

VIETNAM

01-2019

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This Month's Cover

Model: **Singer Linh TNX**

(Read about her rising career starting on page 40)

Photographer: **Vinh Nguyen Art**

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UNIVERSITY



DESTINATIONS



Kim, Hyemin (Amy)
Medicine
University of East Anglia



Park, Jee Yoon
Medicine - Double Degree
The University of Sydney



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Dartmouth University



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Seoul National University



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Science and Technology
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Nguyen, Gia Hanh (Megan)
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University of British Columbia



McKay, Katherine Vo Thi
Photography
Glasgow College



Doan, Nhat Minh
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of Science and Technology



Kirupakaran, Shruthe
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Design Foundation
Design Academy, Eindhoven



Phan, Nguyen Bao Long
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University of Illinois, Urbana



Park, So Hui (Sally)
Illustration
School of Visual Arts, New York



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Datebook

What's on this month...

JANUARY 9



What: New Year Gala Concert Rock Symphony
Where: Saigon Opera House
About: To start off our 2019, Ho Chi Minh City Ballet Symphony Orchestra and Opera will present a special Rock Symphony concert. The program is edited, staged and conducted by well-known Maestro Le Phi Phi. The mix of all-time favorite melodies from around the world, such as Queen, Pink Floyd, String, The Beatles, ABBA, Bee Gees, Michael Jackson and more, with the symphony orchestra, concert band and the choir and include songs that touch millions of hearts around the world, such as *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *We Will Rock You*, *We Are The Champions*, *We Are The World*, *Twist And Shout*, *Waterloo*, *How Deep Is Your Love*, etc.
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JANUARY 12



What: Building Communities With Blockchain
Where: John Von Neumann Institute (Phuong Linh Trung, Thu Duc, Ho Chi Minh City)
About: University students and Blockchain experts will gather at the Blockchain Education Network (BEN) inaugural event, as the Chinese Blockchain startup TRON is featured with an airdrop of their TRX tokens. The private event will be attended by world-class blockchain industry experts and investors, as TRON's entertainment ecosystem comes to the forefront. BEN is an international organization dedicated to forming a robust network of student organizations for blockchain education, innovation, and development. BEN was designed to help educational institutions build a presence on their respective campuses, receive administrative recognition and funding, and to help students connect with similar groups. BEN provides educational and professional resources, contacts, speakers, and guidance in order to usher in a new era of fintech and innovation. Blockchain Education Network Vietnam, a subsidiary of BEN, aims to carry out BEN's vision in building network micro-communities to bring together ideas, expertise within Vietnam. BEN Vietnam will partner with John Von Neumann Institute to host their first blockchain event in support of this collaborative vision.
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JANUARY 19



What: Contemporary Dance Café Saigon
Where: Saigon Opera House
About: Contemporary Dance Café Saigon is the latest artwork from two Dutch dancers Maité Guérin and Joost Vrouenraets. The Saigon coffee scene is the basis for the interaction of different relationships among young people today: how they come together then separate, intertwined with passion and eagerness as well as thoughts about everyday problems.
Contact: Visit www.hbso.org.vn for more info

JANUARY 26



What: DJ Markus Suckut
Where: The Observatory (10th Floor, 85 Cach Mang Thang Tam, D1); 9pm/after 10pm VND150,000 per person
About: German born and based Markus has been producing and DJing for over a decade and a half. As a DJ he likes to take on the role of a storyteller, preferring the longer variety of a set if he can choose. His career is built on excitement and playfulness, both as a DJ and producer, something that has paid off into becoming a considerable back catalogue. With his first production being released in 2009, a discography of over 30 records is now linked to his name, including two full-length solo albums; *DNA* (Figure) and *Resist* (EXILE) released in 2013 and 2017, respectively.
Contact: Visit www.facebook.com/HeartBeatSaigon for more info



Pet of the Month



Why you should adopt a senior or older dog

BY ADOPTING AN OLDER DOG, you are fighting for the value and beauty of life at all ages and stages. Most older dogs have already mastered training basics. They know outdoors is for potty, and shoes are for walking, not chewing. A senior dog has learned many of life's lessons already, and they are quick to understand what you're asking from them. Older dogs are a known commodity, easy to assess for size and temperament. You won't be wondering just exactly how big they'll grow. While many older dogs still enjoy a brisk daily walk, they're also content to nap and cuddle, and they can fit into many households with ease. Most grownup dogs don't require the constant monitoring, so they're a good choice for older people or busy families with young children. Older dog are eager to learn new tricks. That may go against what you've heard in the past, but it's true. Dogs can be trained at any age. A senior dog, given a new chance for a loving home, will reward your care with unwavering devotion and do their best to please you, which makes teaching new tricks pretty easy. ■

Rocky is estimated to be between 8-10 years old. His previous owner was going to "terminate" him, but a kind-hearted person saved him and ARC took him in. He's very friendly to humans, but he's not a big fan of other male dogs. If you can provide him a nice cozy retirement home, he'd love you for life. If you'd like to meet him, please contact arcpets@gmail.com.



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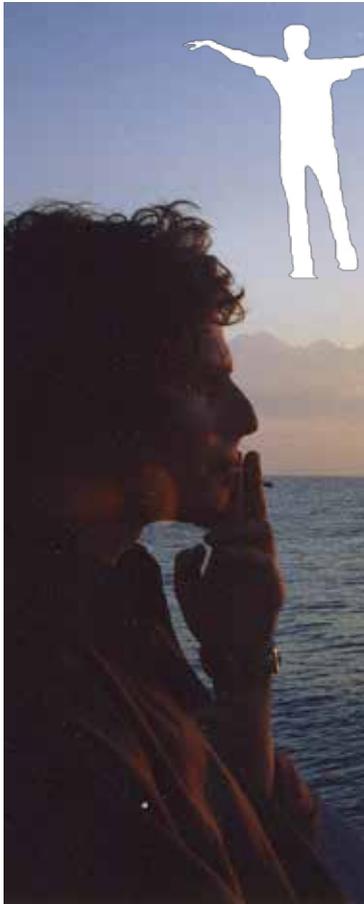
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18.JAN |



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USD8.6 MILLION **COMPLEX FOR BUDDHIST EVENTS OPENED IN NORTHERN VIETNAM LAST MONTH.**

The structure, Cung Truc Lam (Bamboo Forest Palace), cost over VND200 billion to build, with funding covered by donations from organizations and the Buddhist laity, according to Thich Thanh Quiet, a monk serving as deputy chairman of the Buddhist Sangha's executive council in Quang Ninh Province, where the complex is located. The complex is intended to be a place for worshipping Emperor Tran Nhan Tong, but it may also be adapted for various events such as prayer services, Buddhist lectures, and retreats, Quiet said. Tran Nhan Tong ruled Vietnam from 1278 to 1293—an epoch of peace and prosperity for the country. In his retirement from the throne in 1294, he was ordained a Buddhist monk and practiced the religion in modern-day Quang Ninh Province's Yen Tu Mountain, where he established a monastery and taught multiple disciples.

2.5 TONS **OF ANIMAL INNARDS WERE ILLEGALLY CARRIED ON A BUS.**

Authorities in central Vietnam confiscated over 2.5 metric tons of animal offal being unlawfully transported on a trans-national long-haul bus. The rancid organs were being stored in 37 polystyrene boxes on a Laotian bus intercepted while traveling through Thua Thien-Hue Province. Its driver, a Vietnamese national, was unable to present purchase documents for the innards. A similar situation took place in early November when police found around two metric tons of foul pig and cow innards with no proof of origin in a van running along an expressway near the central metropolis of Da Nang. The sale of rotten internal organs masquerading as fresh products has recently prompted general concern about food safety in Vietnam.



12TH **OF DECEMBER IS OFFICIAL RECOGNIZED AS "DAY OF PHO" IN VIETNAM.**

Day of *Pho* (also called *Pho* Day) is an event held by *Tuoi Tre* (Youth) newspaper in celebration of the iconic Vietnamese dish. Phan Ngan Son, deputy director of the National Office of Intellectual property, presented *Tuoi Tre* editor-in-chief Le The Chu with an exclusive authorization certificate of Day of *Pho*, officially marking the day as a national event. Before *Tuoi Tre*, Japan had pioneered the idea of honoring Vietnam's national dish by holding its own Day of *Pho* on April 4 annually since 2017.

USD430 MILLION **HORSE RACING TRACK TO OPEN BY 2021 IN HANOI.**

Construction has not started yet but it is planned to be built on a vast piece of land over 100 hectares, about the size of 140 football pitches, in Hanoi's suburban district of Soc Son. Betting is allowed at the racecourse. HanoiTourist had sought permission to create the track for more than a decade. But not until early 2017 did the facility's construction receive the green light from the government. The tourist company said that once completed, the racetrack would create employment for over 1,000 locals and even possibly for up to 10,000. The facility may help Hanoi draw a large number of tourists and make them stay in the capital for a longer time.



USD12

A MONTH IS HOW MUCH VIETNAMESE MILLENIALS ARE SPENDING ON FOODS AND DRINKS AT

convenience store, spending less than USD2 every time they shop, market researcher Kantar Worldpanel said in a recent report. Saigonese make eight to nine trips purchasing ready-to-drink beverages, ice cream and snacks for consumption away from home a month, which translates into a monthly expenditure of \$11.2-11.6, or an average of USD1.40 worth of purchases per shopping time, according to the Kantar Worldpanel Out-of-home (OOH) panel. For OOH consumption in the three-month period ending November, almost all (98 percent) consumers in Ho Chi Minh City purchased non-alcoholic beverages, 60 percent bought nutritional drinks, 57 percent purchased sweet and savory snacks, and 37 percent spent money on light meals, according to the report. Tea made up around 50 percent of the total spending for beverages among females and student-aged consumers in the September-November period, whereas coffee was favored by male and senior buyers, accounting for 30 percent of their spending for drinks. This explains why tea and coffee shops were the most visited out-of-home places for drinks, occupying 45 percent of the channel choices, among Ho Chi Minh City-based consumers, especially the millennials.



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100 METRIC TON

OF ILLEGAL CONTRABAND FROM CHINA HAS BEEN SEIZED LAST MONTH.

Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security caught 24 people in the act of transferring contraband from trucks with foreign license plates onto Vietnamese trucks in the northern border province of Lang Son. The 100-ton haul of contraband, including a wide variety of goods from tobacco and automobile parts to household appliances, was worth several billion dong. Around 52,000 cases of illegal cross-border transportation of goods were booked in the first half of 2018 in Vietnam, whose areas contiguous to Cambodia in the southwest and to China in the north are smuggling hot spots. Topping the contraband list were cigarettes, tobacco, alcoholic drinks, candy, sugar and clothes.



USD43 MILLION

TERMINAL EXPANSION PUT INTO OPERATION AT PHU QUOC INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

The Airports Corporation of Vietnam had spent VND1 trillion on the expansion since September 2016 in a bid to help increase the capacity of the airport from 2.6 to four million passengers per year. Currently, Phu Quoc International Airport is serving nearly 60 flights a day by 17 domestic and international airlines, according to Vu The Phiet, ACV general director. Phiet complained that the number of passengers surged around 27-47 percent each year. The airport only served 685,000 passengers in 2013 but it has had to handle 3.4 million passengers, of which nearly 400,000 are international visitors, by 2018, exceeding the designed capacity. With this terminal expansion, it is expected that from three to five more airlines will open new routes to the airport this year. Upon the inauguration of the new terminal expansion, the ACV also organized a ceremony to welcome the 100 millionth passenger on a Vietnam Airlines flight from Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi to the airport, located on Phu Quoc - a paradise island. It is reported that the 99,999,999th passenger was Kawse Hiroyuki from Japan.



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

Cat Spraying

Why does it happen and what can you do?



ONE OF THE MOST UNPLEASANT behavioral problems to deal with in cats is spraying.

Unfortunately, this topic is a very common reason why cats get abandoned at shelters.

What is cat spraying? Spraying is also known as urine marking. A cat will not squat to spray, as would happen with normal urination; instead, a cat that is spraying will be standing straight up.

Why do cats spray? One common reason is that something is wrong, therefore, your first step should always be a visit to the veterinarian. If you and your vet have ruled out a medical reason for spraying, then it's time to investigate behavioral causes:

- Within feline social groups, urine marking is used as a form of communication. By spraying in a specific area, a cat can let other cats know she has been there. Marking in an area also lets other cats know to stay away and establishes a cat's territory.

- Anyone who has cats knows they can be quite sensitive to changes in the environment. If you have moved to a new location, done major renovations, brought home a new family member, or lost one, you might discover your cat beginning to spray. One recent study shown that spraying brings relief and reduces stress for cats in a new environment.

- Cats can leave "messages" about

potential mating encounters by spraying. This is why so many cats that spray are unneutered males, although spraying can be found amongst fixed males and spayed and whole females, too.

- If you live in a home with more than one cat, spraying can occur if there is conflict between the cats. Even multiple cats, who get along well, may mark within the household simply because of the presence of other cats.

- We can also see urine marking in homes with only one cat, where there are cats roaming freely outside and the house cat is aware of the presence of the other cats.

How To Stop Cat Spraying

As mentioned before, your absolute first step is a trip to your veterinarian to rule out medical causes of the behavior. Any steps you take to correct this behavior won't work if your cat is sick. If it is behavioral, step one is identifying the cause.

Cleaning can reduce cat spraying. Regardless of the issue causing the marking, you need to make sure that you clean any feline spraying in your home properly. It's not enough to just use soap and water to remove the smell. It may not smell to you, but if not cleaned properly, your cat can definitely sense it. Use special enzymatic cleaners that are made specifically to break down pet urine. Don't use any type of cleaner with an ammonia base, as this odor can stimulate more spraying since there is ammonia in urine.

How can your veterinarian help you reduce cat spraying? If you continue to struggle with cat spraying, discuss it with your veterinarian. Some cats may be placed on medication for anxiety to help alleviate the spraying. ■

Depends on how it's cooked. Done rightly, on a charcoal or pan-seared, it should be smokey, and a bit earthy like a mushroom with a different texture. It's like this: It's juicy, with striated texture, hopefully some fat, crispy on the outside with a tenderness that melts in your mouth.

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Creature Comforts

An animal shelter in Danang promotes animal welfare by teaching kindness and empathy within the local community

Interview by **Christine Van**

Images Provided by **Paws for Compassion Danang**

Can you tell us the origin of Paws for Compassion Danang?

Paws for Compassion (PAWS) was founded in Danang, Vietnam in 2015 by two animal enthusiasts and educators, Lexie Gray and Domenique Terry, who saw the need for animal education in the region. PAWS was created to inform and educate individuals about the animal cruelty that is taking place within their communities. A program aimed at youth with the intent of informing them about humane animal welfare education. PAWS serves the community by providing safety, medical treatment and rehabilitation to help stray dogs and cats become adoptable.

What is the most common way you receive animals? Would you also take an animal from an abusive owner?

There is honestly no common way we receive animals at our center. Just about every animal that has passed through our doors has a unique origin story of

their own. Sometimes a volunteer or tourist finds a handicapped kitten in a gutter, and other times we rescue doomed animals from dog and cat meat restaurants. We have a few affiliate programs we work with, like “Cu Dong” that shares information with us and finds us serious emergency cases from time to time.

We have never taken an animal from an abusive owner as it is a tricky process to go about, but we have definitely tried to save some animals from terrible home situations. Oftentimes, we see dogs chained up on tiny leads with no room to move and just a meager bowl of rice noodles, so we offer to take the dog for a walk, or we try and help them figure out a better way to train and raise their dogs and cats.

What do you do with the animals when they are first brought to you?

Straight to quarantine! The new rescue is put in a cage separated from the rest of

our rescues where they will stay for 10-14 days. This process is absolutely crucial because we never know what sort of contagious virus, bacteria or parasite is lurking beneath the surface. If they are healthy enough, the new rescue will receive their first vaccine. If not, we will do whatever it takes to nurse them back to health to get them strong enough to be fully vaccinated and ready to play with the other pups and cats. If kittens or pups are healthy they can go straight to a foster home until they are fully vaccinated to come back into our pet population.

How many animals are currently in your care?

It changes weekly and even daily. At the cat facility we have anywhere from 15-20 cats and at the dog facility, around 10 dogs. This is our limit because of issues with space, time and funding. We are lucky to have a helpful community who foster dogs and cats for us as well.



Bear, Male, 1 year old

You've recently started a video campaign compiling stories from people who have had their pets stolen, what is the goal of this campaign?

This campaign is very important to us because we have heard many firsthand accounts of people losing their family pets to thieves. When we see these thieves in action, transporting a crowded

cage of stolen pets across the city, we are always shocked to see how shameless and happy the thieves look, oftentimes smiling ear-to-ear with pride. When we go to restaurants to inquire about missing pets from the community, we see laughing patrons happily snacking on dog meat and drinking beer. Documenting and compiling stories about grieving pet-owners helps to put a humanizing touch on the issues, no longer a statistic but a tragic reality. We will not shut down the dog meat restaurants over night, but bringing the issues into the light and letting people who eat dog and cat meat know exactly where their meal is coming from is an important step to stopping the theft of our companion animals for good. Through these videos we also want to show people that the meat trade thrives off of stolen pets. Pet-owners still leave their animals unsupervised or let their cats go outside; then the unthinkable happens. Video format was chosen because it is the most accessible way to reach the masses.

Education is an important aspect to raising the issue of animal welfare, how are you reaching out to the local community?

We reach out to the community in a variety of different ways. Beginning with the youth, we teach classes to children of all ages about many different topics. Protecting the environment, how to pet and feed dogs and cats, how to recycle, why we should be kind to animals, and much more. We recently began offering free English classes for adults in an effort to attract more young, local people to help grow our community. We offer foster workshops for our affiliate rescue groups and foster parents, and generally make ourselves available to the public to answer a myriad of different questions concerning their animals. We even work with orphanages in the area to give free classes while helping the children foster a passion for animals. We understand that education is the most surefire way to change the future for the better, so we see education as a foundation for everything we do.

We often see cute puppies being sold on the streets, while it's tempting to "rescue" them by buying them, why do you recommend against this?

Any animal lover that knows the true nature of these breeding factories knows how tempting it can be to want to rescue every animal they see for sale. We constantly see animals in cages for sale, or worse, being transported to a restaurant for consumption, and we feel so helpless in the moment. We have received hate mail from people for documenting



these restaurants and holding cells, accused of not doing enough, but these people do not realize the difficult decisions we face every day. We can't afford to buy every puppy and kitten we see, no matter how cute it is or how mistreated it is. Saving our resources to fight the bigger issues that plague the companion animals of Vietnam is a more effective strategy for the long term, hopefully saving millions of animals in the future.



Jasper, Female, 1 year old



Lexie

How many volunteers do you currently have? How can someone become a volunteer at PAWS and what areas are most needed?

Paws for Compassion wouldn't run daily without our volunteers! We have around 30 consistent volunteers who commit to 3 hours a week for a minimum of 2 months. Coordinating all of these wonderful helpers is a job itself. So we are very lucky to have a Volunteer Coordinator. To become a volunteer at PAWS, you can message us on our Facebook page, and our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator will reach out to anyone who wants to help in any way. Most of our volunteer labor consists of feeding the animals, cleaning the facilities, walking the dogs, and doing therapy to rehabilitate the handicapped animals, but we have some other areas people can help with, too. We have worked with photographers, videographers, social media consultants, marketers, grant writers, teachers and veterinarians, so there are many different ways to pitch in and help!

What is the screening process for potential adopters? How do you ensure the person will not adopt to sell later? What traits do you look for in adopting families or persons?

It's about a week-long process. First, they will meet the dogs or cats to see who would be the best fit for them. They will then go home to think about it, because adopting is a big step to take for people. If they have made up their minds and decide to adopt, they fill out our adoption forms and we meet with them again to gauge their interest. We like to visit their home to see if it is suitable for an animal to live in, and try to get a good understanding of what sort of home we are sending the animals off to. We usually look for people that have had pets before, or even people that already have a pet they love and take care of. As animal

lovers and pet-owners, sometimes we just get a gut feeling about potential adopters that cannot be explained.

