



VIETNAM

03-2020

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SAIGON Sports



Tập 1/2020

NHÀ XUẤT BẢN THANH NIÊN
NHIỀU TÁC GIẢ



Oi Vietnam **Supports** Local Businesses

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It's time for us to support our food community. The vibe is dire, with business owners and members of the public claiming customers are slowing to a trickle as some doors close, while others are simply putting their businesses on pause to wait out the coronavirus outbreak. The effect on staffing, suppliers and producers means the entire chain of hospitality is feeling the sting of the slow down. It's even more important to visit or order from your favorite restaurant if ever there was one.



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This Month's Cover

Vietnam Cricket Association

See our article on pages 40, 41

OI VIỆT NAM (tập 1/2020)

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IMAGE BY VY LAM

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Le Saigonnais
SASCO BUSINESS LOUNGE

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SASCO Inflight Service Center (IFS) was introduced on January 1, 2020. Set to be the best and most capable inflight catering service provider in Vietnam, the IFS facility has the capacity to serve more than 10,000 meals per day. Bamboo Airways is SASCO IFS's first airline customer.

Le Saigonnais cuisine will satisfy the passengers who love to explore local cuisine. Le Saigonnais introduces many Saigon delicacies and offers customers a unique and interesting local experience.





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.

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Removing emotions when making investments, tears of joy or sadness will come later

NO ONE SHOULD BE SURPRISED by the seedy characters that come out of the woodwork during a time of vulnerability. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus across Asia and then the world, a number of investment scams have surfaced.

If you've seen research reports or promotions touting opportunities to invest with companies that are working to cure coronavirus, think twice before buying stock shares. According to the Securities and Exchange Commission, which released an investor alert at the beginning of February, warning about an uptick in investment scams attempting to take advantage of the coronavirus outbreak, "fraudsters often use the latest news developments to lure investors into scams," the agency's office of investor education and advocacy said. The coronavirus has particularly dominated the news cycle in past weeks. The SEC said that it has become aware of "a number of internet promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded companies can prevent, detect or cure coronavirus, and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result." All completely rubbish claims.

The harsh reality of the stockbroker, wealth manager, private investment guru is not about scams but most definitely the ability to leave emotion at the door when it comes to investing, amongst other things. Any successful broker will be able to do this in a few different scenarios. The first and foremost bit of advice would be to never

become emotionally attached to a stock or investment. Too many investors make the mistake of attaching themselves for different reasons. They may just love a product so blindly that they won't sell a stock when it is plummeting.

It could be that an investor becomes emotionally attached to their company's stock, which leads to an over-concentration and a lack of portfolio diversification. Often a stock that was granted as part of a compensation scheme will make it difficult to view it objectively.

There is no room for sentiments or emotions in the markets. Don't confuse this with moral and ethical trading. Many investors won't invest in certain industries such as drugs, alcohol, firearms, emission inefficient businesses, (non-renewable energy), which fall under the headline of ethical trading. But as far as investment trading goes, there can be no room for emotions.

Some examples are events that are extraordinary and usually not very nice. Oil disasters such as Piper Alpha that sadly blew up in 1988 or the huge Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill in 2010. Both of these either sent the energy sector into free fall or the individual stock line such as British Petroleum in a downward direction. The bottom line is that shares could have been bought straight after the knee jerk reaction, sat on and profit taken when the shares returned to normal. I appreciate not everyone will subscribe or even like what I am saying but it is the bare truth.

Other, more extreme, examples would include the Costa Concordia,

the cruise liner passenger ship that sunk off the coast of Italy in 2012. This tragic event led to the death of 32 passengers. No one would suggest for a second that this was not a truly sad story, but behind the scenes, investment managers would quite rightly so be looking at the impact on markets. They have a responsibility and an obligation to their clients to manage their funds correctly. Every knowledgeable trader would know that the parent company was Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc, which is the world's largest travel leisure company. Their stocks dropped 16% on the day and if you were willing to buy and sit on them, you would have recognized all of that loss back as a gain in mere months.

The list of disasters that have resulted in stock pricing anomalies is endless and they will continue to occur whether they are the result of human error, terrorist behavior or acts of God (if you aren't religious then Mother Nature). You have to hang up your emotions at the door when trading. Don't become emotionally attached to an investment and at the same time don't deny a trade because of the emotional factor.

Let's be brutally honest. No one would ever employ the services of a broker or wealth manager if they were weak in the emotional trading arena. All avenues of growth, no matter what they are, need to be investigated as and when they occur—as long as they are completely legal. Add this as just a part of your broking philosophy and you will do well. Just as I do. ■



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TROI OI!

The country in numbers

2G

SERVICE TO BE TERMINATED BY 2022.

Vietnam will shut down all 2G services from January 1, 2022 under a roadmap planned out by the Ministry of Information and Communications. 2G, short for second-generation cellular networks, allows services such as phone calls, text messages, picture messages and multimedia messages. However, the technology does not let users download data, send and receive emails, or access the Internet.

According to Minister Hung, the shutdown of 2G services plays an important role in promoting smartphone ownership, which in turn promotes e-government, online transactions and the digital economy. Vietnam's telecommunications networks currently employ three different technologies, including GSM (2G), which was deployed in 1990, IMT 2000 (3G) launched in 2009, and LTE-A (4G) deployed in 2016.

The number of registered mobile subscribers has exceeded 143 million compared to the nation's population of nearly 97 million. About 72 percent of the population owned smartphones, according to a 2018 report by Appota.



~USD430 MILLION

IN LOSS REVENUE EXPECTED BY VIETNAMESE AIRLINES DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS.

Vietnam declared a public health emergency over the epidemic on February 1 and banned all flights to and from China, where more than 1,000 people have died from the virus. The ban would affect about 400,000 passengers a month, the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam said in a statement. The number of passengers on all international flights fell 14.1 percent during the first week of February from a year earlier, it added.

Vietnam Airlines, Vietjet Aviation and Jetstar Pacific Airlines conduct commercial flights on 72 routes between Vietnam and China. "The flights [to and from China] can only be resumed under the approval from the Prime Minister," CAAV director Dinh Viet Thang said in the statement.

~40,000

TRAIN TICKETS RETURNED DUE TO COVID-19.

Due to the reduction in passengers, railway transport joint stock companies had to cancel 78 passenger trains, 8.3 percent lower

than planned.

Passenger transport revenue is expected to fall by VND54.8 billion, decreasing 13.3 percent over the same period last year. Cargo transport revenue is expected to decrease by VND9.9 billion.

In order to minimize damage, VR is implementing policies to reduce fares on North-South trains, and promotion programs for groups and tourism companies with early booking, long distance or large number of passengers. However, the promotion of rail fares was not attractive enough to passengers, partly because of the continuing epidemic, partly because fares of other means such as aviation and road were also discounted.



80,000

WORKERS ARE NEEDED IN HO CHI MINH CITY FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE HCM CITY HUMAN RESOURCES FORECAST AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (FALMI) CENTRE.

Most jobs are available in business: sale, service, transportation and information technology, among others.

In January, the city helped more than 23,100 laborers to get jobs and created over 10500 new jobs, or 7.73 percent and 7.84 percent of the yearly plan. According to the center, the city's recruitment demand for February is lower than the initial plan with about 30,000 job vacancies. Of the number, the demand for trained laborers makes up 83.18 percent, including 14.06 percent of university graduates. Fields recruiting many laborers include garment-textiles, mechanical engineering, food processing, business-sale, real estate, information technology, and finance/accounting, among others.

In 2020, the center forecasts the city will need about 323,000 workers, with 135,000 new jobs. The city's demand for trained laborers stands at 85 percent, including 19.8 percent of university graduates.



99

YEARS IN PRISON GRANTED TO BLACK CREDIT GANG IN THANH HOA.

They are considered the biggest loan shark gang, known as 'black credit', led by Thanh, who were lending money and demanding payback at extortionate rates. Thanh received ten years and six months in prison for his role in the operation. Chuong, a gang member, was sentenced to 16 years in prison and the remaining defendants were sentenced to between 18 months and ten years for the same charge.

In July 2017, Thanh and Thang established a company without a license named Nam Long Financial Company. The company was located in District 1 in HCMC and was directed by Thanh. Thanh also established company branches in 63 provinces and cities nationwide. From late 2017 to June 2018, Thanh and his gang members lent money to around 95 people with total loans worth more than VND32 billion. They earned VND8.6 billion from the deals.

USD19 MILLION

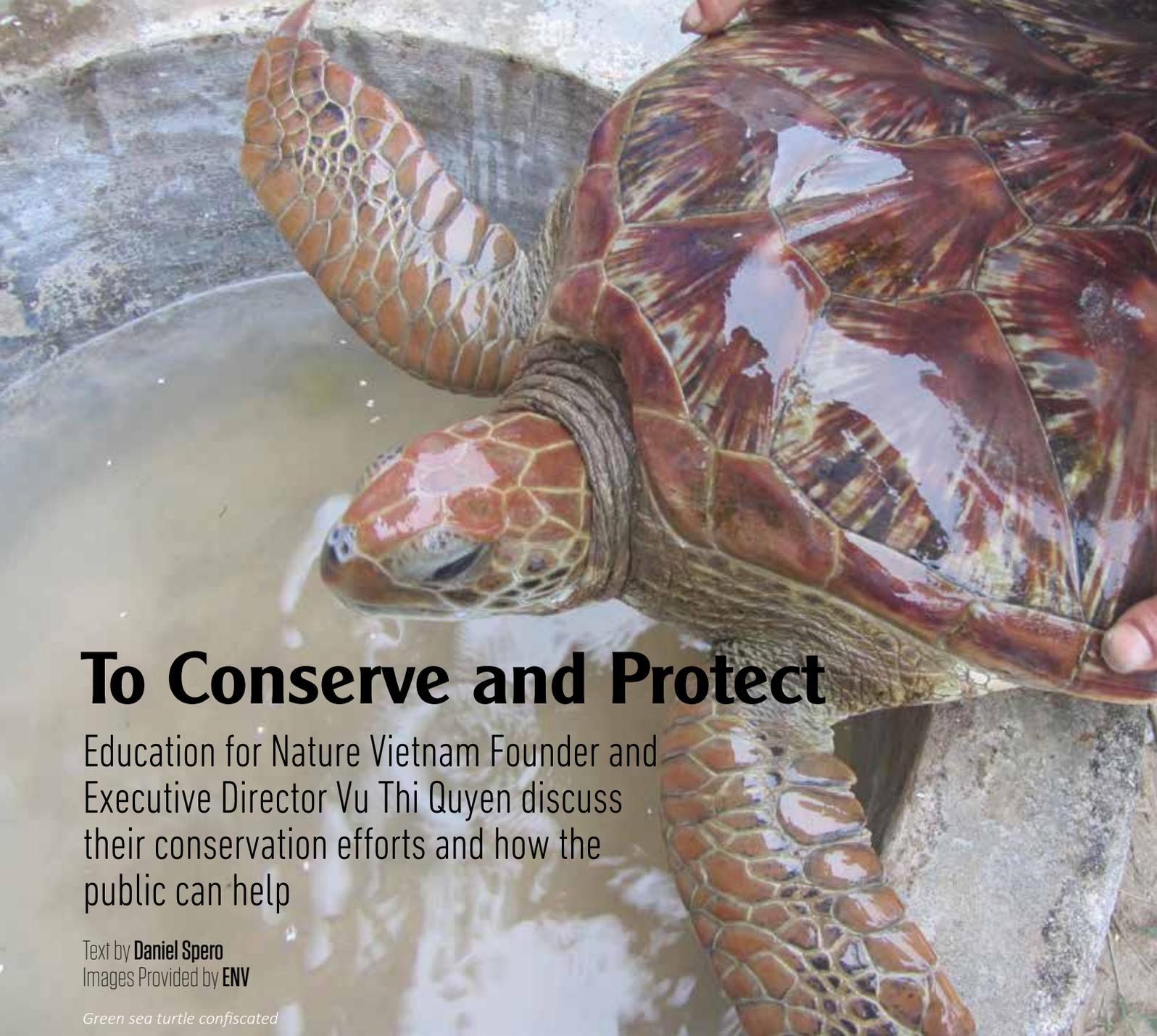
WILL BE USED TO RENOVATE A HISTORIC SITE IN TAY NINH.

Funds will come from the provincial budget and private sources. Among the historic sites to be renovated are the special national relic site of the Central Bureau of southern Vietnam's Party Committee, Bau Rong Military Base, Trang Bang Revolutionary Youth Base, An Thoi guerrilla warfare tunnel, Rach Tram relic site, Binh Thanh Ancient Tower, Hiep Ninh Communal House, and the temple and tomb of Huynh Cong Thang.

After the upgrade, the province will open them to the public as tourism destinations. In the 2021-25 period, the province will continue to renovate 25 more historic relic sites, including the first base of Tay Ninh Province's Communist Party in Giong Nan Hamlet in Chau Thanh District's Long Vinh Commune, the memorial site dedicated to war martyr Duong Minh Chau, Loi Thuan guerrilla warfare tunnel, and Rung Nhum Base, among others.

There are 90 relic sites in the province, including one special national relic site, 25 national-level relics and 64 provincial-level relics.





To Conserve and Protect

Education for Nature Vietnam Founder and Executive Director Vu Thi Quyen discuss their conservation efforts and how the public can help

Text by **Daniel Spero**
Images Provided by **ENV**

Green sea turtle confiscated

SHORTLY AFTER GRADUATING from university, Vu Thi Quyen took part in a conservation project at Cuc Phuong National Park working to educate the local community on why it was important to preserve the integrity of the national park. That was back in 1996, which, as Quyen noted, “At that time you can picture that conservation, protecting nature and wildlife was kind of an alien concept in Vietnam, especially raising awareness within the local community.”

