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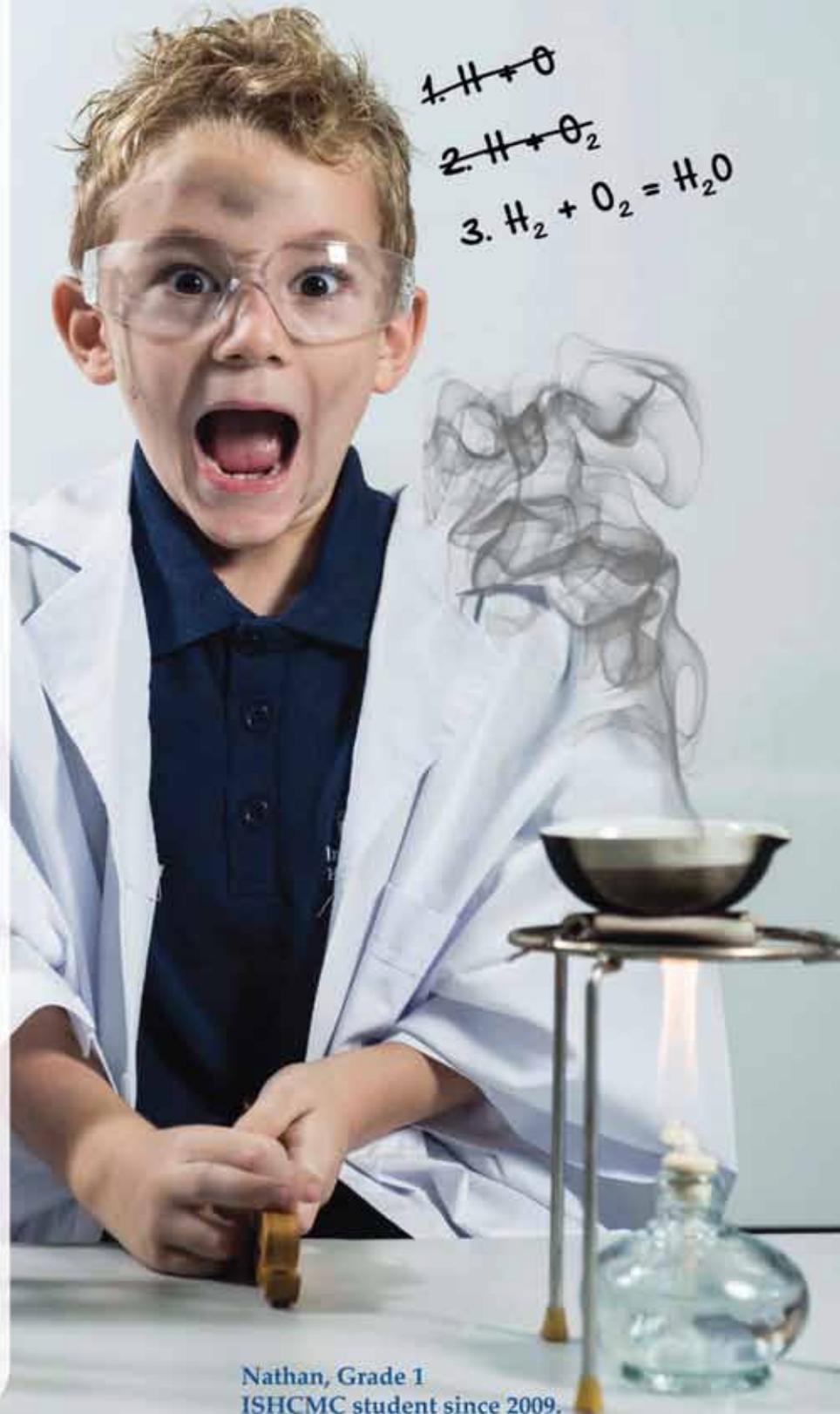
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# Why we love mistakes



**Nathan, Grade 1  
ISHCMC student since 2009.**

No, not all of our graduates go on to Oxford.

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Stanford, Cornell, Penn, LSE, Imperial, Durham,  
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## This Month's Cover

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Hair & Make up: **Kenny Lieu**  
Model: **Christina B Nguyen**  
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Congratulations to Jang Hye Sung, our IB student, on being offered the position of Deputy Secretary General of The Hague Model United Nations held in Singapore, the largest and most prestigious MUN in Asia.

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# *Congratulations*



*Class  
of  
2014*

*"If your dreams don't scare you they're not big enough."*

## UNIVERSITY DESTINATIONS

Engineering – Northeastern University; University of Connecticut; University of Melbourne;  
Computer Science – Adventist University of the Philippines; Business & Management – Han Yang University;  
Charles Sturt University; RMIT; University of Reading; Economics – University of Warwick; University of Melbourne;  
Law – University of Magdeburg; Queen Mary University of London; Computing – University of Goldsmiths; La Salle University;  
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies; University of Colorado; Biomedicine – University of Glasgow;  
Pharmacy – De Montfort University; California College of Art; Psychology – University of British Columbia.

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 UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE  
International Examinations



WINE & DINE

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## Designing Woman

IN MY ALTERNATE life, I think I would've been a designer. Growing up, my mom found ways of working from home to be able to look after my siblings and me. One of those jobs entailed bringing home huge bags of ribbons, bows and clips from a shop in Chinatown. Working from a finished sample, she'd fastidiously recreate these fanciful accessories earning just a quarter each. Of course, with an army of (not so) willing helpers at her disposal, all of us were engaged in this little home factory in the evenings after our homework was done. Looking back, I think this is probably where I caught the design bug to fiddle with accessories, my current obsession being about 100 pairs (and growing!) of earrings in my dresser which I love taking apart and creating new ones from all the pieces. This month, we feature some of Saigon's incredibly talented designers, putting their unique spin on everything from jewelry to hats to shoes to apps. It's wonderful to know that such a creative spirit resides here, along with the craftsmanship needed to bring these designs from concept to reality.

This month's Saigon Mythbusters brings up a question that I've asked myself lots of times. Is it legal for shops to price

items in US dollars or should everything be displayed in Vietnamese dong? It's something I encounter almost every day here and I have to admit, I'll often gauge a business' integrity on whether they price their items in dollars or dong.

Something else that brings up memories of my past is the *Curious for Curious* article on Saigon's most authentic antique market in untouristy Binh Thanh District. All throughout my teenage years, our family would set up our stall at a Sunday flea market in Manhattan. Rain, snow or sun, we would be there from 8am to 8pm selling, buying and trading anything and everything from electronics and antiques to clothes and even stuff from Vietnam. I can't wait to head out to the Saigon Ve Chai market with my dad to relive some old memories!

In *My Body, Her Baby*, NPD Khanh recounts a truly moving story of a woman so desperate for money that she rented out her womb, timely considering a new law soon to legalize surrogacy in Vietnam. In a country where everyone's first question is invariably whether you have a family yet, admitting you're childless can be shameful, opening the door to what some might consider extreme measures to save face.

On a happier note, photographer Piers Birtwistle takes us on a scenic journey to the wilds of Mongolia. Seeing the images brought me back to when I visited several years ago. What struck me most were the wide open empty spaces — no high rises, people or construction. Just sky as far as the eye could see. Later in the trip, I found myself standing in front of the newly built, shiny metal monument of Genghis Khan. The enormity of the statue was overwhelming and definitely made me feel conquered — a fitting tribute to arguably the greatest conqueror in history.

And finally, Saigon's reputation as a foodie's heaven won't disappoint when you read this month's review of two new additions to the culinary scene — Italian import La Bettola and Japanese whiskey bar and grill Monde restaurant.

Even though we're in the midst of the rainy season, that's no excuse to sit at home and mope. So get out there, explore the city and be creative! ■

**CHRISTINE VAN**

Managing Editor

# Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



**UNTIL JULY 14**

**What:** Rock Lottery

**Where:** Cargo Bar

**About:** Non-profit organization Anh Duong-Sai Gon is bringing Rock Lottery to Vietnam. Interested musicians can sign up online by sending their info and what instrument they would like to play by July 14. Chosen musicians will be announced on July 19. Names will be picked randomly, and these musicians become a band. They get six weeks or so to put together a set of original songs. The final performance will take place at Cargo Bar on August 28. Proceeds will go to the Little Rose Shelter, a refuge for young girls who have been sexually abused or trafficked.

**Contacts:** Visit [www.anhduongsaigon.org](http://www.anhduongsaigon.org) to sign up



**JULY 17**

**What:** Canvas & Wine: Painting with Knife

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

**About:** Either with the brush or with the knife, you will learn how to give your paintings a sculptural appearance as well as how to give them expressiveness.

**Contacts:** Visit [www.vin-space.com](http://www.vin-space.com) for details.



**UNTIL JULY 18**

**What:** Craig Thomas Gallery Turns 5

**Where:** Craig Thomas Gallery, 27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1

**About:** Craig Thomas Gallery is celebrating its fifth anniversary with Coming of Age, a group exhibition featuring paintings, sculptures and installations by 14 Vietnamese artists. The artists on show include those who have been with the gallery since the beginning, including Lieu Nguyen, Lim Khim Ka Ty, Tran Quoc Tuan, and Bui Tien Tuan, and those with whom CTG will be working with in the near future, such as established sculptor Bui Hai Son, expressionist painter Doan Hoang Lam and digital painter and illustrator Khoa Le.

**Contact:** Call 090 388 8431 or visit [www.cthomasgallery.com](http://www.cthomasgallery.com)



**JULY 28 - AUGUST 2**

**What:** Innovation and Technology Camp

**Where:** International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC), 28 Vo Truong Toan, D2

**About:** Innovation and Technology Camp, hosted by Everest Education and ISHCMC, features workshops in game design, robotics and filmmaking. Game Design (open to students from Grades 3-6) will expose students to the logic behind computer programming and provide an opportunity to learn basic coding principles and design their own interactive game. Robotics (open to students from Grades 6-12) will allow students to design, build and program their robots using motors and rotation sensors. The students will apply basic concepts in Science and Math to create their robot and prepare it for the final challenge: a sumo wrestling competition. Filmmaking (open to students from Grades 6-12) will enable students to learn techniques for storyboarding, cinematography, directing and editing. The program places special emphasis on storytelling and developing the students' ability to craft a visual narrative. The program is open to students from all schools. Space is limited and participation will be based on first-come, first-serve. Individual workshops cost USD250 and USD450 for full six-day camp. Tuition covers workshop costs and daily lunches.

**Contact:** Call 0125 832 3232 or email [info@e2.com.vn](mailto:info@e2.com.vn) to register



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UNTIL JULY 31

**What:** Mind, Flesh, Matter

**Where:** San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

**About:** This exhibition focuses on relationships between mind, body and the physical environment. Nguyen Van Du's large-scale canvases reveal a 'controlled horror in slaughter', thick with gestures of oil in red and pink "as if his brush is a knife of destruction". Le Phi Long depicts the exploitation of the land and the upheaving of ancestral communities for socio-economic progress by means of sculpture, photography, performance and drawing. Lai Dieu Ha uses modes of theatre, prop and the dramatization of the self that are inherent methods of psychodrama therapy to voice her artistic approach to the occurrence and effects of trauma.

**Contact:** Email [hello@san-art.org](mailto:hello@san-art.org) for info



JULY 31

**What:** Summer Galleria group exhibition

**Where:** San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

**About:** Focuses on ideas of heat, light and transformation and includes the Lotusland of celebrated artist and San Art co-founder, Dinh Q Le, along with works by Le Hoang Bich Phuong, Ngoc Nau, Nguyen Huu Tram Kha, Phan Quang, Sandrine Llouquet, Tran Xuan Anh, and Truong Cong Tung.

**Contact:** Email [hello@san-art.org](mailto:hello@san-art.org) for info



JULY 31

**What:** Network Girls - Cocktails & Canapés

**Where:** OMG! Rooftop Restaurant, Tan Hai Long Hotel, 15-17-19 Nguyen An Ninh, D1, 6:30pm - 9pm

**About:** Network Girls is a monthly event at pivotal venues in the city that gives expatriate and local female working professionals in Saigon a channel to meet each other and exchange ideas on life in HCMC, employment and business. Members of Network Girls meet on the last Thursday of every month for breakfast (7:30am - 9am) or cocktails & canapés (6:30pm - 9pm).

**Contact:** To attend, please RSVP to Ms. Van Ly at [networkgirlshcmc@gmail.com](mailto:networkgirlshcmc@gmail.com) or find them on Facebook at [NetworkGirlsHCMC](https://www.facebook.com/NetworkGirlsHCMC).



UNTIL AUGUST 5

**What:** Open Call for Session 6 Artists

**Where:** San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

**About:** San Art Laboratory, a studio/ residency program initiated and managed by San Art is calling all artists in Southeast Asia under 35-years-old to produce artworks that will be showcased in May 2015. Chosen artists will be provided with an art studio and living quarters for six months, plus USD1,000.

**Contact:** Email [hello@san-art.org](mailto:hello@san-art.org) for further details



**AUGUST 8 - OCTOBER 31**

**What:** Conjuring Capital Group Exhibition

**Where:** San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

**About:** Features works of contemporary artists who reflect diverse localities of historical and cultural difference and innovation, mediated via video, sculpture, installation, painting and drawing. Participating artists include: Adriana Bustos (Argentina); Than Sok (Cambodia); Sudarshan Shetty (India); Nguyen Hong Ngoc (Vietnam); Hank Willis Thomas and Christopher Myers (US). This exhibition is curated by Zoe Butt and forms part of Conscious Realities, a three-year project sponsored by a network partnership between the Prince Claus Fund and San Art.

**Contact:** Visit [www.san-art.org](http://www.san-art.org) for further info



**AUGUST 9**

**What:** Battle of the Year

**Where:** Tan Binh Stadium, 18 Xuan Hong, Tan Binh

**About:** Battle of The Year (BOTY) is a day-long festival of hip-hop and breakdance culture. Over 30 dance groups such as SINE, FreeStyle, BigToe, Big South, XClown, among others from various provinces across the country are expected to participate. The festival will also bring together singers like Suboi, Wowy, Kimmese and JustaTee.

**Contact:** Visit [www.syncnamart.com](http://www.syncnamart.com) for further info

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**AUGUST 13**

**What:** The Aristocrats live in Vietnam

**Where:** Light Music Center, 57 Cao Thang, D3; 8pm-10pm

**About:** The Aristocrats, a rock/fusion instrumental trio featuring Guthrie Govan, Bryan Beller and Marco Minnemann will grace the stage. Front stage seats cost VND1 million, upstairs seats for VND700,000 and standing behind the seated area for VND500,000. Students with valid IDs are entitled to special discount.

**Contact:** Call 091 600 1706 or book online through [www.ticketbox.vn](http://www.ticketbox.vn)

**UNTIL AUGUST 29**

**What:** Study English through Art

**Where:** VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1; Monday to Friday; 9am-12pm

**About:** Classes combining English and art in a fun tutorial, suitable for kids from six to 12 with basic English knowledge.

**Contact:** Visit [www.vin-space.com](http://www.vin-space.com) or call 090 772 9846



**UNTIL AUGUST 29**

**What:** Summer Art Camp

**Where:** VinSpace Art Studio, 6 Le Van Mien, D2; Monday to Friday; 9am-12pm

**About:** For kids between four and 10, this art camp is designed to expose students to different art techniques in a supportive environment where they can build their confidence and skills as artists. It is also an opportunity to explore and investigate different mediums in order to unleash their creativity. Students will discover how they can draw, paint and build crafts using charcoal, inks, acrylics, watercolors, soft pastels, painting, papier mache and "found objects."

**Contact:** Visit [www.vin-space.com](http://www.vin-space.com) for more info



**AUGUST 31**

**What:** Danang International Marathon

**Where:** Danang International Marathon Expo, Danang City

**About:** Da Nang International Marathon (DNIM) is the first ever IAAF-AIMS certified marathon course in Danang. The race includes three distances: Marathon 42.195 km; Half Marathon 21.097 km, and Fun Run five km. Besides the race day, there will be activities such as tour packages, a sports expo and gala dinner for runners to enjoy and explore the city and other tourist destinations located nearby. More than 4,500 international and local runners are expected to join in this year's DNIM.

**Contact:** Visit [www.rundanang.com](http://www.rundanang.com) for more details



## MOONCAKES @ KABIN



Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon celebrates the Mid-Autumn Festival with its collection of exquisitely mooncakes, available for sale from mid July 2014. These much loved delicacies are presented not only in traditional styles but also in a variety of fusion tastes as well

Paying tribute to this celestial tradition, the ensemble of mooncake creations from Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon will be perfect for gifting this season.

Available for sale from 15 July. Place your orders from now to 31 August 2014 and enjoy the following discounts:

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# Troi Oi

## The country by numbers



# 2 BILLION

Choco Pies have been consumed in Vietnam since 2006. That's 22 per person if you average that out across Vietnam's 90 million+ population. With total sales of USD294 million in Choco Pies alone, South Korean company Orion has dominated Vietnam's confectionary market since 2010, with the country's consumption second only to China.



# 26%

of Vietnamese children are stunted. While the proportion of underweight malnutrition decreased steadily over the years, the number of children who do not reach the standard height is still high, the National Institute of Nutrition has announced. Children who are underweight for their age were only about 15 percent; the children who were shorter than standard height were nearly 26 percent. Kon Tum province has the highest indexes in the country, especially the rate of stunted children up to nearly 41 percent. Stunting malnutrition is also known as chronic malnutrition and it causes major implications for physical stature, endurance and mental development of children in the future, even lasts for generations. Stunted mothers can have malnourished and stunted babies.

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# 117

truck and bus drivers tested positive for heroin in Ho Chi Minh City. The ministry called for the examination of 35,358 drivers employed by 589 businesses across the city in an effort to crack down on drug use among drivers. In its recent report to the ministry, the city's transportation department said it has asked local trucking and transportation firms not to hire the disqualified drivers. The department will collaborate with city health and police officials to conduct surprise drug screenings at local businesses. It has also asked the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Health to add drug screenings to the compulsory health checks for truck and bus drivers.

UP TO  
**44%**

of Vietnamese are infected with parasitic worms. About 20 to 40 million people in Vietnam are infected with parasitic worms, also called Helminths, and Vietnamese people lose 1.5 million liters of blood and 15 tons of food to the parasites on a yearly basis, a local health official has reported. The infection is most common in children and the infection can lead to dangerous diseases and affects human growth.



**800,000**

mobile phone users were conned out of USD423,000 collectively. Police in Hanoi have indicted the former head of sales at a local company for illegally installing apps containing porn content alongside spyware to steal money from them. The spyware in the provided apps would secretly send messages to designated numbers and the charge for such messages would be deducted from the victims' phone accounts and credited to his bank accounts, investigators said.

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\*Value not to exceed 2,000,000 VND

# The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC and beyond..

## DELICIOUS DÉCOR DEBUTS

Delicious Décor has launched in Ho Chi Minh City, offering artfully arranged fruit and confectionery bouquets. It blends the concept of fruit baskets with designs inspired by the floral business. All the fruit products are sourced and handpicked from accredited suppliers and delivered fresh daily. Delicious Decor also offers a selection of toppings including semi-sweet dark chocolate, white milk chocolate, shredded coconut flakes, crusted roasted almond and peanut, and colorful sprinkles. Each bouquet is arranged in either a ceramic mug or vase, all of which can be used afterwards as home decorative items, coffee or tea mugs, or even contemporary planting pots. Open from Monday to Saturday, 8am-6pm and delivers within Ho Chi Minh City. Visit [www.deliciousdecor.com.vn](http://www.deliciousdecor.com.vn) or call 090 256 1061 for more info.

## NEW RESORT IN PHU QUOC

Salinda Premium Resort and Spa will officially open its doors on August 15. It is located four kilometers away from Phu Quoc Airport and is inspired by an interplay of rustic local heritage with contemporary design. It features 121 rooms and villas with private balconies, Salinda Lounge, spa facilities and a banquet hall, equipped with a sound system sufficient to host a concert and can accommodate over 400 guests. To celebrate the opening, the resort is offering special promotions from VND3,182,000 per night, valid from October 31, 2014 to August 15, 2015. For more information, email [rsvn@salindaresort.com](mailto:rsvn@salindaresort.com) or call 3929 3097.

## INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON SPECIALS

InterContinental Asiana Saigon (corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1) is offering a special package to all Vietnamese citizens and Vietnamese resident card holders for stays from now until September 30. For VND3,200,000 net you can stay in one of its deluxe rooms including breakfast for two people, high-speed internet access, late check out until 4pm and 15 percent off at the hotel's restaurants, bars and spa.

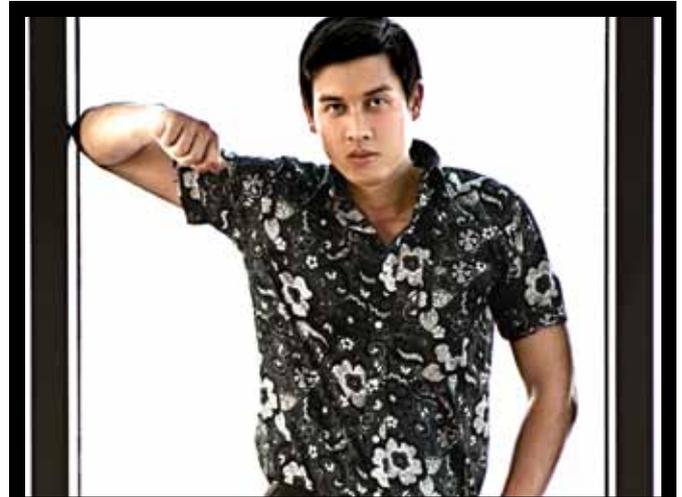
Purple Jade Bar will be showing all the matches of the World Cup 2014 until July 14. Two big screens have been installed so you can catch your favorite teams in action. While watching, enjoy snacks for VND170,000++, including one Tiger draught beer. For more info, call 3520 9099.



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## BELLUNI ADDS STORE

Vietnamese luxury businessmen's fashion line Belluni has opened its 35th store at 496 Truong Chinh, Tan Binh. The new store boasts a complete collection of menswear including hybrid organic fiber comfort shirts, trousers, belts and shoes. More about the brand at [www.belluni.com.vn](http://www.belluni.com.vn).

## NOVOTEL DANANG PREMIER HAN RIVER SUMMER 2014 OFFERS

Novotel Danang's 'Stay 3 Pay 2' promotion allows you to stay three nights at the resort but pay for just two. The promotion is valid until August 31 and is priced at VND2,082,570 per night, including daily shuttle bus to Premier Village Danang Resort, drinks upon arrival, daily in-room bottled water and complimentary hi-speed internet access.

You can also enjoy a Spa Inclusive Package when you book a three day/two night stay at Novotel Danang. For VND 2,449,000 per night, you can enjoy a free 30 minute foot massage at InBalance Spa, daily breakfast for two at The Square restaurant, drinks upon arrival, daily in-room bottled water and complimentary hi-speed internet access. For further details, visit [www.novotel-danang-premier.com](http://www.novotel-danang-premier.com).

## THE ORIENT BAR

Meet your sports, movie and entertainment night needs at The Orient Bar (24 Ngo Van Nam, D1). It has six 55 inch HD screens and one 4m HD projector connected to six different satellites. The game room features pool table, foosball and darts. They offer free flow draught Tiger (VND120,000) and Sapporo (VND150,000) during Happy Hours (5:30pm-8pm) and serve imported steak and handmade pizza. More information on their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/theorientbarsaigon/](http://www.facebook.com/theorientbarsaigon/).



## ASCOTT TURNS 30

The Ascott Limited, which manages the Somerset brand of serviced residences in Vietnam, kicked off its 30th anniversary and 20th year in Vietnam with a thanksgiving gala dinner.

To show appreciation to its customers, Ascott is offering promotions for stays from now until December 31. Ascott's online members can enjoy at least 30 percent off Best Flexible Rates at participating properties. Log in or sign up for complimentary Ascott online membership at [www.the-ascott.com/en/myascott/signup.html](http://www.the-ascott.com/en/myascott/signup.html).

Guests on long stays can get one free night for every 30 consecutive nights stay. In-house guests who refer their friends or business associates to stay at Ascott's serviced residences for a minimum of 30 nights will be rewarded with cash vouchers redeemable for complimentary stays at any Ascott serviced residence. Corporate clients who are members of The Link Club can get 30 percent off redemption points from now until September 30. Visit [www.the-ascott.com](http://www.the-ascott.com) for more info.

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## VIVA! TAPAS BAR & GRILL

Viva! Tapas Bar & Grill (R4-28 Hung Gia 4, Tan Phong, Phu My Hung, D7) aims to bring the love of Spanish culture and food to Ho Chi Minh City. The color scheme at Viva! reflects the striking blues of a typical Spanish coastal village – the light blue cloudless skies and the deep azure blue of the Mediterranean Sea. The restaurant is furnished in an eclectic style of old and new, from the modern blue glass and stainless steel bar to the traditional wine barrels that serve as tables in the outdoor patio. Individual sized tapas dishes start at less than VND50,000 per plate. Some of the tapas dishes are Spanish classics like *albondigas* (meatballs in tomato sauce) and *gambas pil-pil* (spicy chili shrimp). Viva! also boasts a wide variety of modern tapas not found in other tapas restaurants in Saigon.

## SAIGON MAKEOVER

Saigon Makeover is a new design competition for graphic designers and artists to share their creative vision of how different parts of Ho Chi Minh City can be beautified. It is organized by the Global Shapers HCMC Hub, and to join simply take a picture of any part of the city that you think could use a unique graphic improvement – the more open and public the space, the better. Redesign with your favorite design or art tools. Make it look as real as possible and then send a blurb that describes your design. The deadline for entries is July 31. Prizes range from VND5 million to VND10 million. For more info, visit [www.saigonmakeover.com](http://www.saigonmakeover.com).

## NEW ITALIAN RESTAURANT

With a strong passion for cooking, Swiss-Vietnamese Ophely has set up her own restaurant, Le Crespo Pizza on 63 Truong Dinh, D3. Ophely says almost all of their food is organic and homemade. Le Crespo Pizza started operating several months ago, serving Italian food such as pasta and pizza, cooked in a wood fired brick oven, along with a good selection of wine. For more info, visit [www.lecrespo.com](http://www.lecrespo.com).

## BEER CLUB

MOB Beer Club (152 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1) is modeled after the Beer Club in Central Park, New York City. It describes itself as “a place to be seen for those who like to be seen,” a cozy, minimal vintage atmosphere and friendly service with good entertainment. It utilizes the heritage of an old French mansion from the 1920s. The venue’s indoor and outdoor areas are detailed by greenery and landscape with a complete garden in the back. Food is prepared by Chef Julien who puts an Asian flair on modern Western cuisine. Visit their website at [www.mobgroup.vn/beerclub.html](http://www.mobgroup.vn/beerclub.html).

## TIME FOR LOVE

Book a Time for Love package now, or until the end of September, to enjoy a break with your loved one at Pullman Danang Beach Resort. The indulgent package, priced from VND5,208,000/room/night, includes an intimate breakfast at any location in the resort, one bottle of Champagne, a late check-out and more. Call (05) 11 395 8888 or email [info@pullman-danang.com](mailto:info@pullman-danang.com) for info



## STEAKS & CIGARS

Enjoy steaks with different cuts imported all the way from the US at Riverside Cafe (Lobby Level, Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon, 8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1) from July 1 to July 14 for VND1,100,000++/person (food only) and VND1,500,000++/person (free flow of beer, house wine, sodas). Club Marriott members are entitled to a 30 percent discount. Dining vouchers are accepted with surcharge.

Unwind and discover Don Julio cigars and Flor De Cana rum at Atrium Lounge (5th Floor) from now until September 30. Flor De Cana rum is one of Central America’s leading brands of rum and one of the most recognized rum brands in the world. Visit [www.renaissance-saigon.com](http://www.renaissance-saigon.com) for more info.

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June / July Oi Reader Contest

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## BIS HELMETS FOR KIDS CAMPAIGN

With more than 37 million motorcycles registered in Vietnam, knowing how to properly wear a helmet has become a crucial matter and the Year 9 students of the British International School are helping to raise awareness. As part of the ongoing Helmets For Kids campaign, in May the Year 4 students of the Truong Huynh Van Ngoi local school were invited to BIS for an array of educational activities, all with the aim of teaching and encouraging road safety.