What happens when the adoption doesn't work out?

We have had a few adoptions not work out properly. Sometimes there is an unforeseen health issue, or a family recognizes that they might not have the time to raise a pet. We try to do our best and help relocate the animals to a new home, with the animal's best interests in mind.

What happens to the ones who are older and/or not seen as 'cute' enough to adopt. Does PAWS become their forever home?

This is always the case with any shelter anywhere in the world. Cute, adorable puppies and kittens will be claimed minutes after their picture goes up on our page, but some of our older or handicapped animals have been with us for over a year. We never lose hope that someone might come along and adopt them, but we understand that if no one does, they are essentially our pets. We recently had a very old, grumpy dog get adopted so anything is possible!

Where does PAWS get its funding to continue its rescue work?

For the first year, we fully funded ourselves to start PAWS, pay for our rescues' food and medicine, and rent a facility to house them all. We did this out of pocket with our teaching salaries. In 2017, we began to raise more money through fundraising, slowly developing a knack for finding funding in unique ways. Currently, we are in talks with organizations to secure grant money to better improve the scope of our programs. PAWS makes money from teaching educational classes at schools, boarding and babysitting peoples' pets, and holding fundraiser events each month as well.

What do you wish more people knew about PAWS and how can they best help the animals there?

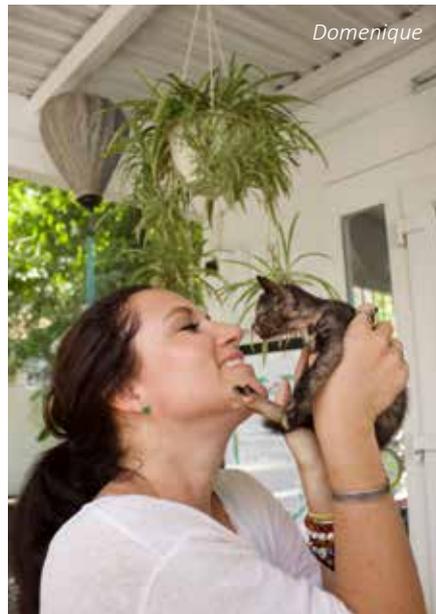
More than anything, we want people to know how much work goes into what we



do. We are by no means trained experts, and we are learning bit by bit each day. We spend almost all of our free time and a lot of our money on PAWS, but we love what we do and we are thankful to have support from the community. People can help set a good example by treating their own pets well, and trying to help others that may not know how to properly care for a living creature.

Tell us some of your favorite adoption stories.

There are way too many to choose from, but Weiley comes to mind as an awesome success story. He was rescued



Domenique



Fiddler, Male, 3 years old



Winnie, Female, 8 months old

at a veterinary hospital in the city, and abandoned by his family after he was bitten by a snake and left for dead. He had a nasty abscess on his torso, and was completely paralyzed from the neck down. Every day we fed him and worked with him to do therapy and get him moving. After four months, he was running, awkwardly, through the yard chasing the other dogs and barking at our squeaky wheelbarrow. He might look tough but this lovable Rottweiler was destined to be part of a loving family home, and sure enough, we found a family to take him out in the countryside. We delivered him to the family house and we were immediately greeted with huge smiles and excited, waving children.

It is a tough job, but when we see stuff like this it makes it all worthwhile. Our old Scotch man (12 years old) just recently had a very happy ending. It is very common for dogs to be abandoned when they are 'too old.' Sadly, they are pushed to the streets when they need us the most. When we rescued Scotch he was suffering from severe mange, was emaciated and covered in parasites. So traumatized, Scotch didn't like to be touched and avoided all human affection until he was adopted 8 months after being rescued. All he needed was a loving family who he

could trust again and have a second chance to be their loyal companion. ■

Visit pawsforcompassion.org/get-involved to find out ways to get involved. All cats and dogs pictured are available for adoption, email pawsforcompassion.vn@gmail.com for more details.



Panda, Female, 1 year old



Prince, Male, 2 years old



Nala, Female, 3 years old



Male and Female, 2 months old

IT STARTED WITH A BANG...



Vietnamese independent horror film *Chase* is taking you on a ride

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**
Images by **Vy Lam**

LATE ONE EVENING INSIDE of an apartment nestled inside of that maze-like section of District 3 nestled in the crook of Dien Bien Phu and Cach Mang Thang 8 streets, Quynh Anh moved quickly to strangle the thin young man on the couch with his eyes closed.

"Oh my God," he said opening his eyes wide with surprise causing Anh to hesitate, softening her expression.

"Okay, stop!" writer and director Sivaraj Pragasm shouts from across the room as Anh, the film lead, who in this scene is supposed to kill with resolve, breaks character and resumes being a nice, young, perhaps nonviolent young woman.

"That's not how you kill someone. It has to be faster he asserts," demonstrating the speed and directness that has to occur to take a life, or at least make a movie audience believe that's what's happening.

Chase (www.facebook.com/batmeanschase) is a film about a woman involved in a car crash. Preferring to

remain opaque about the story, Sivaraj talked instead about what the narrative seeks to accomplish and the narrative devices. "This would be one of the first films in Vietnam where you get a strong female lead. The message... is against female violence." Nam Tran, assistant director, added: "It's like a f**ked up *Kill Bill*. I mean, *Kill Bill's* already f**ked up, but you get what I'm saying."

For the story, "we're going backwards. Nonlinear," Sivaraj said. Like reverse plot film *Memento*? "Kind of yeah. Along the way you get clues." There are two plots running simultaneously, and in one instance two characters are played by the same actor. Confusion and disorientation are a storytelling tactic in *Chase* to heighten the mystery and sense of fear. The chaos is written into the film to add a cheap scare.

Jump Scare

Nam said he was personally bored of



Back row: Tuan Anh, Quynh Anh, Emma and Nam; Front: Sivaraj

what in his industry is called the “jump scare,” the moment in fright films when something jumps out a hiding place. “I think if a film does that, it’s a bad film,” Nam opined. “A good horror film would make the audience scared expecting something to happen, but it doesn’t just pop up like that. It should give the audience a real feeling that you’re expecting something. The really good ones, they do that really well.”

Making a Vietnamese language horror film with Vietnamese actors touches on a particular feature of this culture. Nam said thrillers in Vietnamese culture have historically been places where moviemakers and audiences are exploring the hyperrealistic fears common to Vietnamese storytelling. “Spirits, ghosts, stuff like that. It plays a bigger role in our society than in the American one.” Nam’s position matches filmmaking tastes Sivaraj shares. “You’re going to see it jump out, as opposed to ‘I heard about this ghost,’ but

you don’t see it and that makes you scared.”

Emma Nguyen, assistant to the female lead and a former student of Western literature, said Vietnamese storytelling also tends to feature comparatively simple structures than those in US or British storytelling. For example, the flashback as a narrative device is something she never encountered in her high school literature classes, she said.

“The first time I saw *American Horror Story*, I didn’t understand anything.”

The script for *Chase* was in development for six months. During this time, Sivaraj was writing the film bouncing ideas off of Anh making refinements at her suggestion.

Teamwork and collaboration define the work style on stage. The scene the team rehearsed during *Oi*’s visit was done a number of ways, differing between takes. Rather than working through specific blocking or stage direction, the crew creating *Chase* negotiate through the scene offering feedback and workshopping potential strategies.

Sivaraj, a self-described taskmaster, said the experience has taught him a great deal about leadership, including that he needs to “chill the hell out.”

For Sivaraj, the experience of making the film has been a place for him to explore a range of subjects including authenticity. One of the film’s female characters dons a fake mole, which he sees as a symbol of the fronts people offer to others in place of their real selves. This piece seemed especially pernicious to the team who expressed revulsion at the self-making that happens online, the performing of a self that may have little to do with the user behind it. “[The mole is] meant to be a representation of when you’re fake, and when someone finds out your true colors. It’s something that’s happening in Southeast Asia, not just in Vietnam. I get it in Singapore as well,” he said.

The boyfriend of the woman in the

film with the fake mole finds out it’s a prosthesis and becomes enraged and physically, violently, accidentally killing her. The violence against women was an inspiration to Sivaraj to write *Chase*. He said the idea for the film emerged out of the anti-harassment campaign #MeToo. He wondered what would happen if women responded to abuse not with web activity, but with real action.

Emma signed on to work on *Chase*, bringing in her real experience with sexual harassment. When she was 12, a drunk uncle attempted to rape her. She said she reported the incident to generally unsympathetic response. “The Vietnamese [men] would say ‘Oh, he just wants to play with you’ or whatever,” she said. Emma shared experiences getting unwanted attention from men and even once having her drink drugged when she worked at a club.

Because the film’s women are often subject to compromising situations they have to answer with an aggressive push back, Emma said her experiences there have given her an emotional place from which to coach Anh so she can execute a tough response on screen.

A filmmaker by trade, Sivaraj made his first short film in 2009 as a film student at LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore. He has created seven short films since then, including *A Ride Home*. This work was shown at Ho Chi Minh City film festival Future Shorts and five other international film festivals. He intends to make *Chase* the first installment of a trilogy. Sivaraj is also working on a feature-length Vietnamese language film that he intends to release in 2020. Around this time, the movie will be available for public viewing. Sivaraj intends to finish shooting and editing *Chase* in February 2019 and debut it at a film festival abroad shortly after. Film festival rules prohibit public release of film entries until at least a year after it’s shown at an event. ■

The Blade Master

Hiroshi Takeuchi has quietly built a reputation as the knife-sharpening guru in the country

Text by Jesus Lopez-Gomez

Images by Vy Lam

CHEFS AND MOST FOOD

preparers working in the restaurant industry will regularly sharpen their knives using a metal rod. The rod's surface is coarse, and rubbing the knife against it files a sharper cut into the blade. To save time (and maybe because it looks kind of cool), those in restaurant kitchens may sharpen their knives in theatrical arm swings, clapping the two objects together that aggressively, quickly create a sharper edge.

"They do this, right?" professional knife sharpener Hiroshi Takeuchi asked imitating the swinging motions of the practice. "Yeah, that's not right." Hiroshi is perhaps the city's only professional knife sharpener trained to execute the work in the style of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. Contrasting with the visually exciting, quick swinging and striking of the restaurant chef's knife work, Hiroshi sharpens his knives on a slab of rock called a whetstone. Holding the knife almost flat against the stone, he





rubs it carefully against the rock to create an edge. While the cook may sharpen for a few minutes and get to work, Hiroshi's approach takes more patience and time.

Conscious that not everyone enjoys a bounty of the second, Hiroshi opened the interview by asking his own question. "Do you have some time?" he asked and proceeded to actually begin sharpening a knife. A common culinary knife, it is one of the easiest blades and requires the smallest attention compared to other edges. He sharpened for the next 15 minutes. Like any feat that requires a lot of repetitive motions but delivers a great result like running, the idea of watching someone sharpen a knife is far more exciting in conversation than watching it in person. The physical motions are a bit like waxing the same spot on a car over and over again. Hiroshi didn't speak much during those 15 minutes spent sharpening the knife except to answer a question. "No, I don't get bored. Not until now," he responded with a laugh.

"Have you ever been running before? It's a bit like that."

Knife sharpening is Hiroshi's second act, professionally. He hails from Tsubame Sanjo, a city in central Japan north of Tokyo renowned for its blacksmiths and knife workers. But he never picked it up growing in the rural city. Instead, he did what lots of kids growing up in the country do: leave quickly and go somewhere far away. Hiroshi previously worked in sales at a firm that provided machines for industrial-scale production. The firm handled accounts throughout Southeast Asia, meaning he was always jetting around skipping between countries.

Hiroshi said he accrued great personal wealth and decorated himself in the trappings of an important salaryman with an expensive watch and a tailored suit. He changed careers and earns today about a fifth of his previous salary. Hiroshi sat for the interview in shorts and a t-shirt in his workshop, which is a room on the third floor of an apartment shared with a burger restaurant. The city's heat is abated by a floor fan, and a cat sharing the residence that had been hiding in the couch left away midway through the interview. It lacks the prestige of his previous life but is, by Hiroshi's telling, more enriching and soulful.

"Good salary and not too difficult of a job... but I'm not that interesting [sic] in that kind of a job," he said prefacing an explanation to what has been one of the defining decisions in his life. "I don't know how you feel. I feel that everything in the market, even expensive restaurants, department store. Everything is like a copy product, like a fake product. Even the brand product... I feel everything, cannot feel anything from their product."

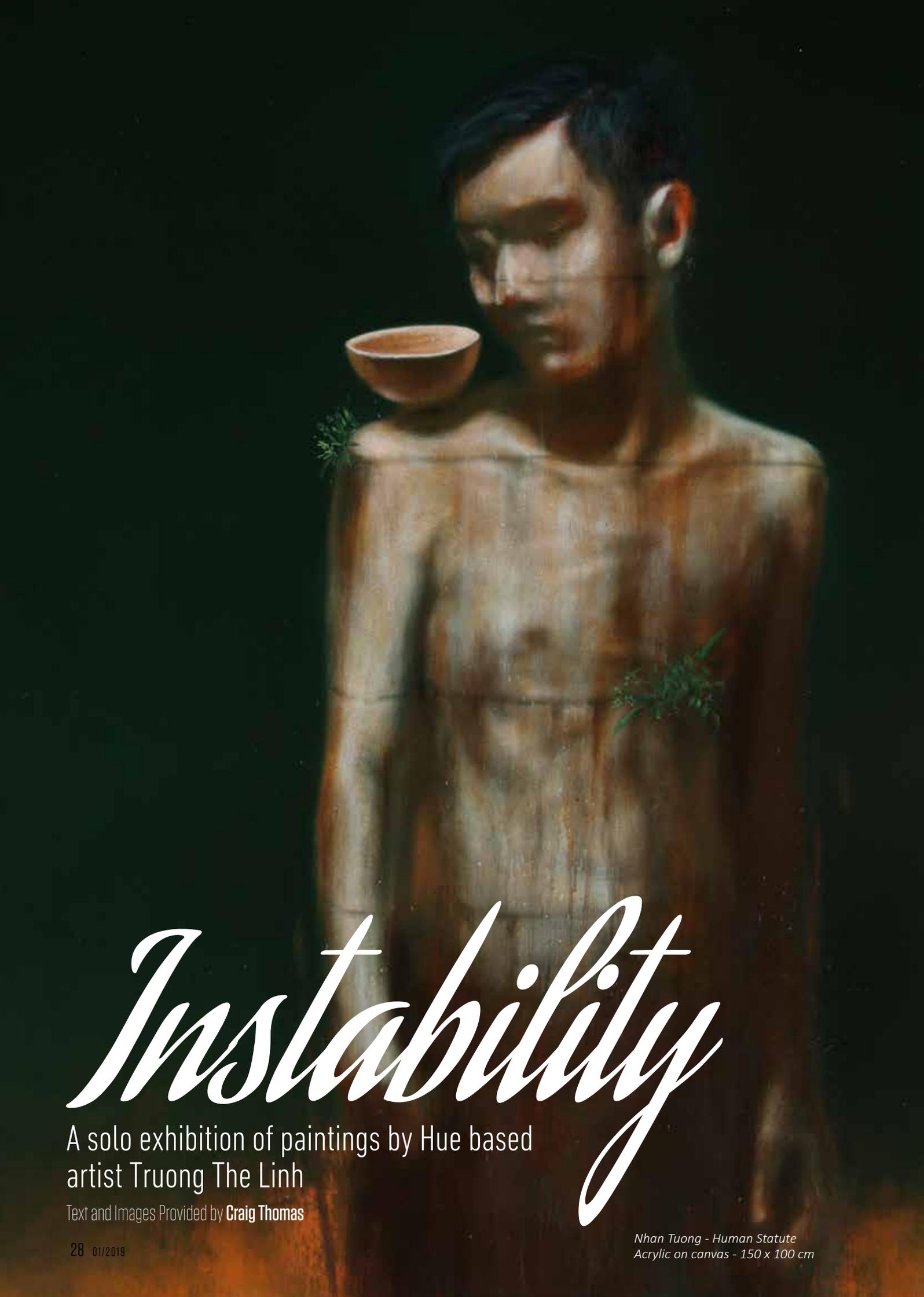
Exhaustion with commercialization and commodification is common, but mass market production is something Hiroshi's previous company was deeply involved in. His comments are colored by personal experience and a professional contribution to it. "Everything is fake," he asserted. "I cannot be part of this kind of thing."

Hiroshi left the company to join a knife sharpening workshop in his hometown, Tsubame Sanjo. It's a city with a four-century long history making and honing knives, a reputation that's earned it requests for service from chefs in London, Paris and elsewhere who are focused on culinary excellence and require a precise knife. He sharpened knives for free before building enough expertise to offer the service commercially. His company Sanjo Blade (*re-sawakichi.com*) walked in to public view in November 2017 with a blog explaining the necessity of sharpening knives.

Today, he sharpens around 200 knives per month for individuals located throughout Vietnam. Hiroshi once sharpened knives belonging to the chef at District 1 tapas restaurant Tomatito. The tradition is not popular with younger Japanese men. Hiroshi estimated that he's one of a declining number of tradespersons working in this craft. Perhaps it's because the value of a sharp knife is difficult to appreciate for the end user, like the person sitting down to have a meal. In Japanese cooking and preparing foods like sushi, Hiroshi said a sharp knife is critical to the process, but in other venues like the burger restaurant downstairs the difference is less noteworthy and neither the cooking nor the presentation require it.

This specific question seems located outside of Hiroshi's field of concern. Aside from an unspecific reference on his website to a "quality of life" improvement a sharp knife can deliver, Hiroshi mostly lets the work speak for itself as he did by taking a newly whetted blade to a tomato during the interview. With no special effort, the knife cleanly moved through the soft firmness of the tomato easily producing an appreciably neat, thin slice. ■





Instability

A solo exhibition of paintings by Hue based artist Truong The Linh

Text and Images Provided by **Craig Thomas**

*Nhan Tuong - Human Statute
Acrylic on canvas - 150 x 100 cm*

YOUNG VIETNAMESE FINE ARTIST TRUONG

THE LINH deals with contemporary figurative painting in his first solo gallery exhibition which he has entitled *Instability*. Linh's paintings arguably focus just as much on the medium of paint, and how it reacts on the surface of his canvases, as they do on the subjects of the paintings. In his new collection of works, the artist continues to explore the sensuous realm of paint, skin and figuration seen in his earlier paintings. His style is unmistakably dramatic and unique and with his methodology he forms images of hidden expression.

An important element in Linh's paintings is light and shadow; they evoke an extreme contrast. The monochrome, mostly black backgrounds put the bodies in the foreground in a glaring spotlight. The dramatic image composition exposes its protagonists helplessly to the viewer's gaze. Those protagonists are young men whose bodies seemingly emerge from the background without any contours. Linh adopts the effect of blurring; this blurs, irritates, unsettles and confronts the viewer with the question of the reality of the perceived. The paintings change between the realism of a photograph and the play of colors in abstract painting. Intense red or orange colors are accented in the dark; emphatic brushstrokes and structures whirl up the emotions. People become diffuse clouds of movement in the free fall of their feelings. Their blurring is the resistance to the optical terror of the all too clear; their ambiguity allows the viewer the freedom to interpret.

Linh's characters become his own in the painting process. They express what he feels. It might be loneliness, confusion and all the inner states of mind which only come to light in intimate moments. In the many works that depict young men, they become his doppelgängers. His figures seem hopeless, trapped in darkness. But especially in the applied black, the artist also expresses the light. Especially in his absence it becomes visible. The artist seeks the light absorbed by the black, while a white would merely reflect it.