While there may have been obstacles Quyen was able to see positive interest from the local community from the educational program she helped develop. “After two years we expanded the program to all the communities around Cuc Phuong National Park as well as the schools, and the community really loved what we were doing.”

Based on that experience, Quyen realized how important these conservation efforts were, not just to local communities,

but to the entire country and began to expand her community-based educational and conservation efforts. By 2000 she founded the NGO Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) with a simple vision, “We created ENV to help other protected areas by creating similar initiatives.”

From there ENV began to train people to understand their educational and conservation focus. As they worked and grew they were invited to various national parks and protected areas to contribute to local conservation efforts. As Quyen explained, “Once there, our experts could help identify endangered species and teach Vietnamese about the need to protect wildlife and nature, but it’s not enough. For children growing up now, it could be too late.”

Through this important work ENV has changed the attitudes of not just the local community, but of park rangers and other stakeholders in these conservation efforts. Of course, not everyone is going to

be on board, but they’ve dealt with them as well. “A scientist on a park staff went into the forest late one night with his brother to conduct an amphibian study. As they worked on the study they could hear a poacher approaching them. They had no guns, only a flashlight. So the younger brother shined the flashlight into the poacher’s face while the older brother held up a frog as a gun and told the poachers to freeze. They ended up arresting those poachers with nothing but a frog,” she recalled.

In 2005 ENV’s conservation efforts expanded from community-based educational programs to a nationwide hotline: 1800 1522. As Quyen described, “We wanted to provide a trusted mechanism for the public to be involved in protecting wildlife because sometimes the public may want to help but may not trust the system, so the idea is that we could be the intermediary. So when



we receive information from the public we will investigate for them and push the authorities to do their job. Whether we succeed or not we report back the results to the public. By doing so we increase transparency between the local authorities and the public.”

That transparency has translated to accountability, yielding great results. Over the years ENV has received a lot more support from officials and seen an increase in calls to the hotline from the public, all actions that are saving endangered wildlife. They now average around five new cases to investigate each day, resulting in the government imposing stricter sentencing on poachers and loggers.

More recently, ENV has started creating PSAs (public service announcements) that air on national television and radio. They produce around four new PSAs each year with topics such as “why Vietnam should not allow the farming of endangered species” or “how cruel the process of procuring bear bile for traditional liver remedies truly is”. As Quyen stated, “Through these efforts, we try to have a maximum impact if we can in three areas; public awareness,

law enforcement and legislation.”

Over the years, ENV has gone from province to province helping to free many species; thousands of bears, hundreds of tigers, pangolins, turtles, macaques and many, many more; finding them homes where they will be safe.

“The capacity of law enforcement to take care of these animals has increased significantly, with many parks now having rescue centers for these animals, from a primate rescue center in Cuc Phuong National Park to a bear rescue center in Cat Tien,” said Quyen.

From public awareness to law enforcement and legislation, ENV has done a great deal to help endangered wildlife in Vietnam. To be a part of that success view ENV’s PSAs on their website or YouTube, call the hotline if you see wildlife being kept in captivity or sold at local markets, and make a donation to through their website, env4wildlife.org

For more info go to env4wildlife.org or to report any illegal or suspicious activity regarding wildlife call the toll-free National Wildlife Crime Hotline at 1800 1522.



Pangolin seizure



Loris confiscated



Bear Rescue in Dong Nai



Customer Satisfaction

Learn the differences between customer service versus customer experience, and how they work together to boost lifelong loyalty

Interview by **Christine Van**
Images by **Vy Lam**

POP QUIZ, CORPORATE BUSINESS leaders: Which team or department is responsible for customer experience? Here's a hint: Think beyond department borders.

Sales, Customer Service, Marketing, Logistics, IT, etc. Delivering incredible customer experiences in today's agile economy is a team sport. Each and every area of the company is customer-facing in some way, shape or form.

Transforming operations to get every department rowing in the same direction to improve customer experience starts with simply listening to your customers and continuously improve or surprise them with better products, services or interactions, that's customer experience management.

Carsten Ley is the Co-founder of Asia PMO (asiapmo.com), a management consulting firm based in East Asia and is an expert in customer experience & agile management. His career in focusing on customer demands and improving their experiences has made him an expert in the field, and he has worked with H&M Online Global, Milano Coffee Vietnam and MIT Myanmar, among others to improve their organization, services and products and giving their customers a

pleasant shopping or service experience.

Oi sat down with Carsten and spoke to him about his journey in the industry and the many complex layers of providing the best customer experience.

How did you get involved in customer experience and what led you to become a customer experience consultant?

I was working for Home Credit Vietnam in 2013 as Project Manager in charge of company-wide projects and innovations. In 2014 I led a customer service project to restructure and improve the CS hotlines, and in 2015 I was approached to kick-start the Customer Experience (CX) project by collecting all customer-relevant data throughout the company, analyze main issues and implement improvement actions on a monthly basis with all major departments involved. After a couple of months, the CEO asked me to be CX Manager as CX was established as a full-function within the company. Within the next 12 months, I set up a CX team for research, data analytics and action management to improve services, products and processes based on customer needs. In 2016, I received an offer from Lazada Vietnam to be their Vice President of CX/CS so I switched,



in a similar role, on a bigger scope to the start-up and e-commerce sector. Beside customer data analysis and improvements we were running CX in Lazada to change the mindset of the employees and partners to be customer-centric and more sensitive to customer demands and expectations.

There are a lot of initials on your website - OKR, CX, CS, EX, PMO - what do they stand for and why are they important in your industry?

Asia PMO offers management consulting to make an organization more actionable towards their targets, their market, and their customers while caring about employees. "PMO" is the basic "Project Management Office" that monitors and controls all actions and projects within the company. Customer Experience (CX)/ Employee Experience (EX) are strategic initiatives to understand & analyze the needs of customers/employees and to

implement actions to make their lives easier (so they stay longer with the product or company). CS (Customer Service) is usually the hotline or chat team in the company that solves customer inquiries, issues or complaints.

OKR (Objectives & Key Results) is a management technique used to plan, organize and measure the progress of a company, team or individual. While KPI (Key Performance Indicators) are performance measures that are given by the top management to the staff, OKR is a more inspiring and team-focused planning which connects the company's strategy & objectives to the purpose of the teams or employees. OKR is also more flexible and agile as we plan on a 3-month cycle for fast-moving sectors like tech, start-ups or e-commerce.

What are some critical mistakes businesses make when it comes to customer experience?

1) Businesses confuse customer experience with customer service: Customer service is fixing mistakes for an individual customer, which is very important but is very time and cost-intensive for companies. Making the customer happy by fixing mistakes could work to retain him/her but it is not a sustainable happy experience. Customer Experience is looking for the main needs/issues of the majority of customers and trying to fix regular processes, product parameters & service dimensions to avoid more unhappy customers in the future and to create more fans of a brand.

2) No involvement of CX before launching a new product or service:

Most companies first implement apps, payment systems, delivery channels, search features, etc. and wait for the customer feedback to see if it works or not. A testing approach with potential customers can assure customer-friendly features.

3) No proactive feedback channels: Companies are only reacting to complaints and negative social media posts to fix their issues. However, 50-60% of their customers are typically

neither happy nor unhappy with a service/product and do not give any active feedback whether by rating, surveys or posting. These customers are likely to switch to a competitor and therefore can be a huge loss. It is necessary to understand these "neutral" customers and why they do not come back.

When launching an e-commerce website, what are some of the key mistakes beginners make?

1) Generic international templates for webpages and checkout (e.g. each country has specific requirements on address, payment and other fields).

2) An overly complicated way to pay and checkout, such as having too many steps/info required.

3) Not controlling the customer experience of the third parties (seller, delivery companies, etc.).

Service staff in Vietnam like to hover over customers because they feel that it is considered good customer service, but foreigners find that uncomfortable and intrusive. How accepting or tolerant should we be with cultural differences in customer service?

Generally, we should not accept anything that makes us uncomfortable when it comes to customer service, however, we should respect cultural differences. We should allow for a compromise. For example, certain things like shouting "em oi" to get a waiter's attention you'll need to adapt to otherwise you will sit there for ages without service, other things depend on the price level and internationality of a place. I expect more of a top-class service in an Italian restaurant or 5-star international hotel than in a local family eatery.

What do you find to be some of the biggest challenges in helping companies and their employees deliver the best Customer Experience (CX)?

CX is a long-term continuous improvement cycle with regular small wins rather than a big leap forward, and most companies and employees do not have the patience for this. Also, the ROI (Return on Investment) can only be measured mid- and long-term in the form of customer retention and recommendation.

How are social media and customer experience both parts of a continuous cycle?

Social media is a great interactive and feedback tool (besides being a sales channel for retailers and services). Social media can help us understand customers and can be a channel to communicate improvements and promotions to customers. As a feedback tool, it is important to scan social media channels to respond to customers quickly and in an appropriate way (we explain this further in our Customer Experience Intro Training)

In terms of online and offline Customer Experience, which do you find harder to train employees in and why?

The online journey is basically the UX (User Experience) of an app or webpage and could be more easily designed, measured and adapted by tech teams.

Offline experiences (the real taxi ride, e-commerce product, food service, etc.) are much harder to excel at because it requires smooth processes between different suppliers and good soft and behavioral skills by service staff. Typically, third parties or freelancers, such as delivery companies, freelancers or restaurants, are in charge of the real product the customer ordered and therefore more difficult to train or control.

Moreover, in a country like Vietnam the impression on offline and real experiences are stronger, therefore some tech companies have branding and complaint issues on the end product even when their apps are good.

During our project for H&M online shopping, we realized that their return conditions on the online store are different than in a brick and mortar shop and that online purchases cannot be returned or changed in shops. A customer does not care if he/she buys from the company's website or in the shop or even from the company's distributor or partner. As long as it is your product, the customer expects similar quality, service and conditions. We advised H&M to follow the example of Zara and create a consistent experience as to not confuse the customer and let them easily understand how to do deal with you.

One of your training services is called Customer Experience Boot Camp. What does this involve?

Our CX boot camp is an interactive training and workshop in which we understand customer experience as a process, team, change tool and implementation cycle. We will learn and practice how to map all steps of the customer on your product and services (customer journey map), find out who is your typical customer (persona) and apply all the tools needed to measure customer feedback and data. Based on that, we develop actions to improve your product or services and ways to measure the impact. The second part of the training is how to implement Customer Experience as a team and process into your company and how to start and grow a customer-centric culture.

Which countries stand out when it comes to CX and which ones still need the most improvement?

I do not think we can make it country specific in a globalized world, however, the level of hospitality and professionalism influences CX. ■





108

Sun Salutations Challenge

Celebrating spring equinox while also giving back to the local community

Text by **Stephanie Cantrell**
 Images Provided by **Yoga Joy Saigon**

THE SUN SITS LOW IN THE SKY, the morning air is still cool. People begin to arrive, yoga mats over their shoulders, hair still wet from the shower and water bottles or coffee cups in their hands. An altar is set up at the front, the river its backdrop. A carved Buddha sits in the centre already surrounded by an assortment of personal belongings -a set of wedding bands, a mala, a crystal and a family snapshot.

So began the 2019 inaugural Sun Salutations Challenge, held by Yoga Joy Saigon to mark the Spring Equinox and raise money for The Little Rose Warm Shelter, a charity that rehabilitates girls and young women at risk or survivors of sexual trafficking in Vietnam.

Saturday March 21st 2020 will be the second annual challenge, held at Riverside Residences in Phu My Hung District 7. The event brings together dedicated yogis and newbies alike, with no prior knowledge of yoga necessary to take part.

So what *is* the Sun Salutations Challenge?

This practice is traditionally observed by the yoga community to celebrate the change in seasons. People come together to complete 108 sets of *Surya Namaskar*—more commonly known as sun salutations. This is a sequence of 12 poses that anyone who has done yoga will no doubt be familiar with. The whole event takes about 60 to 90 minutes, with an instructor leading the group and calling out cues for each pose. Modifications and rests are encouraged for those who need them, making this a truly inclusive event.

Why 108 sets, you may ask? Well, the number or *numbers* 108 hold a lot of significance in the yoga world.

- 1, 0 and 8 respectively refer to higher truth, emptiness or completeness in practice, and eternity or infinity. Together, the numbers connect the whole universe.
- There are 108 sacred sites throughout India, according to

yogic tradition.

- The average distance of the Sun, Moon and Earth is 108 times their respective diameters.
- The Sanskrit alphabet has 54 letters, each with a feminine and masculine form, adding up to 108 total.
- Prayer beads or *mala* have 108 beads.

From a spiritual side participation in a 108 challenge is unforgettable. The silence of the group as each person works through their own challenge is electrifying. There may be soft music in the background and the cueing of breath by the lead instructor, but underlying that is a quiet, contemplative hush, similar to what you experience in a temple or church.

To harness all that energy being created by the kind of people who choose to get in the early hours for this challenge, an altar sits at the front or centre of the group. Participants are encouraged to bring something special to them to place on the altar, both to offer personal encouragement throughout the challenge, and to be ‘charged’ by the positive energy created by the group.

Do I Have to Be a Yogi?

All that said, the challenge is not a religious event, and plenty of participants are not regular yoga students. They may attend to help out a charity, support local businesses, or simply challenge themselves mentally

and physically. Basically, the 'woo woo' side of yoga is there for those who want it, and not forced down the throats of those who don't.