Throughout the event, students and teachers from the local school were interviewed about the event as well as their own awareness of helmet and road safety. Surprisingly, the number of responses to “Do you know how to wear a helmet?” was far from positive when students from the local school were asked. Although they all confidently stated the first part correctly, most of them forgot to fasten their chin strap. Readers, “Do you actually know how to properly wear a helmet?” If you don’t, follow these instructions: 1) The helmet has to be put on the same level front to back, side to side. 2) The side straps should be positioned right below your earlobe. 3) The chin strap should be fastened leaving the space for no more than one finger.

The simple message of “Wear Your Helmets” should be embedded not only into the minds of the students in Huynh Van Ngoi local school, but to every child in Vietnam that uses a motorbike without a helmet. By increasing awareness among the children themselves, the fearsome statistic of “over 9,000 motorcycle fatalities in Vietnam each year, 90 percent [of which] involve children” would inevitably falter.

## HAIR BAR OPENS

Hair Bar (68 Ngo Duc Ke, D1) is a new concept by Sandrine Nguyen providing services to beautify women’s hair in as little as 30 minutes. There are no scissors or coloring at the Hair Bar, instead hair is washed with care, blown dry and then fabulously styled. Additional perks include a “blowout experience.” Visit [www.hairbar.vn](http://www.hairbar.vn) for details.

## THE LEGENDS BAR & GRILL

Wayne’s Texas BBQ has recently reopened as The Legends Bar & Grill (236 Bui Vien, D1) in Saigon’s backpackers area . The new drinking and dining destination still offers Tex-Mex specialties like nachos, fajitas and burritos, among others, with additional items like soup, seafood, kebabs, salads, burgers, sandwiches, steaks, chicken dishes, and more. Visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/LegendsBarHCMC/](http://www.facebook.com/LegendsBarHCMC/) for more info.

## FREE BREAKFAST

The Snap Café’s (32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2) Free Breakfast With a Coffee promotion was so popular in June that they’ve decided to extend it to July and August. From Monday to Friday, 7:30am-9:30am when you order any coffee (espresso, cappuccino, latte or black americano/long white), you can enjoy a free Oven Baked Cajun Clay Pot (diced potatoes and egg with bacon, bell peppers and onion) or Mexican Heuvos Rancheros (crispy tortillas topped with a sunny side up egg, warm tomato salsa, cilantro and garnished with a lime wedge). The promotion is limited to one order per person per day. Call 3519 4532 or email [cafe@snap.com.vn](mailto:cafe@snap.com.vn) for details.

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## THE MYTH:

### Is it true it's illegal for shops to price items in US dollars and everything must be displayed in Vietnamese dong?

YES, IT IS true. Regulation #552/1999/TB-NHNN7, which directly limits the use of dollars and other foreign currencies, has been in place for nearly two decades. Regulation #552 is a nationwide legal announcement, clarifying earlier regulations that issued a blanket ban on pricing items, services and products in any other currency other than dong. However, it was ineffective because there were no penalties in place for violators.

Only in 2011 when reports of frauds on foreign travelers and businessmen reached critical levels did the Vietnamese government issue a legal text (Regulation # 95/2011/ND-CP) officially affixing a range of financial penalties with a maximum fine of VND500 million and confiscation of business licenses. Because of the high risk, Regulation #95 succeeded in curtailing 90 percent of the illegal practice but even this new regulation

couldn't stamp out the dollar pricing phenomenon since, according to the fine print of the legal text, investigation and punishment can only be carried out by investigators from the Central Bank, not the normal police force, thus limiting the actual scope of enforcement.

In mid 2012, a direct hotline to the Central Bank investigators' office was created for customers to report violations, but a year later it was quietly taken down with no reason given.

## THE MYTH:

### I just bought a new phone and when I told my office workers they said I need to take them out for lunch to 'wash' the phone or I'll get bad luck? Is it true there's a Vietnamese custom of 'washing' a new purchase?



IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

YES, THEY ARE messing with you; but not in the way you think. The word 'wash' here is a literal translation from Vietnamese slang to English that didn't quite get the folk culture subtext across. The Vietnamese word is 'rua' and while it does indeed translate to wash, in this case it refers to a Vietnamese folk custom in which anyone who has recently acquired a new item of some value (an expensive phone, a motorbike, a house, etc...) proceeds to have a small celebration with coworkers, close friends

or family members to 'wash' the new item in good luck and to ward off ill wishes of envious people who may be jealous of their wealth.

The custom has roots in ancient rural Vietnam when farmers would, literally, wash a newly acquired ox or sow - the animal represented a new source of income. Since there is no written record of it, no one actually knows when exactly it began.

Now, the custom has taken on a slightly teasing tone, especially between

close friends and coworkers. The request from your colleagues in this case is out of jest that indirectly implies they may wish ill on you (in the same way people threaten each other with pranks) if you don't let them share in the 'good luck' of a new phone. It is not in any way serious though, so if you do not want to spend that extra money to humor them, simply reply half-jokingly, "Because I bought this phone, I am now broke and will have to eat instant noodles from now till the end of the month." - **NPD Khanh** ■



# My Body, Her Baby

A controversial new law on surrogacy  
has just been passed in Vietnam

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

THU THUY (not her real name) is 29 this year, and is now six months into her second pregnancy. You might not think there's anything unusual about that – except that once again, this is not her baby.

Thuy is a surrogate mother. The first time was a decade ago, when an infertile couple paid her a small fortune by Vietnamese standards to bear a child they couldn't conceive on their own. Back then, it was an illegal, even shameful, thing to do. This time, it remains illegal – but lawmakers have now accepted the legitimacy of surrogacy, and from January 1 next year, it will have legal recognition. Legalization will be welcomed by the estimated 7.7 percent (7 million) of people in Vietnam struck by infertility, (according to a 2012 report by the Ministry of Health and Welfare). To put that in context, the World Health Organization classifies any percentage over three as critical – a red zone area that functions as an alarm bell.

The first time Thuy carried a child for another woman was purely for money. "I was a college student then, alone in the big city. My family is based in Tien



## To clarify what the ‘traditional’ method means in Vietnam, Thuy had sex with the husband while the wife sat outside the room until she became pregnant. Back then, Vietnam didn’t have in vitro fertilization technology

methods was pregnant with the couple’s baby within a few months. To clarify what the ‘traditional’ method means in Vietnam, Thuy had sex with the husband while the wife sat outside the room until she became pregnant. Back then, Vietnam didn’t have in vitro fertilization technology.

“It was a typical deal. We pay you VND80 million for the completed birth, a monthly stipend and a budget for medical care,” explains Thuy. “I had a personal doctor who saw to it that I took care of myself and stayed within the agreed rules of the contract. There is also hazard pay. The deal cuts off once I deliver. I am not to associate myself with either the child or the parents once the birth and the adoption papers are completed. I can’t know the name of the child or ever seek to meet her in the future. It’s not mine. I sold it. The contract is all very clear on that point.”

For the first five months, things went well. But soon, trouble arose. “One day, the doctor called me in and told me I have a genetic predisposition for hepatitis,” she says. “Whether the baby inherits it or not, it’s all a big question. When the parents discovered this, they didn’t want it anymore. They called me and told me to get rid of it. I said no. I was in deep shock. I was living alone then in an apartment they rented for me. Of course I couldn’t tell any of my friends or my family what I was doing. They were very insistent. They said that if I did not get rid of the baby, they would stop paying the monthly stipend, the rent, and the completion fee, and I could do whatever I wanted with the child.

“I cried a lot that week. I felt cornered and punished. I thought perhaps my ancestors were punishing me for doing something so vile as selling my own child. I could not go home and I did not want to get rid of the child. I had been harboring her for months in my belly. She kicked whenever I lay on my side. I was only starting to understand what it meant to be a mother. I thought at the time how could I be so stupid, to only think of it as nine months of my life in exchange for the money.”

After two weeks, Thuy made her choice. She was keeping the baby. “I just thought I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t kill this child. It was my decision to become a surrogate mother. Nobody forced me. I thought if I were a big enough girl to put myself in this position then I was big enough to

bear the consequences of my own actions. I cut myself off from the parents, moved out of the apartment, and went back to my dorm room. With how I looked at the time, people started to talk – but I bore it because I’d put myself there. I got in contact with my family. They were happy to hear from me. I’d been absent for months and they worried that something might have happened.”

### A Shame to Bear

Since then, nine years has passed and in vitro fertilization has become available in Vietnam. Thuy is now on her second surrogate pregnancy, but this time her decision is one made out of kinship instead of desperation. The soon-to-be parents are Thuy’s sister and brother-in-law. She was impregnated using the couple’s egg and sperm.

“The gods have a sense of humor,” she laughs. “When I thought I’d learned my lesson, they came back with more. I understand the agony of being infertile. Regardless of what they did to me, that first couple, I understand their pain, now more than I did then. For Vietnamese women, either you’re a mother or you’re nothing. For the men, it’s not so easy either. I’ve heard of those who leave their hometown once people know they’re infertile because they can’t bear the shame.”

Reactions to the news of the legal change to surrogacy have been slow, with mixed expressions of concern, wariness, approval and disapproval. Despite her experience, Thuy approves.

“People are worried that this could open the gate for abuse and reckless commercialization. I can tell you right now that that has already happened. Banning something is not the same as making it disappear. It doesn’t fix the problem. As long as there’s a need, there will be a supply regardless of whether it’s legal or not. I’m an example. My daughter is the product. But I’ve chosen to look past that. The people who wrote the new law are very clear on the goal and the intention of surrogacy – to help those escape the agony of barrenness. In the end, how you choose to view surrogacy is a personal choice, and while I know from my experience that it can be an ugly, heartless thing, this time around, I choose to see it as giving the gift of life.” ■

Giang. They’re not rich. I needed to finish school or it was back to an uneducated life of poverty for me. I was desperate and stupid. I needed money. I needed a lot of it and I needed it quick. Few jobs in the world pay as well.

“I was very naive the first time,” she continues. “I was 19 and didn’t think much about what it meant. I’m in good health. I don’t have any disease. It’s nine months of my life in exchange for the ability to finish college and start my career with a hefty nest egg. I didn’t want to know the details. I told myself I could do this, I could do this. It was for my future.”

According to Thuy, becoming a surrogate wasn’t difficult, even though it was illegal at the time, because of the high demand. Through an underground broker, she was matched with an infertile couple, negotiated a deal and through ‘traditional’

# You Raise Me Up

One man's vision to provide an international school experience at local rates

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



IN BETWEEN A course of king crab tartar with a swirl of mango jelly topped with a gold leaf, a handsomely dressed couple eyes a Hoa Vu painting, heads together, quietly formulating a bidding strategy. The large painting depicting a peaceful river scene is now at USD4,000 and climbing. By the time the poached *oeufs en meurette* in a red wine sauce come out, the couple has secured the artwork for a cool USD6,000. “We don’t even have anywhere to put it,” they laugh. “But the kids don’t like one of the paintings we have, so we’ll swap that one out, I guess.”

The privileged of Saigon have turned out to the Chance Foundation’s Annual Charity Gala to support the city’s underprivileged children through an education initiative, the vision of *Viet Kieu* Jonathan Dinh. Eyes follow this stocky, straight-talking man as he works his way around the ballroom. Born in Vietnam and part of the wave of boat people, Jonathan with his mother and uncle ended up being sponsored by a group of families in Massachusetts (USA) who helped with housing and education. “If that hadn’t happened, I don’t know where I’d be right now. What would’ve happened if no one had sponsored me? I’d probably be in construction with about four kids by now. [Since then], I’ve been lucky enough in life to make my own way, but it’s been a long journey.”

Retired comfortably at 30 from the sale of a telecom company, Jonathan returned to Vietnam with the idea of starting up an education company “and making craploads of money”. However, a stint of teaching left him disenchanted. “The more I got into education, the more pissed off I was that these backpackers come here, speak English, have a one month certificate, and end up making two grand a month, easy.” His conclusion was, “I don’t need to open another business. I’m fine. But these kids aren’t. They’re stuck in a perpetual cycle of the same curriculum, going to school 12 hours a day and not learning anything and not knowing anything when they graduate.”

Back at the charity gala, the next item up for bid is a set of *Amazing Spiderman* comic books drawn by Todd McFarlane. Bidding is slow, so Jonathan takes the mic and tells the story of how he camped in line for two days as a 14-year-old to buy the set. “People can take away your freedom. They can take away your food. But the one thing they can’t take away is your knowledge,” he reminds the crowd. “That’s why we’re



all here tonight.” Bidding starts up again in fervor and the comics end up selling for USD1,800.

After the last macaroon has been eaten and the last glass of paired wine has been drunk, the event is declared a success. The money raised tonight will go to support Jonathan’s dream of providing low-cost, high-quality education to Vietnamese youths in the form of a pair of IEG ([www.ieg.edu.vn](http://www.ieg.edu.vn)) English schools located in District 10.

### Salt of the Earth

“Everyone educated knows that education is the only way to increase a person’s worth and a country’s value. I can come back and buy rice all day long but where is that going to lead? People see [that Vietnam has] a high literacy rate, but the truth is people can’t get educated. Or only to a glass ceiling. These people are the salt of the earth. They’re never going to leave here. What are they going to do for the rest of their lives?”

IEG has two campuses, just around the corner from each other, one for adults and one for kids. “For adults, it’s almost too late for them,” says Jonathan. “For kids, though, it’s not too late. I wanted to create a curriculum like I had being raised in the US. So here, we tell parents that we don’t just teach English, we teach the confidence to use English.”

With that mission statement, Jonathan has set out to create an international school experience at local prices. “We’re one of only two schools in Vietnam to use projectors and multimedia in every classroom,” he says with pride. The school also limits class sizes to 12 students, has 100 percent foreign teachers with Vietnamese teaching assistants and takes kids on regular field trips to places like KizCity, Dam Sen Park and Fly Cupcake, encouraging them to interact in English. Every other Sunday, Disney Days and arts and crafts sessions are held. On certain nights, one of the classrooms becomes a movie room complete with popcorn and the latest flicks, all without subtitles. “I want to provide that experience that you or I had when our parents took us to a movie,” says Jonathan. With the help of the Chance Foundation, the school has been able to drop tuition to VND 4.2m for almost five months of weekend classes, affording some of the city’s youths an educational experience ordinarily out of reach. “We might not be very pretty but we like to think of ourselves as the Nordstrom of the educational world,” he adds, referencing the upscale American department store known for its attention to customer service.

The school, which hopes to be self-sustaining by the end of the summer, is still a work in progress. In its first year, “I lost

more money than you make,” says Jonathan candidly. And this is after another school project fell through, being co-opted by a local business partner. “I got swindled,” says Jonathan. “I didn’t know the ins and outs of the laws and they just took it all over. But being struck once didn’t deter me. It happened, and that’s fine. But I was determined to do this again.”

In a sea of for-profit language schools, finding support for a quality program charging local prices has been a struggle. “The thing is, unless a website shows children dying, bleeding or with their arms cut off, people don’t want to give money to education. But education is the key. Look at India. How did they raise themselves from zero to hero? By putting all their money into universities. Education. Education. Education. For us, the end result isn’t to send people abroad or to make them rich. It’s to better their lives or at least give them an opportunity to do so.”

Back in the “Denver” classroom, the projector is being used for karaoke. The school’s longest-running class is singing Josh Groban. “You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas; I am strong, when I am on your shoulders; You raise me up... To more than I can be,” the children trill as Jonathan watches on proudly. “What man is a man who doesn’t try to make the world better?” he asks quietly. ■



# Curious for Curios

A truly unique vintage shopping experience

TEXT BY **NPD KAHNH** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

ASK MOST RESIDENTS in Saigon where to buy antiques and they'll likely direct you to Le Cong Kieu Street, popularly known as "Antique Street," in District 1. However, that would be leading you in the wrong direction as the majority of objects for sale in this short patch of road near Ben Thanh Market are not real antiques. Even the sellers who make their living on Le Cong Kieu openly admit that more than 70 percent of their merchandise are factory-produced duplicates and that the once honest antique street is now more a tourist trap than a place to buy a piece of history.

For bargains, design classics and retro kitsch, the best hunting grounds are

actually at Cao Minh Café at 311/27 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh. Every Sunday morning an antique fair called **Saigon Ve Chai** (Saigon Junk) is held there and, according to founder Tran Khac Dung, it is the only place in Saigon that guarantees the sale and exhibition of authentic vintage items

"Antique really is a weighty word," says Dung. "I feel it has become something of a gimmick, a sure-fire way to wow and grab attention. I do not like to use it, rather I would call what we have here 'collector's items.'" He points to a 200-year-old handcrafted French clock, a pre-World War 1 Bauser nautical compass,

a Royal brand American oil lamp and a 1961 Mercedes once owned by infamous Vietnamese double agent Pham Ngoc Thao.

"Most people, if they are not consummate collectors, would find it difficult to understand how we place a value on an item," he continues. "How do you place value on something that to other people may be junk? There are many elements that decide the value of an item but the most important are: age, quantity (how many still exist) and history (its story and previous owners). If the owner does not understand the story, the historical worth of an item, he or she



"How long have you been collecting items?"  
 "A lifetime." (Tran Khac Dung, the founder of the fair)



"This did not come from my grandmother's attic. I do sometimes brew tea with it though. Tastes great!"



"These right beside me used to belong to Vietnamese soldiers 60, 70 years ago. You want to hear a war story, come to me."



"My specialty is anything Chinese and old."



"I don't look like your typical antique dealer do I?"

will see it as just junk. Knowledge is the key. To collect is to understand the worth of an item, not to show off."

Saigon Ve Chai ([www.saigonvechai.com](http://www.saigonvechai.com)) first started in 2008 as an online website and forum but the group's popularity and increasing offline community prompted the creation of the weekend market held at Cao Minh Cafe owned by Vietnamese artist and singer Tran Cao Minh. There is no entry fee other than a mandatory purchase of a drink for VND30,000. The

fair essentially acts as a consignment center for sellers who don't have a place to showcase their items.

"During the week, this is a quiet, empty place. But on Sunday morning, it's packed with about 200 people," says Dung. "We thought about getting a bigger place, but that means more people, more sellers, and more factors to control and check the quality of. So there is no rush since we cannot make sure that we can control the increased volume." In a market where

frauds, fakes, and overcharging are the norms, this principle is the reason Saigon Ve Chai has been successful.

Knowledge and information is shared freely at the fair and newcomers are encouraged to ask questions or seek advice from experts. "Our one cardinal rule is trust. This is not a shop. We do not make money from all these sales. This is a community and to break the trust of one person means breaking the trust of an entire community." ■



# Fish Eye Lens

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

If you've been to any of the country's wet markets you would have seen (and smelled) them - dried and flattened whole fish that could pass for cardboard cutouts, slabs of salted fish fillets so hard and stiff they could be used as a weapon. This month we traveled to the seaside town of Vung Tau to photograph every stage of the process, from capture, to handling and processing, and eventually for sale to consumers. ■







# DESIGN BY

Combining passion, design knowledge and practical construction skills, each of our featured designers have one thing in common – they live to create. From elaborate over-the-top headpieces to a heart-shaped brooch that uses Mercedes Benz S-Class color coating technology, these creations are meant to inspire.



# THE MAD WATTER

## THE MANY HATS OF A DESIGNER

TEXT BY NPD KHANH

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

"I'VE BEEN CALLED crazy both behind my back and right to my face more times than I can remember. I got so used to it that it has since lost its barbs. One of these days I'm going to take it as a compliment, a term of endearment even," the eccentric milliner tells me over coffee.

In the local and international fashion industry he's known as "Kan Kanemura," to his Vietnamese friends he's "Kamasutra" (because they can't pronounce all the Ks, Ns and A's in his name) and to the rest of Saigon he's "that crazy hat guy." But regardless of what name you know him by, the consensus is that Kan is the foremost hat designer in Vietnam. His headpieces have adorned the heads of models on runways from downtown Saigon to Hong Kong and Sydney.

Born in the early 1980s to a family of traditional embroiderers, Kan's affair with the visual arts grew from a childhood of helping out his mother with her work. His first foray into fashion was winning first place in a design competition held by *Muc Tim*, a Vietnamese teen magazine, at 16 years old. IT college soon followed and while this educational choice may appear out of place, it eventually became the gateway to learning the basics of fashion, visual arts, and digital graphics for Kan.

"Most people forget that back then there was nothing like a fashion school. What I wanted to learn, nobody was teaching," he explains. "The internet was - and is - an endless source of such information. It was my only source then too. Back then internet was a new thing in Vietnam and cost VND20,000 an hour on a dial-up connection. I sat there every day.

"In a way I was lucky. I came into the fashion world in the same generation as other first generation Vietnamese designers like Minh Hanh and Dieu Anh who are now famous designers in Vietnam. The Vietnamese fashion world may be a lot bigger now, but it's been tamed, commercialized. People prefer safety now. In those first years, fashion was madness, recklessness, spontaneity and a crazy chase after one's personal sense of aesthetic. Because we were the first, there were no rules, no precedents to limit us."



Without such limits, Kan was able to perfect his skills through the process of trial and error. "I took up a lot of jobs: photographer, makeup artist, stylist, creative director and art director. To bring a single design of mine to life utilizes all the skills I learned in my other jobs. The eye of the photographer, the coordination and management skill of a director, the hands of an embroiderer. In a way, I feel like I came full circle to my embroiderer's son background."

### COMPETING WITH HELMETS

During his many photo shoots and runway jobs, Kan would create his own accessories to adorn the clothes and models sent to him. "I always felt that the clothes alone were not enough. Too simple. I like richness, layers and depth. Nobody was protesting the end result." For simple pieces, he says, it may take anywhere from four to five full days to complete. For more complicated pieces, where cost isn't an issue, it may take a month for the individual parts to come together and hold shape.

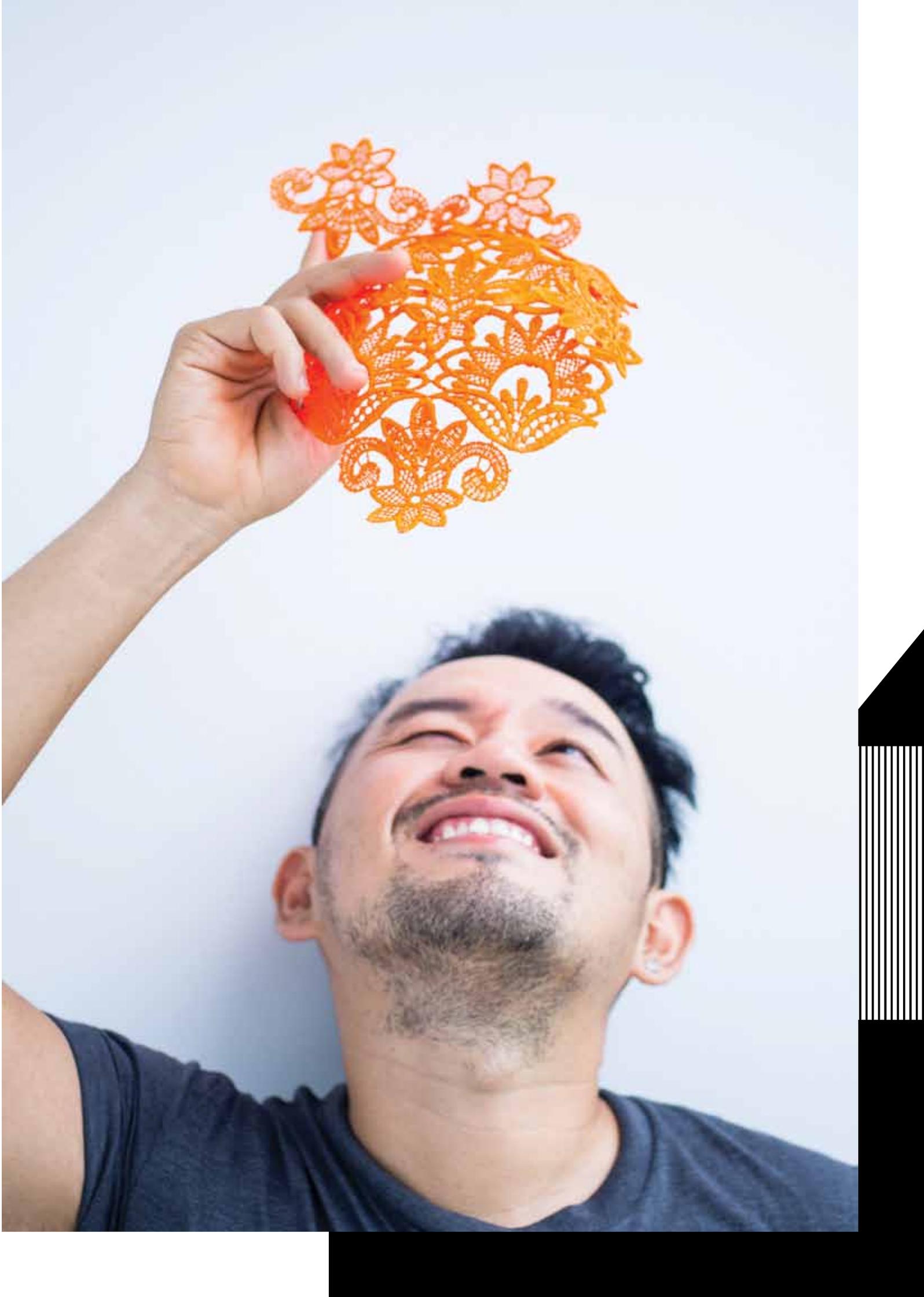
"To wear a hat is to enter a three dimensional game," he claims. "A hat, or headpiece, sits on top of your head, a globe shape. It has to be able to sit on that round surface without slipping off and then maintain its shape without the frame of the wearer's body underneath, like a sculpture."

Each and every one of Kan's creations is unique - a one-off, created from various materials from basic fabric, thread, yarn and lace to heavier industrial components such as plastic, rubber and metal. Not one of them is similar to another.

The past two years mark important milestones for the Vietnamese hat designer in different ways. In 2013 he officially launched his designs publicly - they were previously only available to a select few - and this year will see him commercially enter the mass market. Kan wants to bring his hats to the urban Vietnamese culture. His debut consumer collection is scheduled

to go on shelves July 2014. A risky move considering most of his targeted customers wouldn't leave their house without a helmet.

"So far I've stayed in the safe zone, with the people whose ideas of beauty correlate with mine and who can appreciate my work. But, I feel it is now time. I don't think the ordinary Vietnamese will think of my designs as 'crazy' forever. People's tastes have evolved, matured. So have their desire for an expression of their personality."





# WELL WELLED

## **A SECOND CAREER FOR THE MOST UNLIKELY OF SHOE GURUS**

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

CLINTON KELLY, American fashion consultant and media personality, once said: “Sometimes comfort doesn’t matter. When a shoe is freakin’ fabulous, it may be worth a subsequent day of misery. Soak in Epsom salts and take comfort in the fact that you’re better than everyone else.”

“Comfortable is basically a euphemism for ugly,” agrees UK banker turned shoe designer Dominic Price and the creative force behind Dominique Saint Paul ([www.dominiquesaintpaul.com](http://www.dominiquesaintpaul.com)). “But I don’t believe at all in enduring pain in pursuit of having beautiful shoes. They should be comfortable without looking comfortable.” Surrounded by some of the most exquisitely crafted brogues, loafers and monks, today Dominic is clad in a simple tan suede driving shoe, in sharp contrast to some of the unexpectedly colorful, whimsically embellished luxe shoes in his District 1 shop. An amalgam of the unisex, francophone version of his first name and the Saigon clinic where he was born (now the Eye Hospital on Dien Bien Phu Street), Dominique Saint Paul is what this self-described “Imelda Marcos” facetiously calls the result of a mid-life crisis.

Born in Saigon and raised in India in his early years, Dominic has been obsessed with custom shoes for as long as he can remember. “My mother was an invalid with polio so she always had to have shoes made for her. Even



as a child growing up in India in the 60s, you didn't go to a shop to buy shoes or shirts; you tended to have them made for you. That's how the world was. It was very natural to choose fabric to make a shirt, or leather to make shoes. Later, when I started to work in London, I remember walking by the best shoe houses and looking enviously at these phenomenal shoes which were too expensive for most people to afford, and certainly for me. It became my passion to design shoes and make very high quality shoes for myself."