With his first solo exhibition at Craig Thomas Gallery, Linh presents a devotional as well as profound artistic reflection of life; one which reaches to no less than the existential condition of our lives. His pictures lead us to where we may be reluctant to go. They provide a projection of our own insecurities, and, as so often, it is the perspective from the edge that makes people visible. ■

Instability is showing at Craig Thomas Gallery (27(i) Tran Nhat Duat, D1) until January 8, 2019



Nhưng Ngày Hư Hao - Damaged Days
Acrylic on canvas - 150 x 80 cm



Quynh
Acrylic on canvas - 108 x 108 cm



Bao Dem - Night Storm
Acrylic on canvas - 120 x 120 cm



The Paper Tigers

An independent kung fu film about three guys who are one kick away from pulling their hamstrings

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**
Images by **Beimo Films**

IN MAKING HIS MARTIAL ARTS film *The Paper Tigers*, Vietnamese-American writer/director/editor Tran Quoc Bao is thinking about more than just who punches who. The film's fighters are in the midst of aging and the physical decline that comes with it. Some are fighting custody battles. They are all called back into the fray to fight a challenger. There's martial arts, tightly choreographed fight scenes, the bread and butter of a kung fu movie. The film is and is not a kung fu movie.

Martial arts cinema often falls victim to what Bao calls "mindlessness" that he wanted to stay away from. Speaking about the film in December, he said a lodestar for him in making it has been quirky zombie-cum-comedy feature *Shawn of the Dead*. This movie is billed as a zombie film, but "it was so much more than that," Bao asserted. "It was a rom-com-zombie movie. That's what we want to do making *The Paper Tigers* (thepapertigersmovie.com)."

"We want to go above and beyond that as well with humor and art," he

added. The seriousness and the realness of the drama is nested within a movie that is brashly and at times bodily humorous. The trailer for the movie features an overserious white man who fights the protagonists wearing a traditional martial arts battle uniform and is summarily, deliciously stomped.

Having just finished a fundraising campaign on Kickstarter, Bao is preparing to begin shooting the film in the spring. Bao's decade in film includes credits as an actor as well as an editor of a pair of Vietnamese films. *The Paper Tigers* is his directorial debut. Keeping the film in the US makes him an exception among a certain segment of Vietnamese-American filmmakers. Bao said there's a large interest in Viet Kieu directors and producers in making films in Vietnam due in no small part to the reduced cost of doing business in this country. A Vietnamese-American filmmaker in Vietnam would also be exempted from what he calls the "glass ceiling" or what other (perhaps a bit problematically) might call the "bamboo

ceiling," the artificial barrier imposed by (white) critics and other actors who officiate creative work in some way. Work by Asians is judged differently abroad, Bao said, and what they're expected or allowed to make hews to these restrictions.

Yet, for Bao, the film he's making "is an immigrant American story. It's ... being a fish out of water," he said. "I'm a filmmaker, I want to go where the story makes the most sense." For a couple of his projects, the answer to that question was Vietnam. Bao has previously worked on *Trung So* (English translation: "win the lottery"), a Vietnamese comedy centering around a winning lottery ticket and the ticket seller who comes in possession of its fortune, and *Bui Doi Cho Lon* (English translation: "Cho Lon gangs"), a film Bao describes as a *Gangs of New York*-style film set in a neighborhood home to Ho Chi Minh City's Chinese community. The film's title contains the name of the neighborhood, "Cho Lon" (English translation: "large market").

An incomplete version of the second film is circulating the internet in lieu of the finished product, which was grounded days before its slated theatrical release in 2013 due to censors. They objected to the film's violent portrayal of the city. Bao said they have since used it as grounds to prohibit the release of the final film either in Vietnam or abroad exercising their authority to regulate exports of materials created in the country. "I thought it was fine," Bao said. He said he hoped the film's complications would be resolved soon to show the proper release.

Setting aside the complications around that particular film, Bao said he'd welcome an opportunity to work in Vietnam again, but the country wasn't a fit sense for *The Paper Tigers*, citing the film's willingness to engage elements that aren't typical to the martial arts genre, like leading black actors and hip hop. The film is a closer reflection of Bao's cultural identity. A US-born child of Vietnamese immigrants, Bao first started studying martial arts not out of some longstanding cultural veneration of the sport, but because his parents wanted him to get out of the house and stop watching so much TV.

Bao grew to develop a long relationship with martial arts and briefly trained under a fighter coached by icon Bruce Lee. Bao is deeply Americanized and as a novice fighter he may have looked closer to the fighter in his short film *The Challenger*, a young man in Vans and jeans. *The Paper Tigers* was teased conceptually in this short film. Citing the controversy that Bruce Lee incited in training students of all races and ethnicities—among his first students were black and First Nations fighters—Bao opined that



CW-Top: Gui Da Silva, Greene Yoshi-Sударso, Peter Sudarso, Roger Yuan

diversity is deeper to the tradition of martial arts than what the popular film representations might lead one to believe.

A good story from whoever is at the heart of Bao's interests artistically. Aside from *Shaun of the Dead*, he cited the animated feature *Up*, specifically the film's now-famous intro sequence, as a work he regarded highly. "Those first 10 minutes of *Up*? One of the best segments in cinema," Bao said. Specifically, what he extolled about these works was their gift in making their rich messages understood. The challenge is higher in martial arts films and moving beyond just filming a fistfight. "That's very hard," Bao said. "That takes a lot of skill, and that's what we want to do."

The genre in some ways resists the work Bao is undertaking in *The Paper Tigers*, but he sees the film as a statement: "This is our flag in the ground." ■



Left: Ken Quitugua, Right: Bao Tran



An Everyday Day

A solo exhibition of
new work by Hanoi
based artist Nguyen
Quang Huy

CONSIDERED ONE OF VIETNAM'S pioneering artists following the Doi Moi reforms initiated in 1986 (a period of economic liberalization marked by increased artistic experimentation), Quang Huy will be showing a suite of oil paintings depicting H'mong women and misty mountainscapes created with hazy brushworks in his distinctive

Text and Images Provided by
Galerie Quynh

muted palette of blue-grey grisaille. Acclaimed for his versatile practice including video and installation, Huy focuses only on painting for this show—a medium that has remained central to his practice for over two decades. Much of the artist's work is inspired by the northern highlands of Vietnam, which he began to visit during his days at the Hanoi Fine Art University with one of his professors who lead yearly excursions to sketch in the mountains.

On these trips he was accompanied by his classmates Nguyen Van Cuong and Nguyen Minh Thanh, with whom he exhibited extensively throughout the 90s— their troika constituting an influential node in the Hanoi art scene during this progressive period. Since graduating in 1996, Huy has continued to make a pilgrimage to the mountains every year, where he photographs the winding roads disappearing into the fog, and the stoic H'mong women who walk those roads wearing traditional dress with massive burdens upon their backs, before returning to his studio in Hanoi to process the experience. Dissatisfied with traditional photorealism, Huy developed his own unique voice as a painter—characterized by the use of intentional blurring and a minimal almost monochromatic color scheme, borne out of his search for a more evocative means of capturing the spiritual essence of his subjects.

Influenced equally by Buddhist philosophy and the animistic worldview of the H'mong, which maintains that there are spirits inhabiting all animals, plants, rocks and places, Huy sees both his landscapes and his portraits as representations of living registers upon which the history of the people and



the land are imprinted, if not visible to the naked eye. Just as the limestone cliffs of Halong Bay have witnessed countless generations come and go like the constant waves that have shaped them, so might the soul of a single woman have recorded the history of an entire people across a succession of lifetimes. It is this subtle quality which Huy strives to convey in his quiet and pensive, ethereal paintings. The exhibition title is inspired by Quang Huy's poem *Gặp*—a collection of poignant memories recounted like a chant or a prayer, and a zen-like meditation on the fleeting encounters between men and women, mountains and mist.

About the Artist

Nguyen Quang Huy was born in 1971 in Ha Tay, Vietnam and graduated from the Hanoi University of Fine Arts in 1996. He belongs to the first generation of experimental Vietnamese artists who emerged following the Doi Moi reforms initiated in 1986. Quang Huy has exhibited extensively since the 90s. He has held solo exhibitions in

Vietnam, France, the UK and Germany and participated in numerous group shows in Asia, the US, Australia and Europe. Notable exhibitions have been held at the Vietnam Fine Art Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam; EunAm Museum of Art, Gwangju, Korea; ifa galleries, Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany; Stenersenmuseet, Oslo, Norway; and Pavillon des Arts, Paris, France. He has held residencies at Casula Powerhouse Art Center, Sydney, Australia; Pacific Bridge Gallery, Oakland, CA, USA; and Artist Unlimited, Bielefeld, Germany. Quang Huy's works can be found in international collections such as the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; Andaman Cultural Study Center, Thailand; Post-Vi Dai Collection, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Geneva, Switzerland; and the World Bank, Washington, DC, USA. Quang Huy lives and works in Hanoi, Vietnam. ■
An Everyday Day will be showing at Galerie Quynh (118 Nguyen Van Thu, D1) until January 30, 2019.



Borderless Chic

SANSBORNE SAIGON IS A boutique fashion brand that embraces a rock chic attitude. They offer a full range of womenswear, using mainly the materials that are made in their own factories. Each piece starts from the beginning, from the cotton that they personally source, the yarns that they spin, fabrics that they make, in harmony with other well-known local materials to create each beloved items.

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Sounds of Saigon

Image by Vy Lam



TNX for *Listening*

With a little bit of Trap and a little bit of R&B, German-Vietnamese singer Linh TNX will enter the New Year with a bang and a beat

Text by **Carly Naaktgeboren**
Image by **Vy Lam**



WHEN SHE WALKS INTO A ROOM, Linh TNX is nearly impossible to miss. Laughing jovially, hoop earrings jangling and patent red boots gleaming, her energy spills onto every surface in the space. Her charisma and confidence combined with an overwhelmingly relatable quality tells you instantly that the girl has star power.

Born Linh Tran in Hamburg, Germany, Linh TNX is a relative newcomer to the Vietnam music scene, but music isn't a newcomer to her. Raised on a steady supply of dance, instrumental, and classical vocal training, Linh has the experience to last several lifetimes. The 25-year-old with Vietnamese roots is a certified hip-hop dance teacher and has grown up dancing AfroBeats and dance soul. She has been singing practically since birth, "I started singing at two with my family at a karaoke bar and then my mom noticed I could sing really quickly, before I could speak."

In elementary school, her teacher introduced her to opera. Linh continued to pursue singing in musical theater, but the constant rehearsals impacted her grades and she had to quit until high school where a homework assignment introduced her to the catharsis of songwriting. From classical to theatrical to German and English pop, along her musical evolution she fell in love with R&B and hip-hop, finding inspiration in the classic artists of the '90s. Her music style today is motivated by successful, confident women like Beyoncé, Kehlani and Jhené Aiko. "I'm influenced by their work ethic. All the hard working women out there are really my inspiration. As a woman you have to work twice as hard as men to earn the respect, so I feel like if you can get that power and strength as a woman, that's such a nice thing," says Linh.

Linh didn't plan on moving to Vietnam, she was initially here for a holiday, but a prompt from her cousin changed that. The two recorded Linh's singing and submitted it to an audition and shortly after she returned to

Germany. Linh received a call to drop everything—car, job and apartment—and head back to Vietnam. She didn't even speak Vietnamese at the time, but knew she needed to take a chance to pursue her dreams.

The impulsiveness of her decision and the boldness required to do such a thing is an attribute she credits to her alter ego—TNX. "The foundation of TNX is: T is the first letter of my last name, N is last letter of my last name, and X is that X factor that makes me something different. It sounds a little bit weird but I want to be outstanding, pop out more. TNX is Tran but it's X," she explains. Where Linh Tran once questioned her decisions and felt undeserving, Linh TNX is a woman unafraid of getting what she wants. "I'm really open-minded and happy and TNX is more the darker side. The demanding girl. The woman who is not afraid of asking for stuff, cursing, wouldn't be frightened of anybody. If I'm standing in front of a crowd it's like, 'what's up guys?'"

Linh's alter ego has also given her strength in both her professional and personal life, especially at the beginning of her time in Vietnam when she felt alone. Through meeting people and making connections she learned something unexpected about the music industry in Vietnam: People genuinely want to help you, they want you to succeed. "Everything works so much on social networks here, everything works through social media and connection. It's interesting how interested people are in the country," says Linh. "You get to know people really fast, you get to meet artists really fast. They aren't cocky or arrogant. In Germany, you have to be 'somebody.' Here, I'm not saying you can just go to artists and say something, but as far as you really doing your projects, people really respect that and that's something I'm grateful for. That way you can really embrace yourself and really pursue the career you're trying to. It's not judgmental at all."

Just three months since her move to Saigon, Linh has already released

a single in English with a music video included, has a management team and regularly performs live. She is signed with Piu Piu Records, and is a house artist at their newly renovated club, Piu Piu, on Hai Ba Trung Street. Her musical style is Trap and Beat, which fuses her sultry voice and all of her musical knowledge together. The style moves between melodic ballads and hip-hop, which feature heavily in popular Vietnamese music, making her relatable to markets here as well as abroad. She also raps. "I never was a rapper, never in my life. I don't call myself a rapper, it's just for fun. To mix it up and challenge me as well."

Although rapping is something new for Linh, her comfortability with the performative side of rap is clear in her stage presence. Her creative process requires a beat, some emotion, and a bit of TNX attitude: "My process is listening to a beat and, when I get comfortable with the beat, I start thinking about my current situation. This is the fastest way to put it in a song because I'm actually just singing about what's happening right now. Especially when I'm in a certain mood, so that means when I'm sad, I'm happy, I'm angry... all these heavy moods, these emotions cause you to think. So it's basically the beat, the mood, and, as far as rhyming, I was always poetic in Germany, I like to write essays and poems so that was never a problem. The toughest part is writing stuff in Vietnamese because I just learned it, so the vocabulary I have is what I've got, but when I was afraid to do it, the TNX came out and I was like, just do it." And the TNX attitude definitely did the trick, as she is releasing an all Vietnamese track in the next couple of months.

Astonishingly, none of this hasty success has gone to her head. She's sincerely grateful for what she has accomplished so far and who has supported her along the way. Enjoying the journey, she exudes the nervous elation of someone on the precipice of something. She's definitely one to watch. ■



TURNING THE TABLES

Homegrown Vietnamese DJs are stepping up to the international stage thanks to a DJ contest called Mix Us Happy

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**
Images by **Vy Lam**



Left to right: Kaiser Tran, Linh Hoang, Duc Huy and Duc Hoang



Six months ago, 20-year-old Duc Hoang started learning how to DJ for the first time as a hobby, a nice change of pace from his work as a public relations student. Last weekend, he performed under his stage name Dazed P playing for a crowd of over 100 in a club called Cato in downtown Singapore. “[M]assive night dude,” he said in a text message adding the “audience was madd [sic].”

Dazed P is one of the dozens of DJs that has trained with Mix Us Happy (MUH), a three-month-long DJ training crash course that gives aspirants all the training they need to perform for clubgoers. “[F]rom zero to ‘hero,’” Duc explained. The contest belongs to music equipment company Pioneer, and has traveled to countries across Southeast Asia. An estimated 150 DJs have graduated from Mix Us Happy’s training. Mix Us Happy is an international project, but the mothership is housed at Pioneer’s Ho Chi Minh City office on Dien Bien Phu Street in District 3. It’s there that Duc and other Mix Us Happy staff prepare for the next round of DJ training classes, or “seasons” as they’re known internally to contest organizers. Duc is a graduate of the third season and will be participating in the fourth, as a teacher, taking place right now.

MUH is led by and originated with established local DJ and musician Kaiser Tran and Linh Hoang, a senior staffer with Pioneer. The contest was created in 2017 to answer what Kaiser saw as a need to create a space for DJs who weren’t quite ready for large, professional events but needed to refine their craft. “Every year around the world, you have pro level (DJ) events, but there’s nothing for intermediate (performers),” Kaiser said. “I see

the young generation, they have the ambitions for music... but no place for them,” Linh added.

The curriculum Mix Us Happy DJs undergo is a mix of technical training as well as networking, music history education and team building. Kaiser said that trust and friendships were key to MUH’s work in building a supportive, nurturing environment where learning can take place. As an instructor, Kaiser has shown films to his students, taught them about DJing as a technical skill and even taken them camping. “Learning is sharing,” he said. “When you start to learn something, you need to find a master.”

The goal of MUH is to create opportunities for the young DJs to link in to the city’s performance scene and keep playing if they wish to. To serve this aim, DJs are trained in marketing themselves and using social media to promote their image as professional artists.

Duc adds that DJs participating in MUH must “prepare their spirit,” a comment that touches on electronic music’s power. It is perhaps due to the music’s often very public, bodily consumption (it’s played for dancing crowds) or the often singular nature of the sound (a strong, unvarying beat over which sonic worlds grow) that the music engenders feelings of powerful joy approaching something spiritual or religiously flavored.

Kaiser said Dazed P’s performance in MUH was emotionally moving and showed evidence of a strong performer ready for a debut abroad. “Every day in life, we need a story. (Dazed P) is someone who understands that. He made me cry.”

As a much younger man, Kaiser first began learning music through a guitar and moved on to DJing, which he asserted “is the same thing.” “Music is matched to memory.... spirit,” he said. “People come to see and experience it. Music unites people.”

Before he helped launch MUH and establish himself as a musician through both his DJ work and an electronic music project called Digital Code, Kaiser was a music devotee attending shows. He was a spectator at a 2010 DJ battle where he met a younger Linh. It was there he made the decision to stand not before the stage but on it.

Two years later, he attended a similar DJ battle event in Bangkok as a competitor. Linh and Kaiser remained in touch throughout the years and decided to launch Mix Us Happy last year.

As a middle-aged woman, Linh does not profile as the target audience for electronic music, but she is nevertheless a regular attendee of Mix Us Happy’s events. Linh said she sees the program as a parent and lauds its value for creating a place for not just young DJs but young people in general. “My son is the same age with the contestants. I understand the young people, what they want. There should be a playground for them to join.” ■





Sounds of the *Wild*

A showcase of live
alternative music by
artists for artists

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



“LOCALLY TRAPPED WILDLIFE STARTED WITH THE idea that Ho Chi Minh City has always had a vibrant metal scene, a vibrant hip-hop scene; it’s always had a coming-up experimental scene, and we found ourselves in the place and time where we wanted to make song-based music that was a little more interesting. We find ourselves in the middle, where we have experimental elements, but we also like songs,” explains US-born Gavin Pilisi, who, along with Australian-native Stephen Murphy, founded Locally Trapped Wildlife (LTW), an artist-curated showcase of live alternative music.

Since its inception in the spring of 2017, LTW has held monthly events with a diverse range of local acts, hosting over 30 independent artists and groups from Vietnam and the surrounding area. “Our first event was in May 2017 and we’ve done over a dozen since. This past October was a banner month. We curated the live music stage for the Rocktober festival at Saigon Outcast, organizing 12 bands for that. It worked out well and we had amazing support. Then on the 31st we had our big Halloween show, which is a cover show,” says Gavin.

A “cover show” means bands wear musical costumes—dressing up and performing as other bands. “That was a lot of fun. We had seven bands covering bands like The White Stripes, The Ramones, Van Morrison, and Rosy Palmer and the Handmaidens, which was us covering a made-up band to be as subversive as possible; to bomb our own event,” Gavin adds.

While there is a lively and growing music scene in Saigon, the two noticed that there was something missing, which Gavin expounds on. “We’re both songwriters and singers predominantly and we were like, well, there’s not that many people trying to put on this type of music, and there wasn’t that many organizers so we were like, let’s organize our own shows. We wanted to do something like in the punk rock tradition of seeing a bunch of bands with short sets in one night for a reasonable price.”