As for fitness, the pace is slow enough that individuals unfamiliar with the sequence can follow the instructor and other students. The lead instructor will offer more gentle modifications that people can take (for example, taking knees down for chaturanga -high to low plank) as well as encourage anyone to rest in Child's Pose if they're feeling tired.

For an indication of physical exertion, the Sun Salutation Challenge has been described as more of a 5km race than a

marathon. However, the length of the event (more than an hour) means that your mind will be put through a similar experience to longer races. The beauty of the 108 Challenge is battling the tedium of repetitive poses, challenging yourself to find peace in your breath and see each set of 12 poses as its own hurdle to complete. Many people feel themselves entering a trance-like state as their body takes over, repeating the sequences as the mind meditates.

The Yoga Joy Sun Salutation Challenge is the only one of its kind in Saigon, offering like-minded people the chance to come together and challenge

themselves for charity. Mats are available for those who don't have one, and a charity raffle follows the challenge with a range of prizes from local sponsors including Saigon Suds, Pom Pom, AMP, I am Kendell, Malt South, Simrans Bakery, Pho 24, Highlands Coffee & Aldo. ■

Join the event on facebook at www.facebook.com/yogajoyssaigonadultprograms/ or email alison@yogajoyssaigon.com. The registration fee is VND500,000 with all proceeds going to charity. March 21, 2020; 8-10am; Riverside Residences (Nguyen Luong Bang, Phu My Hung, D7)



#Photojournalism



FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

protests to democratic uprisings against biased and violent authorities, it is clear that 2019 has been a pivotal year for citizens all over the world. It's in this context that mobile app Agora launched its first #Photojournalism photo competition, with the objective to give photographers a way to shed light on specific issues.

"People who manage to be in the right place at the right time can become potential journalists for all Humanity. Through #Photojournalism2020, we aim to discover the best informative images by people worldwide. Everyone owns a camera, and can create interesting content. Everyone has a screen in their hands, where they can see content and vote for what they like the most. At Agora

we feel that the time has come for people all across the globe to become the main protagonists: the result is the very best expression of humankind, in different themes, shapes and formats. We believe that every point of view is important, and that our mission is to generate a platform where users can create and vote for the best creations of Humanity," says Octavi Royo, Agora's CEO and Co-Founder. ■

Devotees Return Home by @sakter (Bangladesh)

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

I took this shot at Dhaka's airport railway station during Biswa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of Muslim community after Hajj. Every compartment of the train along with engine was overloaded!



Two Firefighters Stopping as a Tree Candles in Front of Them While On a Patrol by @RhythmOutdoors (UK)

Location: British Columbia, Canada

After a long day, starting at 7am, we went on a patrol at roughly 6pm along a section of the fires perimeter to make sure that the fire had not jumped the guard and continue to burn the untouched forest. While walking an area candles up in front of us, after a brief pause, we kept on going. 5 minutes later we looked behind and the area we were walking was black with smoke. We then received

news that the fire had jumped the guard higher up. After hiking roughly and hour up what can only be described as a steep hill we made it to join the others help extinguish the area of fire. At 9pm we finished up making it back to base camp at 10pm ready for supper and another 7am start. Climate change is one of the biggest issues we face, with a huge percentage of wildfires being man

made, it is vital to spread the word and understanding on just how dangerous wildfires are to those who live in areas of the world with high heat and humidity. Being from the UK where wildfire are extremely uncommon and my lack of knowledge and understanding, to then experience working in the industry fighting fires is eye opening



Pride Walk by @prit28 (India)

Location: Kolkata, India

I wanted to portray the joy of freedom of the LGBT community after the Supreme Court of India decriminalized homosexuality by declaring Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional. There were more than 200 members from the community on that pride walk. It was quite an overwhelming experience for me to witness something I have never done before. I think photojournalism is a genre that should be completely blunt and honest. It should spread an awareness worldwide.





World Champions Day by @pascalpbz (France)

Location: Dieppe, France

This picture was taken in Dieppe, moments after the football World Cup final of France vs Croatia. It was madness! The crowd invaded the streets all evening and all night. It was a big

party that united all the French people. There was no difference to be seen between anyone, it was beautiful to see. Everyone wanted to be photographed. It was amazing.

Hope by @adeelchishti (Pakistan)

Location: Lahore, Pakistan

It was Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations: everybody was happy and enjoying this day. Then, I saw this father and son suffering from polio. I was amazed to see that a father can't leave his son alone in unhappy situations of loneliness at home. He brought out his son outside to celebrate just like any other citizen. His love for his son made me cry, I cropped his head on the photo because I'm not able to display this kind of painful emotions.





Appreciating Beauty V _58x160cm_2019_ silk painting

Life Ordinary

A solo exhibition of watercolor on silk paintings by Hanoi-based artist Le Thuy

Text and Images Provided by **Craig Thomas Gallery**

MANY FIRST TIME VIEWERS of Le Thuy will express a mixture of admiration and confusion when encountering her work. What at first glance appears ethereally beautiful also reveals itself to be deeply macabre. The silk paintings exhibit both the artist's intense love of nature and her great lament for what is being lost in the natural world as mankind's race *forward* continues. Le Thuy's silk paintings take the micro-events that are taking place constantly in nature and show them for the titanic life and death struggles that they really are.

Le Thuy says, "The works of my *Life Ordinary* collection depict my grief for the loss of the natural world, our collective loss. There is much evidence in literature, poetry, and architecture that celebrates the majesty of nature and our place within it. Now, we have nothing but pollution, ugly high-rises, barren fields and diseased herds. Nature was beautiful, and we made it pitiful. And it would be pitiful if we only know the beauty of nature through recorded images of the past."

Le Thuy continues, "I especially like the passage in Masanobu

Fukuoka's *On Straw Revolution* which states 'Snake bites frog. Hawk hunts snake. Wolf attacks hawk. One person kills the wolf, and later succumbs to tuberculosis. Bacteria grows in human corpses and the grass thrives on the nutrients from this bacterial activity. Insects attack plants and frogs feed on insects.' Humans are just a part of the natural cycle of life. Going against nature will only lead to self-destruction.

"I choose images from nature and arrange them according to the law of survival. All living beings are wrestling with life and death approaches. As the bird lies decaying in the field, covered in flies, corn stalks wither desolately with only the echo of the waterfowl in the emptiness. Even the comfortable herd struggles with nature for survival. I am recording a heroic epic about the death of all life. I hope that after death, life returns as ordinary." ■

"Life Ordinary" will be showing until March 12, 2020 at Craig Thomas Gallery (27i Tran Nhat Duat, D1; www.cthomasgallery.com)



Silent Spring 5
60x170cm_2019_ Silk painting



Appreciating Beauty IV_60x170cm_2019_ silk painting



*Silent Spring 6
60x170cm_2019_ Silk painting*



*White Space 15
60x170cm_2019_ Silk painting*



*White Space 16
60x170cm_2019_ Silk painting*



The State of Fashion

The McKinsey Report on Fashion Trends for 2020 including Commentary from Three Local Designers

Text by Thomas Gaetano Giglione

THE BUSINESS OF FASHION and McKinsey & Company have teamed up to create an authoritative report that provides an annual picture of The State of Fashion within the global fashion industry. The report is a survey of over 290 global fashion executives and interviews with thought leaders and pioneers that also includes a fashion industry benchmark, the McKinsey Global Fashion Index (MGFI). The index is composed of over 500 various public and private companies and created to

track the industry's performance through three key variables: sales, operating profit and economic profit.

The report showed, sadly, that the fashion executives surveyed across various value segments and regions foresaw a slowdown in the industry in 2020. The percentage of survey respondents that expect global economic conditions to improve in the next year has fallen dramatically from 49% from 2019 to 9% for 2020.

Sustainability is a growing trend,

and while the number of mass-market products made from sustainable materials remains low, there has been a 500% increase over the past two years.

The Norwegian Consumer Authority (CA) prompted H&M to more clearly communicate to consumers about the pollution it creates, and the report predicted to see even higher standards.

Apps like Good On You and Buycott better encourage young, environmentally conscious consumers and raise awareness for the Sustainable Apparel

Coalition's HIGG index (for personal sustainability assessment).

Fashion tech has begun to revolutionize the thinking of upcoming millennial fashion designers who are trying to appeal to both this generation and the next.

Established brands and trendsetters like Louis Vuitton and Gucci are now more interested in developing gaming experiences in order to drive sales rather than creating virtual clothing collections. Gucci is launching augmented reality apps aimed at assisting smartphone users with making purchase decisions after trying on digital sneakers virtually using

augmented reality start-up Wanna Kicks.

Louis Vuitton recently became the first luxury brand to partner with the video game League of Legends by offering in-game "skins."

FarFetch, for instance, markets its clothing through a gaming app called Drest, which assigns players human-like avatars, and people can actually buy fashionable digital clothing for their avatars. In order to improve our understanding of the situation, we consulted three leading fashion designers. Here are a few key takeaways from their interviews:



Thomas G. Giglione is a keynote speaker, writer and founder of Guaranteed Original, a Canadian-Vietnamese joint venture start-up. Guaranteed Original is an ecommerce and inbound social media marketing platform that markets art and fashion on an online gallery using Internet of Things technology such as NFC labels and customized QR codes.

Anna Vo - Saigon

Anna Vo is the Global Ambassador at Istituto Maragonini, Creative Director at PNJ, Founder, and Creative Director of Anna Vo Fashion. Having been in the industry for a decade, Anna has quite closely observed a vast shift from the traditional shop-based purchasing to online buying.

According to Anna, fashion and technology complement each other, and any brand that doesn't accept the marriage between these two verticals cannot sustain. She points out that fashion giants like GAP, Zara, Forever21 and H&M have lost their customer loyalty because of "weak digitization policies" and less focus on customer-centric bespoke fashionables. All of her customers are discovering that purchasing fast fashion

does not make you unique.

Anna replied positively regarding Revival trends, recalling Jenifer Lopez wearing a 20-year-old famous brand in a show last year. She stated that the present mindset of fashion is pulled out from a mix of the 70s and 90s eras.

Anna also replied positively about the effects of political and geopolitical challenges on fashion. The global trade war between the US and China and the most recent coronavirus have hugely impacted the fashion industry supply chain.

She suggested that upcoming fashion designers with startups need to find their market niche brands. They also need to focus on more trends of personalization rather than creating self-made fashion wear and gear benchmarks.

At PNJ, where she is the creative

director, QR codes and IoT technology are used in marketing its brand of jewelry through creating AI-VR games, quizzes and selfie contests.

She added that customer reviews, overviews and comments make a huge impact on her designs and brand. She also suggested that her line developed when she moved away from ego-centric to customer-centric based fashion. Anna also advises new young talents interested in a career and developing their own line to first "intern, intern and intern." Internships and mentoring programs are an invaluable source of inspiration for young designers.

She hopes that young designers develop a much more mature, open-minded mindset in order to accept international fashion influence.



Le Hoang Son - Hanoi

Son is a recent graduate of the London College of Design and Fashion in Hanoi and recently was first runner up in Asia New Gen Fashion award by Harper's Bazaar magazine. He recently launched Lee Hoang Son Fashion, his own start-up fashion brand.

Son was so taken by fashion that he gave up studying law at the objection of his parents, enrolled in the London School of Fashion and Design and has not looked back since.

He believes that because of the way technology is building a stronghold in the fashion circles, a complete revolution of traditional retail is not far off into the future. He terms the latest fad in Vietnam's fashion industry as 'fast fashion'—easily accessible fashion, procured quickly and stemmed from much less labor.

In pointing out "weak digitization" policies as the most significant reason

behind the closure of GAP, Forever21 and Macy's, Son's words echoed Anna Vo's. Further strengthening the case, he agreed that brands like H&M and Zara were gaining popularity in Vietnam because of their social media presence. Son also added that "celebrity-endorsed" fashion and the "international brand" phenomenon were important influencers for Vietnamese people.

Son also agreed to the impact of the Industry 4.0 revolution on fashion, pointing out that people in Singapore were using QR codes online to scan and access printable images and videos for made-to-order fashionables.

Son chose "originality" as the most dominating factor word for fashion.



Rena Kok - Singapore

Rena Kok was another winner of the local judging round of Harper's Bazaar Asia New Gen Fashion Award that was held in Singapore. A recent graduate of LASALLE College of the Arts, she incorporated designs built on augmented reality technology.

Rena also has her own fashion start-up called Renakok Collection, which she promotes on her Instagram page. She also promotes her brand online on Fashion Crossover London.

Rena is based in Singapore and specializes in textile fashion coupled with women's accessories.

She believes that technology has made shopping so convenient that young fashion enthusiasts have made a complete shift from retail to online. Also, she said she's been observing upcoming fashion designers wanting to promote sustainability clothing over any other type. While she emphasizes brand positioning and a targeted customer approach, she is also incorporating using QR codes into her design for scanning images ranging from regular to motif. Rena mainly focuses on fabric and materials for making her line of handbags and shoes compliment hip dress culture. She puts emphasis on

brand positioning and targeted customer approaches.