As a 25-year-old, Dominic took his shoe designs to a shoe fair in London in search of a manufacturer. "I found one which took an initial order of 48 pairs which was all I could afford to fund," recalls Dominic, with dreams of creating a winning shoe that would move him up the design ladder. "I spent weekends at the factory in Northampton, learning everything I could about the manufacturing of shoes, much to the curiosity of some of the workers there." But the budding shoe designer's dream had to wait. The manufacturer bumped his order to the next year. "As a consequence, I was disenchanted by how tough it was for a young designer to get a leg up. There was nothing I could do, so I took a job offer trading bonds in an investment bank," following in his father's banking steps. "I thought I would go and work and save up enough money to be able to do this at some future time. I then got married, had children and made a career out of finance."

Indeed, an internet search for Dominic Price leads not to articles on tassels and soles, but to a successful financial career as

Managing Director for India and Sri Lanka at JP Morgan Chase Bank and as CEO of JP Morgan Vietnam.

### **A SHOE IN**

When in Vietnam, Dominic by chance read about an elderly cobbler in District 3 and subsequent visits, old designs in hand, revived his passion for shoes which in turn rekindled his passion for shoe design, a passion dormant for nearly 30 years. While celebrating his 50th birthday he had an epiphany. "I said to my wife that I had always been passionate about making shoes, but never pursued it and I wasn't going to get to 60 without trying to do so. So I guess [shoe designer] is my alter ego," he laughs. "Or you could say banker is my alter ego. Many people go through life not knowing what they want to do. The travesty is in knowing but not being able to do it."

At Dominique Saint Paul, customers first try on a fitting pair to make sure the shop can fashion a shoe for them. "Then the fun begins," says Dominic of the myriad customizations available. While the shop doesn't make bespoke shoes per se, they can customize any one of their 13 different but traditional styles of shoes, including color and patternization, using a combination of materials like leather and suede, in essence creating a 'one of a kind' shoe.

"This allows for a great deal of latitude. Like buying a Rolls Royce, you can choose the extras that you want but you can't redesign the car. I'm a great believer in style being people expressing their own personality, on purpose. A lot of people

would love to wear something a little bit different, but they don't have the courage of convictions or it's astronomically expensive. This is an opportunity to express themselves through what they wear, and to have a pair of high quality, very comfortable shoes."

While the lasts around which the shoes are formed come from London and the crust (unfinished) leather is imported from Florence, the construction and finishing of these shoes is strictly done in Vietnam using traditional European methods. Some even feature a Vietnamese twist, like a Dong Son star motif, either in the broguing or as a mother of pearl inlay, or an actual pearl embedded in the lantern-like tassels. "We're not trying to overdo it, but we wanted something to distinguish these shoes as Vietnamese. You know, Vietnam is a huge producer of shoes, but they tend to be mass market instead of high-end. I've talked to luxury shops in Singapore who say 'We'll carry your shoes if you say they're not made in Vietnam.' But we're proud of that fact; we don't want to hide it. Saigon and Shanghai are incredibly stylish cities in Asia, crucibles of creativity. There are a lot of creative people here, but it's frustrating that a lot of high quality creativity just gets exported rather than being sold here. The stereotype is that lacquer and crafts are what there is to buy, but there are so many other things made here at a very high standard. Even the Vietnamese are surprised by the fact that [other Vietnamese] can turn out such a fantastic product. Sometimes it's the foreigners who believe more in the Vietnamese capacity than many Vietnamese do."

# SOURCE CODE



# A YOUNG LOCAL APP DEVELOPER HOPES TO MATCH THE SUCCESS OF FLAPPY BIRD

TEXT BY NPD KHANH

IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

IN THE AFTERMATH of Flappy Bird's soaring success and sudden cancellation, Vietnamese youths with technical nous have awoken to the potential of the mobile application industry. And despite the criticisms the creator received from fans and the media, Dong Nguyen succeeded in doing what countless other Vietnamese mobile game makers failed to do – prove it's possible for a Vietnamese independent developer to achieve financial success.

With his first app, WiFi *Chua* (WiFi "Freebie"), uploaded onto Apple's App Store and Android Google Play on February 26 of this year, two weeks after Flappy Bird was deleted, Nguyen Luong Bang hopes to be Dong Nguyen's successor. Within four months of its launch, WiFi *Chua* garnered a respectable 500,000 downloads, an active 3,000 log-ins daily and was crowned among the top 10 Vietnamese Apps in March and April 2014. It has started making money from in-app ads and the subsequent pro version (which costs USD1.99). While Bang is tight-lipped about how much he's making with his first digital creation, he hints it's enough for him to be serious about developing apps full time.

Born in 1992, 22-year-old Bang is still a year away from graduating university and has been working in app design and development for only six months. His first foray into design was in 2012 with Aprotain Redteam, a student research and development group created by a professor at his university.

"Our first and only assignment was a social network site. It won first place in an FPT software developing competition but died in the real market due to a lack of funds and our own lack of knowledge on how the real market works," says Bang. "We were all coders in that group. I was the designated designer. I had bits and pieces of experience in designing before that. I eventually learned on the job. I knew then that I chose the wrong major."

With its breakneck development speed and competitive environment, the young naturally dominate IT and its associated industries. Success stories like Facebook and Flappy Bird are not the norm. "All of the Vietnamese success stories I have heard thus far are from older bros who have

graduated and have had some years under their belt," he says. "It's difficult to find others my age."

## CODERS AND DESIGNERS

WiFi *Chua* came from the backlash of overpriced 3G services in late 2013. "People started sharing WiFi passwords online through forums and group chats. Eventually someone had the idea of creating a website dedicated to sharing public WiFi passwords." The site is still up at [sharepasswifi.com](http://sharepasswifi.com). Its latest post was about six weeks ago.

"When I saw that, immediately I thought, 'What a bright idea!' Put all the passwords up there on a website. It's like saying here's your key to free WiFi but you have to have WiFi in the first place to even see the key. What was he smoking when he thought of that? That's how WiFi *Chua* was born."



Bang's app was neither the first nor the only app to revolve around the same password-sharing model. "A couple days before I uploaded WiFi *Chua*, another guy uploaded a similar app." Yet it is Bang's rendition of the same concept that won at the end of the day.

According to him, the difference that marks success and failure for an app boils down to a single thing – design. "There are a lot of coders in Vietnam, but not that many designers." And the difference between a coder and a designer? Intent.

"Coders and designers both work in developing apps. In a team, these two guys have different jobs to do. But if one works solo, there's not a lot to distinguish which is which. The only thing that separates a designer and a coder then is intent. A lot of the time, coders just want to show off their

mad coding chops. Vietnamese coders are generally young guys. It's easy to fall into that trap, especially when it's so easy to just whip up an app and upload it on one of the many app platforms.

"A year's worth of uploading rights costs only USD99 on the App Store. It's not a high price to pay for the ego," he explains. "What they forget is that the average users aren't likely to be able to appreciate their detailed coding work or the scope of their construct. All that work the coder puts in simply complicates the apps and distracts from the purpose of what he first sets out to do. A designer on the other hand must think from the user's point of view and create an app that answers the need of the users and exactly that only. A designer understands that it's not about him, it's about the users and what they want.

"I checked out the other rival app,"

Bang confesses. "There was no point in accusing each other of plagiarism because the concept is already so utilitarian that there's just no point to it. Execution is the only thing that sets them apart and I wanted to see his work. His [rival's] big layout meant that it was more complicated to navigate. The many information inputs he required from the users meant it took longer for the users to get the WiFi password or even to share the pass that they know."

WiFi *Chua*, on the other hand, is simpler and required only one user input – the WiFi pass. The app was

completed within five days, from concept to upload. After his first success, Bang has since then published another application, a game that took him a couple of hours to complete. "It's a simple thing that does what it's supposed to do." The app, named Freaking Math, has since received roughly the same quantity of downloads as its sibling and similarly positive reviews.

Talking of future plans, the young designer says he has nothing concrete yet. "I want to graduate university first. Full timing as a serious app designer is the direction, but there are many things one can do with apps these days. Keep going solo for a while and learn. Form a group as many others did. Or join a pro corporation and learn from more experienced folks. Maybe eventually open up one myself. But that's so far off."

# BEJEWELED

## MEET VIVEK CHAUDHARY, A JEWELER WHO TURNS ACCESSORIES INTO PIECES OF ART

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

INSPIRATION. IT'S THE difference between a Chanel 2.55 bag that retails for thousands of dollars and a similar-looking knockoff sold for a fraction of that on the sidewalks of New York or an outdoor market in Hong Kong. For Coco Chanel, it was the iconic quilting inspired by the puffy jackets worn by horse breeders, and the threaded leather chains reminiscent of ropes anchoring a yacht, that has made her bag one of the most coveted for more than half a century. In the art world, more so than the construction or even the materials, the inspiration and the personality behind a piece is what determines its value. It's the reason collectors the world over clamor for the latest designs of the likes of Alexander McQueen, John Galliano and Donatella Versace, and why works by Van Gogh, Picasso and Warhol routinely sell for the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Far more than fabric and thread, paint and canvas, collectors eagerly buy into the inspiration. "Why should it be any different with jewelry?", asks Vivek Chaudhary, owner of the gallery vivekkevin (35 Dong Khoi, D1). "When you go to a normal jewelry store, you will see 99 percent of the jewelry sold is mass produced, or replicated. People will bring in a book or magazine and ask if this can be made. Or they have a stone that needs to be set. There's no innovation. Even people who are privileged want to feel secure, so when they wear something, it has to be a brand name. It may be beautiful, but it's mass produced. Where's the story behind it?"

Landing in Vietnam 10 years ago, Vivek transitioned from furniture design to jewelry design and along with late business partner, Kevin Lane, opened gallery vivekkevin in 2009. The small gallery is surprisingly stark, the only color provided

by the eclectic collection of pendants, rings and brooches set out on display, surprisingly none under glass as if inviting physical interaction between viewer and pieces. A trio of colored hearts adorn the bare white walls, Vivek's own creations, beaten, burnished, enflamed and engorged using Mercedes Benz S-Class color coating technology. "It's conceptual and represents the complexity of human nature," explains Vivek of the highly glossed silver brooches finished in the car manufacturer's workshops. "When you're wearing them, others may see [their reflection] inside but only the wearer knows whether that person is inside their heart or not."

### **PASSION BEHIND IT**

Another collection by Japanese artist Jiro Kamata features reflective circles of glass which are actually old camera lenses. "For each piece, there's a hidden story behind it," explains Vivek. "Somebody used it to shoot something throughout their life and now someone else is wearing it."

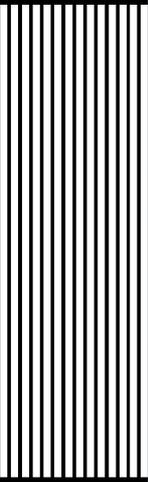
Works by Germany-based Vietnamese jewelry-artist Sam Tho Duong are also on display, taking on an organic, almost frozen quality, mimicking the bark and skin of branches, twigs and fruit covered in ice crystals, but made entirely of oxidized silver and tiny freshwater pearls, fused together with nylon string.

"A store is somewhere you buy a design. A gallery is where you buy a piece of art," clarifies Vivek of the notion that the worth of jewelry should be measured only in carats and ounces. "Some of these works have been bought by collectors all around the world and have been displayed in places like the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. The artists I represent

create either one of a kind pieces or limited collections, using very unique techniques and materials like recycled fabric, silver, zinc... But the jewelry I represent isn't about how expensive the material is or how big the stone is; it's about the technique and the inspiration. If you see a chair made by a designer, you think 'I can make that,' but you know, someone already made it. That's the thing. Someone had to come up with that idea."

The world of contemporary jewelry is slowly following in the footsteps of other, more established fields like fashion and art, where collectors gravitate towards individual designers instead of simply purchasing end products. Developing that level of admiration, though, comes with a cost. "Before a collector buys a work, they want to know the passion behind it, how it's made, how successful the artist is, which galleries represent him or her, which prestigious museums have shown them or bought their pieces. Sometimes it takes up to a year to sell one work to one person."

Being the first gallery space dedicated entirely to jewelry in the Asia Pacific region hasn't been easy, considering the long educational relationship that often develops between collector and gallery. "I still sometimes think, 'What am I doing?'," admits Vivek. "But this is my passion. I saw an opportunity in Saigon and thought that as the country changes, as the city changes, I could be part of the change, changing people's perception of art, culture and design. Initially, our clientele was expats, but now a big chunk are locals, maybe even more Vietnamese than expats. As they're learning more, they love the concept, the idea, the story, the technique. Still, it's difficult, but I wouldn't swap it for anything. This is what I love."



# WHAT WOMEN WANT



# A VIETNAMESE MAN WHO KNOWS WHAT LOOKS GOOD ON A WOMAN

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD

IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

DESPITE WHAT HE may have you believe, Adrian Tuan's fashion designs are quintessentially Vietnamese. But they're just not Vietnamese in the way you'd expect – it's rare to see anything in his collections that even remotely resembles an *ao dai*. Famous for its body-hugging sensuality, Adrian's Valenciani (26 Ly Tu Trong, D1) brand womenswear – much like the lotus – blossoms gracefully from the impoverished Vietnamese soil.

"I think when you're growing up without a lot of means," he says, "you don't have any fashion around you, and the people you see are just trying to survive rather than look beautiful. My mom, for example, is so pretty, but she sometimes forgot that when we were growing up because she always had to try to make money for us. People like that who don't have any kind of fashion, you just want to give them something."

At 35, Adrian holds his own against younger designers for his acute sense of the prevailing trends and an uncanny understanding of what women want. His small team releases four collections per year, and there's not a lot of stock left over after each season. His drive to accentuate the beauty of a woman's body – and he's known for consciously catering to all sizes – has been methodical, studied, and passionate.

## SEXY IN A DIFFERENT WAY

"When I started, I knew almost nothing about a woman's body," he admits. "The more you do it, the more you learn through all the cuttings, forms and fabrics you choose. With this business, because you're born a guy, you don't know about women and you have to learn. I don't sleep with women, so I can't learn that way, so I have to find another way to learn about them. Maybe there's a reason why so many designers are gay. You have to see women from a different angle. It's not sexual. I know how to make women feel sexy without showing too much breast, wearing short skirts. You don't need that to be sexy. That's what I mean when I say I know women."

"I look at straight international designers," he adds, "and they always do very, very revealing clothes. Speaking for myself, I think our brand is sexy in a different way – suggestive, through the way we use fabrics or the way we do the cut. It's not in-your-face kind of sexy."

With 80 percent of his clients repeat customers, Adrian has come to know the tastes of his niche market very well. "The women who wear my stuff are successful. They know what they want, so we don't need to give them any suggestions. We just give them the best of what they want. What I put out at the beginning was completely different

to what I do now. At first they wanted something more sensual, more fitting. Now, they want something more comfortable that's easier to wear. I always have a little romance in my collections – the Valenciani brand is all about women who can love and are ready to give love. It's all about love. There's always some flair in there."

One of the key elements in the Valenciani design range is the plus-sized fit. "Over half of my clients are plus-size," he explains. "When you're sketching and doing the designs, you have to think about who's coming to the store, not just 'Oh, I have a good sketch.' Luckily when I started this brand, there were no Vietnamese designers doing ready-to-wear. They all wanted to get popular, so they did crazy business to get media attention. I didn't think about it that way. I think you need money to survive. You can't just be an artist and survive in this market. When you have 50 people under your paycheck, you need to have more responsibility, so you have to limit your creativity and do whatever is best for the brand."

"I've never wanted to do anything crazy, anyway," he says. "I just want to make women look beautiful, that's always been my goal. That's the key to my success – I know what they want and I give it to them."



# FIT OUT

## VIETNAM'S RISE AS A GLOBAL FURNITURE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING HOTSPOT

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

AN UNLIKELY GAUGE to Vietnam's status as a global consumer can be found in its taste in furniture. While comedic author Jarod Kintz jokes that wooden furniture with no cushions is especially great when the in-laws come over as it discourages guests from staying too long, that type of unupholstered, heavily carved, highly ornate furniture has long been a status symbol for the country's middle- and upper-class. But as the Vietnamese acquired more wealth and had more dealings with the West, along came a change in taste, from highly traditional wooden furniture to highly embellished European antique reproductions, to "more clean lines, more flat surfaces, less decorative, more modern and streamlined from what it was 10 years ago," notes furniture industry veteran Randy Austin.

With more than 50 years experience in the furniture business, Randy, along with wife, Robin, are the owners of Austin Home Interiors (42 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2), an exquisite two-floor showroom featuring their own line of upholstered furniture as well as pieces from some of America's finest furniture companies, like John-Richard, Moore Councill and Emporium Home, all made in Vietnam.

Since opening in 2007, they've seen their customer base move from being predominantly expats to now more Vietnamese clients. "Expat customers are generally looking for a taste of home," says design manager McNeill Shiner. "Upholstery is really a tremendous deal, being able to customize a piece and get exactly what you want. To do that in the States, you're looking at least at another thousand dollars." The furniture and interior design store often catches expats "at the beginning or end of their journey. They've brought a container but houses here are huge. Or for people who are leaving, a month or two before they go, they'll want to fill up their container with investment quality pieces at incredibly

reasonable prices," says McNeill.

On the other hand, "Vietnamese customers are by and large really just beginning the process of learning what they like, what they want and how to use their home to express all of that. Many Vietnamese clients come in with words they've heard like 'contemporary' or 'European' but may not have an idea of what that entails," she continues. "I encourage people to start by looking at Pinterest. Start with visuals and see what you react to. When you see something you really love, it's almost a visceral reaction. Forget about the terminology. Figure out what you actually like."



### DON'T CLOSE ANY DOORS

For the studio's own line, the design team starts by collecting ideas from books, magazines and the internet, looking for interesting shapes and things that inspire. "Once we have ideas and photos pulled together, we'll figure out how to do it, how to tweak it. We'll then have a technical drawing made and then send it to production, one piece at a time, giving us a chance to really test it out," explains McNeill. While the line is sold locally, all the pieces are made to US specifications and quality standards and qualify for export.

While the showroom is very eclectic with classic American furniture juxtaposed with modern, sleek styles, a little bit of Asian inspiration makes an appearance now and then, like in the Jim Thompson silk headboard with a lotus motif or in the oversized Buddha statues. "But we don't want to get too theme-y," says McNeill. "Just because you live in Asia doesn't mean everything you own has to have cranes or cherry blossoms."

While Vietnam is known for mass producing low end furniture, it's gaining a reputation as *the* place to manufacture high quality case goods. "Furniture manufacturing has just about died in the

US. Some is still done there and in China but not at the level of Vietnam," says Randy, who originally came to Vietnam as the president of leading American furniture company Theodore Alexander. "We came here because of the high skill level of the workers, their good work ethic and creativity. Maybe it's because of the French influence and the artistic creative nature of that era, but Vietnam excels in basic handwork, carving and crafts because they've done it for so many years. A lot of fancy stuff is done here now."

Randy now consults for major furniture companies,

helping them find the right factories to produce their designs. Over time, Vietnamese craftsmen have mastered difficult techniques like antiquing and églomisé, gilding the backside of glass with gold or metal leaf.

"I've learned a lot about the work the craftsmen are capable of doing with their hands here. It's refreshing to any designer to not be restricted by the capabilities of the craftsmen; it allows them to think more broadly because of that. I tell people that in Vietnam, we can do anything. Don't close any doors. Think about what you want to accomplish and we can do it."

# Wine & Dine

IMAGE PROVIDED BY LA BETTOLA



# Spirited Away

A new Japanese whiskey bar & grill is home to some of the city's best Kobe beef

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



Kobe Beef

SET IN A PRETTY old manor just back from the main restaurant strip on leafy Han Thuyen, **Monde** (7 bis Han Thuyen, D1) has been the Japanese community's best-kept secret since quietly opening its doors last October. The venue is celebrity bartender Hasegawa Harumasa's first foray into Vietnam, styled after his flagship operation in Ginza's fashionable whiskey bar district in the heart of Tokyo. Back in Japan, Monde is a fairly distinguished brand that has survived for 30 years as the go-to for fine liquor and gourmet cuisine, and it would appear that Hasegawa's long-term strategy is to develop a similar establishment here – Monde Vietnam's top shelf collection of Western spirits and house-brewed sake is nothing short of extraordinary, and the restaurant's head chef is the noted Fukazawa Katsushi, straight from the kitchens of numerous five-star establishments in not only Japan but also France and Africa.

The menu is all Fukazawa's own design,

and it's the chef's firm intention to confound expectations. Japanese with a European twist, Fukazawa's unique fusion dishes are a challenge to the profusion of similar Japanese restaurants in this city, and his dedication to the quality and freshness of the food is so intense that most ingredients – we're talking fish, meat and vegetables – are imported from Japan on a daily basis. You're welcome to try to get fresher genuine Japanese sashimi and exquisite Kobe beef anywhere in Saigon, but hopes aren't high.

The dining area is accessible via a steep staircase up from the ground-floor bar area, and it's comfortable – there are no sliding tatami doors or anything similarly pretentious; if anything, the décor does harken back to the plush classicism of 80s era corporate Japan. Our table was attended by Trang, the venue's local proprietress, who was most concerned about the proper matching of wines with our meal – she was on the nose with the

2012 Chablis Chardonnay, its dry, citrus tones pairing nicely with the fresh fish and caviar dishes.

## The Food

We started light with safe, Western appetizers – soups and salads (ranging from VND85,000-145,000), all of which betrayed chef Fukazawa's French influences with their rich and milky textures. Our additional treat was the fresh Monde Okinawa pork dish (VND420,000), a generous chunk of cured ham flown fresh in from Okinawa itself – thankfully with none of the gristle of the sausage meats available locally.

We then moved further into Japanese territory with a number of seafood selections. While the sashimi platters were highly tempting (ranging from VND120,000-180,000, with occasional special hand-carried items priced at VND200,000-300,000), we opted for the caviar range. Our *taramo* fish roe salad



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Hokusai Cressar Salad, Cocktail, Monde Oyster Chowder,

**The carving technique is Hasegawa's own invention, and the spheres are his polishing touch on what is now undoubtedly one of Saigon's most enigmatic high-class whiskey bar & grill venues**

(VND120,000) served with toasted French bread was almost juicy with its mash of pink caviar and potato, while the braised Japanese *ayu* with salt (VND200,000) is a rare dish indeed in these parts, but one well known to Japanese gourmands. Hasegawa hopes to introduce this delicacy to diners in Ho Chi Minh City; a sweet-fleshed fish found in Japan's Lake Biwa, packed with eggs when caught in the right season. Served baked with a sliced quince to squeeze over the caviar as you dine, this dish alone is reason enough to pay Monde a visit.

The *ayu* would have remained the most memorable dish of the evening were it not for the thin, succulent slices of Kobe beef (sirloin VND1 million/100g; thigh VND800,000/100g) served medium-rare on a platter somewhat resembling a serving of sashimi. If you've never had Kobe beef, you'll note the marked difference with what you're used to – widely regarded as the world's best beef, it's the prime cut from a variety of cattle found only in Japan, typically infused with light veins of natural oils that serve to tenderize the meat without pounding.

Take a tender slice and dip it in a saucer of specially-brewed Monde soy sauce and wasabi or mustard; this sheer delight of a dish is moist, sinuously fatty without a hint of greasiness, and is frankly what all beef would taste like if the world were at all fair. Again, the meat was nicely paired with a supple 2011 Californian Coppola Rosso,

bringing a berry and mocha wash over the warm complexities of the beef and sauce.

A descent into the quiet blue-light bar area was rewarded by the earnest ministrations of veteran Monde head bartender Machii Tomoyuki. Serving with Monde Tokyo for a decade and now teaching staff here, Machii is serious and studied; he waves his hand over the lengthy cocktails list as if it's beneath him and says, "Just tell me what you like, I can make anything." We ask for something with citrus and something sweet & fruity respectively; he frowns, reaches behind him, and embarks on a whole performance of tumbler shaking – stopping only to smell and taste droplets of various liqueurs on his wrist.

The reward is a heady variation on a Jack Rose with French brandy, grenadine, apricot liqueur and lime juice on the one hand, and an Agua de Valencia on the other, the noted Spanish cocktail made with orange juice, champagne, vodka and gin. They're a very fine finish to the meal, and the Valencia in particular is noteworthy for its large, spectacular sphere of ice that sits neatly in the glass – hand-carved from an extremely dense 100 kg block of ice and designed not to melt through your drink. The carving technique is Hasegawa's own invention, and the spheres are his polishing touch on what is now undoubtedly one of Saigon's most enigmatic high-class whiskey bar & grill venues. ■



# Eataly

Where trendy chic meets Italian homemade goodness

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM  
IMAGES PROVIDED BY LA BETTOLA

HEAD TO A *bettola* in Italy and you're likely to find a (sometimes literal) hole in the wall establishment, a family-run dive with mismatched water glasses and nary a menu to be seen, where the cook is also the waiter, busboy and maître d', serving up whatever happens to be available in the back.

One of Saigon's newest eateries, **La Bettola** (84 Ho Tung Mau, D1), is facetiously named by chef-owner Giuseppe Amorello, an inside joke akin to calling a big guy "Tiny" or a redhead "Bluey". What this hip, tony restaurant does share with its namesake, though, is stripped down simplicity, from the clean, minimalist décor to the manageable menu celebrating beautiful products made on site.

Diners expecting red checkered tablecloths and framed photos of the Coliseum had better head elsewhere; this is not your nonna's kitchen. The ground floor houses a sleek (smoking permitted) bar, red leather chairs facing backlit shelving, ideal for showing off the satisfying selection of wines and spirits. We order the Aperol Spritz (VND105,000), common enough in Italy but a serendipitous find in Saigon

## To the eye, no expense has been spared to make this one of the city's most thoughtful spaces

considering how difficult it is to find Aperol. The citrusy sweet base for this cocktail is infused with bitter and sweet oranges, mixed with a healthy splash of Prosecco and seltzer. Aperitifs consumed, we make our way up to the twin dining rooms on the first floor, passing by the glass-walled kitchen, gleaming with new appliances.

The two non-smoking dining rooms, one dark and moody, the other bright and open, seat a total of about 80 guests. The sophisticated, ultramodern décor comes courtesy of Hanh Watt, the restaurant's business manager and benefactor. Her years of luxury hotel food and beverage experience come through in the trendy lounge music, the heavy cutlery and precision service of the wait staff. Upon renovation, a service elevator was installed precluding the mingling of guests and staff laden with trays and dirty dishes navigating the same staircase. To the eye, no expense has been spared to make this one of the city's most thoughtful spaces.

### Comfort Food

The menu, however, is entirely the creation of chef Amorello, a native of Trieste, in the far northeast of Italy. Enrolled in cooking school at the age of 14 ("I don't like study, but I always have the passion to cook at home with my mama, so I choose this career," he says), chef Amorello has worked in Italian kitchens in Germany, Greece, Italy, the US and most recently in China. La Bettola is his first restaurant, though, and his ambitious menu shows he's out to prove himself.

Our dinner starts with the *Rucola e Gamberi* (VND135,000), a perfectly simple salad of arugula with generous-sized shrimp, homemade mozzarella and Gorgonzola. But the standout is definitely La Bettola (VND265,000), a huge serving (easily shared between 2-3 people) of shaved porchetta (slow-roasted, boneless pork stuffed with fresh rosemary and oregano, mustard and other spices) and paired with the most heavenly of focaccia — flaky, slightly crunchy and most importantly, straight from the wood-burning pizza oven downstairs, brushed with olive oil and garnished with a few sprigs of rosemary. If you've been to Central Italy, you'll recognize this most delicious of street foods. Here, instead of being a whole roasted pig, chef Amorello uses pork belly and garnishes the dish with



Chef-owner Giuseppe Amorello

cherry tomatoes and arugula, served without fuss on butcher paper laid atop a wood cutting board.

The mains are just as comforting, with *tortellini*, *pappardelle*, spaghetti and gnocchi being among the pastas made on site. We opt for the *Ravioli di Magro* (VND185,000), traditionally a favorite during Lent as it contains no meat. It's been said that the perfect mouthful of ravioli has a ratio of 45:45:10, dough to filling to sauce, and this comes close, with a spinach and homemade ricotta filling, lightly sautéed with butter and fresh sage.

The *Filetto di manzo ai porcini* (VND455,000) is equally solid, the thick cut of beef tenderloin featuring a good sear to seal in the juices, with the porcini mushroom sauce doing most of the work seasoning-wise, as it should.

By the time dessert comes around, even the promise of tiramisu made from homemade lady fingers and mascarpone can't tempt us. The lemon *sorbetto* (VND85,000), though, refreshingly sour with an appreciable kick of vodka, was the ideal palate cleanser.

