially bamboo works, oil paintings, lacquering, and carved furniture. They have experience in interior design and handmade crafts. 70D Nguyen Hue, DI 3667 0341 090 383 8355 hongchon@vnn.vn www.hongchon.com

Du Du

One of Saigon's higher-class souvenir shops. 78 Dong Khoi, DI 38276128 anh.chichigroup@gmail.com

Em Em

Bright, unusual souvenir shop with high-quality ethnic fashion accessories unavailable elsewhere. Special figurines and a tailoring service are also available. 38 Mac Thi Buoi, DI 3829 4408

Em Oi

Funky souvenir shop with a twist, selling original designer T-shirts, handmade jewelry, recycled bags, and hand-crafted leather products. 124d Le Loi, DI

Ethnic Folk Art Anh

Fine ethnic folk products, mostly hand-made embroidered cloths, accessories and statues carved from horns and bones. Lot B1-C11-C12 2nd Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, DI 3821 3716 090 360 7527 tiru_tiru2003@yahoo.com

Fatima Shop

Fatima shop is manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of customer handicrafts, lacquerware, embroidery goods, and silverware souvenirs. 3 Ton That Thiep, DI 3914 2403 090 891 3377 fatimashop@sg.netnam.vn

Gia Gia

One of Vietnam's leading manufacturer

and distributor of products made from precious stones. Range includes paintings, jewelry, precious stones used for medicinal purposes and fashion products. 135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI 3823 5384 sales@gemstonepicure.com www.giagiacorp.com

Hai Yen

Sells fully-rigged model ships and boats, situated next to the Oscar Hotel. Fine model ships & boats 68 Nguyen Hue, DI 3822 0280 090 318 1600 090 369 6262 haiyenshop1@yahoo.com.vn

Hoa Viet

This small store sells artworks made out of gems of varying quality and stones thought to have geomantic properties. Highly popular with Chinese guests, many of these products are designed for the Chinese market. The store is worth visiting for the beauty of its stock as a side-trip to the public gardens near the Saigon Zoo. 2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, DI 3508 8329 098 392 7732 tranhhoaviet@gmail.com www.tranhhoaviet.com

Huong Nga Fine Art

Huong Nga designs, manufactures and sells high quality arts and crafts products in Vietnam and around the world. 41 Mac Thi Buoi, DI 3823 8356 nga@huongngafinearts.vn www.huongngafinearts.vn

Loang Xoang

Owned by a husband and wife glasswork artist team, they mainly sell their creations through their website, Facebook page, and at the monthly handicrafts fair. 232/8/6 Ba Hat, D10 090 855 6665 loangxoang.blogspot.com

Long Son Handicraft

Long Son Handicraft specializes in manufacturing and exporting quality handicrafts to overseas markets. Their products are made of rattan, bamboo, fern, seagrass, palm leaf, coconut, wood, and ceramic. 135 Nguyen Hue, DI 091 380 7988 097 262 0339 huylien@longson.vn www.longsonhandicraft.com

MH Craft

The shop has a collection of fine handicrafts, artworks, furniture, and all kinds of knick-knacks made from Vietnamese traditional materials such as egg shells, buffalo horns, bamboo, white clay, lacquer, and more. 33 Ton That Thiep, DI 3915 2913 090 382 7471 mh_tax@yahoo.com www.mh.10s.vn

Na Sa Shop

Selling fine wooden sculptures from a small store at the back of a tiny retail enclave, sales staff insist that the particular wood chosen has natural medicinal properties. 35 Le Loi, DI 016 9778 8303

Ngan Quang Wooden Boats

Sells model-size wooden boats. 74/1 Hai Ba Trung, DI

3829 1814 091 822 9272 nganquangshop@yahoo.com

Nguyen Freres - Fine Furnishing

Spacious furniture establishment selling handmade goods of silk, mother-of-pearl, stone, brick, bronze, silver, indigo, wood, lacquer along with Buddha figurines, carved wooden screens, ceramic decorations, red lacquered boxes, water puppets, and lacquered statues. 2 Dong Khoi, DI 3823 9459 098 380 3070 bachlien63@yahoo.com www.nguyenfreres.com

Nhu Y Oriental Lacquerwares

Nhu y provides coasters, tissue boxes, wine bottle holders and boxes, cabinets, frames, plates, trays, vases, and many other items with unusual designs spattered with lacquer dots. 22 Ho Huan Nghiep, DI 3829 6138 091 360 6525 smnhuy@yahoo.com www.nhuylacquer.com

Paper Paradise

Funky little retailer selling just about anything relating to paper and paper arts. 19 Do Quang Dau, DI 091 597 8896 paperparadise.vn@gmail.com www.facebook.com/PaperParadise

Phuong Mai Gallery

Phuong Mai Art Gallery focuses on the contemporary art works of both up & coming and established artists from across Vietnam. The real deal in a district of mass-produced art retailers. 129B Le Thanh Ton, DI 3823 3181 pmg@phuongmaigallery.com www.phuongmaigallery.com/en

Saigon Kitsch

Historic socialist pop-art culture is printed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, coasters and a raft of other goodies creating cool gifts for folks back home - or expats home in HCMC. 43 Ton That Thiep, DI 3821 8019 093 590 5675 audreytran78@hotmail.com

Sapa Crafts & Fashion

Established in 1996, the shop sells clothes and bags reflecting the style of the picturesque village in the northern region of Vietnam after which it is named. 7 Ton That Thiep, DI 3821 8836 090 244 1256 sapa.hcm@spray.se sapa Crafts.com

SoCoLa Boutique

Unique souvenir items and crafts in an off-beat retail space. Highly unusual trinkets. 39/4 Mac Thi Buoi, DI 3822 1839

electronics & camera

Bose Showroom

Something of a connoisseur's choice, a look through this showroom in the Tax Building will demonstrate some fairly impressive speaker and sound system equipment. Ground Floor Saigon Tax Trade Center, 135 Nguyen Hue, DI 3821 5944 0903723933 nguyenvinhhoang@vnn.vn | www.nguyenvinhhoang.vn

Canon Vinh Hung

Canon Vinh Hung has over 15 years of experience providing the citizens of Saigon with quality Canon cameras and other products such as photocopiers, fax machines, and photo printers. 103 Tran Hung Dao, DI 3837 1066 090 370 0011 www.canonvinhhung.vn

Lioa Electrics & Electronics

Hardware mart for power components, electrical appliances, and lighting systems. Lioa has more than 20 years of experience as the largest automatic stabilizer manufacturer in Vietnam. 138 Yersin, DI 6295 9077 012 3839 6768 memart@lioa.com www.lioa.com.vn

Khanh Long Camera

Khanh Long camera is a specialized store selling cameras of all types, from modern digital to professional old-style analog. It also sells all kinds of camera accessories such as flashes, batteries, lenses, and travel gear. 35, Le Loi, DI 3821 3230 www.khanhlong.com

Saigon Photo Center - Nam Ky Khoi Nghia

Saigon Photo Center has been providing an extensive range of photography services since 1991. They offer services such as photo printing, digital inkjets, equipment trading, camera sale, and equipment rental. 114 bis Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI 3825 8735 090 383 2224 anhmausaigon@hcm.vnn.vn www.saigonphotoenter.com.vn

Maydocsach eBook Readers

Vietnamese distributors of Kindle and Nook eBook readers, including e-ink screen and color LCD versions. Providing free Vietnamese language eBooks. 149/2 Le Thi Rieng, DI 6678 4542 093 822 2489 sales@maydocsach.vn maydocsach.vn

Son Ha

Son Ha is a store specializing in electronics, distributing prestigious brands such as Yamaha, B&W, Classe, Sony, Panasonic, and Samsung. They also offer products such as TVs, Karaoke and stage systems, soundproofing, MP3 players, refrigeration, and appliances. 41 Huynh Thuc Khang, DI 3923 1938 090 820 3262 audiosonha@yahoo.com www.audiosonha.com

Song Nhac Electronics

Song Nhac Electronics has 20 years of experience providing electronic products in Vietnam. Satisfy all your technological needs with TVs, speakers, amplifiers, karaoke players, cameras, and digital video recorders. 32 Le Loi, DI 3821 0522 090 862 0762 khaith@songnhac.com.vn www.songnhac.com.vn

books & magazines

Cua Hang Van Phong Pham

Large stationary shop with paints and supplies for artists, this is the place to

come for art paper, easels, paints and brushes.

54 Le Loi, DI
3825 7986
091 917 0356

Fahasa - Le Loi

One of Vietnam's largest book chains with 56 stores around the country, Fahasa has a good range of English titles.

60-62 Le Loi, DI
3829 6386
fahasa-saigon@vnn.vn
www.fahasa.com.vn

Fahasa - Nguyen Hue

One of the largest book distributors in Vietnam with 35 years of operations, Fahasa provides a wide range of books – including English titles – from local to translated editions, as well as CDs, videos, puzzles and stationery.

40 Nguyen Hue, DI
3822 5796
ngnguyenhue2007@yahoo.com
www.fahasag.com.vn

Nam Phong bookstore

A second-hand bookstore specializing in French literature, selling mainly novels and nonfiction titles with a selection of second-hand folio editions. The website is in French only, with a built-in searchable database of all titles available.

94 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3914 7859
lib.namphong@gmail.com
www.namphongsaiгон.com

Parker & Waterman

A specialist luxury pens counter in the foyer of the Bitexco Financial Tower, This Parker & Waterman outlet sells precision-crafted pens with gold & platinum finishes.

Ground Floor Bitexco Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6291 8739
www.scd.com.vn

Phuong Nam Book

With a system of over 30 bookstores in Ho Chi Minh City, PNB sells & publishes hundreds of foreign-language titles. The Saigon Center store also has a wide range of children's books.

Level 2, Saigon Center,
65 Le Loi, DI
3915 1475
info@pnc.com.vn
www.pnc.com.vn

home & furnishings

AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.

219 Nguyen Van Thu, DI
3823 0940
3744 2728
info@aacorporation.com
www.aacorporation.com

AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

91-93 Nguyen Hue, DI
3915 3491
icivnpreview.service@akzonobel.com
www.dulux.vn

Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city. Authentique offers many fine handcrafted products including furniture, ceramics, home textiles, and so on.

71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, DI
3823 8811
authentiquevn@yahoo.com
www.authentique.vn

Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

158 Hai Ba Trung, DI

3822 3430
www.cnd.com.vn

Catherine Denoual

This showroom displays genuine Catherine Denoual products, supplying blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

15C Thi Sach, DI
3823 9394
info@catherinedenoual.com
www.catherinedenoual.com

Good Home

Quality, inexpensive Japanese furniture offering three distinctive styles based on the lifestyles of the customer.

CR2-06-A, 107 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6918
info@goodhome.com
www.goodhome.com

JB Oriental Heritage

Unique Kashmiri products stocked in a plush retail space in the Saigon Center, JB Oriental Heritage sells fine imported Asian products, including carpets and exotic rugs, handicrafts, and objets d'art.

Unit 20, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 2892
090 775 8926
mujtabe_pmasi@yahoo.co.in

Klassy

Luxury furniture retail store featuring imported wares from leading manufacturers in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Italy. Styles range from classical to modern. Besides a broad range of furnishings, Klassy offers professional interior design advice and a full delivery service.

122 Pasteur, DI
3821 7141
www.klassy.vn

Kymdan

Kymdan offers 100% natural latex mattresses made from sponge and mousse foam – without any synthetic latex added. Environmentally friendly, safe, soft, and very strong.

74D Hai Ba Trung, DI
3829 9101
contact_us@kymdan.com
www.kymdan.com

Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65
Le Loi, DI
3914 3553
www.lambui.com

Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, DI
3821 7233
mosaïquesaigoncentre@
mosaïquedecoration.com
www.mosaïquedecoration.com

Patina Home

A furniture and home-styling company specializing in antique reproduction collections, Patina Homes offers an exquisite range of handcrafted furniture, upholstery and home accessories.

SLO08 Garden plaza, Ton Dat Tien, Tan
Phong, D7
5412 4071
sales@patinahomes.com
www.patinahome.com

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, DI
3824 7504
phc@premiumhousewares.com.vn
www.premiumhousewares.com.vn

Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.