In the beginning they played smaller venues and had only solo performers, but as LTW began to grow the range of acts did as well, including full bands, and eventually moved on to larger venues, namely Yoko, where they now organize regular events. “We started at small venues. As we got bigger and our budget got bigger we were able to invite more bands. Yoko is still kind of an epicenter of cool things going on. We’re really excited to keep working with them. Also, Soma has been nice and Saigon Outcast, their whole team. We were invited to Coracle [music festival] this year. We have a lot of exciting things going on,” says Gavin. “We don’t take ourselves too seriously. We have fun with it. The structure of some of our events, the context and the way we market it and the way we posit it to the audience is tongue and cheek in general.”

Filling a gap in the music scene and having fun doing it has kept Locally Trapped Wildlife exciting and emergent, however, there are other realities to organizing music shows, namely financial ones. For many musicians if they don’t have a day job then they often struggle to make ends meet, and this is another aspect where LTW has found a healthy balance to keep the acts that perform as satisfied as the audiences who enjoy their music. As Gavin puts it, “For all of the shows, we income share completely. So to have that incentive, I feel very nice when I can share.”

For each show, they have a minimum of three soloists or bands perform. So come out and have as much fun at a Locally Trapped Wildlife (www.facebook.com/locallytrappedwildlife) event as they have putting them together and performing. ■

Left to right: Gavin and Stephen



In Harmony

Building cross-nationality bonds through music and singing

Interview by **Grace Homer**
Images Provided by **ICOHCMC**

BORN OUT OF A DESIRE TO deliver a platform that enabled Vietnamese locals and foreign expats to create music together, the International Choir and Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City (ICOHCMC, icohcmc.com) was established in 1996. The man behind it all, Graham Sutcliffe, who was the-then cultural attaché to the British Embassy in Hanoi, aimed to bring a variety of musical genres and styles together while embracing different cultures from around the world. Currently, the choir boasts 60 members and the orchestra holds 30 members with plans to increase numbers in the coming year.

Currently at the helm as Artistic Director is Gareth Groves, who began his singing days as a boy soprano and

chorister, later becoming a professional singer in several UK-based opera companies, choral societies and choirs. *Oi* caught up with Gareth to learn more about ICOHCMC.

What brought you to be the Artistic Director of ICOHCMC?

My love of music started at an early age and has ended up becoming both my full-time occupation and hobby. I am currently Head of Visual & Performing Arts at the ABC International School here in Ho Chi Minh City, and am now in my eighth year of living and working in the community. It's a joy to work in a school with such a rich and diverse music program and I am thrilled to be helping to lead so many components of this with

the support of my colleagues. I have been a member of the International Choir since 2011 and have enjoyed singing with them in various ensembles as well as being a regular soloist.

Since you took over ICOHCMC as Artistic Director in 2016, what changes have you made?

When I started my aim was to build on the choir's previous successes and get our name out into the community to both encourage people to join, but also to come and watch our concerts. We rebranded the ICOHCMC, creating a new logo and making sure that all publicity (posters and flyers) for forthcoming concerts were in both Vietnamese and English. It is important

to us that we are a central part of the Ho Chi Minh City community.

What is the goal of ICOHCMC today?

The main aim is to enjoy making music together. We also want to help raise money for local charities. We are currently working closely with Saigon Children's Charity to whom we donated money to after our recent Christmas concerts at St. Paul's Convent in District 1.

How does ICOHCMC promote its music to the public and increase their interest in choir and orchestra?

We are always trying to perform a wide variety of music in the aim to bring something for everyone. Since 2016 we have performed a number of Asian premieres including an African-inspired piece called *Zimbe!* by British composer Alexander L'Estrange. This piece involved the International Choir, FOBISIA Youth Choir and a jazz quintet made up of professional jazz musicians living here in HCMC.

Who is your main audience?

We are delighted to have local and expat families, children and staff from international schools and organizations as well as many diplomats who work in the city come to our concerts. Mr. Ian Gibbons, the British Consul General has been a great supporter of the ICO for a number of years now, as have many other consul generals in the city. It is an honor to receive this sort of support and helps us to truly live up to our name as the International Choir and Orchestra of HCMC.

How does ICOHCMC keep continuing as a not-for-profit?

When we put on a concert, we obviously have to cover our costs, but any money that is made by donation or ticket sale after these costs goes straight to the charity we are supporting. We are



also currently extremely grateful and lucky to have three generous supporters and sponsor: Soul Music and Performing Arts Academy are our Principal Supporters, they kindly give us a weekly rehearsal space and help advertise us on their website. The ABC International School is our Platinum sponsors, helping to cover the costs of purchasing music and hiring musicians. And the British International School, who sponsor us in kind by lending equipment such as staging and percussion instruments when needed. As a not-for-profit organization, we simply couldn't operate without help from organizations such as these and the subscription fees that our members pay to perform in our concerts.

What does the future hold for ICOHCMC?

I feel confident that the ICO will continue to be a big part



Gareth Groves



of the HCMC community for many years to come. I would love to see our membership increase and would welcome anyone with an interest in singing or playing to get in contact.

Although I might be biased in saying this, being a member of the ICOHCMC honestly helped to make HCMC a home for me when I moved here in 2011. One of the biggest downsides of being an expat in any country is that friends so often move on to different countries and new adventures. While this is also true of ICO members I have found that these friendships have truly lasted because of the mutual love of music and singing, something that is very special indeed.

What exciting events does ICOHCMC have coming up in the next year?

2019 is looking to be a very exciting year. We will hold our May concerts on May 16th in D7 and May 17th in D2. This concert will see some music from popular films, including the recent film *Bohemian Rhapsody!* ■



Frequency and Depth

Meet the man building his own sound diffuser panels for better listening

Text by **NPD Khanh**
Images by **Ngoc Tran**

IN THU DUC DISTRICT IN

Ho Chi Minh City, accountant Pham Khac Tuong is turning discarded wood into one-of-a-kind, handmade sound diffuser panels worth thousands of dollars. Used by professional musicians or the most discerning music lover, a sound diffuser is an acoustic panel used to treat echoes and reflections. If that sounds similar to sound absorption panels, then it is—because on the base level the sound diffuser and sound absorber function on the same acoustic principle of using certain materials to affect sound waves. Instead of absorbing sound energy, however,

a diffuser disperses sound waves on particular frequencies, thus giving extra depth to and increasing the musical quality of sounds.

“It filters, magnifies and enriches sounds all at once,” explains Tuong. “That may not sound very impressive on paper, but in real practice that is the difference between listening to an old cassette tape in a cramped shoebox apartment and listening to a full-blown orchestra in an auditorium.”

There are a number of different diffusers, with each specialized for specific sound ranges, from bass to soprano. The more popular ones include

maximum length sequence diffusers, quadratic residue diffusers, primitive-root diffusers, and hemispherical diffusers.

Sound diffusion is an exact science. High-quality sound diffusers, like expensive bespoke ones, are custom-designed to a specific space and sound range. Tuong says the idea of making his own came out of necessity. “You cannot buy diffusers in Vietnam,” he claims, “because nobody sells them. The closest manufacturer is in Europe. And even if you are willing to shell out USD600 plus 40kg worth of global shipping charges per panel, those generic store-bought



panels are not going to fit the acoustics of your room to a tee.”

The first sound diffuser Tuong made was in 2011 and took him two years of research before the actual project took off. “A hemispherical diffuser is not something just about anybody can build. It takes a lot of skill, knowledge and interpersonal resources,” he points out. With the help of audiophiles in his circle and studying from books such as Robert Harley’s *The Complete Guide to High-End Audio* and John M. Woram’s *Sound Recording Handbook*, Tuong educated himself on topics such as soundstages, harmonics, and the Helmholtz resonator

principle. He measured the resonance of his room with equipment borrowed from a friend who worked at the city conservatory and mapped out an exact configuration using an acoustic auralization software.

After designing was done, the panel itself took a month to complete. For materials, Tuong collected old pinewood crates, broken fences or tables from recycling centers and even waste byproducts from carpenters’ workshops. “Pinewood is considered junk by furniture factories, but it is actually the best building material for diffusers. Anybody who knows a thing or

two about musical instruments knows that wood conducts sound beautifully. Commercial diffusers in stores are usually made of styrofoam to save cost, but styrofoam is only number three on the scale of sound conductivity.”

The pinewood Tuong collected was laser cut into 841 rectangular blocks of various lengths by commissioned woodworkers, and then painstakingly assembled piece- by-piece by Tuong and his family over the course of a month into the final product: a hemispherical sound diffuser panel made out of solid pinewood. The panel weighs over 40kgs. Affixed to the wall like a piece of art, the effect the diffuser has on the acoustic resonance of Tuong’s listening room is something he says has to be experienced in person.

“The reason I wanted a diffuser in the first place is because I noticed no matter how good the sound system, music from home audio still isn’t on the same level as live performances. I won’t say having a sound diffuser in your room erases that difference, but it’s certainly getting there.”

Since building his first diffuser in 2011, Tuong has made several more, one of which is a monstrosity as big as four other panels combined. He hangs the big one from the ceiling to further improve the acoustics of his listening room. He likes the sound of guitar clear and deep.

As far as Tuong knows, he’s the only one in Vietnam who has ever successfully built a hemispherical diffuser. Friends, acquaintances and those who know about his work have asked if he plans to make a business out of building diffusers. As of now, Tuong’s answer is a solid no. “I’m happy with my accounting job,” he explains. “Perhaps in the future when I’m near retirement. In the meantime, I’ll gladly share my experience with fellow connoisseurs who want to build their own diffusers.” ■

Adventure Awaits

One of the most important things a traveler can find is the perfect backpack. Like any great travel companion, your pack will be with you through all of your adventures—near, far, urban, outdoors—so you want to make sure that it has all the qualities you need most. Something that is comfortable enough to tote around all day, lightweight enough so that it won't break your back after a few hours, and also something stylish enough that you feel attractive and confident throughout your trip.



Anything that keeps our hands free is a plus in our book, so backpacks are held in high regard. Whether you are looking for a sporty utilitarian one, or a more compact design with a pop of color, a backpack is the perfect bag to carry while on the go.



The German lifestyle accessory brand Kapten & Son strives to inspire passion for adventure with their thoughtfully designed and stylish backpacks, sunglasses and watches. Whether it is for navigating through the daily urban jungle or exploring far-away places: Kapten & Son's products are the perfect companions for your everyday journey.





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Wine & Dine





Fire Power

Quince Saigon serves up simple, smoky goodness

Text by James Pham
Images Provided by Quince

THE DICTIONARY LISTS AT least ten definitions for the word “simple”. Some carry a negative connotation (think: stupid, unsophisticated, or basic) whereas others are more positive (humble, unpretentious, the opposite of what kids mean when they say “extra”). **Quince Saigon** (37bis Ky Con, D1) embraces everything good about being “simple”.

Located on the southern end of Ky Con, towards the river, you’ll likely miss it the first time you drive by, marked only by a small, backlit sign amidst darkened

businesses (Quince only serves dinner, starting at 5:30pm, closed on Sundays). Quince Saigon builds on the popularity of its sister, Quince Eatery & Bar in Bangkok (closed as of December 1 but soon to re-open at another location), awarded a Michelin Plate in the augural Michelin guide for the Thai capital recognizing restaurants that ‘simply serve good food’. But popularity can be both a blessing and a curse. Whereas

Executive Chef Julien Perraudin told us his Bangkok menu was pretty much set (“people complain when their favorites disappear from the menu”), he enjoys free rein in Saigon, tinkering with the menu “every day”. While the one-page menu, simply printed on heavy card stock, leans towards Mediterranean flavors, Chef Perraudin’s offerings often include cuisines he finds interesting, with a few starters utilizing Asian ingredients like ponzu and ssamjang or a recent brunch featuring Israeli and Turkish favorites.

What ties everything together, however, is fire. Everything that comes out of the gleaming open kitchen (other than the bread) is either prepped, cooked or finished over a wood fire, in the pair of wood-fired ovens or otherwise infused with smoke—in essence turning fire



Hay smoked kingfish ceviche



Not so mashed potato

into an ingredient. While people have been cooking over fires for millennia, harnessing its high heat to sear in flavors, add richer caramelization and getting that “slow food” charm seasoned with the resultant speckled char, it’s still an incredibly difficult medium to control. Just watch any “campfire” Top Chef episode and you’ll see otherwise extremely competent chefs reduced to bumbling amateurs. At Quince, however, fire is friend, not foe. A cast iron pan of heavenly “Not so mashed potatoes” (VND150,000) with smoked truffle butter is finished in the wood-fired ovens while grill grates operated on a pulley system over an open fire for just the right amount of heat cook up sizzling Grass-fed Australian flat iron steak (VND610,000) or char the cabbage that serves as a crunchy bed for the Iberico pork secreto (VND550,000). Incredibly juicy, Iberico pork is curiously banned in Thailand, but welcome in Vietnam. Conversely, Vietnam’s poultry doesn’t make the cut with only one duck and one imported chicken dish on the menu. “Vietnam has either ‘mountain chicken’ which is made for boiling or supermarket chicken which has no flavor,” sighs Chef Perraudin. It’s just another example of how ingredient-driven Quince’s menu is. If the quality isn’t there, don’t expect to find it on the already highly curated menu.

Fire also signifies warmth, and everything about Quince encourages culinary communion, from the long narrow space with tables set closely together for an almost communal dining



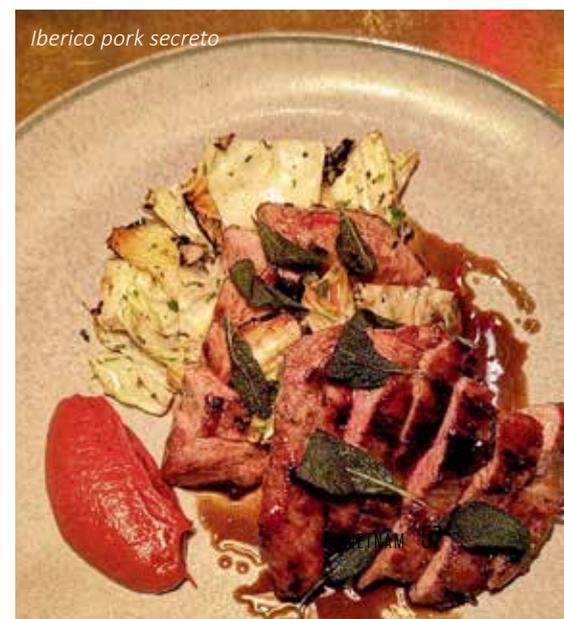
Flat iron steak

feel to the sharing-friendly plating of the dishes. Our steak came pre-sliced precluding the need for that awkward mid-steak swap and the Chicken liver parfait (VND160,000) came with slices of toasted sourdough for dipping. Once the bread was gone, we had no qualms about eating the rest of the velvety smooth pate on its own, like a guilty kid does peanut butter, savoring its pops of tart sweetness from kumquat jelly and bits of crunch from nut brittle. Sometimes, though, simple can mean “basic”, and that’s probably how I’d describe the Hay smoked kingfish ceviche (VND330,000). While the smoked kingfish was firm and flavorful, accompanied by naturally sweet dollops of fennel puree and slices of burnt orange, the blood orange jus needed a touch more bitterness or punchy acidity to make the dish pop.

While a one-page menu allows the kitchen to churn out dishes quickly and precisely (we saw at least a dozen identically-plated BBQ octopus starters leave the kitchen in the two hours we were there), achieving that level of simplicity is deceptively complex. The open kitchen that runs the entire length of the restaurant reveals why Quince is known for serving up consistently good food—dishes seamlessly passing hands for cooking, garnish and plating; tongs, spatulas and tweezers added ingredients from a fanatically organized array of mise en place, all over immaculately clean surfaces. In an open kitchen, there’s nowhere to hide, and Quince’s high-octane staff seemed to revel in being part of the show. Grab a seat by the counter for an impressive, close-up look at a mostly young, all-Vietnamese staff working in concert, taking obvious pride in a job well done, including efficient communication, easy smiles

and finishing touches added with a “Salt Bae” flair.

Quince’s popularity, both in Bangkok and Saigon, seems to indicate they’ve uncovered the secret to great food—making sure every single component on the plate is well-thought-out, well-executed and well-plated, every single time. Who knew it was that simple? ■



Iberico pork secreto

Top of the Tipple



A collection of affordable wines from Australia available to buy online delivered direct to your door

Text by Carly Naaktgeboren

Really Affordable, Deliciously Australian (RADA), RADA VIETNAM (www.ilovewines.vn) aims to provide customers in Vietnam. Quality and knowledge should supersede profit, and this philosophy is the driving force behind the wine distribution company spearheaded by married couple, Andy Wall and Jackie Lam.

Andy and Jackie had a revelation years ago when they first came to Vietnam. “We both looked around, and we found Australian wine, but generally the Australian wine that was available was overpriced, here in Vietnam. We moved here from Sydney and what we would find at the liquor store back home for eight or nine dollars, you would have to pay fifty here, and it just seemed wrong. It just didn’t make sense,” says Andy. With a desire to bring exceptional Australian wines at an affordable price to Vietnam, RADA was born in 2016.

As Australian wine specialists of Vietnam, they know middle income households in Vietnam are growing at a rapid pace, and with this growth comes a desire for drinking something high quality, not just drinking what’s accessible. “We realized a lot of people don’t buy wine because they don’t know about it, not because they don’t like it. You don’t know what you don’t know. And for us it’s not so much about selling quantity, it’s about education,” says Jackie.

Andy and Jackie believe it’s important to expose consumers to varying types of wine, helping them learn what tastes they enjoy, and what that means when purchasing Australian products. Andy further explains: “There are three key ways we go about educating. The first is we align with Australian government initiatives who are out there to try and promote Australian businesses in Vietnam. So that started with the Taste of Australia program, which happens every year





lot of our own tasting and sampling events in restaurants and with retailers. Whoever gives us the opportunity, we take it.”

Australian wine is incredibly rich in history – there are over 630 wineries in Australia. RADA’s portfolio is made up of premium, family-owned vineyards in major wine growing areas around Australia. “RADA’s philosophy is to build strong, personal relationships with each winery, who are also invested in building their brand in Vietnam. How we chose the wineries was, we wanted each major region represented, says Jackie. Some of the producers they choose to work with are:

1) Kilkanoon is the star of Clare Valley and a winner of many accolades. Including Australian Wine Producer of the Year at IWSC (International Wine and Spirits Competition) in London in 2018, and their Oracle Shiraz was named World’s Best Shiraz.

2) Pertaringa, Wines by Geoff Hardy is part of the famed wine legacy started by Thomas Hardy, the father of South Australian wine. When the Hardy label was sold, Geoff built his own label and maintained the family-oriented business that RADA actively seeks out. He has won Wine Estate Magazine’s Winemaker of the Year, as well as Winery of the Year in 2012 and 2014.

3) Paxton Organic and Biodynamic Wines were made by the most famous organic wine grower in Australia, David Paxton. Paxton completely rebuilt his entire winery after realizing his soil was dying due to the use of chemicals and pesticides. His products are preservative free, vegan and environmentally friendly.

These wineries and many more can be found within their extensive portfolio, which bolsters hardworking, experienced, family labels and over 50 different wines.

RADA is determined to increase



availability and exposure to these wines by providing delivery service in Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City. They decided on delivery rather than a shop in order to keep costs low and keep their products affordable for the consumer. After browsing their portfolio online, the customer, (whether that be a restaurant, company or private residence), can place a call to their hotline and have the wine delivered to their doorstep shortly thereafter (minimum of six bottles). This gives the customer the opportunity to personally speak with a wine specialist about their needs without the inconvenience of travel. ■

To view their extensive wine portfolio and begin your Australian wine adventure, visit their website ilovewines.vn.

across Vietnam. And it’s about a series of different events that highlight Australian products and gives us a chance to taste and sample, to run wine classes, to run wine lectures, and basically use the platform behind Taste of Australia to accelerate the education about Australian wine and why the profile of Australian wine suits the Vietnamese food and lifestyle perfectly (Australian wines are fruit-driven, with their flavours easy to identify, and thus easy to match with food. For example, our Kilkanoon Riesling from Clare Valley has strong flavours of green apple, lemon and lime with a balanced acidity that is perfectly matched with spicy Vietnamese salads or fatty foods like sashimi). The second is aligning with other Australian organizations like Wine Australia who are just starting to invest in Vietnam to promote Australian wine. That gives us a platform as the Australian wine specialists to lead the charge at those events with other suppliers. The third way is we do a

FREE WINE OFFER

RADA is now offering OI readers a special promotion. Be one of the first ten people to call after reading this article and receive a free bottle from the McWilliam’s Markview range, with your choice of Shiraz, Cabernet Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay.



