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VIETNAM

07-2019



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Tập 02/2019

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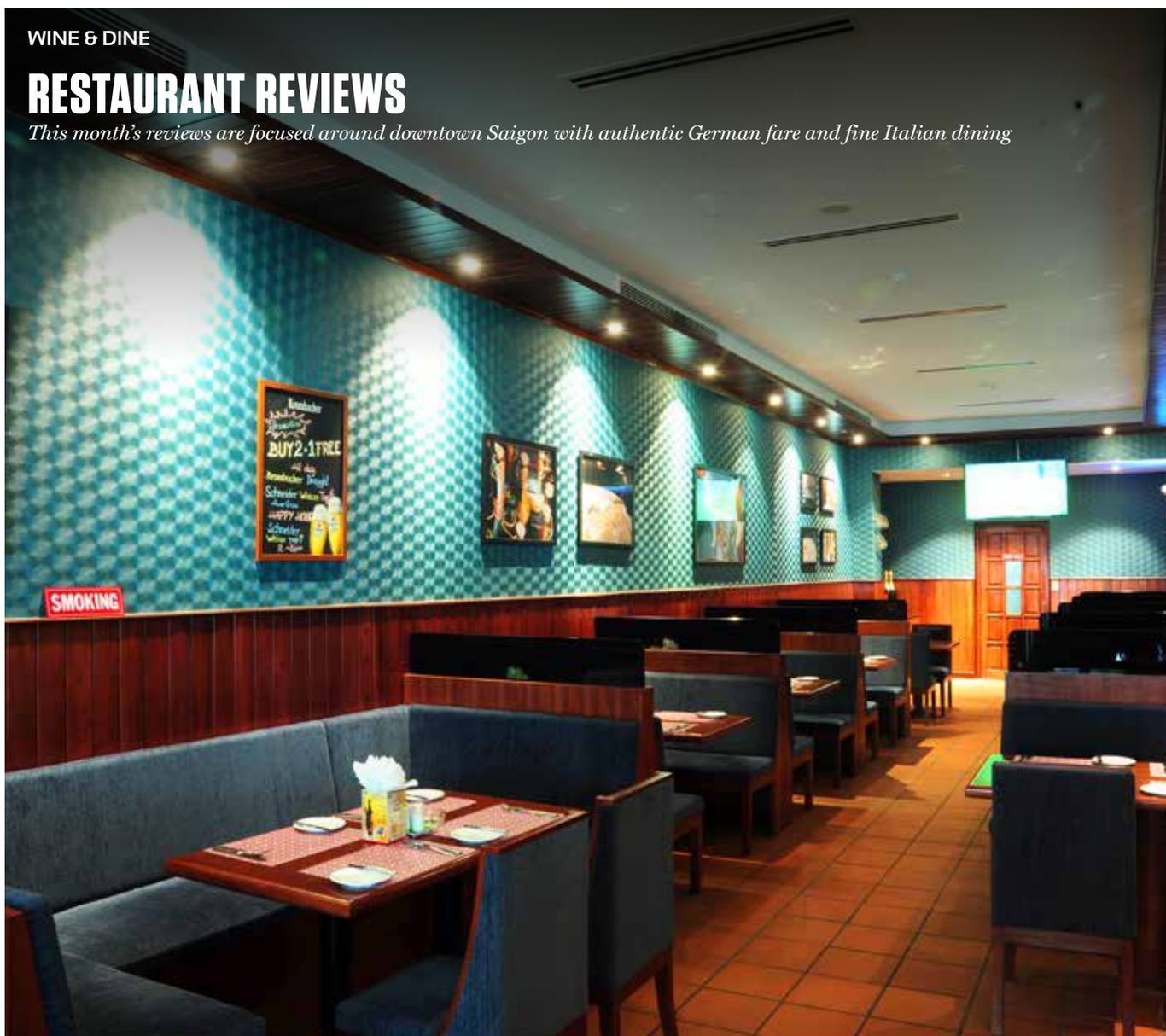


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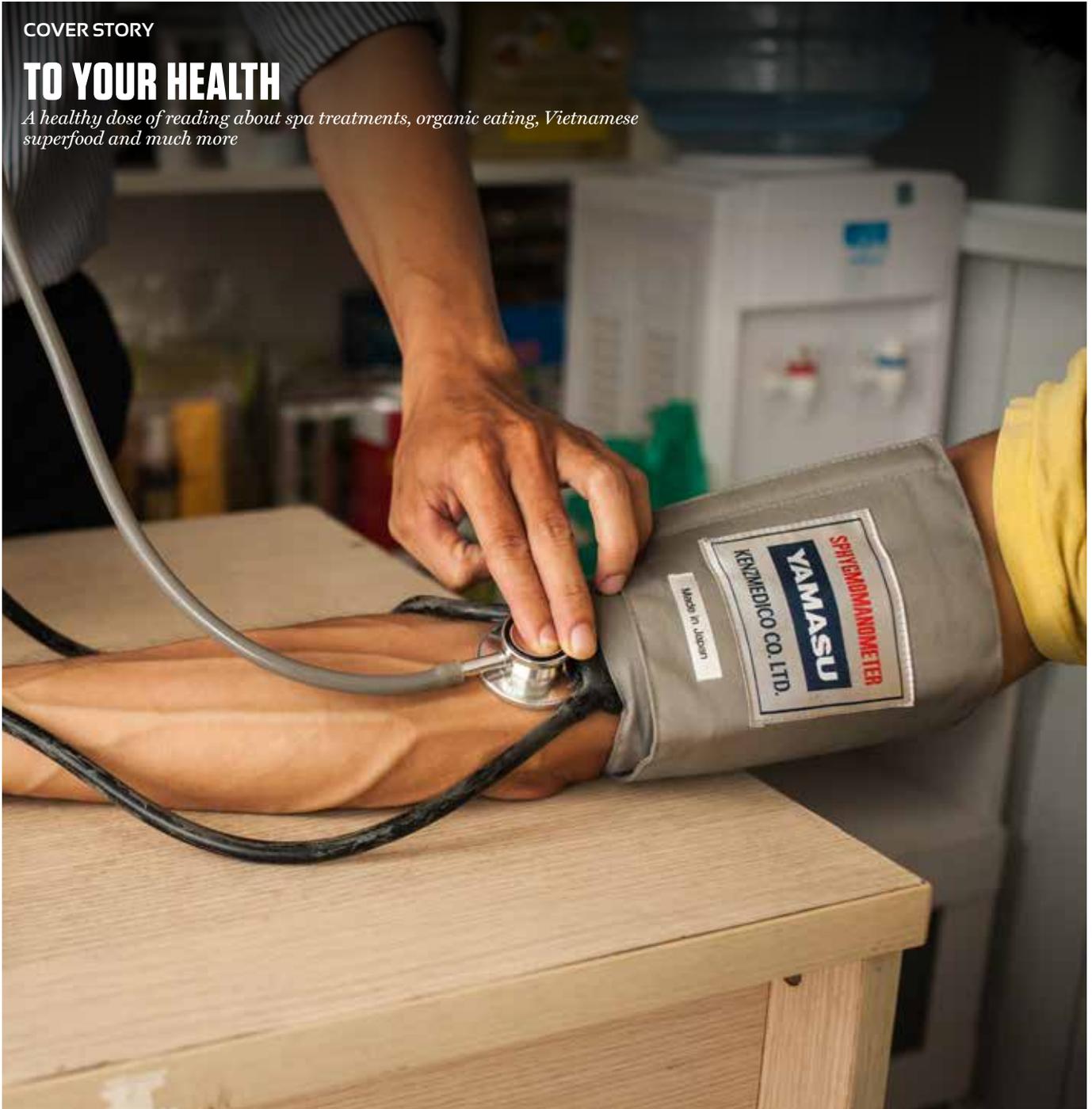
OUR SECONDARY CAMPUS

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Lawrence Young (FCSI) is the Senior Associate for Holborn Asset Management Group (HCMC office). Originally from the UK, Lawrence has been a finance professional for 30 years having worked across Europe and Asia as a stockbroker, Eurobond trader and interbank money broker. His areas of expertise lie in offshore tax efficient saving structures, higher education fee planning, inheritance tax planning, pension planning, life and health insurance, global investment property, offshore company formation and offshore banking. Email lawrence.young@holbornassets.com if you would like him to answer your questions on these topics.

Calling All Entrepreneurs

While the pathway to success is paved with paperwork, Vietnam is still a go-to destination for startups

WHY WOULD ANYONE WISH to open a business in Vietnam? It is a simple answer: Why wouldn't you? A geographically advantageous jurisdiction, a growing economy, and the regulation and rulebooks constantly being ripped up and revamped make it easier to enter into the business arena in Vietnam. However, there are still areas that need working on in order to facilitate the ease of setting up a business in Vietnam.

Vietnam is currently halfway down the "World Banks' list of 189 economies for ease of doing business." The factors attributing to this middle ranking are workforce and labor skills, a young infrastructure, higher levels of bureaucratic processes, juvenile laws that don't cover gray areas, a lack of intellectual property rights, enforcement and language barriers.

As an example, if you intend to do business in Vietnam you will quickly have to come to terms with the "Red Chop," which is a company seal and an example of a bureaucratic process. It can prove to be a cumbersome process to get any documentation legally authorized but by no means unmanageable. Recently, the Deputy Director of General Economics Department, under the Central Economic

Committee, said "Vietnam must improve labor productivity of workers and employees."

The Prime Minister asked the Ministry of Finance to hasten administrative reforms and improve transparency to create favorable conditions for business development. The Prime Minister also spoke earlier this year at a conference about the required changes that needed to be implemented in 2019 to ensure "the

stability of policies, simplify tax and customs procedures, and reduce informal charges." These are all signs that there is a conscientious move to ensure Vietnam can compete on the global stage and how the government can assist. The underlying fear is that Vietnam gets stuck in the middle class trap. It will take years to fully achieve these goals but everything has been set in motion to manage this process successfully.

Further evidence comes from the deliberate move away from a centrally planned economy to a market driven economy, such as a meteoric rise in certain areas like manufacturing has occurred. At a quarter of Vietnam's GDP coming just from electronics manufacturing through giants such as Samsung and Panasonic, it truly does underline the willingness to adapt and grow.

The services industry alone makes up about 40% of the GDP, which is great news for those wishing to visit Vietnam. According to TripAdvisor, Vietnam has become the most favorable tourist destination in Southeast Asia and with it an expanding opportunity for the would-be entrepreneur and in turn, higher employment.

So, what should foreign investors do if looking to set up in Vietnam? Firstly, get into bed with a local company that fully understands the landscape and processes. By doing so, you will save yourself a massive headache, time and energy rather than trying to navigate this minefield on your own. They won't be able to necessarily help with market studies, but once you have concluded your market due diligence and decided to pull the trigger and enter into business in Vietnam, they will almost

certainly become invaluable.

Any new business coming into Vietnam should also consider how attractive they wish to be to their employees. Salaries may be relatively low currently, but that will change over time with increasing employee awareness. With that awareness comes employee expectation. Staff retention is always a major problem with businesses, especially juvenile businesses. Employee benefits are becoming more of a factor and should be considered seriously. You don't wish to invest in training staff and immediately lose them to a competitor because they offer a slightly better package. Better health insurance plans, pension plans or even company share schemes for staff should all be put on the table to make sure your business is competitive and in line with current market expectations.

Nothing is impossible in Vietnam. Learn the rules and consider the cultural differences as a foreign investor. Nothing is ever done the same way as we might be accustomed to in our home countries. Those that adapt and learn this from the outset will always fair better in the long run. I look around every day and am constantly staggered by the pace that enterprises seem to pop up overnight—both domestic and foreign owned.

It seems almost every day businesses such as coffee shops seem to open up closer and closer to my home. I am almost certain that one day I will step out of my front door and before taking two steps be pounced upon by some genius entrepreneur who hands me a bagel and a latte as they have recognized that gap in the market. Not commercially cost effective, but wouldn't it be nice. ■

Shared Experiences, Part 2

Text by Carly Naaktgeboren and Jesus Lopez-Gomez
Images by Vy Lam

Fabric Friends

Weaving and ducking through a maze of brilliantly colored fabrics, Huynh Tien stops to feel silk in varying shades of yellow in the charming Tran Huu Trang Market in Phu Nhuan. She pulls the material, examining the edges and leaning in to get the closest possible look. The woman keeping the shop excitedly chats with her, as this is one of Tien's favorite markets and she has become close with the vendors over the last two years. "This is a small market, but they have good quality fabric," Tien tells me, "I know the quality from my experience."

She takes me to a woman selling lightweight linen in every conceivable shade and they have an affectionate exchange. These relationships are what has inspired the former Miss Universe Vietnam "Sports" and current model and fashion designer to start this shopping experience using the booking platform LandedVibe. Tien brings customers to the market where she is able to help them find the highest quality fabric

for the best possible price, and bring business to the people she buys from. After helping friends buy textiles, she realized she could expand this so that others, especially expats, could experience this as well. She is able to tell what is worthwhile and what is not, and that is imperative in a space overflowing with material. "I try it first myself to make sure of the quality," Tien says. Explaining that she never wants her customers to wear anything she wouldn't also wear.

Tien is a fashion designer who specializes in trendy, tailored suits for men and women alike, with a buzzing shop on Nguyen Dinh Chieu Street in District 3. Participants can choose to shop with her and then be fitted for suits from the material they select, or she can help them pick their fabrics and go on their way. Her main goal is to give them the opportunity to shop like a local in her most beloved of places and support both the shoppers and vendors. Smiling, she rests her chin on her hands as she tells

me, "I'm not doing it to make money, it's more about sharing the experience."



Clothes Maketh The Man

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, they say. For example, try as you might to make those cream-colored trousers go with a white shirt, it's still fashionably risky. Darks like lights.

What happens when you swap the white shirt out for a dark one? "You will

impress everyone, and everybody [will] look at you," opined male stylist and fashionista Hoc Bui. Dark colors are assertive and give the wearer a strong look, he added. Hoc is a personal stylist available for a one-on-one, relaxed, judgement-free consultation through skill-sharing network Landed Vibe.

Hoc prefers a classic look donning a tailored suit. "It's fabric from Italy, last available in Vietnam," he said proudly, and handsome leather shoes that deserve more attention than footwear ever gets. His look makes him stand out among the local crowd. "It's rare for Vietnamese" to don suits, Hoc said. "The weather in Saigon is always hot and wet. People don't usually take on suits. [They] always look at me like, 'What the heck?'" Hoc said laughing in an impeccable, whiskey-wood-colored suit. "Women love the brown," he asserted. He explained the look gives him "confidence, and I don't care."

Hoc started taking fashion seriously about a year ago. Two things happened: he took a management job at Hermès working closely with suits, and he discovered the world of classic male fashion on Instagram. There are a number of Vietnamese men on Instagram showcasing looks that would be at home on an episode of period drama *Mad Men*.

Hoc's current look is married to this

particular point in his life, but previously he dressed in a much different manner as a hip hop dancer, a very different role than that of a Hermès store staff member that prefers more modern, loose-fitting clothing. So, Hoc has some range, and his goal as your stylist and consultant isn't to make you look like him, but to make you look like you, just better.

It starts with a conversation, Hoc said. He'd ask about your job and what your day-to-day life looks like. Are you a businessman who might benefit from pinstripes, a coded marker for wealth, or a journalist that could use a simple outfit that's less visually busy to appear more trustworthy? Then, he'd assess your body type and offer recommendations ranging from the style of collar you should wear to the type of shoes that might go with the pants you're imagining would go with this look.

Should you shave that beard or let it go? Hoc is the guy to ask and he can offer some tips on caring for this beard if you're attached to it. "Lots of men [do] not care about clothes," Hoc said, a generalization that seems true given the way men usually dress, in pedestrian, forgettable ways that are not worth studying closely. You might feel differently about the value of appearances if you knew how you looked in a pinstripe suit. ■



Landed Vibe is a platform that helps millennials turn shareable values of their profession, skill or hobby into on-demand payable activities, either for entertainment, skill learning or travel experience purposes, to be booked by millennial locals, expats and travelers alike. For your own personal consultation with Huynh Tien or Hoc Bui or explore the 80+ experiences that are available, visit landedvibe.com.

TROI OI!

The country in numbers



5.26

TONS OF PANGOLIN SCALES WERE SEIZED LAST MONTH.

Vietnamese customs and anti-smuggling forces found 5.26 tons of pangolin scales hidden in two containers carrying cashew nuts in the southern Vietnamese port of Cai Mep, the government said in a statement posted on its website. Trade in pangolin is illegal in Vietnam, where a large number of people still believe consuming products from the critically endangered and defenseless mammal is good for their health. The scales are often ground up and used as a scientifically unproven supplement to treat liver and bone issues, and for mothers to produce breast milk. The raid came nine days after authorities in the northern Vietnamese city of Haiphong seized 8.3 tons of pangolin scales shipped from Africa, the government said in the statement. Nguyen Van Thai, director of Save Vietnam's Wildlife told Reuters last December that most of the pangolin scales seized in Vietnam originate in Africa and are bound for China.

72,602

PIRATED TEXTBOOKS WERE SEIZED IN VIETNAM.

A multi-department inspection team has discovered a large number of fake textbooks at a bookstore in the south-central province of Binh Dinh, in the country's largest pirated course book bust. Officials found 72,602 pirated versions of official textbooks used in Vietnam's K-12 system at the My Huyen Bookstore in Hoai Nhon District. In Vietnam, authentic textbooks are published by the Vietnam Education Publishing House, each of which is placed with an anti-counterfeiting stamp. "The bookstore owner failed to provide relevant documents to prove the origins of the books as per requested," one member of the inspection team said. The bookstore's owner admitted that he sourced the textbooks at cheap rates to sell at lower prices than market rates, just to help people to buy them at affordable prices. "The textbooks have the exactly same contents as authentic ones published by the Vietnam Education Publishing House, except for their low paper quality," he said in defending his 'good deed.'



1,200

CHURCHES IN VIETNAM HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED FOR CONSERVATION BY DR. TOMOHARU KATANO.

Dr. Katano was a doctoral fellow when he conducted a field trip across the northern Vietnamese provinces of Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh and Thai Binh between June and November 2007 to document churches in the northern region. The six-month expedition, and another one he made in January 2009, took him to 1,224 churches in the three provinces, belonging to some of Vietnam's largest and oldest Catholic dioceses. On rented motorbikes, Katano's mission was to access churches in even the most remote of places in order to photograph the exterior and interior of each building he visited and map their location into a GPS coordinate system. All data collected from the research has been sent to Vietnam's Department of Cultural Heritage and the local culture departments of Vietnamese provinces where the churches being studied are located. Dr. Katano said he found it fascinating that these Vietnamese churches are supported by a system of wooden columns and truss, similar to those found in local pagodas, but the front of these buildings are built from bricks with hints of Europe's Gothic or Romanesque architecture.





20TH

CENTURY ARTWORK BY LATE VIETNAMESE ARTIST SOLD FOR RECORD USD1.4 MILLION.

The painting *Nude*, or *Nue*, which was painted in oil on canvas by late artist Le Pho in 1931, was put up for auction at a starting price of USD520,000-USD770,000 by Christie's Hong Kong at its 20th Century & Contemporary art sales session. *Nude* eventually went under the hammer to an anonymous bidder for nearly USD1.4 million, 2.5 times higher than the starting point, setting a new record for the most expensive work by a Vietnamese artist sold at auction.

The artwork previously belonged to a private collection of 20th-century Vietnamese art pieces amassed in 25 years by Tuan Pham, a US-based art collector of Vietnamese descent. Le Pho (1907-2001) was first discovered by American art gallerist Wally Findlay in the 1960s. Christie's and Sotheby's are two of the world's most prestigious auction houses that have continuously auctioned off his paintings since.

5,000

VIETNAMESE E-BOOKS GIFTED TO A LIBRARY IN TAIWAN.

The copyrighted Vietnamese-language books, covering a wide range of topics and genres, are now available for readers at the Taipei-based National Taiwan Library. The books were handed over by Vietnam's Tre Publishing House to celebrate the opening of the new reading room for Southeast Asian Books, including Vietnamese titles, at the National Taiwan Library. The library also allocates annual budget to purchase Vietnamese books for Vietnam's community in Taiwan and Taiwanese learning Vietnamese, according to director Zheng Lai-chang. The Vietnamese section of the library currently has hard copies of Vietnamese books from well-known authors such as Son Nam, Nguyen Nhat Anh and Nguyen Vinh Phuc. Vietnamese has, since the 2018-19 academic year, become one of the seven Southeast Asian languages being taught as a second language at schools in Taiwan.



USD525 MILLION

TO BE INVESTED IN BUILDING ELECTRIC BUSES BY THE HCMC TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT AND SOUTH KOREA'S TECHNOLOGY FIRM DATAM.

According to DATAM, the electric buses will have 17 seats, including a seat for the driver and one for a disabled person. It will be 1.49 meter wide, requiring a lane at least 1.5 meter wide to operate. These medium-sized 17-seater electric buses will be suitable for narrow roads in HCMC. Of the total investment of USD525 million, USD300 million will be used to produce 20,000 electric buses and USD225 million to install solar LED streetlights with AI cameras and free wifi. The system will first be tested on a two-way 30km road, and will cost USD10 million. Tran Chi Trung, director of the Ho Chi Minh City Public Transport Management Center, said Ho Chi Minh City has only 44 percent of roads with a width of over 7 meters. The city of 10 million people has 85 percent of them living in alleys, meaning congestion is frequent and it is not easy to organize public transportation.