31A Le Thanh Ton, DI
3825 8672
info@reddoordeco.com
www.reddoordeco.com

SB Furniture

SB Furniture is an award-winning furniture store with a reputation for excellent service and attention to detail. They specialize in products made with artificial wood, and cabinets for apartments and villas.

Unit 8-10, 1st Floor, Saigon Centre,
65, Le Loi, DI
0902157935
kd_mai@7979jdc.com
www.sbfurniture.com.vn

Steel Image

Small Korean furniture distributor with some imported brands, ideal place to buy good-quality imported office chairs & other furnishings.

R4 Hung Gia 3, 38 Cao Trieu Phat, Tan
Phong, D7
5410 5818
kosteelimage@gmail.com

markets

An Dong Market

This boisterous wet market beneath the Caesar Hotel. Customers can find food carts, bulk raw ingredients, shoes, sandals, jeans, shirts, and many other goods.

36 An Duong Vuong, D5
3835 4773

Ba Chieu Market

An old market hosting nearly 800 independent businesses in central Binh Thanh district, famous throughout the city for its rich and diverse commodities. Fresh Food, groceries, crockery, household appliances, textiles, and apparel. Second hand clothing available at cheap rates.

40 Dien Hong, Binh Thanh
3841 2483

Ben Thanh Market

Saigon's most iconic tourist attraction, this Vietnamese souvenir bazaar is busy, hot, and full of most everything you'll need to pick up to prove you've been to Vietnam - you can also stock up on your entire quota of presents for family and friends here.

Quach Thi Trang Square, DI
3829 2096

Binh Tay (Cholon) Market

Binh Tay Market is the largest market in Saigon located in an elegant building of Chinese design in Chinatown. The market caters mostly to wholesale trade, but also offers household items, makeup, and beauty products.

Le Tan Ke, Ward 2, D6
3857 1512

Tan Binh Market

Products here are targeted towards the locals, so don't expect to see luxurious or high-end products. The prices can't be beaten though. Bargain to your heart's content.

Le Minh Xuan, Ward 8, Tan Binh
3864 3711

Tan Dinh Market

Tan Dinh Market has been providing Saigon with a thriving market experience for decades. Customers can choose from food carts, clothing services, textiles, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Busy old-style market with impressive architecture, selling a great selection of fabrics and seafood.

48 Ma Lo, Tan Dinh, District 1
3820 1272

War Surplus Market (Dan Sinh Market)

Dan Sinh is known as the army surplus market. Located just 5 minutes from

the backpacker area and city center, it specializes in selling war surplus and military style clothing and items. It is also a good market for electronics and other types of imported industrial machinery.

104 Yersin, DI
3825 1130

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. Features a deli café serving coffee, wine and foods. Regular shoppers can benefit from a loyalty card program.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3822 9391
haibatrung@annam-gourmet.com
www.annam-gourmet.com

Sieu Thi Tax Supermarket

General supermarket in the centrally-located Tax Building.

1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
15 Nguyen Hue, DI
3821 3849
info@thuongxatax.com.vn
www.thuongxatax.com.vn

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

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

158D Pasteur, DI
3829 3306
info@bacchuscorner.com
www.bacchuscorner.com

Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.

94-96 Le Lai, DI
091 816 6809
www.beerplaza.com.vn

Boutique Cellar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.

11 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI
www.fwb.com.vn

Liquor City

Purveyors of fine international wines & spirits.

95, Suong Nguyet Anh, DI
090 240 9024

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.

54 Ham Nghi, DI
3821 5398
098 888 9496

The Warehouse

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

178 Pasteur, DI
3824 6629
090 921 0014
tram@warehouse-asia.com
www.warehouse-asia.com

Vinifera

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

15C7 Thi Sach, DI
3822 1141
vinifera@viniferavn.com
www.viniferavn.com



IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

Anh-Minh Do writes as the lead blogger at TechInAsia.com for Vietnam focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh also organizes events at Evecoo.vn.

Apps to get you ready for 2013 in Vietnam



Vietnamese Apps for Intrigue

Foody.vn (*free*) - The fresh new Vietnamese version of Yelp that just came out late last year already has an iPhone app and is one of the biggest competitors for diadiemanuong.com (literally “places-to-eat-and-drink”.com) but conveniently has an English version. The website and app is still bug-infested, but users are flocking to the site and the content keeps getting better.

Karaoke Vietnam (*free*) - If you’re one of those folks who gets dragged out to karaoke with your Vietnamese friends but you’re secretly waiting for someone to hand over the remote and the songbook, instead just fire up Karaoke Vietnam and you’ll have all the numbers and songs, and even some of the lyrics all in one place. Less waiting, more singing.

Lich Van Nien and VietCal (*free*) - To keep track of Tet and other lunar dates and/or know exactly when to visit which

side of the family, Lich Van Nien’s got tons of info on dates and holidays (including all the superstitious stuff) and VietCal is the simple Vietnamese calendar that you whip out to check which lunar month it is.

Vietnamese English Dictionary by Cole Zhu (*US\$5.99*) - Six bucks may sound like a lot for an iPhone app, but this is the best Vietnamese-English (and vice versa) dictionary I’ve found in the App store. You don’t need to type in diacritics and it always has multiple definitions and alternatives for the Vietnamese or English words you’re looking for. It’s made talking with all my Vietnamese friends a lot easier.

International Apps for Survival

Google Maps (*free*) - If you updated to iOS, then you probably got stuck with Apple Maps. Luckily, Google Maps has just come out with its native iPhone app. It’s much better than the original, before it got kicked out by Tim Cook, and now even has local city bus routes. A big advantage

for walkers.

Foursquare (*free*) - Even though Google Maps is nice and updated, Foursquare, in my opinion, is still the king of finding cool new spots to wine, dine and hang out (even if Foody.vn is going to catch up with it by the end of next year). There’s a ton of users and they’ve been populating the content on the site for the last two years. The app has also gotten sleeker so it’s easier to find new locations.

TripAdvisor (*free*) - Although I’m not a big fan of TripAdvisor (apparently a lot of ad agencies buy good reviews for locations), the app is still useful for checking up on locations if you’re hankering for a weekend trip out in Da Lat, Nha Trang or Mui Ne. Although you can’t completely trust their content, at least they’ve got a lot of it, and that’s always helpful to give you a good idea of the landscape you’re about to adventure into. ■

The List

Recreation

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

bowling

The Bowling Center

The Bowling Centre is a smaller venue with 12 lanes located in the International Club. 285B Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10 3864 3784

Bowling Pacific Garden

Small bowling alley at the Pacific Garden apartments complex, ideal for a more private game away from the crowds of teenagers. 8 Bis Ba Thang Hai, D10 3863 7944

Diamond Superbowl

An electrifying bowling experience featuring a 32 lane centrally-located bowling alley with fluorescent bowling balls and high-tech scoring. 4th Floor, 34 Le Duan, Ben Nghe, D1 3825 7778

PowerBowl 388

This is a 10 lane, 10 pin bowling alley with a games section attached, located on the 4th floor of the Parkson Saigon Plaza building. Level 4, 35 Le Thanh Ton, D1 38295388

Powerbowl Hung Vuong

12 lane 10 pin AMF bowling alley with a games section located on the 3rd floor of the Parkson Hung Vuong Plaza building - a Bud's ice-cream station awaits indoors. 126 Hong Bang, D5

Saigon Superbowl

Formerly the coolest venue in HCMC and opened to great aplomb in the early noughties, this tired old complex in the wrong part of town still retains its international-standard huge bowling alley. 43A Truong Son, Tan Binh 3848 8888

charities

Education For Development Vietnam

An international organization that works with Vietnamese partners to improve and expand their educational services for disadvantaged children and youth. 305/30 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh 3991 6033 admin@educationfordevelopment.org www.educationfordevelopment.org

International Organization For Migration

The organization is concerned with the welfare and quality of life of the Vietnamese people, particularly migrant and mobile populations. 1B Pham Ngoc Thach, D1 3822 2057 hcmc@iom.int www.iom.int.vn

Loreto Vietnam Australia

Dedicated to the reduction of poverty through beneficial, qualitative and responsive educational opportunities for underprivileged and disabled students. 17c Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1 3910 6364 www.loretovietnam.org

Mekong Quilts - Ngo Duc Ke

Founded in 2001, Mekong Quilts employs women in communities northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, to create high quality, hand-crafted bed covers, accessories and gift wares. All profits from the sale of the quilts are reinvested into the community through the NGO Mekong Plus. 1st Floor, 35-37 Ngo Duc Ke, D1 2210 3110

mekong.quilts.creations.hcmtdt@gmail.com 517- Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7 6271 7758 mekong.quilts.creations.hcmtdt7@gmail.com www.mekong-quilts.org

Saigon Children's Charity

Saigon Children's Charity was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged Vietnamese children to get an education and a fairer start in life. Their programs aim to help the most disadvantaged children of Vietnam to escape from poverty through education and training. 59 Tran Quoc Thao, D3 3930 0503 www.saigonchildren.com

The Little Rose Shelter

The Little Rose Shelter is a refuge for young girls who have been sexually abused or trafficked for the purpose of labor or sexual exploitation. It offers psychological rehabilitation, opportunities to go to school, free healthcare and a supportive, loving environment to grow. Hem 30, 55/2 Bis Lam Van Ben, D7 3872 0308 littlerosestory@hcm.fpt.vn

Unicef Vietnam

UNICEF Vietnam provides support in policy development, legal reform, and improving social services. Following reunification in 1975, the charity launched a nationwide programme to meet the basic needs of Vietnam's girls and boys. Unit 1406, Suh Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 9413 hanoi.registry@unicef.org www.unicef.org/vietnam

Waifs Of War Foundation

The Waifs of War Foundation was established in March 2004 by a group of individuals concerned with improving the lives of the children born to Vietnamese mothers and American War servicemen fathers. 24 Le Loi, D1 3913 0439 info@waifsofwar.org www.waifsofwar.com

cinemas & theatres

The Ballet and Symphony Orchestra

Ho Chi Minh City's local classical music venue with regular programs & performances. 212 Nguyen Trai, D1 3925 2265 nhahat_ghvr@hcm.fpt.vn

Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people. 6 Mac Dinh Chi, D1 3823 1652 info@nhahatbenthanh.com.vn www.nhahatbenthanh.com.vn

CT Plaza Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex on the 7th floor with 3D theatres and VIP room. Level 10, 60A Truong Son, Tan Binh 6297 1981 ctp@megastarmedia.net www.megastar.vn/en/ctp

Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films. 116 Nguyen Du, D1 3822 8533

230 Nguyen Trai, D1 3920 6688 246 Nguyen Hong Dao, Tan Binh 3849 4567 www.galaxycine.vn

Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Vietnamese water puppet show with live Vietnamese traditional music, this is an original performing art preserved and handed down for nearly a thousand years. Daytime performances by special arrangement. 55B Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1 3840 4027 098 937 9873 (Mr. Lam) goldendragonwaterpuppet@gmail.com www.goldendragonwaterpuppet.com

Ho Chi Minh Conservatory Of Music

One of three conservatories in Vietnam, offering world class musical education and performances. Concerts at the local Ho Chi Minh City Music School. 112 Nguyen Du, D1 3822 5841

Hung Vuong Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex in the CT Plaza building with 3D theatres and VIP room. 126 Hong Bang, D5 3222 0388 hvp@megastarmedia.net www.megastar.vn

IDECAF Drama Theatre

IDECAF is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French. 31 Thai Van Lung, D1 38295451 sunguyen@icsc.vn www.idecaf.gov.vn

Le Thanh Theatre

Experimental art space for dance and exhibitions, with regular performances of leading-edge artistic theatre. 25 Phan Phu Tien, D5 2242 4622 090 580 4820 info@arabesque.com.vn www.arabesque.com.vn

Lotte Cinema Diamond

Fine cinema complex in one of the most iconic department store buildings in town. Ride up the elevator to the top floor to catch a flick. 13th Floor, 34 Le Duan, D1 3822 7897 lottecinemavietnam@gmail.com www.lottecinemavn.com