Recipe for Success

In conversation with Zsuzsanna Rozsa, founder of restaurant consultant group Art of F&B, on troubleshooting problems and maximizing profits

Interview by **Christine Van**

Tell us how you established a career in restaurant consultancy and why you felt there was a need for it here?

I have been living and working in HCMC for over five years, after spending six years in the restaurant industry in the UK, Spain and Hungary. Before starting Art of F&B, I worked as a general manager and operations manager at several F&B establishments, including restaurants, a lounge/night club and a resort, so I have a good overview of the entire spectrum of the F&B (food and beverage) sector in this city.

I saw that whenever I started a project at a new place, the owner(s) or top management had a specific project goal that could be solved within a short amount of time, so my extensive knowledge and experience were needed for that short period of time only. I also felt that once the initial, most pressing problems were solved, the restaurant stakeholders were no longer interested in further, long-term improvement of the restaurant. In other words, they saw that their house was on fire, called me in to put out the fire but once the fire was out, they didn't think that making the house fireproof would be a wise idea. And, of course, in a few months the house catches fire again...

That's why I see more potential in helping establishments as a consultant to solve their short or middle term problems and/or help them with a long-term growth strategy. In the short run, hiring a consultant may be a bit more expensive for a restaurant, but in the long run businesses can save salary costs of hiring a foreign manager as an employee. Also, as an outsider, I am not involved in the problems of daily operations and smaller issues, so I can see the structural

challenges more clearly and I can really focus on tackling these.

You've been in the F&B industry in Vietnam since 2013, what trends have stayed and what fads have come and gone?

When I moved to Vietnam, restaurants in District 1 and 3 were mainly focused on serving tourists from the West (Australians, Europeans and Americans). Since Vietnam is seeing more Asian tourists the focus has shifted from pleasing Westerners with single-dish menus (which are usually too heavy for the tropical climate and are hard to share) to attracting Asian customers by adapting menus to Asian flavors as well as accommodating Korean and Japanese style dining customs, such as open fire BBQ places and sharing plates.

We must also keep a close eye on the emerging young, urban Vietnamese middle class who are eager to have fun, either the Asian or the Western way, and are willing to pay for quality culinary experiences. I have organized some very successful wine dinners targeting this social group and tickets in the price range of USD50 to USD100 were sold out within days.

It's estimated that 60 percent of new restaurants do not make it past the first year, and 80% go under in five years. What are some of the common reasons why they fail?

There are three main issues that business owners here don't take seriously and usually why their restaurant fails:

1) Lack of planning: HCMC is not the "Wild West" anymore. You cannot just jump into a project because your friend said that it will make you rich. Seasoned



F&B professionals do a lot of research on how to set up their business in the most efficient way and how to minimize the risks of failure. Fortunately, or unfortunately, HCMC (Vietnam and Southeast Asia in general) is changing very rapidly and changes are not easy to follow, let alone predict. Local owners tend to underplan and "play it by ear", hoping that they will be able to solve problems one by one if and when they arise.

Rarely do they have a clear idea of where they want their business to be in five years. This approach saves a lot of money and effort in the initial phases of the business and works well if there is a clear blueprint (either from Vietnam or from abroad) that local investors can copy. These businesses fail usually because they don't have the cashflow to survive at least the first 8-12 months after opening. Ironically, this lack of planning and the absence of documented processes also becomes a problem when the business becomes successful because it will make it difficult to quickly "clone" the concept and open new branches or get an outside investor onboard to finance expansion.

In contrast, foreigner owners tend to overplan their business and have a hard time making their management and staff



understand to follow this plan. Also, these very specific business plans often prove to be too difficult to change or adjust if and when the market or the business circumstances dictate.

2) Leadership failure: Local owners still prefer to hire a family member or close friend to take care of their business instead of hiring an outside professional. They supposedly do this to avoid risks and to be sure that their investment and revenues are “safe”, but in the end they actually take more risk by giving full control to a general manager or director who clearly has neither the knowledge nor the experience to run a restaurant.

3) Playgrounds restaurants: Many restaurants in Saigon are only side businesses of the owners, and their money-making business is unrelated to F&B. These owners are not really interested in their restaurant making a profit and are willing to finance eventual losses from their main business, but they rather like the idea of owning a place where they can take their business partners out for lunch or dinner to impress them. I call these restaurants “playgrounds” because they feel like the playgrounds of the owners, who enjoy the attention they get from their management and staff when they visit the restaurant. Once the losses become unbearable, they quickly close shop. These playground restaurants always fail because of lack of planning and bad leadership.

As a restaurant consultant, what do you notice first when you enter a restaurant, whether you're there to work or as a diner?
The overall experience begins at the door with the welcoming and ends at the door with the goodbye. So a rude “welcome” by a moody security guard can immediately

set a very negative attitude towards the restaurant. At the same time, a smile can work wonders, even if the host does not speak the language of the guest.

How the staff moves is also a good indicator of the quality of the restaurant. If they move calmly and confidently then I know that someone is in control and the staff knows what they should be doing and they are doing it. However, when I see that staff either isn't moving or is running, it's a sure sign that there is a problem and they are not able to pay as much attention to guests as required.

There is more to the restaurant industry than just consuming food and paying the bill, a lot goes on behind the scenes to make a restaurant run smoothly. What are the main areas that Art of F&B focus on to ensure both diners and restaurant owners are 100% satisfied?

Imagine a restaurant as a living organism. The main concept (or the DNA) of the restaurant is decided by the owners, but the actual service quality (or the “health of the organization”) is determined by the output of the people who work in it on a daily basis. In restaurants in Vietnam, the service staff is usually very young, motivated and eager to learn. However, this motivated staff is often managed and supervised by an upper management that has neither the knowledge nor the leadership skills to professionally manage a restaurant. One possible reason for this deficiency is that people currently in upper management positions got to this position fairly quickly (due to the explosive growth in F&B in Vietnam over the past 5 years) and didn't spend enough time in lower level positions to learn “the trade.”

We can help with training these managers to equip them with the necessary leadership skills, so they can set an example of work ethics to their subordinates. Of course, we also train service staff in other areas of F&B service, including food and drink (wine!) knowledge, service knowledge, upselling and cross-selling, customer service, conflict resolution.

Many times, improvements in customer experience do not require large investments. With careful analysis of the available space, the layout of the restaurant can be altered to make it more functional and attractive to guests so the per-square-meter revenue can be increased without customers feeling overcrowded. In addition, profits can be increased by not only raising prices, but also by keeping prices intact and rationalizing portions, which are often surprisingly larger than necessary, thus adjusting food cost to actual customer consumption habits.

What type of projects does Art of F&B work on?

Each of my projects is unique and special to me, but there are a few basic types of assignment. My favorite assignment is opening a new establishment where we can let our creative energies run freely. We are a one-stop-shop and can provide

advice, planning and project management services, from coming up with the details of the concept through finding a contractor for the construction and fit-out works, to training service staff and organizing the grand opening party.

We help with smaller projects as well. Currently, we are running a project to create the documentation and blueprint of the daily processes and inventory management of a restaurant with two branches in D1 and D3. They want to expand and are preparing to open 3-4 new outlets in 2019 and need the blueprint to be able to easily clone their units.

We had another client who admittedly had no formal F&B training, but he has been successfully running a small bar in Binh Thanh. He asked me to review his place and their processes and paperwork to make sure that their daily operation management is on the right track. He is planning to open a new outlet in Thao Dien.

Recently, there has been a big demand by foreign investors looking to purchase existing restaurant businesses and we can help these investors by doing an F&B due diligence on the target restaurant. Needless to say, that such a screening can save the investor tens of thousands of dollars, especially when report is negative, and provided that we can come in and check the business before the sale purchase agreement is signed and the purchase price is paid.

Our team of experts have a large network of not only F&B professionals, but also musicians, entertainers, photographers, video producers, model agencies, make-up artists, etc., so we are also able to organize and manage large events for our customers.

When's the right time to call in a restaurant consultant?

That's easy, whenever the owner feels that their restaurant is not going as well as they think it should. The first hour consultation is free of charge.

Visit www.art-of-fb.com for more info





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



TECHNOLOGY AND WINE

Technology will continue to impact the wine industry, not only for consumers, but those making wine as well

RATHER THAN WRITING ABOUT Tet and wine, I thought of doing something different and ask you, or ask myself, if technology has a place in quality wine making. As most of you know, I am really pro tradition, quality and value when talking about wine, so technology may be at the opposite spectrum of my way of thinking.

And it's as if technology is used to cheat, as some wineries do, by using chemicals to change the taste of the wine, its texture, and even its look. Others use machinery in a different process to save costs, and that affects the quality, too. Therefore, I am totally against it. In case you've ever wondered why those cheap Chilean and Australian wines don't taste that bad, it is because a lot of chemicals are put into the wine making process to give it a nice taste. You may be saving money, but don't complain about the headache afterwards.

However, technology has been used considerably in wine making with positive purposes and outcomes. If you have been drinking wine for a while you may have noticed the vast improvement in the quality of wine from Spain, Portugal and Italy, even with the inexpensive bottles. One of the reasons

for this is that now most wineries, even smaller ones, have small labs built in and they use technology to better control temperature and processes, from grape picking to fermentation. It is not about adding anything to the wine, but about finding the right timing, temperature, etc., and the results are there.

Another way in which technology is helping wine lovers is, for example, by telling us when the wine is ready. Innovative wineries like Mar de Frades in Rias Baixas have incorporated a thermal sensor on the label of their wines that will show a little boat when the wine is cold enough to be drunk. The wine maker and sommeliers have worked hard to check at what temperature wine tastes better, and that saves us the work while being able to enjoy the wine at its best with just a quick look.

Currently, drones are also being used to take pictures and videos of vineyards and send the data back to the winery. This helps by showing where pests start, which pests in particular, and whether some areas need more irrigation than others—this not only improves quality and reduces costs, but also helps to improve the overall performance of the winery, and this is just the beginning! ■

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Wine & Dine

ROOFTOP BARS



Liquid Sky Bar

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

21F - Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1 / 028 3822 0033



Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar

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

141 Nguyen Hue, D1



Social Club Rooftop Bar

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

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

MICROBREWERIES & CRAFT BEER BARS



BiaCraft

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

90 Xuan Thuy, D2



East West Brewery

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

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



Rehab Station

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

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

Also Try...

Winking Seal

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

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

Tap & Tap Craft Beer

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

94 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, D.2

Heart of Darkness Craft Brewery

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

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

Belgo Belgian Craft Beer Brewery

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

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

Pasteur Street Brewing Company

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

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



WONDERFUL FAMILY STAY PACKAGE

15 Dec 2018 – 31 Jan 2019

Deluxe room: VND 3,650,000++/ 1 night/ 2 persons

Executive room: VND 4,550,000++/ 1 night/ 2 persons

Deluxe Suite: VND 8,400,000++/ 1 night/ 2 persons

The Package includes:

- 01 Complimentary Teddy Bear
- Sumptuous buffet breakfast at Atrium Café for 02 adults and 01 children (*)
- Free Extra Bed for children from 4-12 years old
- Free late check out until 2:00PM
- 20% Discount at Spa for all service
- Free use of Fitness Club and Swimming Pool

Extra benefits for Executive Floor's guests:

- Breakfast at Executive Lounge
- Welcome drink upon arrival
- Welcome fresh fruits in room
- Afternoon Tea from 14:30 – 17:00
- Evening snack and cocktails from 17:30 – 20:00
- Complimentary Wi-Fi portable device

**Only free for children from 4-12 years old. Additional charge VND 450,000++ per day for person from 13 years old*

++ Prices are subject to 5% Service Charge and 10% VAT

+ Any unused items are not refundable or exchangeable

+ Extra bed and free upgrade to River view Room are subject to hotel availability

+ The hotel reserves the right to charge one night for any cancellation and no shows

+ Cancellation should be made 24 hours prior to 12:00 noon of the arrival day

+ For more information or reservation, Please contact 028 3823 3333 (Ext. 105) or email: reservation.saigon@lotte.net

CAFÉS

Bach Dang

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

26-28 Le Loi, D1

K.Coffee

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

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

Café RuNam

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

96 Mac Thi Buoai, D1
www.caferunam.com

La Rotonde Saigon

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

77B Ham Nghi, 1st Floor, D1

Chat

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

85 Nguyen Truong To, D4

The Workshop

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

27 Ngo Duc Ke, D1



French Restaurant

Daily Set Lunch
at **VND180.000**

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

02835194058



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

FRENCH



Le Bacoulos

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

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



L'Escale by Thierry Drapeau

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

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



Also Try...

Le Jardin

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

31 Thai Van Lung, D1

Ty Coz

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

178/4 Pasteur, D1 - www.tycozsaigon.com



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

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



ITALIAN



Ciao Bella

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

11 Dong Du, D1
028 3822 3329

tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.ciaobellavietnam.com

Ciao Bella



Italian Trattoria Oggi

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

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang Street District 1

(0)28 3823 3333
www.lottehotel.com/saigon

Italian Trattoria Oggi

Also Try...

Casa Italia

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

86 Le Loi, D1
028 3824 4286

Carpaccio

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

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

La Forchetta

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

24 Hung Gia, PMH, D7
028 3541 1006

Opera

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

2 Lam Son Square, D1

Pasta Fresca

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

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

Pendolasco

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

87 Nguyen Hue, D1
028 3821 8181

Pizza 4P's

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

8/15 Le Thanh Ton, D1
012 0789 4444

www.pizza4ps.com



JAPANESE



Chaya Restaurant

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

35 Ngo Quang Huy Street, Thao Dien, District 2

0938 996 408 (Vietnamese)

0939 877 403 (Japanese)

chayavietnam.com

Facebook: [chayavietnam](https://www.facebook.com/chayavietnam)

Chaya



Gyumaru

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

8/3 Le Thanh Ton

028 3827 1618

gyumaru.LTT@gmail.com

Gyumaru

Also Try...

Ichiban Sushi

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

204 Le Lai, D1

www.ichibansushi.vn

Kesera Bar & Restaurant

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

26/3 Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe Ward, Dist 1

028 38 270 443

Sushi Dining Aoi

Sushi Dining Aoi is one such restaurant, where the whole atmosphere of the place evokes the best of the culture. With its typical Japanese-style decor – the smooth earthen tones of the wooden furniture and surrounds, the warmth and privacy of the VIP rooms – it's possible to believe you're in a more elegant realm.

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3

028 3930 0039

www.sushidiningaioi.com

Yoshino

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

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1

028 3823 3333

For full review, please visit: www.oivietnam.com



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VIETNAMESE



Five Oysters

Five Oysters serves authentic and excellent Seafood & Vietnamese food with 5G Green beer at VND12,000 as well as a promo of VND10,000 per fresh oyster daily. There's also a rooftop, a great place to start or end the night! Recipient of Certificate of Excellence 2014-16 from Tripadvisor and Top Choice 2015 by Lianorg.com. Recommended by VNexpress.net, Lonely Planet, Utopia and Saigoners.
234 Bui Vien, D1



Sai Gon Grill

Located on the rooftop of Saigon Royal Building, Saigon Grill has an absolutely fantastic view over the city. Classical BBQ with beef, pork and seafood by a small charcoal grill at the table and friendly staff. Enjoy our great BBQ with a glass of wine.

Rooftop 7th floor, Saigon Royal Building
91 Pasteur, Ben Nghe Ward, D1
Opening time: 4pm-11pm
0916622662
www.saigon grill.vn



Red Door

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

400/8 Le Van Sy, D3
012 0880 5905
Facebook: Reddoorrestaurant



River Restaurant

Tasty Vietnamese food by Saigon River side. The River Restaurant has its' own vegetable garden and a play area for kids. There is a pool table and a futsal table.
199bis Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien Ward, D2, HCMC
Tel: 0907 65 66 67



Also Try...

3T Quan Nuong

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

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1
028 3821 1631

Banh Xeo 46A

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

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

Cha Ca La Vong

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

36 Ton That Thiep, D1

Com Nieu

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

59 Ho Xuan Huong, D3
028 3932 6363
comnieusaigon27@yahoo.com
comnieusaigon.com.vn

Cuc Gach Quan

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

10 Dang Tat, D1
028 3848 0144

Hum

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

2 Thi Sach, D1
028 3823 8920
www.hum-vegetarian.vn

May

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

19-21 Dong Khoi, D1
028 3910 1277

Mountain Retreat

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

Top floor of 36 Le Loi, D1
+84 90 719 45 57

Nha Hang Ngon

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

160 Pasteur, D1
028 3827 7131
www.quananngon.com.vn
8am - 10pm

Temple Club

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

29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1
028 3829 9244
templeclub.com.vn

The Hue House

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

Rooftop Master Building
41-43 Tran Cao Van, D3
Opening time 10am-10pm.
0909 246 156 / 0906 870 102

 For full review, please visit: www.oivietnam.com

INTERNATIONAL



Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar

Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar

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

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

028-2253-8825

www.butcher-manzo.com



Madcow Wine & Grill

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

30th Floor, Pullman Saigon Centre
(0)28 3838 8686



twenty21one

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

Crispy shredded duck spring rolls and Bacon-wrapped dates stuffed with Roquefort

blue cheese There are two dining levels: an upstairs mezzanine and downstairs are tables with both private and exposed positioning (open-air streetside; and a terrace by the pool out back).
21 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

TWENTY21ONE



Saffron

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

51 Hai Ba Trung, D1
(0)28 3824 8358

Also Try...

Blanc Restaurant

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

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

02862663535

www.blancrestaurant.vn

FORK Restaurant

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

15 Dong Du, D1

028 3823 3597

info@forksaigon.com

www.forksaigon.com

Noir - Dining in the Dark

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

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

02862632525

www.noirdininginthedark.com

Tomatito Saigon

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

171 Calmette, Dist 1, Ho Chi Minh City

www.chcmc.com/tomatito

www.facebook.com/chcmc

+84 (0) 2862 881717



Travel & Wellness

WESTERN AUSTRALIA / IMAGE BY DAVID MULLER







On creating an artists' community in Hoi An

Text and Images by **James Pham**

THE FATE OF HOI AN'S

craftsmen and artists has long waxed and waned with the prosperity of the town itself. Starting in the 15th century, artists from all over the country moved to the bustling port town, hoping to tap into the international market created by traveling merchants from China, Japan, Portugal, the Netherlands and beyond. However, when the port silted up centuries later and business moved up the coast to Danang, many of the craftspeople and artisans likewise dispersed.

However, since being named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, this ancient port town has experienced a revival, and with it a burgeoning arts scene that is unique as Hoi An itself.

"We've got a little neighborhood of artists. There's clean air here, and a gentler way of life," says British artist Bridget March who recently moved to Hoi An from Saigon to open up her own gallery. "It's jolly difficult to be creative in Saigon because just as you find somewhere quiet, someone builds an 18-story block next to you."

"Here, I have more time. There's not much distraction. There's also the ocean not far," adds Hoi An-based portrait

photographer Réhahn. "Personally, I feel peaceful here and every artist needs to be good in his mind before starting to work."

In addition to the inspiration that Hoi An itself provides through its historic timber framed homes awash in a pale colonial-yellow palette, lush rice paddies just minutes from the Ancient Town, and the serenity of being surrounded by rivers and the ocean, Hoi An also brings in massive crowds, on track to host a record-setting 6 million visitors in 2018.