Fat Cat

Watching out for obesity in dogs and cats

OBESITY IS DEFINED AS AN accumulation of excessive amounts of fat tissue in the body, and has been called the most common nutritional disease of dogs and cats. However, in the past 10 years, most clinicians and researchers have agreed that at least 33 percent of the dogs and 35 percent of cats presented to veterinary clinics are obese, and that the incidence is increasing as human obesity increases in the overall population. This statistic is important because obesity is not just the accumulation of large amounts of fat tissue, but is associated with important metabolic and hormonal changes in the body. These metabolic and hormonal changes are associated with a variety of conditions, including arthritis, difficulties in breathing, glucose intolerance and diabetes, high blood pressure, heart failure, decreased heat tolerance, some forms of cancer, and increased risk of anesthetic and surgical complications.

The causes of obesity are multifactorial, and there are many genetic and environmental factors, but obesity is ultimately related to energy imbalance: too many calories consumed or too few calories burned.

One of these recognized factors is breed predisposition to obesity (like Retrievers, Mops and Dachshunds), and there are clearly other components, such as age, sex, and hormonal influences that play significant roles in the development of obesity.

Why Are So Many Pets Overweight?

Food = love? Food is often associated with love, and because we love our furry family members, we want to show them that love by giving them extra food, treats and sometimes food intended for human consumption, which is generally higher in calories and fat than pet food.

Lack of exercise. As we lead busier lives than ever before, many pet owners hope a run in the yard for Fido is enough exercise to keep him healthy. For most dogs, this isn't adequate. Dogs require our participation and interaction. Some dogs love to swim, others prefer to fetch, and some breeds, especially herding breeds, do best with a physical job. For many dogs, a simple daily walk is all that is required for them to stay at their ideal body weight.

Exercising a cat isn't quite as simple. Most veterinarians agree that

cats are healthiest and safest indoors, but an indoor-only kitty can become a lazy kitty, which can lead to weight gain. One way to exercise your indoor cat is to hide a small percentage of her food in a food puzzle or food-dispensing toy. Her innate prey drive will be activated as she "hunts" for her food, forcing her to be more active. Also, use the toys that require your cat to chase and jump.

Lack of pet owner knowledge or understanding. To complicate the pet obesity problem, many pet owners don't know their pets are overweight. 90 percent of owners of overweight cats and 95 percent of owners of overweight dogs incorrectly identified their pets as falling within the normal weight range.

People don't pack on the body weight overnight, and the same is true for our pets. Because weight gain is gradual, and we see our pets every day, it might sometimes be difficult to notice when a pet has become overweight. And for cats and small dogs especially, a few hundred grams can make a big difference.

How to Prevent Pet Obesity?

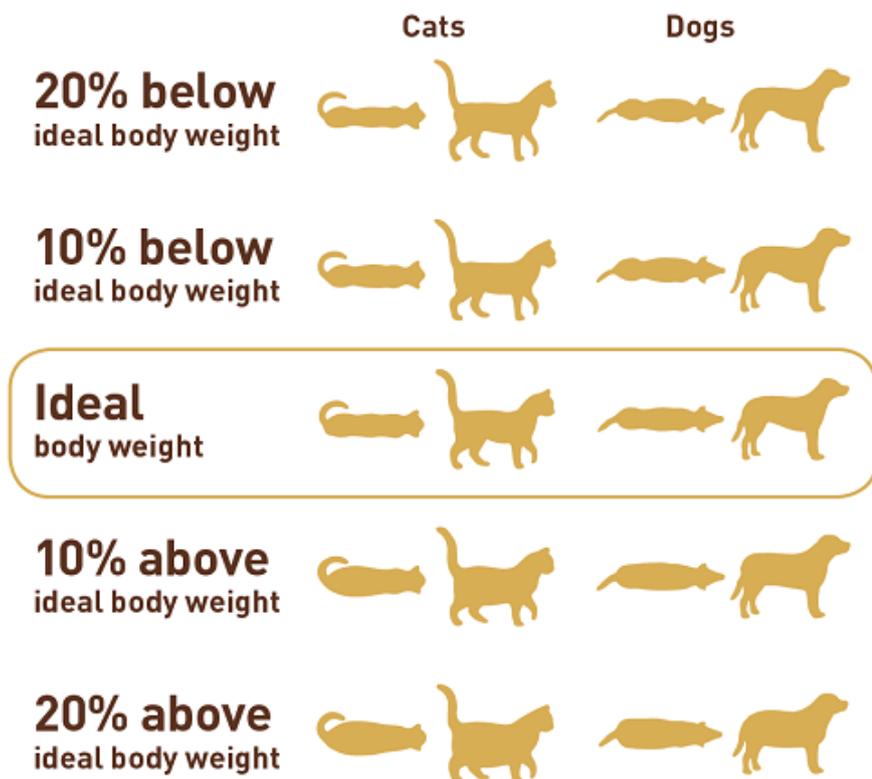
Your veterinarian plays an important role in the health of your pet and can help you keep your furry friend at a healthy weight. While pet owners generally don't weigh their pets consistently, your pet will be weighed at each veterinary visit. If your veterinarian notices your pet's weight is increasing, she should discuss it with you.

If your pet is already overweight, it is important to consult with your veterinarian about the proper way to help him get back into the healthy weight range. Crash diets aren't healthy for anyone, but for cats especially a crash diet can trigger a sometimes-fatal liver disease.

Losing weight is never easy, but it can be done safely and effectively with assistance from your veterinary health care team. ■



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.



Pet of the Month



Augusta and Savannah

Augusta and Savannah are two special ARC kittens who are looking for their forever home(s). The pair had been abandoned at a construction site and were crying loudly enough to be found by a passerby. Luckily for the two kittens, that passerby was Traci, an ARC volunteer. Traci took them home and fostered them even though she had cats of her own. Augusta and Savannah are now a little over one year old and have been spayed. They currently are in the cat room in Thao Dien, where they can be found relaxing and hanging out with the other cats.

Since their rough start, the kittens have always been a bit skittish on first meetings with people, but then warm up and become very loving. Augusta, the little white and ginger girl, is typically the most laid back of the two. Savannah, a watchful ginger, is often found grooming and taking care of her sister. The two have always been together, and all of the volunteers would love to see them adopted together, but that isn't a requirement.



Image by Mel Cartlidge



Jasmine

This gorgeous 5-month-old girl was found in the Thu Thiem area unable to walk properly and very weak and scared, apparently after being hit by a vehicle. She was rescued after a caring security guard, who had been trying to catch and help her since the previous day, flagged down a couple of Sunday cyclists. Together they managed to get her to SPC with ARC's help for treatment and care. Dr. Nghia had hoped he could save her front leg, but it was too badly damaged and it had to be amputated. However, within two days of the surgery Jasmine was bouncing around and ready for anything—nothing is going to hold this little girl back! She is in a lovely foster home, and is making great progress, but really needs to find her forever family to continue growing in confidence. She is friendly and affectionate and gets on with other dogs. She will grow to be a small to medium-sized, and first we thought she might struggle with stairs, but she seems to conquer everything in her way. ■



Images by Veronica Linh

If you would like to meet Augusta, Savannah or Jasmine, please contact the ARC adoption team at arcpets@gmail.com



Sensation of Light

Am sang - Nguyen Huy An's second solo exhibition

Text and Images Provided by **Galerie Quynh**

AM SANG, A PHRASE INVENTED by the artist, communicates a sensation of light, shadows and reflections. While “sang” is translated as “light”, “am” refers to “yin” (the female principle in nature) and suggests the spiritual world.

In *am sang*, Huy An finds inspiration in the rich folk and religious traditions of Northern Vietnam—scavenging relics, curiosities and memories from temple sites, theatres and distinguished actors. Once collected, these items are subtly manipulated and re-appropriated by the artist, drawing out reflections on the threads that run between the reality of today and the cultural heritage of epic mythologies and sacred communal rites that are very much a part of Huy An's consciousness.

Huy An's artistic practice has long built on his fascination with the objects, mundanities and spaces of daily life, particularly in and around his native

Hanoi, and with the shadows they cast. Previously, the shadows he explored were more concrete but here, in sympathy with the subject matter, they have become more obscure, ambiguous, even mental shadows perhaps, cast not by an object's corporal form but by its cultural and historical mass instead.

Originating in medieval times, the distinct styles of *tuong* and *cheo* Theatre embody ancient Confucianist value systems, centered on courtly and quotidian rural life respectively. They were sources not only of entertainment, but of moral teachings and social satire as well. A central aspect of the Mother Goddess, or *Dao Mau* faith is a highly-charged spirit possession ritual called *hau dong*, whose ceremonies include singing, dancing and a haunting musical component known as *hat van*.

In a series of externally-sourced negatives taken of a village temple and

a procession of the village deity, Huy An deliberately collected ‘unusable’ over-exposed film. The images are washed-out, almost abstract and the audience is forced, as with all negatives, to see them in the light, peering carefully at and almost through the image, to glimpse the echoes of detail that remain.

Traces of rituals are to be found throughout the exhibition as seen in the thousands of delicate termite wings in *Night of Thuong Ngan*. At an evening *hau dong* ritual at Dong Cuong Temple to celebrate the forest goddess Thuong Ngan, Huy An became captivated by a swarm of flying termites, cavorting in the air above the worshippers' heads, having been drawn in by the temple's lights. The next day he found wing fragments of the insects scattered in the temple grounds, so he collected them; inert, indifferent yet enduring participants in the ceremony of the night just passed.



A major work in the exhibition in search of Suy Van's hair is presented in a stark room, filled only with the oral theatre of Huy An's voice, recounting his ultimately fruitless search for the lustrous hair of a renowned actress famed for her portrayal of the doomed heroine Suy Van. Huy An has always been drawn to the raven hair of Vietnamese women, and as with his earlier work *Hair on Table* (2005), presented at the 14th Istanbul Biennial, the material acts as a conduit for his meditations on femininity, on the shifting ascendancies of the heroic, the melancholic and the powerless in a woman's role in society.

With a number of works, Huy An allows only a glimpse of an object, channeling the audience's perspective down to a narrow focal point, eliminating distraction and visual noise. He sees these objects, or certain details of them, as points of departure, spurring us to deeper thoughts on what exists behind them, and on their cultural and personal resonance.

Born in 1982 in Hanoi, Nguyen Huy An is among the most dynamic and innovative artists of his generation. He has participated in numerous exhibitions and performance art festivals over the

last decade including *Looking for the Divine Beings*, Nha San Collective (2017); 14th Istanbul Biennial – *SALTWATER: A Theory of Thought Forms*, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Istanbul, Turkey (2015); *Mien Meo Mieng/Contemporary Art from Vietnam*, Bildmuseet, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden (2015); *Residual: Disrupted Choreographies*, Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes, France (2014); *If The World Changed*, Singapore Biennale (2013); *sounds of dust (somniaquy)*, 943 Studio Kunming, China (2011); *Anatomy of an assembly line with an error*, Nha San Studio, Hanoi, Vietnam; Lim Dim, Stenersen Museum, Oslo, Norway (2009); Tam Ta, San Art, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2009); and the Nippon International Performance Art Festival (NIPAF), Tokyo, Japan (2007).

In 2010 Huy An co-founded, with artists Vu Duc Toan and Hoang Minh Duc, the performance art collective The Appendix Group (Phu Luc). The group has performed in festivals in Vietnam, Singapore, China and Poland. ■

On exhibition until July 27, 2019 at Galerie Quynh (galeriequynh.com).



When
All of Saigon
is Your
Playground

Claiming urban spaces and
crushing obstacles for a strong
body and mind

Text by Naomi Sutorius-Lavoie
Images by Johnny Guatto



THE JUMP DIDN'T GO OFF QUITE as planned but “sometimes pain can be a good teacher,” admits Nguyen Van Nghia, one of Saigon’s early traceurs and an original member of the FreeFly Crew. The infamous jump in question happened years ago on the streets of Saigon at the age of 17. Nghia miscalculated a flip when his foot got caught on a table and he landed badly into a potted plant. At first, he felt

winded and thought he had broken a bone, but he quickly realized that the sleeve of his t-shirt was wet. Soaked in blood, he carefully rolled up the sleeve to inspect the damage. The gash in his bicep was deep and blood literally squirted out to the rhythm of his heartbeat.

Most of us would pass out at this point, but not Nghia. A quick call to his dad had him on the way to the hospital,

stitched up and back to practicing tricks in no time.

Parkour, also known as freerunning, is the art of movement and using your body to run up and leap over ledges, railings, staircases, walls and other everyday structures in the urban environment and it’s hardly new. It was popularized in the 90s and made its way to Vietnam around 2007 thanks to YouTube clips and a bunch of teenage



Saigon, where outdoor green areas are in short supply and several family members often live together in small spaces, you can easily see why parkour quickly became an attraction for the city's youth. It doesn't require equipment so it's essentially free and can be practiced alone or in groups. All it takes is massive amounts of willpower, nerves of steel and some free time, all of which most teenage kids have in spades.

After practicing parkour on his own for more than a year, Nghia and a buddy formed the FreeFly Crew back in 2010. At its height, the crew consisted of about 10 members and they regularly practiced on the streets of Saigon and the dusty parks and construction zones of Phan Thiet. They competed in several informal street competitions and, of course, loved to film their daring feats and upload them to YouTube, a very organic, unfiltered way of showing Saigon to the world back then.

Sometimes they would wake up as early as 5am to get together and train before work or school. They did parkour everywhere: abandoned buildings, parks, you name it. According to the FreeFly Crew, it was a way for young people to have fun and claim space in the city. "When you wake up so early and have all that energy to just run and leap and flip, you feel like the whole city is your playground. You're constantly challenging yourself and trying new things in different places. It's the ultimate feeling and we loved training together."

Today, most of the members of the crew have moved on. Some have families, steady jobs, more responsibilities and less time to spend hitting the streets. They no longer officially train as a crew but rather they get together and "play" as often as they can.

In the last decade since parkour became known in Vietnam, the biggest change is that the once "rogue discipline" practiced by loosely tied gangs of teens like the Freefly Crew has become a more formalized sport. When once traceurs met by chance in parks and competed in casual street competitions, today freerunning academies have sprung up all over Asia and there are even popular parkour camps for children in places like Singapore. Moreover, in 2017,



kids with nothing to do and lots of time and energy. These gangs of traceurs, as they are referred to, would meet in local parks, usually Le Thi Rieng park in D10, and were all about figuring out creative and athletic ways of engaging with their physical environment to move over, around and through 'obstacles' in their path.

"Did you ever play with dominoes as a kid? Do you remember lining them all

up in a standing position and then gently flicking the first one only to watch them all collapse into one another and topple?" asks Nghia. That's how he describes the mental high he gets from parkour and physically negotiating the "obstacles" in his path as he runs, leaps and literally sails through the urban jungle of Saigon. According to him, "parkour is for your mind; it makes you stronger."

In densely populated cities like



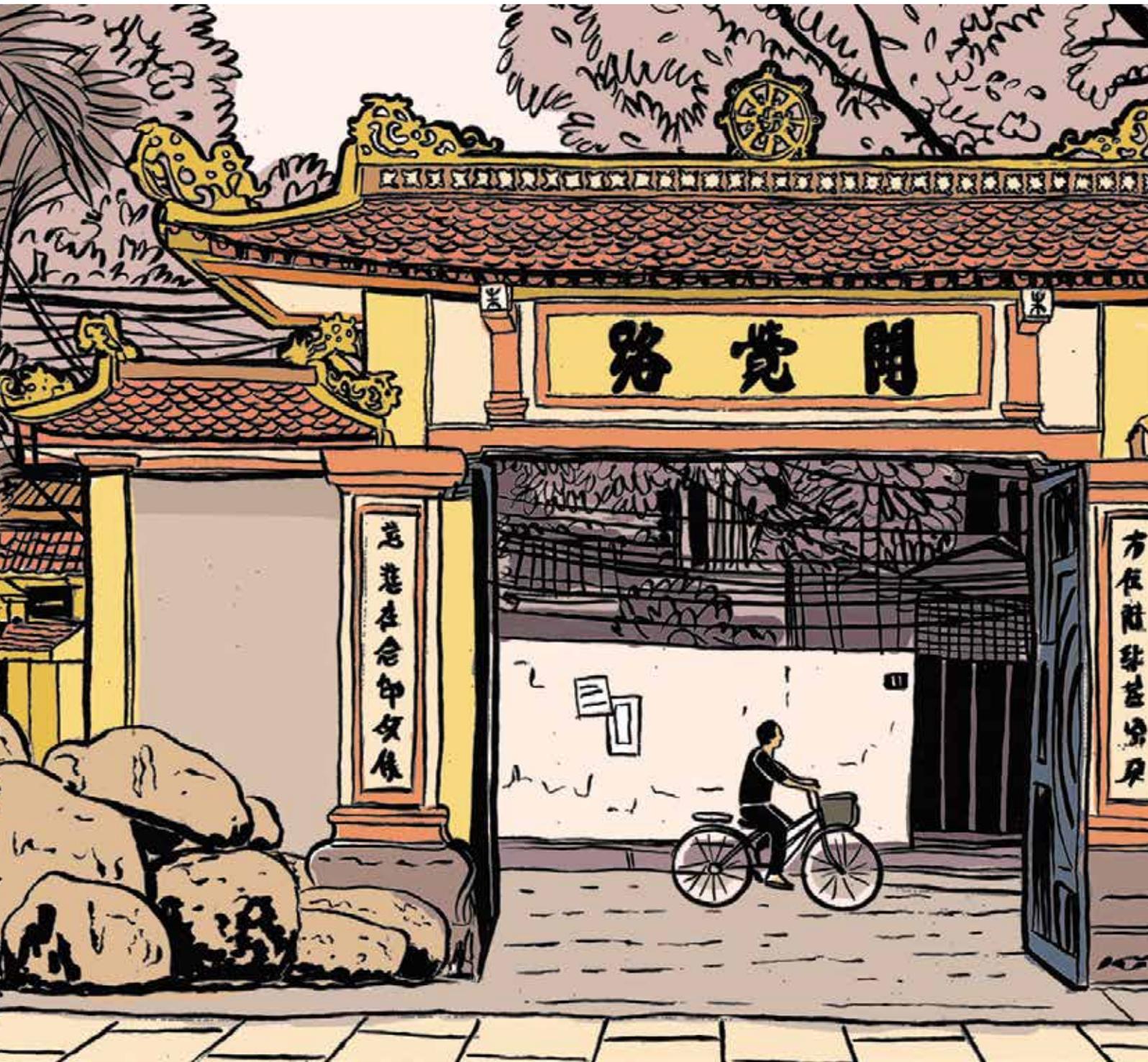
FreeFly Crew

the United Kingdom became the first nation to recognize parkour as an official sport, giving it a solid platform for further growth. Parkour UK says the sport "encourages self-improvement on all levels, revealing one's physical and mental limits while simultaneously offering ways to overcome them."

Despite the slow disbandment of the FreeFly Crew, Nghia still regularly trains on his own every weekend as he says it helps him relax. "It gives me a sense of freedom, adrenaline mixes with fear and my mind and body just start to flow. My body simply goes where my mind tells it to and it makes me feel clear and at peace."

Parkour is filled with contradictions and that's what makes it most exciting. It combines the physical discipline of martial arts and the carefree play of childhood alongside a wildcard element because you're never sure what the traceur's next move will be. It's about physical challenges just as much as mental fortitude, yet at its core it's about you versus your environment. It can be as easy or as dangerous as you decide to make it.