Lotte Cinema Nam Saigon

The district 7 branch of Lotte cinemas features the Charlotte VIP lounge with 6 modern cinema rooms and a luxury coffee shop. Level 3, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, Tan Hung, District 7 3775 2526 lottecinemavietnam@gmail.com www.lottecinemavn.com

Saigon Opera House

No mere historical museum piece, the Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety. 7 Lam Son Square, D1 3825 1563 098 987 4517 info@hbso.org.vn www.hbso.org.vn

The Soul of Vietnam

The Soul of Vietnam showcases traditional Vietnamese music shows

with voice and traditional instruments. Be sure to check out the three-part Legend of the Trung Sisters' with accompaniment of stone musical instruments, gongs and two lifelike elephants. 7 Lam Son Square, D1 2229 9414 www.mekongartists.vn

gyms

California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the-art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility. 126 Hong Bang, D5 3222 0299 28-30-32 Le Lai, D1 6291 5999 5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4 3826 0999 info@cawowx.com www.californiawowx.com.vn

Crescent Wellness Group

Directly targeting foreign customers, especially Phu My Hung residents, CWG is equipped with the latest modern facilities and fitness equipment, selectorized strength training stations, plate-loaded machines and free weights. 3rd Floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5412 1277 cw.info@cswellness.vn www.the-crescent.com

Get Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes. 384 Hoang Dieu, D4 6261 6169 contact@getfitvn.com www.getfitvn.com

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon. 14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7 091 833 7111 www.R1-factory.com

Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health. 2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1 3825 8560 nicole@nutrifort.com www.nutrifort.com

Rex Health Club

This spa was designed for both men & women, integrating traditional Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese herbal remedies and techniques. Situated on the rooftop of the Rex Hotel, it features two outdoor swimming areas. 146 Pasteur, D1 3825 6136 rexhotel@rex.com.vn www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi. Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

3514 9009
info@saigonriverclub.com
www.saigonriverclub.com

Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.
Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh 3514 0255
star_fitness@bitexco.com.vn
www.starfitnessvn.com

museums

Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City

With a collection housing more than 21,000 pieces in various displays, the Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City highlights traditional and modern works of HCMC artists as well as other artists from the south of Vietnam.
97A Pho Duc Chinh, D1 3821 3508
btmt@baotangmythuattphcm.vn
www.baotangmythuattphcm.vn/index.php?lang=en

Geological Museum

A fittingly dull-looking building at the corner of Nguyen Binh Khiem and Nguyen Huu Canh, the museum has over 20,000 samples of interesting rocks.
2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1 3829 8146

Ho Chi Minh Campaign Museum

Small military museum dedicated to the Ho Chi Minh Campaign that led to communist victory over southern Vietnam.
2 Le Duan, D1 3822 9387

Ho Chi Minh City Museum

An old French Colonial palace, the museum has a wide and varied collection and some interesting modern history of its own.
65 Ly Tu Trong, D1 3829 8250
btphcm@hcm.vnn.vn
www.hcmc-museum.edu.vn

Ho Chi Minh Museum

Three stories dedicated to Ho Chi Minh, the museum features an assortment of artifacts from his personal life, including a radio, sandals and clothes. After exploring the more than 3,000 Ho Chi Minh portraits, take a walk in the lovely gardens around the old building nicknamed the 'Dragon House' for its ornate roof and hybrid Franco-Chinese architecture.
1 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4 3940 2060
btbcm_nr@yahoo.com.vn
www.baotanghochiminh-nr.vn

Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women

The Museum of Southern Vietnamese Women has become a place of interest for both locals and tourists alike. The museum was set up in order to educate future generations of women about patriotism and the national traditions of Vietnamese women.
202 Vo Thi Sau, D3 3932 7130
baotangphununambo@gmail.com
www.baotangphunu.com

Reunification Palace

Formerly known as the Independence Palace, the Reunification Palace marked the end of the Vietnam War, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its main gates. Roped-off showrooms, exactly as they were in 1975, include the presidential office, bedroom, and reception.
135 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1 0808 5008
dinhdoclap@dinhdoclap.gov.vn
www.dinhdoclap.gov.vn

Vietnam History Museum

This long-running historical museum offers a chronological display of many items and artefacts, and has been showered with multiple awards by the local administration.
2 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1 3829 8146

Vietnamese Traditional Medicine Museum

The Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine contains nearly 3,000 items informing guests about the subject dating all the way back to the Stone Age.
41 Hoang Du Khuong, D10 3862 7812
fitomuseum@hcm.fpt.vn
www.fitomuseum.com.vn

War Remnants Museum
 Attracting more than 500,000 visitors a year, the War Remnants Museum shows the grim reality of war, focusing mainly on the American phase of the Vietnam War. The multi-building museum includes a courtyard with military equipment including a "Huey" helicopter, an M48 Patton tank and an F-5A fighter.
28 Vo Van Tan, D3 3930 6325

parks

Cong Vien Van Hoa Park

This former French recreational space has been converted into one of the city's favorite sports parks.
115 Nguyen Du, D1

Dam Sen Park

This beautiful park was constructed on reclaimed marshland and is widely considered to be Vietnam's most exciting cultural theme park.
3 Hoa Binh, D11 3963 3073
info.phd@damsenpark.vn
www.damsenpark.com.vn

Ky Hoa Park

Large tourist area in the inner suburbs with many lakeside entertainment activities.
12 Ba Thang Hai, D10

Le Thi Rieng Park

A large park in D10, Le Thi Rieng park is a well-known spot for casual exercise, a friendly game of badminton and early morning birdwatching.
875 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10 3862 6655

Phu Lam Park

Gentle park on a small lake amidst busy back streets of outer Cholon, popular with locals for fishing and exercise.
121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6 3751 3313

September 23 Park

One of the largest parks in the city center. It's a great place to exercise, see free music performances, attend public events, and enjoy food from street vendors.
Pham Ngu Lao, Pham Ngu Lao, District 1

Suoi Tien Theme Park

Enormous amusement park on the outskirts of the city with multiple themed attractions demonstrating Vietnamese culture.
Xa Lo Ha Noi, D9 3896 0260
www.suoi tien.com

Van Thanh Park

This expansive park located on the banks of the Thi Nghe River offers myriad culinary options in addition to stunning views and natural atmosphere.
48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Zoo and Botanical Gardens

One of the world's oldest zoos, with a modest collection of animals and a botanical garden, with many rare orchids, ornamental plants, and over a hundred species of mammals, reptiles and birds.
28 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1 3822 8309
info@saigonzoo.net
www.saigonzoo.net

places worship

Ba Chuong Church of St Dominic

Ba Chuong Church was redesigned in 2003, and now this visually stunning house of worship features a blend of traditional oriental and western architecture.

190 Le Van Sy, Phu Nhuan 3844 8206

Bac Ha Church

Built in 2008. The name Bac Ha is the combination between the two names of their original dioceses, Bac Ninh and Ha Noi. The church has two bell towers at 42m high, and there's a room dedicated to looking after kids to let their parents join the mass.
419 Ly Thai To, D10 3839 1032

Central Mosque

Built by South Indian Muslims in 1935 on the site of an earlier mosque, this was originally constructed for worshippers from southern India then-resident in Saigon. Now Muslims from all over the world come here to worship.
66 Dong Du, D1 3824 2903

Cha Tam Church

Cha Tam Church is an old catholic church built in 1900. The church was named for priest Cha Tam in honor of his great sermons and contributions to the community.
25 Hoc Lac, D5 3829 8914
vi.chatamvn.com

Cho Quan Church

An old church built on the foundations of earlier churches that have stood here for centuries, Cho Quan Church was constructed in 1887 in the Gothic tradition, with large stone pillars and a red tiled roof. The massive bell tower consists of three floors and provides stunning views.
120 Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cholon Mosque

Built by Muslims from South India in 1932, the Cholon Mosque Serves Cholon's Muslim community, including Malaysian, Indonesian as well as South Asian worshippers.
641 Nguyen Trai, D5 3855 5350

Dieu Phap

Almost half a century after Dieu Phap pagoda was founded, it has continued to provide a home and food for the poor, helpless, and homeless elderly people.
188 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh 3553 3267
chua dieu phap188@yahoo.com
www.chua dieu phap.com.vn

Giac Lam Pagoda

Probably Ho Chi Minh City's oldest pagoda, Giac Lam features a rare bodhi tree and seven-storied stupa containing Buddhist relics. The 32 metre-high stupa, facing East, is one of the most distinguished towers of the city.
11, Lac Long Quan, Tan Binh

Hoa Khanh Temple

A tall, colorful, and oddly out-of-place temple, sticking up prominently from the homes and businesses that surround it.
215 Phan Van Tri, Binh Thanh 3843 1699
www.chua hoakhanh.com

Hung Phuoc Pagoda

Quiet and unassuming active Buddhist pagoda situated behind the Saigon Railway Station.
540/23 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3 3993 4113
095 806 3311
thongtin@chua hung phuoc.vn
www.chua hung phuoc.vn

Huyen Sy Church

One of Saigon's oldest churches convenient to the backpacker district, and built by the grandfather-in-law of the last king of Vietnam.
1 Ton That Tung, D1 3882 3858

Jade Emperor Pagoda

An ancient temple built by the city's Cantonese Chinese community, the interiors are filled with paintings

portraying Taoist and Buddhist mythical stories and sculpture depicting the ten levels of hell and the apocalypse from Chinese mythology.
73 Mai Thi Luu, D1

Jamiul Islamiyah Mosque

Highly stylistic Mosque near the central police station, servicing a sizeable local Muslim community, it is also known as the Nancy Mosque.
459B Tran Hung Dao, D1 3920 3325

Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber

In stark contrast with the pagodas and temples that dot the city landscape, Loc Uyen Meditation Chamber is a place dedicated to seeking inner peace and the study of Buddhism. A colorful D6 pagoda with resident monks, daily devotional instruction, and a free traditional medical healer on Thursdays and Sundays from 8-11am.
121 Kinh Duong Vuong, D6 3875 1155
093 868 0935
thichminhsi@yahoo.com
www.tinhxalocuyen.net

Mariamman Temple

This small Hindu temple is frequented by both Saigon's tiny Hindu population along with residential Vietnamese. The temple was built in the late 19th century by traders from Tamil Nadu and is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Mariamman.
45 Truong Dinh, D1

Nga Sau Church / Saint Jeanne d'Arc Church

Dedicated to St. Joan of Arc, this salmon-pink church is built on the site of a former Chinese cemetery.
116B Hung Vuong, D5 3855 7616
090 835 6266

Quan Am Pagoda

An impressive pagoda dedicated to the popular Goddess of Mercy, with a beautiful interior and large fish and turtle pond.
12 Lao Tu, D5

Quoc Tu Pagoda

Prominent seven storied pagoda with colorful statuary in D10, the main complex of the pagoda spans seven stories with the first two open to the public.
Ba Thang Hai, D10 3865 2700

Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica

Ho Chi Minh City's foremost tourist attraction, this beautiful cathedral dates from the 1860s and is built with bricks from Marseille. In front of the cathedral stands a Virgin Mary statue, which is said to have been shed tears in 2005, causing thousands of people to stop around the Basilica.
1 Cong Xa Paris, D1 3824 2903

St Joseph Seminary

This stunning complex of old colonial-period buildings a few blocks to the east of Notre Dame Cathedral is looking its age after significant tropical weathering, but it's slowly being restored and has been training new seminarians since 1986.
6bis Ton Duc Thang, D1

Subramaniam Swami Temple

One among the city's only two South Indian Hindu temples, it was the first Hindu temple ever built in Ho Chi Minh City and the largest. Located a mere five minutes' walk from Ben Thanh Market.
98 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1

Tan Dinh Church

Built by French colonists in the late 19th century, Tan Dinh Church is renowned for its distinctive pink facade and decorative designs. A popular photography subject for visitors to Ho Chi Minh City regardless of their religion.
289 Hai Ba Trung, D3 3829 0093

Thien Hau Pagoda

One of Cholon's most popular

pagodas, this temple was originally built as an expression of gratitude by 19th century Chinese immigrants for Thien Hau's protection during their initial trip to Saigon by sea. Its many hanging incense coils make for superb photographs.
710 Nguyen Trai, D5