Those numbers are both a scourge and a blessing for the Hoi An creative community. "Even at 7 am, there are tourists in your frame," sighs Réhahn whose early work in particular featured iconic Hoi An street scenes. "You have to wake up real early to catch traditional moments."

That said, those same tourists, conveniently already in shopping mode once they hit Hoi An's Ancient Town lined with boutiques and tailor shops, can help local artists 'feed the body before feeding the soul'.

"Hoi An is an easy place to sell because people have more time," says



Along, Phan Boi Chau Street

Réhahn. “It’s not rare to see people spend 5-6 nights here, enough time to see something they like, think about it, and come back a few days later. In Ho Chi Minh City, it’s big, places are hard to find, and people leave for the Mekong Delta after just a few days.”

Tourist dollars and an inspiring location have led to an arts and crafts scene that spans the gamut, from cheap, imported fakes to mass produced copies of paintings to artists creating original works.

“Most Hoi An artists are so busy trying to make a buck that they’re painting things they think tourists will want to buy,” notes Bridget. “The UNESCO status has created a lot of wealth, but the people here still remember what it was like to be poor when Hoi An was just a very poor market town and fishing port, so many say ‘just take the money while it can be had.’”

The result is a glut of cheap, Chinese-made knockoffs and soulless “art” produced for the masses, making it hard to distinguish the real from the fake.

“There is a strong feeling among visitors that the town is full of junk,” explains Bridget. “And when they go into



March Gallery

the painting shops, they have no idea whether what they’re looking at was painted at a factory by guys working throughout the night or not.”

Adding to the confusion are the tour guides who lead their charges to wherever the commission is highest rather than to where truly good art resides.

“The attitude of people in Hoi An is changing,” says Vietnamese-American writer and artist Nguyen Qui Duc as he oversees workers turning an overgrown backyard into a performance space. “There are so many scammers now. The tour guides want 40% commission; people can’t survive that.”

Rue des Arts

To address the issue, there’s a movement afoot to turn one of Hoi An’s

leafy streets into a “Rue des Arts”, or Art Street, a creative hub where art lovers can connect directly with the artists. Réhahn, Bridget and Duc already have retail spaces on the section of Phan Boi Chau Street between the Hoi An Market and Art Space, a new restaurant cum art gallery at the Anantara Hoi An Resort.

“There are already five galleries on this street, in addition to a lacquer artist, photographers, painters, and designers,” says Réhahn who’s spearheading the initiative to have the wide, tree-lined street officially designated a Rue des Arts. “It’s a logical thing to expand this area, just after the market, where people can keep going. There could be terraces to create an atmosphere like in Paris or Venice. I’ve met with UNESCO, the French



Réhahn



Art Space

Consulate, and local government, and they have all agreed to make this street an art-oriented walking street. We've also secured promises of donations. Things are happening. This street will grow up in the next 2-3 years. Right now we need more artists, more galleries."

"It's an aspiration that people can come to Hoi An and get something that represents the best of Vietnam and inch out bit by bit t-shirts, coconut bowls, and all this tat that's sold in town. There are lots of wonderful craftsmen in town but it's hard to find them in all the clutter," adds Bridget.

The movement has found support from the Anantara Hoi An Resort on the eastern end of Phan Boi Chau. "Why don't we create a space where we can anchor art and give it some credibility?" says General Manager Pieter Van Der Hoeven of the impetus behind Art Space. Inspired by a Viennese art museum, the interior is all exposed brick work, raw cement and stripped back columns. Vintage lighting casts a warm glow on an eclectic collection of art from all over Vietnam. Angry, abstract faces in the Fauvist style by colorist Do Nhu Tuan are interspersed with mesmerizing, contemporary wood sculptures from the H're ethnic group while hanging oversized prints of iconic Saigon street scenes from Canadian artist Nathan Lane vie for space with a special exhibition of Hoi An-based photographer Ha My, providing an intimate look into the lives of her grandparents.



Bridget March

"We try to connect with the local art scene. We want to be connected to this street," adds Pieter. "Anantara is about being indigenous to the destination. We're going right into the community and want to be something more than superficial, more than a place that has art on the walls. We want to get movies, art classes, writing workshops and poetry reading in here, taking it to the next level."

Opened in October, Art Space is aiming to be a place where artists, foodies, and art lovers can come to share ideas over original artwork and beautiful food. "I want people to come to us and say 'I have an idea about art' or to get involved in an art class," says Pieter. "The concept is Old World. In the old days, people went and looked for sages. We want to be connected to the old, traditional way of travel."



Precious Heritage Gallery

Even the food at Art Space takes on an artistic quality, as Vietnam's only 3D food printer whirrs away in the corner, creating Mondrian-like geometrics to later be filled with watermelon and lemon curd and served with a Blue Lagoon cocktail. "For a chef, it's something completely new. It makes plating different and gives us something to play with," says Executive Chef Geert Jan Vaartjes. "I feel like I have no boundaries. It's not crazy but we try lots of stuff like Grouper with foie gras and Arabica jus or Iberico Ribs sous-vide with Coca-cola to break the protein down." The wood-fired oven on the outdoor terrace churns out light, crispy pizzas topped with innovative ingredients like Korean Gochujang or Vietnamese banh mi fillings.

"This place is definitely unique," says Bridget who's also the curator of Art Space. "Lots of restaurants are always asking artists if they'd like to display their art. But nothing's ever sold, as staff are paid to look after the guests, not the art. Here, it's different. There's someone from the March Gallery here in the mornings or customers can take the 5-minute walk down to the gallery. From the get-go, it was all about getting art on the walls with the lighting tracks and hanging rails. We think this is unique in Southeast Asia for a restaurant and a gallery to work together to create something mutually beneficial."

While there are differing opinions on how it should be executed, most of the resident artists on Phan Boi Chau agree that the key to creating a new home for the Hoi An art community is striking a balance between commercial and artistic interests, creating something new while retaining the ancient soul of Hoi An.

"We have to have artists who can work with the local people," says Duc, "someone to show them the alternative



Iberico Ribs at Art Space



Phan Boi Chau Street

to selling cheap clothing or hanging up a poster of Che Guevara and putting out tables for beer by perhaps curating a show of a cousin who does ceramics. Big restaurants can keep the house, but not the spirit. Artists have the sensibility to keep things as they are but renew the spirit." ■

Art Space at Anantara Hoi An Resort
(1 Pham Hong Thai Street, corner of

Phan Boi Chau) is an art and dining concept venue where innovative food creations and original artwork combine to offer new experiences for foodies and art lovers alike. Most dishes on Chef Vaartjes' tapas menu are priced at VND220,000. Or come and enjoy a cup of coffee for just VND35,000 every morning from 7- 11am. For more, contact +84 235 391 4555, or e-mail: explore@artspacehoian.com



Nguyen Qui Duc



Precious Heritage Museum



Art Space



Living Stories

Mrs. Khanh, image by Linh Phan

Experience another layer of Saigon through stories from everyday locals

Text by Grace Homer

“I STARTED THIS BECAUSE

I realized that every association with Vietnam revolved around *banh mi*, *pho* and conical hats,” explains Linh, the creator of Hidden Saigon (www.hidden-saigon.com), while en-route to our first stop on the tour itinerary. Linh continues, saying that the only way to truly experience the ‘real’ Vietnam is to go behind the scenes and experience the lives of the locals in an intimate bespoke tour.

After meeting Linh and Bao, the tour guide and translator, we are ushered into an air-conditioned minibus with my new Hidden Saigon swag tote bag. The journey to District 5, Saigon’s Chinatown, is the perfect amount of time for Linh to become the first storyteller of the day.

While searching for a feature film location last year, Linh found herself in Saigon’s Chinatown meeting and chatting with local residents, street vendors, artists and culture makers who were all happy to share their story. Having disregarded prior encouragement from friends, colleagues and family about starting her own tour of contemporary Saigon, Linh came to the realization that it was exactly what she should be doing. Hidden Saigon was born a matter of days later, but Linh’s turbulent story of Vietnamese heritage goes much farther back.

Born on the tail end of the American War, Linh and her family fled Vietnam by boat in the years following. A significant part of her first two years of life was spent as a refugee, living two months of that on a boat somewhere between Indonesia and Australia as her family, along with over 30 other people, headed towards a new country. After living in an Indonesian refugee camp until the age of two, Linh’s family then moved to Canada where she was brought up surrounded by relatives.

“I was always the black sheep of the family,” she says, despite a strict and traditional Vietnamese upbringing. In 2007, Linh took the plunge to rediscover her roots and join her brother, who was living in Saigon after moving back 12 years prior. Before arriving in Saigon, Linh had lived in London showcasing the other side of Vietnam with events and festivals throughout Europe, while also working in media as a creative producer.

For Linh, settling in Saigon was difficult at the beginning. Locals laughed at her ‘old language’ when she used vocabulary that hadn’t been used since the 1960s; modern Vietnam had progressed beyond the dialect she grew up speaking with her relatives in Toronto. “It was a big struggle at first,

but then I began accepting myself as a foreigner in Vietnam and everything became a lot easier,” she says as we pull up alongside a sticky rice stand. Bao, who has been listening in to Linh’s childhood stories, jumps out and picks up a sweet combination of sticky rice, beans, coconut milk and shavings—a typical mid-morning snack for locals.

In a city where construction is everyone’s next-door neighbor, Saigon’s Chinatown has managed to stand still in time. Here, French colonial buildings built in the early 1900s, antique tearooms and herbal medicine stores fill the streets. “*Cho Lon* is the wholesale capital of Saigon, you can buy anything and everything here,” says Linh gesturing around as we head into an immaculately-preserved apartment building complex just off District 5’s Tran Hung Dao street. Built between 1910 and 1913, and tucked away from the busy street, this building is home to many locals of Chinese descent, including Mrs. Khanh, a good friend of Linh’s who has kindly invited us into her home. Situated on the upper gallery of the two-story complex with an inner courtyard, Mrs. Khanh’s home is similar to the others with a Chinese shrine above the door, wooden shutters on the windows and colorful tiled floors.



Image by Valeria Mertsalova



Linh, image by Anna Nguyen

Over a glass of Chinese herbal tea and while tucking into some sticky rice, Mrs. Khanh relays her life story, through Bao, while her two children and husband continue going about their day around us. Mrs. Khanh was born in 1968, 18 years after her parents arrived in Vietnam from China and her heritage shines through in her home. Explaining the history of this unique building, she reflects on the simpler times before electricity, when everyone in the complex would sit outside in the evening gossiping. “Because of this, she was able to learn so much from the elders,” explains Bao, on behalf of a smiling Mrs. Khanh, who speaks Cantonese and Vietnamese but very little English. “The building was built on top of a cemetery so when we were sat outside, some people would see spirits moving around the complex at night,” Mrs. Khanh gestures to the Chinese shrines outside her home meant to ward off bad spirits.

Despite living in the complex since she was born, Mrs. Khanh acknowledges that the building is beginning to crumble and will soon be replaced with a modern multi-storey apartment complex. Saying goodbye to Mrs. Khanh and her family feels like saying goodbye to good friends; in the short time we were in her home, she opened up her life to our eager ears and enabled us to learn the history of Saigon’s Chinatown through someone who grew up here.



Gin House, image by Gin House

Cha ca & Cocktails

Arriving on Nguyen Canh Chan in District 1 for our lunch stop, it becomes evident that Linh has made local friends all over the city as we are greeted warmly by the restaurant owner before finding our seats at the metal table set out on the pavement. Lunch is an exciting fusion of typical dishes from central Vietnam: *nem nuong* (grilled pork sausage) and *bun cha ca* (grilled fish rice noodles). As we make rice paper rolls filled with pork sausage, sour mango, lettuce, cucumber and Vietnamese herbs, we each learn a little more about one another continuing to, as Linh puts it, create our own personal history through storytelling.

No two tours of Linh’s are the same and they can be completely customized to whatever you wish to do and see and whoever you wish to meet. Today’s tour, as Linh explains to me is “people and places, visiting everyday people in Saigon, but I also do culture maker tours where we visit artists and craftsmen working throughout the city.”

Having spent the journey discussing our previous stops while Bao retells the history of Saigon, we arrive at Gin House. Tucked away down a small alley, Gin House is one of the original speakeasies in the city. Behind a heavy wooden door, after pushing through red velvet curtains, we enter a world of gin. A small low-hanging, bare bulb, and candle-lit room, featuring a leather studded bar lined with bar stools and a 7-level shelf packed to the rafters of Gins from around the world greet us.

Vuu Thanh Tan, the 28-year-old owner of The Gin House, worked his way up through various bars and hotels before becoming a mixologist at Snuffbox. It was here he developed the desire to create something new and opened The Gin House almost three years ago. “There are lots of speakeasies in Saigon, but many of them are not doing it right, they are not hidden enough,” explains Tan. The term “speakeasy” originated out of New York’s 1920s prohibition period



Mrs. Khanh, image by Jaiko

where bars hid away behind concealed entrances, deep in apartment blocks and away from the eye of the government who had banned the sale of alcohol.

Cocktail culture in Vietnam is relatively new. “It has only been in Vietnam for five years and [cocktail culture] has grown up a lot in the past two years,” explains Tan. “Now, the Vietnamese may know about cocktails but it is not a deep knowledge.” I watch in awe as Tan combines Tanqueray 10 gin, elderflower syrup, large ice cubes, and petite slices of lemon and Schweppes tonic in a bowl-like stem glass. “This is the perfect gin and tonic,” says Tan as he places it on the bar as we pass around tasters of his 20-plus homemade infused gins. “The flavor of gin is very flexible, it’s exciting to mix the herbs and fruit to see what is created,” continues Tan as he explains the process through which gin is made, the final step being distillation in which dried or fresh ingredients can be added to determine the flavor.

Finishing off with a classic Mandarin Sour, a delicious combination of Jasmine syrup, mandarin fruit juice, gin and Angostura Bitters, Tan tells us that of the 145 gins on the shelves, ranging from the depths of the Cotswolds in England to the alleys of Tokyo in Japan, his favorite is their gin infused with vanilla and orchid.

The entire day was exactly how Linh had explained it to me earlier: “It may be places you have been to, or heard about, but you will have never experienced them in this way.” ■

Stay Awhile in WA

Western Australia is a land of superlatives and extremes,
so take your time

Text and Images by **David Muller**



LIKE MANY WORLD-TRAVELING professionals there are a few cities now that I've lived in that can easily be called home, but when that inadvertent question comes up here in Saigon—"Where are you from?"—I have to always answer "Perth", the city I was born in and spent my misguided youth growing up. Perth is Australia's fourth largest city and is often touted as being the most isolated city on earth because the closest cities, of a million or more inhabitants, are Adelaide, Australia to the east or Jakarta, Indonesia to the north.

Locals in Perth have a laid back attitude to life that can sometimes frustrate outsiders who come to live and work there. Working in Perth they might grumble about the difficulties of making sales or increasing business. To which the local will look at them thoughtfully and ask with a big grin, "You do know what the 'W.A.' in Western Australia really stands for, don't you?"

A puzzled look and a moment of silence.

"Wait Awhile."

"You've got to Wait Awhile in W.A. before things happen, mate."

I am returning to the city to see family and friends and have a well-needed rest after a full three years away. Time had certainly allowed Perth to accomplish some surprising new changes. Perth is a mining town whose economy rides booms and busts depending on the commodity prices of rare metals and minerals. So, thanks to money the state received from the high resource prices during China's rapid economic development in the early 2000s many large-scale infrastructure projects have now been completed in Perth. The AUD\$1.36 billion city link urban renewal project has sunk the train station and bus port below ground then above ground added the Perth Arena and Yagan square linking Perth city center with the Northbridge entertainment area. The square is named after the warrior Yagan of the local indigenous Noongar people of the region. A number of good friends I caught up with during my stay suggested we meet at this trendy new location. Enjoying lunch of Oknomiyaki and a draft beer of Sapporo downstairs at the Hiss & Smoke Japanese restaurant, then another afternoon of Summer Pale Ale

and a bowl of potato wedges upstairs at the Shy John Brewery.

Perth International airport has been upgraded for AUD\$250 million and a new AUD\$1.2 billion children's hospital built in Nedlands. Though the most striking upgrade is by far the foreshore construction of the AUD\$440 million, Elizabeth Quay and the brand new 60 thousand seat capacity AUD\$1.6 billion, Optus stadium all located on the Swan River. Those swans the river is named after grace the flag and crest of W.A. and aren't the European white ones people normally think of, but are a lesser known black variety that populate the waterways around the state.

Aussie rules football is ubiquitous to Australia. The game itself is played with an oblong ball on an oval pitch of no fixed dimensions. Trying to take a running bounce of an oblong ball every 15 meters is no mean feat. Much rivalry exists between the two W.A. national teams, the Fremantle Dockers and The West Coast Eagles. This year the Eagles beat Collingwood to take home the country's "premiership" trophy, which is always played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Victoria.

Cape to Cave to Wine

Further up the Swan River is the fertile Swan Valley, a fantastic spot for a day tour to visit wineries, restaurants and tourist attractions. In W.A. you will never see a koala in the wild because it is only native to the east coast of Australia. So drop in to Caversham Wildlife Park if you still want to see one of Australia's most iconic marsupials and some other unique critters. The suburb of Guildford is the site of the first British settlement in Perth and hosts many older heritage buildings such as the still operational Guildford Town Post Office and old telephone exchange building built in 1898. Over the road are the heritage listed Guilford Hotel (Pub) and Tindale house, for many years a Devonshire tearoom that has now been converted into a Vietnamese fine dining restaurant, showing the changing international palates of Perth residents.

W.A. has become world famous in the wind surfing and surfing communities. Heading a few hours north of Perth is Lancelin, a small fishing town that catches fish and rock



lobsters for the Asian market and attracts professional wind surfers for the Lancelin Ocean Classic. Sand dunes just outside the town have also become a fun place to partake in sand boarding. Nearby is the Pinnacles Nambung National Park, a large expanse of limestone rock formations that stick out of the shifting sands and almost look like an alien moonscape.

The Southwest region is where Perth's locals often go to escape the heat, consisting of some 23, 970 square km, it produces many world famous gourmet quality products such as fine wines olive oil, truffles, Wagyu beef, dairy products and even chocolates. Over the summer Christmas holidays, Perth can be as hot as 40-45 degrees Celsius, at the same time it is often a much milder 25-30 degrees Celsius down in towns like Margaret River. In 1967, Vasse Felix was the first established winery in the Margaret River region and helped pave the way for the hundreds of wineries now in existence there. The region in a relatively short few decades has become well-known for producing light fragrant Riesling and Chardonnay as well as full bodied Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Merlot. The Margaret River Chocolate factory is a favorite spot on the wine region tour with three locations; one is its namesake Margaret River, one in the Swan Valley and a retail outlet in Perth on Murray Street. Famous with tourists and locals for the endless spoonful of milk, dark and white chocolate chips that





are given out as free samples.

The “Cape to Cape” bush walk is a 123km walk from the lighthouses of Cape Naturalists near Dunsborough to Cape Leeuwin near Augusta. It is a scenic coastal trail along sweeping limestone cliffs and through changing wildflower floral landscapes. The whole

walk takes a few days or small sections of the trail can be enjoyed for a few hours near the lighthouses, be on the look out for migrating humpback whales in the Geographe Bay. If you prefer to drive, the old Caves Road winds through tall majestic Karri & Jarrah tree forests and stops at a number of limestone caves,

with names like Mammoth Cave owing to its mammoth sized cavern, Jewel Cave because of its jewel like rock formations and Lake Cave due to the surreal lake inside the cavern. If you hear laughing in the forest, it may be the Kookaburra sitting in the old gum tree above you.





Show, and the chicken schnitzel paired with their 2017 Rampant Red wine, gold trophy winner at the Royal Melbourne Show. Each year every major city in Australia holds a Royal Show, an agricultural fair to judge and exhibit Australia's finest livestock and produce. Prestigious wine competitions are held at these Royal Shows and Hamelin Bay Winery has achieved a number of awards at various Royal Shows across Australia.