For guys like Nghia, it began as a youthful obsession with no rules and a healthy dose of danger. Today, it serves as a mind clearing exercise that taps into our most primal nature; to run free while putting all one's strength and energy into something while holding nothing back. ■



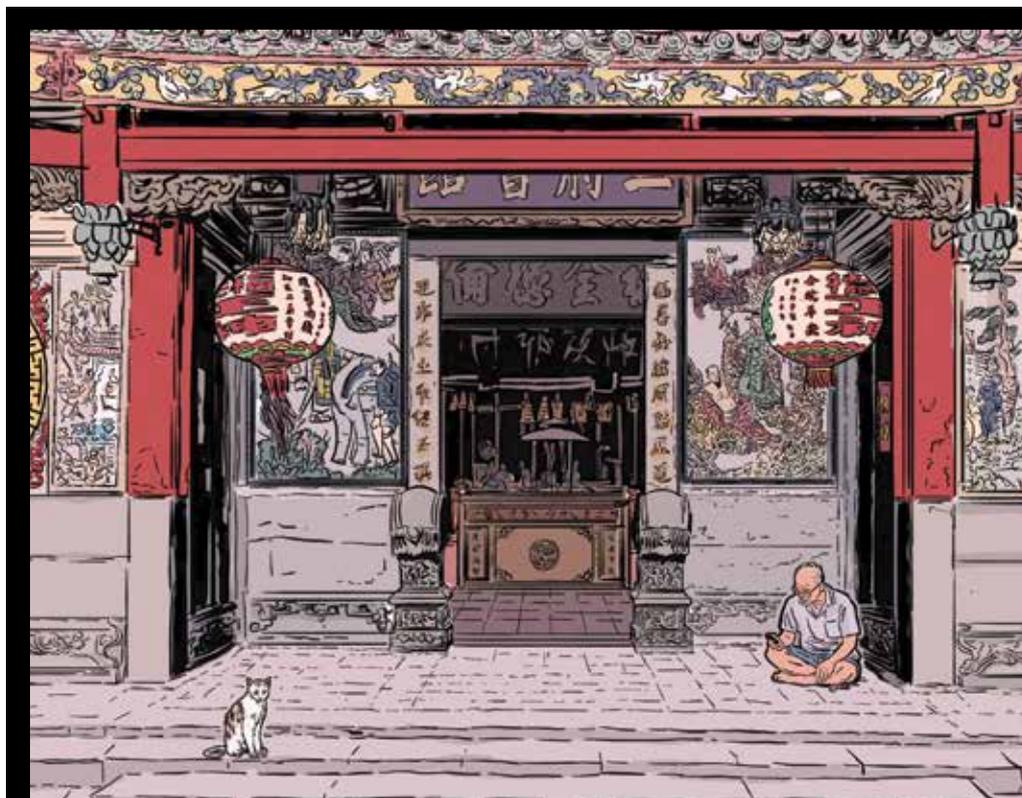
Sketched in Time

Text and Illustrations by
Louis Barnard

Born in South Africa, Louis Barnard uses drawing as a way to understand the different cultures he encounters while



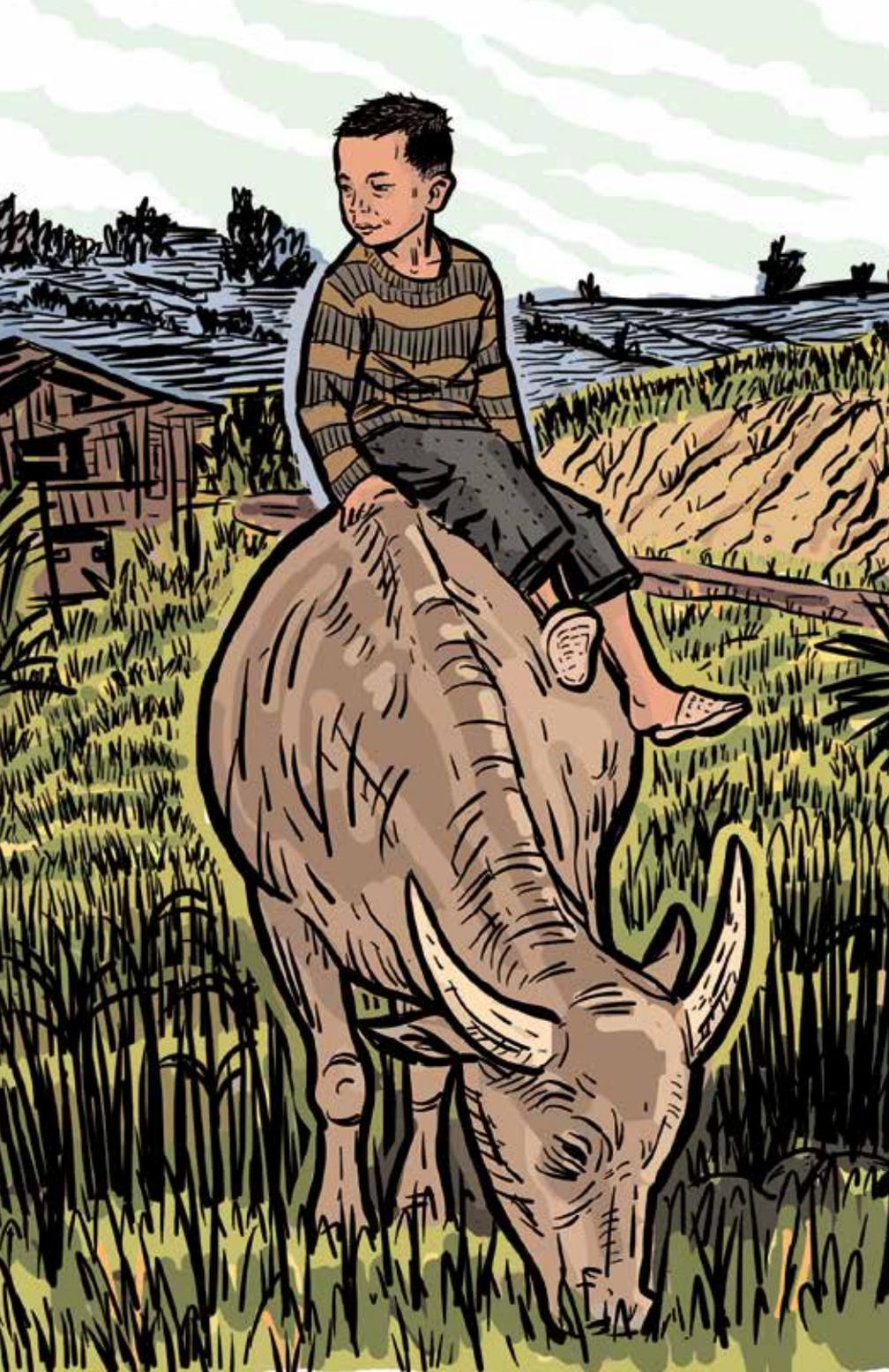
living in Asia. His illustrations capture moments in life that would otherwise go unnoticed. From Korea to Vietnam and portraits to children's illustrations, see more of Louis' works at www.louisbarnardillustration.org and Instagram: [louis123barnard](https://www.instagram.com/louis123barnard).



Mai Thi Luu, Saigon:

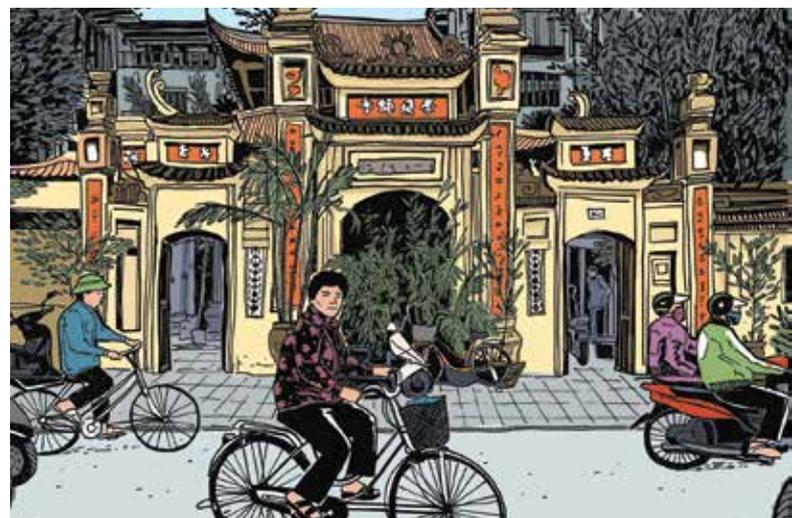
The Jade Emperor Pagoda in District 1 was riddled with sweaty tourists posing for photos outside the gates. I decided to go for an iced coffee across the street to wait for the throng of Westerners to leave on their buses so I could do some sketches of the famous pagoda. While sipping on my sweet coffee, I was taken with the scene across the road; a quirky run-of-the-mill restaurant with two men happily slurping noodles in the shade. A friendly woman was serving

them and also gave a few scraps of food to a street dog. I immediately took out my pencil and sketchpad and started creating some preliminary sketches of this common, everyday Saigon scene. I wanted to replicate each detail—every brick and crack, and letter in the signage. These are the scenes I so easily miss when driving around on the back of a Grab bike, and I was inspired by its commonality.



Sapa:

I went hiking in Sapa a few years ago. Like most tourists, I was drawn to the green terraced rice fields and tiny villages, which reminded me of the Shire from Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. Children were playing in the mud alongside water buffaloes. One boy climbed onto the back of one of the buffalo, it seemed unfazed by the boy's presence. The drawing was done from a photograph I took at that time because I didn't have my sketchbook with me.





Pho Co, Hanoi:

The Old Quarter in Hanoi is a beautiful juxtaposition of French colonial architecture and Vietnamese culture. As I set off to find a scene to sketch in this historic part of the city, I was inspired by a group of men relaxing by their scooters in the shade of an alleyway. They seemed unfazed by the bustling crowds of tourists or the noisy scooters buzzing past them. I quickly took out my sketchbook to capture one man in particular—he was standing by his scooter taking a break.



Magnificent Mulberry



ÓNG Ắ (www.onga.com.vn) was founded in 2018 by Victoria Huyen Nguyen, who was born in Vietnam, raised and educated in Poland and graduated with an MBA at Bradford University in the UK.

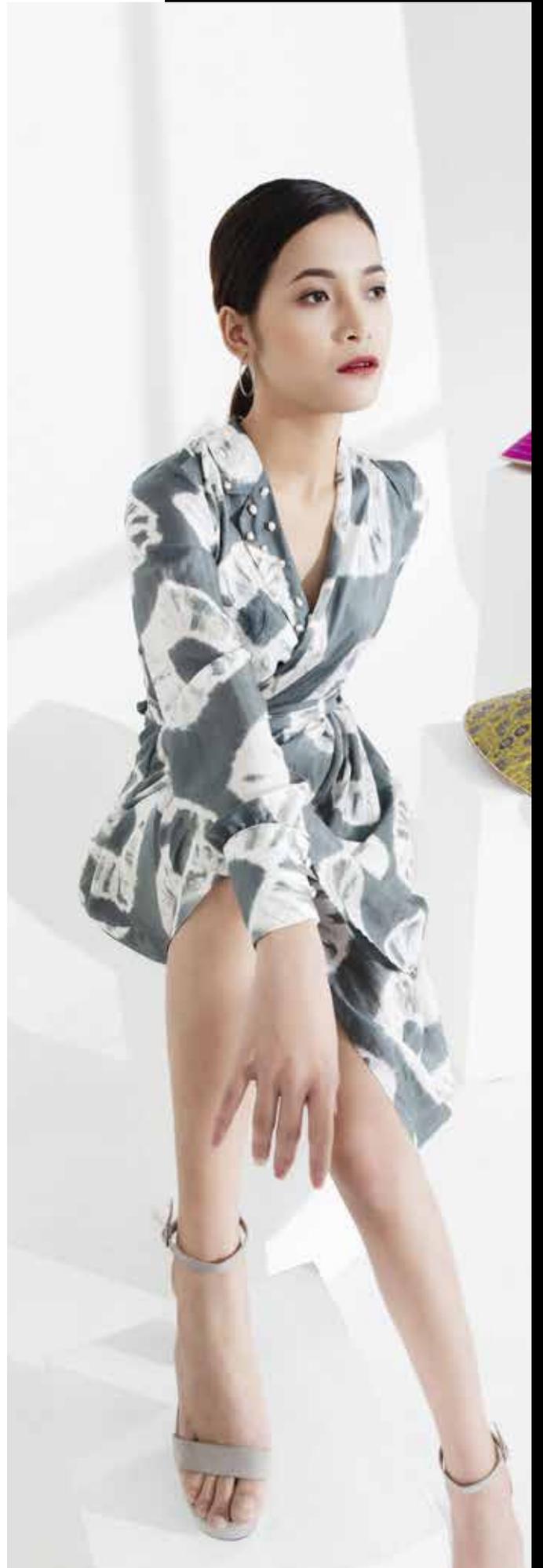
The brand's mission is to modernize Vietnamese traditional fabrics and promote Vietnamese mulberry silk within the local and international markets. Creating a sustainable fashion brand using 100% perfect natural fabric, they contribute to the preservation of the Vietnamese silk industry, as well as support in creating jobs for mulberry artisans in silk villages around the country. They pay great attention to the crafting and dyeing process used in each garment and guarantee the transparency of the origin of fabrics sourced.

ÓNG Ắ is sophisticated, alluring, romantic, elegant yet modern in form. Using high-quality mulberry silk fibers, combined with experienced fashion design and production team, this collection was made for today's women.

Models: **Nhung Bee and Dung Tran**
Photographer: **Bachng**
Makeup & Hair: **Pham Hong Nhung**







To Your Health

IMAGE PROVIDED BY INTERCONTINENTAL SAIGON

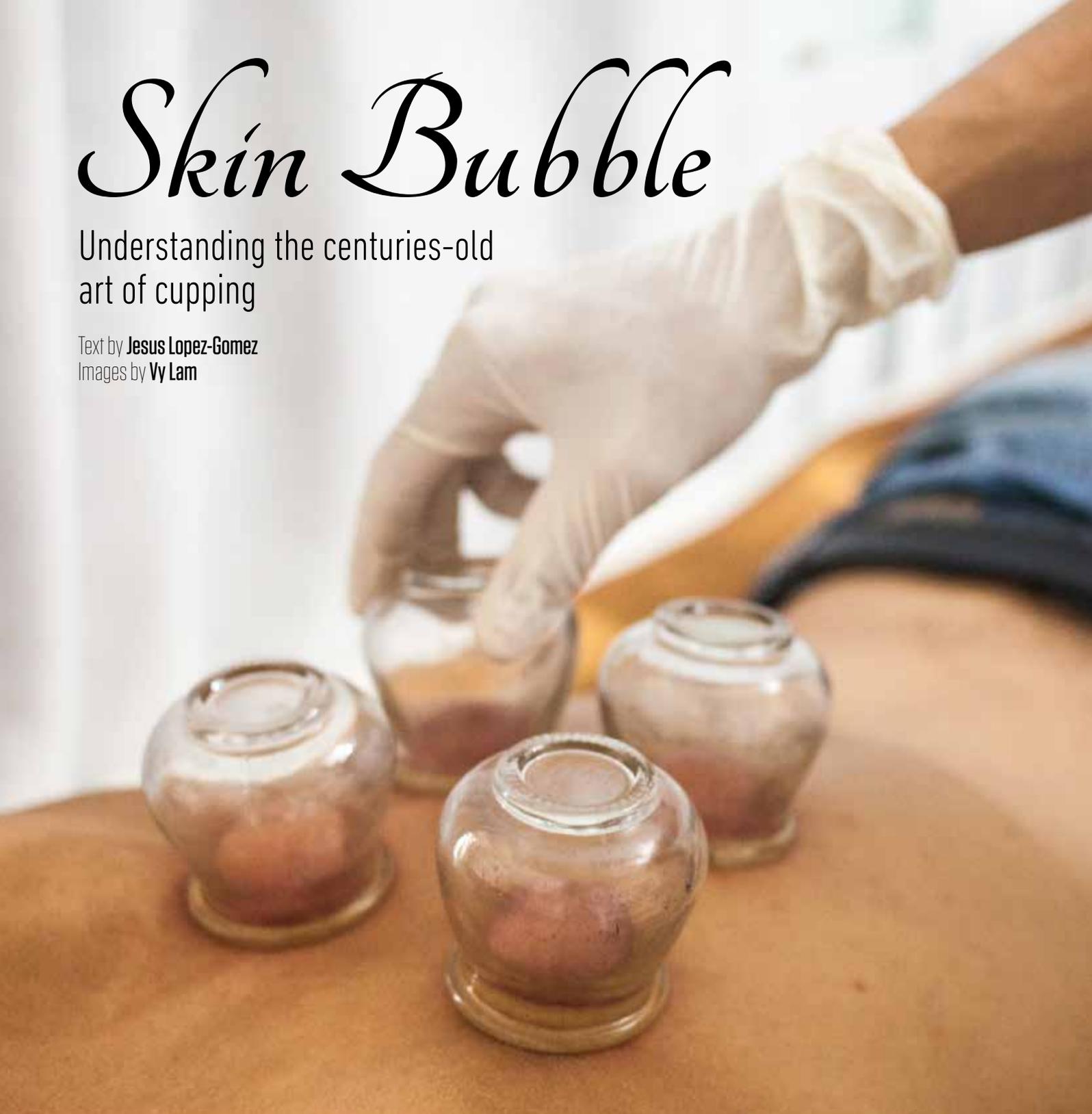


Skin Bubble

Understanding the centuries-old art of cupping

Text by Jesus Lopez-Gomez

Images by Vy Lam



IT'S CALLED "CUPPING" BUT they're actually little jars that are placed on the body for this ancient therapy. There's a little discomfort as they're suctioned on and you might feel a small grabbing sensation as the "cups" suck up what can only be described as a skin bubble. A small flame is wandered over the jars to create suction filling each with a dark reddish lump of skin that rises like a flesh cake. If the words "flesh cake" and "skin bubble" are turn offs for you, it's best to take it lying down. Preferably on your stomach. You can't see much in that posture.

What are the cups trying to draw

out in their suction? The pressure and suction inside of the cups is intended to increase blood flow and stimulate muscles, though medical science has not yet been able to confirm its claims. Among them, a claim that the therapy works to release the chi, the life energy at the center of Eastern medical practice. That's how Dr. Tran Khanh Van explained the benefits of cupping.

He's part of the team of doctors at traditional medicine center Dong Y Hoa Sen (dongyhoasen.com). Speaking through a translator, Tran said to imagine the body's blood vessels and channels for delivering energy are like

streams. Some are open and flowing with no issue, while others are blocked, like dammed riverbeds. Tran explained cupping cleans and maintains the channels.

There's medicine, and there are medicine-adjacent things: alternative treatments, traditional medicines, herbal remedies, etc. The conventional medical practice as Westerners know it is mediated by a plethora of unnamable, sometimes beeping machines doing the magic of healing. Medical theatre. In the other category are cannabis-infused things, a tea for immune system enhancement, massage. It's there that



cupping sits. The therapy has been practiced for thousands of years by a wealth of the world's cultures, but the jury's out scientifically on whether the practice delivers real results. It resurfaced to broad public awareness in 2016 when Olympic swimmer Micheal Phelps appeared with red, half dollar-sized discs on his body, the witness marks of the therapy.

Relieving overworked muscles is one use for cupping, Tran said. He added that cupping has historically been used by laborers to relieve muscular soreness. In the age of the knowledge worker, the practice remains a standby for some

athletes who find the therapy works for muscle recovery after training. Tran explained that cupping can be used as a treatment for flu and some kinds of insomnia. There are a range of uses for cupping, but Tran said a doctor and an in-person examination would be the best way to find out if it's the best therapy for a given patient.

Cupping is part of a menu of traditional therapies used at Dong Y Hoa Sen. The clinic also offers acupuncture and massage. The therapies are traditional and the medicines prescribed here are primarily herbal, but Tran and the team of

doctors who work at Dong Y Hoa Sen are licensed medical practitioners. Tran completed a residency at a public hospital to get his.

Having come from a Western medicine environment and now working in a traditional medicine clinic, Tran opined that both are contrasting approaches but that they are capable of comparable patient outcomes. The chi, the flame dancing over the body to create heat—it may be difficult for a Westerner to see that as medicine. Skeptics are especially welcome, Tran said, adding a statement that can be neatly translated as “the proof is in the cupping.” ■



Adjusted For Health

Knowing the role chiropractic plays in your general wellbeing

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



A SLOPE ARISING IN THE shoulders or hips. A loss of spinal curvature. Fallen arches. Lingering pain from a youth of contact sports. The resulting skeletal imbalance that these conditions may create can also cause nervous system malfunctions like misfiring pain receptors, headaches or even weakened vision because the skeletal system—particularly the spine—and the nervous system are deeply interconnected. The answer is chiropractic medicine.

Chiropractic medicine is better understood as a holistic treatment rather than just pain abatement, according to Dr. Paul D'Alfonso, Maple Healthcare Director and a practicing chiropractor. Before any chiropractic therapy or other treatments are administered, patients undergo a thorough bodily diagnostic where the doctors take vital signs to check the health of major organs and the body's essential functions. They are also x-rayed

so the doctor can show patients visually where any skeletal misalignments or abnormalities have appeared.

For those who can benefit from chiropractic care and would see benefits from it, Dr. D'Alfonso said the gains are usually immediate. Within the first three visits to a chiropractor the patient will either get the relief they want, or they won't. He estimates a healthy majority—between 60 to 80 percent of patients—see positive results.

Dr. D'Alfonso said the treatments work best when they're the foundation of a lasting relationship between his staff and the patients they serve. He personally has patients that he maintains regular contact with. He explained that health problems typically cut across a wide range of lifestyle and environmental factors—and many different areas like nutrition, mental health as well as physical activity—and that the close relationships Maple Healthcare's patients



is also prone to podiatry damage due to the abundant use of flip-flops and other open-toed shoes that don't support the foot arches well.

Chiropractic care can also potentially yield additional benefits over and above just healing an illness. Because the body is interconnected, Dr. D'Alfonso said it's not uncommon for patients to see other improvements, like abatement of seemingly unrelated headaches. The nervous system is a major piece of the human anatomy that can respond in novel and unexpected ways to holistic care like chiropractic practice. Research on chiropractic medicine is starting to develop new working theories and fresh insights into how the body's skeletal and neural networks interact. Dr. D'Alfonso said chirotherapy is a unique place from which to study this problem and from which to offer treatments because few other medical disciplines have the body's literal core structures as a central focus for their practice as his. ■



enjoy with their doctors often serve as foundations upon which they can build healthy lives and broader wellness.