Tran Hung Dao Temple

One among a series of temples and pagodas dedicated to the Vietnamese folk hero Tran Hung Dao, who freed ancient Vietnamese people from the Mongolians in the 13th century.
36 Vo Thi Sau, D1

Vinh Nghiem Pagoda

Sitting next to the canal at the end of Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, this structure draws its inspiration from traditional Vietnamese culture and a touch of the Japanese architectural style. The largest and most impressive Mahayana Buddhist pagoda in the city.
339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3843 9901

vinhnghiemvn@yahoo.com
www.vinhnghiemvn.com

Xa Loi Pagoda

The largest pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City and known for a brutal 1963 raid, Xa Loi was built in 1956 following the drawings of the architects Nguyen Van Duong and Do Ba Vinh for worshipping Buddhist relics.
89 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 0679

social clubs

Brogolf Bar Wars

Group of barflies who meet regularly for golf, open to new members. First Saturday of each month, breakfast, brunch, and 18 holes with a caddy.
46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1
090 927 3997

craig@brogolfer.com

Dat Nam Friendly Club

While it may ring of a bingo association, this is a fairly well-respected venue for entertainment and cultural exchange amongst foreigners and entrepreneurs - a very casual networking opportunity.
Basement Level, 116 Nguyen Du, D1
5404 3618

datnamfriendlyclub@yahoo.com

Go Go Go Club

Japanese Go chess club.
135/117/43 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh
3512 7630

International Ladies of Vietnam

A women's group that meets Thursday mornings for coffee from 10am - noon at Sherwood Residences- 1st floor (127 Pasteur, D3) Cost for coffee and snacks is VND130,000. Membership is VND700,000 per year. Open to all ladies
www.ilvietnam.com

Latin Street Dance

Geisha's was funky enough without the addition of this new meet-up for Latin fans yearning for something a little grittier than salsa.
Geisha Tea House, 85 Pasteur, D1
fred@salsaaigon.com

www.facebook.com/
events/238229646194865

Overland Club

Overland Club is a 100 percent foreign-owned Japanese company that organizes cultural classes including pottery (from basic to intermediate level), as well as painting unglazed pottery) and cooking classes (Japanese and Vietnamese). The Overland Club also hosts various events. Past events include noodle making, soap carving, and kids' cooking.
36bis Huynh Khuong Ninh, D1
3820 9734

www.overlandclub.jp

Saigon Swing Cats

Saigon Swing Cats organizes dance

classes, workshops and events at various venues around HCMC including restaurants, lounges and dance studios. Dance styles include the Lindy, Shim Sham and Tranly Doo.

Petrohouse Tower- caffe molinari,
5 Le Duan, D1
info@saigonswingcats.com
www.saigonswingcats.com

Vietnam Cookery Centre

A complete cookery center offering hands-on classes. This culinary compound introduces visitors to Vietnamese cuisine.
263/8 Ung Van Khiem, Binh Thanh
3512 2764

www.vietnamcookery.com

sports

Green Bamboo Club

Pleasant tennis club with several courts just a short hop over the bridge from District 1 into Binh Thanh.
50/3 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh
3898 6504

3898 6504

Lan Anh International Tennis Court

Popular international sports club facility with advanced sporting equipment, courts, gym, and restaurant. This sports club also hosts tennis tournaments and other events.
291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
3862 7144

3862 7144

Kimdo Recreation Centre

Situated in downtown Saigon, Kim Do Recreational Centre provides a wide variety of services: restaurant, karaoke, live music cafe, bar, dancing, massage, steam bath and hairdressing.
129A Nguyen Hue, D1
3822 5914

3822 5914

swimming pools

Great World Pool

Popular public pool known for its high standard of cleanliness, this indoor pool is shallow at both ends and deep in the middle to ensure safety for non-swimmers.
600 Nguyen Pham Tuan, D6
3853 7867

3853 7867

Ky Dong Swimming Pool

Great D3 outdoor family pool, ideal for the kids.
40 Ky Dong, D3
2241 5322

2241 5322

Lam Son Swimming Club

Olympic-sized swimming pool with designated lanes (one exclusively for women) and a reputation for cleanliness.
242 Tran Binh Trong, D5
3835 8028

3835 8028

Lan Anh Swimming Club Pool

The popular Lan Anh club is a well-situated sports area with a clean, quiet pool and jacuzzi. A bar serves drinks and towels by the water. There are various areas with different depths from 1.4m to 2m, suitable for adults. Swimming lessons are available at the club.
291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D3
3932 5508

lananhclub.vn

Van Thanh Pool

A very casual swimming venue favoured by younger people and recreational swimmers.
48/10 Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh
2219 5487

2219 5487

Yet Kieu Swimming Pool

A long-standing swimming club that's become the standard for competition, clean water, and inexpensive prices, Yet Kieu is a well-managed complex of pools for the family - and it also has its own gym.
1 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
0839101542

yetkieuclub@yetkieuclub.com
www.yetkieuclub.com



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IMAGE BY NAMQUAN

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

Nothing's Free

By trying to lower the cost of flying, airlines may soon be charging passengers outrageous supplementary fees

MAY 21, 2008 will forever go down as a dark day in aviation history. US carrier American Airlines became one of the first legacy airlines to borrow a page from the low-cost carrier playbook and charge passengers for checked baggage. Other airlines soon jumped on the *a la carte* pricing bandwagon.

In what started as a move to combat record-breaking fuel costs, airlines globally have since embraced the fee-based model in nickel and diming passengers for every conceivable add-on possible. Remember the days when drinks (even alcoholic ones) were free? Or even hot meals, later downgraded to cold sandwiches, then to pretzels and peanuts and finally to nothing?

In airline speak, the practice is referred to as "unbundling" and passengers are led to believe it's for their own good. Pay less if you don't have a bag to check! Don't want a meal? Great, you've just saved a few bucks! Airline PR departments have worked feverishly to portray the move as presenting customers with more choices.

But undeniably, the trend has gotten out of hand. Airlines have adopted fees for almost every imaginable service. Some are aimed at convenience, like Qantas' RFID-equipped bag tags that allow travelers to skip ticket counter lines. Others target customers who want comfort. Vueling, a Spanish budget airline, has a €60 Duo package which allows passengers to board early, enjoy drinks and snacks and have the middle seat kept free. Additionally, since travelers have gotten used to paying extra for priority boarding, there's talk about another fee to deplane ahead of other passengers. A survey conducted by fare-tracking site Airfarewatchdog found that 16 percent of respondents would shell out anywhere from US\$10-20 to deplane early.

Paper Money

The most unpalatable fees aim to capitalize on situations that travelers may find hard to avoid. With aisle and window seats

often reserved for people willing to pay a premium, this has the potential of leading to families having to pay to sit together. And while airlines say that early check-in or help from flight attendants and willing passengers should prevent a parent from being separated from a minor, they don't actually guarantee that this won't happen. In another internationally reported incident, one hapless traveler had to pay €300 to print out five boarding passes on Ryanair. Does it cost €50 to print out a piece of paper? Of course not. But customers who don't read the fine print and end up needing additional services may find themselves up against a stiff fee. (In this case, the passenger had her e-tickets saved to her phone, but hadn't actually printed them out.) Locally, AirAsia charges US\$12 as a "processing fee" to use your credit card to book online. When I offered to come down to the AirAsia office to pay cash, that "processing fee", ostensibly connected to credit card usage, conveniently turned into a

"booking service fee".

All of these ancillary fees - a carry-on bag here, a name change there - are adding up to massive profits, US\$22.6 billion, in fact, collected by 50 international airlines in 2011, a 66 percent spike from 2009. Last year, ancillary fees alone made up 33.2 percent of one US carrier's total revenue.

Travelers are left to wonder whether airlines have reached the limit of what they can charge for, or whether there are more fees on the horizon, like the proposed infant fee or the so-called "fat tax". As long as passengers demand the cheapest flights available and comply with the ever growing laundry list of additional fees, it looks they're here to stay.

Check out next month's column where I'll discuss how to get the most value out of your flights.

What's your best tip for avoiding fees and scoring amazing flight deals? Email me at travel@oivietnam.com ■



The List Travel

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

airlines

Air China

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

Air France

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

Asiana Airlines

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

Air Asia

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

Cathay Pacific Airlines

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

China Southern

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

Emirates

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

Ethiad

ethiadairways.com

EVA Airlines

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

JAL Japan Airlines

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

Jetstar

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

Korean Air

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

Lufthansa

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

Malaysia Airlines

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

Qantas Airways

186 - 188 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3910 5373

Qatar

Suite 8, GF, Petro Vietnam Tower
1-5 Le Duan St., room 4, Floor 8, AB tower,

Dist.1, HCMC
84 8 38273888
reservations@vn.qatarairways.com
Working hours: Mon-Fri: 8-17, Sat: 8:30am - 12:30pm
Hanoi phone No: 04 39336767

Singapore Airlines

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

Thai

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

Turkish

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

United Airlines

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

Vietnam Airlines

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

Vietjet

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

hotels

TWO STAR

Bali Hotel

★★
Ideally-located for attendees to any exhibitions held at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, Bali Boutique is flash and modern in style - with a little touch of the plush thrown in for good measure.
39 - 41 Hung Phuoc Villas, D7
54104747
bali2009@gmail.com

Calmette Hotel

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

Cat Huy Hotel

★★
Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.
353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D1
39208717
info@cathuyhotel.com
www.cathuyhotel.com

Ken Hotel

★★
A surprisingly well-designed hotel, this budget establishment looks anything

but from within, although the location in a side alley off CMT8 is quite deceiving.
285/7 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D10
0906699371
hien_pt4889@yahoo.com.vn

Little Saigon Boutique Hotel

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

THREE STAR

ACEM Hotel - 8A Thai Van Lung

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

Blue Diamond Hotel

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

Bong Sen Hotel

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

Catina Saigon

★★★
Hotel Catina Saigon provides 3 star accommodation in large, boutique rooms that include free, high-speed internet access and city views.
109 Dong Khoi, D1
38296296
info@hotelcatina.com.vn
www.hotelcatina.com.vn/en.html

Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa- Nguyen An Ninh

★★★
The Tan Hai Long Hotel and Spa offers award winning 3 star service and stunning views of Ben Thanh Market and downtown Saigon.
3 star Hotel and spa located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh city with 160 rooms and suites, also providing professional spa services by skillful and experienced staff
15-17-19 Nguyen An Ninh, D1
38272738
info@tanhailonghotel.com.vn
www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

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

was written in room 214.
132-134 Dong Khoi, D1
38299201
continentahotel@vnn.vn
www.continentalsaigon.com

Kimdo Royal City Hotel

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

Liberty Central Hotel

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

Norfolk Hotel

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

Novotel Saigon Centre

★★★★
One of HCMC's newest hotels, Novotel is located on busy Hai Ba Trung St, just within walking distance of downtown attractions. It's everything you'd expect from the international brand with 24-seven guest services and a broad dining offer.
167 Hai Ba Trung, D1
38224866
H7965@accor.com
www.novotel.com

Oscar Saigon Hotel

★★★★
French colonial hotel in District 1 offering stunning panoramic views and 4 star amenities.
68A Nguyen Hue, D1
38292959
oscarsaigonhotel@oscar-saigonhotel.com
www.oscar-saigonhotel.com

Palace Hotel Saigon

★★★★
One of the tidier properties of its class within the vicinity, with 144 deluxe guest rooms of contemporary design well-equipped with modern facilities.
56-66 Nguyen Hue, D1
38292860
reservation@palacesaigon.com
www.palacesaigon.com

Park Royal Saigon Hotel

★★★★
Park Royal Saigon Hotel is an ideally placed conference hotel which caters to all MICE needs. The hotel offers a wide array of banquet services and can accommodate 30 to 300 guests.
309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
38421111
enquiry.prsngn@parroyalhotels.com
www.parroyalhotels.com