Fashion and smartphone scanning are a perfect match and there are already applications of QR codes on clothing being used successfully. Smart PJs wanted a way to differentiate their pajamas from the crowd, so when parents scan the codes on these PJs, they can play a video using the video QR code or audio to help children get to sleep. Rochambeau, a New York-based design company, came up with something they dubbed a "smart jacket." This futuristic-sounding jacket came with a zip pocket on one arm, which held a QR code, and when scanning the codes, wearers can find out about music, fashion and art events being organized under the Rochambeau brand, and even access discounts at The New Stand—Rochambeau's retail partners. Elite brands like Rochambeau and children's pajama brands aren't alone in using scannable codes on clothes, Zara added QR codes to their labels, providing information about sizes and colors, and how their garments are made. Burlesque legend and designer Dita Von Teese used QR codes to promote her personal brand, attaching codes to her dresses which linked directly to her Twitter page. The Hointer app uses codes linked to robotics 'droids' which then collect shoes or shirts in the correct size and bring them straight to shoppers with no fuss in between.

The biggest take away from the McKinsey report and interviews from local designers reveal that over 70%, or more than two-thirds of fashion players, believe "increased exploration of spending on new media platforms vs. 'traditional' platforms" will be a top theme in the coming year. ■



Pet of the Month



Images Courtesy of S & A's Foster



Augusta and Savannah

Augusta and Savannah are a bonded pair of female cats that have been with ARC for almost two years. Augusta is ginger and white while Savannah is ginger with a tiny bit of white around her mouth. The two sisters have been spayed and have gone through fostering, time in the cat room in Thao Dien, and are now with new fosters.

Ever since they were found at a construction site as kittens, Savannah and Augusta have been a little skittish around humans. It isn't hard to imagine why. They were surrounded by concrete and metal, with no mother cat to be found. This isn't a situation that kittens would thrive in, to be sure!

The volunteers of ARC had hoped that with fostering and then some time

in the cat room, the two would become more comfortable around people but, unfortunately, that was not the case in the beginning. In fact, Augusta and Savannah went through the long hot summer in the cat room and were beginning to avoid humans entirely. There had been a lot of construction around the cat room during their stay, so possibly the loud noise caused them to recall the stress of being abandoned at the construction site—definitely a bad memory for two little cats.

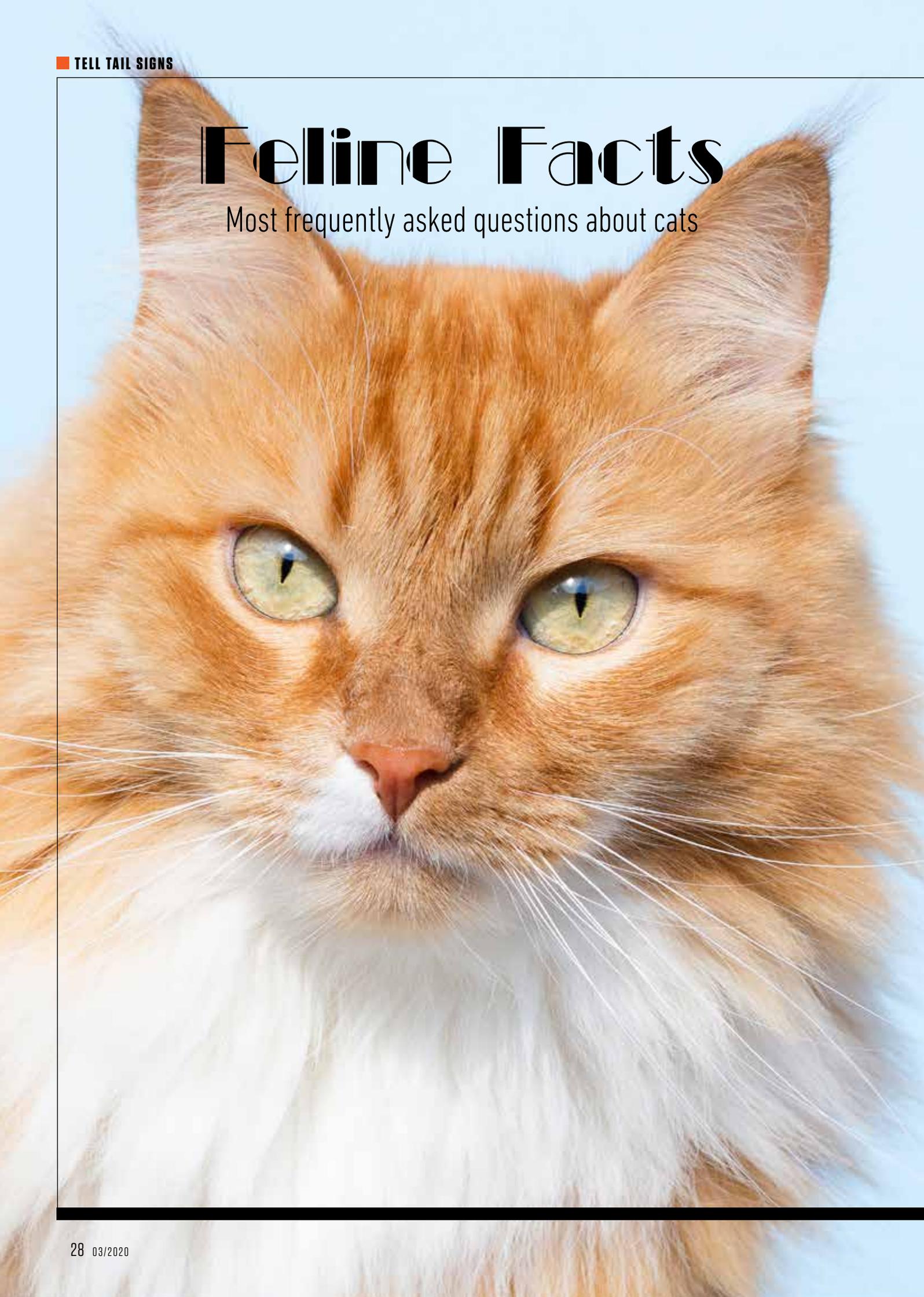
In any event, Augusta and Savannah had a setback and were no longer comfortable with the other cats or the volunteers in the cat room, so it was time for them to receive diligent socialization through fostering by very experienced cat fosters.

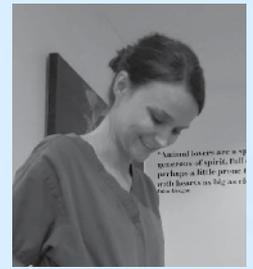
Good news! The socialization is paying off, and Augusta and Savannah are making progress at their foster home. What these two need now is a patient and understanding family that will give them time to trust their humans on their own terms. The two are so bonded that they cannot be adopted separately, so would be perfect for someone who would like to adopt two cats that get along well together. They are comfortable with young well-behaved children and will thrive in a quiet home with a family that has a consistent routine. All of the ARC volunteers who have worked with Augusta and Savannah have enjoyed their calm demeanor and hope to see them in a happy home of their own very soon! ■

If you would like to be considered for adoption of these two lovely cats, send an email to arcpets@gmail.com.

Feline Facts

Most frequently asked questions about cats





Dr. Martyna Lukmin is a veterinary surgeon who graduated from Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences in Poland in 2015. After graduation, she gained experience at veterinary clinics in Poland and Cyprus with a focus on small and exotic animals. She traveled around Southeast Asia and South America working with animal charity organizations before coming to Laos. She has been with Animal Doctors International since 2016. Martyna loves the ocean and sharks, and spends her free time traveling, diving and reading.

Why Do Cats Meow?

Most behavioral experts believe the meowing in cats is an attention-seeking behavior. Kittens meow to their mothers, likely as a way to get fed or get loved. And since it worked as a kitten, adult cats likely continue the behavior with their humans when they need something like food or companionship.

Why Is My Cat Vomiting?

Sometimes people get frustrated with us vets because they'd like a simple answer to this question and, unfortunately, there's not. Vomiting is a symptom of many, many diseases. Cats also vomit to bring up hairballs, which collect in their stomachs as a by-product of the grooming that they do. But, it's also important to know that cats that are vomiting 2-15min after finishing their meal just means they ate too much and their little stomach can't take that much food. This is typical of greedy cats that are fed dry food.

When we're trying to figure out what's making a cat vomit, we separate the list of considerations into two main categories: causes of acute vomiting, and causes of chronic vomiting. By rough definition, acute vomiting has been going on for less than 7 days. Typically, an acutely vomiting cat is also ill. Causes of acute vomiting include the ingestion of an irritating substance, such as plant material, gastrointestinal foreign body, ingestion of a toxin or poison, infection due to bacteria, virus, or parasites, kidney or liver failure, and pancreatitis.

Why Isn't My Cat Using The Litter Box?

Failure to use the litter box is the number one reason adult cats are surrendered at shelters and rescues. Even though sometimes it might seem like your cat is urinating outside the box just to spite you, for example, when you go out of town for the weekend, most of the time there's a medical cause. If it hurts to use the litter box, the cat will avoid it.

Urinary tract infection (UTI) can be the cause. It turns out that UTIs are actually pretty uncommon in cats under the age of 8, and most young cats that urinate outside the box have a condition called Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (abbreviated FLUTD).

Cats with FLUTD have all the signs of UTIs except one—no infection. These

cats experience pain, bloody urine and frequency of urination, but there are no bacteria in the urine. Most experts believe that stress plays a factor, and also a lack of enrichment for indoor cats.

Why Is My Cat's Eye Watery?

One of the most common problems we deal with in young cats, especially kittens, is a respiratory disease. Usually, a virus is the culprit, and since there aren't a lot of great anti-viral therapies out there, we typically provide supportive care and the cat's own immune system conquers the disease.

It turns out that these respiratory viruses, especially the feline herpes virus, also causes eye irritation, including excessive tearing and something we call "blepharospasm," which is just a fancy way of saying that the eyelid is partially closed.

Like I said above, most of the time these infections resolve on their own, but when eye discharge turns yellow or green it's usually a sign of a more serious problem, like a bacterial infection or even a corneal ulcer and your cat should get veterinary care as soon as possible.

My Cat Has a Big Bump. What Is It?

Big, squishy bumps on cats, especially in cats that go outside and are known to roughhouse with the neighbor cats, are often subcutaneous (under the skin) abscesses. Abscesses form when a cat is bitten by another cat. The cat's sharp, pointy teeth pierce the skin, leaving nasty mouth bacteria there to fester into an infection. Pus collects under the skin and the pocket enlarges, leaving a hot, painful, squishy abscess.

Left to their own devices, these bumps will almost always rupture, making the cat feel better but creating a pretty big mess. Abscesses always require veterinary care for appropriate healing, including lancing and draining the pus, then providing pain relief and antibiotics. Sometimes we even have to place a drain under the skin to encourage the infection to vacate while the antibiotics work.

If your cat has a bump and it's not an abscess, it could be any number of things, from a foreign body to a tumor. A sample of the mass should be taken with a needle and examined under the microscope to aid diagnosis and plan for treatment.

Why Do Cats Knead?

Cats need to knead because it feels good. More accurately, they do it because they feel good. They did it to their mothers when they were tiny, adorable, nursing balls of fur in order to encourage the milk in the mammary glands to come into the teats. The theory is that as adults they continue this behavior because they're content.

Why Is My Cat Scratching So Much?

Most of the time we want to rule out a flea infestation first. Depending on the cat's lifestyle and the area of the country in which it lives, this may be more or less likely; however, it's quick, easy and cheap to treat for fleas. We'd hate to embark on a complicated and expensive diagnostic effort only to find out the cat had fleas all along, so it's usually the first thing we try.

Cats that have been exposed to other cats recently are more likely to have diseases they can catch from them, such as mange and ringworm. Mange is an itchy skin disease caused by a mite infestation. Ringworm is actually a fungus, not a worm, and it also comes from other cats or dogs. There are special tests to diagnose these infections.

If we can't find fleas, mites or ringworm, the most likely cause of itching in cats are allergies. Allergies can be caused by exposure to a specific ingredient in the food, like fish or chicken, or to something in the environment, such as pollen or dust. Successfully treating allergies means stopping the immune reaction that's causing the itchiness, which usually means changing foods or using prescription medications and supplements like fish oil. ■

Where Travel and Fashion Meet

Text by **James Pham**

Images Provided by **Dominique Saint Paul**

TRAVEL AND FASHION HAVE always gone hand in hand. Vibrant market colors that find their way into prints, daring Harajuku girls who wear their outlandish outfits with confidence, magical moments in sacred spots—they all have the power to spark inspiration.

