



VIETNAM

SEPTEMBER 2014

ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

Dutch-Indonesian Rijsttafel
Dining Concept Hits Saigon

PAGE 50

THE QUEENS OF NEW YORK

A Neighborhood That is a
Melting Pot of Cultures

PAGE 68

SURVIVAL GEAR

Keeping Culture Alive
One Bag at a Time

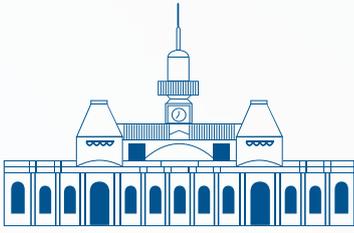
PAGE 92

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This Month's Cover

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Where is your child going?

Contents



COVER STORY

PINOY PRIDE

The Filipino community in Saigon is multifaceted, from food and sport to music and business. Discover what this culture has to offer

32

IMAGE BY PASHAPXEL

FEATURES

P10 DATEBOOK

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

P16 TROI OI

See why an elderly couple, trees and the Ebola virus made our noteworthy numbers this month

P18 THE BULLETIN

Checking out the latest promotions and openings

P22 BRIDGE THE GAP

An organization promoting a new culture of giving in Vietnam

P24 SMOOTH AS SILK

Revitalizing the traditional art of painting on silk

P26 A FAIR TO REMEMBER

Find bargains, homegrown products and live entertainment at the latest fair to hit the city

P28 CHILDREN OF THE NORTH

Capturing the beauty and innocence in the faces of children in Sapa and Ha Giang

P68 THE QUEENS OF NEW YORK

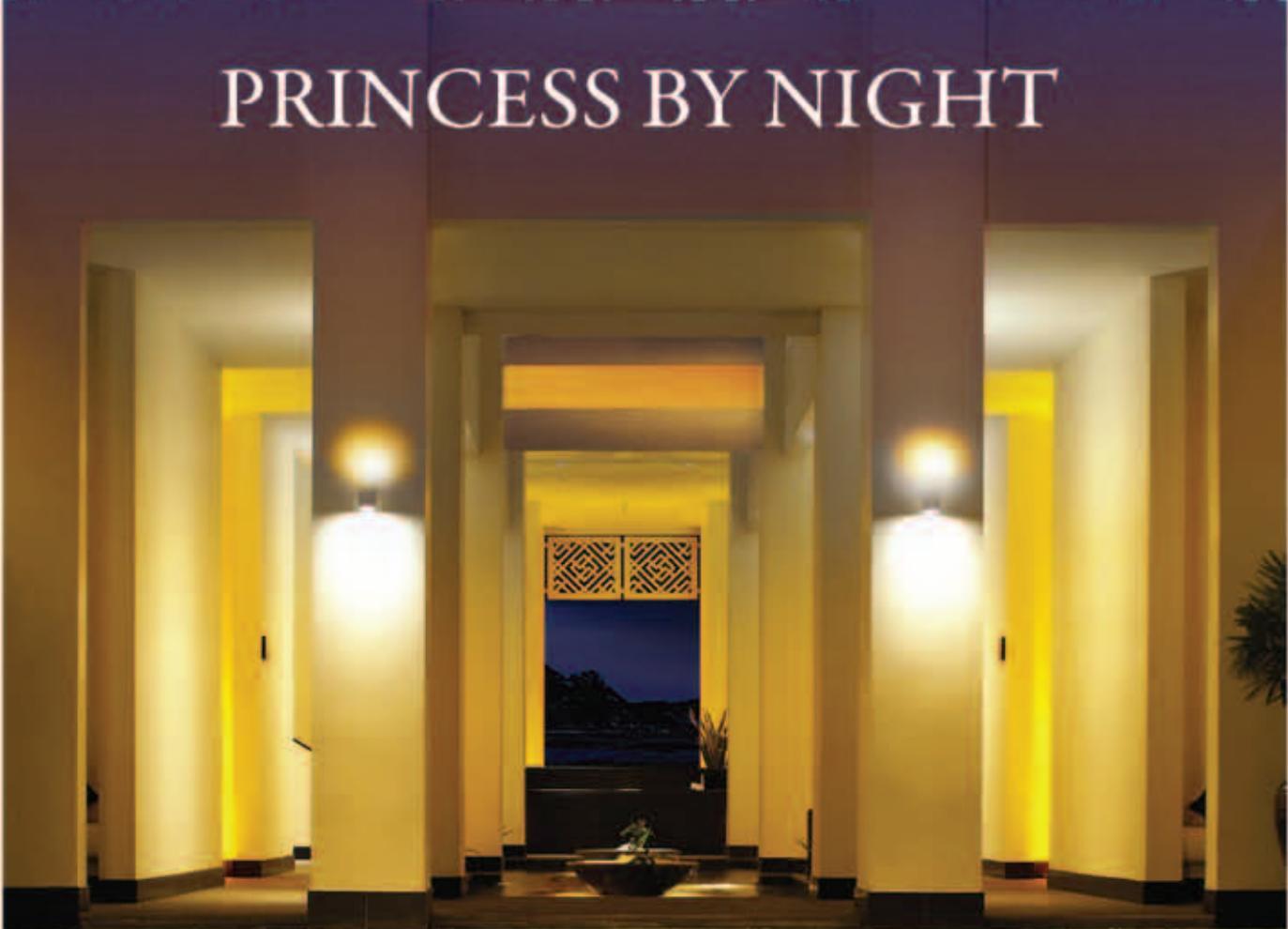
Astoria is the quintessential neighborhood representing the cultural diversity of New York City

P78 SKIN DEEP

Stylish accessories made from ostrich skin



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RESORT & SPA

WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

From Indonesian rijsttafel, Korean barbecue to Japanese hamburger and steak, this month's reviews are all about Asian cuisine



IMAGE BY NGOCTRAN

46

P80 THE WHITE STUFF

A heavy coffee drinker finds out if one dental visit can erase years of coffee staining

P82 MY LIFE AS

A railway crossing guard and how hard it is to protect people from an oncoming train

P92 SURVIVAL GEAR

Designer Jake Orak keeps indigenous cultures alive with his travel bags

COLUMNS

P16 SAIGON MYTHBUSTERS

Is air conditioning bad for your child's health?

P70 LIFE'S A TRIP

Manipulating the credit card system to get a free (or very cheap) vacation

P72 POSTCARDS FROM VIETNAM

The process of dyeing batik fabric by the H'mong tribe

P83 HOME INTERIOR

Lines, whether horizontal or vertical, can make or break your home

P95 LEGAL EASE

Applying for Vietnamese citizenship as a foreigner

Hop on the Jeepney

Despite growing up in NYC, the Melting Pot of America, my first real introduction to Filipino culture surprisingly didn't happen until I was in high school, on Cultural Awareness Day, to be precise. All the seniors were to bring in something — food, costumes, musical instruments — that represented our heritage. It was then that I tasted Filipino food for the first time and was surprised by the differences and the similarities. The chicken *adobo* the Filipino exchange students shared reminded me of *thit kho to*, swapping out fish sauce for vinegar and soy sauce, but essentially a stew with a hint of pepper that's great with rice white to soak up the sauce.

Happily, since moving to Vietnam, I've had more opportunities to experience other facets of the Filipino culture, from working with my Filipino colleagues Rico Gonzales, Jim Abril and *Oi* Creative Director Paolo Maling to taking short jaunts to the Philippines for vacation (see the article on beautiful Boracay in this issue) to enjoying the diversity that Filipino-owned eateries, businesses and residents bring to Phu My Hung. We're happy to share with you this month a small slice of Filipino life here in Saigon in our cover series, showcasing the talent, drive and creativity our Filipino friends bring to Vietnam.

The Filipino culture wasn't the only thing I missed back in NYC. I'm embarrassed to admit that despite being only a subway ride away, I've only been to Queens a handful of times and know very little about the neighborhood. Kendra

Granniss speaks passionately about her corner of New York City, one that few tourists (and obviously, even locals) never get to see. After reading *The Queens of New York*, it'll definitely be on my list of places to go the next time I'm back Stateside to visit family.

For many of us, living in Vietnam means having the opportunity to help the sometimes less fortunate. However, a friend recently found out the hard way that giving cash directly to a charity he hadn't thoroughly researched was not the best idea. It turns out the considerable sum he donated ended up being used to rent a car and driver for the owner of the charity to travel around in for the past nine months, not exactly helping the people it was meant to help. This incident has sadly made him hesitant about donating to charities anymore here in Vietnam but after reading *Bridge the Gap* by NPD Khanh, I'm convinced that the solution isn't to stop donating but to be better informed as to how you give, who will benefit and talking to organizations that have inside understanding of the culture and charities in Vietnam.

However, not everyone is out for charity as James Pham's *Survival Gear* brings out. I'm coveting the Saigon Sling from Ethnotek, not only because of the 'cool' factor of having a well-made bag that features textiles woven in Vietnam, but because it's a way to preserve the traditional craft and lifestyle of ethnic minorities while respecting them as people,

not charity cases. I found the story behind Vietnam-based Ethnotek really inspiring and love that there are people right here in our community that are finding tangible ways to give back to the country they love.

As my friends can attest, I'm an avid bargain hunter and live to shop at markets, fairs and thrift shops. My closet is full of memorable finds like a USD160 pony skin bag that I snagged for USD10 at a mall closing in Kobe and a second-hand Comptoir des Cottonniers jacket I picked up at a Parisian shop for less than one-tenth of its original price. Naturally I was excited to find out about the launch of 3A Bazaar in the article *A Fair to Remember* and although I sadly missed their first fair, I've got my eyes and ears open for their next one.

As always, we have so much to share with you this month, from an Indonesian feast with a Dutch twist (*All Things to All People*) to how to work the system for free travel (*Life's a Trip*) to some of the most interesting personalities you'll ever have the pleasure of meeting!

Have a great September, everyone! ■

CHRISTINE VAN
Managing Editor

Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



SEPTEMBER 6

What: Vietnam Swans AFL Asia Match & 'Ladies Day'

Where: RMIT Sports Grounds, D7

About: In conjunction with the Saigon Colts & Saigon Lady Gaels, the Vietnam Swans will be holding an open day, which will see them host AFL Asia powerhouse the Philippine Eagles. The day will consist of three games and will be open for all players, new and old to join. Non-players: join in the festivities with bar and catering facilities available. To help promote the day a special Ladies Tent will offer free foot massages, mani/pedicures, wine and finger food.

Contact: For further info, contact Josh Lee at nationalpres@vietnamswans.com



SEPTEMBER 11

What: AusCham Real Estate Symposium

Where: Intercontinental Asiana Saigon (corner of Le Duan & Hai Ba Trung, D1); 8am registration, 8:30am start

About: A symposium that will look 20 years back and two years forward in Vietnam's real estate industry. Government representatives and experts will share knowledge, experiences and insights on how to discover new opportunities. For members/co-hosts tickets are VND1,900,000 VND; non-member VND2,300,000.

Contact: Email [Phuong](mailto:Phuong at events1@auschamvn.org) at events1@auschamvn.org

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SEPTEMBER 13

What: Oskar Offermann

Where: The Observatory (corner of Le Lai & Ton That Tung, D1); 10pm; VND100,000 entry fee

About: As a well-known figure of the legendary Berliner's club Berghain/Panorama Bar, Oskar is the owner of two Berlin-based record labels: White Records and Rimini Records. His DJ sets bring the audience through a deep journey in house and techno. Supporting act will be DJ Hibiya Line.

Contact: Visit www.theobservatory-hcmc.com for details



SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 11

What: Nevertheless, solo exhibition by Tom Smith

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

About: Nevertheless exhibition will showcase projects Tom Smith has been working on in recent years. Work such as the *Absurdist Fringe* series, a collection of quirky ink and watercolor illustrations. *Codfish* is a series of mixed media pieces which uses oils, enamel paints, solvent transfer and stencils and references absurdist imagery strongly influenced by Sean Landers, Philip Guston and Paul McCarthy. *The Visitors*, which began several years ago, sees three new pieces in this exhibition. This series uses bland settings and random figures, where the viewer can speculate on the reasoning and allegory behind the imagery.

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



SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 31

What: Jamie Maxtone-Graham Solo Exhibition: *That Little Distance*

Where: Galerie Quynh (Level 2, 151/3 Dong Khoi, D1)

About: Dark, dreamy and fragile, Jamie's photographs conjure up an elusive world of nostalgia and longing, where people and objects of everyday life find themselves in a whirl of interconnection between the past and present. Playing upon ideas of colonial *carte-postales* and representation of lives in Vietnam, the works invite viewers to reflect on the meaning of human relationships, of history and of life itself.

Contact: Visit www.galeriequynh.com for details



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SEPTEMBER 19

What: Friendly Neighborhood Bike Ride

Where: Starts at The Bike Shop (250 Nguyen Van Huong, D2); 7pm

About: To celebrate the joy of cycling. It is a fun 15km ride suitable for riders of all levels. As this is an evening ride and cyclists will be sharing the road with other vehicles, for safety reasons it is strongly recommended that kids under the age of 12 do not participate. This is a self-organized ride and everyone is responsible for their own safety and well-being. Bike rentals are available for the ride.

Contact: Email thebikeshopvn@gmail.com for details

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SEPTEMBER 21

What: Largest Sailing Event in the World: Vietnam's Contribution

Where: Song Hien-Jibes, Suoi Nuoc, Near Muine, Binh Thuan; 9am-5pm; VND100,000 for kids, VND500,000 for adults

About: The event is in memory of Andrew (Bart) Simpson, UK Olympic gold medalist who died while training for the America's Cup in San Francisco last year. His friends wanted to arrange an event in memory of him, expecting about 20 clubs to register but instead over 600 clubs have signed up, across more than 40 countries, including Vietnam (www.bartsbash.co.uk). Anyone who joins the event has a chance to become a Guinness Book of Records holder. Sailors and non-sailors are welcomed; non-sailors will sail with experienced ones.

Contact: Email juliashaw2@gmail.com with dinghy/windsurf ability or experience, and equipment preference. Registration deadline is September 12



SEPTEMBER 22 - OCTOBER 17

What: 200 Hour Worldwide Yoga Alliance Teacher Training / 4 Week Hatha Yoga and Wellness Certification Course

Where: An Phu, D2

About: Become an internationally recognized, certified yoga instructor with Suzanne Vian, an E-RYT, RCYT, yoga teacher trainer from California. Suzanne has more than 20 years of experience in the yoga & wellness industry.

Contact: Email Suzanne at info@lifebright.org or call 090 835 2265 for details



SEPTEMBER 25

What: Canvas & Wine: Joan Miro

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

About: Joan Miro was a Spanish painter who lived in the 20th century. His styles were of broad range and original, including Fauvism, realism and surrealism. Learn to paint like him.

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



Chef owner Giuseppe Amorello



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SEPTEMBER 26

What: Culoe De Song

Where: The Observatory (corner of Le Lai & Ton That Tung, D1); 10pm; VND100,000 entry fee

About: Culoe De Song is a respected name in South Africa's dynamic deep house music scene. His talents gained him the recognition of Johannesburg-based superstar Black Coffee early in his career with the track 100 Zulu Warriors. Culoe has also been recognized by the Red Bull Music Academy, which selected him to participate in Barcelona in 2008. Under German label Innervisions, Culoe has released various tracks including The Bright Forest and has performed at the 2013 Innervisions party at Amsterdam Dance Event along with Dixon and Ame. Supporting act will be DJ Hibiya Line.

Contact: Visit www.theobservatory-hcmc.com for details

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SEPTEMBER 27

What: Vietnam Swans AFL Grand Final Party

Where: Game On Sports Bar (115 Ho Tung Mau, D1);

Doors open at 9am

About: The AFL Grand Final always proves to be a massive event with free flow drinks and an all day buffet, plus kids' entertainment, prizes and games.

Contact: VND1 million for tickets, available at the venue or online at www.vietnamswans.com/online-shop



SEPTEMBER 27

What: Sound Adventures Presents Frank Gossner

Where: The Observatory (corner of Le Lai & Ton That Tung, D1); 10pm; VND100,000 entry fee

About: Frank Gossner's career as a DJ began 1994 in Berlin. In 1996 Frank moved to NYC and his weekly Vampyros Lesbos Party soon turned into a NYC nightlife classic. In 2000, Frank moved back to Berlin where he founded the Soul Explosion which soon became Europe's biggest Deep Funk event. In 2005, Frank took a plane to West Africa where he extensively traveled countries like Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria to build a unique collection of rare African Funk records. Frank's African digging adventures are chronicled on his critically acclaimed blog www.voodooofunk.com. Frank's DJ sets burst with exclusive tracks and with over 15 years of experience in working dance floors across the globe, he knows how to put the power of an infectious groove on.

Contact: Visit www.theobservatory-hcmc.com for details



OCTOBER 10, 12 & 13

What: Waiting for Godot

Where: Cargo Bar (7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, Q4); 7:30pm, 2:30pm Saturday matinee

About: Dragonfly Theatre presents Waiting For Godot by Samuel Beckett. Generally considered to be one of the finest plays of the 20th century, this black comedy takes a lighthearted and irreverent look at the biggest questions in life: Who are we? Why are we here? What are we waiting for? The play follows two men as they wait for the seemingly never present Godot. At times striking and thought-provoking, at others downright silly, this is a play for all.

Contact: Tickets will be available for an advanced discount for VND300,00 at ticketbox.vn, or VND350,000 at the door.



OCTOBER 4

What: Sóng Dance Show

Where: Hoa Binh Theater (3 Thang 2, D10); 8pm

About: A dance show by John Huy Tran and Urban Dance Group (UDG). Performed by young Vietnamese talent, Sóng will bring to the stage a dynamic urban scene with hip-hop dancers, circus performers, beat-boxers, graffiti artists and more. Sóng supports youth culture development in Vietnam.

Contact: Visit facebook.com/songdanceshow for details



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Troi Oi

The country by numbers



57 trees, located in the 23/9 Park, are scheduled to be uprooted for the Ben Thanh Metro Station. Last month, 51 trees, some over 100 years old, were taken down in front of the Opera House for the same purpose. To ease concerns, Nguyen Van Dung, Deputy Director of the Urban Traffic Management Division No.1, said that his team would try to cut down as few trees as possible and are exploring options to replant them elsewhere. In addition to the trees, it's been reported that the statue in front of Ben Thanh Market will also be moved to accommodate construction of the city's first metro line.



VND150,000

may be collected from motorbike riders as a "road maintenance fee" starting January 1, 2015 if the government approves a proposal by The Ho Chi Minh City Department of Transport. The annual fee will cost riders of motorbikes with engines of up to 100cc VND50,000, VND120,000 for bikes with 100-175cc engines, and ones with 175cc or over will have to pay VND150,000. No fees will be imposed on electric bicycles while VND2.16 million will be levied on four-wheel cargo vehicles with 1-cylinder engines.



VND3 MILLION – VND5 MILLION

is how much primary school students in Ho Chi Minh City may have to pay for tablet devices if a proposal on "e-textbooks and tablets for primary students" is approved for the coming school year. The proposal, introduced by the city education department at a conference held last month, will cost around VND4 trillion to "bring around 300,000 first, second and third grade students into special e-classes," according to a draft of the new law. Each pupil will use their tablet to study with and do test exercises while teachers "control" the class via computer. Study content, including sound files and images, will be pre-installed onto the tablets.

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106-YEAR-OLD MAN & 100-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

have been recognized as the oldest couple in Vietnam by The Vietnam Book of Records (Vietkings). Cao Vien and Vu Thi Hai, residing in a rural village in the north-central province of Nghe An, are farmers. They have three sons and five daughters, six of whom are still alive. The couple has a total of 34 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Both of them are still in good health, according to Vietkings. Vien said he was 24 when they married. It is rare to find couples who are both more than 100 years old. Living in peace and following moral principles and taking exercise regularly help them stay healthy.



USD940

fine was given to a Vietnamese couple, by the police, for spreading a rumor on Facebook that an infection of the

Ebola virus had occurred in Hanoi. Vuong Ba Huy, 31, and his wife Do Thuy Linh, 29, each posted false warnings on their Facebook pages on August 11 and 12 that a Vietnamese person had been infected with the deadly Ebola virus and was being treated at Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi.

"Urgent news: The Ebola virus has appeared in Vietnam, at the Hanoi-based Bach Mai Hospital... Be careful to protect yourself and your families from the Ebola infection," Linh wrote on her Facebook page. The couple admitted to the police they posted the information in an effort to warn everybody about the Ebola virus. The couple committed administrative violations in the fields of post, telecommunications, information technology and radio frequency, pursuant to Governmental Decree 174, said Colonel Duong Van Giap, head of Hanoi's Social Crime Investigation Department.

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SALON SAVINGS

In September Maison Mikio Boutique Salon (8 Ton Dat Tien Street in the Garden Plaza 2 Complex, Phu My Hung) is discounting 40 percent off on all L'oreal hair treatment services and during Happy Hour (9am-12pm, Tuesdays-Fridays) all hair services (excluding re-growth and highlighting treatments) are 30 percent off while nail services are 20 percent off. The salon and spa offers clients a spacious yet intimate setting for salon and beauty services such as hair styling, coloring, manicures, pedicures, skincare and waxing. Call 5412 4773 or visit www.facebook.com/maisonmikio for more info.



HEALTHY DELICACIES

Sample premium beef cuts and fresh vegetables at Shang Palace Restaurant (www.shangpalace.com.vn) prepared by the restaurant's Hong Kong chefs throughout this month. The menu is prepared from fresh ingredients such as avocado, asparagus and walnuts combined with juicy and tender imported beef cuts to bring out healthy delicacies. Recommended dishes range from pure Sautéed beef cube with avocado salad, Baked beefsteak with black pepper & BBQ sauces, to Sautéed US beef cube with walnuts & XO chili sauce.



A NEW IMAGE & MENU

With beautiful 360 degree views of the city skyline and recently revamped, Top of the Town Bar & Restaurant's (located on the 25th floor of the Windsor Plaza Hotel in District 5) new menu highlights their extensive selection of premium USDA beef and fresh seafood. Additionally, an international selection of wines is available by the glass or bottle for perfect pairing with any meal. For other drink choices, TOTT offers a selection of premium spirits, cocktails, and imported authentic Reinheitsgebot brews including Krombacher draught, Krombacher Dark, and Schneider Weisse by the bottle. Imported Henkell Trocken varieties of German sparkling wine are also available. The new menu presents a culinary collection that is savory, balanced and affordable. For a limited time, Windsor VIP Card holders will enjoy a 30 percent discount off the total bill when dining at Top of the Town Bar & Restaurant.

EATING VIETNAM

Craving some authentic dishes from Vietnam's main regions on National Day? Then head over to Riverside Café at Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon (8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1) to enjoy the sweetness of Saigon, the spices of Hue and the subtleness of Hanoi all accompanied by live traditional music performances. From September 2-9, the hotel's Vietnamese 3 Region Dinner buffet is priced at: VND850,000++/person (food only) or VND950,000++/person (free flow of local beer/wines/sodas).



A O SHOW

ENJOY

Your Boarding Pass Privileges



DISCOUNTED SHOW TICKETS

Bring your international boarding pass to the A O Show box office at the Saigon Opera House to enjoy a 30 percent discount on your ticket purchase. Performing three to four shows every week at the city's iconic Saigon Opera House, the A O Show is an authentic acrobatic mix of bamboo cirque, live music and gravity-challenging stunts. In just one hour, the show captures the essence of Vietnamese lives from peaceful hamlets to vibrant cities. The promotion applies only to international flights to Ho Chi Minh City, one ticket per boarding pass, boarding pass must be valid within seven days of travel and offer is valid until September 30, 2014. For more info, drop by the ticket box (7 Cong Truong Lam Son, D1), visit www.aoshowsaigon.com or call 0124 518 1188.