The training to become a chiropractor is broad ranging. He said that chiropractic training in the US, like the type he underwent, satisfied the prerequisites to become a primary care physician. This serves a range of benefits, like enabling chiropractors to identify what patients and symptoms would best benefit from their specific kind therapy offered at Maple Healthcare—the clinic offers acupuncture and physical therapy—and diagnosing illnesses as a conventional doctor would.

A US-trained medical practitioner who hails from New York, Dr. D'Alfonso originally trained as a human biology and anthropology student before working within his current specialty. He is an autodidact who trained himself as an entrepreneur when taking over Maple Healthcare in 2012, a role he said he's grown into and has come to be an important chapter in his professional life.

Between Maple Healthcare's three clinics (maplehealthcare.net), the District 7 location sees the highest patient load, around 60 per day. The other two locations in Districts 2 and 3 see about 30 patients per day. Another two clinics are expected to be open shortly within this expanding company. Most clinics see a majority Vietnamese patient population, though the District 2 location is more evenly proportioned between both native and foreign populations.

Chiropractic care in the US has a cultural baggage that didn't follow to Vietnam. Lasting fights between it and the medical community have tarnished its reputation in the West, but in Vietnam—a place where herbal medicines still have their adherents and where there is less comfort with surgery—the practice exists in harmony with established treatments and traditions.

The stigma against chiropractic medicine itself might be dated given mounting evidence affirming the

therapy's positive effects. But here, chiropractic treatment can exist outside of its history. In Ho Chi Minh City, chiropractic care can stand as it is, an effective treatment for a range of ailments. Maple Healthcare's chiropractitioners are able to treat a variety of patient types in all age groups and with a broad array of physical abilities. Patients come to the clinic to seek relief from the lingering effects of a motorcycle accident, or they may come to seek relief from the physical effects of pregnancy. Dr. D'Alfonso's team of trained, experienced clinicians see and are able to treat a wide variety of patients, from the elderly to athletes.

Within Ho Chi Minh City, clinicians have seen some problems show up repeatedly. For example, the Maple Healthcare team is closely monitoring a rise of scoliosis in the young Vietnamese population. Dr. D'Alfonso said the area population





TB OR NOT TO BE

A fierce war against tuberculosis in Vietnam

Interview by Daniel Spero

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) IS RAMPANT. It's everywhere. According to the WHO, tuberculosis kills more people annually than HIV/AIDS and Vietnam ranks near the top globally in TB outbreaks. A third of the world's population has tuberculosis and when they cough or even talk, they can spread it – especially in classrooms, buses, elevators, hospital rooms; really anywhere absent of good air circulation. So what can we do besides wear a surgical mask on airplanes, buses and in crowded public places?

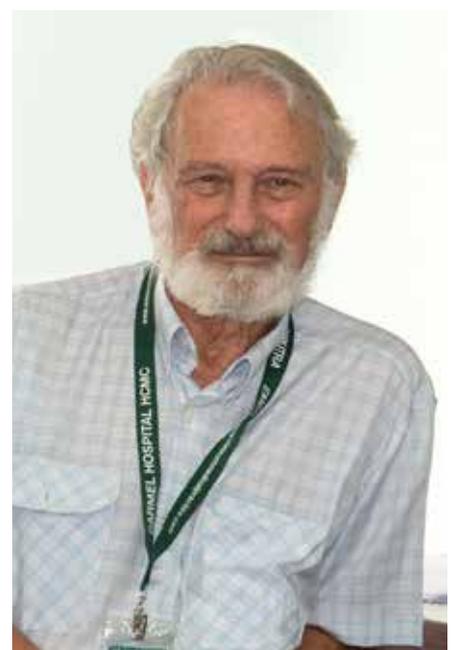
Here to answer this question is Professor Michael “Mick” Alkan, M.D.

Professor Alkan, tell us about tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis is as old as mankind. Fossilized human skeletons have been found with signs of bone tuberculosis. DNA extracted from the preserved lungs of some 3000-year-old Egyptian mummies contain identifiable

sequences of the tuberculosis microbe. It is a disease that hits all mammals, different variants of the bacterium, and a special thing about this bug is that it's coated in a very special material, a polymer, which cannot be touched by anything. You can pour acid on this bacterium and it will laugh.

It is a very peculiar organism. It takes for ages to grow it. It's not one of those that multiplies very fast and then you're overwhelmed, and that's why the disease is sometimes difficult to diagnose, definitely difficult to treat. We know today that it's not the bacterium that eats up the patient; it's the patient's attempts to handle this bacterium, which takes away all his energy. Scientists have described the terminal tuberculosis patient as “anergic”—no energy. The immune system totally gives way because it's exhausted from fighting a futile battle against the bacterium. The bacteria are “eaten” by macrophages, members of



Professor Michael “Mick” Alkan

the immune system, and the bacteria not only outlive the immune cell, they multiply inside the immune cell, so the patient ends up with dead cells and multiplying bacteria and a lot of debris. This debris is called caseation necrosis (caseation necrosis is a condition of cellular death that usually occurs in the lungs that takes on a crumbly, dull white appearance that resembles cheese).

The center of this process will have dead tissue, half liquid. Around it will be the immune response and some scarring so you get a little ball where the outside is protected and the inside is havoc, and it happens in the lung because the way we are infected by tuberculosis is that we aspirate bacteria, which are in tiny little droplets so small that they float in the air for hours for us to breathe in. So in the lung now is this little ball. In most people when the immune system is intact, when we are not malnourished, when we are not mentally depressed, when we enjoy good health, we can handle this. Maybe there will be a little leakage and it will be stopped in a lymph node next to the lung and we call that a primary complex—two little balls. And we can live with these two little balls to happy old age and have no further trouble (this is known as latent TB).

How is TB diagnosed?

Now, our methods of diagnosing TB will not be able to separate latent from rampant tuberculosis because all we can tell is that the immune system knows the bacterium. I wish we could quantify and say 'this man is very sick', 'this man is just latent'—we cannot. What happens is, if the disease progresses or if for some other reason the immune system gives way, this will diminish the body's ability to contain this little ball and then the little ball becomes bigger and bigger with more and more caseation necrosis in the middle, and this happens in the lung.

The lung is made of two major components; one is a blood vessel and one is air. So this ball might burst into a blood vessel and then you get tuberculosis everywhere. We call that miliary TB. Or else the ball will burst into one of the windpipes and then you'll have enormous amounts of coughing, sometimes with blood, full of bacteria. Now, instead of having a solid ball of cheese-like necrosis there is now a cave in the lung because air replaces

this gunk, and this is called cavernous tuberculosis, one of the most contagious forms of tuberculosis. If you see that you must isolate the patient.

This brings me to the picture in the developing world. In lesser developed societies we have a microclimate where the whole family sleeps in the same room, and it usually is a very small dwelling with not too much ventilation. Houses in the highlands of Papua New Guinea have no windows because it gets cold at night. And the door is barred and closed and grandma is sleeping next to the little kids and she's coughing. Don't ever take a public bus in Ethiopia because they close all the windows, and they smoke. The bottom line is we cannot change that, so the hallmark of preventing the spread of tuberculosis is early recognition, diagnosis, isolation and treatment.

How is TB treated?

Now, for the diagnostic tests we do for tuberculosis in a healthy community; let's take the school system in Ho Chi Minh City. We have classrooms that are, in the best of cases air-conditioned and closed in, and we have students sitting there. I don't want anybody to cough tuberculosis on the students so what will I do? I will test each of the students by injecting a component of the bacteria, completely dead, it's called PPD, purified protein derivative of the bacterium, into the skin and come two days later and look for induration (a thickening or hardening of the skin). I'm actually looking for macrophages that came here because they have knowledge about this foreign protein because they have seen it before.

If the hardness is zero to five millimeters I say this person has never seen this bacterium. The PPD test is negative. If it is more than 10 millimeters in diameter I say this person has seen mycobacterium tuberculosis. This person is sent for a chest x-ray. If the chest x-ray is normal, even if he has tuberculosis he is not infective because TB infects only by spewing out bacteria and if he doesn't have anything on the chest x-ray I'm not doing any more work-up. That's it. I have skipped five to ten millimeters, which is called weakly positive PPD, which is bad news. Usually the cause is that that person was immunized against tuberculosis as a baby or exposed to cousins of the bacterium, which don't

cause tuberculosis, but still his immune system recognizes a little bit. I don't know what to do with that.

Do you want to treat it with one drug for six months or with two drugs for 4 months? There are several protocols. Number one, we don't know that the bacteria that caused this positive PPD are sensitive. If you worked in a hospital, a hospital that had people who were resistant, maybe you need second or third line drugs that this bacterium has never smelled before. And they are second and third because they are more toxic. Do I take a healthy person and make him sick with my treatment just so that in 50 years he will not develop tuberculosis? Big questions. If he is HIV positive I'm adamant, yes you must treat, if he's just a healthy young person, maybe no.

How are people with or without a BCG (the tuberculosis vaccine) affected?

Unfortunately, it's a live bacterium, so if a child is born with HIV and I give him a shot he might have what we describe as miliary TB and die. Another issue is that in the best of cases BCG renders immunity to 70 to 75% of cases, which, for a vaccine, is not good, but it's the best we have. There's constant argument about whether it should be given to everyone or shouldn't.

What can those living in Vietnam do to prevent the spread of this bacterium other than wearing surgical masks or staying out of places with poor ventilation?

There is a very delicate balance between increasing knowledge and not causing panic. So on one hand, all that we have said is educational, is increasing knowledge, but then you might start saying, 'I'm not going here or there because it's too dangerous, people are coughing, what will happen to me?' So it's a tightrope, and I think that health education, not only in the field of tuberculosis, definitely in the field of HIV, should be mandatory in the public school system. I think that this is one of the keys to better understanding, and then people will not be surprised or shocked by how we deal with these treatment issues. The bottom line is that we can cure almost all patients with tuberculosis, and prevent the spread of the disease, if diagnosed in time and treated appropriately. ■

Family Medical Practice

As the first foreign-owned multidisciplinary medical provider in Vietnam, Family Medical Practice (FMP) has consistently remained at the forefront of international-standard medicine since 1995. With a diverse multinational team of physicians and the latest in medical equipment and diagnostic tools, FMP offers extensive healthcare and emergency medical services nationwide to Vietnamese, expatriate, and corporate customers.

Professor Michael Alkan

Infectious disease specialist Professor Michael Alkan is a

physician and retired Lieutenant Colonel who has undertaken countless medical missions around the world. He was instrumental in turning Beersheba's community hospital into a university tertiary care center with laboratories. He developed a curriculum for new medical schools in Nepal and Ecuador and upgraded the curriculum in Central Asia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. His experience includes disaster relief work worldwide, treating patients in New York in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, opening AIDS clinics and working as an AIDS preceptor in Botswana, Nigeria, China and several other countries. Professor Alkan has been spending his summers at FMP for the past several years.

Vitamin Bombs

Vietnam's rainbow assortment of power packed foods that won't bust the bank

Text by Naomi Sutorius-Lavoie

Lotus Root

“POWER FOODS” IS NOT JUST A TRENDY TERM ANYMORE. There is mounting evidence to suggest that many natural foods do so much more than simply satisfy our appetites. Dermatologists, nutritionists and other health professionals are raving about these “vitamin bombs” packed with nutrients that can do wonders for our digestion, fight inflammation, improve our cardio vascular and eye health and even contain anti-aging properties, which give us glowing skin and envy-worthy hair.

However, living in Vietnam, you'll quickly learn that these trendy power foods are often imported from far-flung places and can come with a hefty prize tag. But did you know that Vietnam has its own selection of power foods that you can buy easily and affordably without having to scour the shelves of a multitude of stores or purchase online from abroad. The key is to know what to ask for and, of course, what to do with all those green leaves and strange fruits once you get home! With just a little bit of knowledge, a simple trip to the local market can have your shopping basket brimming with produce that will leave you feeling energized and glowing from the inside out.

Here's what to look for on your next trip to the market:

Gac

Gac is truly a wonder fruit that is packed from seed to skin with nutrients and age-defying antioxidants. It's shaped like a thorny ball and doesn't exactly look delicious. The young, raw fruits are greenish-yellow in color but they turn a bright orangey red when ripe. The size of ripe fruits varies between 200g to a whopping one kilogram.

Why it's healthy: In just the arils (the soft, deep red membranes surrounding the seeds) you can find lots of carotenoids, vitamins, polyunsaturated fats and even protein. Gac fruit is also known as the superfruit for your eyes. It contains more carotenoids and Vitamin A than many common fruits and vegetables found in the Western diet—more than yellow corn, green leafy vegetables and even tomatoes and carrots.

Beauty Bonus: Best of all, according to dermatologists, the rich nutrients in gac can benefit our skin because the carotenoids and vitamins A, E and C found in gac can prevent collagen, the strengthening protein in the skin that

keeps it firm and youthful looking, from being broken down over time.

How to eat it: The soft pulp of the gac fruit can be eaten fresh when it's ripe but it's a bit mushy like avocado and has a mild flavor. When it is still green, it is most commonly eaten steamed or grilled and added to rice and salads. Once ripe, it can be juiced or made into gac fruit tea.

Daikon

Daikon is a type of white, winter radish that grows primarily in Southeast and East Asia. It can be recognized by its large, rapidly growing leaves and its long, white root. It is technically considered a cruciferous vegetable and therefore has many of the same benefits in its leaves as in the vegetable itself.

Why it's healthy? Daikon has many amazing benefits that include cancer prevention, an immune system booster, lower inflammation and improved digestion. Furthermore, it helps strengthen bones, detoxify the body, improve respiratory health and stimulate weight loss. Like most other cruciferous vegetables, daikon is a rich source of

calcium, which is essential for bone health. If you are at risk of developing osteoporosis or are beginning to feel aches and pains related to aging, adding some daikon and calcium to your diet can improve your condition.

How to eat it: Daikon is most commonly used diced or in thinly



Gac

sliced rings as an ingredient in soups, salads, curries, rice dishes and various condiments especially in Asian food. Daikon leaves can be eaten as well as a green salad. If you're brave enough, you can even juice it but be sure to mix it with something sweeter or use it as an ingredient in dipping sauce.

Sesame Seeds

These little white or black super seeds are used in many parts of the world but are especially common in Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine and they boast an impressive nutritional profile. They are highly rich in magnesium, copper, calcium and other minerals that play an important role in fortifying our immune systems.

Why it's healthy? The seeds also play a crucial role in maintaining a good digestive system. An excellent source of fiber, sesame seeds take care of the colon and ensure the smooth functioning of the intestines. In addition, sesame seeds contain significant amounts of zinc. This mineral is known to stimulate the mineral density of bones and prevent the onset of osteoporosis because they also contain calcium, which is important for good bone health. Finally, and maybe best of all, these tiny seeds contain an impressive amount of protein. Just 100g of sesame seeds has 18g of protein (32% of our recommended daily requirement).

Beauty Bonus: It's good to know that since these seeds are packed with all essential fatty acids including omega-3, omega-9 and omega-6, they are a natural hair growth stimulant. Not only do they nourish the scalp but they also promote follicular production. For anyone after luscious locks, adding them to your diet just became a no-brainer.

How to eat them: Sprinkle on whole bowls, add to salads, roll your protein balls in them or use to coat chicken or fish instead of bread crumbs. Just a sprinkle of these seeds is a sure fire way to pump up the protein content of any meal while delivering on all the other health benefits.

Sesame Seeds



Daikon

Lotus Root

Many people use lotus root as a substitute to white potatoes as its nutritional density is far superior. Lotus root is said to have a potato-ish taste, which can help you overcome your cravings for this starch. It is rich in fiber yet low in carbohydrates, helping you to achieve optimal blood sugar levels. Consume lotus root when you need something filling to keep you satisfied before your next meal. It's especially great for those who exercise a lot and tend to snack on several meals a day!

Why it's healthy? Lotus root is extremely rich in Vitamin C, which plays a pivotal role in bolstering the immune system and reduces the likelihood of picking up respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Vitamin C also increases the production of white blood cells, which are the body's defense system for tackling pathogens that may cause infections. If this weren't enough, lotus root is also considered "brain food". This is due to the presence of Vitamin B6, which is involved in the synthesis of serotonin and dopamine. Increased consumption of this vitamin is associated with greater brain levels that help improve your mood and general wellbeing.

Beauty Bonus: Lotus root is full of vitamin B complex, antioxidants and a list of minerals that lead to a more nourished and brighter complexion. Consuming

lotus root can help control our sebum production, balancing out oily skin, but can also hydrate and improve elasticity as well.

How to eat it: Lotus root can be pureed and added to soups instead of potatoes. It is commonly steamed and added to salads in Vietnam and it can even be stir fried or coated like tempura. It's a versatile vegetable and can be prepared and seasoned in so many ways so feel free to experiment.

Water Spinach:

Water spinach, also known as morning glory or rau muong, in Vietnamese, is ranked high among the world's healthiest foods. It's widely available at every street market stall in Vietnam for next to nothing and is served in all restaurants as a side dish stir fried with garlic.

Why it's healthy? Just like other dark green leafy veggies, water spinach is a powerhouse of nutrients that benefit your body as well as your skin and brain. It contains abundant quantities of water, iron, vitamin C, vitamin A and other nutrients. The iron boost offered by these greens is great for those who suffer from anemia and for pregnant women and for general eye health.

Beauty Bonus: Green leafy veggies like water spinach are rich in antioxidants that prevent free radical damage of cells in the body. Meaning, its regular consumption can make our skin cells more resistant to damage from sun exposure and minimize wrinkles to a significant extent. That sounds like a win-win!

How to eat it: It can be eaten cooked or raw. It is often used in salads as well as other side dishes to boost their nutrient content. In Vietnam, it is most popular to stir-fry it with garlic (but just be sure that it is not doused in low quality oil or too much sugar to keep it healthy). The healthiest way to eat it and keep all of its nutrients intact is to poach it or add it to broth for flavorful soups.

Happy shopping and happy eating! Your body, your skin and your wallet will surely thank you for loading up on these cheap and easy power foods guaranteed to help you radiant health and vibrancy from the inside out. ■





The *Good Earth*

In Vietnam, organic
farming is gaining
ground

Text by **Jesus Lopez-Gomez**
Images by **Vy Lam and Organik Dalat**



SAIGON NATURAL FOODS

retailer Organik Dalat (*organik.vn*) fulfills grocery lists for around 100 customers a day. It fulfills just part of that demand with a four-acre farm located in its namesake town in mountainous Lam Dong Province. Since its founding in 2012, the retailer's owner, Inès Quico, has worked to cultivate a network of partnering farmers and partnering plots.

An increasing number of the country's farmers are converting their operations to capture a certification and a rising demand for a pricier food product. An estimated 88 percent of Vietnamese surveyed in consumer intelligence firm Q&Me's survey showed a strong interest in organic food, most being what the firm calls "high income" earners, the 25-39 age range and with children.

"There's a big demand for organic food... and not enough," she said. A Vietnamese woman raised in France and the daughter of restaurateurs, Quico remembers reading that ancient human beings rarely ate meat, a small fact that gave her pause. "I read this somewhere," Quico said. "So I said, 'Okay, I don't want to eat any more meat. You guys can enjoy.'"

Moving to Vietnam, she was concerned that the vegetables she ate here would have a high concentration of chemical

adulterants. To understand the food risks of vegetables grown here, Quico began paying personal visits to the farms. She said farmers were very open to her and showed her their land and farming practices, but didn't appear to know exactly what their chemical inputs were. Quico remembers paying a visit once to a farmer who showed her a substance he said was natural citing the container's blue color. The solution's heavy chemical composition was written on the bottle, but when Quico raised that with the farmer, he told her that he couldn't read.