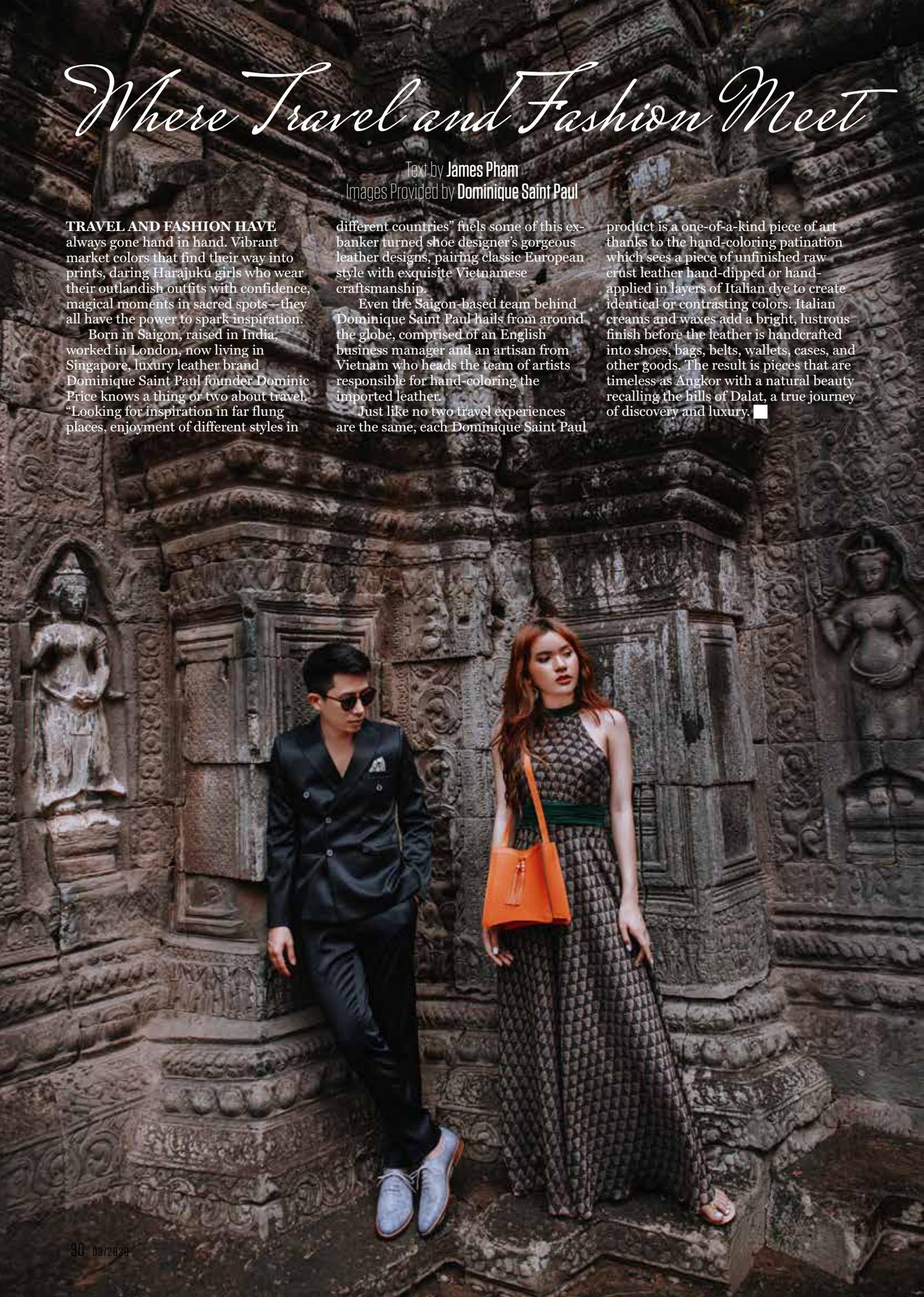
Born in Saigon, raised in India, worked in London, now living in Singapore, luxury leather brand Dominique Saint Paul founder Dominic Price knows a thing or two about travel. “Looking for inspiration in far flung places, enjoyment of different styles in

different countries” fuels some of this ex-banker turned shoe designer’s gorgeous leather designs, pairing classic European style with exquisite Vietnamese craftsmanship.

Even the Saigon-based team behind Dominique Saint Paul hails from around the globe, comprised of an English business manager and an artisan from Vietnam who heads the team of artists responsible for hand-coloring the imported leather.

Just like no two travel experiences are the same, each Dominique Saint Paul

product is a one-of-a-kind piece of art thanks to the hand-coloring patination which sees a piece of unfinished raw crust leather hand-dipped or hand-applied in layers of Italian dye to create identical or contrasting colors. Italian creams and waxes add a bright, lustrous finish before the leather is handcrafted into shoes, bags, belts, wallets, cases, and other goods. The result is pieces that are timeless as Angkor with a natural beauty recalling the hills of Dalat, a true journey of discovery and luxury. ■









Dominique Saint Paul
29 Dong Du, D1
www.dominiquesaintpaul.com

SAIGON



SPORTS





Cool Skatings

They train in sunny climes for a chilly sport

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

IT MAY SURPRISE THE uninitiated to know that Ho Chi Minh City—a metropolis whose primary meteorological modes are “hotter than necessary” and “wetter than necessary”—is home to a recreational ice hockey league. You may have to see it yourself at Thao Dien’s Vincom Mega Mall’s fifth floor ice rink where the players meet weekly on Tuesday evenings.

The hockey player’s size feels visually asymmetric to the ice-borne smoothness and elegance of the players who, despite their bulk, easily are visible proof of Newton’s first law of motion: an object in motion will stay in motion.

Rarely do players simply skate in a peaceful line, however. As an object in motion will stay in motion unless acted upon by a force, players regularly interrupt their momentum pivoting, dodging and changing path. Jersey colors denote the direction everyone needs to go. Like iron filings to a magnet, all are drawn to the puck, where it is, where it might go, a cluster of activity may, if done correctly, bring it within striking distance of the goal, under or around

the grounded, pad-swollen knee of the goalkeeper.

A hockey player grows about a quarter of their size wearing the bulk of the hockey gear. Like superheroes, a player would be hard to spot in their civilian clothing. The only give away that a suit-wearing player was getting on the ice was a large bag of what appeared to be athletic gear.

That, and the call across the room from organizer Ralf Matthaes. “Oh my, is that a goalie we’ve got?” Matthaes shouts in a friendly loud tone, speech that in a comic book might be depicted in capital letters and heavy font.

“This is what’s called a ‘beer league,’” Matthaes said, an intuitive term that describes the skilled-yet-not-serious nature of the league’s play. The structure is light, the stakes are low, the mood is friendly and fun-forward. “This is ‘Ralf wanted to play hockey, so he got his ass moving,’” Matthaes said laughing.

The ice, an expanse of polished ice about the size of a regulation hockey rink, is puzzlingly set in one corner of a food court. With minutes to go until

the evening’s players would take the ice, Matthaes—the de facto league organizer given his seniority, although officially his title is no title—sat in the food court booth and gave an abridged, oral history of ice hockey in Ho Chi Minh City.

“To grow hockey in Vietnam, you have to be ambassadorial,” he said matter of factly. In Ho Chi Minh City, the game has advanced hugely from its first iterations here. Early hockey games were played in the city on some kind of imitation ice made of wax in a small room on the second floor of the Youth Culture House. Again, Newton’s first law of motion: as an object in motion will stay in motion, a skater in motion at the second floor of a building going fast on fake ice may be acted upon by gravity. “Go fast enough, you might fly through the window,” he said with a laugh. For these reasons, hockey couldn’t possibly take root there.

Hockey in Saigon goes back even further than that, however. The city’s earliest games were played on actual ice, Matthaes recalls. Beneath a questionable seeming structure—corrugated roof



under which a ring of heavy plastic curtains made a somewhat enclosed space—people had allegedly brought actual ice in quantities and portions large enough to piece together a makeshift ice rink.

Matthaes arrived in Vietnam in 1994, Canadian native from Kitchener-Waterloo, a city that produced two hockey teams that represented Canada during the 1956 and 1960 Winter Olympics, as documented by the CBC. To say it was a key part of his upbringing is an understatement, but it gets the basic point across.

Matthaes was around for the first ambitious iterations of the sport, which excited him as a player and hockey enthusiast. When the Vincom Mega Mall opened their rink in December 2015, he knew this should be the place to host a Saigon ice hockey league.

Negotiations with Vincom would drag for over two years until agreements on pricing and other accommodations were made, such as a net covering one open wall to intercept any incoming pucks that would otherwise sail into someone's food

court fried chicken. Again, an object in motion stays in motion. They played their first games in 2017.

With help from big players like the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam, the league grew to a formidable force fielding an international-level team that prevailed against a visiting Hong Kong team, a 10-9 victory.

Is it hard bringing ice hockey to a tropical country that produces no snow outside of its mountaintops, let alone expanses of ice? Matthaes said there's a learning curve, but most people have at least seen it played on TV, but the best way to share the experience is to do just that, hence his use of the word "ambassadorial."

The word can also be taken literally. There's a photo of sitting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holding a Canadian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam hockey jersey that Matthaes offered to the state chief during his Vietnam visit in 2017.

The league is made up of mostly expats, a "United Nations of Hockey" joked Australian player Doug Balzer, Vietnamese players like Nguyen Van

Thuyen will sometimes join.

Nguyen said he first encountered the league as an employee of the ice rink. Speaking through a translator, Nguyen said he was familiar with the sport through television, but added that cost is a big obstacle. Matthaes said a player starting from zero could easily cost as much USD800 for head-to-toe equipment needs.

Playing hockey has sparked a passion for the sport. But hearing Matthaes's broader vision retold—a larger league with adult and youth division, a talent pool that could attract broader attention, perhaps even Vietnam's fielding an Olympic hockey team—he seems strongly skeptical. The game is not famous in Vietnam, he said almost apologetically.

But as a case study of Matthaes's central argument, that you get people to play hockey by getting them to play hockey, it's proof positive. "You get people into the sport by showing it to them," he said. The hail mary: "You ever seen the movie *Cool Runnings*? I'm like John Candy." ■



Disc Jockeys

It is a frantic, fast-paced frisbee free-for-all and it is catching on in Saigon

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

SAIGON MONSOON TYPICALLY plays on the open soccer fields of RMIT, but school closures since the beginning of the year have pushed practices instead to the astroturf of Tao Dan Stadium in the heart of District 3, behind the Independence Palace. There, their Wednesday night practices may coincide with soccer games giving them a much-reduced space with a length that can be covered in less than 30 seconds of brisk running. During practice, they cut in half their allotted space giving two groups about the size of a large room to do ultimate frisbee in.

The average person handling a frisbee may request that the person catching it “go long” and give them room to sail it through the air. Ultimate frisbee, a soccer-esque sport that shares endzones and pressure on players in possession to keep it moving toward a goal line, would immediately see the liability in a long, arcing pass like



that: a neatly set up interception. In their relatively confined spaces, Saigon Monsoon players prefer passes that are eye- or chest-level, travel for less than a second and zip neatly across the field.

About half the team has participated in an international contest, perhaps the Malaysia Ultimate Open or the Mekong Cup, which explains their crisp, quick, studied movements on the field. Still, they could better, coach and club president Matt Coster opines. Tonight, they're running pass-centered drills.

It's not just passing, but completing a transfer for another teammate attempting to run interception, all that happening in a space a fraction of the size of what Saigon Monsoon is used to. Coster's practice weaponizes the variables strategically, "Typically, we'll want to focus on one thing and add chaos to it."

There are other groups in Saigon that do gather to play chiefly for pleasure. This is not one of them, as player Ella Bowler

found out when she joined in October. Bowler, an English primary school teacher, originally joined the team with a group of other friends who wanted something fun to do but found Saigon Monsoon's rigor and drill-focused practices objectionable. "A lot of my friends ran scared, but I stayed," Bowler said. "They didn't realize it was competitive."

Bowler, on the other hand, stayed because she liked the 90-minute practice sessions' intensity level and the workout gave her wrists relief from her other sport, badminton. "These are skill-based practices," Coster said plainly describing the seriousness of the sessions and the players themselves.

The sport itself rewards the committed. Except for the highest level international competitions, it is usually played without a referee, requiring players to self-police honestly. An interest in winning because of good game would have to prevail over an interest in winning a technical argument

about what counts as in play. Coster said the referee-free play makes the game special.

So too does the co-ed play. It's not unheard of to have male and female athletes playing on the same field as they would in a limited number of sports including tennis, some swimming events and horse racing. Where men and women meet, however, the events are always called "mixed" (i.e. "mixed-sex sailing"), a new twist on an old favorite. Ultimate Frisbee—or just "ultimate" as the athletes call it—is, by contrast, a place for all players by design. An egalitarian spirit prevails.

"I think it's the spirit of the game," Yen Nguyen said of her four years playing the sport. "Everyone was really friendly and welcome showing me how to play." The comments contrast with Coster's sometimes gruff English manner.

"This is the one, so don't f@#k it up," the coach yelled at everyone but also no one in particular before running another scrimmage. The team will need to push if they want to make a strong showing at the two tournaments they wish to attend this year, one of them possibly the Malaysia Ultimate Open under perhaps more favorable weather. German Narvaez, a Colombian player, remembers the field was deluged in rain during their 2019 appearance where they placed 9th among the 16 teams making up the lower of two divisions.

It's a fond memory for Narvaez who remembers diving for the frisbee sliding on a soaked field. Even with eight years of play under his belt, the game still brings him obvious joy. His story is clipped short as he's recalled to the field. In the closing minutes of the team's practice, they're practicing perhaps the most important piece of their practice: gameplay. Many of the players on the field are good enough on their own to qualify for tournaments on their own, but Coster isn't letting up. "Okay, guys. Let's be a little more disciplined," the coach said, setting the bar for the already high-level players just a bit higher. ■

Visit Facebook: "Saigon Monsoon Ultimate" for more info

AN ALL-ROUNDER

Paving the road for cricket's growth in Vietnam

Text by Daniel Spero

Images by Vy Lam

IF YOU ASK MOST LOCALS

about cricket they might tell you that a chorus of chirping from this insect is a pleasant part of the soundscape of summertime, but that's not the type of cricket that Jeremy Stein is interested in as the president of Vietnam Cricket Association (VCA), who's spent years expanding the foothold for the sport in Vietnam.

Started as a children's game in England during the medieval period, cricket has risen to one of the most popular sports internationally. Therefore, when Jeremy Stein came to Saigon over two decades ago he "was delighted to learn that cricket was played here so I joined the English Cricket Club of Saigon (ECCS)."