In W.A. you need to wait awhile to achieve your professional goals, but as a traveler it's a great place to stay awhile and experience a relaxing stress-free holiday of breathtakingly extraordinary natural scenery, clean pollution-free air and easy carefree living. Tours can be arranged or hire a car or camper van to drive around the state at your own leisure. ■

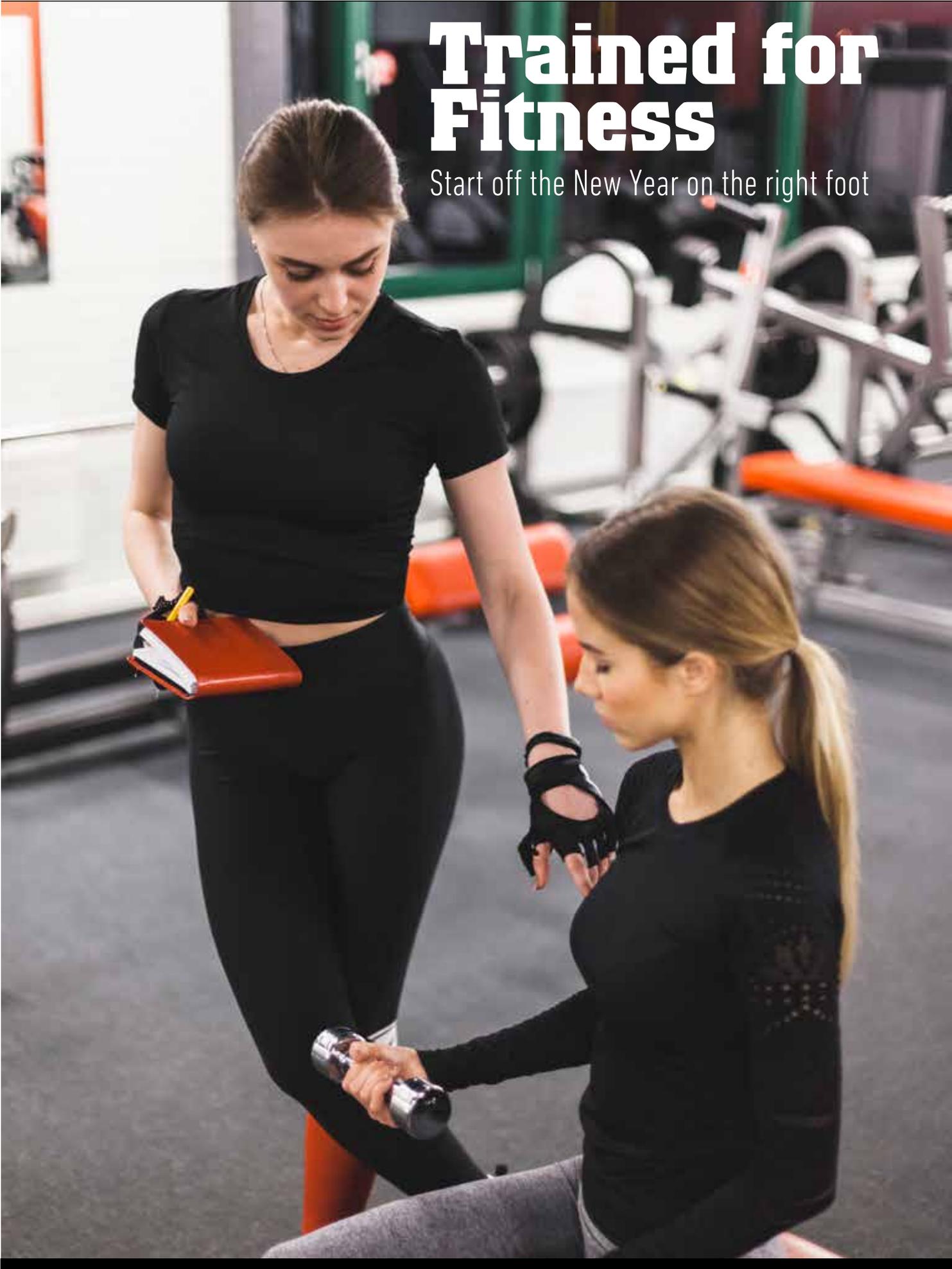


Visiting the Hamelin Bay Winery in Karridale, not far from the end of Caves Road between Margaret River and Augusta, there is a magnificent view from the winery's restaurant on the hill looking down over the vineyards to black swans frolicking on the tree-lined lake in the valley below. The winery's chef prepared Thai style seafood noodles paired with a glass of Semillon Sauvignon Blanc, a silver medalist wine at the Perth Royal



Trained for Fitness

Start off the New Year on the right foot





Thuy M. Do is founder of Wellness Vietnam (www.wellnessvietnam.com), an online resource for wellness products, services and travel.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND

fitness usually tops the list of New Year's resolution. It's a time when people feel most optimistic and motivated to take better care of themselves by pledging to eat better or go to the gym more frequently. They usually start gung-ho with a strong will and commitment, however, the reality is that a majority will tend to lose sight of their goals within three months, either due to lack of motivation or they are not seeing results. This is where the role of a personal trainer can make the difference between success and failure.

Top 5 Reasons for Hiring a Personal Trainer

1) New to Exercise

If you're new to exercise and planning to join a gym you may want to consider supplementing your membership with a personal trainer. Though most gyms offer orientation and instructions on how to use the equipment, you are left figuring out a workout program on your own. The main benefit of working with a personal trainer is receiving a personalized workout program based on your current condition and goals. After conducting an assessment, the personal trainer will create a program and identify the frequency, intensity, and duration of the workout to ensure its effectiveness. In this process, the personal trainer will also show you how to use the equipment correctly to maximize the physical benefits and to avoid injury. And most importantly, you will gain a better understanding of the physical anatomy and your body's functionality. Having a personal trainer provides a great foundation for those who are just starting out, ensuring that you start off on the right foot with an improved chance of achieving your goals.

2) Have Specific Goals to Meet

If you have a specific target in mind, such as losing a certain amount of weight or improving your fitness, a personal trainer can create a workout plan that is realistic and measurable, in terms of how and when this can be achieved. One of the common reasons that people abandon their New Year's resolution is that as time moves on,

they tend to lose motivation either due to becoming bored with their workout or not seeing results within the time they had expected. With a personal trainer on hand, you will be motivated, challenged, and held accountable. It's critical times like this when a personal trainer can help save you from yourself!

3) Not Making Progress With Your Current Workout

If you plan to start off the New Year with the same workout routine that you've been doing the past six months—you are doomed to fail, especially if you have specific targets in mind. The common reason for people giving up on exercise is experiencing the workout rut. This happens when routines are not adjusted regularly enough to stimulate change, which leads to boredom, burnout or weight loss plateau. According to Phil Kelly of Body Expert Systems, "progression is a fundamental component of successful workouts. If you are exercising correctly, you should see strength improvements within a 2-week period. Knowing when to change things up is an essential element of achieving great results." A personal trainer will be able to spot when you've reached this plateau and will adjust your workout program accordingly. Not only that but the personal trainer can also make your workout more fun introducing different approach and techniques that will challenge and motivate you.

4) If You Have Specific Physical Condition Or Injury

If you have an injury or health condition by which your doctor advises to exercise regularly, working with an experienced personal trainer is highly recommended. To ensure that you do not risk injuring yourself or worsening your health condition, make sure to check the personal trainer's qualifications and certification. A qualified personal trainer should have education and/or experience in either physiology, health promotion, athletic training, kinesiology or a similar field. With an understanding of anatomical and physiological function, the personal trainer can guide you to better understand your

body's functionality and which movement is most appropriate and beneficial to support and improve your condition.

5) Seeking Lifestyle Change

If you've reached a point in your life where you feel sluggish, unmotivated, and not at your optimal health, hiring a personal trainer can help you achieve real lifestyle change with additional nutrition coaching and working with you to change habits that may have a negative influence on your life. In addition to the physical assessment, the personal trainer will conduct a more in-depth assessment with a review of your lifestyle and nutrition habits. They will want to know about how you manage stress, your diet and eating habits, and sleep cycles, among other factors. According to Mariusz Steckiewicz, owner and Master Trainer at Body Shape, "I need to know about people stress level in life because it affects the posture, movement and even pain they may experience daily. Training is about making people better—that means moving more freely, stronger, more energetic, more balanced."

The mindset is a critical component for creating positive life change. A key role of a personal trainer is to help guide their client to develop awareness and commitment to their actions through positive thinking. Basically if your mindset isn't aligned with your goals it is impossible to achieve real transformation. "The key to changing an ingrained habit pattern is to progressively change that way of thinking to one that will produce right habits/actions. Habit change is the true path to success... do not try to complete a diet, instead aim to adopt healthy habits," says Phil.

Hiring a personal trainer is an investment in the maintenance of your health. Depending on your budget and goals, hiring a personal trainer can be effective starting with twice a week to provide you with the basic education and a personalized program to get you started and motivated. The key is getting a positive start so you can sustain motivation and commitment towards meeting your goals and making fitness a part of your lifestyle. ■

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>> The List Health & Beauty

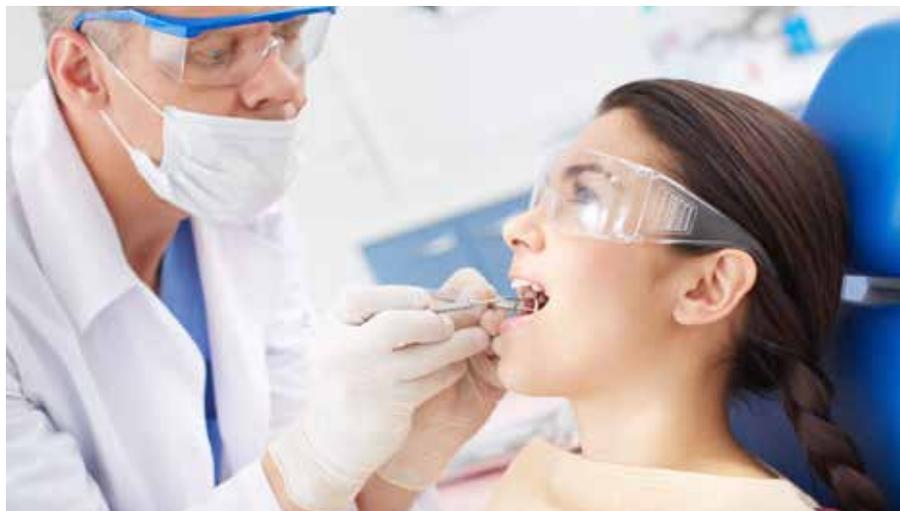
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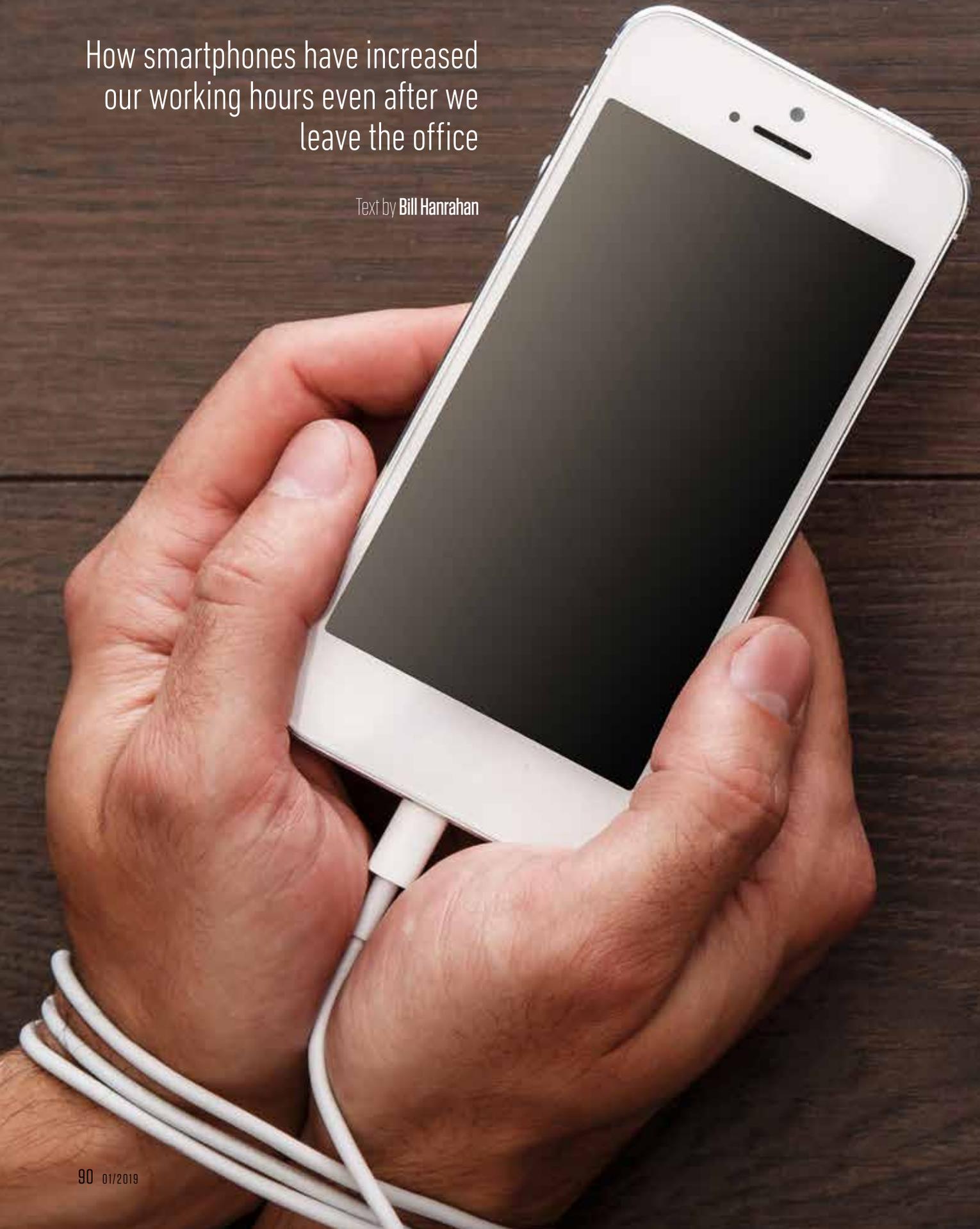
Kids & Education



DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS

How smartphones have increased
our working hours even after we
leave the office

Text by **Bill Hanrahan**



THIS THIRD INSTALLMENT OF our smartphone dilemma series will focus on some current trends being discussed and shed new light on what the phones do to us. If you haven't read any of my previous articles, here is a quick summary: phones are changing how we behave, and the evidence is pointing in the negative direction. Phones are more ingrained in our society than ever before and that isn't going to change. The social media aspects attached to the phone have created a psychological need to stay connected. Everything from the interface of the phone to the time you get your notifications are designed to keep you hinged to it. Going a day without your phone has become harder than quitting smoking. And, unlike smoking, none of us really want to quit.

Generation Z, also known as the "Igeneration," have never known life without the smartphone. Do you remember the days when we had to go to the library to get a book? How about writing a paper and doing works cited with the library rolodex? Those days are long gone. Fast and accurate responses are no longer a luxury, they are the rule.

A few years ago, if you had your phone out while talking to someone it was considered rude. Today, it's almost normal to be multi-tasking, especially around the office. *BuzzFeed* created a Netflix special titled *Follow This*, which accurately pointed this out. I catch myself doing this every now and then, but I have to tell the person I'm speaking with, "I'm just gonna jot this down," to make it clear I am only taking notes. So, if Netflix is creating shows about tech addiction and Tim Cook is announcing built-in programs to control your screen time, why are we still using these products every day? Why can't we stop? Firstly: They make us feel good. Secondly: They have replaced face-to-face communication. Thirdly: We depend on them more than ever.

The science behind the notifications is indisputable. We feel good when we get a message, someone likes our post, or a post gets lots of comments. Dopamine is released in our minds, which is why we keep going back to our phone. Dopamine is associated with the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction we feel when we receive a reward. We keep refreshing our news feed in hopes of something new and exciting to release more dopamine. The short term effects of this is us continuing to look at our phone habitually. Long term, we don't know yet. But we end up

in this dopamine driven feedback loop consuming our attention.

Phones are ingrained in our workplace and are an essential tool for information. Try applying for a job without an email these days. It's impossible. You are required to have an email in order to communicate with your work team. I can only imagine the look on my boss's face if I were to tell him I deactivated my email because it is bad for me. (He's understanding enough that I may actually be able to get away with it). Our jobs, our lives, our bills, everything requires we stay online. There are very few things you can do these days without an email address.

We are expected to stay connected. We are expected to know what's going on in between emails before and after work. But we don't benefit from this. In 2017 France imposed new laws to prevent people from getting emails after a certain time. It's called the "Right to disconnect" or "*Le droit à la déconnexion*." This new law guarantees employees in France the right to ignore messages that aren't sent or received within their regular working hours. According to *The Washington Post*, the reason for this law was because of an increased number of work related stress in the lives of French people. "The motivation behind the legislation is to stem work-related stress that increasingly leaks into people's personal time — and hopefully prevent employee burnout," French officials said. I think this is something we will start to see more of in the future.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries workers and unions in the US fought for better working conditions and shorter working days. In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards act was passed and stated 40 hours was the full work week. Anything over 40 hours would require the employee to be paid time and a half. Our ancestors would be ashamed of us if they knew we were talking to our bosses and colleagues after we returned from a long day of work and not getting paid time and a half for it! We do it voluntarily and sometimes subconsciously these days not because we want to, but because we carry work in our pockets.

Email speeds up productivity, commerce and transactions. Email also makes it easy to recall what one another said. But it's extremely hard to convey our emotions. Not every message needs to be communicated via email. We have voices and faces, and we shouldn't let

that go unused. Simon Sinek, author of *Leaders Eat Last* and the creator of one of the top TED talks "*How Great Leaders Inspire Action*," said in an interview "human bonds are human, and they require human physical interaction. You have to look someone in the eye before you trust them. The relationships you build physically are not only more efficient, but deeper." We must never replace face-to-face interaction with computers. I am afraid what the next generation will look like if we lose our ability to look one another in the eye.

In 1972 psychologists Paul Ekman and Carroll Izard determined there are six facial expressions that are recognized by cultures around the world: disgust, sadness, happiness, anger, fear, surprise. These emotions are easily displayed by changing our facial features when we meet each other. In a recent HBR podcast titled *Avoiding Miscommunication in a Digital World*, communications expert and speaking coach, Nick Morgan, talked about the importance of face-to-face conversation. Nick said, "face-to-face meeting is very efficient in one important sense: that is, we humans care about each other's intent. Intent is very hard to convey except face-to-face, where it's easy and effortless." Email doesn't allow us to do this. Nick met with lead neuroscientists in their field and asked "So if email is so bad, what should we do about it?" The lead neuroscientist responded, "pick up the phone and read your email to the other person." Doing this allows people in real time to clarify their feelings and emotions. You may ask, "What about Skype and Facetime?" Nick argues it interrupts that natural speed of a conversation, and we often end up looking at our own image on the screen instead of directly into their eyes (or the camera lens).