While this brand new restaurant draws in the lunch crowd, being in the shadow of Bitexco and the rest of the financial district, evenings are less harried, if a relaxed dinner is what you're after. Whether chef Amorello and his team can continue to handmake as many products as he now does once word spreads of this superb dining experience remains to be seen. For now, though, the unique stripped down sophistication of La Bettola is a refreshing addition to Saigon's culinary scene. ■

# >> The List

# Wine & Dine

## bakeries

### ABC Bakery & Cafe

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

223-225 Pham Ngu Lao, D1

### Bread Talk

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

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
3930 3181

### Brodard Bakery

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

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

### Cheesecake Ngon Oi's Pick

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

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

### Fly Cupcake

The shop specializes in various flavors of cupcakes.

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

### Givral

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

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

### Gourmand Shop

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

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

### Harvest Baking

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

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

### Kinh Do Bakery

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

128A Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3829 6552  
kinhdobakery.vn

### La Doree

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

216 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3822 1718  
www.ladoree.com

### L'amour Bakery & Cafe

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

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

### Nhu Lan Bakery

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

50 Ham Nghi, D1  
3829 2970  
www.nhulan.vn

### Pacey Cupcakes

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

53G Nguyen Du, D1  
3823 3223  
nguyen.tran@paceycupcakes.com  
www.paceycupcakes.com

### Paris Baguette

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

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

### Pat'a Chou

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

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

### Savouré Bakery

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

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

### Schneider's Cafe & Tea Corner

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

27 Han Thuyen, D1  
2229 6910  
www.schneiders-finest.com

### Tous Les Jours

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

180 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3823 8302

## bars

### Ahoy Beer Club

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

79 Nguyen Cong Tru, D1

### Allez Boo

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

187 Pham Ngu Lao, D1  
6291 5424

### Alpha

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

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

### Bernie's Bar & Grill

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

19 Thai Van Lung, D1  
3822 1720

### Blanchy's Tash

This cocktail lounge is a perfect place to relax with friends, meet with colleagues or just enjoy a cocktail or two. With plenty of seating around the central bar as well as tables for couples or larger groups, plus a more intimate VIP area with comfortable sofas, you will find the right space for any occasion.

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

### Blue Gecko

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

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

### Bootleg DJ Cafe

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

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

### Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, D1  
6656 6338

### Broma Saigon Bar

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

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

### Cargo Bar

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

7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

### Carmen Bar

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

8 Ly Tu Trong, D1

### Chill Skybar

Offers the most stunning panoramic views of Saigon and a wide range of wines and cocktails personally prepared by Vietnam mixologist Le Thanh Tung.

Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1  
www.chillsaigon.com

### Boudoir Lounge

Designed to look like a lived-in yet immaculately styled Parisien home with plush leather sofas, silk cushions and velvet armchairs, Boudoir Lounge serves up everything from afternoon tea to evening cocktails along with signature dishes for any occasion from informal meals and business lunches to gourmet canapés accompanying evening drinks.

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

### Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

The HCMC venue is in the flashy Kumho complex on the edge of the central district, and features a wide 24-meter restaurant frontage on the mezzanine level and a contemporary and chic setting with German-inspired wooden benches and a long wooden bar counter. Serving authentic Bavarian cuisines and premium beers.

39 Le Duan, DI  
9822 4206  
brotzeit.co/kumholink

### Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

104 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
09 8376 3372  
fifi291182@yahoo.com

### 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

### Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

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

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

### Cold Beer Club

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

64 Ton That Thiep, DI  
3914 3999

### Eon51

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

Levels 51-52, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI  
6291 8751

### Game On 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

115 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
6251 9898  
gameonsaigon@gmail.com

### Ginger 60

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

60 Ton That Thiep, DI  
093 772 1011

### Go2

Go2 is a popular nightclub in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also

has a pool table and extensive western food menu.

187 De Tham, DI

### Hair of the Dog

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

194 Bui Vien, DI

### Hard Rock Café

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

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

### Heaven Bar Saigon

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

8 Le Quy Don, D3  
090 534 3316  
www.barsaigonheaven.com

### 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

### 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

### Last Call 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

59 Dong Du, DI  
3823 3122

### Le Pub

In a brawny Australian snub to the effete vestiges of French Colonialism that pervade in Saigon, Le Pub is a hearty Oz-styled pub proudly located in a small alleyway between Pham Ngu Lao and Bui Vien st, Opposite the Chua Au lac arch, where it is a magnet for backpackers and blokey expats. The manager and staff are friendly enough too, I suppose.

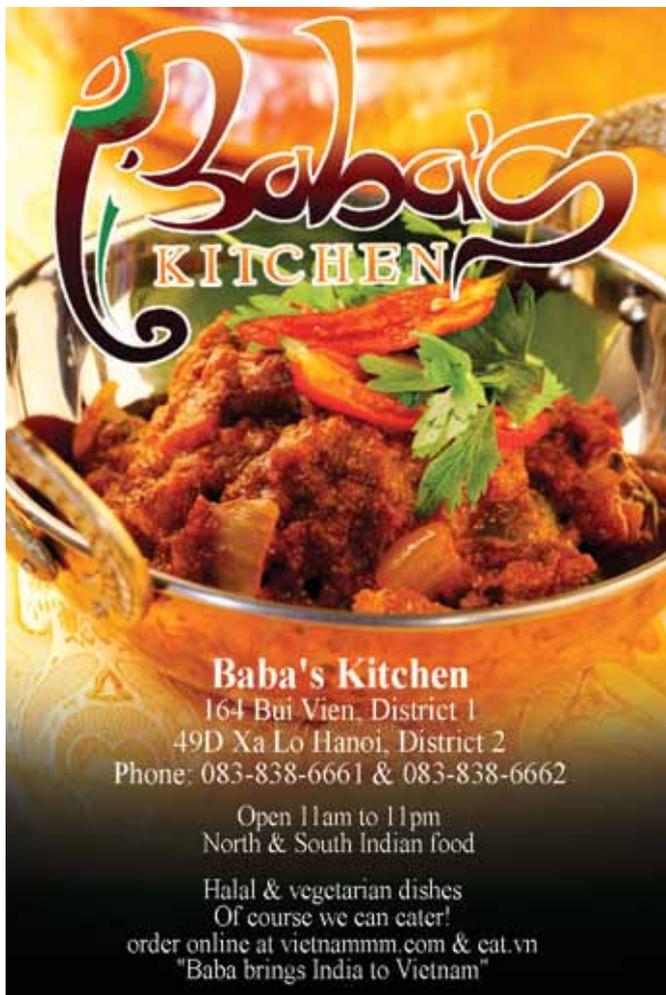
175/22 Pham Ngu Lao, DI  
3837 7679  
www.lepub.org

### Lion Brewery and Restaurant

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

11-13 Cong Truong Lam Son, DI

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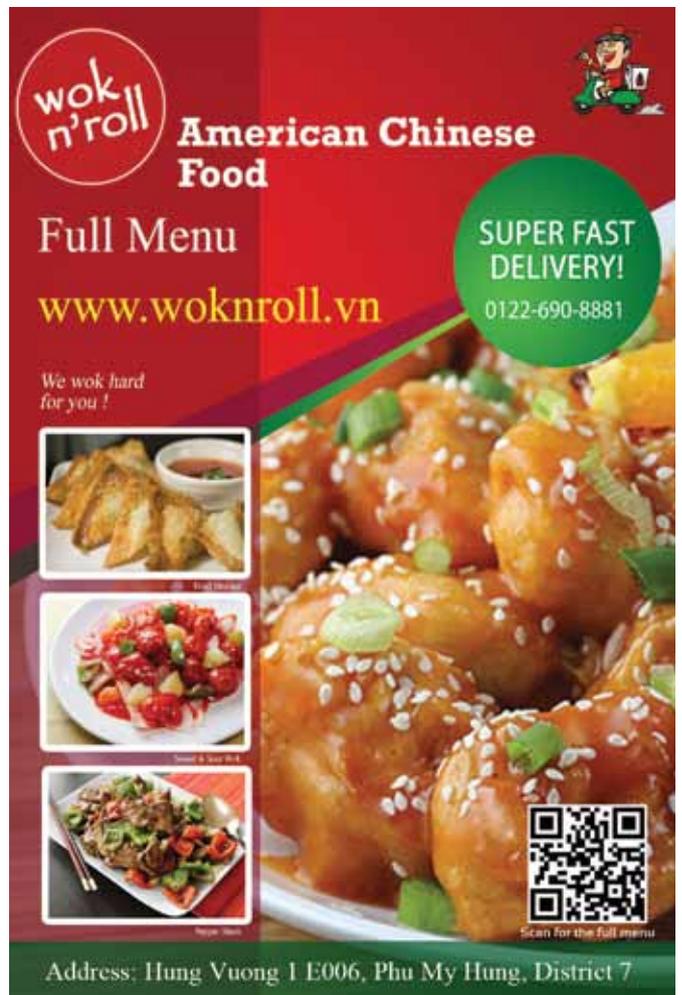


**Baba's KITCHEN**

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49D Xa Lo Hanoi, District 2  
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## Long Phi

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

207 Bui Vien, DI  
3837 2704

## Lush

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

2 Ly Tu Trong, DI

## 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

## O'Brien's 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

74/A3 Hai Ba Trung, DI

## onTop Bar

Located on the 20th floor of Novotel Saigon Centre, onTop Bar provides views over Saigon on the outdoor terrace. Offers a menu with over 20 cheeses and Vietnamese and international inspired tapas.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D3

## Phatty's

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

46-48 Ton That Thiep, DI

## Purple Jade

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

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



## RED Bar

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

70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1  
2229 7017

## Saigon Saigon Bar

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

19 Lam Son Square, DI  
3823 4999

## Saigon Retro 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

113 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
6278 2349

## Shots Bar

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

207 Bui Vien, DI

## Slate

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

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

## Spotted Cow

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

111 Bui Vien, DI  
3920 7670  
spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com

## Storm P

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

5B Nguyen Sieu, DI  
3827 4738  
www.stormp.vn

## The Cube Bar

Besides being a place for drinking and unwinding, The Cube Bar is also a place where unique, educational and exciting events like bartending, modern cuisine, art crafts, theme parties and live music take place in a daily basis.

31B Ly Tu Trong, DI  
09 0336 9798/OI 2088 1964  
info@thecube.vn

## The Orient Bar

Its game room features pool table, foosball and darts. Offers free flow of draught Tiger and Sapporo during Happy Hours (5:30-8pm). Serves imported steak and pizza.

24 Ngo Van Nam, DI

## Universal Bar Saigon

Offers food, drink specials and cold beers. Play pool upstairs or down by the main bar.

90 Bui Vien, DI

## Vasco's

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

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

## Wine Embassy

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

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

## Xu Bar

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

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

## cafés

### ABC Bakery & Cafe

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

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

### Achaya Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

90 Le Loi, DI  
093 897 2050

### Aisha Lounge

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

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

### AQ Coffee

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

32 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3  
3829 8344

### Angel-in-us Coffee

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

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

### Bobby Brewer's

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

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

## Boulevard Cafe

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

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

## Bukafe - Cafe

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

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

## Café Ban Sonate

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

53 Dang Dung, DI  
3290 6004

## Caffe Fresco

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

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

## Cafe Runam

Cafe Runam (the name loosely comes from a traditional Vietnamese lullaby song for young children) is a three storey building with the first two floors designed and decorated in detail to offer different atmospheres for customers. The second floor is an intimate coffee lounge with big sofas and armchairs. Next to the lounge is a terrace where white wood tables and armchairs are surrounded by plants. Offers wide range of coffee, cakes as well as set menus.

96 Mac Thi Buoi, DI  
08 3825 8883  
www.cafefunam.com

## Café Terrace

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

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

## Cafe Vuon Kieng

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

10B Ton Duc Thang, DI  
3823 3279

## Cake Durian Duiro

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

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

## Centrofarms Coffee 🍷 Oi's Pick

This recently opened cafe, located near the airport, sells its own eponymous

brand of Centrofarm organic roasted beans direct from Dalat with indoor and outdoor seating that's perfect for people watching and getting your daily dose of caffeine.

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

### Chi's Cafe

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

40/31 Bui Vien, D1  
3836 7622

### Ciao Cafe

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

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

### Cosmo Lounge

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

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3823 5848

### Cooku's Nest

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

13 Tu Xuong, D3  
2241 2043

### Crêperie & Café

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

5 Han Thuyen, D1

### Cryptic Acoustic Cafe

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

343/6 To Hien Thanh, D10

### DeJa Vu Cafe

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

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

### Elle Cafe

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

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

### Fe Cafe

Fe Cafe brings you all kinds of

scrumptious coffee, along with Vietnamese food and dessert. It offers breakfast, lunch, dinner and offers delivery as well. The interior is a mix of alternative and fancy, with wooden furniture, soft backrest pillows and decorative paintings.

26 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
090 878 3788  
www.facebook.com/fecafe.vn  
7:30am - 11pm

### Gemmi Coffee

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

193 D3 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

### Hatvala 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

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

### Hi-End Coffee

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

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

### Gloria Jean's

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

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

### Highlands Coffee

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

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1

### i-Box Cafe

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

135 Hai Ba Trung, D1  
3825 6718

### ID Café

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, D1

### Imagine Coffee shop

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

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan  
090 956 0105  
www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop  
09 0956 0105  
nguyenmaihoa@gmail.com  
8am - 10pm

### Kebab Cafe

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

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

### Kem My

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

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

### Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, D1  
keserakesera.com

### Kopi Beans

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

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

### L'amour

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

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

### LightBox Cafe

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

179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan  
3517 6668  
www.lightbox.vn

### L'Usine

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

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

### Le Tokyo Baum

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

46 Nguyen Van Trang, D1  
3926 0388

### May Coffee

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

1 Cong Xa Paris, D1  
www.maycoffee.com

### Minhu Coffee

This specialty cafe offers a wood furniture interior setting, which resembles the cabins you would expect to see in the western North American frontier. Live bands are a regular feature at the cozy cafe and prices are inexpensive.

149/35 Le Thi Rieng, D1  
3601 9319

### Mojo Cafe

This modern, chic café, restaurant and bar offers freshly baked homemade cakes, pastries, wood fired pizzas, light fare and superb coffee and smoothies for dine in or take away.

88 Dong Khoi, D1  
08 3827 2828  
www.mojosaigon.com

### MTV Cafe

Providing a relaxing atmosphere after a hard day's work with some of the top hits out today, MTV cafe is the perfect place to unwind with that special someone or just a cup of coffee.

65 Vo Van Tan, D3  
3930 2597  
mtvcafe.com.vn

### MZ Coffee

A cafe in a colonial villa that was built in the early 20th century. It boasts a broad selection of coffee, from fine Vietnamese condensed milk coffee to Italian Lavazza espresso, cappuccinos and lattes as well as wines and beers.

56-56A Bui Thi Xuan, D1  
39255258  
www.m-zing.com

### NYDC

A fun, dynamic and cosmopolitan place for food, desserts, beverages and not forgetting the company of good friends. Prices range between VND100,000 - VND300,000.

Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, D1  
3822 9992  
www.nydc.com.vn

### Paris Deli

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

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D1  
3821 6127

### Passio Coffee to Go

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

112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

### Phuong Cac Cafe

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

Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3  
3932 7484

### Phuc Minh Coffee

Phuc Minh coffee is an airy, clean environment providing a varied menu and delicious coffee. The staff is attentive and quick with a friendly approach. Prices start around VN 25,000 for this simple cafe.

51 Hung Phuoc 4, D7  
9am-10pm

## 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, DI

## Retrobite Diner Cafe

Inspired by the concept of 1960s Americana, bi-level Retrobite Diner Cafe features an interior that includes booths, retro egg chairs, jukebox and classic radio players. The menu is mostly American food with sandwiches, hamburgers, pastas, steaks, milkshakes, waffles and more.  
 6 Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3  
 3521 0673  
 retrobite.vn@gmail.com  
 7:30am - 11pm

## Soho Coffee

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

## Starbucks Coffee

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

## 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, DI  
 3836 9220  
 www.stellacafe.com

## The Blue Cafe

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

## The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

## The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon  
 Ground floor - InterContinental Asiana Saigon  
 Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan  
 3520 9099  
 www.intercontinental.com/saigon

## Tram Coffee ☺️ OI's Pick

A unique romantic cafe experience

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

## The Myth Cafe

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

## Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

## The Serenata Cafe

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

## Vecchio Cafe

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

## Windows

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

## Yogen Fruz

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

## Zoom Cafe 🍷 OI's Pick

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

## chinese

## Dragon Court

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

11-13 Lam Son Square, DI  
 3827 2566

## Dynasty

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

## Hung Ky Mi Gia

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

## Kabin

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

## Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

## Ming Court

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

## Ocean Palace

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

## Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

It's worth traipsing out to D6 for this one. Not only are the Dim Sum, Peking Duck, and pan-China home-style cuisine exemplary, but the venue design, with its architectural flourishes from the seven wonders of the world (including the Great Wall, the Taj Mahal, and the pyramids) makes for a highly distinctive dining experience.  
 12 Duong 26, D6  
 3755 1577  
 www.7ryquan.com

## Shang Palace Restaurant

The slightly off-centre, high-class Norfolk Mansion Hotel on Ly Tu Trong is home to one of Saigon's most well-respected Chinese restaurants outside of Chinatown. Located on the 1st floor, Shang's dark

intricate wooden tables and chairs with white linen and deep red carpeting make for an atmosphere of moody opulence; there is seating for over 300 guests, and private rooms are available.

1st Floor, Norfolk Mansion  
 17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, DI  
 3823 2221

## Shi-Fu Dim sum

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

## Yu Chu

Yu chu is renowned for the quality and presentation of its authentic Cantonese and Peking cuisines along with its elegant décor. Watching the chefs prepare signature dishes such as hand-pulled noodle, dim sum and Peking duck right in the kitchen is a prominent dining feature here.  
 First floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon  
 Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan  
 3520 9099  
 www.intercontinental.com/saigon

## french

## Annamite

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

## Au Manoir de Khai

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

## Augustin

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

## Bon Appetit

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

## Bonjour Restaurant

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

## Cocorico - Ca Nuong Phap

Serves an eclectic menu of roasted chicken (French style), pastas and Asian dishes.  
 127 Dien Bien Phu, DI  
 6292 0606  
 www.cocorico.com.vn

## 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, DI  
 3822 5216  
 www.cordonblue.vn

## La Cuisine

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

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

## La Creperie

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

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

## La Fourchette

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

9 Ngo Duc Ke, DI  
3829 8143  
www.lafourchette.com.vn

## La Nicoise

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

56 Ngo Duc Ke, DI  
3821 3056

## L'essentiel

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

98 Ho Tung Mau, DI  
0948 415 646

## Le Bordeaux

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

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

## Le Bouchon De Saigon

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

40 Thai Van Lung, DI  
www.lebouchondesaignon.com

## Le Chateau de Saigon

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

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

## Le Jardin 🍷 OI's Pick

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

31D Thai Van Lung, DI  
3825 8465

## Le Steak de Saigon

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

15 Dong Du, DI  
3822 4593  
www.lesteakdesaignon.com

## L'Olivier

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

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

## Le Rendez-Vous de Saigon 🍷 OI's Pick

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

9A Ngo Van Nam, DI  
www.lerendezvousdesaignon.com  
6291 0396

## The Refinery 🍷 OI's Pick

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

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

## Ty Coz 🍷 OI's Pick

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

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

## Vatel Saigon Restaurant

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

120 bis Suong Nguyet Anh, DI  
08 5404 2220  
vatelsaigon.com

## indian

## Ashoka

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space

for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards. Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups.

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

## Baba's Kitchen 🍷 OI's Pick

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

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

## Bombay Indian Restaurant

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

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

## Ganesh

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

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

## Indus Indian

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

2C Thi Sach, DI  
3521 0324

## Mumtaz

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

226 Bui Vien, DI  
3837 1767

## The Punjabi

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

40/3 Bui Vien, DI  
3508 3777

## italian

## 1960 Presidential Club

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

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

## Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambiance, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.

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

## Capricciosa

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

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

## Casa Italia

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

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



## Ciao Bella 🍷 OI's Pick

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

11 Dong Du, DI  
3822 3329  
tonyfox56@hotmail.com  
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



## Chef Mamma's

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

A43 Truong Son, Tan Binh

## Da Vinci's

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

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

## Good Morning Vietnam

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

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

## La Hostaria

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

17B Le Thanh Ton, DI  
3823 1080  
www.lahostaria.com

## Lucca

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**

## Margherita

Well-reviewed overseas, Margherita is a familiar place to tourists trawling the nooks of Ho Chi Minh City. This is partly a result of its agreeable price, sumptuous Western-style pizzas, English-speaking staff, and more than average customer service.  
**175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1**  
**3837 0760**

## Opera

Located at Park Hyatt Hotel, Opera is a contemporary, casual trattoria-style restaurant that specializes in authentic pizza made fresh from a wood-fired oven, pasta and homemade Italian dishes prepared from one large open kitchen.  
**Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, D1**  
**3520 2357**

## Pendolasco

There leafy garden is perfect for all those people looking for some fresh air away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It also has a fully air-conditioned dining room. Offers large selection of Italian wines and Italian dishes such as wood fire oven pizzas, pastas, grilled food, among others.  
**87 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**www.pendolasco.vn**

## Pizza 4P's 🍕 Oi's Pick

A little treasure hidden away at the top of an out-of-the-way alley off Le Thanh Ton, this Japanese pizzeria is a major hit with those in the know. Highly attractive premises and some extraordinary toppings catering to all tastes make this an unmissable pizza experience.  
**8/15 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**012 0789 4444**  
**www.pizza4ps.com**

## Pomodoro

In this family-style, simply-decorated trattoria restaurant with an arched ceiling and an all-brick interior, a fine Italian menu pleases diners with 12 different pizzas along with pasta dishes, parma ham with a spicy tomato chutney, and a highly-recommended French onion soup. Ideal option for a simple, reliable, and thoroughly pleasant night out with no complications.  
**79 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3823 8998**  
**www.pomodoro-vietnam.com**

## Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients.  
**125 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**www.sarpinos.vn**

## Scooz

An Italian restaurant that offers pizza, pasta, salad, special desserts and a wide variety of drinks. Provide dine-in, take away and home delivery services.  
**6 Thai Van Lung, D1**

## japanese

## Achaya Cafe

Achaya Cafe have two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meeting, relaxation

or party. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, Vietnamese food from sandwiches, spaghetties, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.  
**90 Le Loi, D1**  
**093 897 2050**

## Aka Taiyo

Aka Taiyo serves traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine with an extensive menu featuring more than 200 dishes. Also stocks a surprisingly comprehensive range of Japanese alcoholic beverages.  
**74B Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3824 4295**  
**www.akataiyo.com**

## Ajisen Ramen

One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.  
**120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1**  
**3822 0522**

## Aki Japanese Restaurant

A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes.  
**15/9 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3827 9083**

## Baby Spoon

Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.  
**47 Phan Chu Trinh, D1**



## Blanchy Street 🍕 Oi's Pick

Once hidden upstairs at the Blanchy's Tash bar, Blanchy Street now has its own location in the courtyard of eateries on Hai Ba Trung, offering authentic Japanese food mixed with fusion cuisine and the occasional additional Southeast Asian dish. Run by an ex Nobu (London) chef with his own signature dishes, it has wide appeal. Food is designed to be shared and is backed by an extensive list of sakes and wines.  
**74/3 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3823 8793**  
**www.blanchystreet.com**  
**11am - 10:30pm**

## Cam On Restaurant

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

## Dragon Hotpot

Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine.

Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines.  
**122-124 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**3825 8842**

## Dragon Noodle

A rather small but pretty restaurant with warm tones and a nice series of murals depicting old Saigon, Dragon Noodle focuses on the Japanese staple – ramen noodle soups – although their version is a little less spicy than is traditionally served, increasing perhaps the international appeal of the dish. There are a total of four soup bases to accompany the noodles.  
**29 Dong Du, D1**  
**3521 0008**  
**www.ramen.vn**

## Dragon Steak

A striking Japanese restaurant tucked away off Saigon's central street, Dragon steak specialises in thick wagyu cuts and tenderloin that could well have been cut off a beast the size of a dragon. They're so enormous that the restaurant once ran a cheeky competition – guests who finished one within half an hour dined free.  
**138 Ton That Dam, D1**  
**3821 0288**  
**www.steak.vn**

## Ebisu

Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles – made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes.  
**35bis Mac Dinh Chi, D1**  
**3822 6971**  
**ductm@incubation-vn.com**  
**ebisu.vn.asia**

## Fuji Restaurant

The cuisine is exceptional – fresh seafood and vegetables flown in direct from Japan and Dalat. A preferred venue for those staying at the hotel, and worth trying if you're living local.  
**Ground Floor, Nikko Hotel Saigon**  
**235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1**  
**3830 8123**

## Hanayuki

A Japanese-style restaurant on Ton Duc Thang with a sushi bar on the ground floor and a fine mezzanine level, Hanayuki serves more than 200 exquisite Japanese dishes with more than 30 kinds of sushi and sashimi. Private, traditional Japanese VIP rooms are available on the top level.  
**21C Ton Duc Thang, D1**  
**3824 2754**

## Ichiban Sushi 🍕 Oi's Pick

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting.  
**204 Le Lai, D1**  
**www.ichibansushi.vn**

## Inaho Restaurant

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

## Kabuto Tokyo

One of the more exuberant Japanese venues in this city, Kabuto Tokyo on Mac

Thi Buoi specialises in both traditional and fusion fresh Japanese seafood cuisine. It's a vibrant venue with its manga murals, carp lanterns, giant samurai warrior, and large aquarium – and in the evening it becomes a respectable upmarket bar. For a quirky beverage there, try a sake served in a bamboo tube.  
**45 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3822 2351**  
**habuto.com.vn**

## K Cafe

K Cafe Sushi is a large Japanese restaurant; an ideal place to gather for a business lunch or for a social dinner.  
**74A4 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**38245355**  
**www.yahatabune-saigon.com**

## Kissho

Experienced chefs prepare teppanyaki, sushi, and yakiniku dishes before your eyes. In addition, an extensive wine list is available as well as an array of fine sake to complement the exquisite flavors of premium imported meat and seafood.  
**14 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
**www.kissho.wmcmvietnam.com**

## Kuru Kuru Shushi

A Japanese restaurant that features a rotating conveyor belt for the buffet, offering 50 different selections. It also offers an a la carte menu.  
**129 Nguyen Du, D1**  
**www.kurukuru.com.vn**

## Kokokokko Pandora

Kokokokko is a combination of modern style fast food with the essence of ancient Japanese cuisine. The restaurant space is designed with high quality materials and features youthful and modern dynamic subtleties. With prices under VND100,00 Kokokoko is a must see.  
**4th Floor Pandora, 1/1 Truong Chinh, Tan Phu**  
**3849 6840**  
**www.kokokokko.com.vn**

## La Fenetre Soleil

Glass tables with mosaic tiles and wooden floors set off large comfy sofas and high ceilings, and diners can look out over the busy Ly Tu Trong though 11 large French windows. Its sense of personality attracts artistically-inclined expats to return often, and many of these profess it as their favourite hangout in Saigon. Cuisine is Japanese-Vietnamese fusion.  
**44 Ly Tu Trong, D1**  
**3824 5994**

## Mus Mus

Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.  
**117 Vo Van Tan, D3**  
**3930 9185**  
**www.musmus.net**

## Osaka Ramen

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

## Robata Dining An

The restaurant has a downstairs bar and a second floor with private rooms that have sunken tables, sliding fusuma doors and tabletop barbecues. Popular with the Japanese expats, the menu serves up healthy appetizers, rolls,

sashimi and An specialty dishes like deep fried chicken with garlic salt sauce An style (VND100,000).  
**15C Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
[www.robata-an.com](http://www.robata-an.com)

### Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

  Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.  
**99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1**  
**6291 1036**  
[sakurasaku.vn](http://sakurasaku.vn)

### Sumo BBQ

  Sumo BBQ is a rising star amongst Japanese venues in Saigon, offering smokeless table BBQ and a unique buffet/à 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](http://sumobbq.com.vn)  
**10.30am - 10.30pm**

### Sushi Bar

  There are plenty of dining spaces – large and small rooms, floor-level Japanese dining on tatami mats, private areas, and the eponymous large sushi bar on the ground level.  
**2 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3823 8042**  
[www.sushibar.vn.com](http://www.sushibar.vn.com)