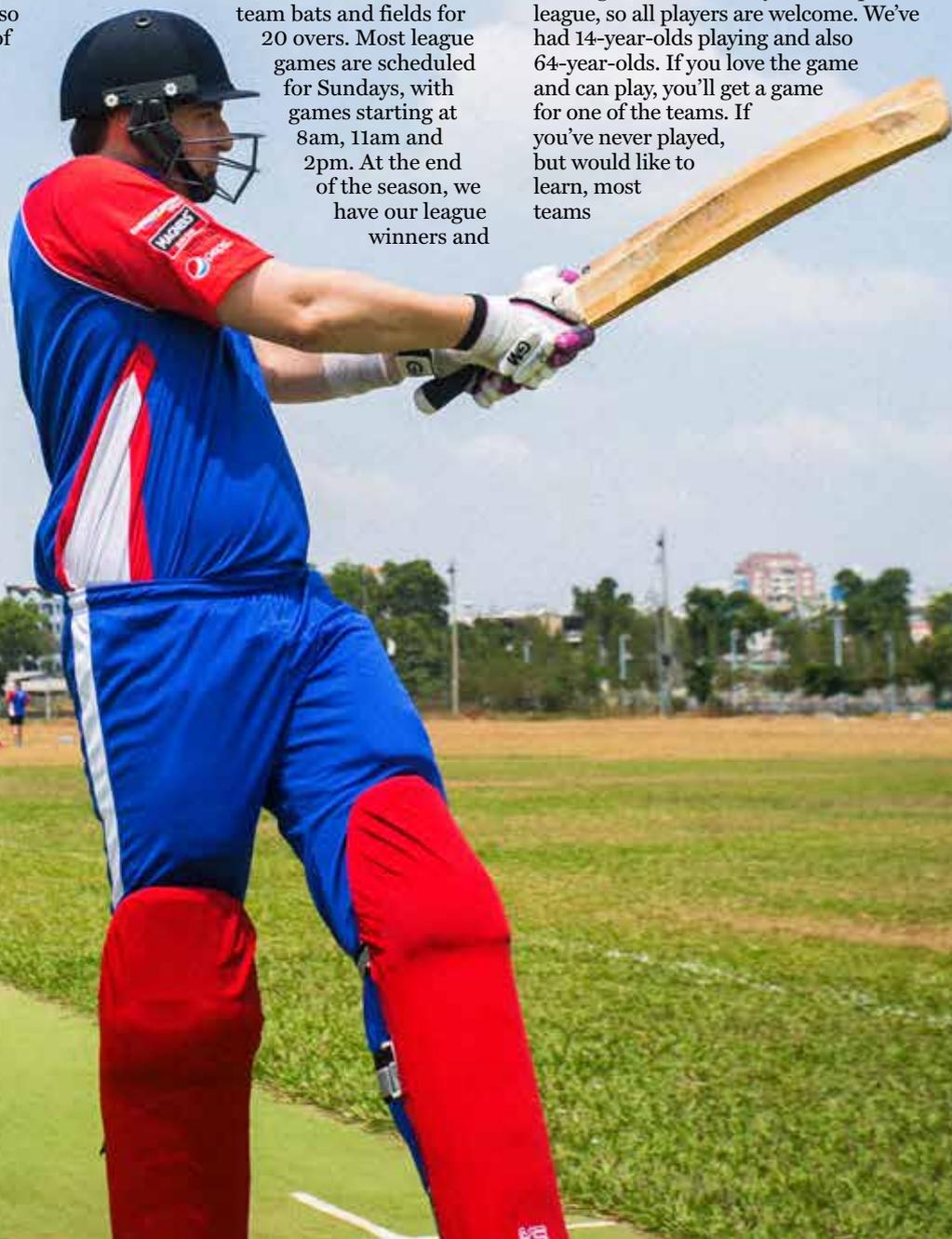
He played with this club for years and by 2006 the VCA league was formed, which Jeremy took part in the management of, rising to the position of league president. "I've been president for three years. The main role is to ensure that our existing players and teams can play quality cricket in Saigon and to develop the sport throughout Vietnam."

True to his words, they now have eight teams that play each other twice in the season, which starts in mid-October and runs through early May. Most of the teams represent specific nationalities, like the Indian Sports Club of Saigon (ISCS), English Cricket Club of Saigon (ECCS), Sri Lankan Saigon Cricket (SSC) and Pakistan Saigon Cricket Club (PSCC), however as Jeremy pointed out, "The players in each club are multi-national, despite their club name."

When asked to explain some of the specifics of league play, Jeremy clarified the details as follows: "We play a T20 format, which means that each team bats and fields for 20 overs. Most league games are scheduled for Sundays, with games starting at 8am, 11am and 2pm. At the end of the season, we have our league winners and

then the top 4 teams have a playoff for the VCA Champions Award. We do have friendly games, which are played on Saturdays. We also host several overseas touring teams each season, and again, these are played on Saturdays. Our International Sixes Tournament is held in March each year and attracts all local teams and a few international teams. Practice is held on Saturday mornings. All practice and games are played at the Saigon Cricket Ground (SCG), which is the old Phu Tho Horse Racing ground in D11."

As far as the demographic makeup of the league, "It's a friendly but competitive league, so all players are welcome. We've had 14-year-olds playing and also 64-year-olds. If you love the game and can play, you'll get a game for one of the teams. If you've never played, but would like to learn, most teams





have regular training sessions and are happy to teach you. We have recently developed a ladies team and a youth team. While embryonic, a few of the international schools have embraced cricket training. In October last year, we held our inaugural Youth and Ladies Tournament. Most players are expats with the exception of the Saigon Cricket Club, whose focus is on attracting and developing Vietnamese players."

One thing about these types of leagues that many people, especially novices, are concerned with are how friendly or competitive the participants or teams are. Jeremy explained, "Some will call it a fun Sunday league, but as with any sport some teams are more competitive than others. Some will play for the enjoyment of playing cricket in Vietnam with fellow like-minded individuals; others will play to win. The top 4 teams will practice regularly and look to win every game. The others have a more social bias and play for the fun of the game." Nevertheless, regardless of personal or team motivation, Jeremy added, "On-field banter and competitiveness turns into off-field friendships and socializing." ■

If you are interested in learning more or joining a club you could attend one of VCA's monthly meetings or visit the league's website at cricketvietnam.com.

The Saigon Sixes Tournament is on March 14th and 15th and all spectators are welcomed for free.



Spirit





"Khou" is a familiar Vietnamese word that evokes images of detailed, handmade goods that are made meticulously and patiently. Based on the spirit of the word, "Khou" was chosen to represent the brand and collection. Established in late 2014, KHAU presents elegant and charming designs that embrace the soul of their designer, who is also the brand's founder - Trang Quynh (CQ).

A woman with long brown hair is standing on a beach. She is wearing a light blue, short-sleeved, knee-length dress with a subtle pleated texture. The dress has a round neckline and a slightly flared skirt. She is also wearing white ankle boots. The background shows the ocean with waves breaking on the shore under a bright sky. A large, semi-transparent white fabric is draped across the foreground, partially obscuring the woman's legs. The overall mood is serene and elegant.

KHAU's clothing brings together intimacy and warmth along with continuous innovation to better provide its clients with the best. To complete any woman's look, KHAU introduces handcrafted faux leather bags that focus on simplicity, minimalism and are single-colored, which will help to reduce the time a woman spends on finding matching accessories. Additionally, the brand is animal-friendly - all products are made from the finest artificial leather, carefully tested to guarantee quality and aesthetic.



KHAU by CQ

www.facebook.com/khaubycq

483 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3

1C Le Thi Rieng, D1



Wine & Dine

STEAMED PORK AND SHRIMP DUMPLING / IMAGE PROVIDED BY WMC GROUP







Shrimp with green sauce fried rice



190 Hong Bang, D5) has been a fixture in WMC's portfolio of F&B offerings since it opened on Nguyen Hue back in 2002. Despite launching at a very different time in the city's evolution, the venue has thrived in the same location for close to 20 years—and it's perhaps this longevity that has prompted WMC's recent revisiting of the brand. Café Central set up a new location on Pasteur last year, and this month the Garden Mall venue is officially opening its doors just a stone's throw from the firm's original five-star accommodation property in Cholon, the Windsor Plaza Hotel.

While quality restaurant chains are a rarity in this part of the city, the decision to open in the heart of Chinatown reflects both WMC's roots in the area as well as the influence of Cantonese cuisine on Café Central's menu, which draws on dim sum staples as well as local favorites and some Western classics. It's also a gesture of confidence in the potential of the Windsor's sister development The Garden Mall to hold its place as Cholon's commercial and entertainment hub in a district where few such projects have even reached completion.

Café Central Garden Mall spans two units in the center ground floor of the three-tower complex, with the entranceway space featuring an open kitchen and a limited number of seats

where diners can observe the chefs at work. A deli counter featuring Chinese pastries is also reportedly being planned for inclusion in this area. The completely separated rear space is entirely devoted to plush, cozy seating at tables designed for large groups—as well as more intimate spaces for two. Like the original Café Central, the décor manifests a relaxed elegance without

attempting any unnecessary fanciness—perfectly befitting the restaurant's pleasantly understated menu, which is guaranteed to feature well-loved dishes with something that will appeal to every potential diner.

For our quiet lunch appointment a couple of days before the official opening on March 1, we skewed towards the Chinese offerings on the menu so as to get a better feel for the brand's new locale. We picked what has to count as Chinese comfort food—a warm fried rice—sampling Café Central's shrimp with green sauce fried rice (at VND78,000) as a base to the meal. This was prepared as a soft and tender version of a simple staple that is nonetheless often ruined by overconfident chefs (ahem) with a gentle umami that could not possibly fail to win favor with any caliber of diner. This we paired with the restaurant's deep-fried chicken with fish sauce (VND48,000), which presented a localized rendition of a traditional Cantonese sweet & sour recipe that was pleasingly balanced and without a whiff of anything remotely towards the more extreme edges of the flavor spectrum.

All WMC restaurants serve the group's house German beer—Krombacher draft, a classic brew that has been Saigon's default craft beer since before anyone knew what that was. We washed down our lunch with modest glasses of the pilsner ale (VND60,000) while trying a steamed pork and shrimp dumpling (VND78,000) dish served in traditional bamboo steamers so as to sample Café Central's Hong Kong-style range. The dumplings were dense, rich, and welcome snacks to close off with.

The restaurant will serve customers seven days a week from this month onwards, with a 50% discount on selected items from the menu available until March 14. If you're spending any time in Cholon and want to get a taste for some of the Chinese cuisine the area is known for without getting lost in exotic menus, Café Central is a safe and satisfying option suitable for everyone. ■



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



Also Try...

Air 360 Sky Lounge - Events

This rooftop bar combines vibrant music, fancy designs and 360 degree view of Saigon's skyline to make it one of the best spots for drinks, lounging and events.
0974 58 77 88
136-138 Le Thi Hong Gam, D1
www.air360skybar.com

Broma Saigon Bar

Famously known for 'not being a bar' Broma is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most popular hangouts with prices ranging from VND30,000 – VND500,000. Broma is a more upscale option for those wishing to escape the cheap drinks in The Pham.
41 Nguyen Hue, D1

Chill Skybar - Dining

A modern lounge, bar and dining space that is considered the first "skybar" concept in Vietnam. It is perched on top of AB Tower, exclusively on the 26th and 27th floor with views of the city's skyline
0938 822 838
Level 26, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1
www.chillsaigon.com

Eon Helibar

This cosmopolitan nightspot is an ideal venue for a vibrant night out with live acoustic performances and DJ's spinning nightly, EON Helibar has a non-smoking section. Rental of the entire restaurant for larger functions is also available.
Level 52, 2 Hai Trieu, Ward Ben Nghe, District 1

Shri Rooftop Bar & Restaurant

Shri Rooftop Bar & Restaurant at Centec Tower overlooks some of Ho Chi Minh's top attractions, including Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral, Kumho Plaza, and Lotus Building, as well as the Phu My Suspension Bridge over Saigon River. Open all day, you can savour modern European and Vietnamese fare at the indoor dining area before enjoying the rest of the night at the rooftop bar and lounge.
Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai

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

Saigon Saigon Bar

This iconic bar is a great place to watch the sun go down over the lights of the city and relax with friends. Live entertainment nightly, including their resident Cuban band, Q'vans from 9pm Wednesday to Monday.
19-23 Lam Son Square, D1
(028) 3823 4999
www.caravellehotel.com
11am till late

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

MICROBREWERIES & CRAFT BEER BARS



Lè 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



Pasteur Street Brewing

Pasteur Street Brewing incorporates American brewing techniques with fresh and exotic Vietnamese ingredients to create amazing craft beers. Named after the first Taproom's location, the company has since expanded into one of the largest craft beer brands in the country.
The Original Taproom: 144-144/3 Pasteur Street, Ben Nghe, Dist.1
Le Thanh Ton Taproom: 26A Le Thanh Ton, Ben Nghe, Dist.1
Thao Dien Taproom: 120 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien, Dist.2
Hoi An Ancient Town Taproom: 100 Bach Dang, Hoi An
Hoan Kiem Taproom: 1 Au Trieu, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi.

Also Try...