EXPERIENCE MALAYSIAN CULTURE

New World Saigon Hotel (saigon@newworldhotels.com), in collaboration with the Malaysia Tourism Board, invites you to experience Malaysian culture from September 10-21 with sizzling specialties dishes, prepared by a guest Malaysian chef, along with traditional Malay dances. At Parkview get ready to dig into *satay*, lamb *rendang*, *char kway teow* (stir-fried rice cake noodle) and much more. Wash it all down with *teh tarik* tea, and finish off with a traditional Malaysian dessert such as *bubur chacha*, *kuih talam* and *kuih dadar*. Their Chinese chefs at Dynasty have worked with a Malaysian guest chef to create a five-course set menu of Malaysian specialties, which will be available during both lunch and dinner. Visit The Lounge for an afternoon filled with Malaysian delights. Enjoy free flow of delicious Malaysian *teh tarik* tea, while choosing favorites from the high tea selection and a trolley filled with sweet and savory Malaysian treats. A live action station creating traditional *roti jala* completes the experience.



NEW DIM SUM PLACE

The two-story San Fu Lou (www.sanfulou.com) restaurant serves noodles with beef brisket, pork or wonton prawn dumplings along with an assortment of dim sum available daily. Be it the classic youmian, traditional hand-pulled la mian or fried ho fun, there's nothing like the simple sustenance of a plate of noodles. In addition to Cantonese fare, they offer Peking duck, pork and chicken. To complement the food, the tea bar serves tea infused with fruits, herbs and flowers.



LUXURY ACCESSORIES

Viet Khanh Phu enters the luxury accessories fashion scene with its debut collection called Aquamarine. Designs include bags, shoes, wallets and belts made out of skins from farm-grown crocodiles, ostriches and pythons. Prices range from a few million dong for wallets and clutches to VND20 million to VND25 million for handbags, and VND40 million for the most expensive item in the collection - a leather traveler's bag. Aquamarine launched last month and is available at Viet Khanh Phu's flagship showrooms in both Ho Chi Minh City (14 Pham Hong Thai, D1; 3824 1466) and Nha Trang (70 Tran Phu; 058 352 5345).

JAPANESE COOKING CLASSES

Saigon Cooking Class, in partnership with Blanchy Street restaurant, has launched a new cooking class for those interested in learning how to cook Japanese food. Chefs Martin Brito and Yogo Oba will be your guide through a delicious journey to present the essentials of Japanese cuisine over two lessons. Born in Sydney, Martin trained under Peter Doyle (widely recognized as the founding father of modern Australian cuisine). Yogo was invited by Matsuhisa to open Nobu London, Nobu Milan, Nobu Paris and Nobu Berkeley St where his outstanding skills flourished for eight years. In September there are two sessions (two classes per session) to choose from: 5th and 13th or 6th and 12th. Classes can be taught in English, Vietnamese or French on request with a maximum of eight students. Visit www.saigoncookingclass.com for more details.



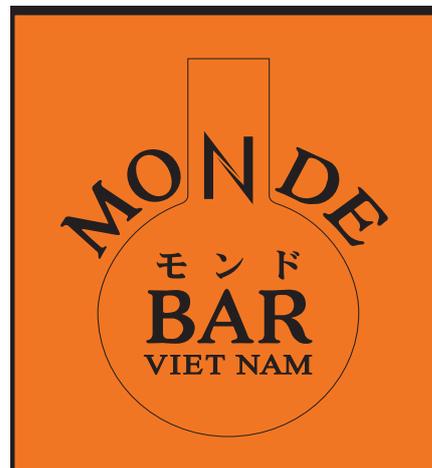
THE GRAND HO TRAM PROMO

To celebrate National Day and the mid-autumn festival The Grand Ho Tram Strip (reservations@thegrandhotramstrip.com or 064 378 8022) is offering deals from now until September 8. Guests will have the option of a festive special menu at Ju Bao Xuan every evening priced from VND1,388,000++. Meanwhile, Ginger will be putting on a seafood buffet priced from VND638,000++ on Saturdays. Foreign passport holders can avail themselves of the weekend's slots tournament where entrance is free and all participants get a chance to win prizes with total value up to USD3,500 cash. If golf is more your thing, enjoy the ongoing Preview Play priced from VND2,079,000 net including green fees, caddy and shared golf cart. At The Spa, it's buy one get one free offers on all 60-minute treatments across the weekend. Finally, free gifts for any child at the Kids' Corner or Teen center from September 5 to 8.



A WELCOME NOTE

Renaissance International School Saigon (Nguyen Thi Thap, D7) welcomes New Academic Year 2014 – 2015. "I would like to offer pupils and parents my very best wishes for an extremely happy and successful year. During the holiday period, Renaissance has continued to fulfill its commitment to remain a family school. Considerable work has been undertaken as part of our program of investment, and our new Early Years classrooms and Medical Room are two of the most obvious changes. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the teachers and administration staff for their hard work, efforts and the long hours they devoted to complete these refurbishments," says David Cole, Head of School. Renaissance is an international British school offering the National Curriculum for England complemented by the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), Cambridge IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate. Call 3773 3171 or visit www.renaissance.edu.vn for more details.



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IMAGE BY LE NGUYEN TUONG UYEN

Bridge the Gap

Promoting a new culture of giving in Vietnam

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH**

“IT IS DIFFICULT to give meaningfully. To not only feel good about what you do, but actually create an impact on those you want to help,” says Dana Doan, co-founder of LIN (www.lin.vn.org), an intermediary organization that bridges donors, grassroots VNPOs (Vietnamese Nonprofit Organizations) and volunteers. LIN’s (Listen, Inspire, Nurture) goal is to develop, nurture, learn from and educate a healthy local community of nonprofit participants capable of cooperating and taking on deep and complex Vietnamese problems. It acts as a community center, a supplier of financial, technical and human resources. It prepares local volunteers with specific skills required for specialized problem solving and connects these skilled volunteers to the nonprofits most suitable for them. It enables donors who want to not only provide money but also to actively participate and help create long-term solutions that target the root causes of problems.

One problem, according to Dana, is that VNPOs are being neglected and underfunded because of a lack of exposure,

often getting overlooked for internationally recognized NGOs. And while international NGOs may be better funded and suited to respond to large scale crises such as natural disasters and diseases, they lack the local perspective to tackle more nuanced Vietnamese socioeconomic problems and do not cater to local volunteers and donors.

“International NGOs naturally favor the international side of communication. They put out English materials which most locals can’t read and their programs cater more to corporate volunteers searching for an outlet for their social responsibility,” says Dana. “A lot of the time, these programs receive good feedback from the corporate volunteers and create a lot of good feeling for the givers, but don’t actually do anything to really help the ones who receive.”

Adding: “Simply having good intentions does not cut it. It takes more to close the gap between the giver and the receiver. We live in a complex society today and our social problems are becoming increasingly complex. It is the people that live here for good that understand the problems the most

and know the best way to solve them.”

After five years of operation, LIN has connected with 138 local nonprofit partners (which include disability groups, minority rights groups, children and homeless shelters, and wildlife preservation funds) offered 46 Narrow the Gap grants, matched 209 skilled specialist volunteers to the appropriate VNPOs, and trained countless more.

Give & Receive

In this day and age of transparency, prioritizing lean organizations, shortening the money stream from donors to receivers, and avoiding misuse of charity funds, the concept behind LIN, which on paper creates another intermediary between donors and end receivers, may be a difficult one to understand, but to Dana, it is not only fully justified but also vital to the long-term development of VNPOs.

“It is true that most people, when they are giving or volunteering, prefer to have as few in-betweens as possible. They want to be able to get into direct contact with

IMAGE BY LENGUYEN TUONG UYEN



IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



“As it develops, Vietnam is becoming less eligible for international aid.”

the receivers. Having one organization in between the donors and receivers already opens up chances for misuse of funds. Going by that rationalization then going through two organizations instead of one would probably be worse. But that argument generalizes and oversimplifies the issue at hand. If donors were to give money directly to the people who need them, will it really solve the problems at their root cause?” Dana argues. “I do not think so. What it does instead, is provide a short-term solution that does little to the root cause.”

She cites Pakistan and other unpopular NGO destinations. “These are countries that naturally have many problems but the money doesn’t come pouring in until something really bad happens or somebody gets killed. It is important to do charity but we have to solve problems. Money flows in when a bridge collapses or a typhoon occurs. We definitely need charity money after such disasters, but what about making sure that the bridges are stable enough? Or working on a coastal alert system?”

LIN believes the important part of solving the problem is to think proactively, to act before things get so bad nothing can be done. Naturally, this is something that takes the effort, knowledge and funding of an entire local community, not just individuals or any single nonprofit group for the simple reason that they do not possess the required resources. Additionally, large international NGOs may not possess the local insight to see the problems from the start.

“The handouts will stop at some point,” says Dana, referring to time frames

that most international NGOs have to work within. “As it develops, Vietnam is becoming less eligible for international aid. This year alone, many international groups have announced their plan to gradually shift their attention and funding to countries that need it far more than Vietnam. At which point, it falls to the community to decide what to do to make our society better and how to do it.”

LIN’s longest running program is their Narrow the Gap grants which are offered three times a year. “Every year we hold surveys to update ourselves on the current issues and let the community choose which one requires our immediate attention. We also invite experts on the issue into our forums,” explains Dana. “It is a chance for us and the community to educate ourselves on deeper issues and to discuss on the best way to solve them.”

The best proposal, judged by the community, receives the grant as well as LIN’s active assistance in carrying out their proposal. “Partnership with LIN is free. There is no hidden fee. The purpose of this partnership is involvement, commitment, narrowing the gap between the people who give, the people who receive, and the people who make it happen.”

This year the theme was education and, because of the generosity of an anonymous donor, the size of the grant tripled to VND600 million for the first prize winner and VND400 million and VND200 million for the second and third prize winners respectively. “With this money, we can do much more. We can take on bigger, more ambitious projects. We can solve more, do more, call on more people, open more doors. Gradually, this will get us more attention, more people coming and adding to the community.” ■

WINNERS OF THE 2014 NARROW THE GAP GRANTS

YOUR UNDERSTANDING LIGHTENS OUR LIFE (VND600 MILLION):

A project to narrow the gap between the community and visually disabled people (by Thien An Shelter - MATA)

DESIRE TO INTEGRATE (VND400 MILLION):

A project to foster communication skills, raise awareness about rights and offer art classes to the hearing impaired (by Deaf Community of Ho Chi Minh City)

ENHANCING EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN (VND200 MILLION):

A project to improve the physical state and capacity of migrant children so they can improve their lives (Cau Han Project by Ho Chi Minh Child Welfare Association)

Smooth as Silk

A modern reinterpretation on a centuries-old art

TEXT BY CRAIG THOMAS IMAGES PROVIDED BY CTHOMAS GALLERY



Graceful Lady

SILK PAINTING IS no longer the popular medium of expression among Vietnam's contemporary artists it once was. With a history dating back centuries, recent decades have seen this once vibrant traditional art form decline into something bordering on kitsch or cliché. Young Vietnamese artists have come to view silk as an outdated material – a fact reflected in the dwindling numbers of students studying silk painting in the country's fine arts universities.

Saigon-based artist Bui Tien Tuan is doing his best to reverse the tide. "Many Vietnamese artists have chosen to abandon painting on silk because they think the material is not suitable for the times we live in. Even contemporary Vietnamese silk painting has typically focused on themes like landscapes and traditional village life and looks like it could have been made 50 or 60 years ago. The way I am different is the way I look at color, the way I dye the silk, and the modern, urban quality of Saigon that comes into my paintings."

Tuan spent the first decade of his career working primarily with oils on canvas. His decision five years ago to return to painting on silk full-time sprang from his love of the material and his sense that it was starting to fade into a solely decorative form. Tuan hopes to help preserve and reinvigorate what he regards as an important part of Vietnam's cultural heritage.

"When you are working with oils it can be superficial in a way as you are just embossing the surface of the canvas with the paint. With silk, you are penetrating the material with the color," he explains. "The process for achieving this is quite labor intensive and time consuming but it appeals to my meticulous nature."

Although silk is a difficult material to work with, Tuan modestly downplays his technical abilities. "I don't overestimate my skill in working with silk. Carving out an independent and unique space for my work in the greater art scene is more important to me and more difficult than just mastering a technique. I want my silk paintings to be immediately recognizable to viewers as my own."

Silky Skin

With his ongoing *Frivolity* series, Tuan demonstrates silk can still speak to a modern audience. His lively and colorful portraits of women are a far cry from the muted tones and staid subject matter

FROM TOP: Girl in the Flower Dress I, Solo Performance & Bui Tien Tuan

of traditional Vietnamese silk paintings. Uncharacteristically for Vietnamese silk painting, many of his paintings feature nudes and many of his subjects tend towards the zaftig (deliciously plump, or carrying extra weight very well). “I think if you look closely at the images in my paintings you can clearly see the breath of contemporary life, the spirit of modern women and a reflection of present day society.”

Tuan’s choice to represent women in the paintings of his *Frivolity* series is well suited to the material. He believes silk has a delicacy that is feminine in essence and the female form comes to life through silk. Tuan’s women are mostly portrayed nude with the skin not painted or colored but left without tincture, emphasizing Tuan’s belief in the intimate and symbiotic relationship between silk and skin.

Paintings like *Girl in the Flower Dress 1* show the diverse influences Tuan incorporates into his work. He professes great admiration for the Japanese artistic sensibility and it is easy to see elements of manga in his compositions. The well versed will also see the influence of the *ukiyo-e* genre of Japanese woodblock prints of the 17th – 20th centuries. Many of the paintings in the *Frivolity* series evoke the Art Nouveau poster art of the 1890s, also influenced by *ukiyo-e*, produced by devotees of Japonisme such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

A 1998 graduate of the Ho Chi Minh City Fine Arts University, Tuan supports silk painting in Vietnam by serving as an adjunct professor at his alma mater. “I don’t do it for the money. I want to share what I have learned and help keep silk painting alive in Vietnam. When I was studying there were only a few of us dedicated to silk and there was a real fear that it would be dropped completely from the university’s curriculum. I love silk painting and will do all I can to help keep it relevant.”

Bui Tien Tuan’s Frivolity 2.0 collection is currently on display in the lobby of the Sofitel Saigon Plaza hotel through the end of September.

BIO: Founded in Saigon in 2009, **Craig Thomas Gallery** (27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1; www.cthomasgallery.com; cthomasgallery@gmail.com) represents and holds regular exhibitions for young and mid-career Vietnamese artists working in painting, sculpture and mixed media. ■



PORTRAIT BY GLEN RILEY



A Fair to Remember

Skip the malls and head to 3A Station Bazaar for unusual gifts, artisan bargains and entertainment

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NEIL FEATHERSTONE**

"I DO NOT believe that there is a single bazaar in Saigon that can truly be called a fair in its original meaning in the West," says Lam Quynh Trang, the organizer behind 3A Bazaar, the latest fair to hit Saigon last month. 3A Station Bazaar (*Facebook: 3A Station Bazaar*), a bi-monthly weekend fair located on 3A Ton Duc Thang, D1 was founded through a cooperation between her company, Dream Up, and the community art and event space 3A Station.

"My first experience with bazaars was about two years ago in England," she shares. "It was a great experience. A bazaar is not just a place to go to when you need to buy the odd handmade jewelry piece or homebrewed lip balms on the cheap. It is also about the entertainment, the performances, the crowd, the social experiences. People go to bazaars for the experience, to enjoy themselves in the



company of those they love for a full day or at least a half day, not for the cheap souvenirs. And not just young people go to fairs or sell at fairs. Children can go. Couples can go. Old people definitely do go. The whole family can have an entire day's outing at the fair."

The fair boasts long lines of stalls selling various local handmade goods, fashion items from indie designers and odd knickknacks. However, frequenters of similar Saigon-based fairs and flea markets may think 3A Station Bazaar is just the latest in a trend of outdoor markets popping up around the city.

"I do not think that Saigon actually has any single fair that truly replicates the authentic experience," Trang says. "Whenever the Vietnamese go to these bazaars, they go in, buy whatever they want, take a quick gander around, and then hightail it out of the bazaar before they suffocate. Who can enjoy an

experience like that?"

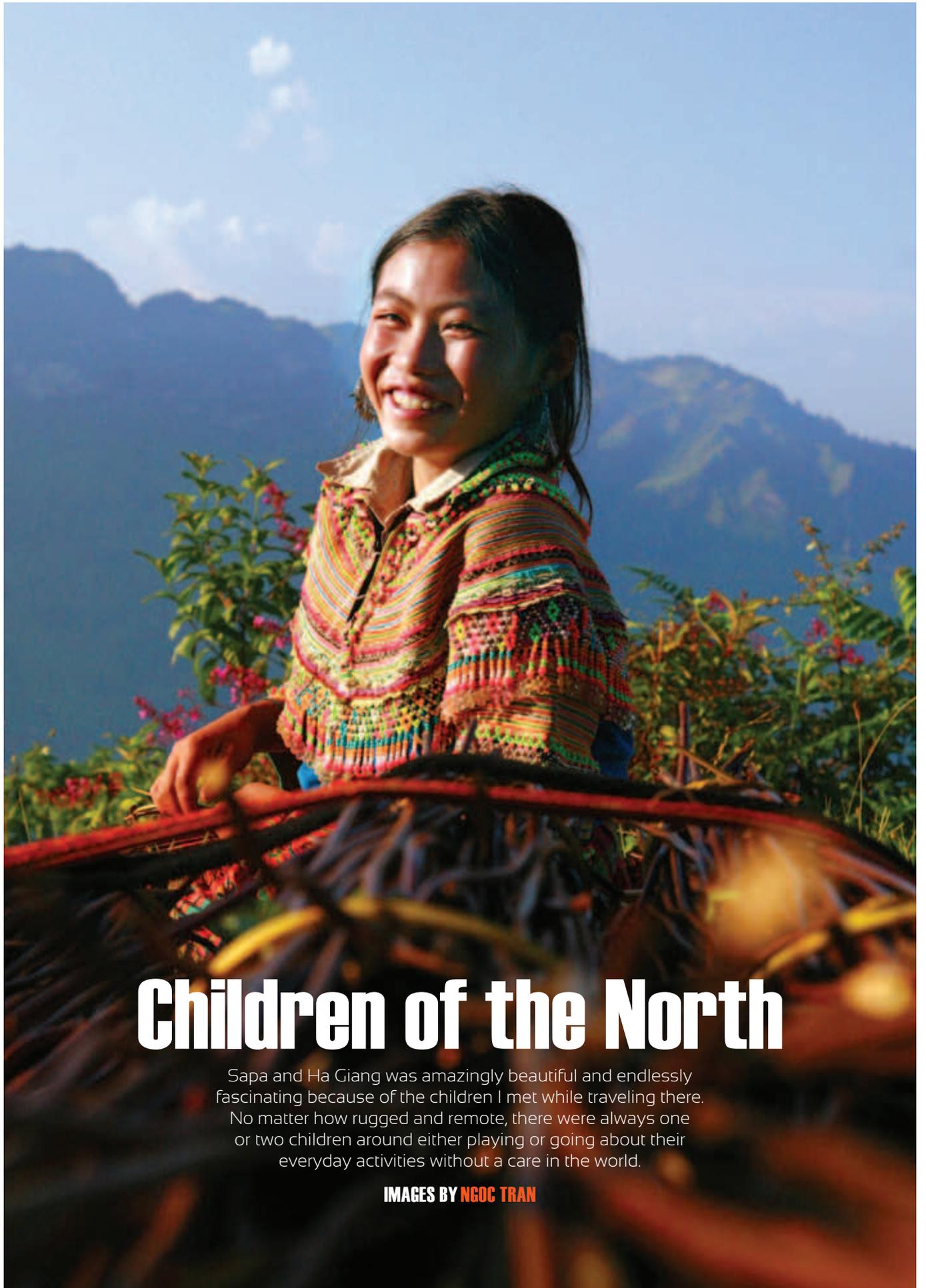
"And then, there are the products," Trang adds. According to her, the existing fairs and flea markets typically have lax policy regarding sourcing or accepting merchants and products into their bazaars, which eventually turned them all into pseudo markets selling cheap Chinese mass imports. "I often go to other bazaars to see what is already on offer. Most of the time, they are all the same. Export Vietnamese products, cheap Guangdong imports, a smattering of stuff handmade by college or high school students. And there are so many of them. Hello Weekends Market has 150 stalls. Saigon Flea Market also has 150 stalls. Yet so many of them are the exactly the same that I feel dazed just looking at the stalls."

Learning from others before her and drawing directly from her experience in England, Trang sets out to create a bazaar

true to its name.

"I want to create something that a British person or any expats living in Ho Chi Minh can come in, look, and say, 'Ahh, this is the bazaar that I know.' To that end, sourcing the products is very important," she insists. "I do not want a long line of lookalikes. Every single stall, every product has to have its own flair. The fashion items have to be designed. The handmade items need to be produced with love and care rather than whimsically for a quick buck on the side. And the knickknacks need to be truly unique and delightful."

Trang also organizes on-site entertainment. "We have music performances planned. But I want more: circus acts, stand-up comedy, theatrical plays and community events. Things that make you come back to the bazaar every other weekend and not feel like you have seen this before." ■



Children of the North

Sapa and Ha Giang was amazingly beautiful and endlessly fascinating because of the children I met while traveling there. No matter how rugged and remote, there were always one or two children around either playing or going about their everyday activities without a care in the world.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**





THE MYTH:

My Vietnamese family thinks air-conditioning is unhealthy, and is reluctant to let our kids spend too much time in an air-conditioned room. But I think the Saigon heat is too much for them, and that the air pollution isn't good for them either. Is there any truth to their belief?



WITH ALL THOSE bikes and the constant dust blowing about from construction projects, it's certainly true that the air over this city is far from fresh and it's not always good for young children to spend a lot of time outside breathing in all those pollutants – not if they have another option. Vietnam is in the world's top 10 most air polluted countries in the world, much of it sitting in a hazy smog over Ho Chi Minh City. It's not even recommended for adults to do much exercise outside, let alone children.

Air conditioners filter as well as cool the air, so they're an effective way of removing dangerous particulates that can otherwise lodge themselves in the lungs. That said, air-conditioning isn't without its own health issues.

According to pediatrician Dr. Jonathan Halevy of Family Medical Practice, the benefits of air-conditioning are obvious. "Air-conditioning reduces humidity, keeps you cool, reduces sweating and also reduces skin irritation such as heat rash or a worsening of atopic dermatitis – and it does keep the air a bit cleaner," he says. "Bringing down the humidity also reduces dust mite and mold growth, as well as any allergic reaction to them (such as allergic rhinitis and asthma).

"On the other hand, dry, cold air can be very irritating on the airways and many babies and adults suffer from stuffy or blocked noses because of



air-conditioning," he adds. "It can trigger coughs or an asthma attack and worsen the symptoms of a flu. If not treated routinely, a/c filters can collect dust and mold and spread them into the air, increasing the irritation."

For the best solution, especially with kids who are sensitive to colds and flu, Dr. Halevy recommends a mixed approach: "If your kids tend to suffer from a stuffy nose when they wake up in the morning and you suspect that the air-conditioning is irritating their breathing, try using a fan at night. If that's not an option, make sure the filters are cleaned routinely

(every three to four weeks) and that the room temperature is pleasant (not too cold or too hot) – remembering that the temperature you see on the a/c screen is not the actual temperature of the room. Using humidifiers may help a little."

With regular filter cleaning, air conditioners aren't harmful to the health per se – your kids are more likely to benefit from the cooler temperatures than otherwise. The only real threat is the prolonged exposure to dry, cold air. Balance air-con use with fans and humidifiers, and try to keep your kids cool at all times. – **Michael Arnold** ■



PINOY PRIDE

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THIS MONTH, WE EXPLORE THE PINOY DIASPORA IN SAIGON TO LEARN ABOUT ITS CULTURE AND PEOPLE.





