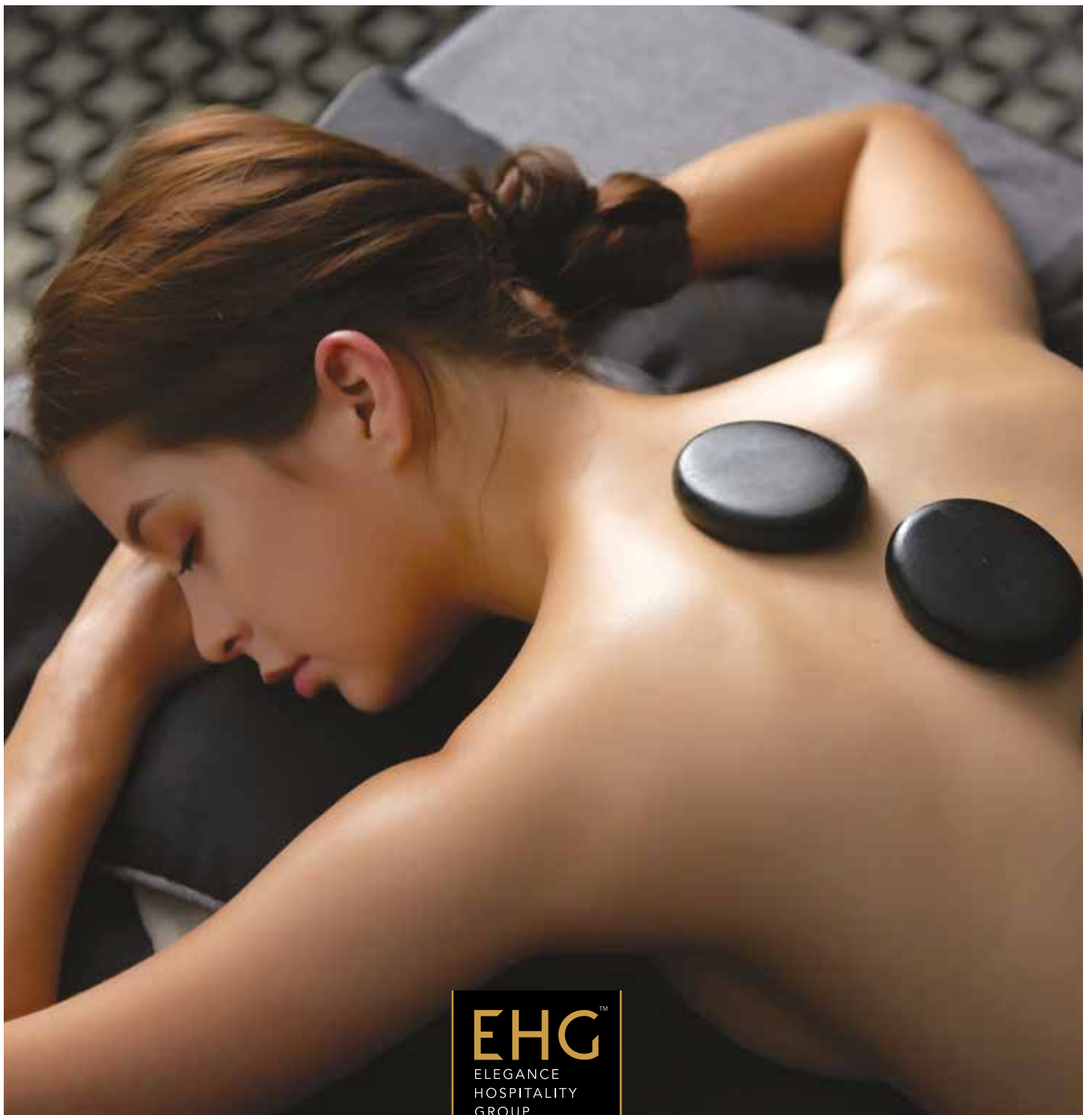


# La'gazine

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**EHG**<sup>TM</sup>  
ELEGANCE  
HOSPITALITY  
GROUP







A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**Ms Kim**  
Spa Director of EHG

# Xin chào!

Welcome to the third edition of La'gazine, La Spa's bi-annual magazine keeping our customers updated with spa initiatives and cultural information.

The spa industry, the ultimate in indulgence for the mind, body and soul, is constantly changing and evolving as it tailors the experience to the customer. La Spa has long been regarded as a trendsetter in Hanoi and Hoi An's spa world. We never stand still as we refine and perfect our service. A new addition to La Spa's menu is the four-hands massage therapy – the ultimate sensory experience. This technique induces deep relaxation both physically and mentally. Two therapists work seamlessly together applying the same amounts of pressure at the same time, mirroring each other's strokes as four hands snake over the body. It is a heavenly experience far superior to single person massage. Indulge yourself in a kaleidoscope of sensations and a special feeling of well-being.

This edition of La'gazine focuses on La Spa's four-hands massage technique and benefits, as well featuring different types of spas, as well as what makes La Spa so special. Our publication is compiled by the La Spa team. We introduce you, through varied articles, to daily life in our business and to Vietnam's culture through the eyes of our people.

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine as well as having a great experience at La Spa and a good time in Hanoi or Hoi An.