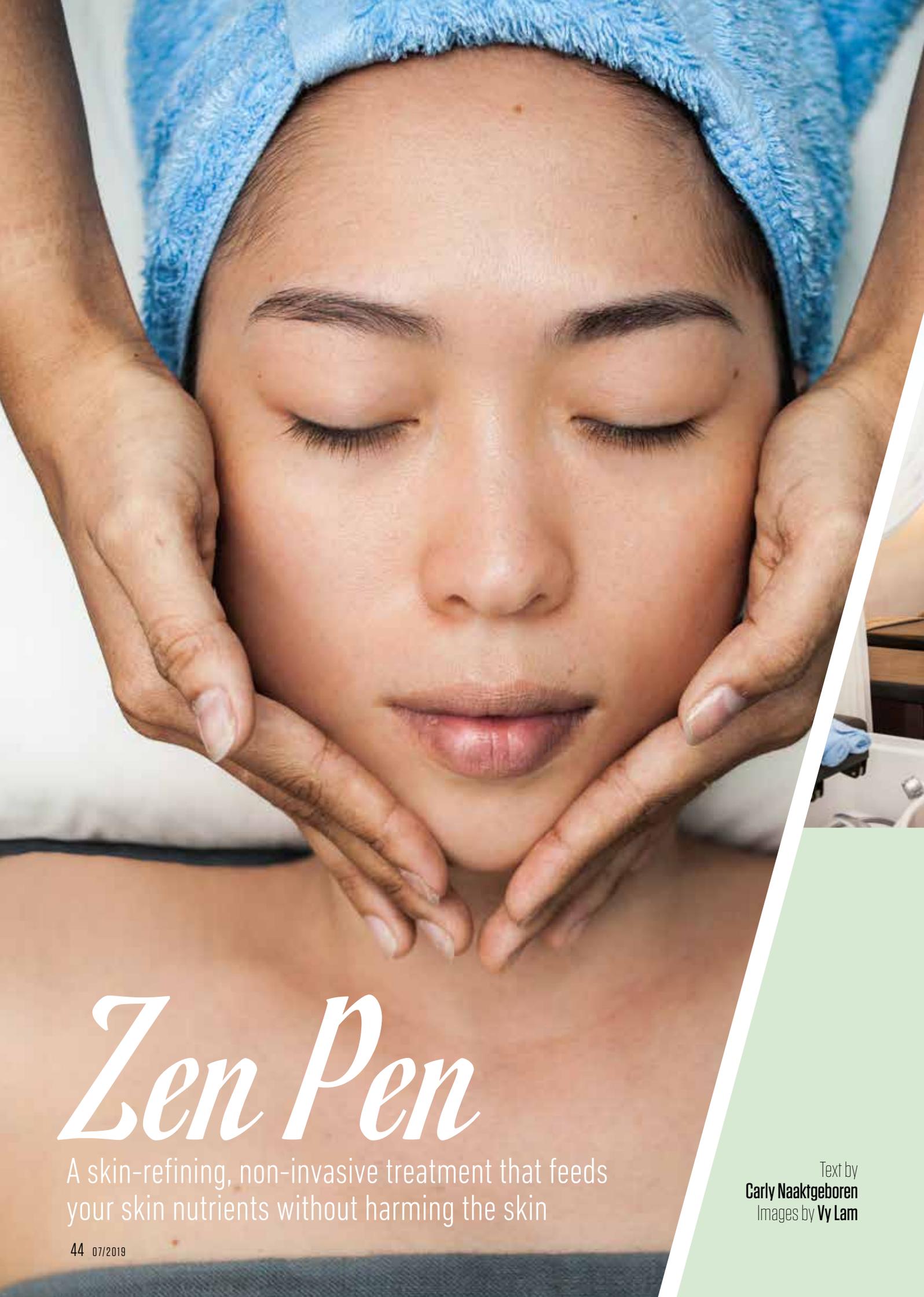
A lot of farmers are older and many have lower educational attainment than the general population, Quico said, factors that may be hampering wider adoption of organic farming, a process that requires more care than conventional farming but also involves interaction with and oversight from certifying bodies, like local credentialing organization VietGAP and foreign government's foods inspectors. Organik Dalat's own farm is certified by inspectors from the EU, US and Japan, for example.



During her farm visits, Quico met a 65-year-old agronomist named Dr. Nguyen Ba Huong who trained her how to create an organic food operation. He held a farm that Quico took over in 2014. Through Organik Dalat, Quico has worked with farmers to convert their operations into operations that would satisfy the requirements for an organic certification, a change that requires farmers to not only change the crops and farming practices, but to replenish depleted soil. Quico said this usually takes between five to eight years. There are about 45 farming operations that partner with Organik Dalat converting their conventional farming operations in to organic farms. The median size of their plots is about 1,000 square meters, but even a small operation can offer a sizeable boost to a farmer's income. As an example, Quico said Organik Dalat would pay around VND90,000 for a kilogram of tomatoes that meet their standards. A conventional tomato sold at a similar time in the growing season would yield between VND45,000 and VND60,000 per kilogram. On average, Organik Dalat produce yields per-kilogram earnings around 30 higher than conventional crop for the farmers who can produce them.

The demand for organic produce isn't just rising on the consumer side, Quico explained. She said that farmers are increasingly aware and sensitive to the dangers of pesticides and other chemical additives involved in their work. Many farmers are older workers who are drawn to organic farming's natural inputs as a way to mitigate their professional hazards. "They're getting scared, you know, for their health," she said. "So what I tell them is you don't have to be scared when you go to your farm anymore. Farmers, they're very sensitive about that."

Organik Dalat recently retired its physical storefront in District 2, but still operates out of a digital storefront on its website. There, customers can select and order organic produce for delivery to their homes. ■



Zen Pen

A skin-refining, non-invasive treatment that feeds your skin nutrients without harming the skin

Text by
Carly Naaktgeboren
Images by **Vy Lam**



fibers that create a current which aids in healing the surface of the skin from fine lines, wrinkles, hyperpigmentation, enlarged pores and acne scarring. It does this by exfoliating and hydrating the skin, and also by stimulating collagen production. After many painful extractions in past facials, I was prepared for some pain, but the nano pen facial had no discomfort at all, and left me with a glow and zero irritation. A week later, my pores are smaller and my skin is brighter, with previous hard to heal blemishes greatly improved.

Quyen explains the benefits of each step of the extensive and carefully crafted facial regimen, “Hyaluronic Acid (HA serum) helps skin achieve maximum delivery and hydration, while boosting moisture retention and firmness. Vitamin C stimulates new collagen, reduces visible discolorations on the skin, and enhances protection against environmental pollutants and UV exposure. 80 minutes: face wash, face relaxing, face detox with Enzymatic Gommage, steam, oil/clog pore extract, Vitamin C and HA serum induction using micro nano pen, deep hydrating mask, head-neck-shoulder relaxing, toner with cold massager to help tighten the pores, sun screen protective finish of daytime or moisturizer if nighttime.”

Soi Spa is one of few places in Ho Chi Minh City offering nano pen technology, which is exceptionally expensive in other countries, but still affordable here. This intensive, multi-step facial is VND1,160,000 and lasts 80 minutes.

She also tells me about the brand of products she carefully selected, “We choose Le Club, a specialized skin care products from France. I got this recommendation from one of our facial trainers and decided to have this product range for its proper size, quality vs cost, focus solution for various skin problems, and having an authorized distributor in Vietnam.”

Quyen created Soi Spa with a vision of creating a relaxing space for busy people who need, “an instant getaway,” during their lunch break or after they get off from their long workday. And it is an absolute reprieve from the high energy, heat, and horns of the city. ■

TUCKED AWAY ON BUSTLING

44 Nguyen Hue Street, **Soi Spa** (www.soispa.vn) sits on the Sixth floor, decorated in calming hues of blue and smelling of lemongrass, it is an instant retreat. Soi Spa has been open at this location since 2015 and recently opened a second location on 152 Ly Tu Trong Street (Second floor). Expansion is suggestive of success, and upon entry, a customer can easily see why. Clean, charming and serene, Soi Spa offers nail and hair care, wax services, massage and a wide array of facials.

“Relaxer in Chief,” Quyen Nguyen, breaks down the most popular of facial requests and the benefits of each:

“The Relaxing Detox Facial is very popular at Soi Spa for weekly skincare and self treatment routine. The Enzymatic Gommage works magically detoxifying and cleaning the pores and helps get your skin ready for absorbing skincare products better. The lavender mask at the end very

often helps spa guests nap.

The Vitamin C Facial with Vitamin C infused product range to help brighten skin, enhance collagen generation process. Vitamin C is rapidly oxidized by dissolved oxygen thus requires to be stored properly. We have Vitamin C serum sealed in a capsule for single use and we make sure these capsules are stored away from strong light and high temperature.

The Deep Hydrating Using Nano Pen Facial is the best hydrating solution for the skin using a Hyaluronic Acid (HA) product range. A Nano pen with mild vibration helps improve blood circulation. Jelly face mask at the end covers the eyes and lips as HA works safely on these areas.”

The Deep Hydrating Nano Pen Facial is what I am here to try. Nano pens use nano-needling technology to penetrate the skin and push nourishing products in. The pen has tiny, conical shaped



WORLDWIDE HOSPITAL

Where beauty and health are in harmony

Text and Images Provided by Worldwide Dental & Cosmetic Surgery Hospital

About us

Worldwide Dental & Cosmetic Surgery Hospital (“Worldwide Hospital”) is the first private dental & cosmetic surgery hospital in Vietnam. Our hospital is a tall modern building located at 244A Cong Quynh, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, equipped with luxurious amenities and state of the art technology. Since Dr. Do Dinh Hung established Worldwide Hospital our raison d’etre has been to provide our clients with exceptional cosmetic, dental, dento-facial and skin care services at an affordable price. Our first-rate dentists, surgeons and dermatologists, are passionate about helping clients achieve the look of their dreams. It’s our belief that cosmetic surgery and dental treatment involve more than just changing one’s outward appearance. We know from experience that getting a confidence-boosting look can help make a positive impact on each client’s life. Every aspect of every

treatment will be customised to your specific needs. We always strive to ensure that you are completely delighted with your results.

Although the hospital has only been established for 2 years, our history goes way back. Before upgrading to Worldwide Dental & Cosmetic Surgery Hospital, we were Dr Hung & Associates Dental Center for many years and have received considerable praise and appreciation from both domestic and foreign clients. About 60% of our clients hail from many different countries around the world, such as Australia, New Zealand, USA, UK, France, Germany, Canada, Singapore, etc.

The vision

One may ask, why do we combine dental, skin care and cosmetic surgery into one hospital. To properly answer this question, we have to go into the background on Dr Do Dinh Hung, DDS, PhD, the founder our hospital.



Dr Hung has almost 40 years’ experience within the dental industry and facial surgery. He worked at Minh Hai Province’s Hospital for a decade and was the head of the hospital’s Odonto-Maxillofacial Surgery Department, specialising in both dentistry and odonto-maxillofacial surgery. During this period, he completed thousands of odonto-maxillofacial related surgeries, including pathologies, maxillofacial malformations and trauma for patients at Bac Lieu and Southwestern Provinces. In the 2000s, Dr Do Dinh Hung was the Head of Prosthodontics Department, then Vice President at National



Hospital of Odonto - Stomatology in HCMC - Ministry of Health. Dr.

In between his jobs at the two hospital, Dr. Hung took some time off in late 1990s and attended the post graduate master's program in Dental Implant and Cosmetic Dentistry at Texas University, United States. His time in the U.S. inspired his vision to bring American care standard to Vietnam. Dr Hung was the first Doctor to establish a dental clinic which follows the model of a US dental clinic. Over the years, he continued to improve his clinic and in 2014 he founded Dr. Hung & Associates Dental Center, a full service dental clinic. At this center he performed thousands of surgeries, involving implants, facial reconstructions,

and various other oral surgeries. Impressed with his skills as a surgeon, many customers asked why Dr. Hung doesn't offer cosmetic surgery as well, and that's what inspired another vision for Dr. Hung. He sets his mind into establishing the first hospital in Vietnam that provides a one stop shop beauty treatment. He wants the customers to be able to set foot in the hospital and once they leave, they will radiate with beauty and happiness, from head to toe. Dr. Hung's dream came true in 2018, when he finally upgraded the dental clinic to a full service dental, cosmetic surgery and skin care hospital.

What makes us different

Here are some of the reasons why you should choose Worldwide Dental & Cosmetic Surgery Hospital:

1. Ranked top 5 cosmetic surgery hospitals in Ho Chi Minh city by the Ministry of Health during the annual inspection at the end of 2018.
2. A team of highly specialized dental experts, dermatologists and surgeons who speak fluent English.
3. Modern technology and equipment.
4. Full range of specialized dental departments, skin care department and cosmetic surgery department.
5. Lab In-house with high quality material sources imported directly from the US and Europe.
6. Unique Warranty Policy (Lifetime for Implants and 10 years Porcelain Restorations).
7. Painless Experience with **MINIMUM INTERVENTION - MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY**
8. Strict sterilization process following FDA standards
9. Luxurious amenities as if you were on a vacation
10. Best service quality at the most reasonable price. Our clients have ranked us with the coveted 5-star service on the world's prestigious healthcare website: www.whatclinic.com.

Unlike other big-name dental clinics in Vietnam that have multiple branches throughout the country, Dr. Hung does not want to expand. He simply wants to be the best, not only in Vietnam but also around the world. That's why in Vietnam you



will find only one location for Worldwide Dental & Cosmetic Surgery Hospital at 244A Cong Quynh. Dr. Hung works here 6 days a week to make sure he can oversee the work of his doctors and staff. All of our doctors/specialists were handpicked and trained by Dr. Hung right after they graduated from university. Some of our doctors have been with us for 20 years. This closeness helps us control 100% of our quality. Stop by the clinic, and you will get to see Dr. Hung with his big and caring smile, walking around taking care of his patients and coaching his young doctors.

A few words from Dr. Hung

"I can't express how proud I am that Worldwide Hospital is in operations and got the rating that it deserves. We couldn't do any of this without our dear customers. You have been wonderful in supporting us and we are forever grateful. There are so many customers that have become our friends and family. Disregarding my dream of having an American standard hospital, of being the best, my true dream is to provide happiness to people, through beauty and health. I can't thank everyone enough for their support and I promise our hospital will never stop improving and providing our customers with the best care." ■

For more information on our hospital, please go to nhakhoadrhung.com and benhvienworldwide.vn. For consultation, please call 0914900016 or email us at info@nhakhoadrhung.com. For the summer we are currently offering big discount for all services, ranging from 15% to 30%.





Body Indulgence

A revitalizing day at the spa is what everybody needs

Text by **Daniel Spero**

Images Provided by **InterContinental Saigon**

THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENED to the third floor of the **InterContinental Saigon** (www.icsaigon.com) and I stepped out. Entering the spa, as the wall closes behind, the atmosphere immediately transforms to one of tranquility. The lighting is soft and dim, the scent of flowers and lemongrass subtle, but distinct in the air. A woman from behind a counter stands and smiles to greet me before directing me to a seat where I'm served a five-spice cold tea with a fruity tang along with a small bowl of lotus seed nibbles. I had a few sips of the refreshing tea as I eagerly awaited my spa treatments.

The masseuse approached and led me to a private room. The lighting was low and the fragrance in the air nectarous and calming. There is soothing, meditative music on softly, an atmospheric melody of lute and strings. A large massage table centers the room with a long counter filled with bottles and containers of various emollients at the head of the table. On one side of the room is a closet and bathroom while on the other a shower stall and a chair with a wooden basin at the feet. The masseuse handed me a sealed bag with a pair of underwear of a soft, thin fabric that is loose fitting, and points to the closet, directing me to take off my clothes and put on the robe hanging there along with the underwear. She indicates a button near the door and tells me to press it once I'm ready. She then gives me the room.

Once the masseuse returns we begin the Relaxing Aroma Indulgence Body Massage (VND1,472,625). She starts by asking if I have any areas of the body I want to focus on and how much pressure I like applied. She then leads me over to the chair where I have a seat and put my feet into the oak half barrel, submerging them into warm water with orchid petals, fresh lemon and lemongrass stalks. She washes my feet and legs with a cotton washcloth before putting a handful of sea salt and cinnamon in her hands and rubbing my feet and lower legs with the mixture. The grains are coarse, yet refreshing, and restorative to the skin as they scrub away the toxins.

After drying my feet the masseuse leads me over to the massage table. I disrobe and lie face down on it. She covers me with a thin blanket and starts by warming up my muscles with light, long and flowing movements up and down the length of the body. Next she begins applying massage oil infused with Malabar grass, sweet orange and vetiver. Vetiver is a perennial bunchgrass from India used in aromatherapy as a calming agent that promotes circulation and also has anti-inflammatory properties. The masseuse starts with my neck, shoulders and upper back, applying the right amount of pressure and maintaining sinuous movements. She works her way down to the lower back and bottom with the same fluidity.

The masseuse makes her way around the rest of the body as I lie with my face in the breathing hole, eyes closed, reaching a deeper meditative state the longer the massage goes on. The one thing that brought me back briefly was about halfway through when she asked me to flip over, but I was quickly back to raking my mental Zen garden as she worked on my shoulders and neck. While on my back she covered my eyes with a silk eye poultice cover with lavender and kaffir lime.

Once the hour of massage was

complete the masseuse transitioned seamlessly into the hour-long Tropical Fresh Facial (VND1,559,250). She warms up the scalp and face with massage before a series of facial wipes, oils, creams and more were applied. It starts with what felt like a soft wet-wipe with a lemon scent and then followed with one containing a watermelon scent. After this the face is cleansed with yogurt before a black sesame and honey exfoliation. Next a cucumber toner is applied before she gives a facial massage with olive oil.

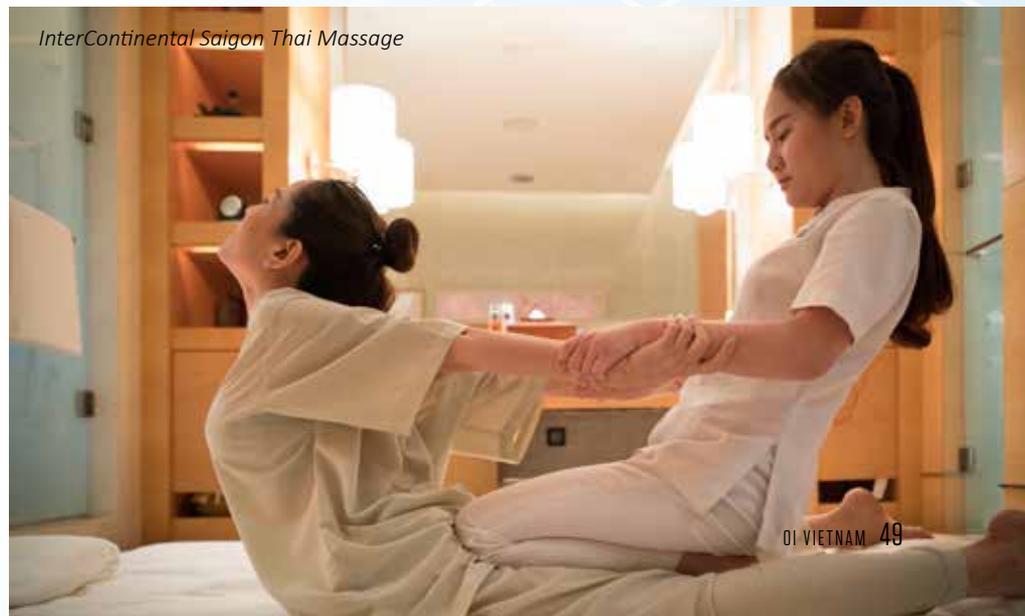
Following this, the masseuse uses another lemon scented wet-wipe before applying a face mask of milk and oat milk. It felt creamy and cool on the now supple skin of my face. Once applied she works her fingers through my hair and massages my scalp for some time. Afterward she removes the face mask and applies a cucumber toner once more. She ends the facial by cleaning my face and neck thoroughly before a final coat with a nourishing vitamin E lotion.

As I showered, which was hot and with excellent pressure, I thought about how the environment was impeccably soothing while the massage and facial

were incredible. Additionally, all of the products used are natural, incorporating fresh local herbs and other products used for traditional Asian healing methods. Or as the spa manager, Phung Thi Mai Hoang, puts it, "This therapeutic treatment seamlessly blends the freshest ingredients to enhance the qualities of natural bounty, so come experience firsthand the unique character of the Vietnamese tradition for relaxing mind, body and soul." ■



InterContinental Saigon Facial Treatment



InterContinental Saigon Thai Massage

Unleash Your Inner Gladiator

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MEN'S sandals were considered anti-fashion, relegated to clueless tourists and dowdy dads who paired them with thick socks for an all-together unappealing look. But in today's climate where we're obsessed with all things Vikings, gladiators, and Game of Thrones, men's sandals are this summer's latest fashion trend with design houses like Gucci, Valentino, and Bottega Venata firmly on board.

In Saigon's tropical heat and humidity, sandals make perfect sense with their open design and supreme breathability. Leading the charge to marry fashion and function is ManGii (196 Le Thanh Ton, D1), unveiling three new sandal designs

just in time for summer. However, these are definitely not your Vietnamese uncle's cream-colored sandals.

Hand-crafted with the same fine Italian leather and traditional techniques used in their dress shoes, ManGii's sandals look great paired with cuffed trousers or linen shorts. Available in brown or black to better suit more conservative staples, you'll actually find yourself reaching for them even on dressy occasions.

The Nero is a masculine slide sandal with thick crossover straps for a sturdy look and feel while the Xi channels your inner gladiator with its slim woven straps that show off more of the foot. The Julius will be in stores (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) this July, a caged sandal with a handsome thatched upper that achieves a pleasing balance of form and function.

In addition to looking good, ManGii's sandals are Goodyear welted, a more expensive, time-consuming, and skillful construction typically reserved for pricier dress shoes.