SAUCY AND SIZZLING



FILIPINO CUISINE FINDS A FOOTHOLD IN SAIGON

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

DON'T BE TOO surprised if you happen to notice some expensive vehicles pulling up to an unassuming little canteen on one of the more anonymous stretches of Dien Bien Phu. Although the venue may seem indistinguishable from the many cheap, outdoor-eating *binh dan* diners that exist to serve the Vietnamese everyman in this town, look a little closer and you'll see that the cuisine on offer at this restaurant is anything but the common fare. It's probably the only place in Ho Chi Minh City where you'll find 100 percent genuine dishes from the Philippines – and if you happen to know any Filipinos who live here, chances are that they probably already order a good number of their meals from this tiny kitchen. Even the most successful among Filipino expats – and there are more of them here than you might think – drive right across the city to find this little diner, just for the privilege of

squatting on a plastic stool by the side of the road and enjoying a little taste of home.

Beneath the Vietnamese camouflage, this is a real *panciteria* of the kind you'll see everywhere on the streets of Manila, the kind of place affectionately referred to as a '*turo-turo*' venue. As the restaurant's proprietress Marie Malit tells me, "*Turo-turo* means 'point-point' – you just point through the glass at the dishes you want. It's food for the masses, the common people. It's the way we Filipinos like to eat, very casual. We just love to gather, eat and laugh. It's nothing fancy."

The name of the venue is a bit of a mouthful – **Loriekot's Lutong Bahay** (193 Dien Bien Phu, D3; 093 742 0716) – it means "Little Lorie's Home Cooking." Lorie is Marie's little daughter, who I see hopping around the stools begging for a *hotsilog*. That's a cross between an American hot dog and a plate of egg and rice that looks



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Dinuguan, Pancit, Tapsilog, Bulalo, Bopis

very similar to a Vietnamese *com tam*, a prime example of the crazy mish-mash of cultural influences that has made modern Filipino cuisine the extraordinary hybrid it has become. Just as Chinese as it is Hispanic and just as Central American as it is Austronesian, the taste of the Philippines is very much like its people – a complex blend of polar opposites made warm, simple, and really, really likable.

That's the one insight you'll need if you've never tried Filipino cuisine – it's a mash-up. Take the *pancit*, one of Loriekot's signature dishes – an easy stir-fry noodle that's essentially a local twist on a Chinese vermicelli. "The secret to *pancit* is that it's highly adaptable," says Marie. "You can almost put anything you want in it."

What gives it its Filipino kick is the vinegar marinade and the thick, gravy-like sauce. We try a chicken *pancit* (VND40,000) that has a creamy texture almost like a pasta sauce, but with bold soy and pepper

flavors. It's nicely paired with a plate of *adobo*, a preserved marinated meat you'll find on the tables of every restaurant in the Philippines. Although it's named after a similar Spanish dish, *adobo* actually predates the European presence in the Philippines and is about as close as you can get to truly native cooking.

Loriekot's other Filipino staple is its series of silogs – traditional breakfasts with rice (*sinangag*) and eggs (*itlog*), hence the name. Marie provides *silogs* at any time of the day – we try a *tapsilog* (VND50,000), the original silog recipe with beef marinated in garlic, soy sauce, sugar, and pepper. It's intensely aromatic, made even more fragrant by the dipping sauce (a delightful mild vinegar dip with onion and calamansi lime) and a side dish of *bulalo* soup, infused with pork bone marrow and as rich as any thick, creamy broth – although it's actually a clear soup.

We went a little deeper into Filipino



“I DO MOST OF MY BUSINESS THROUGH FACEBOOK AND MY VIBER GROUP,” SAYS MARIE. “WE DELIVER ANYWHERE IN THE CITY, AND I PUT UP A NEW MENU EVERY DAY. PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS DROPPING ME MESSAGES AND ORDERS, ASKING WHAT’S ON TODAY, OR IF I CAN MAKE THIS OR THAT DISH.”

territory with a couple of small side dishes – a *bopis* meat salad (VND50,000) made of diced pork heart and lungs, and thus incredibly soft and tender, and a *dinuguan* pork blood stew (also VND50,000) that was viscous and tangy, the sharp undertones of the blood brought into fine relief by pureed tomatoes and onion. Perhaps unusual preparations for the modern Western palate, these are hardly among your typical Asian fear-factor dishes – both of them are European in origin.

SOCIALLY CONNECTED

Loriekot’s has been open since last November, but Marie has been serving the local Filipino community since long before that. In the seven years since following her husband here (an engineer whose company transferred him to HCMC), Marie has taken on an increasing role in catering for various Christian groups from the Philippines that the family was

involved in. “I started out just cooking at home for friends, and then for parties,” she says. “It was mostly *pancit* noodle dishes and baking. Every weekend, I had a lot of orders, especially for the CLS Christian Life Program. I found myself catering to 80-100 people. When I started realizing I could handle it, I knew I had to do this as a business.”

The result of this decision was the modest Dien Bien Phu venue. There’s no indoor seating, and the drinks are provided by the café next door, who sometimes lend Maria extra chairs in return for the side business. While other international cuisine venues in Ho Chi Minh City go in for colorful décor, a snazzy website and high-end prices, Loriekot’s settles for a functional menu board, a Facebook page, and prices on a level with a side-alley *pho* diner.

The social media is certainly working. “I do most of my business through Facebook

and my Viber group,” says Marie. “We deliver anywhere in the city, and I put up a new menu every day. People are always dropping me messages and orders, asking what’s on today, or if I can make this or that dish. If I get new customers arriving at the restaurant, I’ll take a photo for my Facebook page and tag them. The word spreads from there. I get a lot of new friends that way.”

It’s really all the business needs right now. When I ask her if the venue is successful, she answers frankly – “very.” Her husband confirms this: “It was originally just something for her to do. Now I’m looking forward to quitting my job and letting her make all the money.” He may be joking, but that day may come sooner than he thinks – Marie’s looking for larger premises along the same stretch, so Loriekot’s Lutong Bahay in its current form could well be on its way to becoming something a whole lot bigger. Watch this space.



THE TASTEMAKER

EDGE PAMUTE TALKS DUBBING, DJING AND REVOLUTIONIZING THE FACE OF ASIAN TV

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



MOVE OVER ZAC Efron, Justin Timberlake and Jennifer Lopez. Hollywood's so-called Triple Threats (singing, dancing, acting) have a ways to go to catch up to Edge Pamute: international DJ, event promoter, music / TV / radio producer, sound architect and co-founder of Yan TV.

On a lazy Thursday afternoon, we find ourselves in the vintage hip surrounds of Maison Mikio, a tony salon that would not be out of place in Seoul, Tokyo or New York. Sipping an iced tea, Edge is making use of the huge, open space, striking rapid fire poses against the floor-to-ceiling windows, spinning around on one of the salon's stools or playing with a handful of salon props. "Slower! Slower!" pleads the photographer, shutter clicks falling woefully behind the action. But as is so often the case, this self-proclaimed dreamer needs (or maybe takes?) no direction.

Born in the Philippines, Edge Pamute (yes, that *is* his real name he confirms with

an enigmatic smile) found himself as an unfulfilled music-crazed teenager in the 80s amidst a music revolution fueled by the British Romantic movement led by groups like The Pale Fountains and The Smiths. Shut out of clubs, Edge started organizing his own parties in the park. "People were hungry for this type of music, but it was hard to get the records. I started organizing my own little roving clubs that came out of my dire need to play music and to hear music." The budding DJ / event promoter found his calling, doing weddings, parties and even missing his own prom for a gig.

After getting a degree in Marketing and Economics, Edge found himself working for an ad agency in the early 90s when his boss took a job at the biggest TV channel in Asia, bringing Edge along as an idea man. "Edge, you have only one task here and that's to make this a happenin' TV channel. Not 'happening' but 'happenin'." Edge's response was: "Buckle up and enjoy the ride."

WOULD YOU CONSIDER THAT YOUR FIRST BIG BREAK INTO TELEVISION?

I was 23, 25 at the time and I didn't know what I was doing. I just thought: TV! Celebrities! Wow! But commercial TV was boring. There was no depth, no art, no fullness. Thankfully, my boss said, "Let's do something different. Let's not do what everyone else is doing." I thought that was cool because whatever I envisioned, these people had the willingness, money and infrastructure to do it. I remember closing down a whole street to launch [the 90s TV hit] *Charmed*. It was an event! We had fortune tellers and gothic bands and decorated the whole street like it was New Orleans. Nobody had done that. It wasn't just TV. It was a 360-degree experiential approach that wasn't there in the 90s. Now it sounds dinosaur but at the time, it was like "Wow. This is how TV should be!"

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE VIETNAMESE TELEVISION INDUSTRY?

In 2007 when the television business was privatized in Vietnam, I was hired to set up a TV channel here. I thought it would be an easy cut-and-paste job, catering to a similar population and demographic. But when I got here, I saw TV was a challenge. They were dubbing programs with only one voice! The challenge was to find the right people. It was hard to even find a cameraman. There was only graphic design school, no school for television or film.

At the time, they still played old, "everlasting" songs. But we made it cool. We added pop ups, channel bugs (on-screen logos) and straps (graphics in the lower part of the screen). We made it edible for everyone, revolutionizing TV without alienating the viewers by taking a "modern traditionalist" approach.

YAN TV HAS BLOWN UP REACHING 4.5 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS WITH OVER 7 MILLION DIGITAL FOLLOWERS. HOW IMPORTANT IS THAT KIND OF REACH?

Size matters. The reach matters. We have the power to shape the youth. You know the phrase: Do you want to be famous? Well, we can literally make anyone famous if we want to. Five or six years ago, we had a show called *Hip Hop Central* where we exposed people to what hip-hop was all about by featuring hip-hop artists in Vietnam and abroad. That was an important catalyst for the hip-hop scene to explode in Vietnam. This has been true with other music genres and scenes here.

SPEAKING OF VIETNAMESE ARTISTS, WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR VIETNAM TO BE ABLE TO EXPORT A CROSSOVER PRODUCT, SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF K-POP?

It'll take a big door to the world. Vietnamese artists need this door to open but right now it's not yet open. I mean, there are good artists but they're only thinking of Vietnam. I recently met some artists in Hanoi who were

talented and cool. I asked them who was managing them and they said, "No one. We want to be independent, indie." I told them: "If only you would open your mind not just about your art and your music but to what's happening around the world, you'd be much bigger artists." They had the look: boots, big hair, eyeliner. But it's going stop there if they don't work.

My project now is opening windows to the world for Vietnamese artists. I'm dealing with an aggregator that will help expose Vietnamese artists to 350 music portals around the world. Vietnamese artists can use social networking to find gigs outside of Vietnam. If they're industrious enough, they can manage a YouTube channel under Yan. It'll be a big thing to open up a market for them that's not just in Vietnam.



"THE PSYCHOLOGY IS IF YOU WANT TO WIN THE YOUNG GENERATION, YOU'VE GOT TO BE PRESENT WHEREVER THEY ARE"

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF VIETNAMESE TV LOOK LIKE?

The big thing on TV now is the formats [syndicated and structured shows] like *The Voice*, *Big Brother*, *American Idol*... You're going to see at least 25 different formats shown this year. Moving forward, you'll see more Western-inspired locally produced shows. We'll soon be launching a family channel skewed towards women. I hope it'll be revolutionary, something like the *Star World of Vietnam*, but not with the usual dramas. Maybe there'll even be a Vietnamese version of *Sex in the City*!

YOU KNOW THE SONG "VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR"? IS THE INTERNET GOING TO KILL TV?

In Vietnam, the medium of choice is still TV.

But media stacking is the next big thing. You watch TV while texting a friend on your phone and googling something on your tablet. MIT did a study and showed they're complementing each other, not killing each other. What you see on the internet will be amplified. You like what the host is wearing? Snap the QR code and go to the shopping site. We're doing everything. [In addition to Yan TV, the Yan Group is involved in events, websites and television production.] The psychology is if you want to win the young generation, you've got to be present wherever they are, from Coffee Bean to movie houses to bars to parking lots and even here at Maison Mikio!

YOU PROGRAM AND PRODUCE. YOU'RE THE CHIEF STRATEGIC OFFICER OF A HUGE SUCCESSFUL TV CHANNEL. YOU DO ARTISTS AND REPERTOIRE. YOU DJ INTERNATIONALLY. WHO IS THE REAL EDGE?

It's funny you ask that because I'm still trying to figure that out. I sent a text message to five people close to me, asking them who they thought I was. Everyone said that I am a child trapped in a man's body. I'm highly creative but still naïve. I think it comes from me always being a dreamer. I feel like I have two personalities. There's the professional Edge who helped build Yan from the ground up. Then there's the Scrambled Edge, my name when I produce music and DJ underground gigs. I try to DJ once a month in another country. It's all about travel, some money and exposure. Different cultures, different kinds of music. That side of me is totally unrelated to Yan. But it feeds my mind, body and soul.

THE ENTERTAINMENT FIELD IS DOMINATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE. IS YOUR AGE A PLUS OR MINUS?

You know, I'm like a big kid. I don't need to cope with people. It's the other way around — people need to cope with me! [laughs] But I try to keep myself updated. I read a lot. I go to where the youth are, the bars, cafes and clubs they go to. I follow their websites to keep abreast with what's happening. In the beginning, my Vietnamese staff would ask me, "Edge, are you sure about this? Vietnam may not be ready." But I reminded them that I have 25 years' experience. They stop and realize, "Oh shit, this guy knows what he's doing."

Maison Mikio is located in Garden Plaza 2 (8 Ton Dat Tien, D7). In addition to the usual hair cutting, coloring, perm and hair / scalp treatments, the spacious two-story salon also does nails, waxing and skincare, including the 90 minute galvanic face massage (VND1,000,000) enjoyed by Edge. Hair-related services are done on the cheerfully open ground level while skin treatments are cared for upstairs, in one of two VIP rooms, a massage room or a manicure / pedicure nook. Owner Mikio has more than 10 years' experience in the industry, aiming to replicate the success of his salon in Korea.



VIET CAPITAL BANK

SAIGON HEAT

Molten
OFFICIAL

Air Asia
ABL
OFFICIAL BALL

GG7

PACIFIC RIMS

POINT GUARD FOR THE SAIGON HEAT, FROILAN BAGUION OPENS UP ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES, FAMILY AND BASKETBALL

TEXT BY NPD KHANH IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

"I USED TO sneak out of my house in the afternoon to go play ball while I should have been sleeping like my mother told me to," shares Froilan Baguion, Saigon Heat's Filipino point guard. Born in 1980 in Metro Manila, he started playing as early as six-years-old and calls basketball an addiction that would define his life and career.

Basketball was Froilan's ticket to college because his family was too poor to pay tuition fees. Resigned to working right after high school to support his family, everything changed when he met the coach of a college basketball team, Manny Fandango and later on Rico Perez. These guys laid the foundation for his professional basketball skills and passed on the principles of a good basketball game.

"It's not how you play the game. It's how you finish the game," Froilan recalls the advice he received from them. The fourth and last quarter of the game is the most vital one. A team can win the first three and then lose during the last quarter because stamina is ebbing, fatigue rising and the wrong tactical decisions are made.

His skills eventually earned a two-year college scholarship playing for the Philippine National University Bulldogs and a professional league spot under the Welcoat Dragons. However, it was in the ASEAN Basketball League (ABL) where he garnered international fame, winning his first ABL crown under the Philippine Patriots and then by touring the next five years with the San Miguel Beermen and the Chang Thailand Slammers. Froilan is one of the Philippines' pure point guards. A great pass-first point guard, he leads the ASEAN Basketball League in assists. He is one of the few remaining pass-first point guards in the Philippines.

In an interview that appeared on the ASEAN Basketball League website, Froilan's coach at the time Joe Bryant (father of Los Angeles Lakers star Kobe Bryant) said: "Froilan has the kind of skills of Chris Paul and Steve Nash. He has a great leadership skill in him and has made my job a lot easier. Sometimes as a coach

you have to stand up offensively and tell your player to do this and do that. But Froilan has a great feel for the game and communicates with all the players so it really makes the job easier on offense."

DRAFTED

"My entrance into the Saigon Heat was pretty uneventful," he says. "My coach talked to me one day, and then I met Mr. Michael from Saigon Heat. And they asked me, 'How would you like to come play for this young Vietnamese team that just started a couple years ago?'"

"I'VE SEEN THE VIETNAMESE CROWD IN MY PREVIOUS TOURS SINCE THE PATRIOTS. VIETNAMESE BASKETBALL IS SO YOUNG, BUT THE CROWD IS AMAZING. THERE IS A SENSE OF PURITY IN THE VIETNAMESE FANS' LOVE FOR BASKETBALL."

Froilan's answer came easily. "People may think that I came to play for the Saigon Heat because they pay better, but that's not true," he explains. "They pay about the same. But in the Philippines, I can get paid five, six grand a month and sit on a bench to watch players I know are not as good as me on the court simply because they know someone I don't. The choice then for me was either stay in the Philippines, sit around and do nothing and still get paid top dollar or go to other countries where the sport is still young and

honest and show the world what I've got. It really was no choice at all."

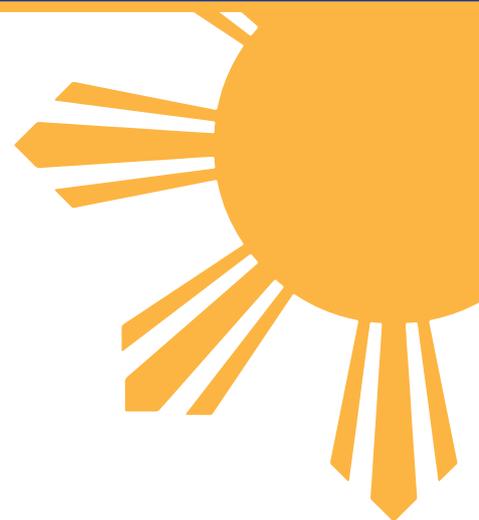
For his family, however, the decision was more difficult. "My wife and I argued. She worries about me. I'm here and she's in the Philippines and she doesn't know how I'm doing and if I'm OK. And then there are my kids and I can't bring them over... yet."

He joined the Saigon Heat earlier this year in a team consisting of six Vietnamese, two Americans, two Filipinos and one *Viet Kieu*. Saigon Heat was formed in 2010 and officially participated in the ABL in 2011 so recruiting seasoned players locally, then and now, has been difficult, sometimes causing friction between local and foreign players.

"The Vietnamese players do not lack for talent, that I can tell you," says Froilan. "But if I can describe them by one word, it would be 'young'. On the other hand, I've been where they are. Most of the time, I just think I've gotta help them out. I'm the experienced one. I have to show them what I know, and that's it. I would say that in the ABL, they [Saigon Heat] are the best.

"I've seen the Vietnamese crowd in my previous tours since the Patriots. It's funny. Vietnamese basketball is so young, but the crowd is amazing. There is a sense of purity in the Vietnamese fans' love for basketball. Filipinos love basketball just as much of course, and there are more basketball fans in the Philippines, but whenever a sport grows too strong eventually it's no longer just about the game anymore. Other things start coming into the equation - money, politics, gambling."

For Froilan, he's just enjoying the love of the game, wherever it takes him.





ISLAND ESCAPE

FUN AND SUN IN THE EMERALD WATERS AND WHITE SANDS OF BORACAY

TEXT BY FIONA GONZALES



IT WAS THE midweek of an off-peak season. Usually, times like this, I would expect to have the beach all to myself. But this was no ordinary beach. This was Boracay. And in Boracay, even a slow day is roaring.

Located about 2 km off the northwestern edge of Panay Island, Boracay is still very much in the midst of an upswing in popularity. Subsisting mainly on its coconut plantations and fishing for much of its modern history, it was only when a German travel writer named Jens Peter shared details of the island to the world in 1978 that it began to take root as a popular destination for backpackers. The wider travel community's interest has well and truly been piqued in modern times as Boracay draws over a million tourists each year, both domestic and foreign.

Probably the most famous aspect of Boracay is its absurdly picturesque beaches. Although there is some uncertainty about the etymology of the island's name, one theory is that it is derived from the local

word "*borac*" meaning white cotton, which shares some of the same characteristics of the fine, powdery sands synonymous with the area's shoreline.

Somewhat remarkable given the island's limited dimensions is the variety in beaches. White Beach, probably the most popular among tourists, is located on the west coast and offers the kind of landscape that appears to be lifted directly from a postcard. Sugary sands, palm trees and calm, clear waters make it the perfect spot for a relaxing dip in the ocean.

The east side is host to Bulabog Beach, one of Asia's most attractive destinations for kite surfers and a spot that enthusiasts of water sports simply have to visit. The higher winds and rolling waves combine to create a fantastic environment for the adventurous traveler to enjoy an exhilarating afternoon. Although these are perhaps the most well-known beaches, there are plenty of others to discover and explore. Yapak, Diniwid and Balinghai are all stunning in their own right, and a case



IMAGE BY SAIKOP

could certainly be made that their relative seclusion could make them even more attractive to prospective beachgoers.

GET ACTIVE

One thing irresistible in Boracay is the urge to get wet. The invitation from its enticing blue waters makes any excuse to stay dry futile and there are so many ways to get wet which go beyond just diving in. Right at the top of my list of must-do water activities was helmet diving. The helmet was a heavy fiberglass shell with a clear visor – heavy enough to rest on my shoulders while a constant supply of pressurized air from the surface, through a hose into the helmet, allowed me to breathe normally while pushing the water out through the opened bottom. While this doesn't give the mobility that scuba diving or even snorkeling does, it did let me walk on the sea bed under several meters of water. It's a wonderful way - especially for those who have not had the opportunity to take up scuba diving - to get a view of Boracay's aquatic life.

The descent into the underwater world was down a ladder from a boat assisted by a certified scuba diver, whose instructions (what hand signals mean and when to use them) were important to follow. Dives are done in groups and once down, the 15 minute dive offered not just an opportunity to interact with those in my group, but also to take a few photographs and interact with the fish (a piece of bread is given to everyone to feed them).

There are dive centers everywhere and they operate as a cartel and so you will find pricing is consistent among them, helping

to take the stress out of shopping for a bargain. The coral reefs surrounding the island beg to be explored and with a range of certifications on offer and companies catering to every level of experience, it wasn't long before I was doing just that. One of the most popular sites is Crocodile Island, sitting about 20 minutes from White Beach by boat. Named for its distinctive shape, it is host to a wide range of marine life of which moray eels, nudibranch, sea snakes and lion fish are but a smattering.

NIGHTLIFE & DINING

The sun may be down, but Boracay is never out. Bass starts pumping, streaks of light pulsate with the beat and the energy is still rising – it's party time in the island. I was looking for a place to relax over a few drinks while enjoying the cool breeze of the sea and came across Bamboo Lounge in Station 1 (Boracay's 3.5 km long White Beach is divided into three parts: Stations 1, 2 & 3). I plopped down on a big couch around a low box table - which stood on a native hand-woven mat - and as the lounge music played I ordered a drink, met some locals and kick started our night.

After a few drinks, we walk towards Station 2, every step we were taking, we felt the bass thud harder and found the source of the beat at Epic Bar. Different streaks of light flashing with the house music playing and without even noticing, I was nodding my head to the beat. Epic Bar, during my visit, probably was the hippest place where everyone gathered for some moving and grooving in their bikinis, board shorts and flip flops.

Of course the partying lifestyle isn't for

everyone. A further stroll down the beach offers fire twirlers, or a bargain at the night market. Or maybe charter a boat for an evening sail and a few champagnes while taking in the neon lit island from afar. While famous for its booming nightlife, the good times are certainly not limited to the party animals.

With so many restaurants to choose from, every meal in Boracay might be a hit-and-miss affair. It's very easy to fall prey to beachfront displays, buffet promos, and even free dinners, which turn out to be no charity work at all. So I made it a point to ask around first before stepping in. Among the rows of *paluto* restaurants in D' Talipapa, I opted for Plato D' Boracay Resto for most of my lunches since it had the most occupied tables; I had to wait 10 minutes for a table to become available my first visit there. The seafood was so fresh and delicious I often ate with my hands.