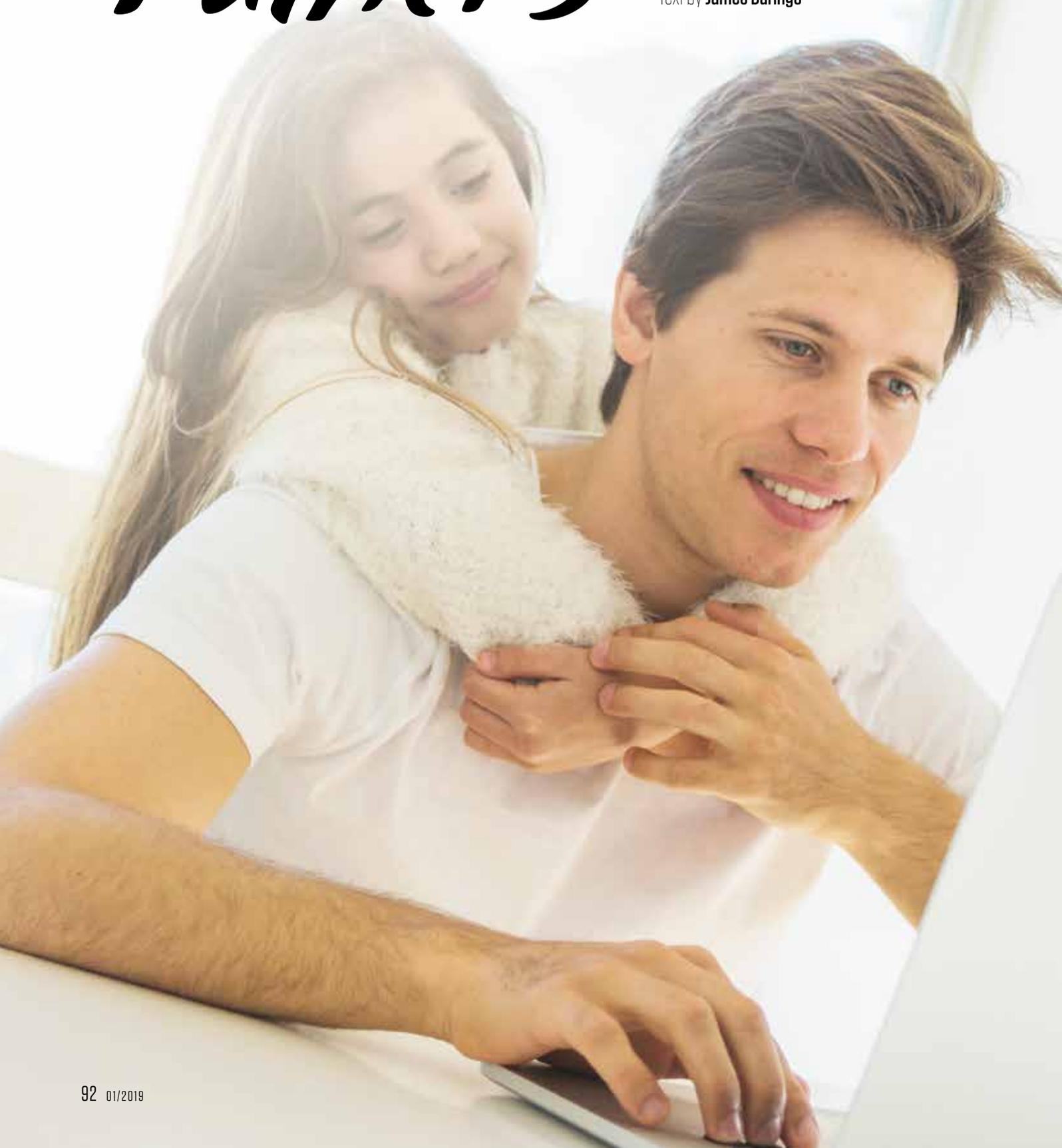
So go ahead, leave your phone at home. Go to the office without it one day. Email will still be there, but it won't nearly be as easy to check while you use the restroom, eat lunch or wait for the elevator. Still not sure if your phone is addictive? Try giving it up for an hour. Then try two hours or a day? Most of you will realize you, too, are dependent on your phone. Go to a mall or a coffee shop and count how many couples, friends or families you see sitting together using their phones. Hopefully you'll be more cognizant of your usage after seeing this. The observations are clear: people can't put down their phones. ■

Bill Hanrahan is a Technology Education Coach & Social Studies Teacher. He is a Syracuse University adjunct instructor for psychology and entrepreneurship and is convinced Seinfeld is the best show there ever was or will be.

Forums for Fathers

How online communities help dads with parenting

Text by **James Daringo**



A LAWYER IN BERMUDA BECAME

internet-famous for dancing ballet alongside his two-year-old daughter, comforting her stage fright by being there and doing the dance moves right with her. He knew the part because he had practiced ballet with his children before—and said it was just a normal part of fathering daughters.

That isn't a common sentiment about fatherhood, even now. But social norms have been changing over the past 40 years, as more women—and mothers—have entered the workforce. While mothers still do more work at home, the burden is becoming more equal. However, the concept of father-as-breadwinner is still stronger than ideas of fathers as nurturers. As a result, fathers often find themselves out of place at parks, malls, and other areas frequented by mothers and children. The same problem happens when they visit most parenting forums online.

My research focuses on understanding how modern fathers find and use online communities of men in similar situations, as they all try to make sense of their own parenting identities. By interviewing fathers and using big data analysis, my coauthor and I found that fathers seek information and support online, use more anonymous social media sites like Reddit to discuss sensitive issues such as divorce and child custody conflicts, and blog about do-it-yourself projects as a way of legitimizing their childcare and domestic work as masculine labor.

Fathers look for community online

Analyzing 102 interviews, a team of us found that fathers are active on social media, including posting photos about their children's milestones, such as walking or crawling, and pictures of activities like dancing and baseball. But fathers are less involved than mothers in managing online sharing of child-related content. We found that moms were fielding the questions and making the decisions about whether Grandma could share a picture with the baby on her Facebook wall or if friends could share photos of the child's birthday party.

I and others have also found most fathers reluctant to share family content with social networks that include colleagues and managers. Mothers felt fewer such constraints, even when their social media accounts also included professional contacts.

In private Facebook groups, though, fathers are willing to discuss their parenting experiences—whether they are small local groups, private chats, or even groups with thousands of members. In these groups, dads gain social support and seek advice, especially from older fathers who have experienced similar problems. Fathers told me that Facebook group discussions ranged from daily parenting experiences like diaper changing to more serious issues around marital problems, especially for new parents.

Reddit As A Haven

In contrast, some fathers were reluctant to discuss more personal issues—like divorce and custody—on Facebook, where posts are labeled with their names. Instead, they felt safer using other online names on sites like Reddit, where it was harder for people to associate their posts with their actual identity. When posting

under pseudonyms, fathers were willing to share deeply personal details beyond what's usually appropriate on Facebook.

My collaborators and I analyzed how fathers use Reddit by studying about 2 million parenting comments. We focused on three parenting forums, including r/Daddit, a subreddit for “Dads. Single Dads, new Dads, Step-Dads, tall Dads, short Dads, and any other kind of Dad.”

When fathers discussed divorce and custody issues on Reddit, they covered topics as diverse as venting about their plight in family court and detailed legal questions about their cases. Fathers also discussed controversial issues like vaccination and circumcision. One father suggested in an interview that Reddit is a “peaceful place to post an opinion” because he did not have to deal with reactions from friends, colleagues and family members.

The DIY Dad

When I started talking to fathers about their use of social media sites, I did not set out to ask about do-it-yourself projects, but the theme emerged from the interviews. In one project, I supplemented interviews with visual and rhetorical analyses of father blogs, finding that fathers blog about their DIY projects and tie that work into their fatherhood experiences and their domestic roles. They engaged their children in projects like retiling bathrooms, teaching useful skills while also carving out quality father-child time. Blogging about these projects gave these fathers a way to describe how they could be both caretakers and providers at the same time.

Notably, fathers used DIY language to describe work traditionally considered feminine. For example, fathers blogged about preparing lunchboxes and craft work like creating children's toys from recycled trash. When working on traditionally feminine domestic work like cooking, fathers emphasized that they were not only cooking but “hacking the kitchen,” imbuing daily tasks with more masculine entrepreneurial language.

Fathers today face the paired challenges of shifting domestic pressures in dual-earner families and lagging social preconceptions of dads as breadwinners and mere helpers for mothers. Through my research, I am shedding light on the ways that fathers can find support and guidance on social media, and I hope to promote involvement and inclusion among men in their roles and responsibilities as fathers. ■

1 in 5 Women

Seeking medical help and reporting sexual assault is one of the most important things you can do



IT IS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT to imagine oneself as the victim of sexual assault, yet statistics show that one in five women will be. When something like this does happen, it's important to remember that any kind of sexual assault or violence is a crime—and anyone who is a victim has the right to seek both justice and receive medical care. This is just as true in Vietnam as it is anywhere else in the world.

When a woman has been sexually assaulted and is seeking help, the key factor is time. For help to be most effective, she should contact the police department and a medical clinic as soon as possible. Expats or travelers should also notify their country's consulate or embassy.

Sometimes victims will be persuaded by other people not to file a police report. They are told that the police won't care, or that they don't speak English, or that nothing will be done. Such advice is in itself an assault on a woman's right to decide for herself to speak out and take action. Sexual assault is against the law, and it should be reported to the police and documented. A woman seeking to notify the police can ask others for help, such as a front desk staff or receptionist of a hotel, a friend or consulate personnel.

From a medical perspective, it is important to seek medical attention right

away—to treat the injuries (which can be both external and internal), to check and treat for sexually transmitted disease, and for pregnancy assessment—and ideally this should take place at a clinic or hospital with a gynecologist, infectious disease specialist, or surgeon depending on the injuries. Even victims who are not sure whether or not to report the assault to the police should still get medical attention as soon as possible.

The laws regarding sexual assault vary from country to country, so the response a foreigner might expect from her consulate/embassy can vary too. It is still best to report the event and obtain consular advice in addition to reporting the crime to the local police—this helps the victim to document the occurrence and receive advice and assistance from her own government.

Rape kits—otherwise known as sexual assault evidence kits—are usually used to collect evidence in cases of sexual assault. These are not yet available here in Vietnam, although some consulates/embassies do have them. They usually contain:

- Instructions & checklist
- Bags and paper sheets for evidence collection
- A comb
- Documentation and forms

- Envelopes
- Material for blood samples
- Swabs
- Specimen containers

DNA evidence usually needs to be collected within 72 hours in order to be properly analyzed, but other types of evidence can last much longer. When a rape kit is not available, law enforcement agencies should work together with the medical staff to discuss an appropriate course of action consistent with the law/guidance from local authorities.

In order to help the authorities to preserve evidence—and also to ensure that medical personnel can properly assess the extent and site of the injuries and provide the most appropriate treatment—sexual assault victims should avoid:

- Bathing
- Showering
- Washing hands
- Using the restroom
- Changing their clothes
- Combing their hair
- Cleaning up the area where the assault occurred

It's important to note, however, that even if a victim has done any or all of the above, it is still not too late to report the incident to the police and go to the doctor. There are other ways to collect



Dr. Jane Shadwell-Li is a graduate of New York's Stony Brook Medical School. She is frequently called upon to present health talks on a wide range of issues such as health screening, breast cancer, occupational health and skin cancer.

evidence. It's advisable to bring an extra set of clothes, as any garments worn during an attack may be collected as evidence also.

Usually, evidence collection focuses on an attempt to try to discern the extent of injury and identify the perpetrator. Victims of assault are asked to "preserve the scene" and not to wash, even though that will usually be the first impulse. Hair/nail samples, pieces of clothing, and personal belongings might be collected. A statement will be taken, and usually law enforcement officers will work closely with medical staff to collect any body fluids for examination and identification.

Seeking Medical Help:

If you have been victim of sexual assault, go to an emergency room as soon as possible—this is an emergency. The ER doctor will assess what kinds of specialists need to be notified depending on whatever injuries have been sustained. These might involve:

- A gynecologist—to assess for pregnancy and administer emergency contraception.
- An infectious disease specialist—to assess and treat any sexually transmitted infections.
- A surgeon—to assess and treat any fractures/lacerations/bleeding.

- A counselor—victims of sexual abuse have gone through a traumatic experience, and may be in shock. If possible, assessment by a counselor is recommended.

In the US and UK, a SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) is usually notified, who will follow the rape/sexual assault protocol. Vietnam has its own protocols for when a sexual assault is reported, although the specific practices may be different from hospital to hospital.

In any case, a victim should expect her injuries be taken care of as well as to be asked about details of the events. Some questions can seem very personal and detailed, but this is important not only to make sure all possible injuries have been evaluated, but also to guide DNA collection for evidence and identification of the perpetrator. A victim will also be asked about her past medical history, medications, allergies, and menstruation status before getting a head to toe examination—including an internal exam of her mouth, vagina, or rectum. During the exam, samples might be collected and sometimes photographs will be taken—consent will be obtained first.

It's recommended for victims to be offered sexually transmitted disease

testing for infections such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, HIV, and genital herpes, etc, depending on the circumstances of the assault. In some cases, a victim might need to take antiviral medications to prevent HIV transmission after high risk exposure. These can prevent the virus from taking hold, and usually the medication has to be taken for one month. Negative tests are usually repeated a month or three months later to make sure they stay negative, as some diseases do not show up positive immediately after exposure. For this reason, if the risk is high, empiric treatment for the most common STIs can be given regardless of the initial result.

Also, pregnancy status will need to be assessed, and a morning after pill may be offered if necessary. As a matter of fact, any woman can obtain emergency contraception at almost any pharmacy in Vietnam, although to use it properly, it is important to speak to a medical provider—if used too late or if the wrong dose is taken, it will not be effective.

While the trauma of a sexual assault can make a dramatic impact on any woman's life, taking assertive steps in the immediate aftermath can help to restore her sense of dignity and control, which is very important to the wellbeing of any person. ■

>> The List Education

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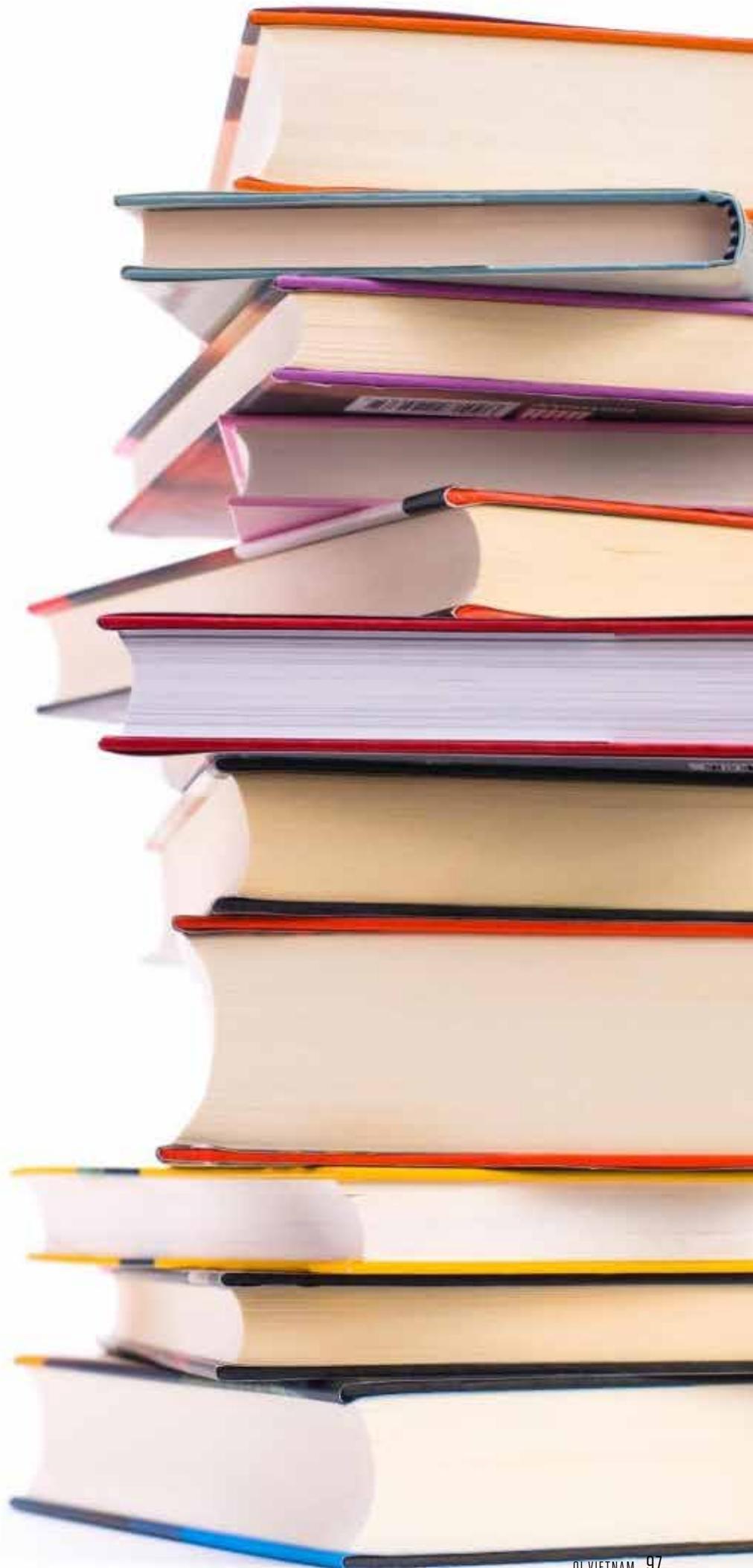
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I am a passionate Artist, Fashion Designer and Fashion Stylist from Uruguay. Venturing half the planet to come to Vietnam, I am eager to show you my designs - all of them born from my illusions, strength, and ideas! My goal is to give each woman the best fit and most beautiful piece of cloth on their bodies, each one of them is completely tailor-made on the highest quality standard.

I hope you'll enjoy my designs and all the collections.

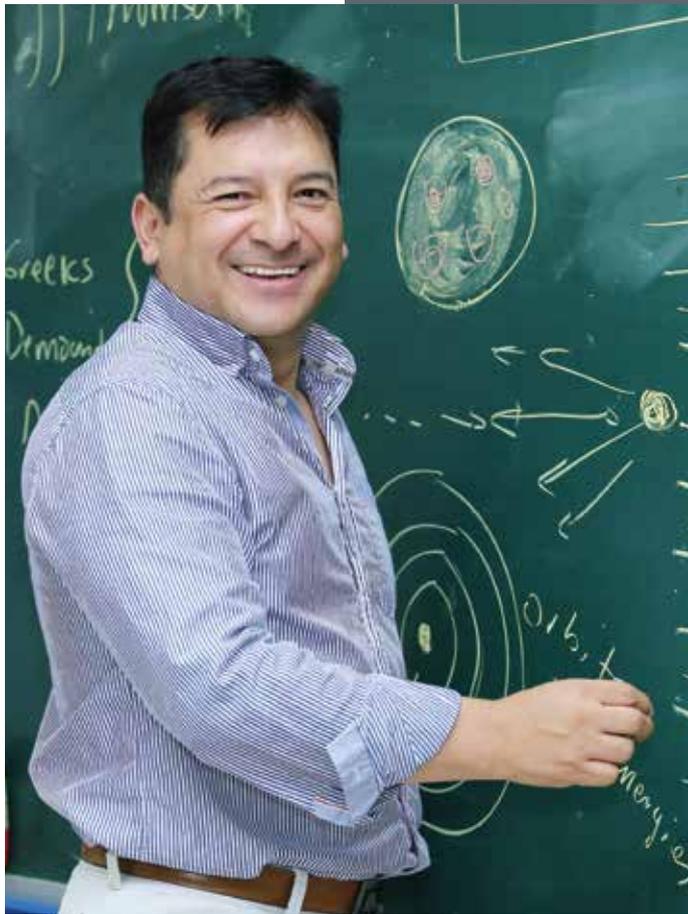
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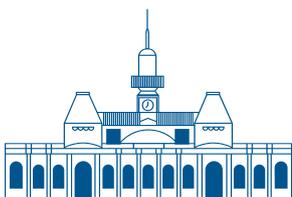
Dr. Alex Aristizabal
SU Chemistry Adjunct Professor

SUPA at Syracuse University is perhaps one of the most student-centered and flexible college-level preparatory programs available for high school students world-wide. After having taught in several international programs and curricula, I am happy to be part of a program where students have the opportunity to show their learning in multiple instances and not just one end-of-the-year exam.



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