Thao Dien Boutique Hotel

★★★★
Set in a secluded, verdant garden occupying 1.2 hectares along the Saigon River, Thao Dien village is a tropical hideaway that's just 20 minutes from

the city centre.
 195-197 Nguyen Van Huong, D 2
 3742222
 sales@thaodienvillage.com
 www.thaodienvillage.com

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

 Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era. Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining one of its most luxurious places to stay.
 19 Lam Son Square, D 1
 38234999
 hotel@caravellehotel.com
 www.caravellehotel.com

Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

 An international hotel located where the borders of the city's four main districts meet. The city's major commercial and entertainment area is only an 8-minute drive away.
 242 Tran Binh Trong, D 5
 38397777
 info@hcm.equatorial.com
 www.equatorial.com/hcm

Legend Hotel

 Classic hotel offering 5 star amenities along with a scenic view of the Saigon River, and providing a unique culinary experience with many options for fine dining.
 2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D 1
 38233333
 info@legendsaigon.com
 www.legendsaigon.com

Majestic Saigon

 One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.
 01 Dong Khoi, D 1
 38295517
 majestic@majesticsaigon.com.vn
 www.majesticsaigon.com.vn

Moevenpick Hotel Saigon

 An international hotel chain with Swiss roots, this comfortable hotel caters to both businesspeople and families with fine dining options, a fitness centre, and multiple conference rooms.
 253 Nguyen Van Troi Apartments, Phu Nhuan
 38449222
 hotel.saigon@moevenpick.com
 www.moevenpick-hotels.com

New World Saigon Hotel

 One of the most impressive business hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, with stunning views and 5 star amenities. 533 luxury rooms and suites offering the perfect ambience for concentrated work and undisturbed relaxation.
 76 Le Lai, D 1
 38228888
 saigon@newworldhotels.com
 www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Nikko Saigon

 One of the city's newest accommodation jewels, this lavish hotel is designed to make the maximum impression of austere Japanese-style class from the lobby upwards. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in HCMC, with classic, precise and elegant decor.
 235 Nguyen Van Cu, D 1
 39257777
 dos@hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn
 www.hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn

Park Hyatt Saigon

 Without a doubt the city's most luxurious hotel, Park Hyatt Saigon

features French colonial inspired rooms, two award-winning restaurants, an outdoor pool and a stylish contemporary bar. The exterior is the result of meticulous research into the colonial architecture of the region.
 2 Lam Son Square, D 1
 38241234
 saigon.park@hyatt.com
 www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

Rex Hotel Saigon

 Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.
 141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1
 38292185
 rexhotel@rex.com.vn
 www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

 High-class getaway hotel located out of the city centre on exotic Thanh Da Island, allowing guests to escape from the chaos of the city life while remaining close to the action. More hotel than apartment complex, The Domaine's private residences are classic and luxurious, making the most of the natural surroundings.
 1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
 35561145
 sales@saigondomaine.com
 www.saigondomaine.com

Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

 Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City vibrant business and entertainment district, Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers is a 5 star haven of convenience, connecting guests with colleagues and friends.
 88 Dong Khoi, D 1
 38272828
 sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com
 www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview

Softel Saigon Plaza Hotel

 The Softel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.
 17 Le Duan, D 1
 38241555
 H2077@Softel.com
 www.softel.com/gb/hotel-2077-softel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

 Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.
 18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
 3833 6688
 services@windsorplazahotel.com
 www.windsorplazahotel.com

serviced apartments

Avila Serviced Apartment

These serviced apartments combine an excellent location with luxurious amenities.
 20-20bis Thi Sach, D 1
 35218365
 hangpham_msa@hotmail.com
 www.avilaapartment.com

Cantavil Daewon Apartment

High-luxury complex with libraries, research center, and cultural information center on site. Also features an outdoor swimming pool. One of the most luxurious towers in the central area.
 600A Dien Bien Phu, Binh Thanh

Central Garden Apartment

These luxurious apartments offer stunning views of downtown Saigon along with western style

accommodations and excellent location.
 Clean, inner-city luxury compound close to the Ben Nghe River.
 225 Ben Chuong Duong, D 1
 38367734
 cdaciv@vnn.vn
 www.centralgarden.batdongsan.com.vn

City View

Located in the prime business and residential district, only minutes away by car from downtown area, City View is the perfect place for home and/or business in Ho Chi Minh City.
 12 Mac Dinh Chi, D 1
 38221111
 cityview@hcm.vnn.vn
 www.cityview.com.vn

Hung Vuong Plaza Apartment

Huong Vuong Plaza apartments above the D5 Parkson are comprised of two 29 floor buildings with many luxurious apartments in bustling Chinatown.
 126 Hong Bang, D 5

Jasmine Court Serviced Apartment

A boutique property with only 12 apartments, comprised of one and two-bedroom suites of various sizes. All apartments are designed in a fresh contemporary style and finished in a pleasing neutral colour scheme.
 307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
 38446639
 jasminecourt@jasminecourt.com.vn
 www.jasminecourt.com.vn

Lancaster Serviced Apartments

Lancaster Serviced Apartments Le Thanh Ton enjoys a commanding position over the nightlife, culture, and business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, offering a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window.
 22 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D 1
 38246666
 sales@trungthuygroup.vn
 www.lancaster.com.vn/project/1/contact

The Landmark

The Landmark is a prestigious development of residential accommodation and office space situated in the heart of HCMC. The 16-storey complex, located on a prime waterfront site, was one of the first of its kind in the city.
 5B Ton Duc Thang, D 1
 38222098
 info@landmark-saigon.com
 www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

Mai Ha Lan II Serviced Apartments

Mai Ha Lan II offers a sweeping panoramic view of the city skyline from virtually every window. It offers 33 luxurious and graciously furnished apartments with studio and two bedroom options.
 8A/1C Thai Van Lung, D 1
 62990992 0909868052
 info@maihal.com/hai.apartment@gmail.com
 www.maihal.com

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.
 17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1
 38226111
 sales@norfolkman.com.vn
 www.norfolkman.com.vn

Saigon Court

Since its opening in 1998, Saigon Court has become well-known amongst the expatriate community for exceptional standards of service. This 12 storey building is among the highest in the area, offering its tenants commanding views of other parts of the city.
 149 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D 3
 39306466
 saigoncourt149@hcm.fpt.vn
 www.apart-saigoncourt.com

Saigon Pearl Apartment

Ho Chi Minh City's largest five star apartment complex, Saigon Pearl comprises six 37-story residential

towers located on the banks of the Saigon River in Binh Thanh District, about five minutes by taxi from downtown. Pool, gym, supermarket and dining facilities all on site.
 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
 38219999
 sales_dept@saigonpearl.com.vn
 www.saigonpearl.com.vn

Saigon Skygarden

A 15-storey building located in the Saigonese Little Tokyo on Le Thanh Ton, offering 172 international-standard Serviced Apartments for lease.
 20 Le Thanh Ton, D 1
 38220002
 sales@saigonskygarden.com.vn
 www.saigonskygarden.com.vn

Saigon View Residences

Saigon View Residences offer a range of Deluxe, Superior, and Executive Ton types in distinctive one and two bedroom apartments.
 117, Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh
 38404966
 Sales@saigonview.com.vn
 www.saigonview.com.vn

Sedona Suites

With a fantastic location in District 1 and rooms offering all of the comforts of home, this award winning serviced apartment complex caters to businessmen and families alike.
 65 Le Loi, D 1
 38229666
 sedona@repland.com.sg
 www.sedonahotels.com.sg

Sherwood Residence

Serviced apartments available for short or long term bookings, located in Pasteur, within walking distance of downtown Ho Chi Minh City, international schools, shopping centres, etc. Pool, sauna, gym, mini-cinema onsite.
 127 Pasteur, D 3
 38232888
 info@sherwoodresidence.com
 www.sherwoodresidence.com

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.
 21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
 38229197
 enquiry.hochiminh@the-ascott.com
 www.somerset.com

V-Star Apartment

Good proximity to the Saigon River and FV International Hospital, as well as international schools and the Tan Thuan export zone.
 Go O Moi, Phu Thuan, D 7
 37733151
 banquantri@vstarhome.com

travel agencies

Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.
 92-96 Nguyen Hue, D 1
 3825 1358
 090 780 0432
 sales14@asianatravelmate.com
 www.asianatravelmate.com

Aquarius Booking Office

With access to a global network of leading travel specialists, Aquarius is a domestic & international air ticketing agency committed to offering low-cost flights, travel insurance, and accommodation.
 4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
 3823 1905
 airticket@aquarius.com.vn
 www.aquarius.com.vn

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112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

136 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1

53C Nguyen Du, D1

250 Dien Bien Phu, D3

11 Vo Van Tan, D3

47 Tran Cao Van, D3

97 Dinh Tien Hoang, Binh Thanh

485 Lac Long Quan, Tay Ho, Hanoi

75 Ly Thuong Kiet, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

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info@oivietnam.com

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

5th Floor, Empire Tower, 26-28 Ham Nghi, D1
6291 3887
info@tourismthailand.org.vn
www.tourismthailand.org.vn

Ben Thanh Tourist

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

51 Dong Khoi, D1
3914 3921
090 611 1121
office51@benthanhtourist.com.vn
www.benthanhtourist.com.vn

Cle Voyages - Xuan Viet Travel

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

Unit 1105, Harbour View Tower, 35 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 4942
info@clevoyages.com
www.clevoyages.com

Fiditour

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

129 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 1414
fdi@fiditour.com
www.fiditour.vn

Hoi An Express

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

94 Mac Thi Bui, D1

3939 0135
090 803 9699
info@hoianexpress.com.vn
www.hoianexpress.com.vn

Refine Asia

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

138 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ward 6, D3
3932 0732
info@refineasia.com
www.refineasia.com

Saigon River Tour

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

10b Ton Duc Thang, D1
6290 9410
098 936 8508
info@saigonrivertour.com
www.saigonrivertour.com

Sinh Cafe

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

246-248 De Tham, D1
3836 7338
www.thesinhthourist.vn

Viet Journey

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

18-19-20 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 7152
090 809 7008
sales1@vietjourneytours.com
www.vietjourneytours.com



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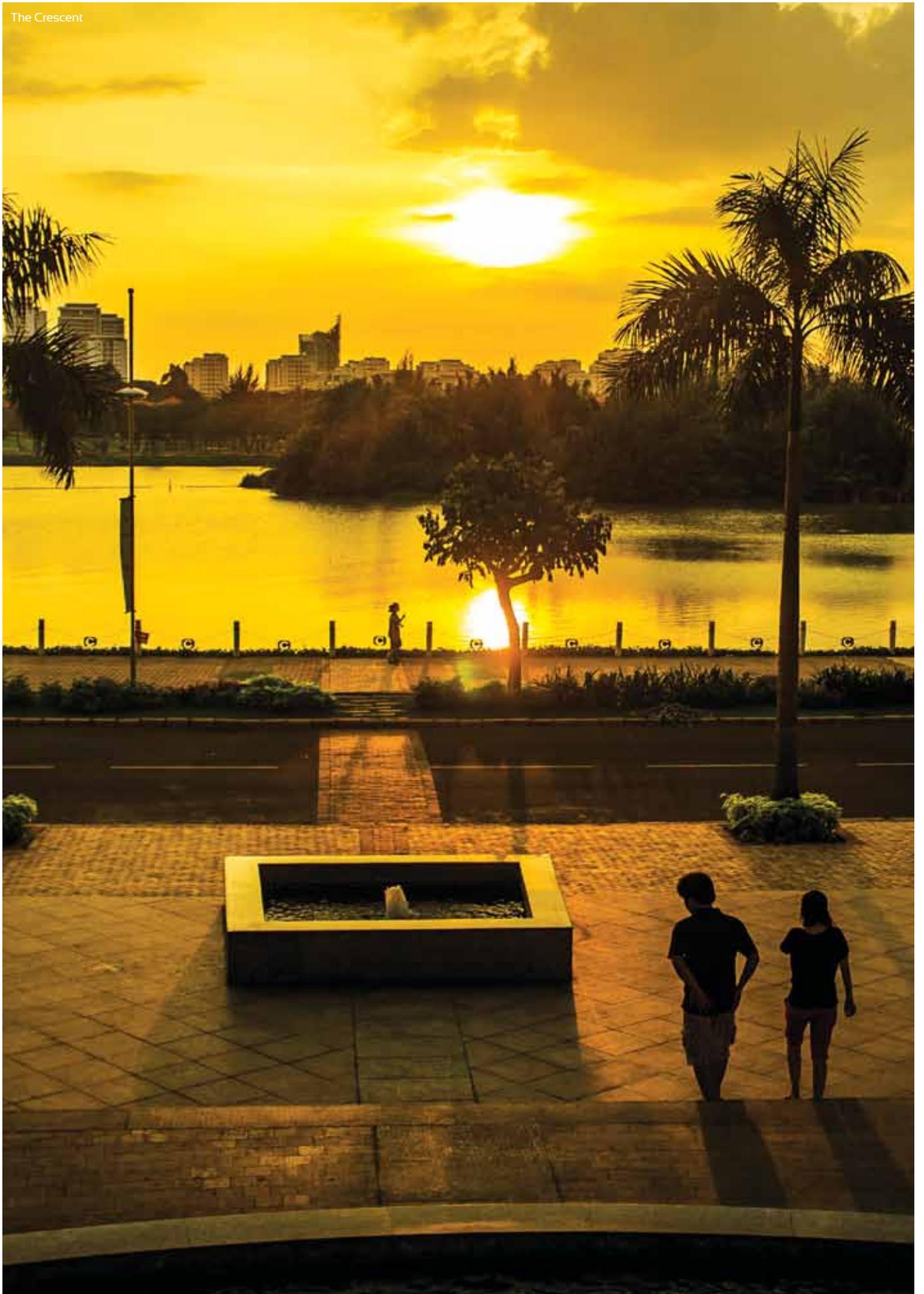
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6 Secret Spots in District 7