Dinnertime had me heading to Zuzuni, a Mediterranean restaurant located between Stations 1 and 2. It's a warm and cozy place that's best for people who dislike noisy and crowded places when eating or drinking. The star of the meal was the to-die-for Mati Chocolate Sin – a molten chocolate lava cake that's known across the island as one of the most decadent delights legally available.

Boracay can be a place of relaxation and pampering by the beach. It could also be a place of endless activities from snorkeling, helmet diving and island hopping to endless bars and beach parties. Boracay can be anything you want it to be. Just make sure you pack the sunscreen.



TWO-LIVE CREW

THE STORY OF HOW A SINGER MET A MUSICIAN TO FORM A HIT SENSATION

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



Thanks to their musical career and popularity, Sitti Gomez and musical partner Jason Jazz are amongst the most visible Filipinos in Ho Chi Minh City. Sitti, 29, and Jason, 33, have entertained expats in the city's entertainment venues for nearly four years. They've made their mark on the expat community for their broad repertoire of music styles, from jazz and cabaret to pop and rock and a generous contribution of time to charity.

SITTI'S STORY

"I'm a free-spirited person. I came from the provinces. I wanted to free myself," she says.

Her first singing gig was at a five-star hotel in Guangzhou, aged just 22. By night she sang jazz and love songs in English, by day she taught Chinese students English. When the contract ended, she returned to her hometown Bacolod City, in Negros

Occidental Province, near Cebu. After six months, that free spirit was niggling once more so she decided to check out opportunities in Thailand. That led to three months on Koh Chang (Elephant Island) in a band at a resort.

"Somehow my keyboard player, the leader of the band, got a gig in a casino in Cambodia on the border with Vietnam. That's how I made my way to Vietnam. Almost every weekend I went to Ho Chi Minh City to escape. My main reason was to see movies. And I was sick of hotel food - in Saigon I could eat burgers!"

Over the course of a year, Sitti shopped, socialized and dined in Ho Chi Minh City before heading back to the Cambodian border town which, as every expat passing through on the way to Phnom Penh knows, has nothing but garish and often decrepit, casino complexes.

Like most Filipinos, Sitti is Catholic and



one Sunday morning at church in Ho Chi Minh City, the minister asked what her plans were. She said she wanted to sing; the minister just happened to know a musician looking for a singer...

JASON'S STORY

Jason Jazz comes from Lucena City, capital of Quezon Province located between Metro Manila and Bicol Region. He taught himself to play the piano when he was 12.

"I started playing music at church, where I was an altar boy. I learned my love of music at church listening to others play and sing. At the time I had no background in music, but I was very curious. After the band went home I would experiment with the instruments. I did not know at that time I had a talent for music," he explains.

Music was part of the secondary school curriculum, so as a teenager Jason joined the marching band and learned the trumpet. But his family was poor and could not afford to buy a trumpet so he only played at school where he could use the class one. Then he added keyboards to his range of instruments and soon earned a role as a session musician.

Later he majored in music but, as the oldest of seven siblings, he had a responsibility to support the family and at that stage a career in music seemed unlikely until he got a lucky break. Someone was recruiting performers from the Philippines for a cover band to play in Vietnam. That was how he first visited Ho Chi Minh City, in 2004.

It would be more than two years before

he returned, footloose and fancy free, single, with no idea where his future was heading. "I was just a backpacker. I had no instruments. I had sold my trumpet so my brother could buy a saxophone. My capital was my talent. I just went into a bar. It was like an answered prayer."

The bar was Cage, the gig short lived - the venue closed two months later. But Cage would have a lifelong impact on Jason because he met Nhung there. She is now his wife with whom he has two children.

"After Cage closed, I had a girlfriend, but no job. Nhung helped me find a house and someone introduced me to play in the Catholic Church." A member of the congregation bought him a guitar and he kept practicing and soon, despite having no formal tuition, he was playing the guitar in a weekly gig at Buddha Bar among other places.

One day, Jason was on a bus to Cambodia and chatting to a fellow passenger, a Filipino church minister from Ho Chi Minh City. Jason said he was looking for a female vocalist to team up with. Turned out the priest knew just the woman...

THEIR STORY

Sitti and Jason have been playing together now for four years. Their first gig was a private party at a golf club in District 8 in 2011 and a regular appearance at the now defunct Mexico Lindo, along with local expat bars like Universal and Number Five, then Cavern on Dung Du, which is where they came to the attention of Caravelle

management.

Besides their paid acts, the two frequently participate in charity events and church concerts, including a benefit for Filipino typhoon victims last year.

Musicians are not the highest paid professionals, an important consideration for Jason with two children to raise. Sitti supplements her income teaching English part-time. But they say performing is more about fulfillment than income. They have an obvious musical connection.

Neither is sure about their future.

"Should I stay here? Because I have the travel bug, so should I see somewhere else? Even though my mum is in the Philippines, my friends are here. If I move on to another country I will still miss Vietnam. There's a special place in my heart here. I live with a Vietnamese family and I'm lucky here to have met so many great people. Home is where the heart is. I want to do two things if I stay in one place: teaching and singing. I've found that here in Saigon. It's like my dream to improve myself and living in Vietnam I can make my dream come true," muses Sitti.

Jason is equally content: "I always trust God, what He wants me to do. I have the talent. I don't know where my journey will lead me. But my family is here in Vietnam. Coming here all started with music. And now I have another reason to be here."

Sitti Gomez and Jason Jazz perform at the Reflections bar in Caravelle Hotel on Monday and Wednesday through Saturday from 7pm to 10pm and at Saigon Saigon on Tuesdays from 9pm to midnight.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

TAKING TIME OUT OF HER BUSY SCHEDULE, VIETNAMESE HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL OF THE PHILIPPINES ATTY. LE THI PHUNG SPEAKS TO OI VIA EMAIL ABOUT RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE PEARL OF THE ORIENT SEAS

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



HOW BIG IS THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN HCMC, AND IN VIETNAM AS A WHOLE?

At the moment, we can't give an accurate number because this hasn't been cleared to us as well, but according to the High Ranking Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi there is an average of 1,000 Filipinos with three month visas and registrations, while the report from the High Ranking Officer of the Department of External Relations of HCMC [states] there are more than 5,000 Filipinos in southern Vietnam. We are working with both agencies to have this clarified.

DOES THE CONSULATE OFFICE ORGANIZE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES?

Normally through the initiative and effort of the Filipino community, the Philippine consulate office co-hosts the Annual Family Day and Christmas Party for Filipinos. The consulate supports all the activities of the Filipino community such as the basketball league, festivals, etc.

The consulate actively participates in many festivals hosted by other agencies as well. Recently we have participated in the ASEAN Anniversary Celebration here in HCMC where we organized 70 kids

to perform our traditional dance. At the moment we are working on sending our participants to the HCMC Our Common Home Festival this September.

HOW MUCH REMITTANCE DO THE FILIPINOS LIVING IN VIETNAM SEND BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES EACH YEAR?

In general, 30 percent of [the Philippines'] GDP is contributed by Overseas Filipinos.

WHAT MATERIALS DO THE TWO COUNTRIES TRADE WITH EACH OTHER?

Rice, instant noodles, fertilizer, canned [goods], sugar, peanuts and cashew nuts.

TELL US THE HISTORY OF FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS IN VIETNAM. WHEN DID THEY FIRST ARRIVE?

This is a very long history, but it has been recorded that Filipinos has been in and out of Vietnam since French colonization and the American War. Nowadays, the Filipinos are very visible and active for business.

IN WHAT INDUSTRIES ARE THEY MOSTLY EMPLOYED IN HERE?

Executive leadership (Director, General Manager, etc.), construction, garments,

teaching/education, advertising, and hospitality management.

IS THERE A VIETNAMESE DIASPORA IN THE PHILIPPINES?

Ten years after 1975 there are some records that say there are few Vietnamese in the Philippines but many of them already left for other countries.

WHY DO YOU THINK FILIPINOS HAVE ADAPTED SO WELL HERE?

Both Vietnam and the Philippines share many similarities: culture, geography, climate and the likes. Vietnam and the Philippines also share the same body of water (East-West Vietnam-Philippine Sea). One great reason I can say is that how the Vietnamese people welcomed the Filipinos here in Vietnam. The natural cheerfulness, sincerity and friendliness of the Vietnamese people made the Filipinos feel at home and love Vietnam more.

HOW MANY VIETNAMESE TOURISTS VISIT THE PHILIPPINES EVERY YEAR?

In 2013 about 5,000 Vietnamese tourists visited the Philippines; Manila, Makati and Palawan in particular.

For Filipinos visiting Vietnam, they are interested in seeing the historical places, but they enjoy the shopping more.

AN EXCERPT IN AN ARTICLE IN THANH NIEN NEWS ABOUT A PLAN TO HIRE FILIPINO TEACHERS TO TEACH ENGLISH AT VIETNAMESE SCHOOLS STIRRED SOME CONTROVERSY WITH CRITICS OF THE PLAN SAYING THE CITY "SHOULD HIRE ONLY NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS OR IMPROVE LOCAL TEACHERS INSTEAD." AND A PRINCIPAL OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN HCMC SAID SHE WAS CONCERNED BY THE PLAN BECAUSE "ENGLISH IS NOT THE MOTHER TONGUE OF FILIPINOS. THE BEST WAY TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS TO STUDY WITH A NATIVE SPEAKER... I AM AFRAID THAT THEY WILL SPEAK ENGLISH LIKE A FILIPINO RATHER THAN NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS." YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS?

We respect the idea that everybody is entitled to their own opinion. The Philippines has adapted English as the second language. Vietnam, a country that is starting to do the same, the Filipinos is still thankful that the majority of the locals are still recognizing their English communication skills as globally competitive. ■

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



Steak Your Claim

Japan's delicious fusion take on the American Salisbury steak

TEXT BY ROBERT STOCKDILL IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

WITH A PROLIFERATION of Japanese restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City, it's hard to imagine a new one offering something unique. But in the delightful little restaurant lane off Le Thanh Ton St in District 1, Yoshiki Kondo manages just that. He is General Manager of **Gyumaru Hamburg & Steak** (8/3 Le Thanh Ton).

Gyumaru is not what you might expect. It's not a burger joint, nor is it a steakhouse. It is a quintessentially minimalist Japanese dining experience rotating around the style of meat meal Westerners would be quick to link to a gourmet burger, but without the bread. It also offers Western steak dishes and Japanese barbecue. And, of course, as one expects from the Japanese dining culture, presentation and perfection is everything.

Before we get to the meal, here's an explanation for those unaware of the Hamburg steak concept. The Americans have been eating Salisbury steak since 1897, a recipe created by a physician who was an early pioneer of the low-carb diet for weight loss. Much like a burger patty

or meatball, it's a blend of ground meat - usually beef - vegetables, breadcrumbs and herbs and sometimes egg. The Americans eat it with gravy and mashed potato or noodles.

Hamburg (ハンバーグ *hanbāgu*, steak) is the Japanese version, made from ground meat with finely chopped onion, egg and breadcrumbs, flavored with spices and made into a flat, circular shape about a centimeter thick and 10 to 15 cm in diameter. Gyumaru makes them a little larger and rounder, but the concept remains the same. Many restaurants in Japan specialize in variations of hamburger steak, including *hanbāgu* topped with cheese (or *chizuhanbāgu*) or *hanbāgu* with Japanese curry.

Gyumaru Hamburg & Steak is housed in a typically narrow Vietnamese style shophouse, the ground floor featuring a glazed kitchen affording every customer - and passersby - a view of the shiny stainless steel food preparation area. It's immaculate and the team of chefs are in an organized frenzy when we arrive -

testament to the popularity of the eatery, despite its newness on the street. Inside, the dining room is cozy, yet functional, the guests a mix of Japanese businesspeople, local Vietnamese who are in on the secret and some foreigners.

There are more tables upstairs and a small private function room is available. The service, from our arrival to departure, was warm and friendly; our waiter Albert speaks excellent English and was happy to explain the menu and offer his recommendations.

The Food

The house signature dish is of course the Hamburg Steak - and it comes in six large but very affordable variations: Gyumaru, Cheese, Japanese Style, Stewed, Stewed Cheese or Deep Fried. You choose your size - medium is recommended for between VND158,000 and VND210,000, but for those with more modest appetites, there is a smaller option (VND128,000 to VND180,000) or for the big eaters, large at VND188,000 to VND240,000. We took the mid-sized option - which was more than



filling - of the Cheese Hamburg Steak. My companion chose the US tenderloin steak, cooked medium rare and served with salad and unlimited bread for VND420,000, which, given the size of the cut, was excellent value by Vietnamese standards.

After just one mouthful, it was quickly obvious why the Japanese have embraced the Hamburg concept, adapting it to their own palate. The meat mixture was fresh and tasty, the meat and herbs contrasting the thick slice of cheese melted over the top. It was moorish, tasty and smooth - far smoother than a patty you might encounter in a burger bun in a Western restaurant, no matter how 'gourmet' it might be labeled. The dish was served with crunchy sprouts, greens, carrots and roasted potatoes, and a crisp green salad. It came to the table on a cast iron plate resting on a wooden base, juices still simmering in the bottom.

My companion was equally delighted with her US steak which was tender and juicy, perfectly cooked and served with a generous mountain of mash, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots and zucchini... this is about as healthy as a steak dish could get. The chef's special sauce was a savory gravy mixed with thinly sliced vegetables and

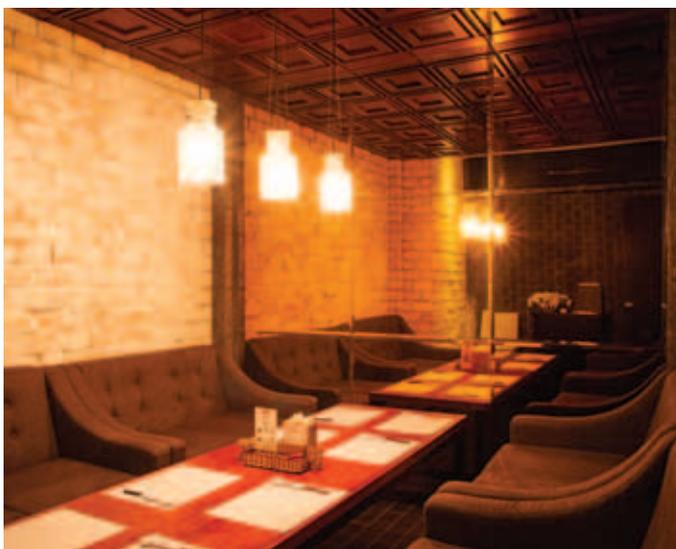
whole mushrooms. Even with just a salad and bread for starters (the bread was sliced baguette served with olive oil), it proved too big for her alone.

If you're not keen to try the Hamburg Steaks (you really should!), Gyumaru offers Japanese curries, seafood barbecues, salads and soups as well. And there is a small children's menu.

In the unlikely event you're not full after the main course, there are desserts - cake of the day, sorbet or ice cream. Also, uncharacteristically perhaps for Japanese eateries, there is a small but well-priced wine list including a Spanish Cava and three red and three white wines from Chile, Italy and Spain. A glass for VND110,000, bottles from VND450,000 to VND800,000.

Not surprisingly, word of this new entry onto Ho Chi Minh City's dining scene is spreading fast and Gyumaru has responded with a bento box takeaway and delivery service. You can order or take away any of the items on the menu for home consumption - and the team in the kitchen are open to requests for variations on the menu items. Fresh, healthy, innovative cuisine in a relaxed, cozy environment - Welcome to HCMC, Gyumaru! ■

“It was moorish, tasty and smooth - far smoother than a patty you might encounter in a burger bun in a Western restaurant, no matter how ‘gourmet’ it might be labeled.”



The Thrill of the Grill

A refined new invention on Korean barbecue

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



Modum Gui

PERFECTION IS AN ideal that's rarely aimed for in BBQ venues – it's usually all about the sizzle, the smoke, and the thrill of the grill. With the recent reincarnation of **Kang Nam Ga** on 6B Le Quy Don, that paradigm has now changed. Under new owner James Kang, this second-tier Korean venue has risen sharply in the ranks, and it's now a serious contender for the crown within its category. Kang, who operates a number of successful businesses in Ho Chi Minh City, has reinvented this once-tired restaurant with the intention of introducing a more refined style of Korean BBQ to local diners – fitting it out with high-tech smokeless racks and commissioning the services of Lotte World Hotel's Head Chef Im Woon Ky to retrain all staff and bring in some classy, cutting-edge cooking techniques.

Our table is attended by 21-year-old student Yen My, although not exclusively – under the new management, every table is looked after by a team of three wait staff, each of whom have been through Im's training. My enthuses with the energy of a convert – since reopening last month, she's seen some big infrastructural changes at the restaurant (she mentions the kids' playground up front, which is actually one of the better ones I've seen), and she says that she appreciates the clarity of the new, more disciplined regime. It shows.

My, other staff tell me, is Im's star pupil. It's obvious that he's succeeded in passing on his culinary skills – she wields the tongs like a seasoned professional. It's not showmanship, it's methodical: every aspect of the cooking is under tight control, including the exact sequence of temperatures used to cook each morsel – which is why customers are deftly waited upon rather than left to clumsily overcook their choice, imported American beef.

In Korean BBQ, beef is treated with a certain reverence, and at Kang Nam Ga, it's almost always served first. We ordered the ambitious assorted meat grill set (*modum gui*) at VND890,000, which is a selection of four beef cuts, each of which, according to the young team of experts at our disposal, are cooked in different ways. The grill is spotless – there's no gas or coal smoking out, it's all electrical – and a water cache beneath the surface channels all the fumes down through a chute, so the air throughout the restaurant remains clean. The sirloin cuts, My explains, cook fast – so turning is kept to a minimum. The grill is swabbed first not with oil, but with a chunk of fat from the same type of meat that's about to be cooked. It's cleaned easily with a dousing of *soju*.

FROM TOP: Samgyeopsal Gui, Samyetang & Kam Nam Ga's main dining area

You can roll your beef up in fresh lettuce leaves with chives, pickle, and garlic, dipped in a Korean BBQ sauce – but if you're not in so much of an herbal mood, you can always dunk the meat by itself in the rich, salty sesame sauce provided. It serves to remove any persistent odors in the meat, and it's divine.

Chiseled and Cut

We follow the beef with a pork dish for a little contrast, ordering the grilled pork belly (*samgyeopsal gui*) at VND160,000. Pork, unlike beef, needs to be gradually cooked and turned, and the resulting portions are fully-done without any chewiness. The fat is a tad crispy – just like a Christmas roast.

The meat dishes are served with a number of vegetable condiments, each chiseled to perfection. One of Im's trademarks is his attention to detail and symmetrical cuts, even with the carrot and radish sticks. *Kim chi* is on the table, but in deference to the foreign palate, this is lightly fried to bring out the flavor of the fresh cabbage leaves – it's not as acerbic as raw *kim chi*, and the heat descends gradually on the tongue rather than bites back at you on contact.

That being said, I'm a particular fan of *kim chi*, and so my preference was to finish off the meal with a fine *kim chi* stew (*kimchi jjigae*) at VND120,000. Properly matured *kim chi* makes for the best stew, and this variety is made with genuine Korean sauces and top-quality local cabbage from Dalat, set off with tofu and pork. The dish has a pleasant, insistent burn that rivals the best of Thai soups.

Korean food should be accompanied by Korean spirits, but watch out – the stuff has a habit of catching up with you before you've realized how much you've had to drink. Kang Nam Ga has a good selection available, from a small bottle of Hongjo at VND45,000; a variety of *sojus* (around VND120,000) and fruity *macgoli* (VND160,000); and a particularly fine *nigori sake* at VND400,000.

The best is yet to come with Kang Nam Ga – Chef Im Woon Ky's back at Lotte World now, but he's due to return to set up the venue's next signature dish – the infamous and eminently popular ginseng chicken soup (*samyetang*), which will be prepared with Korean ginseng and Dalat chickens and sell at VND215,000 per bowl. *Samyetang* is served in a claypot with the broth bubbling at boiling temperature, and it's one of the most memorable dishes of the Korean cuisine for those whose experience extends only to meals with *kim chi*. The ginseng wine has already arrived – massive jars of 16-year-old ginseng sit steeped in 15 percent proof alcohol, and complimentary shots will be served with the soup. Try it when it gets here – Kang Nam Ga may well be the Korean go-to venue long before then. ■





All Things to All People

A Saigon mainstay returns to its roots with Indonesian *rijsttafel*

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

I GET NERVOUS when I see flags on a menu. It's often a sign of an establishment either catering to tourists who neither speak English nor the local language or of a diluted menu that lacks focus, a culinary jack of all trades but master of none.

The menu at **La Fenetre Soleil** (44 Ly Tu Trong, D1) looks like the phone directory of the United Nations. There's a Japanese corner, vestiges of the restaurant's Japanese-Vietnamese fusion origins catering to Japanese tour groups, a French niçoise salad, Italian pasta, Mexican tacos, American burgers and Thai mango with sticky rice. The restaurant itself takes its name after a lovely old bay window from its original location now framing the bar area, although French speakers may have fun debating the grammatical accuracy of "La Fenetre Soleil."

The venue is equally schizophrenic. Come on a weekday afternoon and you'll likely find freelancers feverishly working on laptops at one of a handful of mismatched tables set up in the sunny corridor that runs around the perimeter of the main restaurant space, an upscale bohemian combination of exposed brick

walls, well-worn wood floors, bookcases and a musical stage. Another group of friends might be chillaxing on the oversized corner sofa. And a family of tourists could be enjoying a late lunch at one of the long granite tables, pouring over matching Lonely Planets deciding on where to go next. The space takes on a completely different personality in the evenings. Chandeliers give way to disco balls. On certain nights, someone will be softly playing the baby grand in the corner or crooning out jazz standards with a live band. On another night, tables and chairs are pushed aside for sultry salsa and on Sunday evenings, the city's musicians rock up for jam sessions in exchange for free beer. (See video clips at La Fenetre's Facebook page.)

Being all things to all people — a cozy hangout spot, a trendy night club, a kitchen that serves up meals from around the globe — shouldn't work, but it oddly does at La Fenetre Soleil. Its 14 year history when so many other lofty restaurants have come and gone is testament to the success of giving people what they want — a taste of home — wherever home may be.

Home Sweet Home

Ironically, La Fenetre Soleil goes home for its newest addition to the dinner menu, back to the Indonesian roots of owner Cinta Wijayanti, in the form of *rijsttafel* (VND280,000 per person, minimum of two orders). Meaning "rice table" (pronounced, "RACE-tah-fell"), *rijsttafel* is essentially an Indonesian feast made up of anywhere from seven to a hundred dishes, showcasing the best of the 300 or so distinct native ethnic groups making up the archipelago. Meant to celebrate (and show off) the bounty of the country, the concept originated during the more than 300 years of Dutch colonialism, and is more popular in the Netherlands than it is in Indonesia itself.

"The influence of Indonesian cuisine on the Dutch one is huge," says Mark Schiefelbein, food blogger at DutchGrub. "There are Indonesian restaurants and *tokos* [Asian food shops] all over Amsterdam, *kip* (chicken) saté is considered a typical Dutch dish and many tourists visiting the Netherlands end up having *rijsttafel* when looking for authentic Dutch food."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Cinta Wijayanti, Rijsttafel, Sate Ayam, Rissoles

Where Vietnamese cuisine relies on quickly cooked food and tasty sauces, Indonesian cuisine often marinates the meat for longer, allowing the flavor to permeate the proteins.