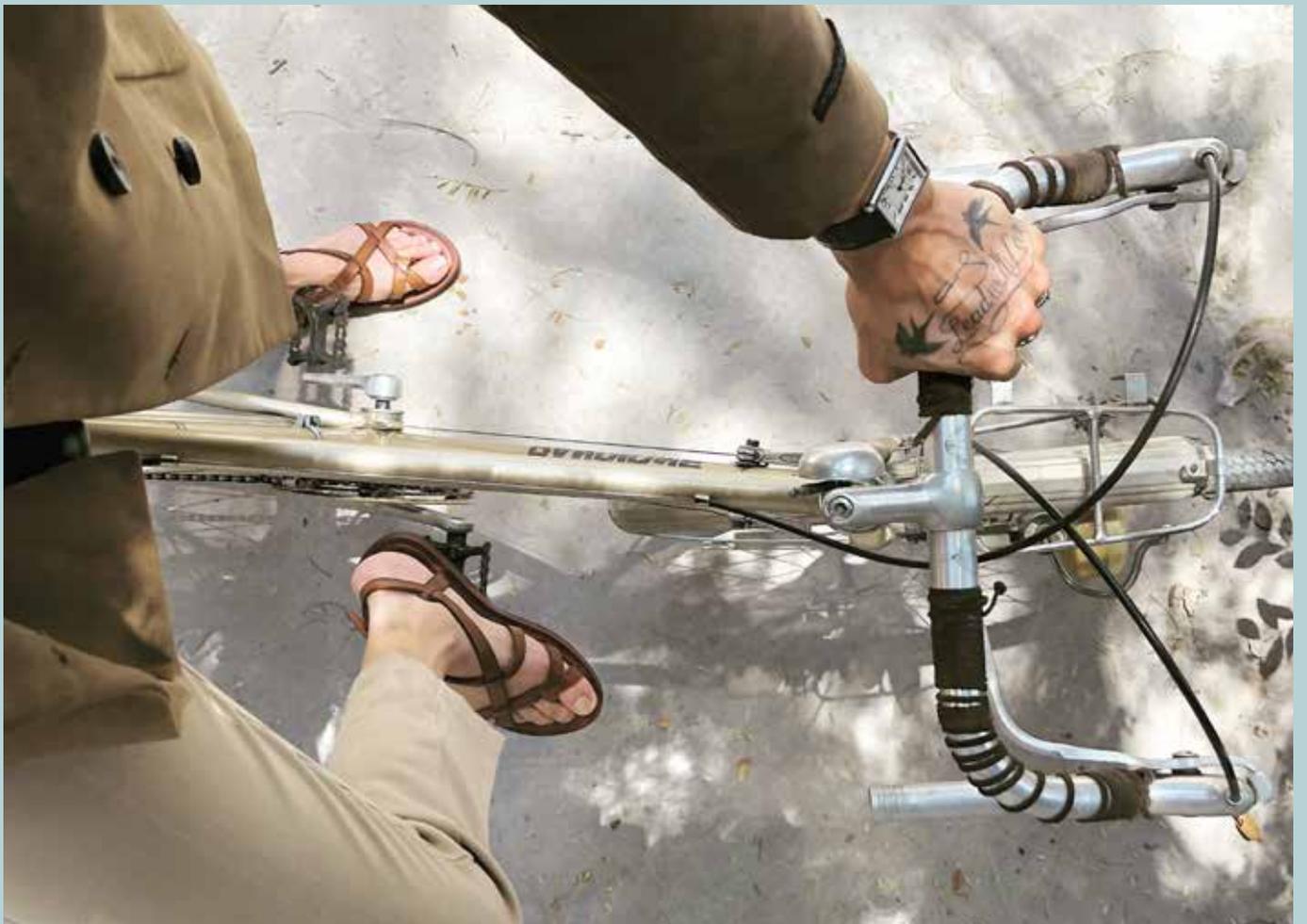
The benefit, though, is in the increased strength, durability and repair qualities which allow for complete removal of the sole without causing damage to the upper. So bring on Saigon's rainy season because these sandals are here to last. ■





ManGii ready-to-wear Xi, Nero, and Julius sandals for men range from VND 900,000 to 1,200,000 and are available at the Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi stores. For more, visit www.mangiishoes.com





Wine & Dine

TAVOLA / IMAGE BY VY LAM





Your Table

is

Waiting



A peaceful oasis of Italian fine dining in the center of Ho Chi Minh City

Text by Grant Hawkins
Images by Vy Lam

Tavola Signature

AT THE TOP OF LE DUAN STREET in District 1, shielded behind a wall of trees and under a canopy of shade, is **Tavola** (1 Le Duan Street, located inside Petro Vietnam Tower at 1-5 Le Duan). It occupies the ground floor of PV Tower, within walking distance of Notre Dame Cathedral and some of the city's best shopping. Serving a mix of classic and modern dishes made from the finest ingredients in authentic Italian style, Tavola is a peaceful oasis of Italian elegance and fine dining in the center of Ho Chi Minh City.

Tavola, which literally means "table" in Italian, opened in November 2017. Its founder, Tran Thi Hoai Anh, has a background in marketing and international business development, and wanted to create a restaurant in Saigon that captured her love of Italian cuisine. She assembled an Italian dream team that included Mariasole Capodanno, a Milan-based F&B consultant, to create a signature Italian experience, and

PierFranco Mannazzu, a veteran Italian chef, also from Milan, who has worked in some of Milan's most fashionable and elite restaurants. These three have combined their talents to create a stylish, elegant and modern environment with an outstanding menu of classic and modern Italian cuisine.

A good dinner begins with great drinks, and here Tavola does not disappoint. For the traditionalist, try the Old Fashioned (VND220,000), or try signature Tavola Sunset (VND180,000), a gin infusion with egg white topping. Wine-lovers will be pleased to find a wide selection of international wines, which are also integrated into the design as a wine library on the far wall. The interior has an opulent, luxurious feel dominated by polished brass, glass and black marble. Enormous windows connect the indoor and outdoor dining areas, while no wall separates the indoor dining area from the kitchen. Chandelliers of incandescent bulbs cast a

soft yellow light over the spaces. The menu at Tavola is a mixture of classics and modern dishes with a pervasive focus on using quality ingredients. They source both local organic fruits and vegetables as well as authentic Italian products. Breakfast and lunch dishes include pastries, soups, salads and sandwiches, as well as some classics, all made with a focus on natural flavors. The dinner menu begins with a mouthwatering array of starters, which include cold cut and cheese platters. The Tavola Signature (VND450,000), their most popular starter, includes an assortment of thinly-sliced and delicately cured meats, three types of cheese, and bed of garden herbs and a side of bread and honey. Served warm and perfectly Instagrammable, this is more than enough for two people to get started. Further down the menu, you'll find a selection of gourmet authentic Italian pizzas, handmade pasta and risotto, and



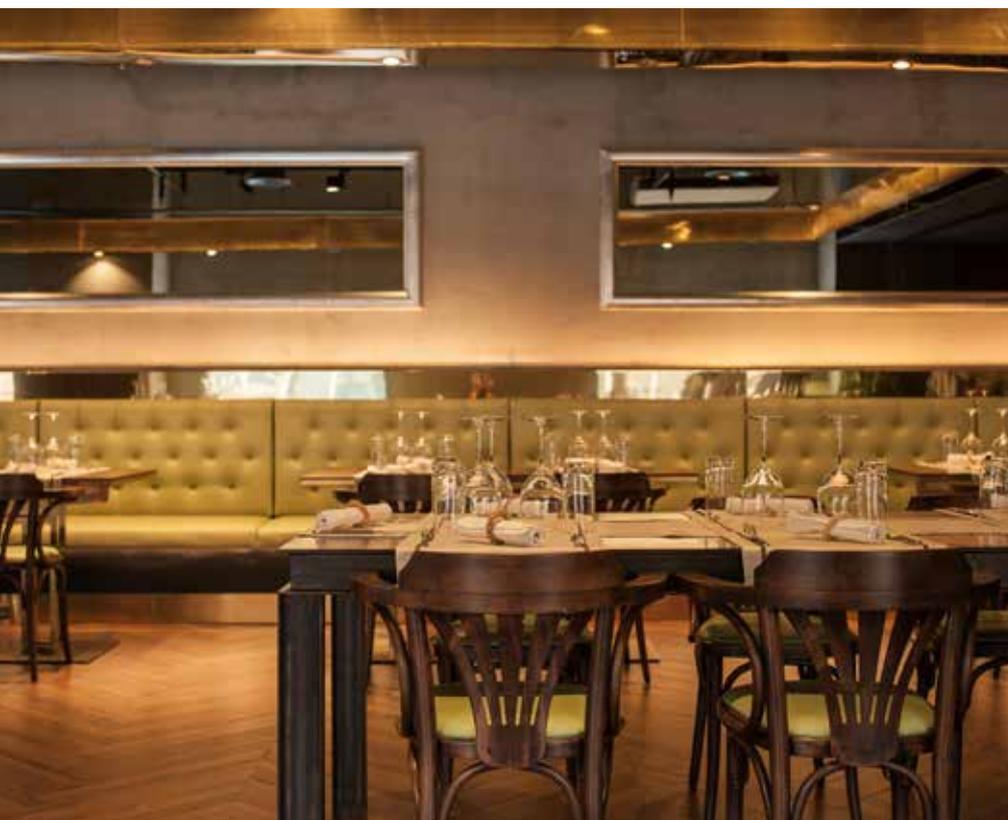
Old Fashioned Cocktail



Tavola Sunset



Tagliata di Manzo

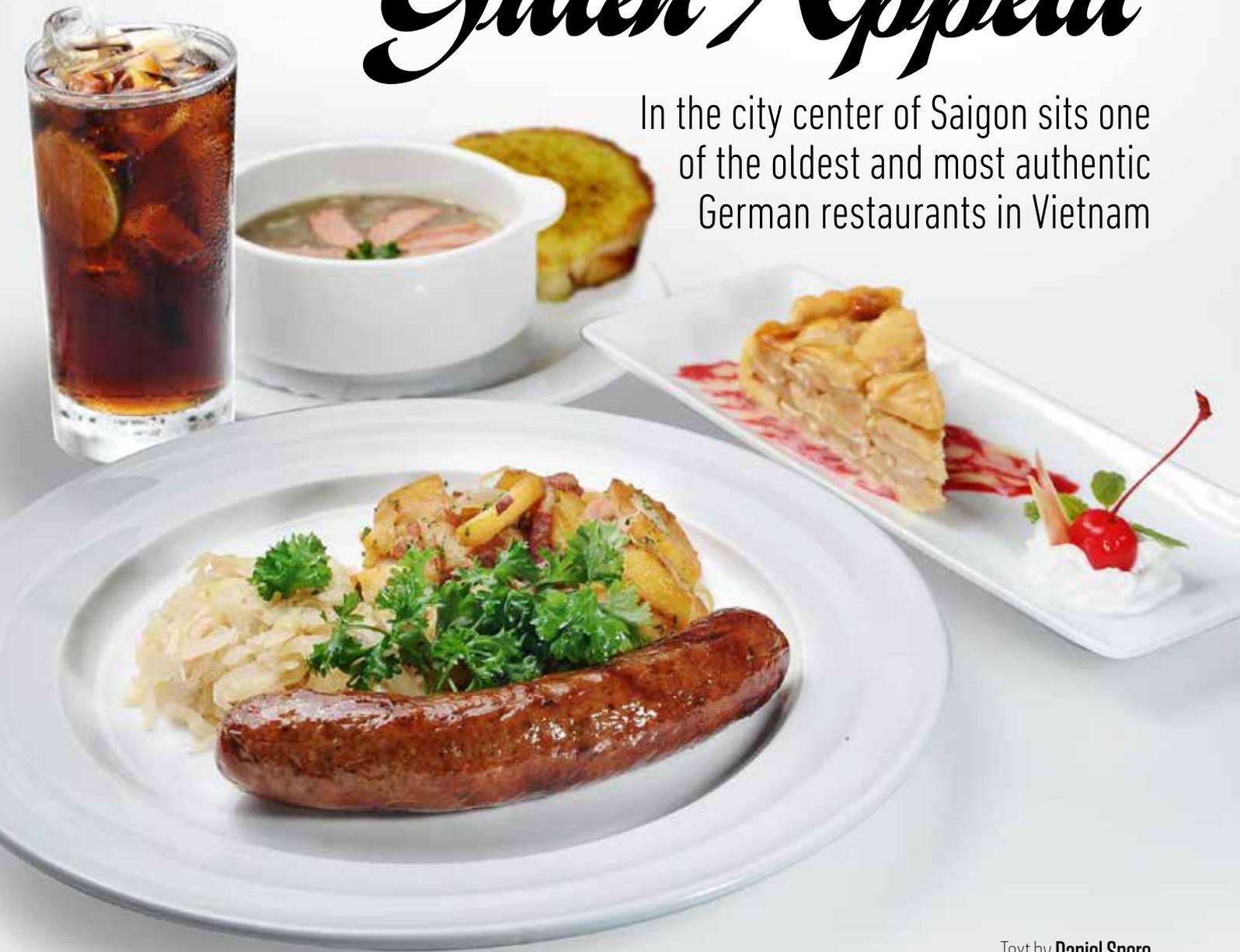


Tavola's signature fish and meat mains. In an establishment with unimpeachable quality and attention to detail, the Tagliata di Manzo (VND900,000), a sliced ribeye steak, is a guaranteed winner. Lightly seasoned and gently seared, the focus of this dish is the meat itself, rather than a contrived sauce of some sort. It is served beneath thinly shaved sheets of parmigiano reggiano and on a bed of rocket, and comes with sides of steamed zucchini and twice-fried chips.

Tavola is an ideal place for lovers of fine Italian food, stunning interiors, or anyone in need of an elegant evening away from the noise of the city. Besides the open dining room and outdoor seating on the first floor, there are larger rooms upstairs that can be reserved for large groups. After dinner, the chef comes around to the table to pay his respects, and you will be eager to pay yours as well. For an authentic Italian oasis in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, pull up a chair at Tavola. ■

Guten Appetit

In the city center of Saigon sits one of the oldest and most authentic German restaurants in Vietnam



Text by **Daniel Spero**
Images Provided by **WMC Group**

WALKING IN FOR A SUNDAY

lunch there's a lot of contrast between the afternoon sunlight outside and the much dimmer ambient lighting indoors at **Gartenstadt Restaurant** (34-36 Dong Khoi, D1). The door opens to the bar and beyond it is a cavernous dining area broken into sections by a wall. I headed past the bar to a seating section behind it where there are comfy booths or benches with soft seats and fuzzy fabric backs. In addition to the seating at the bar there's a balcony on the second floor big enough to accommodate up to 20 people. The indoor dining areas, including both upstairs and down can seat more than 150 patrons. On any given day Gartenstadt's clientele is typically around 70% locals with the other 30% comprising a mix of international diners.

After being seated the server brought food and drink menus to the table, then giving me time to look them over.

I started with a bottle of Krombacher Dark (VND98,000). This German Schwarzbier style beer has a delightful mix of malt and molasses flavors but is much less filling than a typical stout. Gartenstadt imports a few Krombacher varieties as well as Schneider Weisse. They also have standard regional beers like Tiger or 333. Other than beer there's a large drink menu with fresh juices and specialty Italian coffees, a nice selection of cocktails and spirits, a number of different flavored Schnapps and an entire page of whisky varieties. Additionally, they have a selection of red and white wines from all over the world.

While the German fried dumplings (VND130,000) or the shrimp cocktail (VND160,000) were alluring appetizers, I went with the radish & Serrano ham plate (VND220,000). What a great presentation they made of it with a small tomato carved into a flower petal



centering the plate and sprigs of parsley dashed about. The radish was crisp and fresh with a little natural spiciness, while the ham was soft, buttery and subtly salty. The saltiness of the ham was superbly complemented by the tart piquancy of the radish.

Before moving on to other parts of the menu I tried one more appetizer, a quintessential German delight, potato cakes with apple sauce (VND130,000). The server brought a plate with four piping hot potato cakes with light brown centers and golden brown edges. The apple sauce was more like candied apple compote in a jelly. The potato cakes were delectably sapid, with a crispy exterior and soft interior while the apple sauce, sweet and syrupy, was an exemplary contrast. This is a must for the potato connoisseur out there.

The Gartenstadt menu has a lot of interesting options for soup or salad, such as the herring salad



Lentil soup with bacon and sausage



Potato Cakes with apple sauce



Smoked sausage with home fried potatoes and sauerkraut

(VND210,000) or the traditional goulash (VND160,000), however I chose the lentil soup with bacon and sausage (VND80,000). A hot and savory soup that leaves a nice touch of pepperiness in the throat, this hearty dish is served with toasted garlic bread. The brown lentils are slow cooked to tenderness, mixed with thin slices of sausage, chewy bacon pieces and small nibbles of boiled potato. I left the bowl completely empty.

When it comes to mains there are schnitzels, steaks, seafood, veal, rabbit, ribs and more, but I had my eye on the sausage. All of the sausage ingredients at Gartenstadt are imported from Germany and then made in-house. For different flavors there is smoked, spicy, curried and more. For different meats, beyond the traditional beef and pork there is lamb, chicken or ostrich to try. In the end I decided on an old favorite, smoked sausage with home fried potatoes and sauerkraut (VND230,000). The sausage was plump and juicy while the large portion of sauerkraut was crispy with scattered peppercorn and bits of chewy bacon mixed in. The other side consisted of thick, golden brown potato slices with nice pieces of lightly seared onion and chewy bacon. I cannot imagine this meal being any more authentic even if I were eating it in Munich.

Although I shouldn't have, I couldn't turn down dessert. I had to go with another German standard, apple strudel with vanilla ice cream (VND120,000). A dessert that dates back to 17th century Austria, the strudel had a thin, flaky, buttery crust with soft, stewed apple slices with hints of cinnamon. The plate had a caramel drizzle while the vanilla ice cream, which was served in a separate dish, was topped with a maraschino cherry and a sprig of mint. This rich dessert was a gratifying way to finish this ambrosial meal. ■



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.

Wine and Tapas

This popular Spanish cuisine can be a challenge for wine pairing

WITH THE INTERNATIONAL tapas day and a nationwide tapas event organized by the Spanish Embassy recently ended last month, I have received many comments from people about both terrible and amazing wine and tapas pairings by some of the participating restaurants. So what is the secret for a good tapas and wine pairing?

First, I would like to clarify that tapas are Spanish, full stop. The same that sashimi is Japanese and spaghetti is Italian; you may have raw fish dishes that are not Japanese, like ceviche, and noodles that are not Italian, likewise you may have small dishes that are not Spanish, but tapas are.

First rule, if you are enjoying tapas in Spain, go for the local wine, people who make food and wine locally. That is the case in every

region of Spain; they tend to make them in a way that compliments each other. For example, nothing beats the Castilian roast lamb with a good Tempranillo from Ribera del Duero, or a Galician seafood platter with an Albarinho.

Second rule, Tempranillo does not always go great with tapas. Mainly because there are many diverse styles of Tempranillo wines, even within the same region. If you want a Tempranillo and you are in doubt go for a well-known Rioja Crianza, they tend to be velvety and easy to pair.

Third rule, the same that Spanish wines go great with non-Spanish food, like French and Italian, non-Spanish wines can taste delicious with Spanish dishes—experiment.

If you are not a wine or pairing expert try to ask the chef, he is likely to give you a great recommendation regarding which wines go best with each particular dish, but here are some general recommendations for some of the most popular tapas:

Paella: Try an Albarinho, a white Bordeaux or a Spanish Chardonnay
Ibérico Ham: Ribera del Duero, Rioja, Bierzo mencia, Bordeaux
Grilled/cooked chorizo: Toro, Calatayud
Grenache, Rhone Grenache
Spanish Omelette: Young Rioja, Navarra rose,
Green Olives: Fino, Manzanilla
Patatas Bravas: Young Mencia, Young Garnacha, dry Riesling
Calamari: Verdejo, Chardonnay
Octopus gallega: Albarinho, Rioja Crianza. ■

Wine & Dine

ROOFTOP BARS



Escape Lounge and Rooftop

Escape Lounge and Rooftop, a new stylish, sophisticated lounge in Thao Dien is a reminder of the time when flying was elegant and romantic. You can enjoy the view from their rooftop surrounded by palm trees, bamboo, murals, relaxing music, all in a vacation atmosphere. Escape serves tropical cocktails, spirits, great food, and Saigon's best craft beers.

11 Thao Dien Street, Thao Dien District 2
083 827 9179/escapelounge.vn



Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar

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

141 Nguyen Hue, D1



Social Club Rooftop Bar

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

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

MICROBREWERIES & CRAFT BEER BARS



BiaCraft

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

90 Xuan Thuy, D2



East West Brewery

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

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



Rehab Station

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

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

Also Try...

Winking Seal

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

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

Tap & Tap Craft Beer

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

94 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, D.2

Heart of Darkness Craft Brewery

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

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

Belgo Belgian Craft Beer Brewery

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

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

Pasteur Street Brewing Company

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

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



Lê La Saigon

Set in a vintage-retro style décor, this open-air oasis on city's liveliest corridor offers coffee in the morning, vietnamese and western cuisine from a renowned local chef in the evening, and live music welcoming guests from around the world nightly. Cafe-Restaurant starts 10AM, everyday live music starts at 9PM.

138 Le Lai street, D1, HCMC.
090 816 61 38
FB: Lelabarpag



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, Cafe RuNam is now embarking on the road to becoming a successful franchise. The venue's first floor is particularly enchanting in the late evening.

96 Mac Thi Bui, D1
www.cafemunam.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 ca phe sua da served here.

27 Ngo Duc Ke, D1



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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



Le Bacoulos is a French brasserie located in the heart of Thao Dien. Following the brasserie tradition, Bacoulos serves typical French food at affordable prices.



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.