Think District 7 is only fast food chains and modern apartment blocks? Think again - a closer look reveals some surprising spots that will help you see another side of this southern suburb

TEXT BY **CARL FRIE** IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN & QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY**



Takoika



Clockwise from top left: 404 Truong Son BBQ, Loi Mon, Tram Anh Tea & Coffee, Mori Cafe

ALTHOUGH NGUYEN THI Thap Street is best known for LotteMart, nestled in the shadow of the retail monolith are actually some great garden cafes and the best of the bunch is **Loi Mon**, meaning “path” in Vietnamese. Offering cool shaded seating on the ground floor and a tree-house loft on the second, this open-air cafe is a refreshing alternative to the usual coffee chains. Come on a weekend evening to catch live pre-war Vietnamese and French acoustic music done with a touch of class.

Just off Nguyen Thi Thap on Le Van Luong is **3 Thi**. While not big on atmosphere, this place serves incredibly delicious *mi quang* that some locals say is the best south of Danang. Prices here are low so there’s plenty left in your wallet for a smoothie or coffee at one of the cafes in the neighborhood. Its location makes for a great vantage point to watch how the nouveau

riche mix with the working class.

With most of the dining scene in Phu My Hung dominated by Korean restaurants, you can still find diversity if you’re willing to look, and **Takoika** aims to do just that. Bringing a touch of that Nippon culture to the area, it’s a Japanese soul food restaurant that specializes in various octopus dishes. Getting here by bike on Huynh Tan Phat Street is a bit of an adventure in itself but your reward is an amazing meal.

If you like rooftop bars but are tired of ten-dollar beers and posers, then climb on up to **Mori Cafe** near RMIT. Come in the evening, grab a seat on the terrace, catch the evening breeze off the river and enjoy a new view of the city.

For those missing that smoky barbecued taste in their food and eating under the uninterrupted night sky, then just skip over to nearby **404 Truong Son BBQ**.

Ignore the half dozen or so BBQ places on this square - 404 is the best of the lot. For VND200,000 you can satiate four hungry friends on BBQ pork, chicken and even goat breast. But beware, this is a true countryside style eating experience with low plastic chairs, metal tables, and a whole lot of new friends who like to shout and toast to almost anything.

Now we couldn’t get away without including at least one refined place to our list. **Tram Anh Tea & Coffee** mirrors Phu My Hung’s image as one of the more civilized districts of Ho Chi Minh City. Tram Anh produces one of the best coffees in Vietnam. Don’t believe me? Then just ask for a free cup, they will be more than happy to brew one for you and explain the farming and roasting process. How’s that for hospitality in District 7? ■

DISCOVER D7

LOI MON

451 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7

3 THI

322 Le Van Luong, D7

TAKOIKA

549 Huynh Tan Phat, D7

MORI CAFE

1 Street 9a, D7

404 TRUONG SON BBQ

404 Truong Son (street 9a), D7

TRAM ANH TEA & COFFEE

1429 My Toan 2, Phu My Hung



The Kebab Philosopher

One Frenchman on a mission to clean up the fat in these Turkish sandwiches

TEXT BY BENNETT DAVIDSON IMAGE BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

IT'S A LITTLE out of the way and, sure, the city is already speckled with dozens of carts around bearing names like Doner Kebab, Aladdin, Kebab Master and so on; but this one is different. It's actually fresh and healthy. Imagine indulgence sans guilt.

"It's difficult to explain my product to foreigners because for them kebab is the very definition of fat junk food," explains Pierre Quentin, the proprietor of four-month-old KST Kebab (76 Lam Van Ben) in District 7. "[Usually] the meat is full of fat, the sauce is full of fat, and then you stuff the whole thing with french fries. I don't want to do that. When you provide people with food you have a responsibility, and I take that very seriously."

If those words sound shockingly honest from a fast food salesman, then you've never met Pierre in person. His concept stems from his inherent goodness. He wants to provide his customers with a cheap, healthy, tasty product, and he takes great strides to make it happen.

Normally, the chicken used for making kebabs is the fatty dark meat, stored in big boxes filled with spices and oil so that the ingredients will infuse the meat with that signature kebab flavor, but Pierre circumvents this process to make his chicken healthier and tastier.

"Our process doesn't involve oil at all. We just use the lean part of the chicken breast and we apply our spices directly, so we are able to take oil out of the equation," he explains.

He also makes the yogurt sauce himself by using fresh milk, using the heat from the sun. His project is intimately connected to the environment: depending on the weather, the consistency of his sauce will change.

"If it's 45 degrees outside I will have a thicker yogurt sauce, but if it's cooler, it's thinner.

Thank God it's hot here most of the time!"

Pierre purposely set up shop outside the central Phu My Hung area because he wanted to attract Vietnamese clients as well, and achieves this by keeping his prices low (a standard kebab costs VND20,000).

He's still in the process of trying to win the taste and minds of the locals. Many Vietnamese are resistant to this new wacky sandwich, and some of them are even starting to call it "strange food."

The stranger story, however, is how this Frenchman started selling a Turkish sandwich.

Streets of Dreams

Pierre flew from France to Vietnam as a tourist five years ago and found a job as a supply chain director for Big C, a large French supermarket chain. However, despite the success of his job, he began to notice the opportunity and dynamism of the street culture was beckoning him.

"Vietnam is still a village. Even the big cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are still very human in scale: You can basically live in the street, eat in the street, shop in the street, and then you can find a motorbike taxi to take you home," he explains. "There is always someone to help you if your bike breaks down or when you are hungry."

Pierre was inspired by the opportunities he saw. "With no formal education or job training anyone can become a successful businessperson. Someone very poor can come from the countryside, buy some ingredients from a market, and sell something directly on the street. It's complete freedom for entrepreneurship. It's like the 'Vietnamese Dream'."

While others seek new ways to bring major franchises into Vietnam, he aims to do the

opposite and preserve what he sees as central to Vietnamese life.

Even though Pierre didn't go to culinary school, he had faith in the simplicity of the kebab formula: chicken, fresh vegetables, the right bread and the perfect sauce. The kebab is perfect for someone on the go. The Vietnamese like to eat sandwiches because they can be made quickly, and they don't cost much. Pierre has confidence he can tap into that same market by providing new flavors.

He's even cooking up savory crepes with eggs, cheese, and bacon (starting at VND20,000), an homage to his French heritage.

"I wanted to set up something where I could be a part of the street, be a part of this story," he says. "Some people are quick to scoff at life on the streets by saying that the food is not healthy, the *xe om* is not safe, the hairdresser gave me a bad haircut or whatever. But I think the best way to experience Vietnamese society is to engage in life on the street."

So, with a serving of philosophy on the side, you can find Pierre living his Vietnamese dream out in District 7. ■

"When you provide people with food you have a responsibility, and I take that very seriously"

>> The List

District 2



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

food & drink

BAKERIES

Annam Gourmet Market

A French-owned grocery shop stocking a large range of imported foodstuff, fresh vegetables and fruits, beers, wines.

41A Thao Dien, D2
3744 2630
www.annam-gourmet.com
anphu@annam-gourmet.com
9am to 8pm

Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate

39 Thao Dien, D2
6296 0066
voelker-vietnam.com

BARS

Mcsorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.

4 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4659
www.mcsorleys.vn
3pm - midnight weekdays,
10am - late weekends

Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.

18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
6252 1333
papagayo.saigon@gmail.com
11am- 3pm Tuesday - Sunday, 6pm -10pm

Buddha Bar

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

7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080
buddhabarsaigon.com
5pm - 9pm, Monday - Sunday

restaurants

FRENCH

Gastro'home

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service.

100 Xuan Thuy, D2
6281 9830
7.30am - 9pm

La Villa

Serves fine French cuisine using fresh ingredients with different special every day, this restaurant offers an authentic Gaillac experience

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn
tinapham@lavilla-restaurant.com.vn
Lunch (11.45 - 3pm), dinner (6.45 to late),
Closed Sundays

Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.

18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3744 4585
www.3gourmandsaigon.com
gils_phuong@yahoo.com
Open for lunch and dinner from Tuesday to Sunday

ITALIAN

Pendolasco



An institution in Saigon since the late 90s, this venue in the gentrified An Phu area picks up on the success of its counterpart in town with its stunning outdoor patio and warm wooden interior. Excellent classic Italian cuisine is on the menu - wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu - cooked with a focus on fresh flavors and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy. Off-site catering is available for groups of 20-200.

36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
62532888
www.pendolasco.vn
info@pendolasco.vn
11am - 10pm

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.

43 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2132
www.sarpinos.vn
yvonne.trinh@sarpinos.vn

JAPANESE

Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

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

14E1 Thao Dien, D2
3744 6782
10am - 2pm and 5 - 10pm

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308
www.rhaisilkcorp.com
thanhpheu@rhaisilkcorp.com
11am - 1.45pm & 5.30pm - 9.30pm,
Monday - Sunday

THAI

Baan Thai

Both a Thai restaurant serving authentic Thai cuisine and a pub with satellite TVs to watch live sport

55 Thao Dien, D2
3744 5453
www.baanthai-anphu.com
11am - 11pm Sunday to Thursday. Open until midnight on Friday and Saturday

VIETNAMESE

Baniam Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant that serves authentic Vietnamese cuisine. Baniam Tree is part of the Khai Silk group so the design is extremely well thought out, gleaming wooden surfaces complementing the red signature walls. Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308
6.30am - 10.30pm

WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.

40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2
3744 6790
www.boathouse.com.vn
7.30am - 11pm

Mekong Merchant

Set in a colonial house within an

open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.

23 Thao Dien, D2
3744 4713
info@mekongmerchant.com
8am - 10pm

Snap Cafe



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

32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
35194532
www.snap.com.vn
7.30am - 10.30pm

The Deck



Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.

38 Nguyen U Di, D2
3744 6632
www.thedecksaigon.com
info@thedecksaigon.com
8.30am to late

Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.