### Sushi Dining Aoi

  Sushi Dining Aoi is one such restaurant, where the whole atmosphere of the place evokes the best of the culture. With its typical Japanese-style decor – the smooth earthen tones of the wooden furniture and surrounds, the warmth and privacy of the VIP rooms – it's possible to believe you're in a more elegant realm.  
**53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3**  
**3930 0039**  
[www.sushidininaoi.com](http://www.sushidininaoi.com)

### Sushi World

  A four-storey restaurant in a Japanese-style, the first and second floors feature an open sushi bar, while the upper levels contain 15 VIP rooms decorated in a traditional Japanese style with tatami matting.  
**28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1**  
**3911 0147**  
[www.sushiworld.com.vn](http://www.sushiworld.com.vn)

### Tokyo Deli

  Tokyo Deli's menu consists of a wide range of distinctive and delicious meals, prepared by specialists to create pure Japanese flavor. The menu is always being changed and improved.  
**240 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**5404 2244**  
[tokyodeli.com.vn](http://tokyodeli.com.vn)

### Uraetai BBQ Restaurant

  Uraetai serves yakiniku grill, a variant of the popular Korean dish bulgogi. The restaurant itself is attractively done, with a nod to feng shui in its selective placement of ponds and rocky pathways outside.  
**6673 9373**

### Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ

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

**42 Le Anh Xuan, D1**  
**3823 3232**  
[victis.com.vn](http://victis.com.vn)

### Vietnam Monde

Good for receptions, team meetings, relaxation, family dining, banquet and other special occasions. The recommended dishes include Kobe beef imported from Japan, Tepan Steak, Sashimi and Sushi. Average price per person is between VND100,000 to VND300,000.  
**7bis Korea Sailing, Ben Nghe Ward, D1**  
**0838220187**

### Vui Vui

Vui Vui is a Japanese restaurant specializing in barbecue and Japanese-style hot pot. Offers a variety of set lunches including Yakidond, Kimuchi Pokka, Sukiyaki and Purukogi. The restaurant has two floors with each floor accommodating approximately 100 guests.  
**125A Tran Quoc Thao, D3**  
[www.vuivui.net.vn](http://www.vuivui.net.vn)

### Wainosuke

Wainosuke is a Japanese and Italian style restaurant. It serves food such as pastas, salads and steaks to name a few and wine from traditional Japanese to premium Italian wine.  
**37 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**3821 4016**  
[www.wainosuke.vn.asia](http://www.wainosuke.vn.asia)

### Yoshino

  The decor is straight out of the set of Shogun, with black wood, tatami mats, stencilled cherry blossoms and all the trappings of Japanese exoticism – tastefully done. While Ho Chi Minh City is certainly not short of fine Japanese eateries, this one is particularly impressive.  
**2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1**  
**3823 3333**

### Yuki

  Yuki 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**

## korean

### Dae Jang Gum

All the theatrics of a traditional Korean experience are part of the service at Dae Jang Gum, named after an historic figure, but more pertinently after a wildly popular Korean drama focusing on her life – photos from the series appear throughout the venue. From waitresses in hanboks to vast plates of kimchi, this is the most authentic introduction to the cuisine available outside of District 7.  
**1st Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza**  
**39 Le Duan, D1**  
**3825 7974**  
[www.daejanguum.vn](http://www.daejanguum.vn)

### 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**

### 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**  
[www.mihanquocvn.com](http://www.mihanquocvn.com)  
**8am - 11pm**

### Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof

  This unusual Korean import famous for extraordinarily spicy chicken is an odd phenomenon on the HCMC culinary landscape, serving up a version of KFC that's actually painful. Lovers of spicy food rejoice. The restaurant itself is clean and modern in design, and there are another 50 Korean dishes on offer beyond the signature dish, including some tasty bibimbap mixed rice dishes.  
**20 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1**  
**3823 9000**

### Seoul House

  Seoul House is a well-known two-story Korean restaurant with a simple, cozy atmosphere. Its menu contains Korean favorites like Banchan, hotpots, grilled meat, clay pot mixed rice, and kim chi tofu soup.  
**33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1**  
**3829 4297**

## steakhouses

### Au Lac do Brazil

  Serving Saigon for more than 10 years, Au Lac do Brazil is the very first authentic Brazilian Churrascaria in Vietnam, bringing a new dining concept – an “All you can eat” Brazilian style BBQ where meat is brought to your table on skewers by a passador and served to your heart's content. They have an extensive selection of fine wines as well.  
**HO CHI MINH CITY**  
**Au Lac do Brazil I**  
**238 Pasteur, D3**  
**(08) 3820 7157**  
**HA NOI**  
**Au Lac do Brazil II**  
**6A Cao Ba Quat, Ba Dinh**  
**(04) 3845 5224**  
**For Banquet & Catering**  
**Call or email**  
**pr@aulacdobrazil.com**  
**090 947 8698**  
[www.aulacdobrazil.com](http://www.aulacdobrazil.com)  
[www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil](http://www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil)

### Corso Steakhouse and Bar

  Corso Steakhouse and Bar operates under an open kitchen concept, bringing together an exciting menu of Asian and European dishes with a focus on grilling. Guests can choose from a wide variety of wines and spirits.  
**117 Le Thanh Ton, D1**  
**3829 5368**  
[www.norfolkhotel.com.vn](http://www.norfolkhotel.com.vn)

### Dragon Steak

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

### El Gaucho

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



### Indaba Restaurant

Indaba Steakhouse combines German style steak and Italian coffee under one roof. Expect a fusion dishes like Indaba Spring Rolls, Mexican BBQ Spare Ribs, and Grilled Duck Breast served with sesame sauce, steamed rice and salad. The quaint and cozy restaurant is decorated in soft hues of red and black, complemented with soft jazz music. A German Viet Kieu with experience in restaurants in Germany helms the kitchen.  
**35 Ly Tu Trong, D1**  
[www.facebook.com/indabacafe](http://www.facebook.com/indabacafe)  
**Contact them at 3824 8280 or visit**  
[www.facebook.com/indabasteakhouse](http://www.facebook.com/indabasteakhouse)

### New York Steakhouse

  While situated in a fairly laid-back area, New York Steakhouse is definitely in the upmarket category and serves exclusive American imported beef dishes, with a whole range of steaks from rib eye, New York strip steak, and tenderloin being popular options.  
**25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1**  
**3823 7373**  
[www.steakhouse.com.vn](http://www.steakhouse.com.vn)

### Pho 99 🍷 OI's Pick

  Not a traditional steakhouse per se, but Pho 99 is known for its excellent filet mignon steaks made out of Cu Chi beef. Also serves great pho.  
**139 Nguyen Trai, D1**  
**3925 2791**

### Samba Brazilian Steakhouse

  This is certainly Saigon's most visible and colourful restaurant serving the popular Brazilian buffet style, where enormous skewers of meat are circulated around the tables for diners to enjoy as much of as they can.  
**10C Thai Van Lung, D1**  
**3822 0079**  
[www.samba.vnnhahang.com](http://www.samba.vnnhahang.com)

### Wild Horse Salon

  Cowboy-themed western steakhouse with an impressive exterior on trendy Thai Van Lung, Wild Horse serves high-quality Tex Mex/American cuisine with enormous servings.  
**8A/1D1 Thai Van Lung, D1**  
**3825 1901**

## thai

### Golden Elephant

  A cozy and relaxing Thai style restaurant, serving an extensive collection of Thai specialties including noodles, curries, rice, stir-fries, soups, and a good range of seafood.  
**34 Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
**3822 8554**

### Jasmine Thai

  A quiet, candle-lit affair complete with the ethereal tones of traditional music, guests can enjoy variations on dishes prepared in the Thai culinary tradition.  
**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.roththai.com.vn](http://www.roththai.com.vn)  
**11am - 10pm Daily**

## Lac Thai

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

**71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
**3823 7506**

## Mai Thai

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

**13 Ton That Thiep, DI**

## 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**

## 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**  
[www.spicevn.com](http://www.spicevn.com)

## Thai Express

Thai Express is the world's largest Thai restaurant chain. Enjoy fantastically authentic Thai cuisine at reasonable prices in a relaxed, contemporary atmosphere.

**8A Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
**6299 1338**  
[www.thaiexpress.com.vn](http://www.thaiexpress.com.vn)

## vietnamese

## 3T Quan Nuong

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

**Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, DI**  
**3821 1631**

## An Khue Quan

Serving a well-selected series of dishes from both northern and southern regions of Vietnam in an area where international diners are likely to be in abundance – and therefore well attuned to the foreign palate.

**92B Le Lai, DI**

## An Vietnamese Bistro

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

**71/5-6 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**

## 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**

## Banh Xeo An La Chien

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

**74 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI**  
[www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en](http://www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en)

## Barbecue Garden

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

**134-136 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI**  
**3823 3763**  
**135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI**  
**3823 3340**  
[www.barbecuegarden.com](http://www.barbecuegarden.com)

## Beefsteak Nam Son

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

**188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3**  
**3930 3917**  
[www.namsonsteak.com](http://www.namsonsteak.com)

## Binh An Village

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

**1163 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh**

## Bonbon

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

**Kumho Building, 39 Le Duan, DI**

## 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**

## Bo Nong

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

**143 Nguyen Trai, DI**  
[www.bo-nong.com](http://www.bo-nong.com)

## Bun Sai Gon

This franchise positions itself firmly in the local market with the slogan 'the bun noodles of the Vietnamese people' – indicating a concerted dedication to the authenticity of its noodle soup staples.

**73 Ly Tu Trong, DI**  
**6276 2609**  
[www.bunsaigon.com.vn](http://www.bunsaigon.com.vn)

## Cha Ca La Vong

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

**36 Ton That Thiep, DI**

## Cuc Each Quan

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

**10 Dang Tat, DI**  
**3848 0144**

## Five Oysters

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

**090 30 12123**  
[www.facebook.com/FiveOysters](http://www.facebook.com/FiveOysters)

## Gainh

With green suspended lanterns, simple and elegant furnishings, all touched off with bamboo baskets of fruit, flowers, and reed grass, the atmosphere is just as smooth and well-defined as a more modern-styled venue.

**58/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3**  
**3829 5243**  
[www.nemnuongganh.com](http://www.nemnuongganh.com)

## Gold Fish

Gold Fish offers a slice of authentic Vietnam with a genuinely rural cuisine.

**73 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**  
[www.goldfish.vn](http://www.goldfish.vn)

## Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

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

**122 Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
[www.grillbar.com.vn](http://www.grillbar.com.vn)

## Highway 4

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

**101 Vo Van Tan, D3**  
[www.highway4.com](http://www.highway4.com)

## Hoa Tuc

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

**74 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
**3825 1676**  
[www.hoatuc.com](http://www.hoatuc.com)

## Hoang Yen

Try some of the country's delicacies in a modern yet inviting atmosphere. The eatery's various clay pots are flavorful; some feature mam, a delicious fermented fish paste.

**7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, DI**  
**148 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
**Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5**  
**CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
[www.hoangyencuisine.com](http://www.hoangyencuisine.com)

## Hum

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

**2 Thi Sach, DI**  
**3823 8920**  
[www.hum-vegetarian.vn](http://www.hum-vegetarian.vn)

## Khoai Restaurant

Specializes in dishes from Nha Trang.

**3A Le Quy Don, D3**  
[www.rhoairestaurant.com](http://www.rhoairestaurant.com)

## Lang Viet 🍷 OI's Pick

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

**36 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3**  
**3829 9266**  
[www.langvietxua.com](http://www.langvietxua.com)

## Lemongrass

The vibe aims at a harmony between modern styling and the Vietnamese traditional arts, and the dining room with its tile floors and wooded wainscoting effects a comforting natural environment.

**4 Nguyen Thiep, DI**

## 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**  
[www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan](http://www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan)

## Nam Phan

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

**34 Vo Van Tan, D3**

## Nam Phat Restaurant

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

**21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, DI**  
**3910 6488**  
[nhangnamphat@gmail.com](mailto:nhangnamphat@gmail.com)

## Marina Saigon

Marina Saigon is one of the leading seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.

**172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3**  
**3930 2379**

## Maxim's Nam An

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

**13-15-17 Dong Khoi, DI**

## Mitau

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

**52 Hai Ba Trung, DI**  
**3823 0767**  
[www.mitauhue.com](http://www.mitauhue.com)

## Nghi Xuan

Decorated as a high-class traditional Vietnamese mansion, Nghi Xuan is perfectly fitting for a venue serving the finest of Vietnam's classical cuisine – the imperial dishes of Hue. Service is courteous, fast, and quintessentially elegant.

**5/9 Nguyen Sieu, DI**  
**3823 0699**  
[nghixuanrestaurant.com](http://nghixuanrestaurant.com)

## Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy

Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.

**160 Pasteur, D1**  
3827 7131  
www.quananngon.com.vn  
8am - 10pm

### Papaya Restaurant 🍷 **Of's Pick**

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

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

### Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.

**4 Phan Chu Trinh, D1**  
3822 2788  
6am - 10pm

### Pho 24

PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.

**71-73 Dong Khoi, D1**  
3825 7505

### Propaganda Bistro

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

**21 Han Thuyen, D1**  
3822 9048  
www.facebook.com/Propaganda-Saigon

### Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

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

**17a Ngo Van Nam, D1**  
3829 1515  
(deliveries: 3602 2241 or 091 400 8835)

### Quan An Ngon

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

**138 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1**  
3827 9666  
www.quanngon138.com

### Royal Revolving Restaurant

The Royal Revolving Restaurant is a unique restaurant experience. Experience stunning views of the city while you spin around in the sky. The restaurant offers more than 50 Hong Kong inspired dishes and a bar that serves coffee and cocktails.

**9th Floor, 12D Cach Mang Thang Tam, D1**  
3823 2232

### Saigon Vegan

Saigon Vegan is located in a casual and inviting space with high ceilings, dark wood tables, and lots of natural light.

Guests can choose from over 100 vegan dishes, all of which are either soy or vegetable based.

**378/3 Vo Van Tan, D3**  
3834 4473

### SH Garden restaurant

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

**4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, D1**  
6680 0188  
shgarden.com.vn

### Song Ngu

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

**70 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1**  
3832 5017

### Temple Club

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

**29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1**  
3829 9244  
templeclub.com.vn

### Thanh Nien Restaurant

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

**11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1**  
3822 5909  
www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien

### Thang Bom Quan

Serves hot pot and special style BBQ.

**49 Pho Duc Chinh, D1**

### Tib Restaurant

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

**187 Hai Ba Trung, D3**  
3829 7242  
www.tibrestaurant.com.vn

### Tin Nghia

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

**9 Tran Hung Dao, D1**  
3821 2538

### Vietnam House

Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine. This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.

**93-95 Dong Khoi, D1**  
3829 1623  
www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

## (other) asian

### Crawfish King

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

**63 Truong Dinh, D1**  
6272 7888  
www.facebook.com/crawfishking63  
7am - 12am

### Lion City

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

**45 Le Anh Xuan, D1**  
3823 8371  
www.lioncityrestaurant.com

### Little Manila

An eatery with indoor and outdoor seating serving your craving for Filipino cuisine such as the famous adobo, pansit (dried noodles), breakfast combinations like Longsilog (combination of longanisa (Filipino sausage), egg and fried rice), Tosilog (tocino, egg and fried rice) and more.

**Ground Floor, Citiplaza, 230 Nguyen Trai, D1**

**S2-1 Hung Vuong 2, Phu My Hung, D7**

**5410 0812**

### Long Monaco

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

**Ground Floor, Etown 1**  
**364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh**  
www.longmonaco.com.vn

## western/international

### 27 Grill

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

**Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1**  
www.chillsaigon.com

### Al Fresco's

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

**16 Nguyen Thi Nghia, D1**  
3926 0036  
www.alfrescosgroup.com  
8.30am - 11pm

### Au Parc

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

**23 Han Thuyen, D1**  
3829 2772

### Bahja

Algerian restaurant serving north African delights such as couscous, tajines and desserts. Unique Mechoui set dinner is a popular choice and perfect for groups (available with prior notice).

**87-89-91 Ho Tung Mau, D1**  
**093 787 2010** (French, Arabic, English, Finnish)

### Ben Style 🍷 **Of's Pick**

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

**302 Co Bac, D1**  
**090 691 2730**

### Beirut

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

**74/13D Hai Ba Trung, D1**  
www.beirut.com.vn

### Black Cat Restaurant

Originally envisioned as a fast food Vietnamese sandwich place, Black Cat Saigon now serves international food with a focus on burgers, most famously its "Big Cheese" featuring 500g of beef.

**13 Phan Van Dat, D1**  
3829 2955  
www.blackcatsaigon.com

### Chuck's

Chuck's offers American comfort food like pancakes, omelets, burritos, fries, tacos, burgers and hotdogs.

**27 Tran Nhat Duat, D1**

### Crab Pot

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

**65 Pham Ngoc Thach 6, D3**

### Gartenstadt

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

**34 Dong Khoi, D1**  
3822 3623

### Hog's Breath Café

An Australian family diner and bar concept. Renowned for quality steaks, seafood and other western fare served in an informal environment. Smoke-free indoors.

**Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, D1**  
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

### Jaspas Wine & Grill 🍷 **Of'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**



## MEXICAN RESTAURANT

### Khoi Thom



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

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3  
www.khoithom.com



### La Fenetre Soleil

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

4 Ly Tu Trong, DI

### La Habana



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

6 Cao Ba Quat, DI  
www.lahabana-saigon.com

### Ly Club



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

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

### Margherita



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

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, DI

### Market 39

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

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan  
3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon

### Mogambo Bar & Grill



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

50 Pasteur, DI  
3825 1311

### MZ Wine & Restaurant

MZ has a wine cellar featuring wines from the Old World to the New World. The restaurant serves Asian and Western cuisine with beefsteak and lamb dishes as the most suggested ones. Piano and violin artists perform daily from 7:30pm-9:30pm.

Special arrangements like a live band and decorations are available upon requests.

56A Bui Thi Xuan, DI  
3925 5258  
www.m-zing.com

### 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, DI

### Parkview

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

New World Saigon Hotel

76 Le Lai Street, DI

3822 8888

saigon@newworldhotels.com

www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

### Pasha



Serving Turkish and Mediterranean cuisine, the kitchen is headed by Chef Ismet with over 30 years of experience in 25 restaurants.

25 Dong Du, DI

www.pasha.com.vn

### Quán Ut Ut

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

168 Vo Van Kiet, DI

www.quanutut.com

3914 4500

### Reflections

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

Level 3, Caravelle Hotel, 19-23 Lam Son Square, DI

### Saffron 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

51 Hai Ba Trung, DI

382 48358

### Shri

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

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

www.shri.vn

### Skewers



An open-air kitchen at the front of the restaurant and a small cigar lounge upstairs set off the atmosphere and mark this venue as one with a unique presence in Saigon. The purely Mediterranean

cuisine is appropriately authentic.

9A Thai Van Lung, DI  
www.skewers-restaurant.com

### Subway



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

121 Ho Tung Mau, DI

3914 4118

### The Elbow Room



The Elbow Room on Pasteur is an American-style bistro with a long bar, exposed brickwork, white walls, and whirring ceiling fans - making for a casual, contemporary space with an international vibe. More of a diner than a restaurant, Elbow shoots at a cool, relaxed atmosphere, pleasantly decorating its warmly-lit walls with evocative black & white photos and subtle lighting.

52 Pasteur, DI

www.elbowroom.com.vn

### The Hungry Pig

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

144 Cong Quynh, DI

### The Legends Bar & Grill

A drinking and dining destination in Saigon's backpackers' area offering Tex-Mex specialties like nachos, fajitas, burritos, among others, soup, seafood, kebabs, salads, burgers and sandwiches, steaks, chicken dishes, and more. Wide selection of drinks complement the food.

236 Bui Vien, DI

### 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, DI

### Xu Restaurant Lounge



The venue is well-known for its pork wontons, bun cha, seared beef crostinis, bo luc lac diced beef and 'Xu-style' chicken rice. Xu is an elegant venue that works as a restaurant or a high-class bar for the upper echelons.

71-75 Hai Ba Trung, DI

www.xusaigon.com

### Zest Bistro & Cafe

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

5 Ton Duc Thang, DI

3911 5599

### Zoom Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

169A Bui Vien, DI

3920 3897

7am - 2am daily

# >>The List District 2

## BAKERIES

### Sweet and Sour

Offers custom made cakes, pies, tarts, brownies and cupcakes. It welcomes visitors to an open kitchen where they

can watch and be a part of what makes its sweets special. Provides catering for special occasions.

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

### Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate

39 Thao Dien, D2

6296 0066

voelker-vietnam.com

## BARS

### McSorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.

4 Thao Dien, D2

3519 4659

www.mcsorleys.vn

### Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.

18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2

### Buddha Bar

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

7 Thao Dien, D2

3744 2080

## CAFES

### Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

At Agnes Cafe they offer fresh coffee, smoothies and juices along with a delicious breakfast and lunch menu.

This quaint and cozy cafe is a perfect place to meet up with friends or just relax to get away from the bustling traffic outside. They offer free delivery.

11A-B Thao Dien, D2

### Shalom Coffee

Shalom Coffee is available for all your coffee and chocolate needs, warm snacks, cold refreshments, breakfasts and lunches.

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2

www.coffeeshalom.com

## RESTAURANTS

### FRENCH

### Le Bacoulos

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

13 Tong Huu Dinh, D2

3519 4058

www.bacoulos.com

### Gastro'home

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service.

100 Xuan Thuy, D2. 6281 9830

### La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick



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

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2

3898 2082

www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn

\*Reviewed in Oi March 2013

## Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.

**18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2**  
3744 4585

## INDIAN

### Ashoka

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

**33 Tong Huu Dinh (Street 53), D2**  
3744 4177  
www.ashokavietnam.com

## ITALIAN

### Pendolasco – Thao Dien

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

**36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2**  
62532888  
www.pendolasco.vn

### Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.

**43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132**

## JAPANESE

### Tama River–Japanese Restaurant

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

**14E1 Thao Dien, D2**  
3744 6782

### Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu.

**River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2**  
6683 5308

## THAI

### Baan Thai

Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs. Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.

**55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453**  
www.baanthai-anphu.com

### Jasmine Thai

Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.

**85 Quoc Huong, D2**  
3519 0038

## VIETNAMESE

### Baniam Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant.

Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast.

**River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2**

### Frangipani Hoa Su

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

**26 Le Van Mien, D2**  
frangipani.restobar@gmail.com

## WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

### Boathouse 🍷 OI's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.

**40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790**  
www.boathouse.com.vn

### Blu Bar and Grill

Blu Bar provides a wide range of Asian and Mediterranean specialties for breakfast, lunch, and dinner along with many unique beverage options.

**53 Vo Truong Toan, D2**  
3744 4111  
7am - 11pm

### Blue Crab 🍷 OI's Pick

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

**49 Quoc Huong, D2**  
3744 2008  
www.bluecrabsaigon.com

### Mekong Merchant

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.

**23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713**

### Snap Cafe

By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, foosball, and more.

Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large open-plan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie screenings.

**32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2**  
35194532  
www.snap.com.vn

### The Deck

Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.

**38 Nguyen U Di, D2**  
www.thedecksaigon.com

### Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.

**NO.1, Street 2nd, D2**  
www.vinovietnam.com

# >>The List District 7

## BAKERIES

### Dunkin' Donuts

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

**59 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**

### Savouré Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season.

**Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
5412 2469  
www.savourébakery.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**

### Ruby Soho

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

**552-1 Sky Garden 2, D7**

### Sala Beer

Enjoy Asian and European dishes at Sala Beer and choose and enjoy more than 50 famous beer brands from around the world.

**Ground floor White House Hotel**  
**R2-25 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Phuoc 1, D7**

### The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

**R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7**

## CAFES

### Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

**105 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
www.baskinrobbins.vn

### Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

**SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7**  
www.budsicecream.com.vn

### Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf serves some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes.

**Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
www.coffeebean.com.vn

### FB Deli Coffee

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

**SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7**

### The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

**SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**

### MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent

Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

**101 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
www.mof.com.vn/en

## NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC, The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular mudpies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.

**107 Ton Dat Tien, D7**

### S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.

**SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
5411 1186

## CHINESE

### Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant

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

**559-561, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7**

### Ming Dynasty

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

**23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7**

## INDIAN

### Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandooris.

**S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7**  
5410 1989

### Bollywood

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

**Free Delivery (All Phu My Hung)**  
22131481 - 22450096

0938069433  
Hotline: 0906357442(English)  
bollywoodvietnam@gmail.com  
facebook: bollywoodvietnamindiancuisine (for complete menu)

## Spice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any palette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood.  
**56-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7**  
**093 841 6551**  
[www.namaste-india.com.vn](http://www.namaste-india.com.vn)

## ITALIAN

### La Cucina

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

### Sarpino's

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

### Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

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

## JAPANESE

### Osaka Ramen

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

## THAI

### Nathalie's Phu My Hung

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

### Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

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

## VIETNAMESE

### Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.  
**RI-72 Hung Gia I, Bui Bang Doan, D7**  
**5410 2027**

## Com Tam Ba Son

Com Tam Ba Son, Ba Son offers authentic Vietnamese broken rice (BBQ) and hu tieu sadec. The 35 year old recipes are handed down for more than 3 generations. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.  
**SB10-1 Nguyen Luong Bang, Nam Khang, Phu My Hung, Q7**  
**5413 3122**

## ASIAN

### Cham Charm

Cham is more like a museum than a dining venue, filled with the artefacts and sculpture of the Champa people and with gorgeous artworks and colourful hangings on the walls. The upstairs area is a wide-open terrace with plenty of tables for a more relaxing atmosphere. The cuisine is pan-Asian.  
**2 Phan Van Chuong, D7**

## WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

### Berru 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

### Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.  
**107 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
**3841 3883**  
[www.boomerang.com.vn](http://www.boomerang.com.vn)

### Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.  
**02 Phan Van Chuong, Phu My Hung New Urban, D7**

### Deutsches Eck / German Corner

The six month old restaurant is fast becoming known for its sausage, beer, and their Schweins Haxe or pork knuckles (served with white cabbage and mashed potatoes). A number of German beer to select from including Bitburger, Koestritzer Black Beer, Benediktiner Weisse, HB-Hofbrau Weisse, Schwarzbrau Exquisit, and Schwarzbrau Weisse.  
**A001 Nguyen Van Linh St., Phu My Hung, D7**  
**54106695**

### El Camino

A small bar & restaurant situated in the heart of Phu My Hung. Relaxing outdoor saloon featuring inexpensive Spanish tapas and small plates from gourmet ingredients. Affordable selection of Spanish & French wines.  
**137 SB-02 Khu My Phat, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
**5412 4641, 3pm - midnight**  
[www.facebook.com/elcaminovietnam](http://www.facebook.com/elcaminovietnam)

### El Gaucho

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

## Harry Casual

A sports bar, with pool tables, dart boards and satellite sport. There is also live music and a wide food and drink menu to choose from.  
**RI/49, Hung Gia 3, Tan Phong Ward, D7**

## Le Taj

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

## Salt & Pepper

Salt & Pepper Restaurant mainly serves Italian dishes.  
**103 Ton Dat Tien, D7**  
[www.saltpepper.com.vn](http://www.saltpepper.com.vn)

## Scott & Binh's Restaurant 🍷 Oi's Pick

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

## VIVA! Tapas Bar & Grill

Specializes in tapas dishes like Albondigas (meatballs in tomato sauce) and Gambas pil-pil (spicy chilli shrimp), priced individually at less than VND50,000 per plate. The restaurant is furnished in an eclectic style, from the modern blue glass and stainless steel bar, to the traditional wine barrels that serve as tables.  
**R4-28 Hung Gia 4, Tan Phong, Phu My Hung, D7**  
**5410 6721**

## supermarkets

### 100%

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

### Annam Gourmet

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

### An Phu Supermarket

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

### Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.  
**No. 17, Street 12, D2**  
[www.classicfinefoods.com](http://www.classicfinefoods.com)



## Le Cochon D'or

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

## Metro

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

## Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.  
**554-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7**

## wine & liquor

### Bacchus Corner

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

### Beer Plaza

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

### Boutique 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, D1**

### Shop Thai Duong

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

### The Warehouse

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

### Vinifera

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

# Travel & Leisure

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IMAGE BY PIERS BIRTWISTLE







# Steppe by Steppe

The roaming lifestyle

TEXT BY **FRANK CULLISON** IMAGES BY **PIERS BIRTWISTLE** ([WWW.PIERSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM](http://WWW.PIERSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM))

STRETCHING OUT FROM across the vast desolate Gobi Desert in the south, through the seemingly endless grassy steppes of the central plateaus towards the magnificent snow capped peaks of the Altai Mountain range of the northwest, this is Mongolia, “The Land of the Blue Sky,” a land of extremes and contrasts. Although ranked as the 19th largest country in the world at about three times the size of Spain, Mongolia has the lowest population density on earth, with only 1.77 people per square kilometer.