Traditionally, *rijsttafel* isn't confined to any predetermined set of dishes, and La Fenetre Soleil's version has eight, starting with a trio of appetizers including *perkedel jagung*, sweet corn fritters with shrimp, and the excellent *rissoles*, something akin to a croquette, stuffed with cubes of chicken and French beans in a béchamel sauce, rolled into a crepe and deep fried. The standout appetizer for me was the *sate ayam*, grilled chicken on skewers served with a rich peanut sauce (which the Dutch also call "satay"), accompanied by discs of *lontong*, compressed, slightly mushy rice cooked in banana leaves, ideal for mopping up the satay. Where Vietnamese cuisine relies on quickly cooked food and tasty sauces, Indonesian cuisine often marinates the meat for longer, allowing the flavor to permeate the proteins.

Mains are represented by beef *rendang*, a tasty stew with large chunks of beef cooked over low heat for hours until the coconut milk practically reduces down to oil and a trio of dishes meant to be eaten together: *sambal goreng kentang*, a sweet, savory, spicy potato dish cooked in coconut milk and flavored with *sambal*, the ubiquitous

sauce of chili peppers and shrimp paste, *opor ayam*, a mild chicken curry with tofu and egg, and *sayur labu siam*, a coconut milk-based stew thickened with tomatoes and featuring chayote (a gourd known as *xu xu* in Vietnamese). *Pecel*, a steamed medley of vegetables with a side of peanut sauce, completes the feast.

La Fenetre Soleil's *rijsttafel* doesn't include a dessert, but one can be ordered a la carte. We tried the *dadar gulung* (included in the lunch set menu at VND180,000), shredded coconut cooked in brown sugar and wrapped in a pandan flavored spongy crepe and the more interesting *pisang bakar* (VND60,000), grilled bananas topped with shredded cheddar cheese and chocolate sprinkles, a pleasantly odd sweet and salty combination along the lines of salted caramel.

"*Gezellig*" is an untranslatable Dutch word conveying the idea of "quaint" or "cozy" but almost always attached to the company you're with. And if there's ever a meal that's guaranteed to make you feel "*gezellig*," it's La Fenetre Soleil's *rijsttafel*, a feast to be shared amongst friends, no matter where you call home. ■

Southern Comfort

A taste of Cajun cooking in the city

TEXT BY MIKE JONES IMAGES PROVIDED BY THE CRAB SHACK



Crawfish with corn



Moules mariniere



Mud crab

Cajun cooking is a spicy treat and the items found on the menu are as much fun to indulge in as they are messy, both of which rank high for locals and expats alike.

WHEN ENTERING **The Crab Shack** (11B Le Quy Don, D3), now six months old, guests are greeted by tanks of live shellfish, exposed brick walls, and simple, square wooden tables covered in butcher's paper. With the smell of Cajun spices wafting from the kitchen, one yearns for jazz music playing in the background.

Frankie, the restaurant's manager, explains the inspiration for this decidedly American South eatery popping up in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City. "The owners have visited Louisiana several times and fell in love with crawfish and wanted to bring that back to Vietnam," he tells us. Indeed, one can see they went to lengths to try and recreate the atmosphere and menu one might stumble into in New Orleans.

We opted to start with some fried calamari (VND129,000) which isn't necessarily Cajun, but we were in the mood for some. Served with french fries and a side of tartar sauce instead of marinara, they were done properly.

Crawfish (VND699,000) are one of the signature items on the menu and can be ordered in a variety of sauces and flavors. We opted to stick with the traditional Cajun spices and asked to have them with as much kick as they could muster. It was a treat to have them after being away from the US for so long. They have adapted them to the local palate, so the sauce is a bit sweeter than the Louisiana version those who are familiar with the cuisine would expect, and they come in a large bag tossed with garlic and in an oily sauce. The addition of corn on the cob (VND50,000 for five pieces) is a great touch, but if you prefer the traditional style let your server know so they can accommodate you. They currently use frozen crawfish, but are looking at experimenting with fresh options as well to see how customers will respond. Of course fresh ones are certain to raise the price, but they're equally as certain to increase the enjoyment. The *moules mariniere* (VND350,000) were spot on for flavor. Using fresh New Zealand mussels, their chef did a great job of recreating the Southern American taste.

But of course, this restaurant is called The Crab Shack, so their crabs are the reason to visit. We had local mud crabs (market price). Two to an order, we were served one deep fried in Hong Kong garlic sauce and the other sautéed in black pepper sauce. The Hong Kong style was nice, even fun, and certainly geared towards Asian tastebuds. The black pepper version, while perhaps not strictly Cajun, pops in your mouth and encouraged us to find a new home for the garlic bread. It's something spice lovers will enjoy.

The Crab Shack is toeing the line between traditional Cajun and local tastes. Cajun cooking is a spicy treat and the items found on the menu are as much fun to indulge in as they are messy, both of which rank high for locals and expats alike. ■



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 4KM RUN STARTS: 8:00

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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, DI

Bread Talk

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

106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 3181

Brodard Bakery

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

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

Cheesecake Ngon Oi's Pick

Cheesecake Ngon is a small boutique-style cheesecake shop. Their 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, DI
06 Pham Ngoc Thach, DI
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, DI
3822 8659
www.saigongivral.com
6am - 10pm

Gourmand Shop

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

Ground floor, Sofitel Saigon Plaza
17 Le Duan, DI
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, DI
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, DI
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 DI

Nhu Lan Bakery

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

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

Pacey Cupcakes

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

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

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, DI
Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, DI
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, DI
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, DI
3914 3773
www.savourebakery.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, DI
3823 8302

bars

2 Lam Son

Serves a variety of premium beverages from vintage wines to signature cocktails. Located above the illuminated glass bar is a mezzanine floor that offers a cozy lounge seating area for more privacy. Features DJ performances every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9pm-12am.

First Level, Park Hyatt Saigon,
2 Lam Son Square, DI
3812 1234

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, DI

Allez Boo

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

187 Pham Ngu Lao, DI
6291 5424

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, DI
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, DI
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, DI
3824 3483
simon@hcm.vnn.vn
www.bluegeckosaison.com

Bootleg DJ Café

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

9 Le Thanh Ton, DI
090 760 9202
dorutudose@gmail.com

Boston Sports Bar

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

28/4 Bui Vien, DI
6656 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, DI
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, DI



Cavern Pub

Live band entertains a crowd of locals, expats, foreigners every night. The bar also shows sport channels on a large TV screen. Tired after work, don't know where to go to play? Come Cavern Pub to mentally relax and enjoy exciting offers. Buy 2 Beers - Get 1 Free From 6pm to 9:30PM Live music every night from 9:30pm-1am 19 Dong Du, DI 090 826 5691

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, DI www.chillsaigon.com

Boudoir Lounge

Designed to look like a lived-in yet immaculately styled Parisien home with plush leather sofas, silk cushions and velvet armchairs, Boudoir Lounge serves up everything from afternoon tea to evening cocktails along with signature dishes for any occasion from informal meals and business lunches to gourmet canapés accompanying evening drinks.
Ground floor, Saigon Sofitel Plaza
17 Le Duan, DI
3824 1555

Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

The HCMC venue is in the flashy Kumho complex on the edge of the central district, and features a wide 24-meter restaurant frontage on the mezzanine level and a contemporary and chic setting with German-inspired wooden benches and a long wooden bar counter. Serving authentic Bavarian cuisines and premium beers.
39 Le Duan, DI
9822 4206
brotzeit.co/kumholink

Chilli Pub Saigon **👍 Oi's Pick**

A fun place to unwind, with cold drinks, good music (customers can choose the music) friendly staff, light pub food, weekly quiz night (Mondays), darts and televised sport. Try a challenge shot from the big Chilli on the bar top.
104 Ho Tung Mau, DI
09 8376 3372
nfi291182@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 hell 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 nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a streetside view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.
187 De Tham, DI

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 Cafe

Memorabilia from Hard Rock's iconic collection adorns the walls of Hard Rock Cafe 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

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

Open 10am to 11pm
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www.woknroll.vn

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

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 Duau
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon



RED Bar

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

70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1
2229 7017

Saigon Saigon Bar

In wartime Saigon, the rooftop of the Caravelle hotel was one of the most popular drinking holes in the city for foreign journalists and expat

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

19 Lam Son Square, DI
3823 4999

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 9798/01 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

Voodoo Bar

White-washed walls, dartboards and a décor lined with voodoo-esqu oil paintings make this a pleasant venue for a beer or a glass of wine. Friendly female bar staff brings a convivial atmosphere to the place.

92 Ho Tung Mau, DI
090 826 5691

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 Capriosa on offer along with a variety of tapas with DJs and drink specials throughout the week.

71-75 Hai Ba Trung, DI
www.xusau.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

Café 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 Bui, DI
08 3825 8883
www.cafefunam.com

Café Terrace

Café 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 Kiang

Cafe Vuon Kiang 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 Centrofarms 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, DI
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, DI
40 Ngo Duc Ke, DI

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, DI
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, DI

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

DoJa 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, DI
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, DI
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, DI
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, DI
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, DI

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, DI
3825 6718

ID Cafe

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

34D Thu Khoa Huan, DI

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
nguyenmaihuan@gmail.com

8am - 10pm Kebab Cafe

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

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

Kem My

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

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

Kesera

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

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, DI
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, DI
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, cafe and gallery space occupying two locations in the center of DI. 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 cafe in both locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.

151/1 Dong Khoi, DI
70B Le Loi, DI
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, DI
3926 0388

May Coffee

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

1 Cong Xa Paris, DI
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, DI
3601 9319

Mojo Cafe

This modern, chic cafe, 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, DI
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, DI
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, DI
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, DI
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, D1

The Blue Cafe

A spacious cafe divided into two different areas with a lush, outdoor garden seating lounge and an air conditioned in-door lounge. The Blue Cafe has live music with drinks under VND100,000.

701-703 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3588 6824

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

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

www.coffeebean.com.vn

7am - 11pm

39 Le Duan, D1

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall

Ton Dat Tien, D7

157-159 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1

39 Le Duan, D1

12-14 Thai Van Lung, D1

94 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1

235 Dong Khoi, D1

1-5 Le Duan, D1

60-62 Cach Mang Thang 8, D3

1-3 Phan Chu Trinh, D1

The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon

Ground floor – InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan

3520 9099

www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Tram Coffee ☺️ OI's Pick

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

100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan

2240 5306

The Myth Cafe

Escape the daily grind of Ho Chi Minh City with a trip into the mystical setting of Myth Cafe. With live bands and prices under VND100,000 it's no wonder The Myth cafe is one of the best around.

176 Dien Bien Phu, D3

3820 9735

thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com

Trung Nguyen Cafe

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

26B-C Le Loi, D1

The Serenata Cafe

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

6D Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

3930 7436

Vecchio Cafe

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

39/3 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

Windows

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

12 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1

38238408

Yogen 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, D1

www.yogenfruz.com.vn

Zoom Cafe 🍷 OI's Pick

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

169A Bui Vien, D1

3920 3897

chinese

Dragon Court

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

11-13 Lam Son Square, D1

3827 2566

Dynasty

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

New World Hotel

76 Le Lai, D1

3822 8888

www.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, D1

3822 2673

Kabin

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

Renaissance Riverside Hotel,

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1

3822 0033

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

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

Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1

3827 2828

www.libaisaigon.com

Ming Court

Since the Nitrko 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, Nitrko Saigon Hotel

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1

3925 7777

Ocean Palace

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

2 Le Duan Street, D1

3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

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

12 Duong 26, D6

3755 1577

www.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, D1

3823 2221

Shi-Fu Dim sum

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

139A Nguyen Trai, D1

3925 1111

www.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.

108 Nguyen Thiep, D1

www.augustinrestaurant.com

Bon Appetit

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

78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

090 789 8345

Bonjour Restaurant

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

150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1

3926 0699

Cocorico - Ca Nuong Phap

Serves an eclectic menu of roasted chicken (French style), pastas and Asian dishes.

127 Dien Bien Phu, D1

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, D1

3822 5216

www.cordonblue.vn

La Cuisine

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

48 Le Thanh Ton, D1

2229 8882

www.lacuisine.com.vn

La Creperie

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

17/7 Le Thanh Ton, D1

3824 7070

infosgn@lacreperie.com.cn

Mon-Sun 11am-11pm

La Fourchette

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

9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1

3829 8143

www.lafourchette.com.vn

La Nicoise

A small, friendly French bistro with about a dozen tables, La Nicoise serves up typical

French dishes under the watchful eye of its French-Vietnamese owners.

56 Ngo Duc Ke, 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.lebouchondesaigon.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

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 the upstairs section with a balcony overlooking a courtyard in an alley. The venue offers a tasty selection of wines from France to South Africa, and a delectable menu of French cuisine.

9A Ngo Van Nam, DI
www.lerendezvousdesaigon.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, dandas, 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.

2G 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 ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.

Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, 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
Vincom 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
15 Dong Du, DI
3823 3597
tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



Chef Mamma's

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

A43 Truong Son, Tan Binh

Da Vinci's

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

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

Good Morning Vietnam

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

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



La Bettola

Chef/owner Giuseppe Amorello's combines sleek decor with traditional homecooking in this two-story centrally located Italian eatery. Expect creative dishes such as rucola e Gamberi, and La Bettola that includes shaved porchetta, focaccia and homemade mozzarella. There's a wood-burning oven on the premise and they try to handmake all their ingredients. They also deliver.

84 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3914 4402
www.labettolasaigon.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, DI
3915 3692
8am - 11pm

Margherita

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

175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, DI
3837 0760

Opera

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

Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, DI 3520 2357

Pendolasco

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

**87 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.pendolasco.vn**

Pizza 4P's 🍕 OI's Pick

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

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

Pomodoro

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

**79 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8998
www.pomodoro-vietnam.com**

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients.

**125 Ho Tung Mau, DI
www.sarpinos.vn**

Scoozi

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

6 Thai Van Lung, DI

Japanese

Achaya Cafe

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

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

Aka Taiyo

Aka Taiyo serves traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine with an extensive menu featuring more than 200 dishes. Also stocks a surprisingly comprehensive range of Japanese alcoholic beverages.

**74B Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 4295
www.akataiyo.com**

Ajisen Ramen

One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is

best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.

**120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3822 0522**

Aki Japanese Restaurant

A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes.

**15/9 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3827 9083**

Baby Spoon

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

47 Phan Chu Trinh, DI



Blanchy Street 🍕 OI's Pick

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

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

Dragon Hotpot

Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine. Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines.

**122-124 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3825 8842**

Dragon Noodle

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

**29 Dong Du, DI
3521 0008
www.ramen.vn**

Dragon Steak

A 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, DI
3821 0288
www.steak.vn**

Ebisu

Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles – made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes.

**35bis Mac Dinh Chi, DI
3822 6971
ductm@incubation-vn.com
ebisu-vn.asia**

Fuji Restaurant

The cuisine is exceptional – fresh seafood and vegetables flown in direct from Japan and Dalat. A preferred venue for those staying at the hotel, and worth trying if you're living local.

**Ground Floor, Nikko Hotel Saigon
235 Nguyen Van Cu, DI
3830 8123**

Hanayuki

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

**21C Ton Duc Thang, DI
3824 2754**

Ichiban Sushi 🍕 OI's Pick

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting.

**204 Le Lai, DI
www.ichibansushi.vn**

Inaho Restaurant

This unique venue specializes in traditional sushi & sashimi as well as hot pot dishes. Couples can retreat to the upstairs area; it's far more private than the downstairs bar.

**4 Chu Manh Trinh, DI
3829 0326**

K Cafe

K Cafe Sushi is a large Japanese restaurant; an ideal place to gather for a business lunch or for a social dinner.

**74A4 Hai Ba Trung, DI
38245355
www.yakatabune-saigon.com**

Kissho

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

**14 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.kissho.wmctvietnam.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, DI
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 Kokokoro is a must see.

**4th Floor Pandora, I/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 through 11 large French windows. Its sense of personality attracts artistically-inclined expats to return often, and many of these profess it as their favourite hangout in Saigon. Cuisine is Japanese-Vietnamese fusion.

**44 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3824 5994**

Mus Mus

Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.

**117 Vo Van Tan, 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, DI
10am - 10pm**

Robata Dining An

The restaurant has a downstairs bar and a second floor with private rooms that have sunken tables, sliding fusuma doors and tabletop barbecues. Popular with the Japanese expats, the menu serves up healthy appetizers, rolls, sashimi and An specialty dishes like deep fried chicken with garlic salt sauce An style (VND100,000).

**15C Le Thanh Ton, DI
www.robata-an.com**

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.

**99 Suong Nguyen Anh, DI
6291 1036
sakurasaku.vn**

Sumo BBQ

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

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

Sushi Bar

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

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

Sushi Dining Aoi

Sushi Dining Aoi is one such restaurant, where the whole atmosphere of the place evokes the best of the culture. With its typical Japanese-style decor – the smooth earthen tones of the wooden furniture and surroundings, 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.sushidingaioi.com**

Sushi World

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

Tasaki

A Japanese restaurant offering pork, beef and seafood barbecue favorites with wagyu beef as the most recommended.
12B, Ngo Van Nam, DI
3824 2179
www.tasaki.com.vn

Tokyo Deli

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

Uraetai BBQ Restaurant

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

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ

It provides a fusion of Asian cuisines with dishes from Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Their menu is interesting and diverse, with many delectable seafood options.
42 Le Anh Xuan, DI
3823 3232
vickis.com.vn

Vietnam Monde

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

Vui Vui

Vui Vui is a Japanese restaurant specializing in barbecue and Japanese-style hot pot. Offers a variety of set lunches including Yakiudon, Kimuchi Pokka, Sukiyaki and Purokogi. The restaurant has two floors with each floor accommodating approximately 100 guests.
125A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
www.vuivui.net.vn

Wainosuke

Wainosuke is a Japanese and Italian style restaurant. It serves food such as pastas, salads and steaks to name a few and wine from traditional Japanese to premium Italian wine.
37 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3821 4016
www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Yoshino

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

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

Yuki

Yukie is a popular Japanese restaurant located in the backpacker area of District 1. Offering authentic Japanese cuisine at affordable prices.
99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, DI
3824 2754

korean

Hana Restaurant

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



Kang Nam Ga Korean BBQ

All the theatrics of a traditional Korean experience are part of the service at this newly opened restaurant. From waitresses in hanboks to vast plates of kim chi, this is the one of the most authentic introduction to the cuisine in the city. The vast menu consists of the finest beef cooked to perfection along with a range of sojus.
6B Le Quy Don, D3

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, DI
3914 1565
www.mihanquocvn.com
8am - 11pm

Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof

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

Seoul House

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

steakhouses

Au Lac do Brazil

Serving Saigon for more than 10

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

Corso Steakhouse and Bar

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

Dragon Steak

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

El Gaucho

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

Indaba Restaurant

Indaba Steakhouse combines German style steak and Italian coffee under one roof. Expect a fusion dishes like Indaba Spring Rolls, Mexican BBQ Spare Ribs, and Grilled Duck Breast served with sesame sauce, steamed rice and salad. The quaint and cozy restaurant is decorated in soft hues of red and black, complemented with soft jazz music. A German Viet Kieu with experience in restaurants in Germany helms the kitchen.
35 Ly Tu Trong, DI
www.facebook.com/indabacafe
Contact them at 3824 8280 or visit
www.facebook.com/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, DI
3823 7373
www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99 Oi's Pick

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

Samba Brazilian Steakhouse

This is certainly Saigon's most visible and colourful restaurant serving the popular Brazilian buffet style, where enormous skewers of meat are circulated around the tables for diners to enjoy as much of as they can.
10C Thai Van Lung, DI
3822 0079
www.samba.vnnhang.com

Wild Horse Salon

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

thai

Golden Elephant

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

Jasmine Thai

A quiet, candle-lit affair complete with the ethereal tones of traditional music, guests can enjoy variations on dishes prepared in the Thai culinary tradition.
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.rohthai.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

Thai Express

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

8A Le Thanh Ton, D1
6299 1338
www.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, D1
3821 1631

An Khue Quan

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

92B Le Lai, D1

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 Buoai, D1

Banh Xeo 46A

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

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

Banh Xeo An La Ghien

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

74 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
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, D1
3823 3763
135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 3340
www.barbecuegarden.com

Beefsteak Nam Son

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

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

Binh An Village

Open every day for dining and other

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

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, D1
www.bo-nong.com

Bun Sai Gon

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

73 Ly Tu Trong, D1
6276 2609
www.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, D1

Cuc Cach Quan

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

10 Dang Tat, D1
3848 0144

Five Oysters

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

090 30 12123
www.facebook.com/FiveOysters

Ganh

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

58/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 5243
www.nemnuongganh.com

Gold Fish

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

73 Mac Thi Buoai, D1
www.goldfish.vn

Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

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

122 Le Thanh Ton, D1
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

Hoa Tuc

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

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 1676
www.hoatuc.com

Hoang Yen

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, D1
148 Hai Ba Trung, D1
Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5
CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.hoangyencuisine.com

Hum

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

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

Khoai Restaurant

Specializes in dishes from Nha Trang.

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

Lang Viet Oi's Pick

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

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

Lemongrass

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

4 Nguyen Thiep, D1

Luong Son

Exotic beer garden style eatery famous for its barbecue beef. Luong Son also serves fear factor items such as scorpions, grubs, ostrich meat and crickets.

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3825 1330
www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan

Nam Phan

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

classical music.

34 Vo Van Tan, D3

Nam Phat Restaurant

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

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

Marina Saigon

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

172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3930 2379

Maxim's Nam An

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

13-15-17 Dong Khoi, D1

Mitau

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

52 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 0767
www.mitauhue.com

Nghi Xuan

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

5/9 Nguyen Sieu, D1
3823 0699
nghixuanrestaurant.com

Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.

160 Pasteur, D1
3827 7131
www.quananngon.com.vn

8am - 10pm

Papaya Restaurant Oi's Pick

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

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

Pho 2000

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

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

Pho 24

 PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.
71-73 Dong Khoi, D1
3825 7505

Propaganda Bistro

Offers Vietnamese cuisine such as spring rolls and Vietnamese street food with a Western twist. Serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant features hand-painted wall murals.
21 Han Thuyen, D1
3822 9048
www.facebook.com/Propaganda-Saigon

Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

Leafy green roof garden, upmarket restaurant with reasonable prices and a wide menu of choices. Open style 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

Square One

Offers authentic Vietnamese and Western cuisine. A wide selection of imported meats is prepared Western style while the best local and imported seafood is the focal point of traditional Vietnamese dish. Features an outdoor terrace and four private dining rooms to cater to guests' needs for special events.
Park Hyatt Saigon, 2 Lam Son Square, D1
08 3824 1234

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
08 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 Trung 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.chillisaigon.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

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.
74/130 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
3823 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

 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

JJ's Brazilian BBQ Restaurant

Located along Pham Ngu Lao, Brazilian eatery JJ's offers a menu emphasizing authentic Brazilian Churrasco and Western fusion cuisine. The bar offers a great selection of wines and cocktails. Offers Tiger draught for only VND20,000 per glass during Happy Hours (8am-8pm daily).
275-277-279 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
3838 8833
www.jjbbq.com.vn



MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Khoi Thom

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

29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
www.khoithom.com



La Fenetre Soleil

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

4 Ly Tu Trong, D1

La Habana

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

6 Cao Ba Quat, D1
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, D1

Market 39

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

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

May Restaurant and Bar

May offers a wide range of international dishes and wines, both by the bottle and by the glass. Enjoy their Happy Hour specials from 3-7pm daily. The second floor provides venue for events or private parties.

19-21 Dong Khoi, D1
6291 3686

Mogambo Bar & Grill

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

50 Pasteur, D1
3825 1311

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, D1
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, D1

Parkview

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

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

Pasha

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

25 Dong Du, D1
www.pasha.com.vn

Quán Ut Ut

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

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

Reflections

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

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

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 Dung Du, this restaurant offers Mediterranean food, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness. Guests are welcomed with complimentary Prosecco, fresh baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus.