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/

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

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.cafesru.com

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

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

FRENCH

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

Le Bacoulos

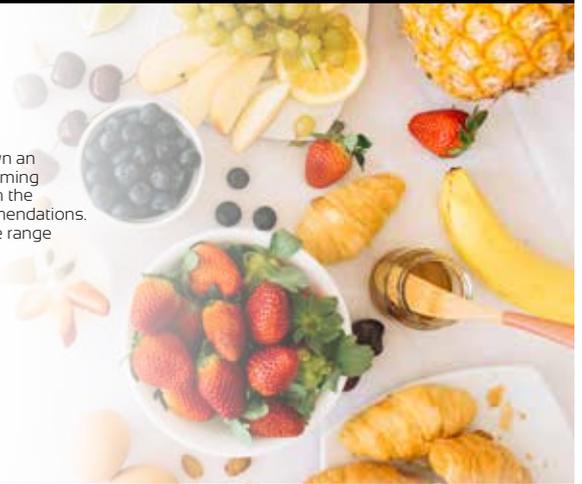
Le Bacoulos is a French restaurant, bar and lounge that serves French cuisine, bar food like burgers, fish and chips alongside vegetarian options like spinach soup and Greek salad. There's also a garden to unwind in with a glass of wine.

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

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



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

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

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

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 Heath Gordon 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

INTERNATIONAL



Kiba Saigon

In one of Saigon's trendiest areas, the area south of Ben Thanh Market in District 1, sits fusion tapas restaurant Kiba. Occupying two floors and a large terrace above a street-level wine shop, Kiba serves marvelous, original cuisine with Spanish and Asian influences, in a stylish and comfortable space.

31 Pho Duc Chinh, Nguyen Thai Binh Ward, District 1, HCMC

www.facebook.com/kibasaiagon/
038 407 2893



L'Adresse Bistro

L'Adresse Bistro, a multi themed bistro, a place where traditions & culture meet, is announcing most unique live entertainment for unforgettable interactive experience as we bring you fresh musical arrangements from Live band, to DJ, to Sax and Dance. Join us on Tuesday for our happy hour and Wednesday where ladies get their first (selected) drink free.

2 Phan Van Dang, VistaVerde, District 2.
+84906707900 ladressebistro.onuniverse.com
Insta & FB @ladressebistrosn



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



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

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

15 Dong Du, D1 - 028 3823 3597
info@forksaigon.com www.forksaigon.com

Noir - Dining in the Dark

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

178/180D Hai Ba Trung, Da Kao, D1
02862632525 www.noirdininginthedark.com

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

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

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!

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0938 996 408 (Vietnamese)
0939 877 403 (Japanese)
chayavietnam.com Facebook: chayavietnam

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

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

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028 38 270 443

Sushi Dining Aoi

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

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

KOREAN

Galbi Brothers

Superb casual BBQ venue focusing on every foreigner's favorite K-dish: galbi. Home of the only all-you-can-eat Korean BBQ in Saigon, GB is distinguished by its inexpensive lunch sets and unabashed enthusiasm for Korean spirits.

R1-25 Hung Phuoc 4, Pham Van Nghi – Bac, D7
5410 6210

Seoul House

Long-standing venue serving Korean delicacies in this city for many years, Seoul House is simple on décor and strong on taste. Specializes mainly in Korean hotpot and grills.

33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4297

THAI

Koh Thai

Supremely chic Thai venue with all the authentic burn you need – or without if you prefer. An opulent, fashionable decor with the cuisine to match – often reported to serve dishes comparable with those of Thailand itself.

Kumho Link, Hai Ba Trung, D1
028 3823 4423

Lac Thai

Hidden away down a narrow alley in the heart of downtown this unique Thai restaurant boasts authentic flavours and surprising character. Eat downstairs at tables in a cosy, themed environment – or be brave and climb the narrow spiral staircase to the attic and crouch on cushions in true Thai style while attentive staff serve plates to share.

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi St. D1
028 3823 7506

Thai Street

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32 Tran Ngoc Dien Road, Thao Dien, D2
028 6654 9525

The Racha Room

Brand new fine & funky Thai venue with kooky styling and a great attitude – and some of the most finely-presented signature Thai cuisine you'll see in this city, much of it authentically spicy. Long Live the King! Reservations recommended.

12-14 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
090 879 1412

Tuk Tuk Thai Bistro

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17/11 Le Thanh Ton, D1
028 3521 8513 / 090 688 6180

VIETNAMESE



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

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: benthanhstreetfoodmarket

Cha Ca La Vong

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

36 Ton That Thiep, D1

Com Nieu

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

59 Ho Xuan Huong, D3
028 3932 6363

comnieusaigon27@yahoo.com
comnieusaigon.com.vn

Cuc 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

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234 Bui Vien, D1

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

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

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

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 port, 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

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



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.

A Good Rosé is Good

Rosé rules. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

ROSÉ WINES ARE

some of the most

undervalued wines in the world.

There are no particular reasons for this other than perhaps ignorance and misunderstanding them.

In Asia, rosé wines are considered bad because “they are made from the bad red and white wines mixed together,” therefore it is a quality issue for Asians. In some Western countries, they’re considered a women’s drink, so men will not drink it in order to not offend their masculinity.

Even some critics claim that rosé wines lack complexity and depth. Do they? The critics maybe, the wines definitely not.

Let’s start at the beginning: rosé wines are not made with leftover wines that no one wants, nor do they use low-quality wines to make them.

Regardless of the different methods used to make

rosé, bear in mind that it is more costly than making white wine.

The color of rosé wines, similar to the color in red wines, comes from the grapes’ skins; in case you didn’t know

the juice of the grapes, whether they’re white or red, is white.

Women may like rosé wines, and so do I, and so will most people who know about wine. You will not find the heavy flavors of long-aged reds, but will enjoy the freshness, the good acidity, the different layers and levels of complexity, as well as a good length.

Although most rosé wines work perfectly on their own as an aperitif, rosé wines can be a great complement to many dishes, meat included. Depending on the grapes used to make the rosé, the vinification method and the wine style, you may have wines as light and delicate as a gris-blanc, which is almost as transparent as water; or you may go for a traditional Navarra rosé, which is almost as dark as red wine.

It is not common for rosé wines to be aged in oak, but it can happen in order to gain complexity, however, they tend to lose their freshness, which is one of the best attributes of rosé wines. As for grapes used to make them, there are many, but perhaps Grenache and Cinsault are the most common ones.

So, what makes a good rosé wine good? More or less the same that makes a good red wine: good grapes, good terroir, good winemaker and knowing how to keep it and serve it. ■

>> The List Business

INSURANCE



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19th Floor | VCCI Tower | 9 Dao Duy Anh |
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Liberty Mutual Insurance

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15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, DI
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Travel & Wellness

KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN DRAGON AND TIGER PAGODAS AT LOTUS POND.







Time for Taiwan

Make your trip to this island state unforgettable with these places

Text by Jesus Lopez-Gomez

THE A MEI TEA HOUSE IN JIUFEN —a three-storey restaurant done with an exterior of darkened wood fringed with red, bulbous lanterns on the building's façade—is a sight to behold in its own regard. The pleasure is increased for fans of the Japanese animated filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki who will immediately identify the building's uncanny similarity with *Spirited Away*.

Nevertheless, it's an association that Miyazaki himself has vigorously denied, The A Mei Tea House's owner said. A tour of the restaurant includes a visit to a set of masks that bears a distinct appearance to the masked figure inside of the film, *No-Face*, where they mention the film by name. It's clear that Miyazaki's denials have done little to convince the owners that his artistic property is distinct from the tea house.

Nor are the denials meaningful seemingly to visiting press who paid the site a visit before *Oi Vietnam's* visit





in October. A reporter from *Vice* filed a story in 2018 under this headline: “Eat All the Food from *Spirited Away* in this Taiwanese Town,” referring to the abundance of snacks inside Juifen’s tight, winding and—forgive the description—spirited alleyways as well as the A Mei Tea House’s undeniable similarities to the film.

As a souvenir for our visit, A Mei Tea House gives us a postcard showing the exterior of the film at night. The red lanterns’ glow gives everything in the frame a reddish-orange hue and it all looks frankly like a famous anime film that allegedly has nothing to do with the tea house.

The tea house owners pointed out, however, that the lanterns are probably more closely associated with traditional Chinese decorations of the same style. The note makes explicit not just Juifen but greater Taiwan’s place as a meeting point for various Asian cultures. *Oi’s* reporting was unable to settle the debate on whether or not Miyazaki took inspiration from the Japanese-style tea house in rural Taiwan, but rather what became evident at various site visits throughout the country was the nation’s inextricable ties to its nation neighbors to the north and west.

Chenggong Township in Taiwan’s Taitung County is a sleepy town nestled next to a mountain. The clear skies and vacant roads give it an almost Colorado-like feel, except for the Chinese script on the business signage. But even with the language differences, an air of familiarity prevails over the village. Perhaps its town’s removed, rural—Chenggong is a full 217 miles (349 kilometers) from the capital, Taipei—and related lack of tourist- and visitor-facing infrastructure that gives a sort of plainness and normalness. It’s special, yet nothing is presented as special. The language is untranslated, the experience is unmediated, yet it clearly means something.



It’s in this unassuming, secret-keeping quiet locale that mochi maker Dong Ban Xiang sits. At the intersection of two sloping roads within walking distance of an active local produce market that’s bustling by mid-morning. Inside, owner Liu June Ling work making the traditional hakka treat, the third generation of his family to maintain the culinary tradition. The mochi shop was originally opened by his grandmother.

Maybe you’ve tried mochi before. Maybe you’ve tried a recipe that placed mochi firmly in the dessert camp: chewy, almost sticky but super sweet. It’s the kind of thing you’d need to follow with a drink of water to clear the palette. Those are not the Liu family’s mochis. Greeting traveling press in a visit, the owner lays out the restaurant’s treat: a white mochi cake with sesame inside, a red mochi covered in a layer of peanuts. The glutinous treats have an overall neutral flavor that doesn’t overpower another light flavor like peanuts. He serves them with a sticky rice pudding with pork and steamed brown sugar rice cakes.

Mochi was originally believed to be a type of food for the gods by the Japanese who created and popularized it. The ascendance of this belief tracks with a belief that the mochi could be used to enhance the eater’s strength—a belief which led to the food’s popularity among samurai—and even build healthy teeth. How this Japanese dish came to be part of a food tradition belonging to an ethnicity that hails from southern China isn’t known exactly, but the Hakka adoption of another food traditional mirrors the Hakka adoption of Thai food. In certain parts of India, diners there eat a Hakka-nized Indian food.



Originally nomadic people of northern China, Hakka have over the years been spread out over the globe. The name Hakka in Chinese reflects this visitor status; The Chinese characters for Hakka (客家) literally means "guest families". A Hakka saying: "Wherever there is sunshine ... there are Hakka."

Today, the Hakka are the second largest ethnic minority in Taiwan, about a fifth of the 4.6 million who live on the island. The Hakka were key allies in the fight to rid the island of Japanese invaders, which ended at the close of World War II. As a point of historical healing, the Japanese have worked to rehabilitating the symbols of their imperial past in Taiwan by, for example, converting one of their old military ports into the Sanxiantai ecological reserve. It's also not uncommon to enjoy tea in a ceremonial manner that identified as distinctly Japanese.

Mochi is strongly identified as a Japanese dish, but in fact both Hakka



and Japanese have their own take on the dish. The mochi prepared by Lui, with its crushed peanut exterior, is done in a Hakka style. A Japanese-style mochi might be sweeter, like the red rice-filled cake Lui also served for visiting press.

To a certain extent, asking whether or not Miyazaki borrowed from Jiufen is a bit arbitrary. The centuries intermingling between Japanese and Taiwanese, the presence of cultural intermediaries like the Hakka and Taiwan itself, make it clear that cross pollination likely occurred if not with Miyazaki then with someone who tutored him.

The question is a bit like asking whether the green, turtle-shaped mung rice cakes he served to us and other visiting press actually bring good luck. Something else is at work, something bigger may be at stake in the question. There is something more interesting than "true or false" as a feature to those questions. Exploring the governing logic behind asking a question like that seems



equally if not more fruitful. The questions themselves deserve careful processing, something to chew on albeit slowly, like the foods of the mochi maker Lui.

Don't Miss Out

Visitors to Taiwan will likely touch down in the country's international airport near Taipei. If you're looking for something more removed from the typical, consider taking the two-hour journey to Lukang Township. There, you'll find Wu Yi Hsiang Oyster Omelet. Enjoy its offering of oysters in a range of recipes: oyster omelets, oyster vermicelli stew and a sharp-yet-distinct oyster and ginger dish with wasabi sauce. The early fall months are the best time to go. The bigger oysters are available during the months of August and September. While you're in town, stop by the Osmanthus Alley Humanities Tea House and sample the osmanthus cakes and tea made in this cozy shop, which was converted from a home to the business it



a fisher-turned-entrepreneur, a second-generation fisher who knows the catch best.

This township is also the home of the centuries-old Donglong Temple. This storied temple holds a collection of ornate carvings done as an homage to the gods guarding the seafarers the area harbored in the past as today. You'll know this temple by its massive, gold leaf-covered gate. Once you've seen more of the city, head to Dongsheng Restaurant to savor the region's crab and the *harpodon macrochir*, a kind of light, buttery fish that's very trout-like in mouthfeel. You'll hardly hear anyone call it by this scientific sounding name. Curiously, locals tend to refer to it as "that fish," a name that's perfectly teed up for the joke you're itching to make with it. ■



If you're going to make the trip out to Lukang, Donggang Township is just within reach to another couple hours away. The coastal city is renown for its offerings of seafood. Would you take a suggestion? Head to the Arong Square Seafood Flavor restaurant. Dine on the red coronet fish, a seafood delicacy only found here. Those who prefer to eat with their eyes first are in for a treat: the restaurant's specialty dish is a bluefish tuna doused with a whiskey glaze that's set aflame at the table. The resulting fish is gently cooked and still tender. The whiskey is aromatic but added a light bite to the creamy fish. Head to Jiazhen Seafood Restaurant to enjoy more of the region's seafood in recipes particular to the area, like the fried tuna cake made with leeks served with a side of papaya in an arrestingly delicious passion fruit sauce. Be sure to try their fish filet in a soy and vinegar sauce, which has garnered the restaurant an award. The shrimp is served in a crispy cake known as a "beehive" for its appearance. This restaurant is owned by



is today. If you've never had osmanthus before as either a food or a drink, the slightly spicy, warm aroma that greets you as you enter the tea house will give you a good sense of what you're about to get yourself into. This tea house is not only a business but a home base for a collective of local artists and creatives fostering homegrown talent—painters, designers and more—who sell their wares at this unique tea shop. This township is also the home of Dingtaixing Cuisines, a quiet bakery that sells a selection of traditional steamed cakes. Select from a range of flavors: taro, matcha and even pumpkin. The cakes are said to be prepared in a way that removes toxins and promotes health. Enjoy these fluffy, low-fat cakes with a perfect pairing of brewed coffee.