Traditionally Mongolians have been pastoral nomads, living in small white round yurts, moving seasonally from one place to another as they pasture their herds. Today, about half of the population still practices this nomadic lifestyle. Independent, self-reliant and open-minded, Mongolians tend to be intensely curious about the world around them, with a deep connection to nature. Family, elders and traditions are

highly valued in Mongolian society, and Mongolian hospitality is legendary.

Mongolians are fiercely proud of their connection to Genghis Khan, the 12th century founder of the Mongol empire. His cult status has surged dramatically in recent years with his name being used everywhere: on streets, squares, airports and even many commercial products such as vodka and beer. After landing at Genghis Khan international airport in Ulaanbaatar, many visit the statue of Genghis Khan in front of the parliament building located at Genghis Khan square in the city center.

Traveling in Mongolia is an adventure, with few highways or roads, so you must rely on GPS or your own navigational skills as you set off on your journey. Gazing into the horizon you can’t help but feel awed by the stunning beauty of the deep blue sky contrasted with the infinite emerald ocean of grass or the vast expanse of sand. ■



**Gazing into the horizon you can't help but feel awed by the stunning beauty of the deep blue sky contrasted with the vast ocean of sand**



# Become a Warrior King

Discovering the beauty of Ghana while volunteering

TEXT & IMAGES BY JONATHAN REBOURS



THE 4X4 TRUNDLES along the dirt path strewn with rocks, the odd shoe or tire lining the route underneath blossoming orange trees. Austere mud houses, primitive graffiti and obscure parliament benches where locals hang out and the obligatory spot where beer is sold - these symbols typify the community of northern Ghana - a red striped land of dusty fields devoid of moisture but blooming with possibility.

A UK government development project brought me and four other volunteers here to West Africa for three months. We witnessed the immense beauty of Africa, the debilitating poverty and the beneficial development work being done.

Situated between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, Ghana (meaning "Warrior King") sits underneath the desert sands in Sub-Saharan Africa with a stretch of coast nicknamed "The Gold Coast" by the Portuguese. There are still remains of the colonial European forts and architecture dotted along the south coast, however Ghana, the first African

nation to gain independence from colonial Britain, is a country very much standing on its own feet.

That is not to say it doesn't have its fair share of problems. It has two seasons, a rainy and a dry and most of the economy is based around agriculture during the wet season. Much of the population in the northern part of the country depend on the rain for their year-round livelihood, and if there is a poor harvest then that is simply tough luck. The poverty is noticeable everywhere you turn, from the state of the roads to the mud-built houses to the blind beggars defying the intense sun.

Yet, there are gems amongst the dust. Three hours from Tamale, capital of the Northern Region, is Mole National Park, the biggest nature reserve and safari park in Ghana. All around the central Mole Motel - a pleasant hotel enjoying monopoly inside the park - are acres of lush vegetation stretching to the horizon.

We took a private *tro* (minibus) there

from Tamale. The guidebook warnings of a terrible road are unfounded - the two and a half hour trip was pleasant enough. On arrival elephants were bathing in the nearby watering hole and huge eagles were circling overhead. The hotel staff were helpful in organizing our tours and making our stay as comfortable as possible.

For roughly USD75 you can stay in a comfortable air-conditioned room, go on an open top jeep safari, convene with elephants, antelopes, baboons and many species of birds and enjoy Ghanaian and international dishes in the restaurant. The jeep safari takes roughly two hours and you are pretty much guaranteed to see one or more of the 400 or so African elephants that roam within the safety of the park. It has got to be the best value safari in Africa.

## Working in Development

We were based in Bolgatanga, three hours north of Tamale, the capital of the Upper East Region where over 70 percent of the



people were unemployed in 2010. Incomes in the Upper East are traditionally based in and around agriculture; however varying environmental factors mean that this is an increasingly unreliable source of money. TradeAID ([www.tradeaidgh.org](http://www.tradeaidgh.org)), the NGO who we were working with, seeks to address this by promoting alternative revenue streams by facilitating the trade of the local craftspeople - which includes anything from the basket weaving that Bolgatanga is so well known for to leather work and traditional 'smocks' - great woven garments worn usually for special occasions.

Working with smock makers, fabric and basket weavers and craftswomen with disabilities, it's easy to see the benefit of development projects in people's lives. In the couple of months we've been here, we've seen the profits of the

craftswomen with disabilities grow week by week because of business planning and monitoring training we've introduced. The basket weaving groups working with TradeAID also enjoy 265 percent more profit compared with selling at local markets. Poverty reduction can be sustainable, and development organizations like TradeAID are making it happen.

### Ancient Beliefs

An area 15km outside Bolgatanga steeped in ancient beliefs is Tongo Hills. A private taxi will make the return trip for about USD10 and even the journey itself is worth it as the rolling hills unfold over the dusty savannah.

The ancient shrine is the focal point of a trip to Tongo. Reminiscent of the vision of *The Lion King*, a ledge overlooks beautiful plains and the White Volta River far

down below where the local community's spiritual shrine is positioned. It's a peaceful spot where everyone entering must remove their shirts - men and women alike.

Locals consult the shrine through the medium of a soothsayer, sacrificing varying sized animals based on the shrine's instruction and the gravity of the problem they're trying to solve.

The nearby Chief's Palace is a labyrinth containing his 18 wives and all their offspring, the mud walls adorned with bones of sacrifices to their ancestors. It's not unusual in these parts of Ghana for men to take multiple wives, but even locals in Bolgatanga laugh that the Tongo Chief's 18 is excessive!

A tour of the area and an invite into the Chiefs Palace will cost you a few dollars for a guide and although vegetarian tourists may be slightly uncomfortable with the



## **Ghana is not a country in need of handouts. It's a place to be admired and cherished – with lessons to be learnt from the locals' laissez-faire attitude to life**

remains of animal sacrifices strewn around, the people are accommodating and happy for you to snap photos.

### **Beach Break Musings**

Although there is still much development work being undertaken, Ghana is one of the most developed of the West African nations in terms of political stability and wealth. The south of the country enjoys relative prosperity and has reduced unemployment figures drastically over the past 20 years. It is definitely a country moving forward and with increased tourism will continue to do so.

One such tourist destination is Busua Beach on the south coast, further east than its larger and more hectic counterpart, Cape Coast. Busua is an arching bay with one strip of five to 10 establishments and one tiny high street, a calming paradise set amongst the forests on the headland. It's reachable from the capital Accra by *tro* in a few hours or a gruelling 12 hours by bus from the northern region towns of Bolgatanga and Tamale.

The arduous journey from Bolgatanga was worth it as the water is warm and the tide barely changes, a topaz colored ocean under the African sun. Varying hotels

range from a couple of basic beach huts where you may be woken by a monkey through the window to two comfortable hotels, all ranging from about USD4 per night to USD20.

Black Star Surf Club provides the entertainment with music blaring and monthly surf competitions for locals and tourists alike. In the interests of impartiality, tourists visiting Busua may be asked to officially judge the surf contest, being plied with beer for the service. They also organize bi-weekly jungle parties with guest DJs providing the soundtrack for the jungle clearing half a kilometre from the beach.

For those who want to enjoy peace and tranquillity, it's only a short walk down the deserted beach to find a quieter spot along the coast. You can explore the rocky headland and arrive at untouched coves, taking in the scenery while musing on the disparity of a country so seemingly divided.

While Ghana certainly doesn't evoke the images of commercials where starving children wither away, there is still an obvious need for development. The silver lining is that there is much being done, and not by huge organizations bearing down on

Africans, telling them what to do.

The majority of the projects we encountered were organised by local people, building local enterprises to assist their communities. Take Samuel for example, a nurse at Afrikids Medical Centre who uses his income to fund his own orphanage. Or Nicholas, the Executive Director of TradeAID, who began his work with craftspeople in Bolgatanga over 14 years ago and is now one of the most revered men in the community.

Ghana is not a country in need of handouts. It's a place to be admired and cherished – with lessons to be learnt from the locals' laissez-faire attitude to life. Even with over 70 percent poverty in the Upper East the people are more than happy to go out of their way to help you, traversing vast markets to find the things on your list, chasing you half a kilometre through town to give you your change and the simple, constant smiles and shouts of "You are welcome!"

That is the overarching memory to be taken from the northern region – the wide smiles and giddy laughs. Even when times are hard it's all the more reason to smile, laugh and look to the sky. And that is why Ghana is definitely a country on the up. ■



# On the Dock of the Bay

One man escapes frenetic Saigon to find serenity on a remote resort in Nha Trang

TEXT BY **ROBERT STOCKDILL** & IMAGES PROVIDED BY **AN LAM VILLAS NINH VAN BAY**

RECLINING IN A SPEEDBOAT looking back at the jetty I watch the two An Lam Villas Ninh Van Bay staff who greeted me at the mainland check-in facility waving to me. It's as if they represent the real world saying goodbye as I am whisked across the bay to the isolated resort which will be home for two short days.

Some 15 minutes later, more immaculately groomed, smiling staff are standing at the end of another jetty. The resort is built amidst enormous granite boulders and natural fauna, on the shores of Ninh Van Bay. Inaccessible by road, it is serenely beautiful, silent, relaxing and safe - everything Ho Chi Minh City is not.

From the moment the shuttle turned off the north-south highway onto a short, narrow road to the waterside check-in

16km north of Nha Trang, the pampering experience begins: refreshing towels, a welcoming Champagne or freshly squeezed juice and the obligatory paperwork, including a checklist of any personal dietary requirements or preferences, hints at any recreational activities I might wish to indulge in and how discreet I prefer my butler service.

Unfamiliar as I am with butler etiquette, given my distinctly commoner upbringing, I tick "discreet." Phu, who greets me at the pier and leads me to my first room, turns out to redefine the term.

The room is a Hill Rock Villa, with a peep of the bay. There's a double bathroom opening onto a private pool, long enough for these old bones to manage three strokes per length. There are indoor and outdoor

showers and a bath resting before a large window overlooking a private garden.

Up a short flight of stairs is a lounge with a fully stocked wine cooler, a mini-bar fridge, espresso machine and twin sofas - yet open on all four sides so one feels part of the wilderness. More stairs lead to the bedroom, the only room air-conditioned (and the only one that needs it), with an enormous bed veiled in a flowing white mosquito net and an expansive deck for an in-room breakfast, overlooking the pool and the bush. Here, there is a satellite-connected TV for diehard city folk. (There is also free WiFi and good mobile phone reception throughout the resort, despite its remoteness).

An Lam Villas Ninh Van Bay is no cookie cutter Asian beach resort. The



whole concept is based on respecting the ecological hinterland, celebrating Vietnam's food and culture, and service. There are 33 villas, their guests looked after by a 200-strong army of staff to ensure no one wants for anything after they set foot ashore.

Chief Operating Officer Antoine Sirot hopes guests experience Vietnam "in the architecture, our food and the music." You can take a class in understanding the origins of Vietnamese coffee and how to make a great *cafe sua da*. There are cooking classes, yoga lessons and the personal butlers will happily share with guests the country's culture and history.

The staff at An Lam are as memorable as the setting. Everywhere I went I was greeted genuinely by the team, no matter what their role. That, explains Sirot, is no accident. "Our staff are not trained like robots to do this and do that; they are guided. Their characters and personalities will shine through. We motivate the staff to make the guests happy, not make management happy."

As I enjoy an astonishingly delicious five-course Italian set dinner on my first night, that character shines through. Phu appears, like a friendly apparition from nowhere - he tends to do this the entire trip; I never see him arrive or disappear. He asks about my meal and I quiz him about what it's like

working at the resort. Conversation comes freely and naturally.

The next morning while I soak in my private pool, I am acutely aware the only sounds are the chattering of geckos, invisible in the high ceilings, and tall bamboo trunks whispering in the breeze. I cannot hear or see any other guests. Butterflies of many colors dawdle by, skimming over the trembling water surface. I might as well be in the middle of paradise. Oh wait, I am.

### Standing on Its Own

Later, after an hour-long trek through the bush to an enormous granite boulder from which you can see for miles across the island-dusted bay, and a subsequent 45 minute neck and shoulder massage in the onsite spa - I am taken to my next room, a Lagoon Villa. This is a larger, single story bungalow, with all of the same facilities as the other, but with a gorgeous deep bath carved from an enormous rock.

The villas all range in size from 80sqm to more than 150sqm. They were built around and into the existing terrain: on the hillside, no two are the same due to the bold rock formations in the hills behind the resort.

The resort is as self-sufficient as possible: it pipes its own water from natural springs in the hills, generates its own electricity,

grows many of its own vegetables (the rest are farmed organically in Dalat), and even has its own lobster farm.

On rare occasions, trekkers might spot an endangered monkey with a white face and tail tip - a species now so rare it can only be found on this peninsula. But they're shy of humans and won't come too close. One morning, a mischievous squirrel augmented an avian dawn chorus outside my villa one morning. There are also blue headed salamanders, lizards, wild deer and pigs. But generally, wildlife is a rare sight.

Guests here typically stay seven or eight days on average, but the record is a German couple who, for three years running, have escaped the northern hemisphere winter for three months.

After two glorious nights' sleep, the largest, most filling dinners and breakfasts I can recall, endless smiles and fresh air I've not experienced in years, it's sadly time to go. As I sit on the back of the boat looking back at An Lam Villas Ninh Van Bay's jetty, eight staff stand and wave in unison, farewelling me back to the real world.

*An Lam Villas Ninh Van Bay  
Tan Thanh Hamlet, Ninh Ich Commune,  
Ninh Hoa District, Nha Trang  
(05) 8362 4964  
rsvn.nvb@anlam.com  
www.anlam.com*

# Pack Like a Pro - Part 1

The joys of traveling with only carry-on



Having visited nearly 60 countries as a travel writer and award-winning photographer, **James Pham** blogs about his adventures at [FlyCarausFly.com](http://FlyCarausFly.com)



I LOVE TRAVELING but hate packing. Isn't that how everyone feels? Before every major trip, I used to have those anxious moments of wondering what I'd forgotten, what I'm bringing that I'll probably never use and whether my hotel is going to have (fill in the blank) so I won't have to bring one. Over the years, though, I've gotten much better at packing to the point where it's more of a nuisance than anything else.

I recently talked to Ali Garland, author of the newly released e-book, *Packing Made Simple: A Simple Guide to Packing Light* (available on Amazon). Ali is an American expat living in Germany and shares travel tips at [www.Travel-Made-Simple.com](http://www.Travel-Made-Simple.com). Having visited all seven continents before her 30th birthday, she probably knows what she's talking about. While the book is aimed at novice travelers, there's something for everyone.

## Carry-on vs Check in

Ali advocates for traveling light, taking carry-on only if at all possible. "It's

cheaper, less stressful, lighter and faster," she writes. I'm definitely on board with carry-on only whenever possible. With legacy airlines going the way of budget airlines, checked baggage fees can be a substantial part of your travel costs. When weight isn't an issue, I love my wheeled backpacks (Lemoore Alpha by Tumi, VND 17.38 million at 4-6 Le Loi, D1) — easy to sling over my shoulder when roads are rough but great to wheel around on long walks to the gate. They also look more structured, which I like, meaning I won't feel out of place taking it with me to a business meeting or to a nice hotel. However, "it won't fit you as comfortably as a traditional backpack because it needs to be more structured. You'll have a harder, flatter surface against your back, so it will feel uncomfortable much quicker," Ali warns. "If you decide this is the type of carry-on bag you want, try on the bag as a backpack to see how it fits. Make sure you can't feel the handle or wheels digging into your back. Check how it functions as a wheeled bag to

make sure you're comfortable with that as well."

Probably a more comfortable, if not stylish, choice are the larger outdoorsy backpacks. While you can definitely fit more in and they can take a pounding, I've never been a fan. Maybe it feels too much like you're carting around your whole life on your back. There's also the stigma that goes along with them. I asked Ali about her preferred carry-on luggage: "I'm sure some people do judge me for being a backpacker, after all there are a few awful backpackers out there who make the rest of us look bad. But I've never really experienced any hostility or anything like that. Most of the people I've encountered while traveling in Southeast Asia have been incredibly friendly, and even if they were wondering if I'd turn out to be some obnoxious backpacker, they never let that show. As for the backpack itself, many people were surprised at how small my bag actually was and how little I was carrying with me."

## CARRY-ON ESSENTIALS



### What to Pack in Your Carry-on

The simple answer is anything you wouldn't want lost, damaged or stolen. In addition to the obvious medication, identification, money, credit cards and electronics, Ali adds sentimental items, a change of clothes, entertainment, snacks and tissues. To this list, I'd like to add cords for your electronic devices. I've been fortunate in having only lost (more like delayed) luggage twice in all my travels, but the worst feeling is having all your devices but none of the chargers or cords for them. I was stranded in Barcelona for almost 24 hours with only my carry-on and the USD50 reimbursement for delayed baggage wouldn't have gone very far in buying a change of clothes and cords which may not even be covered under the airlines' definition of "essential items".

Traveling involves a lot of waiting: waiting at the airport (after some close calls, I always arrive extra early and either spend the time working or catching up on reading), as you're traveling on a plane or bus, waiting for traveling companions... So I definitely think 'entertainment' is a necessary carry-on item. With tablets now, you can have music, reading material, movies and the internet all in one place. When I'm about to go on a long trip, I start saving new episodes of my favorite TV shows, books that I've been wanting to read, even

**When I'm about to go on a long trip, I start saving new episodes of my favorite TV shows, books that I've been wanting to read, even web pages (using read-it-later apps like Pocket or Instapaper) to my iPad**

web pages (using read-it-later apps like Pocket or Instapaper) to my iPad. With that, I actually look forward to wait times because I get to do some of my favorite things.

### Managing Your Luggage in Transit

Chances are you're not the only one who's decided to go carry-on only. With increasing checked baggage fees, delays in

retrieving luggage and the real possibility of loss, more and more people are choosing to bring (often oversized) bags onto planes. Ali recommends trying to board as early in the boarding process as you can to make sure you have room for your bag, especially if it's at the high end of the size limit.

Another great suggestion is to think ahead about which items you might want to use while in flight. Ali says "these should be packed in the bag that you put under the seat in front of you, that way they're easier to access... Trying to pull things out of your luggage once it's in the overhead compartment can be a big hassle. Sometimes (like during meals and turbulence) you won't even be able to get to the overhead compartment. You will have even less access to the overhead compartment if you have a window seat." I always carry a small tote bag in my carry-on (the laundry bags from nice hotels work well) to store just the things I'll need on the flight, including passport and pen for filling out forms and valuables (considering how much theft has been in the news recently by passengers on airlines serving Vietnam).

*Stay tuned for next month's column when we'll talk about how to pack light with checked bags including the fold vs roll vs bundle wrap debate!* ■

# Masterpieces

Getting lacquered in Old Hoi An



A professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*, Bridget March specializes in urban landscapes and aims to reveal the hidden treasures of city life and small town cultures through her illustrations. Bridget is currently offering art classes and sketching tours in Hoi An until the summer. For more of Bridget's work including news of her upcoming book visit [brushwithasia.blogspot.com](http://brushwithasia.blogspot.com).

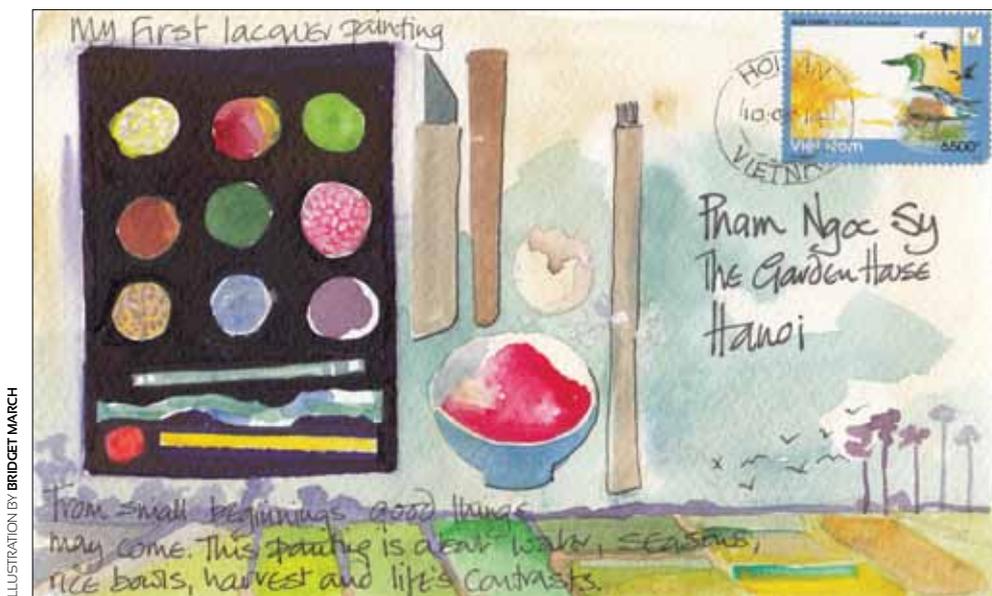


ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

FOR THE PAST seven months, I have been painting and drawing in Hoi An. I have watched the change of seasons and witnessed the drama that major weather events bring to the lives of people who inhabit this peaceful corner of Vietnam. Since October a rice crop has been planted, filled the fields with fluorescent green and then turned to yellow ochre to be harvested under the baking sun of late April. The town that had been yellow and brown through the winter months is now splashed with vivid bougainvillea at every street corner.

The art galleries that line the streets also add splashes of bright color. The warm, contrasting tones and graphic images of the lacquer paintings beckon you into the brightly lit interiors to marvel at familiar images of Vietnam depicted on these almost irresistible shiny panels.

Lacquer painting was a mystery to me so I asked a local artist, Tran Huy Chien, to explain how to tell the difference between a cheap reproduction painting that may be imported from China, and an original work produced by a Vietnamese artist. He replied by inviting

me to learn the art of lacquer painting at his studio. This was an invitation I could not resist.

I arrived, full of anticipation, at a sunny studio at his home in one of the quiet neighborhoods that characterize Hoi An. Chien had laid out a table with all the traditional tools a lacquer artist needs. There was a pre-prepared, charcoal gray lacquer board, a box of small chisels for carving the board, a wicker basket full of translucent shards of duck egg shells and a large clam shell lined with mother of pearl. Two tins of lacquer were positioned next to a sheet of thick plate glass where we would mix colors. On the shelf under the table were boxes, bowls and bags of raw powdered pigment: scarlet, ultramarine, magenta, violet, gamboges, viridian, cobalt and sienna to name only a few.

We transferred my design onto the board using chalk dust. Next, I carved out my first circle to create a shallow well into which I would inlay crushed egg shells on a bed of tacky lacquer. I was completely engrossed.

Over a period of two weeks I applied more egg shell, some mother of pearl,

and layer upon layer of thin lacquer between slivers of reflective silver, gold and copper leaf. This layering enables light to move through the colors and adds a depth that is quite magical.

Between each coat, the lacquer must be left to cure in a humid environment (which, handily, is the normal atmospheric condition for Vietnam). After three or four days, more gold leaf and more coats of lacquer are applied. Finally the whole picture is ground down using stones and fine abrasive papers until the surface is smooth and different layers are revealed according to the artist's design.

My first lacquer board is a marvel of alchemy and artistry that has given me a real insight into this technique and now, I really can tell the difference between the cheaper lacquer paintings and the masterpieces.

My patient teacher, Tran Huy Chien is a graduate of the Hanoi University of Fine Arts and a member of the Vietnam Association of Fine Arts who owns Dang gallery in Hoi An. You can find out more about him and his classes at [www.facebook.com/chien.huytran](http://www.facebook.com/chien.huytran). ■



# GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

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## hotels

### HO CHI MINH CITY

#### TWO STAR

##### Bali Hotel

Ideally-located for attendees to any exhibitions held at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, Bali Boutique is flash and modern in style - with a little touch of the plush thrown in for good measure.

39 - 41 Hung Phuoc Villas, D 7  
54104747

##### Cat Huy Hotel

Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D 1  
39208717

#### THREE STAR

##### EMM Hotel Saigon

The 56 air-conditioned guestrooms at EMM Hotel Saigon include laptop-compatible safes and minibars. Complimentary wireless and wired high-speed Internet access and in-room refrigerators are provided. 32-inch LED TVs are equipped with premium cable channels. All accommodations provide desks, safes, and direct-dial phones.

157 Pasteur, D3  
01663221322

##### Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.

73 Hoang Van Thai, D7  
www.ibis.com

##### Sunland Hotels

Located about 35 minutes from Tan Son Nhat Airport, Sunland is a three star hotel with 90 rooms and suites. The hotel also comprise a Sky Bar and Sun Coffee Lounge.

302-304 Vo Van Kiet, D1  
9922 3833  
www.sunlandhotel.vn

##### Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa

Three-star Tan Hai Long Hotel offers 106 rooms and suites, all boasting a view of the city and Ben Thanh Market. Its conference room can accommodate up to 110 people with modern facilities. It also houses two dining venues, the La Terrasse Restaurant and L'emotion Lounge Bar & Coffee.

14-16 Le Lai, D1  
www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn  
3827 2738

#### FOUR STAR

##### Hotel Continental Saigon

One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most

famous as the location where much of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* was written in room 214.

132-134 Dong Khoi, D 1  
3829 9201  
www.continentalsaigon.com

##### Norfolk Hotel

Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.

117 Le Thanh Ton, D 1  
3829 3415  
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

##### Novotel Saigon Centre

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

167 Hai Ba Trung, D 1  
3822 4866  
www.novotel.com

##### Park Royal Saigon Hotel

Park Royal Saigon Hotel is an ideally placed conference hotel which caters to all MICE needs. The hotel offers a wide array of banquet services and can accommodate 30 to 300 guests.

309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh  
www.parkroyalhotels.com  
FIVE STAR

##### Caravelle Hotel

Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era. Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining one of its most luxurious places to stay.

19 Lam Son Square, D 1  
3823 4999  
www.caravellehotel.com

##### Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

An international hotel located where the borders of the city's four main districts meet. The city's major commercial and entertainment area is only an 8-minute drive away.

242 Tran Binh Trong, D 5  
38397777  
www.equatorial.com/hcm

##### InterContinental Asiana Saigon

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

##### Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1 3520 9999

saigon@ihg.com  
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

##### Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

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

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D 1  
3823 3333  
www.legendssaigon.com

##### Majestic Saigon

One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.

01 Dong Khoi, D 1  
3829 5517  
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  
3844 9222  
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  
3822 8888  
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  
3925 7777  
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  
3824 1234  
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

##### Pullman

The 306-room hotel features a contemporary design, a wide range of

technological facilities, four bars and restaurants and five meeting venues. Offers signature services including Welcomer, optimal connectivity with the Connectivity by Pullman concept (free high-speed wifi throughout the hotel, Quadriga's Personal Media Network mobile application), the Co-Meeting offer for business event and functions and Fit and Spa Lounge by Pullman.

148 Tran Hung Dao, D1

##### Renaissance Riverside Hotel

A five-star hotel located in the heart of Saigon's business and entertainment district. The hotel's 336 rooms and suites offer an incredible view of the Saigon River as well as over the city. Each guest room is designed and furnished with discerning business and leisure travelers in mind. Choose a deluxe room or suite with large desk and ample lighting, in-room coffee and tea service, high speed internet, safe, well-stocked mini-bar as well as the jack bag (connectivity kit).

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1  
3822 0033

www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sgnbn-renaissance-riverside-hotel-saigon

##### Rex Hotel Saigon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.

141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1  
38292185  
www.rexhotelvietnam.com

##### Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

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  
3556 1145  
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  
3827 2828  
sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com

##### Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

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

17 Le Duan, D 1  
3824 1555  
H2077@Sofitel.com  
www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

## Windsor Plaza

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

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

## CON DAO ISLAND

### Six Senses Con Dao

\*\*\*\*\*  
True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.

Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son

## DALAT

### Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

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

Le Lai, Phuong 5, Dalat

### Blue Moon Hotel & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
Located in the heart of breathtaking Dalat, the Blue Moon Resort & Spa is designed to complement the natural beauty of the "City of Eternal Spring." Built opposite the popular and tranquil Xuan Huong Lake, Blue Moon is centrally located and convenient to Dalat's eating, shopping and entertainment spots. Much more than just a comfortable night's sleep, Blue Moon Resort & Spa invites you to experience true hospitality.

4 Phan Boi Chau, Dalat 67, Vietnam  
www.bluemoonhotel.com.vn/bluemoon2

### Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa is perched on an idyllic location overlooking Tuyen Lam lake and gently undulating hills. It has four categories of rooms, including VIP villas, all with stunningly furnished rooms, spacious balconies offering sweeping mountain and/or lake view, and subtle finishing touches.

Tuyen Lam Lake, Zone VII.2, Dalat  
(063) 383 1515  
www.dalatedensee.com

### Dalat Green City Hotel

Budget hotel in the center of Dalat. Five minutes from most major attractions in Dalat. Newly refurbished. Beautiful mountain and city views from the rooftop. Features free WiFi, TV, snack bar in all rooms. Coffee shop downstairs. Airport pickup by private car. Motorbike rental. Tour information. Laundry. Computers in lobby for public use.

172 Phan Dinh Phung, Dalat  
(063) 3827 999  
www.dalategreencityhotel.com

### Dalat Train Villa & Cafe

Located near the Dalat Train Station, the Dalat Train Villa is for short or long staying guests. The villa is a restored 2-story French colonial-era villa. Next to the villa is a French train car, which has been renovated into a bar/cafe/restaurant. Romantic venue. From the lake, take first left after Dalat Train Station.

1 Quang Trung St, Ward 9, Villa #3

## Sofitel Dalat Palace

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

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

## DANANG

### Furama Resort Danang

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Furama Resort enjoys a stunning beachfront location on one of Vietnam's finest beaches, fringed by natural pines and coconut palms. Two four-storey wings overlook the ocean on one side and a freshwater swimming lagoon and manicured tropical gardens on the others.

Trung Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

### Fusion Maia

\*\*\*\*\*  
It is the first all-pool villa-style resort in the destination and offers 87 pool suites, spa villas, and beach villas each with modern, open-plan living and private courtyard with swimming pool. Customize-your-stay options and breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store.

Trung Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

### Pullman Danang Beach Resort

\*\*\*\*\*  
Located on the stunning white sands of Bac My An beach, the friendly and modern Pullman Danang Beach Resort is an oasis of fun. It has 187 guest rooms and cottages and offers warm and genuine Vietnamese service. The resort is perfect for a family holiday or a romantic beach getaway.

Vo Nguyen Giap, Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son  
(0) 511 395 8888  
info@pullman-danang.com

## HALONG BAY

### Novotel Halong Bay

\*\*\*\*\*  
A glimpse into contemporary Vietnam with echoes of the country's intricate past through its elegant interior décor. Sturdy polished stone, glass and marble stand against the delicate Asian textures of silk, wickerwork and carved wood. With sweeping windows and large mirrors, the hotel captures panoramic views of Halong Bay and its spectacular seascapes at every turn.

Ha Long Road, Bai Chay Ward, Ha Long City  
info@novotelhalong.com.vn

### TUAN CHAU RESORT

\*\*\*\*\*  
Tuan Chau Resort is constructed in the style of classical French and modern Vietnamese architecture. This is the ideal place to find white sands, blue ocean, and the rejuvenative energy of the Vietnamese tropical sun.

Tuan Chau Island, Ha Long City

## HANOI

### Hilton Hanoi Opera

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

1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

### Intercontinental Westlake

\*\*\*\*\*  
Superbly situated on the serene waters

of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities, and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveler.

la Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi

### Sheraton Hanoi

\*\*\*\*\*  
Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden and courtyard, the hotel provides the perfect balance between tranquillity and convenience.

K5 Nghi Tam, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

### The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

\*\*\*\*\*   
Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

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

## HOI AN

### The Nam Hai

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

Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam

### Boutique Hoi An Resort

\*\*\*\*\*  
Boutique Hoi An Resort offers 82 rooms and villas, with all rooms facing the sea with private balconies. Other facilities include spa with 3 treatment rooms and 5 massage pavilions, fully-equipped gym, restaurant, lobby lounge and pool bar and conference facilities accommodating 80 guests for dinner functions and 130 guests for cocktail parties.

Group 6, Block Tan Thinh, Ward Cam An, Hoi An City  
www.boutiquehoianresort.com

## HUE

### Ana Mandara Hue

\*\*\*\*\*  
Located a scenic 15km drive from central Hue, this is spacious resort with the largest villas and rooms in the area. The property includes private pool villas, beach villas, duplex and deluxe rooms in a wide range of styles and decor designed with complete and modern facilities.

An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang

### La Residence Hotel & Spa

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

5 Le Loi, Hue

## NHA TRANG

### Evason Ana Mandara

The exclusive location affords city-centre access to Nha Trang's only

beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.

Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang

### Six Senses Ninh Van Bay

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

Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa

### Sheraton Nha Trang

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

06-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang  
05 8388 0000

## PHAN THIET

### Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

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

Mui Ne

### Muine Bay Resort

Located in the Mui Ne Bay and overlooking the Hon Lao pristine island of blue sea, Muine Bay Resort includes 103 rooms in 4-stars standard of which 32 bungalows designed and inspired by the Cham Tower.

Khu pho 14, Mui Ne Ward, Phan Thiet  
www.muinebayresort.com  
0622220222



### Novela Muine Resort & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*   
A 150-meter beach resort that offers luxurious accommodations, countless modern facilities and amenities with attentive services. A private and unique space in the heart of resort, Novela restaurant serves a daily breakfast, lunch, dinner and any other banquet with Asian and European cuisine. With two floors, guests can enjoy wining and dining and view the beautiful beach and sand hill.

96A Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ham Tien Mui Ne, Phan Thiet  
www.novelaresort.vn  
(62) 374 3456

### Princess d'Annam

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

Hon Lan, Binh Thuan  
06 2368 2222

### The Cliff Resort and Residences

Offers 128 rooms equipped with a myriad of amenities such as 3D smart TV, safe and mini bar as well as private bathroom. It boasts an extensive lap pool, a kid's pool and pool bar as well as submerged on deck swimming pool chairs. Its restaurant serves a selection of local seafood specialties and Western cuisine.

**Zone 5, Phu Hai Ward, Phan Thiet**  
[www.theciffresort-binhthuan.com](http://www.theciffresort-binhthuan.com)

### The Sailing Beach Resort

Offers a contemporary setting in sensual tropical harmony that befits its bay host. All 192 rooms, with spacious private balconies affording stunning ocean views, are scattered across tropical vegetation, ponds and rests steps from an endless beach.

**107 Ho Xuan Huong, Phan Thiet**

### Windflower Beach Boutique Hotel

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

**76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne (Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969**

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

### PHU QUOC ISLAND

#### Chen Sea Resort & Spa

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers.

**Bai Xep, Phu Quoc**

#### Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

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

**62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc**  
 07 7384 6999

#### La Veranda

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

**Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach**

#### Paris Beach Resort **Or's Pick**

Owned and managed by a friendly and hospitable French-Vietnamese woman and her French husband, the resort is located about a 15-minute taxi ride from the airport. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a private beachfront, recreation room, bicycles and a restaurant serving local and French food. Each room or bungalow has air conditioning, a mini bar, cable TV and free Wi-Fi. They also offer tours around the island.

**Cua Lap, Duong To, Phu Quoc**

### QUY NHON

#### Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam.

**Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh**

### Bai Tram Resort and Spa

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

**Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen**

### VUNG TAU

#### The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is Vietnam's first largest integrated resort and ultimately will include an 1,100-room five-star hotel, a world-class casino, restaurants, high-tech meeting space, an exclusive VIP area, as well as a variety of beach-front recreation activities. The first 541-room tower of this development opened in July 2013 with its casino including 90 live tables and 614 electronic game positions. The second 559-room tower is on track to open in 2015.

**Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District**

### cinemas & theaters



#### A O Show

A O Show is a unique blend of bamboo cirque, acrobatic acts, and theatrical visual drama.

It depicts the charming beauty of Southern Vietnamese life in villages & cities, where the richness of its culture remains despite inevitable urbanization. Live traditional music which echoes of rural work songs, scenic and lighting design makes the A O Show, which is performed at the 115-year-old historic Saigon Opera House, worth seeing when you visit Ho Chi Minh City.

**7 Cong Truong Lam Son, DI**  
[reservation@aoshowsaigon.com](mailto:reservation@aoshowsaigon.com)  
[www.aoshowsaigon.com](http://www.aoshowsaigon.com)

#### 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, DI**

#### 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 Galaxy**

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films.

**116 Nguyen Du, DI**

#### 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, DI**

#### IDECAF Drama Theatre

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

**31 Thai Van Lung, DI**

#### Saigon Opera House

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, DI**

### serviced apartments

#### Diamond Island Luxury Residences

Diamond Island Luxury Residences offers 68 fully-furnished apartments, ranging from two- to four-bedroom units with private balconies providing panoramic views of the stunning surroundings. Each apartment comes with a fully-equipped kitchen, en-suite bathrooms, separate work and living areas. Each lavish space features plush interiors, modern amenities, elegant furnishings and carefully chosen trimmings and fixtures, creating a luxurious harmony of comfort and tranquility that will have you relaxed and recharged, and functioning at peak performance.

**No 01 – Street No.104-BTT, Quarter 3, Binh Trung Tay Ward, D2**

**096 829 3388 / 3742 5678**

[www.the-ascott.com](http://www.the-ascott.com)

#### InterContinental Asiana Saigon Residences

It's a 31-floor tower with 260 rooms; the Residences offers superb panoramic views of downtown area and is part of the Kumho Asiana Plaza - the city's finest integrated complex featuring commercial, hotel, residential and a diverse choice of dining and dining outlets. They will also benefit from the preferred amenities at the InterContinental Asiana Saigon next door.

**Corner of Le Van Huu & Nguyen Du**  
 3520 8888



#### Jasmine Court

Located on a peaceful and beautiful side street off Nguyen Van Troi Boulevard, only 5 minutes from the Tan Son Nhat International Airport and 15 minutes to the city centre, this boutique property with only 12 apartments is 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. With personalized service, our warm and attentive staff will make your stay with us a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

**307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh**  
 08 3844 6639 - 092 669 9033  
[www.jasminecourt.com.vn](http://www.jasminecourt.com.vn)

#### 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, DI**

#### Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

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

**8A Nguyen Binh Kiem, DI**

**3822 8899**

[www.somerset.com/vietnam](http://www.somerset.com/vietnam)

### Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

**21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI**  
 38229197

### Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

**628C Hanoi Highway, D2**

**6255 9900**

[www.somerset.com/vietnam](http://www.somerset.com/vietnam)

### The Landmark

The Landmark features serviced apartments, offices, luxury dining, sports clubs, swimming pool at the rooftop of the building with great views of the Saigon River. It offers one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units for rent. Amenities offered include wireless broadband Internet access, 100 percent power backup, room service, maid service and laundry, 24-hour reception and airport shuttle service.

**5B Ton Duc Thang, DI**

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

### travel agencies

#### Asiana Travel Mate

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

**92-96 Nguyen Hue, DI**

#### BeenInAsia.com

Online travel in Southeast Asia. Offers you selection of best hotels and great tours. Create your own trip or we can tailor make your itinerary.

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

#### Buffalo Tours

A premium travel agency that helps travelers customize their itinerary and destination packages. From corporate to small tour packages available.

**81 Mac Thi Buoi, DI**

[www.buffalotours.com.vn](http://www.buffalotours.com.vn)

#### Exotissimo Travel

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world!

Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office.

A District 1 presence will re-open soon.

**41 Thao Dien, D2**

[www.exotissimo.com](http://www.exotissimo.com)  
[anphu@exotissimo.com](mailto:anphu@exotissimo.com)

#### Inside Asia Travel

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

**www.insideasiatravel.com**  
 3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

#### Saigon River Tour

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

**10b Ton Duc Thang, DI**

# Living

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IMAGE BY MINH CAO

## The Lady in White

Producer: Nguyen Tra My

Fashion Director: Hoang Dao

Photographer: Minh Cao

Model: Tra My Next Top Model

Makeup: Dang Minh Academy

Stylist/Hair: Huynh Kim Hien – Giau Tang

Costume: Tuan Hai

Accessories: HULOS by Huynh Hai Long – The Huy

Location: Le Domaine De Cocodo 53 Ham Nghi, Hue













# My life as... a pho cook

INTERVIEWED BY MAI NGUYEN, TRUONG MINH GIANG, CAROL NGUYEN, JOHN TRAN, DO THU HUONG IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

MY NAME'S QUYEN, and I'm 22-years-old. I've been selling *pho* for five years now. This is a traditional family business. My dad started the restaurant, and now my brothers and I are helping him run it. We're from Dong Son Village, in Nam Dinh. Nam Dinh Province is known as the birthplace of *pho*, so that's why so many restaurants say they sell "traditional Nam Dinh beef *pho*." Almost the entire population of my village sells *pho*. You may come across people selling *pho* from other villages, or even from other provinces, but at least in Hanoi it's mainly people from Dong Son. When you're making *pho*, the most important thing is the broth. Before we can sell a single bowl of *pho*, we have to cook the broth for an entire day and night, so we have the fire burning and the broth boiling 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The broth you're eating right now had already been cooked for 24 hours before we poured it into that big serving pot over there to continue boiling. When a customer orders a bowl of *pho*, that's the broth we use. We use that broth the whole day, and if there's any left over at the end of the day, we dump it.

Nam Dinh beef *pho* is not much different compared to other *pho*. In the past, *pho* noodles from Nam Dinh had to be dried by hand, but we don't have to do it that way anymore. Now, people dry it by machine. The main difference is that it's part of a tradition that's been passed down from one generation to the next. Each *pho* shop has its own flavor; it's only when you eat it that you can tell the difference.

Selling *pho* is a funny thing. Sometimes, we run out of *pho* in the middle of the day; other times, there's still plenty left at the end of the day. Even on a day when there's plenty of broth left over, we throw it away; we have to. I know some *pho* shops put their broth from the day before in the refrigerator to use again, but I can guarantee that no Nam Dinh *pho* shop would ever do that. Every day is the same: I work from dawn to dusk. My only time off is at Tet; that's when I go back to my hometown on the 30th and come back to work in Hanoi on the third day of the New Year. On other holidays, like Independence Day, I still have to work while

other people get their day off. But I'm used to it. Once in a while, one of my friends asks me to hang out in the afternoon when we've got fewer customers; other times my brothers and I switch shifts for each other. My family may work for the rest of our lives, but I can't imagine us ever buying our own house in Hanoi.

**I don't have enough passion to pursue school. And if I do end up going to school, there won't be enough hands to help out in the shop, so we'll have to hire someone else. It's complicated**

## Enough to Eat

My family didn't open a shop in our hometown because people in Nam Dinh don't have enough money to afford *pho*. So six years ago, my dad and my brother came to Hanoi, rented this house, and opened the shop. I came here one year after they did. I live in the shop. I'm the youngest; my oldest brother doesn't live here so usually it's only my other brother and me. Every day is the same, looking at the streets of Hanoi; it's the same. I guess it's because I'm used to it. This shop is my dad's, I just help him. Business isn't growing much. To

tell you the truth, life here is only a little better than life back home in the village. The price for one bowl of *pho* keeps going up because the price of everything else keeps going up. Six years ago, we rented this house for VND6 million, and now the rent is VND12 million. That's just in six years! And aside from rent, we also have to pay tax: VND300,000 each month. We don't make much profit; it's only enough to eat.

And as for me, I don't actually get a monthly salary because I'm working for the family, you know? If I ever decide to do anything else later, I'll ask my family: if they have money they'll give it to me, if they don't, then I'll just have to accept it. I'm not sure what my future will be like, but if there's an opportunity, I might change my job. If not, then I guess at some point I'll have to break away from the family and open up my own *pho* shop. Before this, I was studying in the village high school but I had trouble keeping up. And anyway, my family didn't have the resources for me to continue school, so I quit and came to Hanoi to sell *pho*.

To tell you the truth, I want to become a car mechanic. Ever since I was a kid I've always played with cars, and back home in Dong Son I would sometimes practice fixing cars. I don't really like selling *pho*, I like working on cars better. I told my parents about my dream several times but I know it's not easy. Going to school and getting training costs money, and I'd have to ask my parents for it. And as you can see, we don't make much money selling *pho*, so I don't feel comfortable asking them for money. Sometimes at dinner my parents will say, "It's up to you, if you want, you should go to school," but I keep thinking about it and it just doesn't feel right. I don't have enough passion to pursue school. And if I do end up going to school, there won't be enough hands to help out in the shop, so we'll have to hire someone else. It's complicated.

Additional editing by Gerard Sasges  
Excerpted from *It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam Today*, available in paperback on Amazon or as an e-book on iTunes (scan code). ■



# Question Everything

Making sure schools have the right answers



Adrian Watts is the Deputy Headmaster and Director of Academic Studies at the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)



THE SCHOOL YEAR has ended and as parents you are either reflecting upon the year at your present school or preparing to move to a new posting in another country. Selecting a school for your family is one of the most important, yet difficult, decisions that you will make. This decision is made more difficult because you are often moving to unknown territory; have to make judgments under pressure of time and without significant data and information that is completely trustworthy. Of course, there are a number of reasons for choosing a school and every family has a different set of priorities. However, I have tried to identify a few areas of a school's function and some related questions that as parents you could ask to gain a deeper understanding of the institution that you are entrusting with your child's education.

## Teachers

First and foremost, a school must have highly effective teachers and this ingredient is far more important than any other factor. Researchers have slowly come to realize that a school's effect on learning is nowhere near as significant as an individual teacher's impact on learning, that an effective teacher brings value-added learning gains for years to come and that an ineffective teacher will have the reverse effect. Research has recently suggested that many teachers learn most and improve the most in their first few years of teaching and after that, learning either plateaus or stops. This is generally because schools do not focus enough upon creating a continuous professional learning environment through targeted professional development opportunities: teacher

goal setting and providing time and expertise for coaching of teachers in their classrooms. The old proverb, "don't judge a book by its cover," is very applicable when choosing a school; a ramshackle school with good teachers should always be preferable to a school with wonderful facilities and ineffective teachers.

*Questions to ask: How do you select your teachers? What standards do you use to evaluate teacher performance? How do you help your teachers' professional growth? Do you use professional coaches to help your teachers develop their teaching skills?*

## Clear Definition of Learning

Most schools will tell you they are good or great and refer to the organizational bestseller *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.

For schools to move from good to great, the emphasis has to be clearly focused around learning. Today many international schools dazzle prospective parents with new technologies, 1:1 computer programs, state-of-the-art facilities, activities, uniform design, jazzy websites and so on. Some of these aspects are important but they are all peripheral to the highest priority for you as a parent, that is your child's learning and how will you and the school know that your child has learned. If a school has defined learning and can explain what it regards as its learning principles then you have a set of criteria to refer to when you are observing and discussing your child's progress as a learner. By making learning the key focus of the school it tells you a lot about where the energies of the teachers and administration at the school are going.

*Questions to ask: Does your school have a definition of learning? Has your school defined its key learning principles? Do all teachers understand the importance of assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning?*

### Teaching Pedagogy of the School

For many of us adults, our schooling focused on the learning of content and knowledge. Today the focus should be on learning how to use skills that access, interpret and create from the content and knowledge that is so freely available from the worldwide web. It is important that schools place a strong emphasis on students building enduring understandings through a constructivist approach built on clearly defined sets of skills that are embedded in subjects and reinforced through and across the curriculum from KG to Grade 12. By ensuring this systematic approach, students will be able to transfer learning to different learning scenarios which will prepare them to be problem solvers for the rest of their lives. Today the most relevant curricula are driven by concepts not content.

*Questions to ask: Does your school have a prevalent teaching pedagogy/methodology that it encourages the teachers to follow? Do you have curricula that develop and encourage the concepts and skills that will be important for 21st century citizens?*

### Mission and Vision

Remember that when you are choosing a school for your children, the school's mission is their promise of what you will get from enrolling in that school. The vision is what they aspire to be or do with your children. Many schools have very fancy and complex missions and visions that promise they will create perfect global citizens who will change the world, but the question as a parent has to always be: How will I see that in my child? Does the school truly walk the talk with its mission and vision or are they just words on a website? When you are walking around the school, is the



**The old proverb, “don’t judge a book by its cover,” is very applicable when choosing a school; a ramshackle school with good teachers should always be preferable to a school with wonderful facilities and ineffective teachers**

mission clearly visible? A school that has a review cycle for its mission and vision is one that is willing to reflect, discuss and accept change as a normal part of the development process of the school. In our rapidly changing world, modern schools have to be forward looking if they are going to serve their stakeholders effectively.

*Questions to ask: Does your school have a Mission and Vision and how will that affect my child as a learner? Does the school use its Mission and Vision as a filter for decisions that are made? Does your school adhere to its Mission? When was the school's Mission and Vision last reviewed?*

### Educational Decision Makers

Unless the administrators who run the school are regularly in classrooms, they do not know what they are talking about. Imagine a sports coach who never attended games. At school, what happens daily in classrooms is the most important work and the decision makers need to be where the action is, to understand the learning going on, to see the challenges that students and teachers face, and to build meaningful relationships.

*Question to ask: Is it normal for the school's decision makers to visit classrooms?*

### Voice of Stakeholders

Many schools believe that the educators are always right and that parents and students simply do not understand what is best. Today this is a misguided belief for a school and particularly so at international schools where we have a highly educated parent community that has enormous experience of what works elsewhere. You want a school where parents are seen as partners in the education process. Students are also very astute about what works and what doesn't. So it is important that schools provide opportunities to listen to its stakeholders. Schools should be making good use of accrediting agencies that encourage honest self-reflection and provide good critical friendship advice from visiting experts. As parents, you should be looking for a school that is open and honest, does not spend all its time telling you how good it was, but instead focuses on how it is moving forward and improving its services.

*Questions to ask: Do parents and students have a voice at the school? Is there a parent teacher organization? Is there an annual parent satisfaction survey? Are there student governance opportunities available throughout the school? Is the school accredited? ■*

# >> The List Education

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

## education

### SCHOOLS [CHILDREN]



#### ABC International School (ABCIS)

Inspected and judged an outstanding school by British Government Inspectors (October 2013), the ABCIS is one of the few schools worldwide awarded this Department for Education rating. Progress of students puts the ABCIS among the top 8% of schools in the world. Providing education for 2-18 year olds in a supportive and friendly environment, it delivers a culturally adapted version of the British National Curriculum supported by Cambridge & AQA IGCSE and AS/A levels. Students are prepared for Universities in the UK, USA, Australia, Korea and Canada.

**Enquiries and Admissions**  
Tel: 5431 1833/34/35/36  
Email: [office@theabcis.com](mailto:office@theabcis.com)  
[www.theabcis.com](http://www.theabcis.com)



#### American International School

Founded in 2006, American International School (AIS) is a private, coeducational, university-preparatory school for students from preschool to grade 12. The language of instruction is English. The school offers standard American curriculum with a complement of performing arts, visual arts, music and sport programs.

**Elementary School (102C Nguyen Van Cu, D1)**  
**Middle School (35 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh)**  
**High School (781/C1-C2 Le Hong Phong, D10)**

#### APU International School

Operating since 2004, APU International School is a private coeducational international school enrolling students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Instruction is conducted in English, but there is an English Language Development (ELD) program available to students who require it. It is currently a member of the College Board, and is an official SAT testing site.

**Elementary (501 Lac Long Quan, D11)**  
**Middle and High School (286 Lanh Binh Thang, D11)**  
[www.apu.edu.vn](http://www.apu.edu.vn)

#### Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).

**Xi Campus (Kindergarten)**  
**190 Nguyen Van Hung, D2**  
**Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)**  
**APSC Compound**  
**36 Thao Dien, D2**  
**Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)**  
**East-West Highway, D2**  
**3742 4040**  
[www.aisvietnam.com](http://www.aisvietnam.com)



#### British International School (BIS)

Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body from pre-school to Year 13. The school is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers with recent UK experience. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISIA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam.

**An Phu Primary Campus**  
225 Nguyen Van Hung Street, D2  
3744 4551  
[apprimary@bisvietnam.com](mailto:apprimary@bisvietnam.com)  
**An Phu Secondary Campus**  
246 Nguyen Van Hung Street, D2  
3744 2335  
[apsecondary@bisvietnam.com](mailto:apsecondary@bisvietnam.com)  
**Tu Xuong Primary Campus**  
43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D3  
3932 0210  
[txprimary@bisvietnam.com](mailto:txprimary@bisvietnam.com)  
[www.bisvietnam.com](http://www.bisvietnam.com)



#### Canadian International School

Now in its fifth year of operation with a student population of 700 students in grades K-12, CIS- VN has received approval from the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam and the Department of Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City to accept both Vietnamese nationals and expat nationals. The school's language of instruction is English.

**No 86, Road 23, D7**  
[www.cis.edu.vn](http://www.cis.edu.vn)



#### Deutsche Schule Ho Chi Minh City International German School

Deutsche Schule (IGS) offers a German curriculum from Early Years to Grade 12 which is approved and supported by the German government. IGS is staffed by native German, Vietnamese and English speakers who have many years of teaching experience. We offer a link between Vietnamese and German culture, an international program with German standards and the immersion of German culture into everyday life.

**12, Vo Truong Toan, An Phu**  
**08 37 44 63 44**  
**info@igs-hcmc.de**  
[www.igs-hcmc.de](http://www.igs-hcmc.de)



#### Horizon International Bilingual School

A bilingual school, HIBS opened in 2005 and applies 100 percent of the Vietnamese national curriculum, MOET, as well as providing students with an intensive English program along with teaching science and math in English.

**6 - 6A - 8, 44 Street, D2**  
[hibsvietnam.com](http://hibsvietnam.com)



#### European International School HCMC

The European International School Ho Chi Minh City (EIS) offers a supportive and challenging academic education from Early Years to Grade 12 (K-12) an EIS promotes inter-cultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. Its motto is "Educating Global Citizens".

**Thao Dien Campus**  
**730 F-G-K Le Van Mien Street**  
**Thao Dien, D2**  
[www.eishcmc.com](http://www.eishcmc.com)



#### Fosco International School

Caters to pre-school children from 18 months to 4 years and elementary students from 5 to 12 years. It offers enrolment opportunities to both local

and expat children providing childcare services, comprehensive pre-school and kindergarten programs and an internationally aligned elementary school curriculum.

**40 Ba Huyen Than Quan, D3**  
**3930 5930**  
[www.fis.edu.vn](http://www.fis.edu.vn)

#### Kids Club Saigon

Early childhood centers in Phu My Hung offering creative play-based programs for children ages 2 to 5. Known for unique facilities, experienced staff, high-quality learning resources, and small class sizes

**79/7 Pham Thai Buong, D7**  
**27/3 Ha Huy Tap, D7**  
**5412 5944**  
[www.kidsclubsaigon.com](http://www.kidsclubsaigon.com)

#### Kinderworld International Kindergarten

KinderWorld International Kindergarten has been in operation since November 2006 and offers both international and local kindergarten services for children aged 1.5 to 5.5 years old.

**The Manor Building, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh**  
**3514 3036**  
[enquiry@manorhcmc.kinderworld.edu.vn](mailto:enquiry@manorhcmc.kinderworld.edu.vn)

#### International School Saigon Pearl

ISSP is an elementary school for children 2 to 11 years of age. Offers an academically rigorous American curriculum. The school has several smartboards, projectors and an independent IT suite that allows students the opportunity to interact with technology to enhance learning.

**92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh**  
**082227788**  
[www.issp.edu.vn](http://www.issp.edu.vn)

#### L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

**33/19 Quoc Huong, D2**  
**3744 6844**  
[www.latelier-anphu.com](http://www.latelier-anphu.com)

#### Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

**42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2**  
**3744 2639**  
[www.montessori.edu.vn](http://www.montessori.edu.vn)

#### Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

**No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2**  
**3744 4709**  
[noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn](mailto:noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn)



**Renaissance International School Saigon**



Renaissance is an International British school providing an inclusive curriculum based upon the British curriculum complemented by the International Primary Curriculum and International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each student is offered an education tailored to meet his or her individual learning needs. It is a family school providing a stimulating and secure learning environment with first-class facilities including a 350-seat theatre, swimming pool, mini-pool, play-areas, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

**74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7**  
**3773 3171 ext 120/121/122**  
**www.renaissance.edu.vn**



**Saigon South International School**

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families.

SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood – Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.

**78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7**  
**www.ssis.edu.vn**



**The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)**



The most established school in Ho Chi Minh City is celebrating 20 years of success in 2013. ISHCMC is the only school in HCMC with full accreditation to teach all three IB programs to students from 2 to 18. ISHCMC is fully accredited by both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC), two of the most prestigious international accreditation organisations. ISHCMC has 975 students from over 50 different nationalities enjoying recently upgraded facilities.

**28 Vo Trung Toan, D2**  
**www.ishcmc.com**



**Saigon Star International School**



Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.

**Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, D2**  
**3742 STAR / 3742 7827**  
**www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn**



**Singapore International School at Saigon South**

Commenced operations in August 2008, The Singapore International School at Saigon South (SIS @ SS) is a purpose-built international school campus that has a capacity of 625 students. It operates classes from kindergarten to senior high school.

**No 29, Road 3, Trung Son Residential Area, Binh Chanh**  
**www.saigonssouth.sis.edu.vn**

**Vstar School**

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.

**Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7**



**The American School of Vietnam**



**THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF VIETNAM**

The American School of Vietnam (TAS) is a young school that has been granted candidacy by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 20 nationalities. TAS provides an American-based curriculum with rigorous performance standards and a variety of academic offerings including Advanced Placement courses, university credit courses through our partnership with Missouri State University, and an Intensive ESL Program for English Language Learners.

**177A, 172-180 Nguyen Van Hung st, Thao Dien ward, D2, HCMC**  
**www.theamericanschool.edu.vn**  
**08 3519 2223, 08 3519 2224**  
**info@tasvietnam.edu.vn**

**SCHOOLS [ADULT]**

**PSB International College**

PSB College is an Internationally-Recognized Singaporean Institution specializing in business programs ranging from Business Administration & Marketing, Accounting & Finance, to Hospitality & Tourism Management.

**144-146-148 Le Lai, D1**  
**www.psbcollege.edu.vn**

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 QUINN@QUINNMATTINGLY.COM  
 +84 (0) 128 569 8144

# Health & Beauty

## ladieswear

### Anupa Eco Boutique **Ol's Pick**

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, D1  
www.anupa.net / facebook: anupaluxury

### Gaya

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

1 Nguyen Van Trang, D1

### Kelly Bui

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

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

### Valenciani **Ol's Pick**

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

23 Ly Tu Trung, D1  
3821 2788  
090 785 5788

## menswear

### Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, D1

### Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

## gyms

### Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astro turf play area. Inquire about special packages.

APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2  
www.aissportscentre.com

### Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

### Body By Jovie

Body By Jovie is a boutique personal training center and yoga studio, catering to individuals demanding diversity, challenge and results. It specializes in one on one session and also offer a full range of classes such as yoga, TRX suspension class, belly dancing, Zumba and outdoor boot camp.

Riverside Residence, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

info@bodybyjovie.com  
7am - 9pm (Weekdays) and 7:30am - 7pm (Saturdays)

### California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5  
28-30-32 Le Lai, D1  
5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

### Christina Eberlin Yoga Teacher

Christina graduated from Virajati 300hr yoga teacher training in Thailand. She is offering private yoga classes and group classes. For more information you can reach her at

Christinaeberlin@gmail.com  
or 093 849 2461

### Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs.

Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326  
www.cyril-and-you.com

### Got Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4

### K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7

### Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba®Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbAtomic®.

Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril&you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1).  
093 406 0735 or 6680 7226  
zumba.nutrition@gmail.com  
www.zumba-saigon.com

### Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2BI Chu Manh Trinh, D1

### Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped

with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

### Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh 3514 0255

### Spa InterContinental & Healthclub

Guests will have access to a 20-meter outdoor lap pool complete with a sundeck, a 160-square meter spacious fitness centre with the latest generation cardio and resistance equipment, plus a personal program of fitness classes.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1  
spa@icasianasaigon.com  
8am - 9:30pm

### The Health Club

The Landmark Health Club is located on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark serviced apartments, and offers a fully equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, and a squash court. It also features male and female changing facilities and saunas.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D1  
hc@thelandmarkvietnam.com

### The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness center offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.

3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza, 105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

### X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2  
www.xrockclimbing.com

### Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2

## clinics

### American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

161-161A Hai Ba Trung, D3  
www.acc.vn

### American Eye Center

Provides eye care services to adults and children by an American Board certified ophthalmologist with 17 years of experience. The American standard facility is equipped with state of the art equipments for the early detection and treatment of important eye conditions such as Lasir, Cataract surgeries to Presbyopia, Glaucoma and Diabetic eye

disease. Cosmetic procedures such as eyelid surgery and Botox injections are also available.

5th floor Crescent Plaza, 105 Ton Dat Tien, D7  
08 5413 6758  
www.americaneyecentervn.com

### Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2  
www.arcpets.com

### An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2  
6660 6602  
www.dakhoaanphu.com

### Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2  
3744 2000  
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com  
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com  
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

### Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10

### 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

### Centre Medical International

Centre Medical International was created in 1992 by Pr Alain Carpentier and Dr Duong Quang Trung, director of the health service of HCMC. In the heart of the city, just near the Notre-Dame Cathedral, French and Vietnamese doctors provide high quality medical service in 12 specialties: General and tropical medicine, Cardiology, Gynecology, Traditional oriental medicine, Ophthalmology, Speech and language therapy, Osteopathic, medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychomotor Therapy, and Dietetics. All our profits are dedicated to the Heart Institute which helps deprived Vietnamese children to pay their cardiac surgery.

1 Han Thuyen, D1  
3827 2366  
www.cmi-vietnam.com

### David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

DSCC provides Chiropractic care for patients using state of the art physiotherapy equipment imported from USA. DSCC is managed and operated by American doctors who use modern and advanced technologies techniques to ensure safe, gentle, and

effective treatment.  
**41 Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7**  
[www.saigonchiropractic.com](http://www.saigonchiropractic.com)

### 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**

### Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.  
**95 Thao Dien, D2**  
[www.vietnammedicalpractice.com](http://www.vietnammedicalpractice.com)  
[hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com](mailto:hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com)  
**8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday**

### Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.  
**2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1**

### Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.  
**273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan**

### International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.  
**167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3 3829 8551**

### Saigon Acupuncture

Practitioner Christopher Booth, M.S., L.Ac., is now accepting new patients. Chris treats the following conditions with acupuncture: Chronic and Acute Pain, Neurological Disorders, Gynecological Disorders, Emotional & Psychological Disorders, among others.  
**161 Hai Ba Trung, D3**  
[saigonacu@gmail.com](mailto:saigonacu@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/saigonacupuncture](http://www.facebook.com/saigonacupuncture)

### Stamford Skin Centre

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.  
**99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1 08 3925 1990 or 0908 453 338**  
[www.stamfordskin.com](http://www.stamfordskin.com)

### Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.  
**79 Dien Bien Phu, D1**

### Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Hamon complex, within easy reach of high-

rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.  
**Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh**

## dental

### 2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.  
**125 Le Thi Rieng, D1**

### Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.  
**34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh**

### Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.  
**R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7**

### Elite Dental Group

Elite Dental is an international and well-equipped clinic that provides a wide range of dental services including general dentistry, cosmetic dentistry, implant, pediatric dentistry and orthodontics. Luxury design and their dental experts will bring you an extremely comfortable experience.  
**57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3**

### European Dental Clinic

Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.  
**17-17A Le Van Mien, D2**  
[www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com](http://www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com)

### German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.  
**1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7**

### Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.  
**Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1**

### Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.  
**199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1**

### Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Miiko.  
**R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7 5410 3937**

### Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.  
**96 Tran Nao, D2 6674 4255**  
**8am to 8pm**

### Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight,

exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.  
**50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1 3835 6159**

### Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.  
**173 Ton Dat Tien, D7 5413 6635**

### Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.  
**2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3 3822 6222**

### Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.  
**27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1 3825 7485**

## hospitals

### Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.  
**135B Tran Binh Trong, D5**

### Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.  
**201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5**

### Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.  
**1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh**

### DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.  
**253 Dien Bien Phu, D3**

### FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.  
**6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7**

### Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.  
**63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1**

### Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre

practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.  
**179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3**

### Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.  
**284 Cong Quynh, D1**

### Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.  
**15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap**

## nails

### Classic Nails

Located near Ben Thanh Market, Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation.  
**4 Phan Boi Chau, D1 3825 7047**  
**9am - 8pm**

### Fame Nails

A place for your nail care near Ben Thanh Market. Besides classic manicure and pedicure, it also offers deluxe spa manicure and pedicure, nail art and enhancement, and services including waxing, facial, eyebrow shaping and eye lashes extension.  
**18 Pham Hong Thai, D1**  
[www.famenails.com](http://www.famenails.com)

### Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.  
**214C Nguyen Trai, D1**

### OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.  
**103 Nguyen Hue, D1**

## spas

### An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.  
**26-28 Dong Du, D1**

### Dermal Essentials

Dermologica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin treatment system. Call Dermologica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.  
**108 Pasteur, D1**

### Eden Spa

Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.  
**19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 3815**  
**097 810 6868**

### Flamingo Spa

Flamingo Spa is an authentic Thai spa where all ingredients used are imported from Thailand. Guests arrive in a clean and friendly atmosphere for an optimal relaxing experience. Men, women and couples are welcome, and they offer a wide range of massages along with a sauna, jacuzzi facilities & VIP rooms.

**13B Le Thanh Ton, DI**  
**3822 1074**  
**091 243 9601**  
**FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com**  
**Open 10:30 am to close 11:30pm**

### Glow

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, guests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options.

**Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, DI**

### 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**

### Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully equipped massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung street. Various salt scrubs, and high end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

**15 Thai Van Lung, DI**  
**3822 1515**

### Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanness environment, Indochine spa provides your senses with natural energy. Indulge yourself for a unique and amazing experience.

**69 Thu Khoa Huan st., D. I, HCM**  
**3827 7188**  
**indochinespa@gmail.com**  
**www.indochine-spa.com.vn**  
**Open: 10:00-22:00**

### Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

**45 Ton That Thiep, DI**



### Kyoto Spa & Hair Salon

Body massage  
 Foot massage  
 Hair cut women and men  
**32 Dong Du, Ben Nghe Ward, DI**  
**(Spa & Hair Salon)**  
**8A/4DI Thai Van Lung,**  
**Ben Nghe Ward, DI (Spa)**  
**0902 983 089**  
**loan\_royal@gmail.com**  
**www.spakytotohcmc.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, DI**

### L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an

exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

**1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7**  
**5413 6638**

### La Cochinchine Spa



Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

**6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, DI**  
**3825 1812**

### La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

**64A Truong Dinh, D3**  
**100 Mac Thi Bui, DI**  
**1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7**



### Maison Mikio Boutique Salon

District 7's Premium Boutique Salon. Two floors providing full beauty services nestled in a quiet residential area in Phu My Hung's Garden Plaza 2 Complex. Equipped with a café, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.  
**Garden Plaza 2 Complex**  
**8 Tôn Dật Tiên, Quận 7**  
**5412 4773**

### MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events – and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

**32 Dong Khoi, DI**  
**090 387 6666**

### Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

**4 Chu Manh Trinh, DI**  
**6659 3609**

### Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being.

**9C Ton Duc Thang, DI**  
**3911 7118**

### Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care &

waxing services.

**1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, DI**

### Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

**1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, DI**

### 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, DI**

### Spa InterContinental

Spa InterContinental is a contemporary spa that has two double and five single treatment rooms, each with a private bathroom, a foot reflexology area, and luxurious changing and shower rooms. Combining the fresh, local traditional herbs and plants, an ambient lighting, soft scents and soothing sounds with the best of international brands, Spa InterContinental offers guests the professional spa expertise and a truly sensory experience.

**3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon**  
**Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, DI**  
**3520 9999**

**spa@icasianasaigon.com**  
**8am – 9:30pm**

### The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

**87 Mac Thi Bui, DI**

### 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, DI**

### Tri Sam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

**76C Hai Ba Trung, DI**

### 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, DI**

### Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

**3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7**  
**3775 2990; 093 481 8085**

### Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

**16-18 Hai Ba Trung, DI**

### 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, DI**

## 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**

### AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

**91-93 Nguyen Hue, DI**  
**3915 3491**

### Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.

**71/1 Mac Thi Bui, DI**  
**3823 8811**

### Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

**158 Hai Ba Trung, DI**

### Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

**15C Thi Sach, DI**

### Gomo

Typical of the large furniture warehouses in North America and Europe, Gomo sells contemporary items for your home and office.

**7/30B, Road 13, Binh Hoa**  
**Thuan An Town, Binh Duong**  
**(0650) 376 5115**  
**www.gomo.com.vn**

### Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

**Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI**  
**3914 3553**

### Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.

**Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,**  
**65 Le Loi, DI**

### Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

**77 Pasteur, DI**

### 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**

### Vscential

Vscential sells aromatic French lavender bouquets, fresh flowers, silk flowers, and handmade flowers. With 45 different types of essential oils available, there's a scent for everyone.

**Vscential**  
**2388B Pasteur, D3**  
**www.vscential.com**

# Business & Tech

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IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



**Dear Hadrien,**

**Last week, a friend of mine threw a party for her boyfriend's birthday and with copious bottles of wine we surely had a lot of fun, but at some point I noticed that a few other foreigners were taking soft drugs. Coming from Europe, I was not too shocked, but once in a while you hear those horror stories about foreigners getting caught with drugs abroad. As I don't want to get in any trouble, could you please enlighten me with some legal information about drugs in Vietnam?**



A member of the Paris Bar, **Hadrien Wolff** has been practicing law in Vietnam for more than seven years, currently as a partner of Audier & Partners based at its HCMC office. Having gained extensive legal experience in the Netherlands and Cambodia, **Marijn Sprokhereef** is an associate at the Hanoi office of the same firm. **Audier & Partners** is an international law firm with presence in Vietnam, Myanmar and Mongolia, providing advice to foreign investors on a broad range of legal issues.



YOU ARE RIGHT to be concerned and unfortunately, I am also aware of the horror stories that you are referring to. A *Midnight Express* kind of nightmare...

Even though in some countries in Europe the legal regime for soft drugs is quite liberal, in many Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, it certainly is not. Therefore, it is good to know a bit about the laws in Vietnam and our starting point is the Vietnamese Penal Code of 1999.

The Penal Code contains a separate chapter about so-called "narcotics-related crimes," which includes, among other things, the growing and producing, the storing, transporting and trading, the organizing and facilitating, and the illegal use of narcotics itself. For your better understanding, "narcotics" are defined as addictive and/or psychoactive substances, such as cannabis, heroin and cocaine.

Vietnamese law prescribes that those who illegally use narcotics in any form will be sent to a compulsory rehabilitation facility first. Those who continue to illegally use narcotics will be sentenced to between three months and two years of imprisonment, whereas repeat offenders shall be sentenced to between two and five years of imprisonment.

For other narcotics-related crimes, the sentences vary. For example, you will not be held criminally liable when stockpiling, trafficking or appropriating a limited amount of narcotics, such as opium, cannabis or cocaine resin of less than one gram and heroin or cocaine of less than 0.1 gram. Because it is not regarded as significantly dangerous to society, such actions will only be sanctioned with a fine ranging between VND1 million and VND 2 million.

I suspect that these are not the horror stories that you heard of, am I right?

In fact the Penal Code prescribes for much more severe sanctions in case of so-called "aggravating factors," such as the number of times a person has committed the crime and the volume of narcotics involved. For example, illegally producing narcotics will carry a sentence between two and seven years of imprisonment. When such crime is repeatedly committed, it will increase to between seven and 15 years, and persons convicted of producing the narcotics in a professional manner shall be sentenced to a jail term of between 15 and 20 years. For several other narcotics-related crimes, such as the illegal stockpiling, transporting and trading of heroin and cocaine weighing more than 100 grams, the Vietnamese Penal Code prescribes life imprisonment and even capital punishment! That should be a good enough reason, if you need a legal one, to prefer wine over narcotics at future parties!

As a concluding remark, the Vietnamese Penal Code applies to Vietnamese citizens and foreigners equally, as long as the criminal act is committed within the territory of Vietnam. If you ever end up in a situation like that, you may be "reassured" that your embassy or consulate may send a representative to visit you in order to help you inform your family and to find you a lawyer to protect your legal rights. In addition to that, if your home country has signed a relevant agreement with Vietnam, you may be transferred to your home country and serve your sentence there.

But if you want my advice..., just make sure you will never let it come that far!

Every month, **Hadrien and Marijn** answer legal questions from *Oi* readers. If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to [legal@oivietnam.com](mailto:legal@oivietnam.com). ■

# From Here to There

Traveling in uber style



Anh Minh-Do is the editor at [TechInAsia.com](http://TechInAsia.com) for Vietnam, focusing on technology startups, trends and companies. Minh is on the board of [Starthub.vn](http://Starthub.vn) - a database and forum for startups dedicated to the growth of Vietnam's business ecosystem.



MOST PEOPLE IN Vietnam never thought it would happen, but it has – the Uber app has arrived. The luxury transportation startup that connects users with a driver at the tap of a smartphone screen debuted in Bangkok in February, Beijing in April, and Jakarta in June. This month it reached Ho Chi Minh City and is on track to roll out in major cities across Asia. Uber's presence here is interesting because the city is already dominated by two major taxi companies: Mai Linh and Vinasun. In the past 10 years, the two companies have flooded the city with their recognizable green taxis and logos and reliable services, beating out their smaller competitors. Uber will face resistance from these two incumbents whose drivers are increasingly using two of Uber's competitors: GrabTaxi and EasyTaxi apps. Although the numbers cannot be verified definitively, some in the startup ecosystem believe that GrabTaxi is doing better than EasyTaxi because it is offering a better discount and marketing strategy

across Vietnam's two major cities – Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Either way both will now have to contend with Uber's unique marketing techniques. As Uber's press release outlines, it playfully partnered with Vietnamese celebrities for the extra boost on the day of the launch: actresses Hong Anh and Chi Pu, singer Hoang Thuy Linh, and blogger Nicky Khanh Ngoc were the first to jump at the chance to try Uber out for a ride on the town. They downloaded the Uber app, and within 10 minutes, a luxurious Uber was able to whisk them away to a movie set, a recording studio, and a photo shoot. We'll let you figure out who went where.

We're likely to see more of these marketing ploys, just like how Uber offered lion dances in China and Singapore for Lunar New Year. What does Uber's potential market look like? The USD17 billion company has expanded to over 100 countries worldwide, but the bulk of its revenue comes from just five cities. In other words, Uber is clearly playing

a very long-term game. It wants to get a foothold before copycats get too powerful. It has a long road ahead though. Uber will face pushback from local taxi companies as well as encounter cultural challenges. Cities like Ho Chi Minh have a peculiar luxury car culture. Most luxury black cars of the BMW and Mercedes variety are owned by the wealthy and upper middle class. They own the cars but hire the drivers so the car owners may not allow their drivers to moonlight on the side. Yet Vietnam sorely needs logistical support, and Uber can help. Companies like Giao Hang Nhanh have already grown to fill the holes, and Lazada, The Gioi Di Dong, Tiki.vn, and others have invested heavily on their own logistics fleets. If Uber founder Travis Kalanik's vision is to really bring Uber into other logistics categories like ice-cream delivery and flowers, the Vietnamese will welcome them with open arms. Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi, both lack a train system despite desperately needing one. Uber, GrabTaxi and Easy Taxi are all easing that burden for now. ■

# Business & Tech



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

## banks

### Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
39290999

### Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9949

### Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3824 2267  
094 801 6318

### Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1  
3824 1525  
012 1861 8695

### HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1  
3724 7247

### Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3827 8260

### Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1  
3911 0000

### Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3  
3829 1581

### Vietcombank

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

## concierge

### Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.  
7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)  
service@giup.me  
www.giup.me

## consulates

### Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1  
3521 8100  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

### Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2  
6281 8001  
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

### Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 2751  
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

### Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong Khoi, D1  
3827 9899  
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

### Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1  
3910 2903

### China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3829 5009  
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

### China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3823 1142  
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn  
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

### Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 7350  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 9373  
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

### Finland Consulate

Room 501, 5/F Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1  
3827 2029

### France Consulate

27 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3520 6819  
www.consulfrance-hcm.org

### Germany Consulate

126 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3  
3829 2455  
www.ho-chi-minh-stadt.diplo.de  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3829 0130

### Iceland Consulate

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm

### Consulate General of India

55 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3  
3823 7050  
www.india-consulate.org.vn  
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 5pm

### Indonesia Consulate

18 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3825 1888  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm

### Italy Consulate

81 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh  
08 6258 6473  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 4pm

### Japanese Consulate

261 Dien Bien Phu, D3  
08 3933 3520  
8.30am - 11.30am; 1.15pm - 4.45pm

### Kuwait Consulate

24 Phung Khac Khoan, D1  
3827 0555  
kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 4pm

### Laos Consulate

93 Pasteur, D1  
3829 7667  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1pm - 4.30pm

### Malaysia Consulate

2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1  
3829 9023  
malhcmnh@tln.gov.my  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am

### Mexico Consulate

215 A-B Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan  
3844 5520  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 3pm

### Myanmar Consulate

50 Sam Son, Tan Binh  
5449 2425  
www.gmas.com.vn  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm; Sat: 9am - 12pm

### New Zealand Consulate

235 Dong Khoi, D1  
3822 6907  
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 11.30am; 1.00pm - 5.00pm

### Nordcham

12A Floor, Bitexco Building, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1  
3821 5423  
www.nordcham.com

### Norway Consulate

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1  
3822 1696  
norcons@hcm.fpt.vn  
Mon - Fri: 08.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, D1  
3825 0334  
consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn

### Hon. Consulate of Portugal

66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach  
3820 0623

### Russia Consulate

40 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3

### Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1  
3822 5174  
www.mfa.gov.sg

### Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1

### South Korea Consulate

107 Nguyen Du, D1  
3822 5757  
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

### Sweden Consulate

8A/11 Thai Van Lung, D1  
3823 6800  
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

### Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2  
3744 6996

### Thailand Consulate

77 Tran Quoc Thao, D3

### The Czech Republic Consulate

28 Mac Dinh Chi, D1

### The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, D1  
3829 8433

### U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, D1  
3520 4610

### Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

## 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

### Blue Cross

Blue Cross Vietnam is a Medical Insurance Administrator specializing in Health and Travel insurance in Asia. Our competitive advantage is in our design and administration of modern travel and medical insurance plans; plans built for people living and working in Vietnam.  
Level 8, River View Tower, 7A Thai Van Lung, D1. 3821 9908

### IGlobal Assist

Offers insurance programs offered by ACE, Liberty, Seven Corners and other global insurers. Free consultation and custom quotes for most lines of insurance including health, travel, home, auto, motorbike, property, liability, and personal accident.  
www.iglobalassist.com

### IF Consulting

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

IBC Building, 3rd Floor, 1A Me Linh Square, D1  
www.insuranceinvietnam.com

### Liberty Mutual Insurance

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

15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1. 3812 5125

### LIG Insurance

The company provides property and casualty insurance, along with customer relations management and automobile claims support services and long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

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

### McLarens Young International

McLarens Young International is a global claims service provider that helps our clients achieve timely and equitable claims resolution.

9th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3821 3316

### Prudential Vietnam

Prudential Vietnam is one of the leading life insurers nationwide, also

providing a variety of financial solutions, with over 200 customer service centers, branch offices and general agency and business partner offices.  
**Unit 25F, Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1**

### information technology

#### Asia Pacific Solutions

A software development and IT support service company, services include developing all kinds of engineering systems and implementing software solutions.

**Suite 1201, 12th Floor, 111A Pasteur, D1**

#### NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME

**11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1 3827 3646**

#### 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**

### finances

#### Total Wealth Management

A team of experts available to offer advice and options on how to manage your wealth.

**66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach 3820 0623 t-wm@t-wm.com**

### law firms

#### Apex Law

The Apex management system

represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.

**Unit 4A2, 4F Nam Han Office Building, 65 Nguyen Du, D1. 3822 2942**

#### JP Law Firm

J&P Law is a full-service law firm providing the highest quality legal services to both international and domestic clients, and its widely-recognized practice areas include Corporate, M&A and Finance.

**Level 7 - Room 702, 81-85 Ham Nghi, D1**

#### Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.

**Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3822 7161**

#### 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.

**Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3**

### real estate agencies

#### Colliers International Vietnam

Globally, Colliers International is a leading commercial real estate services company offering comprehensive expertise to investors, owners and tenants around the world.

**Bitexco Office Building, 7th Floor, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3823 3529**

#### Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

Their primary focus is on consultancy, brokerage, and investment across the retail, office, and hospitality sectors.

**Level 2, Pathfinder Building, 52 Dong Du, D1. 6291 4707**

#### House Link

House Link offers a wide array of apartments and houses for lease all over Ho Chi Minh City.

**23 Phung Khac Khoan, D1 3824 5271**

#### Realty World

Focuses on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office buildings, and villas.

**111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh. 3899 4979**

#### Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.

**Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3825 8598**

#### The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.

**369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9**

### relocation

#### AGS Four Winds (Vietnam)

Global leader in international removals & relocations, with 128 offices in 78 countries, they can move you to/or from any location worldwide.

**5th Floor, Lafayette De Saigon, 8A Phung Khac Khoan, D1 35210071**

**ags-vietnam@agsfourwinds.com www.agsfourwinds.com**

#### Allied Pickfords

One of the largest and most respected providers of moving services worldwide,

AP assumes complete responsibility for all moving services through a single point of contact.

**District 1. 0122 5141 848**

#### Asian Tigers

Pan-Asian moving firm with a perhaps unrivalled level of experience and expertise in packing, storing and moving a family's treasured belongings throughout this region and beyond.

**9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, D4. 3826 7799**

#### Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.

**60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1**

#### JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.

**1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4. 3826 7655**

#### Logical Moves

They offer your belongings the best protection available with the latest technology, experienced staff and equipment. With door to door services, Logical Moves is all about quality service, best prices and well-arranged time. They have moved offices and household goods for many well-known international companies in Vietnam.

**3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net**

#### Santa Fe Relocation Service

Door to door relocation service which promises to take the stress out of moving personal possessions from one city - or country - to another. Also offers pet relocations, records management, home search and immigration help.

**www.santaferelo.com info@santaferelo.com.vn**

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**June / July Qi Reader Contest**

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**JUNE & JULY THEME**

## Food, Glorious, Food

Inspired by the international breakfasts in our June issue, we want to see your best food photos!

STREETSIDE PHO?  
 A DECADENT HOMEMADE CAKE?  
 SPICY / SWEET / BIZARRE / BEAUTIFUL?

Logos: **TnT BBQ**, **HOTEL MUSE**, **AO SHOW SAIGON - VIETNAM**, **Scott & Bin's "comfort food with a twist"**

VISIT US FOR MORE DETAIL: OIVIETNAM2013 OIVIETNAM.COM

# Faces & Places



1

Stylish Vietnamese restaurant Quán Bui celebrated its first anniversary with local celebrities in attendance along with a delicious birthday cake

IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



1

Housing different brands that are made in Vietnam, the Ginkgo Concept Store marked its one year anniversary with a party and special exhibition by Fred Wissink

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



3

Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon's third annual Day of Discovery showcased a contemporary jewelry and art exhibition including Vietnamese designer Sam Tho Duong

IMAGES PROVIDED BY  
RENAISSANCE RIVERSIDE HOTEL SAIGON

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WINNER OF THE  
2013 GOLDEN DRAGON  
AWARD PRESENTED BY  
THE VIETNAM  
ECONOMIC TIMES



## The Landmark

Ho Chi Minh City's first international serviced apartment and office, The Landmark has been setting the standards of service and management since 1994. The 16 story complex is situated in the heart of the business district on a prime waterfront site, minutes away from the popular dining and shopping areas.

Renovated in 2014, serviced residences offer 65 elegantly furnished units, ranging from studio apartments to a 3-bedroom suite on the 14th floor.

***The Landmark Health Club is offering 25% discount off 6 months and 1 year Full Club memberships for Summer 2014.*** Known for its intimate and exclusive atmosphere, The Health Club offers a fully equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, fitness studio, and the only squash court located in the city center.

*To enjoy luxurious living and convenient working spaces in the heart of the city, visit The Landmark, your home address in Saigon.*

5B Ton Duc Thang St., District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Tel: (84-8) 38222098 - Fax : (84-8) 38225161  
info@thelandmarkvietnam.com - www.thelandmarkvietnam.com