NO.1, Street 2nd, D2
6281 9059
www.vinovietnam.com
info@vinovietnam.com

supermarkets

An Phu Supermarket

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

43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

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

No. 17, Street 12, D2
3740 7105
www.classicfinefoods.com

Metro

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

Residential An Phu, An Khanh Ward 2
3740 6677
www.metro.com.vn
randy.guttery@metro.com.vn
6am - 9pm, Monday - Sunday

business

ATMS/BANKS

Agribank

22 Thao Dien, D2
8540 21323

Vietcombank

56 Tran Nao, D2

Maritime Bank

218 Tran Nao, D2

3740 2478

LAW FIRMS

Nguyen Giap Law Firm

14 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7812
www.hangluatnguyengiap.com
hangluatnguyengiap@gmail.com
8am - 5pm

Dang Khuong

26 Street 44, D2
8224 09726

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www.industrialdesignasia.com
info@industrialdesignasia.com

Thanh Tung

Prints digital, cuts decal, LED signs, Braille and stainless neon materials to ensure compliance with quality.

373 Luong Dinh Cua, D2
090 952 1411
ttungquangcao@yahoo.com.vn
8am - 5pm

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Namhouse

Provides rental properties for home and office use, focusing in the District 2 area.

48A Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
098 900 7700
www.namhouse.com.vn
sales@namhouse.com.vn
8am-5.30pm, Monday - Saturday

Snap Café

Has an extensive list of property rentals in District 2.

32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
3519 4282
www.snap.com.vn
7.30am - 10.30pm

health & beauty

DENTISTS

European Dental Clinic

This is the dental clinic's second location in Ho Chi Minh City. Experienced practitioners, latest technology, most dentists from UK and France. Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.

17-17A Le Van Mien, D2
091 874 9204 or 090 955 1916
eurosaigon@hotmail.com
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.

96 Tran Nao, D2
6674 4255
8am to 8pm

Nu Cuoi Hoan My (Perfect Smile)

14-16 Tran Nao, D2
3740 7470
hoanmysmile@gmail.com
8am to 8pm

Dental Truong Thanh

276 Tran Nao, D2

5402 3009
www.nhakhoatruongthanh.com
ntruongthanh@yahoo.com.vn
8am to 8pm

FITNESS

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.
APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2549
www.aissportscentre.com

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs. Holds regular sessions at Boathouse.
Thao Dien, D2
094 777 1326
www.cyril-and-you.com

NTFQ2

Besides an excellent weights and cardio area, the facility runs group classes including power yoga, pilates, circuit training, martial arts and spinning. The centre also contains a spa and a restaurant serving up calorie-calibrated meals to help members stay in line with individual fitness programs.
34 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2
3744 6672
www.nutrifort.com
ntfq@nutrifort.com
6am - 9pm Monday - Friday,
7am - 8pm Saturday & Sunday

Thien Nga (Swan) Club

Fitness club that has training equipment and a 25sqm swimming pool
751 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0012

X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.
503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
2210 9192
www.xrockclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women
18 Street Number 2, D2
3897 6786

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Animal Rescue & Care

A.R.C. was founded in 2010 to directly address the plight of abused and abandoned animals in Ho Chi Minh City. Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns. New volunteers are always welcomed there.
31-44 Thao Dien, D2
arcpets@gmail.com
www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.
251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2
6660 6602
www.dakhoaanphu.com
info@dakhoaanphu.com
8am to 5pm

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.
95 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2000
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

PHARMACIES

A Chau - Nha Thuoc Tu Nhan A Chau
48 KP2 Le Van Thinh, D2
37437163

An Phu 2 - Hieu Thuoc An Phu 2
14N KP2 National Huong, D2
3744 2484

Quynh Lam
628 Nguyen Thi Dinh, D2
3742 0155

SPAS

Saigon Dep

The clinic treats various skin diseases and offers skin care protection and prevention packages.
79 Xuan Thuy, D2
3899 0448
www.saigondep.net
sgd@saigondep.net

Thao Dien Village

Within this tourist complex is a luxury spa and wellness center.
189 - 197, 197/1 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3744 2222
www.thaodienvillage.com
info@thaodienvillage.com

The Royal Spa And Salon

Services include acrylic nails, facials, hair salons and massages
14E14 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4873
9am - 9pm

shopping

ELECTRONICS & CAMERA

The Gioi Di Dong (Metro An Phu)

This is a chain of mobile phone stores but also has a wide range of laptops, speakers and gadget accessories.
628C Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2
1900 561 292
www.thegioididong.com

HOME INTERIORS

Austin Home

Furniture shop that stocks art deco pieces, cushions, fabrics and wooden ornaments for the home
20 Thao Dien, D2
3519 0023
6am - 6.30pm

Clic Clac Sofa

Sells sofas that double up as beds in various sizes and wood
327F Luong Dinh Cua, D2
5402 7434
www.clicclacsofa.com

education

SCHOOLS

Aeg International School

An IB school that provides international education from kindergarten to senior. The curriculum and assessment includes: International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP), University of Cambridge International Lower Secondary program, leading to Checkpoint assessment in Year 9 and IGCSE in Year 11.
190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3519 2727
www.acgedu.com

British International School

Offers pre-school to secondary education under the English national curriculum.
225 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3744 2335
www.bisvietnam.com
susanwilson@bisvietnam.com

Horizon International Bilingual School

A bilingual school, HIBS opened in 2005 and applies 100 percent of the Vietnamese national curriculum, MOET, as well as providing students with an intensive English program along with teaching science and math in English.
6 - 6A - 8, 44 Street, D2
5402 24 82
hibsvietnam.com

info@hibsvietnam.com

L'atelier

A French language center offering classes in all forms to children and adults. Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.
33/19 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 6844
www.latelier-anphu.com
latelier.anphu@yahoo.com

Saigon Sports Academy

A multi-sports training school that teaches chess, swimming, tennis, soccer, among others.
28 Tran Nao, D2
7303 1100
www.saigonsportsacademy.com
info@SaigonSportsAcademy.com

travel

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Exotissimo

With 20 years of operations in the region, they offer unique travel experiences with destination-based offices in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and China.
41 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4111
www.exotissimo.com
yen@exotissimo.com
9am - 9pm

Ha Nguyen

Specializes in providing tickets for Eva Airlines, Qatar Airways, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific, American Airlines, Singapore Air, Malaysia Airlines, Korean Airlines, Qantas Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines and many other international airlines.
64B3 Xuan Thuy, D2
6674 9041

SERVICED APARTMENTS

Fideco River View Apartment

The Fideco River View Apartment is located in a safe and secure area in district 2, offering tenants luxurious amenities with a panoramic view of Saigon.
14 Thao Dien, D2

Riverside Apts

Overlooking the Saigon River, the compound offers short and long term leases.
53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
37 444 111
www.riverside-apartments.com

River Garden Apartment

River Garden is the first luxury river-view condominium development in HCMC. It is located within a 15-minute drive of downtown and provides its occupants with stunning views of the Saigon River in a resort type of environment.
170 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D 2

Villa Song Saigon

Colonial-style, boutique apartments characterised by solid hardwood flooring and an outdoor swimming pool enclosed by verdant gardens.
197/2, Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D 2
37446090
0906099180
www.villasong.com

places of worship

CHURCHES, TEMPLES, MOSQUES

Ky Quang 3 - Chua Ky Quang 3 (Pagoda)

73 Ha Noi Highway, D2
3744 4608

My Hoa - Giao Xu My Hoa - Hat Thu Thiem (Church)

136 KPI Binh Trung Dong Ward, D2
3743 0808



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 www www.oivietnam.com

>> The List

District 7



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

food & drink

BAKERIES

Savouré

Savouré serves French-style desserts and breads in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Its famous cakes reflect the sophisticated and gentle French spirit. Good for families and small groups of friends.

SD 4 -1 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 2469
www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

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

557-1 Sky Garden 2, D7
5410 0999

The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7
5410 3900

CAFES

Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
7308 3131
www.baskinrobbins.vn

Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7
3932 2778
www.budsicecream.com.vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7
3824 4527
www.coffeebean.com.vn

FB Deli Coffee

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

SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7
5411 9696
8am - 10pm

The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3257

MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent

Sourcing the majority of their dessert

ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

101 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 7332; 090 822 7999
www.mof.com.vn/en
10am - 9.45pm

NYDC

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

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6523

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

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

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

restaurants

CHINESE

Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant

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

559-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7
5410 4368

Ming Dynasty

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

23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7
5411 5555

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoor.

59-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7
5410 1989

ITALIAN

Sarpino's

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

351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7
5412 2480
www.sarpinos.vn
9am - 10.30pm

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.

103 Ton Dat Tien, D7 | 5412 4848
www.saltpepper.com.vn
11am - 2pm, 6pm - 11pm

JAPANESE

Baby Spoon

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

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

SB 2-1 Parkview, D7
3822 3356

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.

SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7
5412 3940

THAI

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food is a slightly fusion style, exhibiting the best of Thai cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5415 5556
www.thaiexpress.vn

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

R1-72 Hung Gia 1, Bui Bang Doan, D7
5410 2027

WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7
3841 3883
www.boomarang.com.vn

Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.

2 Pham Van Cuong, The Crescent, D7
5410 9999

El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere.

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

Scott and Binh's Restaurant

A whole bunch of independent reviewers can't be wrong - this unassuming little bistro with a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, and pasta is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike.

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
094 890 1465
4pm - 11pm Tue-Fri; 11am - 3pm Sat; 4pm - 11pm Sun

supermarkets

Annam Gourmet

An upmarket deli-grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. This location also

features a coffee lounge.

SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3263/64

Citimart

Despite being smaller in floor size than some other supermarkets, Citimart, a large Vietnamese supermarket chain, carries a wide selection of imported goods.

SC-10 Green View, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 2238
B3-4, B3-5, B3-6 Ha Huy Tap, D7
3412 8008
54-1 Hung Vuong 3, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5410 1040

Lotte Mart

Lotte Mart is a South Korean supermarket chain with two branches in Ho Chi Minh City carrying a very wide range of products.

469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3771 8989

Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.

554-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7
5410 2613

business

BANKS

ANZ Bank

47 Phu My Hung
5410 1666
www.anz.com/vietnam/vn

HUMAN RESOURCES

Xage Consultancy

A human resource management consulting firm that develops people and organizations specializing in talent development, organizational development and outplacement.

35A-1-2, 1st Floor, Grandview C, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 3402
www.xageconsulting.com

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

Xone FM

The first independently run radio station in Vietnam, Xone FM provides the latest and hottest songs in both English and Vietnamese via 10 channels throughout the country.

100 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5413 5341
www.xonefm.com

REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Anh Nguyen Real Estate

Anh Nguyen specializes in rental and sales of residences in Phu My Hung.

168 Ha Huy Tap, D7
090 958 2489
www.rental4u.net

Vietnam Housing

Vietnam Housing specializes in helping Vietnam's foreign community with their long- and short-term real estate rental and purchasing needs.

R1-49, Hung Gia 3, D7
5412 5979
www.vietnamhousing.info

health & beauty

DENTISTS

Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Narashima Mitro.