51 Hai Ba Trung, D1
382 48358

Shri

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

Level 23, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
www.shri.vn

Skewers

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

9A Thai Van Lung, D1
www.skewers-restaurant.com

Subway

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

121 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4118

The Elbow Room

The Elbow Room on Pasteur is an American-style bistro with a long bar, exposed brickwork, white walls, and 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, D1
www.elbowroom.com.vn

The Hungry Pig

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

144 Cong Quynh, D1

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, D1

Warda

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

71/7 Mac Thi Bui, D1

Xu Restaurant Lounge

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

71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.xusaigon.com

Zest Bistro & Cafe

A casual restaurant featuring an American, French and fusion menu. Located across from the waterfront, just minutes away from the Bach Dang pier,

Zest offers diners one of the nicest views in the city.

5 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 5599

Zoom Cafe 🍷 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, D1
3920 3897
7am - 2am daily

>>The List District 2

BAKERIES

Sweet and Sour

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

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

Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate

39 Thao Dien, D2
6296 0066
voelker-vietnam.com

BARS

McSorley's

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

4 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4659
www.mcsorleys.vn

Papagayo Saigon

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

18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2

Buddha Bar

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

7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080

CAFES

Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

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

11A-B Thao Dien, D2

Shalom Coffee

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

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
www.coffeshalom.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

Gastrohome

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 Washi

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 Trung 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 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 tandoor.

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.

S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7
093 841 6551

www.namaste-india.com.vn

ITALIAN

La Cucina

La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.

Reviewed in Oi April 2013

Block 07-08 CR1-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 7932

Sarpino's

Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.

351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7
www.sarpinos.vn

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.

103 Ton Dat Tien, D7

5412 4848

www.saltpepper.com.vn

JAPANESE

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.

SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7

THAI

Nathalie's Phu My Hung

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

S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7

5410 0822

www.nathaliesrestaurant.com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but

with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000 VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

R1-72 Hung Gia 1, 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

Charm 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

Boomarang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomarang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

3841 3883

www.boomarang.com.vn

Britz Bistro

A brainchild of Brett Taylor-Holmes and Robert Easson and specializes in 'British food with a twist'. Menu includes pasta, soups, gourmet burgers, pies, curries, baguettes, drinks and more. Opens daily except Mondays.

70 So 7, Phu My Hung, D7

3785 3373

info@britzbistro.com

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, Schwarzbau Exquisit, and Schwarzbau 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

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 CR1-12, The Crescent, D7

3825 1879

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.

R1/49, 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

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 guilty 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.100percent.vn.com.

26b Thao Dien, D2

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.

41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630

SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1

An Phu Supermarket

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

43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.

No. 17, Street 12, D2

www.classicfinefoods.com

Le Cochon D'or

LeCochon D'or shop sells European and International meat that include ham, sausages, pate, terrine, and smoked specialties. A taste of home, because you and your taste buds deserve it! Customizes service available including door-to-door delivery.

64 Ngo Duc Ke, D1

3829 3856

8am - 7pm

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 Collar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.

11 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.

54 Ham Nghi, D1

The Warehouse

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

15/5 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Vinifera

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

15C7 Thi Sach, D1

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY MEAGAN ALBIN



Steinway Factory
Queens, New York

The Queens of New York

Founded over 350 years ago, Astoria is one of New York City's most historic and diverse neighborhoods

TEXT BY **KENDRA GRANNISS**

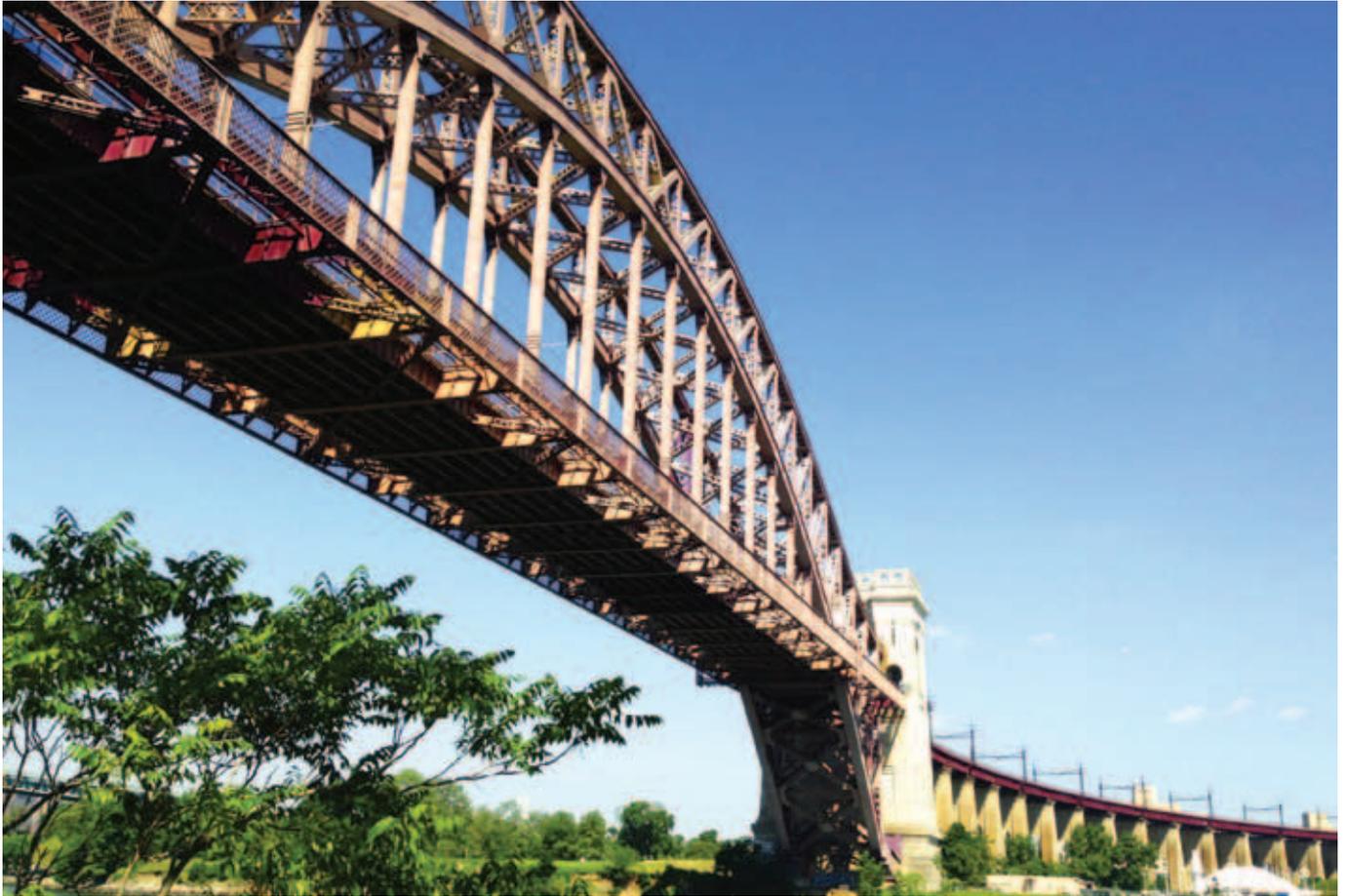


IMAGE BY SKY

Hell's Gate Bridge

FLASHING NEON LIGHTS and giant billboards that assault the eyes, theater marquees that trump the latest Broadway hits and a cacophony of taxi horns, shouting hawkers and excited tourists – this is Times Square and what most people picture when they think of New York City. And it's also where most people choose to spend a lot of their time while visiting the City That Never Sleeps. However, the 'real' New York City - a melting pot of different cultures, food and art - is far from the several blocks that surround 42nd Street.

My home, and my favorite little piece of the real New York, is Astoria.

Astoria (located in Queens, one of the five boroughs that make up New York City) is a quiet neighborhood 20 minutes from Times Square heading northeast on the subway. As I exit the station there are no skyscrapers in sight, instead the streets are lined with family brownstones. I spot parents walking their children to the public playground or buying them soft serve ice cream from the truck

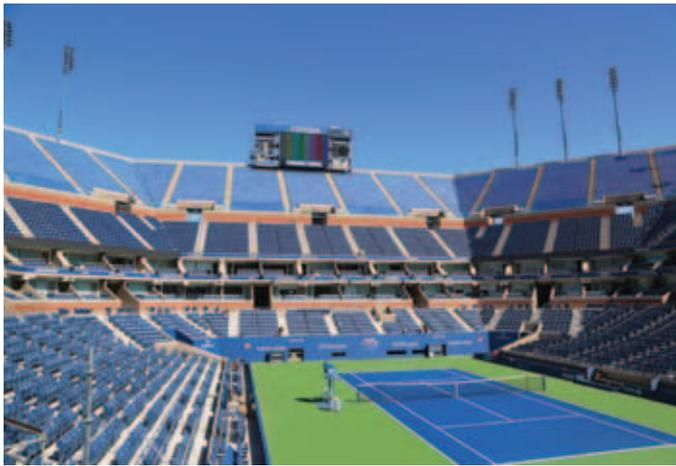
on the corner. Someone in an apartment on 38th Street practices his saxophone every day at 6pm as I walk home from work. Independently-owned shops, bodegas, and restaurants that serve some of the best food in New York City dot the area. I can satisfy any good craving without going far; on the streets vendors sell everything from empanadas and halal food to Italian ices and sliced mango.

Astoria is a true example of a melting pot. Its population mainly comprises Greeks, but also has influence from other cultures such as Asians, South Americans and Italians. Because of the Second World War, Astoria was initially made up of Italians. After 1965, Greek residents quickly started to inhabit the area. Traditional neighborhoods include Dominican, Indian, Ecuadorian, Korean, Romanian, Chinese, Filipino and Columbian immigrants. Many of them came to Astoria because this community offered a low cost of living. In the summer, I often pass by groups of Greek men congregating

at outdoor cafes chatting in their own language with a smoking pipe in one hand and a newspaper in the other, and teenagers sitting on the steps of their brownstones or playing on the streets, enjoying the summer break from school.

A Historic Walk

Don't let this quaint neighborhood fool you: there is plenty to do in Astoria. Explore the area around Kaufman Astoria Studios, where shows such as *Orange Is the New Black* and *Sesame Street* are filmed. The studio was opened in 1920 by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, and shortly after, the first two Marx Brothers films were made there. Next to the studios, take a journey through the history of film at the Museum of the Moving Image (www.movingimage.us). Throughout the year, the museum has many unique films and exhibitions. The exhibition currently running through January 2015 is *What's Up, Doc? The Animation Art of Chuck Jones*



“Given the choice, I would stay in the calm streets of my neighborhood, Astoria, and enjoy a delicious meal with friendly people and a fantastic view of the city.”

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Arthur Ashe Stadium, New York World's Fair Unisphere In Flushing Meadows Park, Mural art in Astoria section in Queens

IMAGES BY LEONARD ZHUKOVSKY

about the man who created Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck.

Strolling towards the river, Astoria Park sits nestled in the northwest corner of the borough between the Triborough Bridge and the Hell's Gate Bridge. The view from this part of Astoria is my favorite - across the East River the skyscrapers of Manhattan look like toys. During the warmer months, it is not uncommon to hear bands playing on the bandstand in the center of the green. Astorians bring their blankets and have picnics, or set up lawn chairs by the water to watch the barges crawl by.

Past the bandstand, up a grassy hill, is the historic Astoria public pool. Originally built for qualifying events for the Summer Olympics in 1936 and 1964 by Robert Moses (who played a large role in shaping the physical environment of New York State), it is now the oldest and largest public pool in New York City.

Astoria is also home to the oldest beer garden in the city. After a long walk through the park, stop in at Bohemian Hall & Beer Garden (www.bohemianhall.com) for an ice-cold beer. The beer garden, built in 1910, is owned by the Bohemian Citizens' Benevolent Society - a society formed in 1892 made up of people of Czech and Slovak descent. At night, the long wooden tables are filled with the young and old, natives and newcomers mingling together.

And a stone's throw away from the beer

garden is a traditional Greek restaurant that actually has locals leaving their other four boroughs (and if you know New Yorkers that is a hard feat to accomplish) to dine at. Taverna Kyclades (www.tavernakyclades.com) is a cash-only place that takes no reservations, but the food is worth the long wait to get seated. I will walk a mile from my house just for their appetizers. The thought of their stuffed grape leaves and spinach pie are enough to make me salivate.

After a hearty meal at Taverna Kyclades, I like to walk by one of Astoria's historic buildings - the Steinway & Sons piano factory, built in the late 1800s, and still in use today. Steinway pianos are handmade and take almost a year each to build, comprising more than 12,000 parts. They are considered the best in the world. The factory sits only a few blocks away from the Steinway Mansion, which was purchased in 1870 by the Steinway family and used as their summer home for 50 years.

If you're in need of a break and a few more beers, stop in at SingleCut Beersmiths (www.singlecutbeer.com). Take a free 15-minute tour of the brewery before enjoying a pint in their taproom. All of their beers are brewed locally and named after their favorite musicians.

Only a short subway ride away, just outside of Astoria, is Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the second largest park in New York City. Before its reincarnation as a park,

the space was a garbage dumping ground. In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald described the area as a "valley of ashes". But those ashes evolved into a beautiful green space embedded with history. The 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs were held here. The Unisphere and several other structures built for the fairs still stand today.

While there, don't be surprised if you suddenly find that you're in the center of an excited crowd. Sports fans often have to make their way through Flushing Meadows-Corona Park because it is home to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, currently where the US Open is held, and to the Mets' Citi Field. You can join them, or you can take a stroll along the lake and stop by the Queens Museum, the New York Hall of Science or the Queens Wildlife Center.

Perhaps after a refreshing break from downtown Manhattan, you may be ready to go back to the hustle and bustle. If not, you are welcome to stay to explore other parts of Queens. Given the choice, I would stay in the calm streets of my neighborhood, Astoria, and enjoy a delicious meal with friendly people and a fantastic view of the city. ■

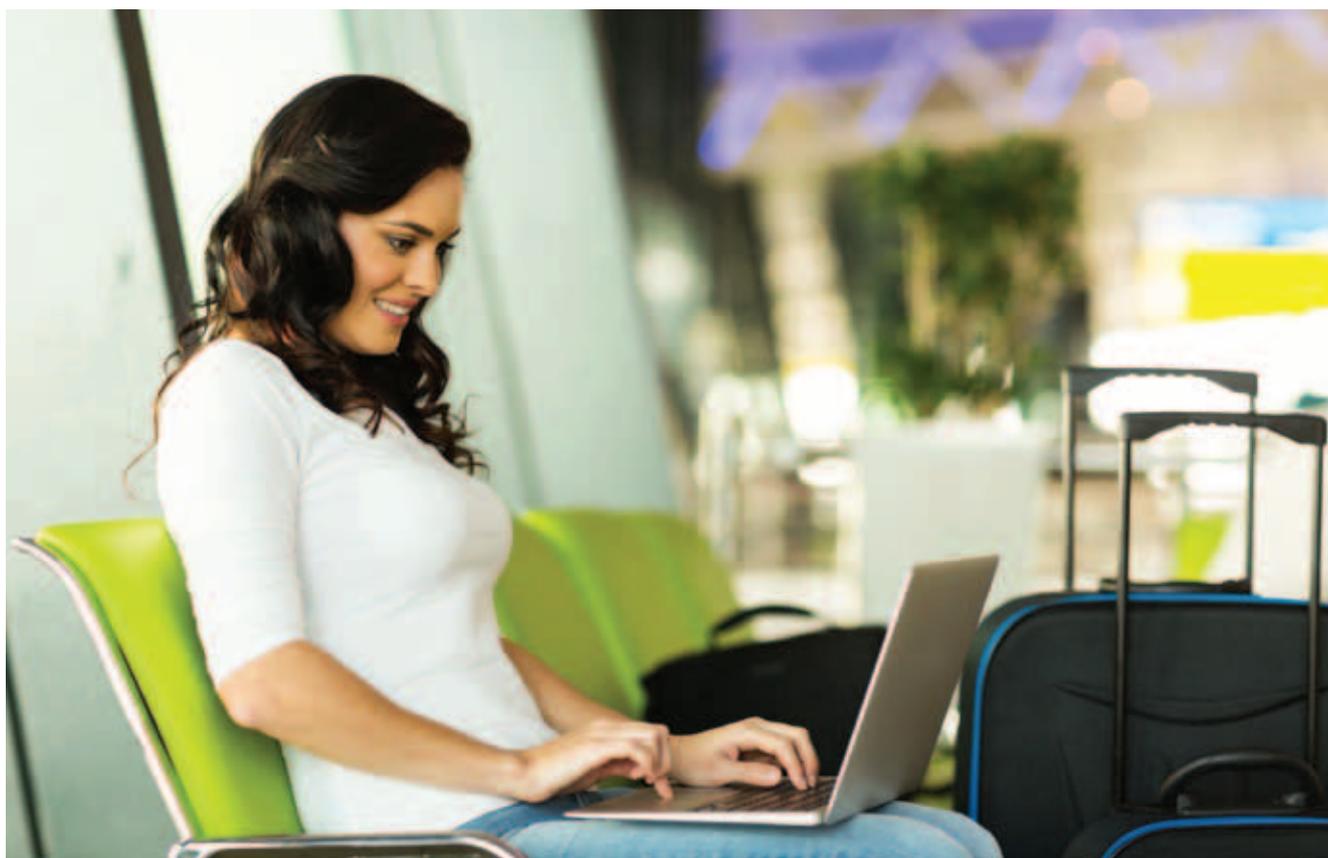
BIO: Kendra Granniss is a travel writer currently based in Astoria, New York. She is taking a hiatus from the city of her dreams starting next year to explore the world. Visit kendraescapeologist.com to read more about her travels.

Travel Hacking 101: Credit Cards

Tips for cheap (or free!) travel



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



WHO DOESN'T WANT to travel for free (or at least very cheaply)? Welcome to the world of travel hacking, a worldwide community of people dedicated to maximizing the value of every resource (be it time or money) with the goal of getting the best flight, hotel room, rental car or upgrade legally possible. While some in the community object to the word "hacking" because it implies doing something shady or illegal, it's become a common enough term for working the system. If you've never travel hacked before, prepare to have your mind blown at how creative some people can get in the name of free travel.

The Credit Card Game

Far and away the fastest and easiest way to rack up travel points is by taking

advantage of credit card promotions — basically a bonus for opening up an account and meeting a minimum spend without ever having to travel anywhere. First of all, this works mainly for US residents (and to a much lesser extent, Canadians, Brits and Australians). This is simply due to the huge number of banks competing for your business. How it works is banks will buy frequent flier points from airlines and use them as incentives to open up a credit card. Sign up, spend, say USD3,000 in the first three months and bam! 50,000 free miles, enough for two free domestic tickets. Pretty simple, right? The best offer I've seen is somewhere around 100,000 frequent flyer points for a USD10,000 spend, but with an annual fee of USD450. However, chances are if you're the type

of person accumulating hundreds of thousands or even a million miles or more a year, you won't flinch at a fee of a few hundred dollars for a card that typically comes with other perks as well, for instance airline lounge membership and free checked bags.

Travel hackers take this one step further by opening up multiple cards. I've seen people open up one each for a personal Visa and MasterCard and then another two for 'business' use. To get around the condition that you can't already have a rewards card with that same bank, some will open up applications in four different browser tabs (or use different browsers all together), pre-fill them out and then click "submit" all at the same time so that the system doesn't flag that you've already

applied for a credit card. Don't own a business? No problem. Just enter your social security number instead of a tax ID number. Meet the spend limit for all four cards and within a few months, that's 200,000 miles in your account, enough for an around the world ticket or two. (And if you find a better offer within 60 days of opening your card, remember to call and ask the bank to match the bonus.)

Travel reward cards aren't always points, though. My Marriott card comes with no foreign transaction fees, free Silver Elite benefits (like free internet and priority late checkout) and offers one free night per year. It does have an annual fee of USD65, but when I saw my beautiful room on the 34th floor of the brand new Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit last month in Bangkok, it certainly felt worth the fee and then some.

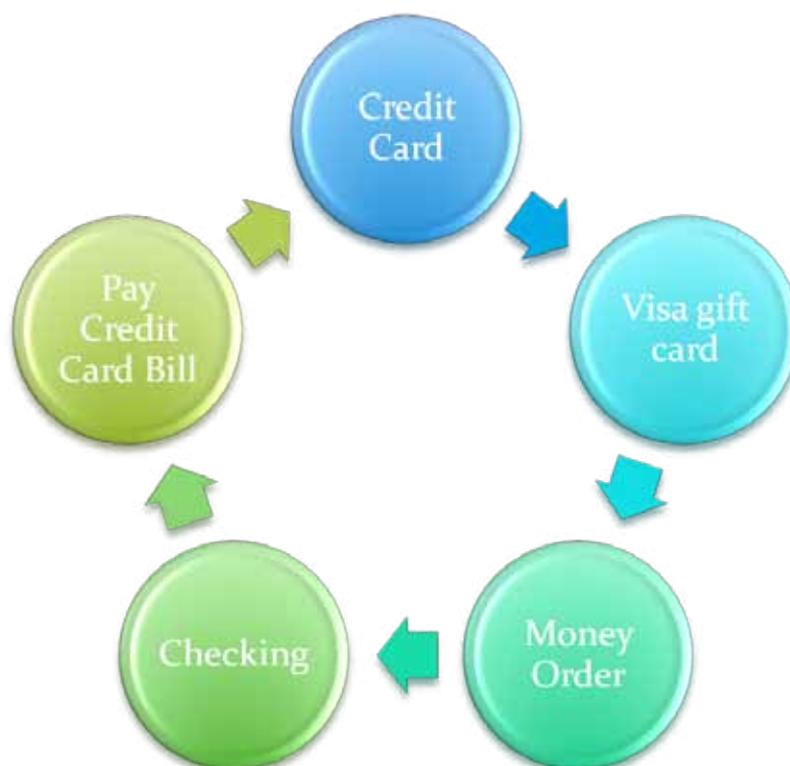
The Churn

Basically credit card churning is opening a card, collecting the enrollment or activation bonus, closing the card, and then reapplying for the same card. Lather, rinse, repeat. This is best for people with very good credit scores (as your rating takes a hit every time you apply for / close a card) and for people who manage their money well (i.e. can keep track of multiple cards and who don't carry a balance from month to month, as paying interest on a credit card violates the spirit of travel hacking). Churning requires a fine balance of knowing when to repeat the cycle. Back in the day, one bank was famous for allowing new applications once every 60 days. At one point, I was probably juggling 7-10 different active credit cards. Nowadays, banks have made churning more difficult by increasing the amount of time required between applications, anywhere from 90 days to 18 months. Fortunately, the close-knit community of travel hackers often posts their own experiences of how long it took them to get a specific card approved, providing real-time data for others.

Manufactured Spending

So, now that you've got four brand new credit cards, you'll need to meet the minimum spending amount to reap your rewards. The problem is most people can't spend that much within the time limit without buying things they don't need or want. Enter "manufactured spending," described by some as a legal way to launder money. One example was using your credit card to buy US coins from the US Mint (for face value, and at the time, counted as a purchase, not as a cash advance) and then depositing the coins into your bank account to repay the credit card bill. I actually did this once,

“While the credit card route is the fastest way to rack up miles, it obviously isn't for everyone. And some of the methods required to maximize your rewards, while not quite illegal, may cross the ethical line for some”



but decided it felt a bit too shady for me. This loophole has long since been closed, so nowadays, manufactured spending can mean using your credit card to buy store gift cards then purchasing something and selecting the option to receive cash back using your gift / debit card. US residents can also use Amazon Payments — basically paying a friend into his / her Amazon account (which counts as a purchase if you say you're paying them for goods or services), then have them transfer the money to their bank account, withdraw it and give it back to you.

While the credit card route is the fastest way to rack up miles, it obviously isn't for everyone. And some of the methods required to maximize your rewards, while not quite illegal, may cross the ethical line for some. Next month, I'll talk about some more 'benign' ways of travel hacking

including mileage and mattress runs and fat finger fares.