ITALIAN



Ciao Bella

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

11 Dong Du, D1
028 3822 3329

tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.ciaobellavietnam.com

Ciao Bella



Italian Trattoria Oggi

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

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

www.lottehotel.com/saigon

Oggi

Also Try...

Casa Italia

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

86 Le Loi, D1
028 3824 4286

Carpaccio

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

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

La Forchetta

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

24 Hung Gia, PMH, D7
028 3541 1006

Opera

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

2 Lam Son Square, D1

Pasta Fresca

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

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

Pendolasco

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

87 Nguyen Hue, D1
028 3821 8181

Pizza 4P's

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

8/15 Le Thanh Ton, D1
012 0789 4444
www.pizza4ps.com



JAPANESE



Chaya Restaurant

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

35 Ngo Quang Huy Street, Thao Dien, District 2
0938 996 408 (Vietnamese)

0939 877 403 (Japanese)
chayavietnam.com
Facebook: chayavietnam

Chaya



Gyumaru

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

8/3 Le Thanh Ton
028 3827 1618
gyumaru.LTT@gmail.com

Gyumaru

Also Try...

Ichiban Sushi

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

204 Le Lai, D1
www.ichibansushi.vn

Kesera Bar & Restaurant

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

26/3 Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe Ward, Dist 1
028 38 270 443

Sushi Dining Aoi

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

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
028 3930 0039
www.sushidiningaoi.com

Yoshino

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

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1
028 3823 3333

 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



Ngoc Chau Garden

Serving up fresh and traditional Vietnamese fare since 2015, Ngoc Chau Garden is a centrally located gem in District 1, just a stone's throw from Nguyen Hue. The menu has local favorites, such as Vietnamese Grilled Pork Patties with Citronella and Pork Ribs. The menu and decor reflect Viet Nam's countryside with vintage window shutters and walls made from mud and straw with oil lamps - giving the restaurant a charming, homely atmosphere.

116 Ho Tung Mau, District 1, HCM City
(028) 6687 3838
ngocchaugarden116@gmail.com



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



Ben Thanh Streetfood Market

Located in the city center there is a food court filled with dishes from all over the world, cooked by indigenous people, at affordable prices. Open most of the day and night, Ben Thanh Street Food Market offers live music on Tuesdays and Saturday night.

26 - 28 - 30 Thu Khoa Huan, Ben Thanh Dist, W 1, HCMC
0901 26 28 30 Open Time: 09:00 AM - 01:00 AM
FB: BenThanhstreetfoodmarket
Instagram: ben Thanhstreetfoodmarket

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

Cue Cach Quan

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

10 Dang Tat, D1
028 3848 0144

Hum

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

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

May

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

19-21 Dong Khoi, D1
028 3910 1277

Mountain Retreat

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

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

Nha Hang Ngon

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

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

Temple Club

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

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

The Hue House

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

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

INTERNATIONAL



Madcow Wine & Grill

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

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



Tomatito Saigon

Tomatito won the award for Best Restaurant of Saigon 2018. This sexy tapas bar is Chef Willy's casual interpretation of the prêt-à-porter concept. Willy has a very personal perception of style, that is reflected in all his creations. His universe is colorful, funky and eclectic.

**1st Floor, 171 Calmette, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City
www.tomatito.vn
www.facebook.com/tomatitosaiagon
+84 869 388 864**



twenty21one

A new casual dining venue with an innovative tapas menu divided into two categories: Looking East, and Looking West, with dishes such as Crispy shredded duck spring rolls and Bacon-wrapped dates stuffed with Roquefort blue cheese. There are two dining levels: an upstairs mezzanine and downstairs are tables with both private and exposed positioning (open-air streetside; and a terrace by the pool out back).
21 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3

TWENTY21ONE



Saffron

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

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

Also Try...

Blanc Restaurant

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

**178/180D Hai Ba Trung, Da Kao, D1
02862663535
www.blancrestaurant.vn**

Butcher MANZO & Craft Beer Bar

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

**17/13 and 17/14 Le Thanh Ton street, District 1, HCMC
028-2253-8825
www.butcher-manzo.com**

FORK Restaurant

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Travel & Wellness

NICOSIA, CYPRUS



GO, GO GEORGIA

Smear your face with sunscreen, lace up those walking shoes and let's hit the streets; here's how to spend time in Atlanta

Text by **Melanie Diamano**



FOUNDED AT THE CROSSROADS

of rail lines in 1836, Atlanta, Georgia was called Marthasville and Terminus before the Western & Atlantic Railroad led to the name. The city was infamously burned to the ground by Sherman's troops during the Civil War, but following the devastation, rose from the ashes like the phoenix that is the unofficial mascot. It's been the home of Civil Rights heroes John Lewis and Martin Luther King Jr. as well as authors like Margaret Mitchell and Joel Chandler Harris, musicians OutKast and Gladys Knight, and countless athletes. Atlanta also famously hosted the 1996 Summer Olympics and continues to be a sports town. Lately, it's also become known as "Hollywood of the South" because of tax initiatives that bring film productions to the state. It's also my hometown, so I have plenty to share!

The Neighborhoods

Most travelers don't see beyond the airport and downtown, where the majority of the tourist attractions and chain hotels are located. There's so much more to see beyond this district. The city's layout makes it feel like these neighborhoods are their own towns, each with unique architecture and history.

Old Fourth Ward is the city's hottest neighborhood, originally named for Atlanta's ward system, and has gone through a number of changes over the years. Thanks in part to developments like Ponce City Market and the Atlanta Beltline, new restaurants, shops and residences have set up alongside it. Explore Fourth Ward Park while you're there.

The former cotton mill area is called Cabbagetown, made up of restored lofts and small row houses tucked into narrow one-way streets. Residents are fiercely proud of their home, especially for its eateries like Agave, Little's Food Store, and Carroll Street Café. Historic Oakland Cemetery forms the neighborhood border on one side, equal parts graveyard and city park. Wander the area in search of street art and murals.

Midtown feels the most like the city, complete with high rises and notable hotel chains. The

neighborhood is set around Piedmont Park, Atlanta's largest public green space, and its adjoining Atlanta Botanical Gardens. It's also home to attractions like the Margaret Mitchell House and the High Museum of Art, and the epicenter of annual Pride festivities.

The historically black neighborhood where Martin Luther King Jr. grew up, Sweet Auburn, is full of landmarks, from King's childhood home and church to the Curb Market to the former offices of the Atlanta Daily World, now Condesa Coffee. A streetcar line runs through it, connecting to downtown, and Edgewood Avenue has become a nightlife hotspot for dive bars and clubs.

East Atlanta is a hip area for locally-owned restaurants like Argosy and We Suki Suki as well as dive bars with large patios. Live music venues and clubs like The Basement and The Earl keep the party going late into the night. The neighborhood is also known for annual events like the East Atlanta Strut and seasonal markets.

The popular Westside has been transformed from run down warehouses into many retail areas that are near Atlantic Station and Georgia Tech. Make reservations to dine at some of the city's top eateries, including JCT Kitchen, Cooks & Soldiers and The Optimist. Catch blues musicians at Northside Tavern or watch the sunset from the rooftop at Oku, a popular sushi restaurant.

Like a city of its own, Decatur is set around a historic square that has a fiercely local mindset when it comes to restaurants and stores. Come during one of their events, like the Decatur Book Festival, or catch an up-and-coming musician at Eddie's Attic. Don't miss the restaurant scene with favorites like Leon's Full Service, Kimball House and Revival.

Restaurants and Cafés

After many years of being overshadowed by other Southern foodie cities like Charleston, Nashville and New Orleans, Atlanta is finally getting its due in the media, thanks in part to celebrity chefs like Hugh Acheson and Kevin Gillespie. There's something for every budget and palate. For most, you can just show up, but the big-name eateries might require a reservation, especially on weekends.

Homegrown- I'm always hesitant to write about my favorite breakfast place,



Buford Highway

but I can't hide it anymore. This place looks like an old school diner mixed with your grandmother's house. Funky artwork covers the wall and is all for sale. The menu has Southern favorites like chicken biscuits, fried catfish and blue plate specials.

The Optimist- Seafood lovers flock to this Westside Ford Fry restaurant for its outdoor bocce court, oyster bar, cocktail program and top-notch selection of fish. But those who don't eat seafood can also find something to enjoy, from burgers to roasted chicken.

8 arm- This funky eatery is equal parts coffee shop and restaurant with an open air patio and small dining room. Their menu changes daily and is available for weeknight dinner, brunch and late night bites. The patio has a shipping container bar with frozen cocktails and beer.

Buford Highway- There's nowhere better for international dining in Atlanta than the restaurants along this stretch of road in Chamblee. Start at the farmer's market and wind your way through Chinese, Malaysian, Korean and even Guatemalan restaurants. Lee's Bakery is one of my favorites for its cheap sandwiches and pho.

Staplehouse- Named by Bon Appetit as the best restaurant in America, it supports The Giving Kitchen, a charity for food and beverage industry employees that fall on hard times. The menu is both colorful and creative, but reservations are a must.

Paschal's- Few Atlanta restaurants are as historically significant as this soul food eatery where Civil Rights activists dined. The fried chicken is some of the best in the city, best paired with collard greens or macaroni and cheese.

Food halls- The newest restaurant trend allows diners to try multiple things in one convenient location. Sweet Auburn Curb Market is the original, with real produce vendors and small restaurants like Arepa Mia. Ponce City Market is where top name chefs set up, from Italian to Mexican to Mediterranean. And Krog Street Market is smaller, but has an equal diversity of selections.

Fourth Ward Park





Nine Mile Station

Bars and Nightlife

Atlanta is a city previously known for its nightlife and while Buckhead may no longer be the wild place it once was, it's still where you can find the popular nightclubs. Elsewhere in the city, there are dives with cheap beer to swanky cocktail lounges that craft drinks to order and craft breweries serving all styles of beer.

Nine Mile Station— Make reservations for this rooftop beer garden at Ponce City Market. The menu is fantastic, but you can't beat the views. Open rain or shine, bring some friends for draft beer, cocktails and wine.

Clermont Lounge— To call it a "strip club" wouldn't do it justice. This dive bar has dancing ladies, but all are over the age of 50. Look out for "Blondie," the most famous performer, while sipping on a Pabst Blue Ribbon. Bring cash for entry and don't take photos inside!

Manuel's Tavern— Another longtime Atlanta watering hole, Manuel's has winding rooms covered in memorabilia from over the years. Enjoy a pint of beer, both local and national, as well as the tasty bar food.

The Mercury— In search of swanky cocktails in a Mad Men-style setting? This lounge above the food hall at Ponce City Market is where to go, whether you're enjoying it at the bar or taking it to enjoy as you peruse the shops downstairs.

Breweries— There's no shortage of breweries around town, especially on the Westside. Sweetwater is the longest-running, but Monday Night, Orpheus, and Wild Heaven have become popular in recent years. All offer tastings and tours.

The Regent Cocktail Club— While definitely on the swanky end of things, it's one of the few non-fratty places around. It has an open rooftop overlooking Buckhead and nice cocktails.

Church— Also known as Sister Louisa's Church of the Ping Pong Emporium, this Edgewood favorite is equal parts bar and art installation.

Swig a cheap beer while playing a round of ping pong, donning choir robes.

Things to Do

There are many types of attractions in Atlanta, from the well-known ones to quirky and lesser-known museums. Add in an equal mix of both for a well-rounded experience. If you'll be hitting the highlights, look into the Atlanta CityPass to save you time and money.

Georgia Aquarium— The world's largest aquarium showcases countless species, including those found in our backyard and beyond. Favorite creatures include the beluga whales, river otters and horseshoe crabs.

World of Coca Cola— Visit the interactive attraction that details the company's history from pharmacy remedy to beverage giant. Sample the brand's drinks from around the world and see the vault where they keep the secret recipe.

Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site— This area includes the Civil Rights leader's childhood home and the church he preached at. Tour the visitor's center and the King Center for the full experience.

Center for Civil and Human Rights— This state of the art museum

interprets both the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and modern struggles in the LGBTQ and immigrant communities.

High Museum of Art— Visit one of the region's top art museums, which showcases early European to modern works with a large selection of self-taught folk art and pieces from regional artists like Howard Finster.

Atlanta Botanical Garden— Located within Piedmont Park, this garden features plant species from around the world as well as art and sculpture made of plants as well as glass by Chihuly.

Atlanta History Center— The Buckhead museum encompasses multiple exhibits, including sections on the Civil War and the 1996 Olympics as well as a historic farm. The center also manages the Margaret Mitchell House in Midtown.

Delta Flight Museum— Learn about the international airline's history from local farm airline to major brand in their historic hangar. Inside, visitors can see their airplanes from over the years as well as uniforms.

Fernbank Museum of Natural History— The 75-acre museum covers natural history with exhibits on dinosaurs, Georgia's natural environment, and world cultures. There are also changing exhibits and sprawling grounds.

Atlanta Beltline— The city's best resource is the rails to trails paths that loop around the city, including from Piedmont Park to the Old Fourth Ward. Hop on and off along the way to see local artwork and bars and restaurants.

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum— Learn about the life of Georgia's president, from his early days as a farmer in Plains to Nobel Peace Prize winner. The museum features artifacts from his life and hosts readings and events.

Tours— Visit the city's filming locations with Atlanta Movie Tours and hear about the culinary history with Atlanta Food Walks, two of my favorite tour companies. There are many more that hit the city's highlights.



Georgia Aquarium

Shopping

If you're looking for high-end luxury stores, Buckhead is where you'll find them. But elsewhere in the city, there are funky boutiques and secondhand and antique stores, especially around the Old Fourth Ward.

Citizen Supply— Located in Ponce City Market, this store sells goods from a variety of local vendors, including clothing, artwork, jewelry, candles and other gifts.

The Beehive— Similarly, this store sells handcrafted items from multiple vendors from Atlanta and beyond. They also teach arts and craft classes.

Draper James— Owned by Reese Witherspoon, this Buckhead boutique sells Southern-inspired clothing, accessories and gifts. You'll be offered sweet tea to sip while you shop.

Paris on Ponce— Part antique store, part artisan market, you never know what you might find at this 46,000 square foot Beltline-adjacent spot.

Trashy Diva Clothing Boutique— Now with an Atlanta outpost, this New Orleans original sells vintage-inspired clothing for curvy ladies, including dresses and lingerie.

Buffalo Exchange— This chain store in Poncey Highlands sells new and secondhand trendy clothing for both men and women. They also buy items if you're short on cash.

Psycho Sisters— Atlanta's original vintage store is in Little Five Points, selling gently used clothing as well as wacky accessories, jewelry and wigs.

Clothing Warehouse— Organized by color, this is where to pick up soft vintage t-shirts, denim and accessories. They started as a warehouse where you could buy items by the pound.

Criminal Records— Atlanta's original record store in Little Five Points sells new and used vinyl, CDs, and tapes from well-known and independent artists.

Sid and Ann Mashburn— The upscale men's and women's boutique is run by a husband and wife team on the Westside. There's even an in-house coffee shop.

Where to Stay

Atlanta has its fair share of big-name hotel brands, but there are more and more boutique and unique stays. Choose from one of these stylish options all over town for any budget.

Hotel Clermont— Formerly an abandoned motor lodge, this hotel in the heart of the Old Fourth Ward has a rooftop bar overlooking the city, a French-inspired restaurant, cocktail lounge, and coffee shop. They have king rooms, suites, and even bunks.

Loews Atlanta Hotel— Located in the center of Midtown, the hotel's Atlanta location has a restaurant, in-house spa and fitness center, and is popular for events and festivals as well as for visiting celebs. Rooms and suites have floor to ceiling windows that overlook the city.

The American Hotel— This hotel originally opened as the first



desegregated hotel in Atlanta for traveling sports teams and later hosted countless celebrities and politicians. The downtown DoubleTree has been renovated back to its midcentury style.

The Ellis Hotel— This historic property survived a devastating fire, but is now a boutique hotel downtown with women's only floors, pet friendly rooms, and a wellness room. ■

TRANSPORTATION

Atlanta isn't really thought of to be a highly walkable city, but it depends on the neighborhood. Within downtown, you can get around very easily as well as in places like Inman Park and neighborhoods located along the Atlanta Beltline.

It's also becoming a more bike-friendly city, especially thanks to the Beltline, PATH trails and bike lanes in certain parts of Atlanta. Relay Bikes are the bike share program and can be picked up all over the city and rented by the hour or day. Bike shops like Skate Escape and Atlanta Bicycle Barn also have rental bikes.

MARTA is the city's public transportation service, which includes both buses and trains. The trains don't run many places except for in the city center, but are the best way to get to and from the airport. All fares are USD2.50 per journey and can be loaded onto a Breeze card. Taking the train is also encouraged if you're going to sporting events or areas without parking. The Atlanta Streetcar connects between downtown and Sweet Auburn as well.

What you've likely heard about getting around Atlanta is just how bad the traffic is, which lasts for at least three hours twice a day. Unless you're used to aggressive driving, I don't recommend it. If you're traveling further out in the state, you can rent cars for the day through agencies at the airport or downtown or use Zipcar. Travel Insurance is a wise purchase if you'll be driving. I recommend World Nomads. Ridesharing is a much better option. I exclusively use Lyft to get around parts of Atlanta, but Uber is also available.

Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport is around 25 minutes from downtown and can be accessed by train or car. Visitors also arrive by train at the Amtrak Station in Midtown. Bus drop offs for Megabus are at the Civic Center MARTA Station, while Greyhound picks up at the Garnett MARTA Station.





Cyprus is Calling

Things to do and see in
Nicosia, Cyprus



Text by **Brenda Wadsworth**

NICOSIA WAS OUR FIRST STOP

on our trip to Cyprus and left a strong impression for a variety of reasons. The history of Nicosia and Cyprus is very interesting and controversial, but the city is completely safe and there are lots of interesting, fun and quirky things to do in Nicosia. We recommend spending two to three days in Nicosia as well as exploring other parts of the country. We decided to spend the rest of our time road tripping through Northern Cyprus.

Located in the middle of Cyprus, it straddles the border of North and South Cyprus with a thin strip of 'no man's land' running through the middle. Tourists can easily cross between the sides on foot at one of the two main border crossings by presenting their passports. The two sides have different languages, currencies and even time zones.

A Brief History of Nicosia

Formally a British colony, Cyprus announced independence in 1960. This was quickly followed by disagreements between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. As a result, Nicosia was split along the middle by the United Nations. The line on the map was drawn in green pen and is now known as The Green Line.

2003 marked the opening of the Ledra Palace crossing and people were able to walk between the two sides of the city for the first time in nearly 30 years. Today there is still some tension between Greek and Turkish Cypriots but most people we talked to (young and old) were keen to see a united Cyprus.

Things to Do in Nicosia - South

This bustling part of the city has a much more European feel, with international franchises such as H&M, McDonald's and Starbucks lining the main streets. You can also get lost in the cobblestone streets and eat your fill of olives, feta and souvlaki. There is not much going on outside the walls but there is plenty to fill a couple of easy-going days in the old town.

Shacolas Tower

This was one of the best attractions in Nicosia. You'll find the entrance to this on a side street next to H&M. Take the lift to the 11th floor and for €2.50 you can enjoy some stunning views of the city. There is also plenty of information about the buildings in and around the city. As well as timelines of Nicosian history and maps.

Walk Along the Green Line

We found the border between North and South Nicosia utterly fascinating. They seemed to have just picked a point and then blocked off all the streets. So you can be walking along a lovely little lane and then suddenly there's a barricade covered in barbed wire and a couple of armed gunmen. It's really interesting to walk along the line and see this as well as the cute houses and graffiti. It's completely safe to walk along the Green Line but don't try any funny business like jumping fences.

Relax in Funky Cafés

After a recent trip home to Wellington, world café capital, I rekindled my addiction to cozy, funky cafés and South Nicosia really fulfilled my cravings. We spent a couple of days café hopping enjoying homemade lemonade, Cyprus coffee and relaxing with a book. Check out Kafeneio Arsinois off Ledra Street, Peto and The Weaving Mill Book Café.



The Green Line



The Ledra Palace Hotel

Walk Along the Venetian Walls

Venetian walls surround the entire old town of Nicosia. While most of the action happens in the middle, the walls themselves are nice to walk along, particularly the Southeastern section starting from the Famagusta Gate. If you are in town on a Saturday you might be lucky enough to catch a local football match and the farmers market in full swing.

Ledra Palace Crossing

This is a little out to the East of the old town. The Ledra Palace Hotel used to be—you guessed it—a swanky hotel in the heart of Nicosia. When the city was divided the hotel fell in 'no man's land' and is now the headquarters for the UN. It is also the venue for many peace talks between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. You can cross the border to North Nicosia here and take a stroll through no man's land including taking a peek at the hotel.

Things to do in Nicosia - North

Arriving in North Cyprus you will notice a few differences. Firstly, if you're there at certain times of year, you will have time traveled forward an hour. Next, everyone speaks Turkish. While the currency is technically the Turkish lira, the euro is widely accepted. There is a distinct lack of chain stores and all of the churches have been replaced with mosques. North Nicosia is a bit rougher around the edges but you'll find the people just as welcoming, the food just as delicious and just as many things worth exploring.