R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
5410 3937
www.naomidental.com

HOSPITALS

FV Hospital

French Hospital - Vietnam is a multi-specialty hospital equipped with modern equipment and providing a full range of medical services including medical and health advice, diagnosis and surgical treatment at a single point.
6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5411 3333
www.fvhospital.com

SALON

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.
3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2990; 093 481 8085

shopping

A/V ELECTRONICS & CAMERA

The Gioi Di Dong

The Gioi Di Dong is a chain of medium-sized mobile phone stores but also features a range of laptops, speakers and gadget accessories.
346 Huynh Tan Phat, D7
1900 561 292

EYEWEAR

Eyewear Hut

Eyewear Hut is full of eyewear, carrying brands from across the globe, from RayBan to Prada and everything in between.
496 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3925 9659
www.eyewearhut.com.vn

HOME & FURNISHINGS

Mekong Quilts

Mekong Quilts offers sustainable employment to women from poor rural regions of Vietnam and Cambodia who craft fashionable, quality silk quilts and home wares.
517 Sky Garden 1, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6271 7758
www.mekong-quilts.org

LADIESWEAR

Aquamarine

Aquamarine and Xuan Thu are premium swimsuit brands for men, women and children.
3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
3842 7105
www.xuanthuswimsuit.com

Vera

Vera is an international premium lingerie brand that is designed and made in Vietnam. The line offers cutting edge lingerie and is reasonably priced.
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3822 1152
www.vera.com.vn

SHOES, BAGS, PURSES & ACCESSORIES

Geox

Geox is a line of Italian-style shoes with a unique blend of fashion and functionality, catering to all ages and genders.
3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
2210 9848
www.giaybiettho.com

Heatwave

What started as a small shoe shop in Singapore, now has stores all over Asia. Heatwave targets young women with their well-crafted heels with an affordable price tag.
801 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
6290 9588

Vans

Created in 1966, Vans' rugged rubber shoes quickly became favorites among skateboarders. The brand's street-style shoes and apparel collection continues

to receive warm support from teenagers and young adults around the world.
Crescent Mall, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3818 1848

education

SCHOOLS

Kindermusik

The center is a music, movement and English-language program for children from birth to 7 years. Each lesson promotes early literacy and English language acquisition, social skills and more. Kindermusik programs align with standards and/or requirements for the US, UK, UE, TESOL Pre-K and IB Primary years.
Ground Floor, Crescent Residence2, D7
kindermusik.edu.vn
090 709 9480

Renaissance International School Saigon

Opened in 2008, The Renaissance International School Saigon offers programs from Early Years to secondary curriculum, founded on the International British System. The four buildings on the school's one-hectare site include a 350-seat auditorium, a computer resource centre, gymnasium and 25 m swimming pool.
74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171
www.rissaigon.edu.vn

RMIT International University Vietnam

RMIT International University Vietnam is the Asian hub of Melbourne-based University RMIT - Australia's biggest tertiary institution. The largest offshore campus in the world, RMIT Vietnam offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering.
702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
3776 1300
www.rmit.edu.vn

Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families. SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.
78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5413 0901
www.ssis.edu.vn

Vstar School

Vstar School provides education for Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m² environment including a sports field and swimming pool.
Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3821 3821
www.vstar.edu.vn

recreation

CINEMAS AND THEATRES

Lotte Cinema

Lotte Cinema (Nam Saigon) has 1,336 seats in 6 theaters, showing movies in English and Vietnamese.
3rd Floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7
3775 2527

Megastar Cineplex

Showing movies in English and Vietnamese, and Megastar offers more cinema screens than anyone else in Vietnam. Both the Crescent Mall and Parkson Paragon locations have 8 theaters.
5th Floor, Crescent Mall, 101 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 2222
5th Floor, Parkson Paragon, 3 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7
5416 0088

SPORTS

The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and

organically designed fitness and wellness centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.

3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza, 105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 1277

Saigon South Golf Club

The closest golf course to HCMC's downtown area, Saigon South is a 9-hole, par 3 golf course and driving range situated behind FV hospital. There are foreign trainers to help golfers with golf skills. Equipment hire is available.
Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5411 2001

travel

HOTELS

Bizu Boutique Hotel Phu My Hung

The hotel's 24 guestrooms are all designed with guests' comfort in mind, featuring wireless Internet access along with all the basic facilities. Other features at the hotel include a restaurant, billiards, karaoke, 24hr room service 24hr, an elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning and meeting facilities.
15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7
5411 1008
www.bizuhotel.com

Bizu Premier Hotel Phu My Hung

Twenty-five rooms spread over 5 floors provide modern comforts such as satellite/cable TV, bathtub, balcony/terrace, bathrobes, air conditioning.
7-9 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

Black Sea Hotel

Black Sea Hotel is a conveniently located 2-star hotel close to Lotte Mart and FV Hospital.
11-A-15-17 Hung Phuoc 2, D7
5412 1234
www.blackseahotel.com.vn

Boutique Garden Hotel

Newly opened in 2012 and conveniently located close to Phu My Hung, FV Hospital and Tam Duc Hospital, guests can choose from 20 rooms.
R3-84 Hung Phuoc 3, D7
5410 5941
www.boutiquegardenhotel.com

Golf Hotel Phu My Hung

Opened in 2008, the 2-star Golf hotel has 38 international standard rooms that feature a complimentary buffet breakfast, tea & coffee making facilities, ADSL Internet and Wifi access.
R4/17- 19 Phan Khien Ich, D7
5410 4999

Hotel de Paris Saigon

The Hotel De Paris offers 24 budget rooms equipped with cable / satellite channels, a TV and free Wi-Fi. The hotel staff are available 24/7 and can help with booking tours and tickets. A concierge, a business centre and a lift are also available at the hotel.
4 Street 12, D7

Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.
73 Hoang Van Thai, D7
5410 1111
www.ibis.com

Laguna Hotel

Designed for both business and leisure travel, Laguna Hotel has 23 rooms and features room service, car park, Wi-Fi in public areas, a restaurant and laundry service/dry cleaning.
R3-84.85 Hung Gia 4 Internal Road, D7
5410 2888

Lucky Star Hotel Phu My Hung

Renovated in 2012, the Lucky Star Hotel Phu My Hung's 15 guestrooms feature

a variety of comforts such as bathtub, desk, complimentary wireless internet access and mini bar.

R3-36 Phan Khien Ich, D7
5410 3472

Milano Hotel

Milano Hotel offers 24 spacious and well-appointed rooms featuring large windows, a flat-screen cable TV and a mini-bar. Other services include laundry, ironing and currency exchange facilities.
R4-26 & 27 Hung Gia 4, Cao Trieu Phat , D7
5412 2225

One World Hotel

All 32 rooms at this 3-star hotel offers guests a refrigerator, air conditioning, television and desk. Also to be found at the hotel is a family room, elevator and room service.
16-18-20 Hung Gia 3, D7
5410 4455

Sabena Hotel

The Sabena Hotel sits in a quiet, tree-lined street just off the major Parkway Nguyen Van Linh. The Saigon Exhibition & Convention Center, RMIT International University and The Crescent Mall are only 1km away.
24 Noi Khu Hung Gia 4, D7
5416 1000
www.sabena.vn

Sophia Hotel

Sophia Hotel features 12 guest rooms, each including air conditioning, mini bar, desk, shower and bathtub. The property also has a restaurant, concierge, safety deposit boxes, room service and Wi-Fi in public areas.
R3 60 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
5410 3689
www.sophiahotel.com.vn

Torino Hotel

Located on a peaceful and green neighborhood, this 10-room contemporary property is close to restaurants, cafes and shopping centers.
25 Road No. 2, D7
5410 5611
www.torinohotelsvn.com

Vien Dong Hotel - Phu My Hung

All 58 rooms at this 2-star hotel come equipped with modern facilities including in-room safe, balcony/terrace and satellite/cable TV, all located 5km away from the city center.
R4-27, R4-28 Hung Phuoc 3, D7
5410 2494
www.viendonghotel.net

SERVICED APARTMENTS

The Crescent

The Crescent is located along the Crescent Lake in the heart of Phu My Hung New City Centre, offering an exclusive high-class lifestyle for locals and expats. This area consists of a variety of green parks, restaurants, luxury apartments, retail shops and entertainment venues.
101 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Court

Completed in 2009, Garden Court is a luxury apartment building located close to schools, supermarkets and shopping centers and a golf course.
Garden Court, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Garden Plaza

Garden Plaza is a high class apartment building designed after modern Singapore buildings, comprising of four inter-connected 8-storey blocks.
Garden Plaza, Ton Dat Tien, D7

The Panorama

A complex consisting of six medium- and high-rises, from 6 to 24 storeys tall, The Panorama has 276 individual apartments and 51 stores.
The Panorama, Ton Dat Tien, D7

Sky Garden

Sky Garden is a huge complex of apartments including 42 buildings with more than 3,000 individual apartments set on 10.4 hectares.
Sky Garden, Nguyen Van Linh, D7
5410 1616

Snapshots

Events around HCMC



Time to Buck Up

The world's largest coffee chain has finally opened after much anticipation and speculation. But Starbucks will have to battle entrenched tastes, local brands like Highlands and Trung Nguyen, international rivals and thousands of independent cafes (both on and off the streets) to succeed.

IMAGES BY **NAM QUAN & JAMES PHAM**





Hot & Spicy

From kids to adults, the city's brave find out if they can handle Patrick Leija's Dos Chiles Salsa at Boathouse in An Phu.

IMAGES BY QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY



Oi Marketplace

Exclusive deals all over town just for Oi readers available throughout the month of March



EAT

BONJOUR RESTO

Bonjour Resto serves up international dishes with a French flair. Main courses feature roast duck, salmon, tuna and lamb steak. Our staff picks are the ostrich medallions with BBQ sauce and the surprisingly juicy venison steak with pepper sauce (both VND79,000). Mains come with a side salad with a sweet mulberry dressing, crispy french fries and piping hot fresh bread.

Oi readers receive 20% off all main courses (VND69,000 - VND149,000 with most dishes averaging VND89,000)

6/2 Nguyen Huy Tuong, Binh Thanh District, Tel: 3551 5950, www.bonjourresto.com



PLAY

BAT TRANG MOMENT

Channel your inner Demi Moore with a pottery making session at Bat Trang Moment. You're limited only by your imagination as you work with clay and a potter's wheel under the guidance of one of the English-speaking staff, making for a great half-day activity. Kids will enjoy getting clay everywhere (so dress them in something you don't mind getting dirty) and adults will find the process deceptively challenging. After partial drying, get to work on painting your one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Firing takes approximately one week.

Oi readers receive 30% off their pottery project (regularly VND140,000 for 600g of clay, instruction, painting and firing)

Bat Trang Moment DIY Pottery Art Studio, 53/104 Tran Khanh Du, D1, Tel: 098 943 2234; 096 343 2234

SMILE

NU CUOI DUYEN DENTAL CLINIC

Nu Cuoi Duyen dental clinic features clean, spacious rooms, sleek, modern equipment and very friendly staff who speak some English. A professional team of dentists and technicians does everything from teeth cleaning to fillings to crowns to whitening. Our staff pick is the thorough and professional teeth cleaning and polishing for an amazing VND50,000.

Oi readers can get in on these deals:

— Teeth cleaning and polishing for VND50,000 (regularly VND200,000)

— Zirconia crowns for VND2,800,000 per crown (regularly VND5,000,000)

— Plasma teeth whitening for VND990,000 (regularly VND2,500,000)

100A4 Thich Quang Duc, Phu Nhuan District, Tel: 083 995 8052; 097 377 9900, www.nhakhuanucuiduyen.com

EAT

SAIGON STREET EATS

Designed by Australian-Vietnamese couple Barbara and Vu, Saigon Street Eat's food tours take visitors off the beaten culinary path to hidden gems around the city. Choose from the Pho Trail, a morning walking tour wandering around back streets, a wet market and a temple; the Seafood Trail, a night-time adventure that begins on one of the city's "snail streets"; the Veggie Trail or the Family Feast. Groups are kept small and in addition to the food, the tours are a fun way to gain insights into Vietnam's people and culture.

Oi readers receive 10% off any tour or 20% off any two or more tours (regularly US\$40 - US\$55), Tel: 090 844 9408, www.saigonstreeteats.com

HOW IT WORKS

- Contact the business directly to make a reservation
- Identify yourself as an Oi reader to claim the exclusive deal
- Some restrictions may apply. See www.oivietnam.com for more details

Share your Oi Marketplace experience on our website!

Are you a business with a great deal to offer Oi readers? Contact us at: editorial@oivietnam.com

Word Play



Caption this! Go to our website, www.oivietnam.com, to submit your caption for this photo. Our editorial team will choose the winner who will receive an exclusive Oi goodie bag! Good Luck!



P A S S I O
COFFEE TO GO®

Terminal 15F 15F Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Q1.
.....
Terminal 112 112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, P6, Q3
.....
Terminal 136 136 Nguyen Thai Hoc, Pham Ngu Lao, Q1.
.....
Terminal 53C 53C Nguyen Du, Ben Nghe, Q1
.....
Terminal 250 250 Dien Bien Phu, P12, Q3
.....

Terminal 11 11 Vo Van Tan, P6, Q3.
.....
Terminal 47 47 Tran Cao Van, P6, Q3.
.....
Terminal 97 97 Dinh Tien Hoang, P3, Binh Thanh
.....
Terminal 485 485 Lac Long Quan, Tay Ho, Hanoi.
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Terminal 75 75 Ly Thuong Kiet, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi.
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www.passiocoffee.com