Fun fact: Lukang Township gets its name from the Chinese word "lu" meaning "deer." The region is famous for its deer population. The city was once a primary hub of the region's deerskin trade.



>> The List Travel



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www.anamandara-resort.com



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quynhon.villas@anantara.com



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26 - 28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa

0258 2220 000

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

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www.boutiquehoianresort.com

Cham Garden Restaurant

Cham Garden Restaurant is located inside Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort. Set in the midst of a lush tropical garden, this cozy and quiet restaurant serves Asian Fusion, Vietnamese and Western Cuisine. The ideal place for a romantic and exquisite dinner.

32 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Phan Thiet

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www.chamvillas.com

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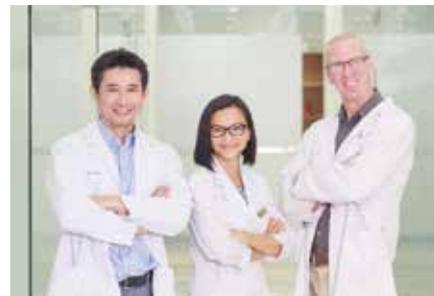
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Kids & Education





Demystifying Coronavirus

Read more on what we know about COVID-19 including understanding the disease and addressing some of the fears and concerns



CORONAVIRUSES ARE A LARGE family of viruses that infect mostly animals, although a few of them have spread to humans as well. The infections they cause can range from mild to severe. The most common members of this family that regularly infect many people around the globe are known to cause a mild upper respiratory tract infection—the common cold. Some other coronaviruses can cause more serious and deadly diseases such as MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome).

A new strain of coronavirus, now called COVID-19, recently emerged in Wuhan city, in China's Hubei province. The outbreak was initially linked to a large seafood and animal market in the city of Wuhan, where transmission of the virus most likely occurred via a jump from animal to human. But currently there is a growing debate about where and how the infection started. While MERS was caused by a coronavirus that jumped from bats to camels and then to humans, the new coronavirus seems to have originated in bats that jumped to snakes and then humans who either consumed it or otherwise came into contact with the infected animals. But this theory is still not proven, and a deep investigation on this topic is now underway.

These viruses were initially thought to have only been transmitted from animals to humans. This presumption was later contradicted by the discovery, using mathematical models, that the viruses were highly contagious and could be transmitted from person to person. Now it is evident just how easily

and frequently infection from person to person can occur, and what is the cause of the deep concern about a global pandemic.

The virus replicates within human cells by using our own cellular machinery against us. A virus is actually just a ball of genetic information that uses a biological host to multiply from one to millions. Just as any written information would require ink and paper to form a book, so too does the virus need the materials available within a host to reproduce itself, as it has no cell structure of its own. When it infects a person, it hijacks the body's cells, each of which contains ample biological machinery—the equivalent of loads of paper and ink—to produce millions of copies from one single viral invader.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Just as the hepatitis virus targets the liver, COVID-19 targets the lungs, where it causes respiratory inflammation. In most cases, the symptoms it causes are similar to those of the common cold, such as dry cough and fever. In severe cases, especially when the patient has some preexisting risk factors (such as old age or comorbid conditions) the infection causes pneumonia-like symptoms—for instance, a progressive cough and difficulty in breathing with severe lung inflammation.

The time from exposure to the appearance of symptoms is usually between 2–21 days. Because of the long incubation period, the virus can be transmitted during this asymptomatic phase. This came to light during cases in Germany where the virus was transmitted from a Chinese woman to

a number of German colleagues before her infection became evident for her. Such a situation can be precarious, as monitoring the spread of the virus could become extremely challenging.

Also, the virus poses a higher risk in colder regions because it survives longer on surfaces at low temperatures, which makes it difficult to contain in places with large populations (such as Wuhan) during the winter. Even with the world-class hospitals and highly skilled medical staff and scientists they have in Wuhan, the infrastructure wasn't enough for the sudden surge in severe pneumonia patients. Also in the early stages of the epidemic at least 7% of medical staff in the region—including doctors and nurses—were exposed to the virus while treating infected patients due to the lack of preparedness and shortage of beds. This made controlling the outbreak more daunting for the Chinese authorities. Since that time they have taken a more cautious approach along with other authorities worldwide. Crucial information has been released by Chinese scientists and medical practitioners in other countries as cases of the infection are reported around the world.

Since the virus can't sustain itself for long in high temperatures, on top of the government closing schools, there have been relatively fewer cases in places like Ho Chi Minh City, which has a warmer climate. Still, the virus has taken almost 3,000 lives globally out of 85,000 cases of the infection that have been officially reported. The preliminary fatality rate of COVID-19 is around 2% in China (but in China excluding Hubei province, it is just 0.16%) in comparison to 9.6% for SARS



Family Medical Practice’s resident specialist in liver disease, Argentinian native **Dr. Pedro L. Trigo** received his MD with honors at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, and completed further programs at Pittsburgh University’s liver transplant unit. An avid proponent of health through exercise, he is currently training to participate in the Danang Iron Man event.

and 34% for MERS.

However, as SARS affected just 800 people and MERS around 2,500, it is evident that COVID-19 is far more contagious. Therefore, it poses a higher risk than influenza—which has infected more than 25 million people but has a fatality rate of 0.1%. If the spread of the COVID-19 contagion goes unchecked, it could lead to a much higher number of casualties than those that influenza has caused so far.

Preventative Measures

So far, 80% of fatalities have been reported in people aged more than 60. Moreover, 75% of those who succumbed to the infection had underlying chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure and/or cancer. The virus seems to affect more men than women—which could be linked to genetic disposition or different hormonal patterns—and children are also less likely to be affected, perhaps related to their higher levels of immunity against the coronavirus. Essentially, adults with low immunity are more prone to infection.

People are advised to consume healthy, well-cooked food and place an increased focus on sanitizing surfaces and maintaining cleanliness. Frequently washing hands and letting sunlight into houses could be of help too.

As the virus is highly contagious, it can spread from an infected person to another person by sneezing, coughing or personal contact. Physical barriers such as face masks can help prevent transmission when someone is close to an infected person. Also, distance should be maintained from people infected

by the virus as well as those showing symptoms of the infection.

Any kind of masks will be equally effective here, as most of them provide almost the same level of protection against airborne virus transmission and respiratory droplets in this case. However, when there are no cases in a community, there is no benefit to wearing a mask, and the World Health Organization does not advise people to use a mask except in risky scenarios, i.e. when there is a chance to be close to an infected person.

Being in crowded places and traveling to risky areas such as China, South Korea, Northern Italy or even Japan and Singapore may carry a risk of developing an infection. Currently, regardless of any personal interest for travel, the government already banned many destinations because of the chance of becoming infected. It is tourism that has affected Vietnam more, contrary to the common belief that its proximity to China is what makes Vietnam more vulnerable to the virus. But the fact is this was not the case, and there are only 16 confirmed cases in Vietnam—most of them related to a group of Vietnamese workers who went to Wuhan for training. It would therefore be appropriate to postpone any unnecessary travel plans. For similar reasons, expats need not consider leaving Vietnam for their home countries, as their risk of exposure while traveling is far higher than it is by staying in this sunny, tropical country.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Lab tests and CT Scans are primarily used to make a provisional COVID-19 diagnosis. Those suspected of carrying

the infection will receive personal health care by medical practitioners and be quarantined. Medical authorities responsible for containing the coronavirus will be notified so that necessary medical care can be provided to the patient, and further proliferation of the virus can be avoided. Test kits are currently limited and are not available to the public or for testing on the healthy.

In case patients experience mild cold symptoms, or do not feel well in general, it’s recommended they take care of themselves at home just as they would when suffering from a common cold, while maintaining a distance from others—especially family and friends. If the symptoms are aggravated or become worrisome, medical practitioners should be consulted for further treatment. Our Family Medical Practice medical centers are observing strict site access protocols to ensure they remain safe and exposure-free places to seek treatment as usual.

There is no antiviral treatment or vaccine available right now. Some studies have already been initiated to derive a cure against the virus, deploying a scientific double-blind strategy where neither the medical practitioner administering treatment nor the patient knows if they are receiving potential treatment or a placebo. This is the only method that can tell us if a treatment is really useful or not. The studies will not be complete for some time, so results will be available in the near few months—however, if proper measures continue to be taken (namely those communicated by medical practitioners and government authorities) and through careful personal care and hygiene, a more widespread contagion can be prevented. ■

>> The List Education

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS



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www.aisvietnam.com

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Primary Campus:
#69, Street No. 3, KDC Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC

Secondary Campus:
#2, Street No. 9, KDC Tan An Huy, Ap 5, Phuoc Kien, Nha Be, HCMC

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Email: office@theabcis.com
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www.issp.edu.vn

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www.kidsclubsaigon.com
(028) 5412-5232, kidsclubsaigon@gmail.com.

The International School Ho Chi Minh City - American Academy

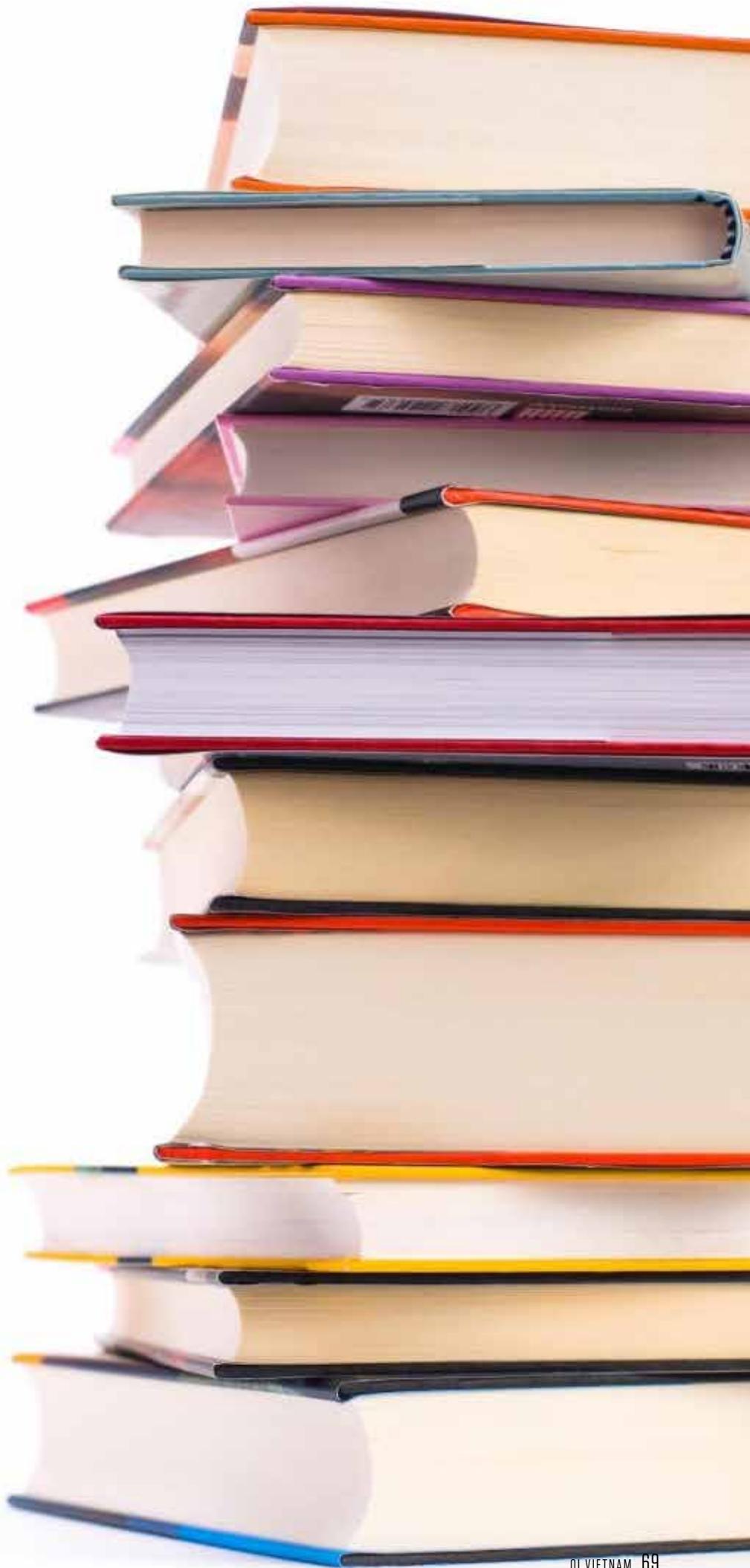
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