Selimiye Mosque and Belediye Bazaar

Heading East from the Ledra Street crossing you will find a huge mosque. This used to be St. Sophia's Cathedral but was converted into a mosque during the Ottoman siege in the 1500s. Next to



Famagusta Gate



Selimiye Mosque



Lamacun

the mosque is a small bazaar and many shops selling scarves, souvenirs and an abundance of sports clothing.

Follow the Blue Line

This is one of the best things to do in North Nicosia. From the mosque you can follow a blue line along the road that will take you through North Nicosia passing all the major sights. The whole line takes about 1-2 hours. The most interesting area for us was from the mosque to the small streets, which are the oldest council housing in Cyprus.

Have Tea and Snacks

Along the way we stopped at some cute little cafés. Our favorite snacks/meals in North Cyprus were lamacun and borek. Lamacun is Turkish pizza, a thin base covered with mince meat. It is served with fresh parley and lemon juice, which

you sprinkle on and then roll the pizza to eat. These cost about €2.50 each. Borek is a pastry filled with cheese or meat, best washed down with a Turkish tea in the adorable glasses. The price averaged around €3 for one borek and two teas.

Have a Hammam

Visiting a hammam in Nicosia is one the most interesting and relaxing things to do in the northern side. The hammam in North Nicosia is supposed to be cheaper and more authentic. For €10 you can use the hammam and for €30 you can enjoy a proper soap and peeling scrub. Buyuk Hammam is open for tourists (mixed genders) from 4pm-9pm every day (closed Monday). Scrubs and massages require an appointment. Nothing beats the feeling of sweating everything out and being scrubbed smooth. Okay, maybe a slight exaggeration but it's a pretty great feeling.

We loved our time in Nicosia and even went back for another day during our road trip. There are plenty of easy and affordable flights to Cyprus from Europe and it has great weather all year round. And with so many cool things to do in Nicosia there's enough to keep you occupied for several days. What more could you want in a city break? ■



Hammam in Nicosia



Borek

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>> The List Health & Beauty

DENTAL

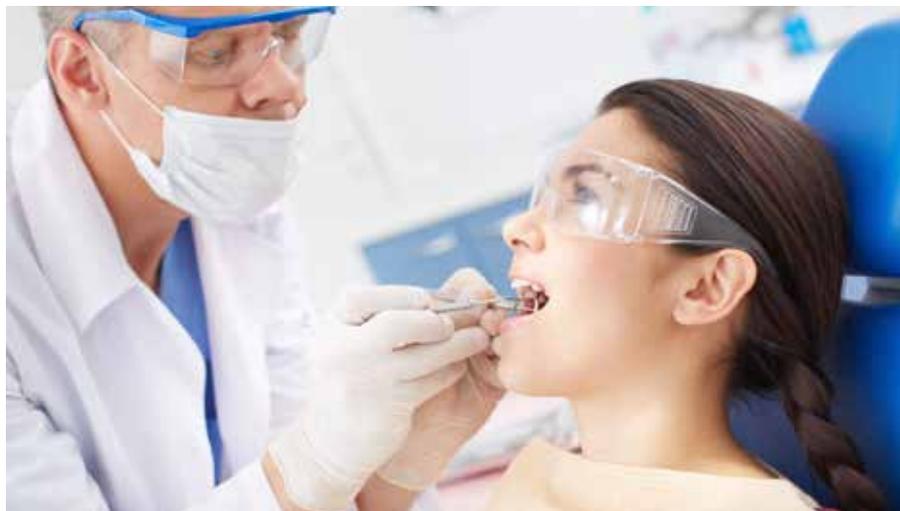


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Kids & Education





Away For A Day

Could you be without your phone for a day? Here's why we all need to step back into reality and take a break from the digital world



EVER SINCE AN “UNPLUGGED DAY”

was held at our school in 2016, I’ve been on a mission to better understand how technology impacts our lives. The benefits of the day were obvious, but the willingness to go back to the technology was so strong. Since then, I’ve read several books on the topic like *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World* and *Digital Minimalism* by Cal Newport, and *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* by Adam Alter. I’ve spoken with experienced teachers at my school and inquired about how they manage their time. Most of them never open their work computer once home, but many still struggle with the urge to check their phone. A portion of my year was spent writing articles for *Oi Vietnam* on this subject. Hopefully I was able to convince one or two readers that their phone and social media consumption is not conducive to a healthy lifestyle. I used my other time delving further into technology education to learn more about this growing addiction.

I don’t think many people realize the impact of these digital interruptions until they are exposed to something like the *Screenagers Movie: Growing up in the digital age*. This year we hosted a *Screenagers* viewing at our school. It changed a lot of teachers’ minds about the devices in the halls. We had an overwhelming vote to rid our school of phones next year. We received many complaints from parents about how they can’t get their kids off the phone. A major concern of Vietnamese parents is *how* to enforce these phone rules once at home. We often hear, “my child just won’t get off the phone.” Another parent told me, “I tell them to do what their teacher says and get off the phone. Then he holds up his iPad and says to me, ‘This is not a phone.’ What am I supposed to do?” Parents and teachers often say this to me as they hold their phone in their hand and check it the first moment they can. The first step is to model what you want to see. Next, I recommend parents make a “contract” with their child at the start of the school year. It should provide rewards for following the rules and penalties for breaking your terms of agreement. The contract should be for both children and parents. Additionally, the child should have some influence on the rules. Both you and your child should sign the contract and do your best to uphold it. That means you too, dad!

This year ISHCMC-American Academy took it a step further. We

wanted to teach our children what life was like without these devices. Many kids from the “igeneration” (those born post millennium) never spent a day without some form of technology in their hands. We decided to hold an “Away For A Day” at our school. This is a day that promotes wellbeing, conversation, face-to-face interaction, and just plain old fashioned fun without phones. An enthusiastic group of teachers who shared this passion convinced the staff to also put their phones away, too. Some students were scared of a day without their device. Others didn’t know how to put their phones away. Many didn’t know what to do to replace this time they spent on their phone. The feeling of anxiety was as prevalent as an exam day.

There were a few students who tried not to follow the rules, but overall the day was a huge success. Perhaps the biggest surprise was the amount of female students playing games during lunch. Our team provided the students with options like jump ropes, and life size *Connect Four*. Our English department banded together to offer a poetry café and reading time in the library. Boys were encouraged to bring a book to school and surprisingly many of them enjoyed it just as much as the gaming they do on other days. A room devoted entirely to board games encourage problem solving and conversation skills. Sports were offered as usual, and teachers minimized tech in the classroom.

The conclusion that we came to was that school is better without the phones. Students look up when they walk the halls. They interact with each other on their free time. They focus on building relationships in front of them instead of the accumulating followers across the globe. As humans we have this innate desire to socialize. When we feel bored we pick up their phones to connect with someone. The key is to provide your child (and yourself) with an alternative to the phone. It sounds so simple, but we should be encouraging them to embrace this time they have off the device. When given an alternative to fill that void, they will jump at the chance. Play a game with them, read a book together, have a board game night, remove the phone from the dinner table and just talk. Keep the phone out of reach. It’s a powerful urge to check our devices. An urge we are just not sure has the long term rewards we want it to have. If students and parents keep working at building these healthy skills they’ll find they, too, have a healthier relationship together. ■



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.

The Wonder of The American School



Danny Tran at Baylor University

How The American School's quality curriculum has contributed to generations of successful high school graduates

Text and Images Provided by The American School



TO THE AMERICAN SCHOOL (TAS), it's always an honor to hear wonderful news of TAS alumni become successful in the real world. It's a validation that TAS curriculum and education environment has brought out the best in each student, and this school is the place where future global citizens, who are both academically excellent and socially responsible, are nurtured and sent to the world.

A Noteworthy Alumnus

When Danny Tran—a member of TAS Class of 2018, Secretary of the Student Council—graduated from the school last year, TAS faculty members immediately knew that he would be one of the “prides of TAS”. Being accepted by 11 universities in the US, receiving 5 scholarships worth more than VND5 billion, Danny chose

Baylor University, Texas as his next destination for education. After a year of being a college student, he has found himself in a place where he is constantly evolving and maturing without much difficulty despite the differences between the two countries—Vietnam and the US—thanks to the preparation and foundation that TAS gave him during his years studying at the school.

Studying in an international environment like that of TAS helped Danny learn from early on the way to socialize with people from different cultures and backgrounds. English is no longer impossible to overcome, as TAS curriculum is completely taught in English, giving students the chance to be fluent and comfortable using this international language for studying and communicating. Interacting with international teachers, 80% of which are from North America, also helped Danny integrate into the American culture with more ease and confidence to speak his mind.

TAS core values always reflect the aim to highlight and embrace different cultures of students, and with this, graduates like Danny find it easier to highlight and embrace different cultures of college students when they enter university in the US—a place where diversity is signature to the country's identity. Studying in the US, to Danny,



Danny Tran with Baylor University Red Cross

is an interesting experience, because he got to meet so many people bringing their own cultures to the already colorful college scene.

Extracurricular activities are always encouraged at TAS, and with this come generations of TAS graduates who are not only academically excellent, but also socially responsible. For Danny, his passion for extracurricular activities in general

and social works in particular continues to lead his college life, when he joined Baylor Student Association and Baylor University Red Cross. This experience has led him to countless charity works at Family Abuse Center, Nursery Home, The Salvation Army Kitchen... And with that, Danny saw himself become more open, more socially aware and more mature in his view of life, society and himself. ■

Class of 2019 and More Potential Success for TAS Graduates



This year, TAS once again witnessed the graduation of another class of high school seniors, full of hope for future success. Saturday, June 8, 2019 was a special day for not only 12th graders of The American School (TAS) and their parents, but also for the school itself. Because it was the day of the high school graduation

ceremony, in which TAS presented its 27 bright, intelligent, talented and passionate graduates to the world.

Class of 2019, like previous generations of graduates, filled TAS faculty with pride, because all 27 of them were accepted into 56 universities, colleges and college-level institutions

across the US, Canada and Singapore. Even more impressive, they received nearly USD3,000,000 in scholarships. Among the graduates, Peter Phan (Phan Le Ha Long)—Salutatorian of Class of 2019—already stood out before graduation, with his amazing journey at the #IWTMekong Short Film Competition.

For his incredible short film *Breath* about rhino conservation, Peter won both the Student Prize and Viral Prize of the competition initiated by The UK Government and the Luang Prabang Film Festival, in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). From the total of USD3,000 in prize money, Peter decided to donate USD2,000 to Wild Rhino—a campaign aiming to engage and educate young Vietnamese students about the myths and false beliefs that surround the use of rhino horn products. As the Student Prize winner, Peter was also invited to the 9th Luang Prabang Film Festival, which took place from December 7-12, 2018.

These fascinating successes of TAS's new generation of graduates once again reaffirm the school's leading status for educational quality among international schools in Vietnam. They also promise even more success at a larger scale for those global citizens that TAS has always proudly called its students.

Saying Thank You This Summer

"Thank you" can be an incredibly powerful pair of words, especially if the person you're thanking really needs to hear them, or isn't expecting

Text by **Robert Hunt**, a 16-year-old student currently attending ABC International School



SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS

something we should all aspire to because it is versatile; coming in many different forms, which can then be used in combination to fulfill the ultimate goal of self-improvement. Self-belief is an example of self-improvement, which many people struggle with. A dynamic and demanding society requires a lot from people and fitting into a formidable world can be rather challenging. Nevertheless, self-improvement is the improvement of one's knowledge, status or character by one's own efforts and a way of doing so is to simply say "thank you". This phrase is often used incorrectly and is exceptionally under-appreciated when used with genuine purpose due to it being used erroneously throughout our lives. A positive change can be

substantially beneficial to everyone around us—a major reason to adhere to the importance of saying "thank you".

Let's go through times in which we should appropriately say "thank you":

There are many different situations in which responding with a "thank you" would change the outlook and atmosphere of the conversation. A common situation we all face is when we are handling constructive criticism. Receiving constructive feedback often leads to people being defensive or over-sensitive instead of actually interpreting the information given to them and using it to improve. If the feedback is constructive then it is meant to help you. We should be thankful for people who care about us and following it up with a simple "thank you" is already an easy way to improve yourself. Saying "thank you" here implies that you have taken the message on board and it may even build a stronger relationship with the person saying because you both understand that you are trying to help each other improve.

Situation: "You were not your usual self out there. Your finishing was not up to standard."

Don't: "Like you did anything. Luck wasn't on my side today."

Do: "Thank you for thinking so highly of me. I'll give it my all next time."

Inequitable criticism is a form of criticism that is different to

constructive feedback/criticism. Usually, the person giving this criticism is seeking an opportunity to hurt you or is waiting for a reaction from you. Those actions alone are unjustifiable and unnecessary. Thanking someone in this situation will significantly reduce the effect of their statements and shows maturity as you are decreasing the magnitude of the problem. There is no need to win every argument. Dealing with inequitable criticism by simply being thoughtful is already a win itself. Additionally, thanking someone in this situation can come with sarcasm and may change the mind of the "offender". This situation can be similar to when people give you unsolicited advice. Exposing other people's flaws does not remove yours. We should thank people for contributing to our improvements even if it is unsolicited and annoying at first.

Situation: "The way you're behaving just shows how much of an idiot you are."

Don't: "It's very ironic that you say that because..."

Do: "Thank you for your kindness. I will try to improve and make an attempt to continuously meet your requirements!"

The trait of being arrogant or egocentric is one that many people dislike and try to avoid at all costs. However, this causes people to then become too humble when receiving compliments, devaluing the nice words. Saying thank you indicates appreciation and that you have acknowledged the compliment. Compliments shouldn't be awkward; it is a form of expressing yourself and as a receiver, it is nice to have and has to be taken on board with finesse.

Situation: "You look really nice in your jeans!"

Don't: "Really? They're nearly worn out."

Do: "Thank you. I'm glad you like them."

Times of comfort are times in which something has happened. People often do not know what to say but want to show that they are willing to help and comfort the person in need. Arguably the most common response is "Well, at least you..." This is done to allow the person to feel reminiscent and fondly remember the good times. Sadly, there is nothing you can do to get these thoughts off their mind instantly because only time will heal those wounds. Therefore, the best option is to show full support and prove that you are there for that person. You can do that by thanking them for trusting you and continue to be the best version of you.

Situation: Your friend just had a breakup

Don't: "At least you had lots of good memories."

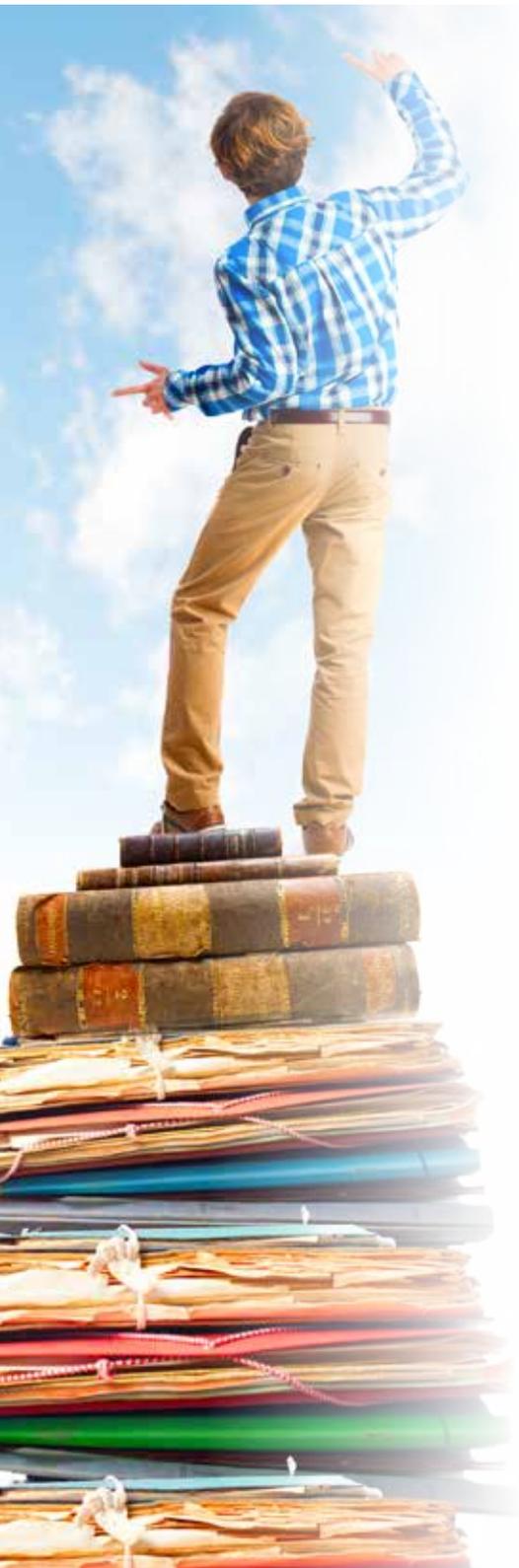
Do: "Thank you for sharing such private information. I'm here to support you and offer you my friendship."

Ultimately, there really isn't a downside to saying "thank you". There is no shame in showcasing gratitude (it actually resembles self-improvement), so say "Thank You" this summer! ■



>> The List Education

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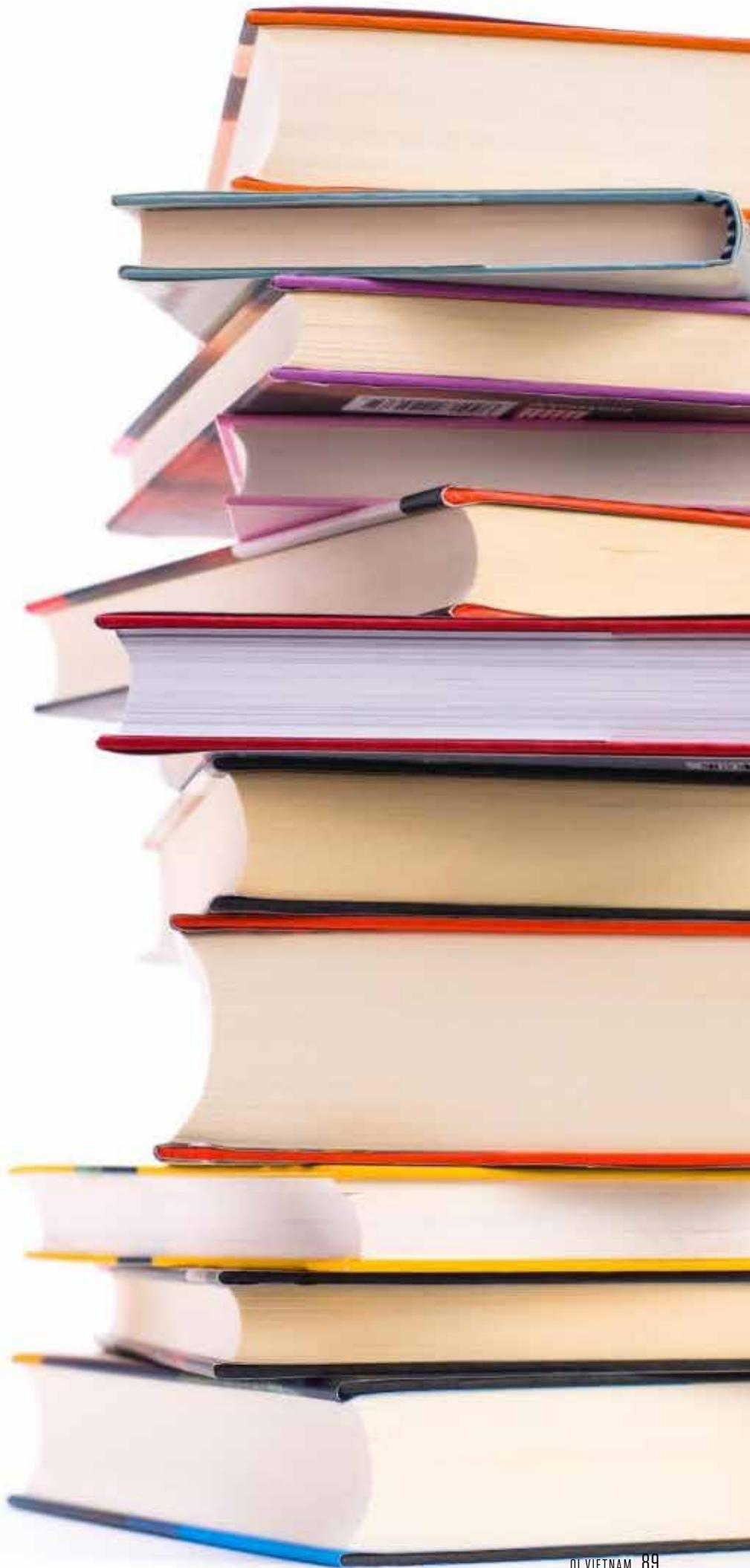
The American School (TAS) is an international school that has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 21 nationalities. TAS provides an American-based curriculum with rigorous performance standards and a variety of academic offerings including Advanced Placement courses, university credit courses through our partnership with Missouri State University, and an Intensive ESL Program for English Language Learners. In 2018, The American School will open its new, sprawling mega-campus in District 2's An Phu Neighborhood. This purpose-built facility will house up to 1200 students from pre-nursery through grade 12. This is an exciting time in the growth of the school!

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