In the meantime, check out these sites for some more travel hacking tips.

- www.flyertalk.com
- www.thepointsguy.com
- www.millionmilescrets.com
- www.boardingarea.com

Just remember to do a lot of reading before you post anything, as these communities are mainly made up of people who take travel hacking very seriously and devote hours and hours to keeping up with the latest deals and 'tricks.' They have their own lingo and typically have little patience for wide-eyed newbies who jump into the fray uninformed. Enjoy, but consider yourself warned! ■

A Dyeing Art

The making of H'mong batik



Bridget March is a professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*. Currently she is the artist in residence at Sapa Rooms Hotel and Art Cafe in Sapa. Bridget is working on a project called Art for Community that will provide a sustainable income for the school in the poorest district in Sapa. She is also offering art classes and sketching tours in her Sapa studio until mid September. For more of Bridget's work including news of her upcoming book visit bridgetmarch.co.uk.



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIDGET MARCH

UP IN THE misty mountains of the Lao Cai district in northern Vietnam, H'mong women in the Sapa area have perfected a technique for making deep, rich, blue hemp textiles decorated with intricate designs. These fabrics have been produced for generations and the first time you see them, they are fascinating for their unusual dimensions, color and tiny repeating geometric patterns.

These narrow lengths of material are handcrafted by women and girls to turn into panels for their pleated skirts. Traditionally, depending on their means, a mother would give her daughter one or more skirts as a wedding gift. One of these skirts would even be kept and worn at the girl's funeral. Some H'mong wear their skirts every day and some, like the Black H'mong, save them for ceremonies and feasts.

It takes months to make one length of hemp batik. The price charged by local women doesn't begin to reflect the hours of cultivation, weaving, printing and

dyeing involved in making one skirt. First the women prepare the land to sow with hemp seeds and separate plots are sown with Indigo plants from which they extract the gorgeous blue dye. Six months later they harvest the hemp plants. It is the fibers of the bark on these long, straight stems that is stripped and spun into yarn for weaving. The H'mong women carry hanks of hemp which they strip and twist all day long.

As you trek through the beautiful villages of the Muong Hoa valley, you can see simple wooden looms through doorways or in some of the craft workshops. They weave the hemp yarn into narrow strips of honey beige fabric which is then washed many times to make it soft and then pressed to provide a smooth surface for 'printing' with beeswax.

In Loa Chai, there is a batik workshop in a traditional pole house where you can watch women applying the hot wax to 'print' designs onto the hemp. The motifs they use represent some of the

elements of their lives. Stylized symbols of mountains, houses, family, fences, leaf fronds, seeds, snails and freshwater crabs make up most of their designs. A three to four meter length skirt of fabric represents weeks of work.

When the entire length has been decorated with wax, it is time to dye the cloth. The dye is prepared by soaking indigo stems and leaves in wooden vats of water. The sap leeches out of the plant turning the water deep turquoise and petrol blue. The liquid ferments and exposure to air turns it to the deep blue, once known as Blue Gold that was used as the original coloring for denim jeans. Each length of fabric is dipped, dyed and dried 15 times to achieve the deepest blues.

Finally, the fabric is boiled in water to remove the wax. The dye cannot penetrate wax so the resulting fabric is deep blue with white patterning. Some are trying to preserve this craft but I fear it may not survive more than another generation. It may, literally, be a dying art and craft. ■



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Contact: Kate Tu
091 800 7160 | 08 3943 4223

Travel & Leisure

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.

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



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reservation@aoshowsaigon.com | (84) (0) 1245 18 11 88 | www.aoshowsaigon.com

tripadvisor A O Show | saigon.AOshow | Aoshowsaigon

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/sgnrb-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

★★★★★  **Oi's Pick**
 High-class getaway hotel located out of the city centre on exotic Thanh Da Island, allowing guests to escape from the chaos of the city life while remaining close to the action. More hotel than apartment complex, The Domaine's private residences are classic and luxurious, making the most of the natural surroundings.
1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
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 Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.
18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
www.windsorplazahotel.com

CON DAO ISLAND

Six Senses Con Dao

★★★★★
 True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.
Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son

DALAT

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

★★★★★
 Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises seventeen restored French-style villas from the 1920's and 1930's, preserving the original design, décor and charm, is 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
www.anamandara-resort.com
(0) 63 3555 888

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 Oi's Pick

★★★★★
 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.dalatgreencityhotel.com

Dalat Train Villa & Cafe Oi's Pick

★★★★★
 Located near the Dalat Train Station, the Dalat Train Villa is for short or long staying guests. The villa is a restored 2-story French colonial-era villa. Next to the villa is a French train car, which has been renovated into a bar/cafe/restaurant. Romantic venue. From the lake, take first left after Dalat Train Station.
1 Quang Trung St, Ward 9, Villa #3

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.
1a Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi

Sheraton Hanoi

★★★★★
 Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden and courtyard, the hotel provides the perfect balance between tranquility and convenience.
K5 Nghi Tam, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

★★★★★  **Oi's Pick**
 Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialities 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 Ha My 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 Oi's Pick

★★★★★
 Boutique Hoi An Resort offers 82 rooms and villas, with all rooms facing the sea with private balconies. Other facilities include spa with 3 treatment rooms and 5 massage pavilions, fully-equipped gym, restaurant, lobby lounge and pool bar and conference facilities accommodating 80 guests for dinner functions and 130 guests for cocktail parties.
Group 6, Block Tan Thinh, Ward Cam An, Hoi An City
www.boutiquehoianresort.com

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

★★★★★
 Located a scenic 15km drive from central Hue, this is spacious resort with the largest villas and rooms in the area. The property includes private pool villas, beach villas, duplex and deluxe rooms in a wide range of styles and decor designed with complete and modern facilities.
An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang

La Residence Hotel & Spa

★★★★★
 This former French Governor's residence dates to 1930 and is a masterpiece of art deco design. Its incredible location overlooking the Citadel and the Perfume River brings this 122-room hotel a total and serene tranquility. 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

Mia Nha Trang

Every one of the 50 rooms has a sea view and each has its own private veranda, which offers the discerning guest the option of experiencing a beach getaway in ultimate privacy. That has helped Mia Resort Nha Trang to gain numerous accolades including Finalist of Best New Boutique Hotel In The World; Runner up of Best Budget Hotel-The Smith Hotel Awards 2013; and the Certificate of Excellence 2012, 2013 and 2014 from TripAdvisor.
Bai Dong, Cam Hai Dong, Cam Lam
www.mianhatrang.com

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.
26-28 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
062220222



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 wine 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.thecliffresort-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

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, butter-yellow exteriors, whitewashed louvers, and tropical gardens recalling a colonial plantation. Freestanding deluxe villas are notable for their sea-facing porches, spacious bathrooms, and cathedral ceilings.

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach

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 tranquility, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings are so far unmatched in Vietnam.

Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.

Hoia 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 lives in villages & cities, where the richness of its culture remains despite inevitable urbanization. Live 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.

7 Cong Truong Lam Son, DI
reservation@aoshowsaigon.com
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

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

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna,

and high-class Cantonese restaurant.
17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D 1

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Khiem, DI
3822 8899
www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D 1
38229197

Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

628C Hanoi Highway, D2
6255 9900
www.somerset.com/vietnam

The Landmark

The Landmark features serviced apartments, offices, luxury dining, sports clubs, swimming pool at the rooftop of the building with great views of the Saigon River. It offers one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units for rent. Amenities offered include wireless broadband internet access, 100 percent power backup, room service, maid service and laundry, 24-hour reception and airport shuttle service.

5B Ton Duc Thang, DI
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

BenInAsia.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.beninasia.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 Bui, DI
www.buffalotours.com.vn

Exotissimo Travel

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world! Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office. A District 1 presence will re-open soon.

41 Thao Dien, D2
www.exotissimo.com
anphu@exotissimo.com

Inside Asia Travel

Inside Asia Travel is a boutique luxury travel provider of tailor made travel arrangements for English speaking expats and travelers through Southeast Asia. Guests enjoy highly personalized, bespoke travel arrangements suited to individual tastes and budget.

www.insideasiatravel.com
3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, DI

Living

IMAGE BY NEIL FEATHERSTONE





Making Waves

Inspired by the natural beauty of the blue sea and Nha Trang, Viet Khanh Phu brings together a new Spring/Summer 2015 collection entitled The Aquamarine. Each product, made from ostrich skin, was designed drawing ideas from ocean waves, sun rays and the people living in the coastal town. With "timeless style, luxury materials and genuine craftsmanship" as its motto, Viet Khanh Phu aims to bring the highest quality product and customer service to the local and international market.

Viet Khanh Phu's showrooms:
Ho Chi Minh City (14 Pham Hong Thai, D1; 3824 1466)
and Nha Trang (70 Tran Phu; 058 352 5345)
Or visit www.vietkhanhphu.khatoco.com





The White Stuff

Tackling years of coffee stain

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

I HAVE TO confess to being a big-time coffee drinker. I started out much younger than I should have, and I indulged far more often than was probably good for me. I've found living in Vietnam – where more coffee is produced than anywhere else on the planet – to be one permanent caffeine buzz, and I don't go a day without a visit or five to the coffee pot.

The casualty has been my teeth. You can't down that much coffee without your tooth enamel taking on an unpleasant shift to the yellow spectrum – and the frustrating thing is, it doesn't brush off. No amount of toothpaste will remove the microscopic grinds from those tiny cracks and ridges, and the acidity in the coffee itself can contribute to a gradual wearing away of the bright outer layer, allowing the lemon-colored dentin underneath to shine unpleasantly through.

The upside to ruining my smile in Vietnam is that I'm ideally located to fix the problem. High-quality, international-standard dental care is quite affordable here, and superior teeth-whitening procedures

can cost around a third of what a clinic would charge overseas for the same thing. I found that in Ho Chi Minh City I could restore my teeth back to their teenage hue at a reputable dentist's without seriously affecting my café latte budget, and so I went ahead and booked a procedure.

There are a good number of methods for achieving whiter teeth, most of which require multiple treatments and religious maintenance regimes. At Dr. Do Dinh Hung's **HD Dental Center** (www.drhung01.com) – recently relocated to palatial new premises on Cong Quynh – the most effective (and certainly the fastest) procedure available is the Brite Smile teeth bleaching system, which takes about two hours and allows you to leave the clinic with a significantly pearlier grin than you had when you arrived.

While soaking your teeth in hydrogen peroxide may sound a tad extreme, the process is actually fairly gentle and optimized to reduce any discomfort. My dentist, Dr. Tuan Anh, gave my teeth a thorough visual once-over first to ensure

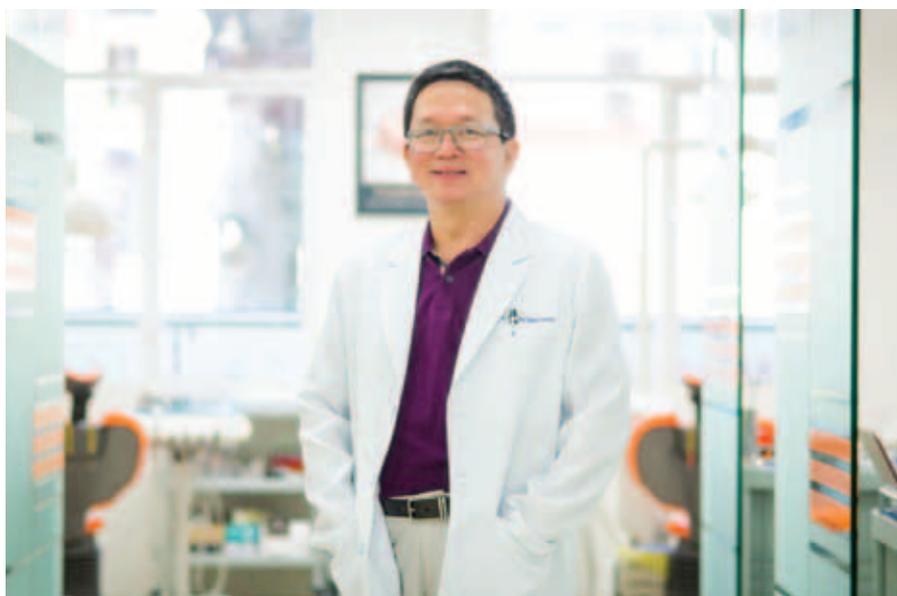
there weren't any undiscovered cavities that shouldn't come into contact with the bleaching agent, and then gave me an initial polish to fully expose the surface of my teeth. I was laid back, fitted with a mouthpiece, and then the real work began.

The procedure was conducted in three parts, each 20 minutes in duration. My gums and lips were applied with a protective jelly, and then the hydrogen peroxide gel was smeared all over the surfaces of my teeth where the espresso had done its damage. As with most dental gels and pastes nowadays, the taste was light and pleasant – faintly minty.

What I hadn't expected was that for most of the procedure I'd be lying undisturbed while a specially-designed blue-light lamp – looking not unlike a miniature sunbed – was positioned in front of my mouth to activate the gel and accelerate the oxidation process that would be removing the stain. Most people don't exactly look forward to visits to the dentist, but in this case, lying there with my protective goggles on and the warm blue



“Most people don’t exactly look forward to visits to the dentist, but in this case, lying there with my protective goggles on and the warm blue light shining on my teeth, the experience was mercifully comfortable.”



Dr. Do Dinh Hung

light shining on my teeth, the experience was mercifully comfortable. My only regret was that I didn’t bring any entertainment along with me – an hour can seem a long time, even if it is broken up periodically by the dentist coming over to swab the gel off, carrying with it the stain of cappuccinos past. If you’re thinking of having your teeth whitened, my best advice is to make sure you take a pair of headphones along with you: without the benefit of music, I just let myself drift off to sleep.

Sixty minutes later, the difference was obvious. Dr. Tuan Anh showed me a rack of artificial teeth dyed with the different enamel colors that occur in patients – according to the grading method, I’d moved from a slightly muddied A3 right up to a healthy A1 – about the lightest shade that teeth can be without looking artificial.

I can’t say that the procedure was unpleasant, although I did experience some mild pangs of sensitivity here and there during the bleaching process and for a short while afterwards. Patients are each presented with a tube of a rather tasty ointment to alleviate this problem. In fact, the only major issue I had was with the post-treatment care leaflet I was handed as I left, which explained that until the ‘protein pellicle layer’ over my tooth enamel reformed – a process that takes about a day – my teeth would be particularly sensitive to restaining. For 24 hours I needed to avoid eating or drinking anything that might discolor them again, including – drumroll – coffee. ■



My life as... a railway crossing guard

INTERVIEWED BY COLLEEN THUY TIEN NGO, JOSH MAYHEW, MAI LAN AND MAI QUANG HUY IMAGE BY NEIL FEATHERSTONE

MY NAME IS Ky and I'm a railroad worker on the Ha-Hai line (Hanoi - Hai Phong). I'm 50 now and I've been working this job for 20 years. I was originally an army man, but then I retired and worked building railroads before changing to my current job. My main duties are to close the barriers at the crossing when the train comes, or to alert the train to stop in case there's a traffic jam or an accident at the crossing. My group, which has responsibility for the crossings from Bach Mai Hospital to Linh Dam Lake, has more than 100 workers. My team at this crossing has seven members in total. A normal shift, which lasts 12 hours, requires two of us to be working at once.

In general, when we're at the crossing, we're responsible for everything. If there's an accident, we're partially liable. Fortunately, there aren't that many accidents. The government tried replacing us once with an automatic barrier-closing system but it failed because people would always try to cross the tracks while the barriers were closing, and then there'd be traffic jams. Speaking of traffic jams, it's much easier to work in the city where all we have to do when there's a traffic jam is to call the train conductor on the phone. When you're out in the countryside, you've got

to go 'catch' the train using lights and flags to get the conductor's attention... it can be quite dangerous. Sometimes the conductors stop at the wrong place which results in arguments then we have to write up a report and submit it to our superiors.

The most tiring thing about this job is the way the trains don't come on schedule. We've only got about 10 minutes' notice before the train gets here, so we've got to stay at the crossing for the whole shift. The day shifts are a bit better because at night 12 hours without any sleep can be long and exhausting, not to mention it's more dangerous at night.

No one appreciates our work. We're just trying to keep people safe, but even so, people always complain when we close the barriers. We get insulted on a daily basis and sometimes fights even break out, but there's really nothing you can do about it. To do this kind of work, you've got to be gentle and know how to sweet talk. If you've got a bad temper, even if you're right, it will take a very long time for the police to come and solve your problems. I once had an incident with some people but some locals intervened pretty quickly and nothing really happened. That was a long time ago.

Honestly, I don't find anything interesting

about my job, but since I've been here for decades, I'm just trying to hang on and finish out my final years [laughs]. The railway industry's still State-owned so us workers are considered "State people" but we're so poor. The highest our salaries can get is a little over VND2 million. My family has a house here and both my kids are grown and in college now; we mainly live on the money my wife earns with her little shop at the market. What about people who have to rent a place to live? How are they supposed to live? Me and my co-workers have also started selling prepaid mobile phone cards to earn a little extra cash. But if you're working outside the city, that's not an option. That's why the industry lacks workers... we don't even want our children to work here. I've got about five years left before retirement and I haven't thought of anything to do after. I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't continue working here no matter how high a salary they offered me. It could kill you at any moment! [Laughs]

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). ■



Power Lines

The effects vertical and horizontal lines have on the home



As an interior and furniture designer for Austin Home Interiors, McNeill Shiner is always looking for new ways to mix styles and influences to create spaces that are uplifting, comfortable and very personal.



AS AN ELEMENT of interior design, line can appear in many forms: as part of the architecture of a space, edges of furniture and other elements of a room, or perhaps in patterns in fabric or tile. Line also occurs in the empty spaces between objects, such as placement of art on a wall, or pendant lights hung from a ceiling. As with other elements of design, line will often impact us in ways we aren't quite conscious of. When you know a little bit about how these elements affect your perception of space, you can begin to see how they work in your own home.

Horizontal and vertical lines can both produce a sense of awe and spaciousness, but in different ways. With horizontal lines, it's there in the name - where sky meets earth, as far as the eye can see. Even within the confines of four walls, horizontal lines generate a feeling of connectedness with the earth, of being calm and grounded. They can also add a sense of that spaciousness to interiors. In the bedroom example (pictured left), wide tonal stripes serve to visually push the walls out further. The large scale of the stripes and subtle color choice keeps the overall look from feeling too overwhelming.

While horizontal lines are closely associated with nature and the earth, strong vertical lines better recall

manmade achievements. A space with high ceilings and a strong element of vertical line will produce a feeling of awe or smallness - think of an impressive cathedral or monument. Vertical lines can represent strength and dignity, as in columns supporting a building, but they also draw your eye upwards, toward the sky. Just as horizontal lines visually expand horizontal space, vertical lines can accentuate the height of a room. In the bedroom example above, the drapery is hung very high, nearly to the ceiling, and just skims the floor. The very strong, straight lines are a perfect contrast to the horizontal stripes, and keep the space feeling airy.

The bedroom could be a little static and traditional with only straight lines, so the contemporary curved settee in the corner is really a stroke of genius. Curvy lines can be the easiest for our eyes to process, because they occur frequently in nature and in the human body. The sinuous lines of terraced rice paddies in Sapa are a beautiful example of this effect; following the curves of the mountains they're carved into, the paddies draw your eye slowly and effortlessly through space. Soft, flowing lines in your interiors will produce a similar feeling. Wind those curves into tighter loops, however, and the effect is

more playful, even young.

Diagonal lines embody a sense of movement, change, or excitement - a staircase, a jagged cliff, the sun's rays. Despite the limited color palette, the kitchen (pictured right) is full of energy and movement. The most obvious feature is the pattern running across the backsplash and all the way up to the ceiling. The movement is vertical, but in sharp, diagonal shapes. That vertical movement is balanced by the long counter and open shelving, which draw your eye outward. There's a little relief from the sharp shapes in curved, mismatched pendants, but did you notice the placement? The designer of this space cleverly mimicked the zigzag wallpaper by installing the pendant lights at alternating heights.

Just like with color, the best way of training your eye to recognize the function of line in a space is to observe interiors that have been well designed. Next time you're in a restaurant, try to identify the designer's aim in using different types of line for visual impact. Where is your eye drawn? How is the space balanced in terms of static and dynamic line? With just a little bit of understanding of how these elements work together, you'll be making adjustments to your own space in no time. ■



Adrian Watts is the Deputy Headmaster and Director of Academic Studies at the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

Child's Play

Why it's important for children to have enough free play at a young age

DURING MY 20 years of international school administration, one of the changes I have noticed is the move by both schools and parents to reduce free play time for children and replace it with more academic activities. This is best demonstrated by the increasing obsession of parents to fill children's free time out of school with structured activities. When I refer to free play, I am referring to play that is self-controlled and self-directed.

It is interesting that the OECD, Microsoft's Partnership for Learning and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills have all found the business world is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit employees skilled in critical thinking, critical problem solving and collaborative teamwork. These organizations clearly identify the key skills of collaboration, knowledge construction, problem solving, innovation, self-regulation and

communication as essential for the 21st century work place. While at the same time neuroscientists, psychologists and anthropologists are identifying the importance that free play has on brain structure in the early years of life and how this enhances the development of these much needed qualities.

As teachers of Early Years have always known, how a child learns to play in the sandpit informs how they choose to communicate and collaborate as they grow older. In free play when young children are with their peers, the resultant environment influences the development of social competence, strengthens social bonds, builds emotional maturity, develops thinking and reasoning skills and assists with physical health. Young children learn from each other how to share, how to engage in reciprocal interactions, to take the needs and desires of others into account,

and to manage their own impulses. When deprived of the opportunities provided through free play these characteristics do not develop as effectively.

Researchers and psychologists have discovered that between the ages of three and five, children should develop the capacity to self-regulate. This is regarded as a critical part of brain development in what scientists call "executive functioning." This will later have a huge impact on learning outcomes and employability. What they discovered at the University of Colorado is there is a strong correlation between free play and executive functioning that further correlates closely with success at school and in life in general.

Learning to Control Fear

At the University of Lethbridge in Canada, research has shown connections

between neurons in the prefrontal cortex, which plays a critical role in regulating emotions, making plans and solving problems, are changed through free play. Thus leading researchers to conclude that free play is vital for building pro-social brains - social brains that know how to interact with others in positive ways and help prepare us for life. These findings are further supported by US government longitudinal research demonstrating robust contributions of early pro-social behavior to children's developmental success in academic and social domains. They found pro-social interaction developed in play has a strong, positive impact on later academic achievement and social preferences.

It also appears from these studies that free play is a means of teaching children they are not helpless. In play away from adults, children do have control and can practice asserting it. In free play children learn to make decisions, solve their own problems, create and abide by rules and get along with others as equals. In his book *Resilience in Children and Teens*, Kenneth Ginsburg from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia clearly identifies the importance of play as an integral part of building resilience. He explains when children play they make mistakes and have to learn from them to avoid the same outcome repeating itself. From his observations and studies he has found play enables young children to create multiple scenarios and outcomes and deal with unexpected variables not the same as in the traditional school environment. Ginsburg has shown play is vital for normal cognitive, social and emotional development. Play helps reduce stress and increases well-being. He has also shown the absence of play leads to maladaptive behavior which helps explain the positive correlation existing between increased anxiety and depression in school

age children and the decline in time allowed for free play.

Play is also a means by which children learn to control fear. You may have noticed that when allowed to do so, young children naturally test themselves by climbing, jumping and rough and tumbling because the slight risks involved are outweighed by the gains. Through such activities children are teaching themselves about levels of fear they can tolerate without panicking. They are learning to control their bodies in the face of fear, an ability that may one day save their lives.

At MIT they have discovered a clear correlation between play, innovation and creativity. Qualities such as idealism, experimentation and wonder - are vital ingredients for innovation - have been shown to develop early in our lives through free play, which is all about exploring the possible. In modern times of rapid change, exploring the possible is an essential skill. Free play allows

children to develop the flexibility needed to adapt to changing circumstances and environment; an ability that comes in handy when life becomes unpredictable as an adult. To be comfortable with uncertainty, one must remain fluid, receptive and creative and the best way to have developed these qualities is through play.

Unfortunately for a plethora of reasons, both real and imagined, children today are given far less time or opportunity to engage in free play at both home and school. Children are rarely given the freedom to direct their own activities, leading to a persistent rise in children feeling that they have no control over their lives, which as noted earlier is bringing problems later in childhood. As Peter Gray discusses in his TED Talk, "the most important skills children must learn in order to live happy, productive, moral lives are skills which cannot be taught. They are skills learned and practiced by children through play." ■



>> 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
www.theabcis.com



American International School

Founded in 2006, American International School (AIS) is a private, coeducational, university-preparatory school for students from preschool to grade 12. The language of instruction is English. The school offers standard American curriculum with a complement of performing arts, visual arts, music and sport programs.

Elementary School (102C Nguyen Van Cu, D1)

Middle School (35 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh)

High School (781/C1-C2 Le Hong Phong, D10)

APU International School

Operating since 2004, APU International School is a private coeducational international school enrolling students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Instruction is conducted in English, but there is an English Language Development (ELD) program available to students who require it. It is currently a member of the College Board, and is an official SAT testing site.

Elementary (501 Lac Long Quan, D11)

Middle and High School (286 Lanh Binh Thang, D11)
www.apu.edu.vn

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).

Xi Campus (Kindergarten)

190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)

APSC Compound

36 Thao Dien, D2

Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)

East-West Highway, D2

3742 4040

www.aisvietnam.com



British International School (BIS)

Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body from pre-school to Year 13. The school is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers with recent UK experience. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISIA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam.

An Phu Primary Campus

225 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2

3744 4551

apprimary@bisvietnam.com

An Phu Secondary Campus

246 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2

3744 2335

apsecondary@bisvietnam.com

Tu Xuong Primary Campus

43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D3

3932 0210

txprimary@bisvietnam.com

www.bisvietnam.com

Canadian International School

Now in its fifth year of operation with a student population of 700 students in grades K-12, CIS- VN has received approval from the Ministry

of Education and Training in Vietnam and the Department of Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City to accept both Vietnamese nationals and expat nationals. The school's language of instruction is English.

No 86, Road 23, D7

www.cis.edu.vn

Canada Vietnam Kindergarten

According to the average age of each class as well as the physiology and psychology of each age, CVK has deployed a curriculum that ensures the balance between study and playtime, Vietnamese and English learning.

Street 23, Tan Phu, D7

5412 3028

www.cvk.edu.vn

CreativeKids

CreativeKids preschool program is tailored based on Singapore and New Zealand preschool program. Offers special curriculum including after school English and Mandarin class, for kids whose English is their second language, and parent's English conversation course, for adults who need to converse in English in daily situations.

No 216, Lo H7, My Hung, Phu My Hung

New City Center, D7

5412 1306

www.creativekids.edu.my



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 Trung Toan,

An Phu

08 37 44 63 44

info@igs-hcmc.de

www.igs-hcmc.de



French Ministry of Education.
234 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3519 1521

www.creche-ecole-francaises-internationales-hochiminh.com



European International School HCMC

The European International School Ho Chi Minh City (EIS) offers a supportive and challenging academic education from Early Years to Grade 12 (K-12) an. EIS promotes inter-cultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. Its motto is "Educating Global Citizens".

Thao Dien Campus

730 F-G-K Le Van Mien

Street

Thao Dien, D2

www.eishcmc.com



Fosco International School

Caters to pre-school children from 18 months to 4 years and elementary students from 5 to 12 years. It offers enrolment opportunities to both local and expat children providing childcare services, comprehensive pre-school and kindergarten programs and an internationally aligned elementary school curriculum.

40 Ba Huyen Than Quan, D3

3930 5930

www.fis.edu.vn

Global Indian International School

Offers Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and the Global Montessori Plus Program. The school's Nine Gems model is a proprietary tool to achieve a balance between academics and experience, mental and physical development, fine arts and performing arts, language skills and creativity, personality development, ethics and entrepreneurship.

172 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

www.globalindianschool.org

Horizon International Bilingual School

Offers curriculum for kindergarten, primary, secondary and high school. Classes are taught in English and Vietnamese. Offers scholarships for children who achieve excellence in school.

6 - 6A - 8, Street 44, D2

5402 2482

www.hibs.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



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

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

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

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

Little Angels International Preschool

Offers nursery and kindergarten classes and provides full-time or part-time childcare and kindergarten services for children 4 months through 5 years.

159/12 Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan
3844 3719
www.little-angels.edu.vn

Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3744 2639
www.montessori.edu.vn

Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2
3744 4709
noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn



Renaissance International School Saigon



Renaissance is an International British school providing an inclusive curriculum based upon the British curriculum complemented by the International Primary Curriculum and International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each student is offered an education tailored to meet his or her individual learning needs. It is a family school providing a stimulating and secure learning environment with first-class facilities including a 350-seat theatre, swimming pool, mini-pool, play-areas, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171 ext 120/121/122
www.renaissance.edu.vn



Saigon Mandarin English Kindergarten

For children aged 5 months to 6 years old. The learning environment is highly interactive and play-based, where every child is encouraged to reach out and relate to people around him or her, going through learning stages: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

133 Nguyen Trai, D5
38 38 11 23
www.smehr.edu.vn

Schools of North America

Offers a dual curriculum - instructing students in a Vietnamese program directed by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in tandem with an American program aligned with the State of California. Students graduate after accumulating 248 credits which is equivalent to high school graduates in the US.

Street 5A, Trung Son Residential Quarter, Binh Chanh
402 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
www.sna.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



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

Smartkids

Focuses on the holistic development of the child and combines Montessori, Steiner and Reggio Emilia philosophies into its program. Also offers childcare for young children until 6 years old.

1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2
3744 6076
www.smartkidsinfo.com

Stamford Grammar - SLC Kindergarten

Provides comprehensive and holistic education for infants from 4 months to kindergarten students of 6 years old. Each class is conducted by one qualified native English teacher and two qualified local teachers.

4bis Phung Khac Khoan, D1

214 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
www.stamfordgrammar.com

Vietnam Australia International School (VAS)

Established in 2004 and licensed by the Vietnamese government, VAS is offering educational services to some 4,500 students from K through 12 at 6 campuses in Ho Chi Minh City.

www.vas.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

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 Huong St., Thao Dien ward, D2, HCMC
www.theamericanschool.edu.vn
08 3519 2223, 08 3519 2224
info@tasvietnam.edu.vn

SCHOOLS [ADULT]

Kent International College

The first Australian vocational college in Vietnam to receive approval from the Ministry of Education and Training to teach Australian Advanced Diplomas in business, marketing and information technology in Vietnam.

148-150 Nguyen Dinh Chinh, Phu Nhuan
219 - 221 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh
www.kent.edu.vn

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

RMIT

RMIT University Vietnam is an Asian campus of Melbourne-based University RMIT, Australia's biggest tertiary education. Offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering, and boasts a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
21 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
www.rmit.edu.vn

Health & Beauty

Ladieswear

Anupa Eco Boutique **👉 Oi's Pick**

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, D1
www.anupa.net / facebook: anupaluxury

Gaya

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

1 Nguyen Van Trang, D1

Kelly Bui

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

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Valenciani **👉 Oi's Pick**

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

23 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3821 2788
090 785 5788

Menswear

Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, D1

Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

Gyms

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.

APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
www.aisportscentre.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



GETFIT GYM & YOGA

Founded in 2010, GetFit Gym & Yoga is a high-end fitness and yoga center that's 2,500 sqm. They provide top brand equipments, modern facilities, professional trainers and a variety of classes to help members successfully reach their goals and enhance their lives.

Third Floor, H3 apartment,
384 Hoang Dieu, D4
6261 6168
www.getfit.vn

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba®Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbaAtomic®.

Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (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@icasianasaiagon.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 centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.

3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza,
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

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.dakhoanphu.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

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
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551

Saigon Acupuncture

Practitioner Christopher Booth, M.S., L.Ac., is now accepting new patients. Chris treats the following conditions with acupuncture: Chronic and Acute Pain, Neurological Disorders, Gynecological Disorders, Emotional & Psychological Disorders, among others.

161 Hai Ba Trung, D3
saigonacu@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/saigonacupuncture

Stamford Skin 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

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.

79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.

Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

dental



Dr. Hung & Associates Dental Center

A centrally located dental center that uses the latest modern equipment with a team of skilled specialists.

Services include cosmetic, implant, braces, prosthodontics, pedodontics and more. Expect high quality service at a reasonable price.

Building 244A Cong Quynh, D1
08 3925 7526
08 3925 7527
nhakhoadhung@gmail.com
www.drhung01.com



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

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 premisses in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.

2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital

to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.
63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, D1

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap

nails

Classic Nails

Located near Ben Thanh Market, Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation.

4 Phan Boi Chau, D1
3825 7047
9am - 8pm

Fame Nails

A place for your nail care near Ben Thanh Market. Besides classic manicure and pedicure, it also offers deluxe spa manicure and pedicure, nail art and enhancement, and services including waxing, facial, eyebrow shaping and eye lashes extension.

18 Pham Hong Thai, D1
www.famenails.com

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, D1

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, D1

spas

An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, D1

Dermal Essentials

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 cleanliness 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 & Gel Nails Salon

Body massage
 Foot massage
 Hair cut women and men
32 Dong Du, Ben Nghe Ward, DI
 (Spa & Hair Salon)
8A/4D1 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 cafe, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.
Garden Plaza 2 Complex
8 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



Nano Nature Spa

The spa is a partner of many different cosmetics corporations based in France and the US. Modern facilities are airy with advanced equipment in the industry.
140 - 142 Pasteur DI
3822 4130 - 382204132
097 219 6969

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



Silk Waxworks

Located right in the heart of District 2, SILK is a concept boutique that specializes only in waxing services for both men and women. Their waxperts are trained in hygiene, speed and quality to clear a path of silky, smooth and sleek adventures for your hoochie and coochie. Owing to its expertise in waxing, SILK are your go-to for high-grade hair removal.
88 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien Ward, D2
 http://www.silkwaxworks.com
08 3519 1588

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 Siam

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
238B Pasteur, D3
 www.vscential.com

Business & Tech

■ IMAGE PROVIDED BY ETHNOTEK





Survival Gear

Ethnotek's mission to keep culture alive, one bag at a time

TEXT BY **JAMES PHAM** IMAGES PROVIDED BY **ETHNOTEK**

TREKKING FAR OFF the beaten path amongst the solitude of the hills of Sapa, bag designer Jake Orak found himself in a different world, in more ways than one, far from his suburban upbringing in Minnesota (USA). By that 2007 trip, Jake was already onto his second career, after a stint at industrial design for 3M. "There were extremely smart people there; I was having lunch with thermodynamic experts, mechanical engineers and chemists. But it was too big a company for a budding designer. I wanted something more 'lifestyle,' a bit more me," he recalls. He then took on a job as a design intern in Saigon for an international bag company, working his way up to junior designer. "I didn't know anything about bags," he confesses. "I thought it was going to be easy. After all, it's just fabric!" But having access to the sample room, where he could just hand over a sketch to be mocked up was exhilarating. "I learned so much, doing 50 things a day, managing whole collections, from sketches on a napkin all the way to freight on board and into retail." It was through the eyes of a bag designer

that he appreciated the craftsmanship of the Hmong villages he encountered. "Seeing tribes in their natural environment, just existing, was incredible," says Jake. "Some didn't even use money, just trade. I witnessed thriving communities, people with their hands dyed blue from indigo, wearing their traditional dress... I felt incredibly privileged to experience this and I wanted everyone I knew to know about it, that something like this still exists on earth. I felt a sense of responsibility wash over me."

Suppressing his first impulse to quit his job and join an NGO somewhere, he thought: "I'm a bag designer. Let's be proactive and design something!" Jake remembers sitting down after a long trek in Bac Ha and writing in his journal about how inspired he felt, thinking how many other places there were like this in the world with basic human diversity and tradition still intact. "It's gotta be rare and I want to help protect it," he wrote.

But then, as it often happens, life went on. Jake moved to Los Angeles to become the senior designer for another high-

end bag company. However, the idea for creating bags using local fabrics was rekindled when he spotted a shop selling African textiles while cycling in downtown LA. He recognized, though, that the idea of working directly with individuals in remote villages was simply not compatible with the large quantity sourcing required by a big company. "At the end of the day, it was just creating junk that's produced in a factory with no real meaning. It's a product without a soul," he says of the mainstream bag industry. "I wanted to create something more meaningful while sustaining myself, a product that does some good in the world, but at the same time be practical. Something that improves people's lives not just because of social good, but because it's functional. It had to have a tech side and not just be a hippy dippy slouchy bag."

Tribal Customers

Jake started sourcing textiles in 2010 and launched Ethnotek (www.ethnotekbags.com) in 2011. Trips involve a lot of research, attested to by ethnic textile books and a stack of Lonely Planets in his office.



“We take on a lot of risk to help the artisans and not exploit them in any way. They produce what they want at the pace they’re able to.”

“There’s usually only one tiny blurb on where to get textiles,” he laments. “You can only do so much research. In the end, you just have to parachute in and ask someone who’ll usually first take you to a souvenir shop. It’s only when I explain that I want to meet the family who made this and order from them every three months forever, that they’ll say: ‘Oh! So you want to go to my cousin’s house!’”

Jake then spends two to three weeks with these families to gain their trust. “It’s a business-to-business relationship. It’s not a charity,” he says. “These people don’t want handouts. They want you to buy the things they create. They don’t want to leave their home to get a job in a factory. They want to stay at home and work from home. That keeps the kids in the village and it passes on the knowledge.” The time spent in the villages also allows Jake to work through a detailed protocol of finding out more about the artisan’s process, everything from whether the dyes used are natural or synthetic, where the cotton comes from, where the dye is disposed and what motifs mean. He also needs to be sure

villagers have an export license and are tech savvy, being able to use email, receive wire transfers and understand shipping methods. Respecting fair trade standards also means asking about working hours, where the artisans live and how far they have to commute (in the case of collective weaving centers).

Jake now sources textiles from Vietnam, Indonesia, Ghana, Guatemala and India. A small factory in Vietnam turns these fabrics into “threads,” interchangeable covers for backpacks and messenger bags, and a range of chic travel accessories (think travel wallets and iPad covers). His Vietnamese textiles are embroidered by Red Hmong, Black Hmong and Flower Hmong villages in northern Vietnam and on looms in the Cham communities near Phan Rang. This month, he’s visiting the K’Ho minority tribes outside of Dalat. “That’s the story for all ethnic minorities here in Vietnam. They’re either being pushed out or put on display. Ethnocide faces the biggest threat here because there’s no support. It’s really important for us to restore demand, to bring business to these places where the

people are trying to get by on agriculture or by conforming. I feel a sense of urgency when I visit the villages,” he says.

His work has seen results, though. He still gets goose bumps when talking about a village in India where Ethnotek started out collaborating with a single family of four, weaving three months out of the year. Ethnotek’s success has now allowed them to engage six looms in two villages weaving eight to 10 months out of the year. The goal for every village they work with is to provide year-round sustainable employment. “We pay 50 percent up front to artisans so they don’t have to fund raw materials and production themselves,” he says of the company’s humane business model. “We take on a lot of risk to help the artisans and not exploit them in any way. They produce what they want at the pace they’re able to. For example, if you go beyond the Sapa Sunday Market, you’ll see that embroidering fabric is what a lot of Hmong people are doing in their free time — when it’s raining or in between harvests... It’s a passive sourcing model because we’re taking what they *want* to



IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

Jake Orak

do, not pushing them to do anything. Once they understand my intentions are pure and I'm there to help them spread the story about their culture to a wider audience which translates into more business for them, they get really excited."

With only two salaried employees (including Jake), Ethnotek has come a long way from its humble beginnings. Just two weeks after launching, REI, a US-based outdoor retail company with more than 130 stores, called to say they wanted to carry Ethnotek products. The Ethnotek "fulfillment center" is no longer Jake's mom's basement. And the ETK "tribe" as Jake calls his customers, is growing stronger by the day. "Tribe implies a sense of community around the mission and the product. People feel ownership on a deeper level than just buying a bag and going away. When people send in their photos with them and their bag on social media, I get stoked, super happy. That's instant gratification, seeing someone I don't even know, just loving their bag. In a sense, they become cultural consultants, helping to spread the message. That's extremely rewarding and makes all the

struggle worthwhile. This is a personal, emotional business."

While owning your own business and getting to design and travel for a living is a dream job for almost anyone, in the end, it's about the survival of these unique, beautiful people spread across three continents. "It's like the Latin language going extinct, but here, you see things disappearing in front of your eyes. In Cham villages, every house has two looms — one for the older generation and one for the younger generation to learn. Sadly, I've seen a lot of these looms collecting dust and moved out of the house and into the yard. Helping to preserve these cultures by applying it to a product is more sustainable, like buying coffee beans directly from the person that grows it, rather than donating something where someone will take a cut and pass it on to someone else who'll also take a cut before eventually getting to the person it's supposed to."

Much more than a hippy dippy, Kumbaya startup, the story behind Ethnotek is just as compelling as the one of the villages it's helping to save, the ultimate in 'survival' gear. ■

GEAR REVIEW



I really wanted to like Ethnotek's Acaat Messenger. But inspiring backstory aside, the pragmatist in me needed to know whether the bag was worth the price point and wouldn't be confused for something Sapa-inspired that I could pick up on Bui Vien. In a word, yes and yes. As a travel writer, at minimum I carry an iPad with keyboard case and a DSLR (sometimes with more than one lens) everywhere I go. On longer trips, a laptop comes along. The problem with most messenger bags for me is that the body of the bag is too slim, with little give on the sides, which makes for a very awkward fit considering the bulkiness of the camera. The Acaat Messenger not only has a padded sleeve for a laptop (with an unexpected textile finish and a fuzzy poly-tricot lining), there's also a second sleeve that fits a tablet. The generous 20-liter body is large enough to house a camera and a couple of lenses with plenty of room to spare without being unwieldy to carry. There are also four slip pockets for accessories as well as a zippered pocket for documents. If you're not using the luggage trolley pass-through on the back, zip it up and it becomes another large pocket. The 'tech' side of Ethnotek comes through with some geek features, like removable bumper inserts (to snugly fit a 13" laptop) and a stabilizer strap, so you can cinch the bag close to your body, handy for running through airports or when riding a bike, true messenger-style.

Small touches are also well thought out, like the extra loop to hang your bag up and off the ground, or the compression straps on the bottom of the bag that double as a place to roll up your jacket or a yoga mat. Another gripe of mine is narrow straps that bite into your shoulders when the bag is fully loaded. Thankfully, Ethnotek's bag has a wide padded strap while judicious use of Velcro makes everything easily accessible, including the ability to change out your thread (the textile flap on the front of the bag). While the bag itself is solid (made in Vietnam of 840-denier water-resistant ballistic nylon) and comes with some really nice features, its uniqueness springs from the interchangeable threads. I bought an extra one (more muted and not out of place at business meetings) and love that I can carry a tangible piece of Vietnam with me wherever I travel. My one reservation with the bag is actually with the handmade textile covers wearing out with use, but at USD29-39 for a new cover, it's a small price to pay to basically reinvent your bag.

ACAAT MESSENGER BAG

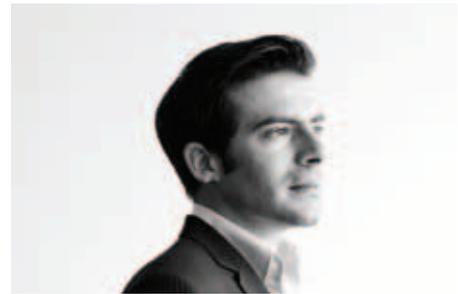
Retail: USD139-169

(depending on the textile)

In Vietnam, email: jake@ethnotekbags.com for an Oi Reader discount

Dear Hadrien and Marijn,

I am a Canadian citizen who has been living and working in Vietnam for the last six years. My Vietnamese girlfriend and I are thinking about getting married and staying in Vietnam permanently. Reading your columns every month, I understand that doing business in Vietnam and things like access to real estate are often much easier for Vietnamese citizens than for foreigners. Thinking about our future in Vietnam, I would like to know how a foreigner like me could possibly become a Vietnamese citizen. What are the requirements and will I be able to keep my Canadian citizenship?



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.



IF YOU ALREADY made a decision to marry a Vietnamese citizen and live here permanently, becoming a Vietnamese citizen does not seem such an eccentric idea as there are indeed a lot of advantages in gaining Vietnamese citizenship when living in Vietnam, notably in the domains that you refer to.

The Law on Vietnamese Nationality of 2008 sets a general rule whereby a foreign national residing permanently in Vietnam may acquire Vietnamese citizenship if he or she: (i) has resided in Vietnam for five years or more; (ii) is capable of making a living in Vietnam; (iii) understands the Vietnamese language well enough to integrate into the Vietnamese community; (iv) has full civil capacity to act; and (v) obeys the laws of Vietnam and respects its traditions, customs and practices.

There are three categories of foreigners who need only satisfy the last two requirements to validly apply for Vietnamese citizenship: (i) foreign

nationals being a spouse, a natural parent or natural offspring of a Vietnamese citizen; (ii) foreigners having made meritorious contributions to Vietnam's national construction and defense; and (iii) foreign nationals whose acquisition of Vietnamese citizenship would be helpful to the State of Vietnam.

If you want to apply for Vietnamese citizenship, you will need to submit an application and forms to the Department of Justice of the province or city where you reside. The paperwork consists of the following documents: (i) a standard application form; (ii) a copy of your birth certificate, passport or a valid substitute document; (iii) a curriculum vitae made in a standard format as issued by the Ministry of Justice; and (iv) recent judicial records. The application fee is VND3 million and the procedure should take, at least in theory, just under four months to be completed.

Foreign nationals not falling within

one of the exempted categories will additionally need to submit documents proving that they satisfy the requirements of the period and place of their residency, on their capability to make a living here and on their Vietnamese language skills.

On the other hand, foreigners claiming to fall within one of the three exempted categories will need to prove that they satisfy the relevant condition, for example in your case by including a marriage certificate to their application file (or a photocopy of your Vietnamese Medal of Honor, if applicable). Last but not least, if you apply for Vietnamese citizenship you must have a Vietnamese name, which you can choose yourself and which should be noted in your application file. Write back to us if you need any inspiration! We suggest Binh (in an obvious attempt to expand the population of Mr. Binh in Vietnam).

Following submission, your application file will go through various State authorities for verification and review before it will be handed over to the Ministry of Justice. Provided that your application file is complete and that all requirements are satisfied, it will be sent to the Prime Minister and it will finally end up on the desk of the President of Vietnam for his final decision.

Regarding your question about dual citizenship, the main rule under the Law on Vietnamese Nationality is that foreigners applying for Vietnamese citizenship must give up their then-current citizenship. However, if you fall within one of the three exempted categories that we mentioned before, and only with the approval of the President of Vietnam, dual citizenship is possible, provided of course that the country of your current citizenship also allows for it.

Best of luck to you and your future wife! ■

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

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66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach 3820 0623 t-wm@t-wm.com

law firms

Apex Law

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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

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Crown Line

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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

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3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net

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Faces & Places



Battle of The Year

A day-long festival of hip hop and breakdance performances with singers Suboi, Wowy, Kimmese and JustaTee taking the stage.

IMAGES BY **LOUIS-PHILIPPE BELANGER**



Tick Tock

Luxury watch retailer Tan Tan Watch hosted an event at Saigon Tax Center to showcase the latest Citizen timepiece.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**



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