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# La'gazine

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**La Spa**, by La Siesta, is a member of the Elegance Hospitality Group (EHG). The first spa branch opened in 2010 and now the operation has five branches in Hanoi's

Old Quarter and one in our Hoi An resort. La Spa, guided by the principles and professional standards of EHG, is a trendsetter in Vietnam's spa and wellness industry.



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la  
spa  
BY LA SIESTA



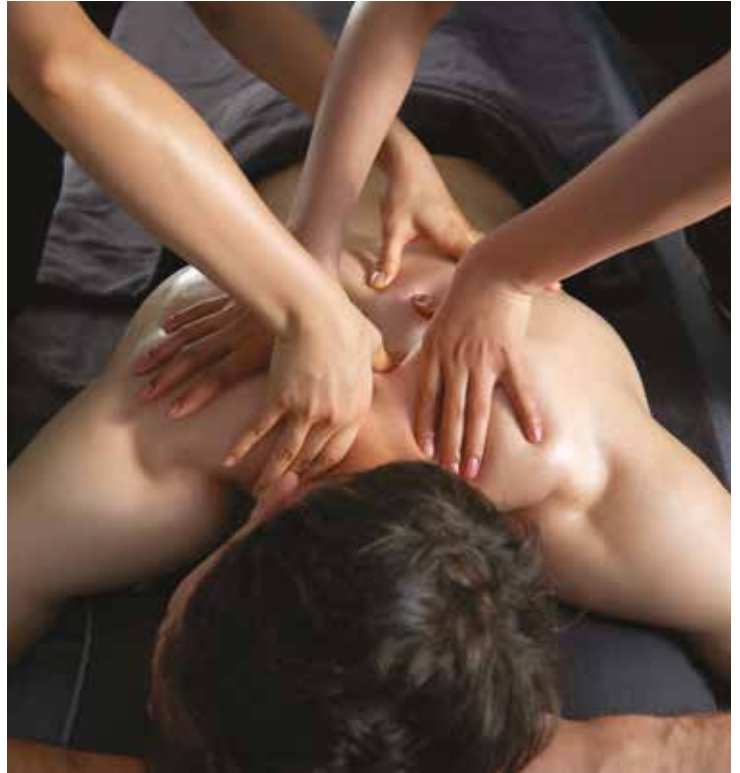
# Sensational massage

This is a particularly powerful type of massage providing not only optimal relaxation therapy but it also employs a very artistic technique. Welcome to four-hands massage.

Four-hands massage technique is based on the rhythmic and regular resonance of two skilled therapists working on one customer. Two therapists, four hands, ten fingers working in choreographed movements apply overwhelming sensations of touch to the whole body. La Spa's four-hands massage employs an elegant technique resulting in a beautifully choreographed dance of four hands performed over the body. This therapy induces the most amazing level of relaxation and a complete sense of letting go. It improves blood circulation, strengthens the relaxation of muscles in a superior way and leads to a great sense of well-being.

Therapists skilled in four-hands massage not only mirror one another's hand movements, but they also need to exert an equal amount of pressure on each side of the body in order to produce a balanced, relaxing experience. One of the hardest aspects of this type of massage is ensuring each therapist applies exactly the same levels of pressure at the same time with equal speed and motion to avoid disunity. At La Spa the therapists are perfectly paired, they are in tune with each other working as one. Here, the four-hands massage technique has been superbly refined, reinforcing the notion that with this type of therapy the brain cannot discern which hand is doing what. In other words, the mind stops trying to work out what is going on and surrenders to pure relaxation. La Spa employs a variety of extremely smooth movements. So much so that it feels more than four hands at work as they continuously snake over the skin and muscles using long, circular, deep strokes.

A typical four-hands massage is worth the equivalent of two single massages in both quantity and quality. Two therapists can cover more of the body and for a longer period of time. The therapy focuses on a continual combination of deep tissue massage and Swedish massage with warmer and deeper techniques targeting each area of the body. The body falls into the state of optimal relaxation releasing all aches and muscle tension, improving blood circulation, reducing stress and anxiety, and leading to the overall improvement in one's mood.



How can one visually describe the sensations of La Spa's four-hands massage? It can be likened to the beauty of synchronized swimming. A visual delight of grace and rhythm requiring strength and a synchronicity of artistic formation. If four-hands massage could be seen in color it would be a kaleidoscope. Fascinating patterns of colors and reflections continually move to create seamless new beautiful forms.

La Spa four-hands massage - a sensory experience like no other.

*By Ton Khanh Nhi*



# THE ESSENCE OF LA SPA









On 13 April 2019 along with La Siesta Hotel Premium, La Spa Hang Be officially opened its doors to become the sixth La Spa branch.

Detailed planning and preparation paid off ensuring this La Spa branch - in shades of black and greys - exudes a calm modern look at every level. Currently, this is the largest La Spa branch in Hanoi able to accommodate up to nine customers at one time across five therapy rooms. In addition to an extensive menu of massage options, extra pampering is provided via saunas and steam rooms.

Throughout the spa attention to detail has been made a priority especially when it comes to interior design. For example, extending from the reception area up the side of the captivating spiral staircase leading to the







mezzanine spa level, a whole wall has been replaced by giant shelving displaying beautiful and calm decorative items.

Unlike the other La Spa facilities, the treatment rooms of La Spa Hang Be each have a wall shaped with soft curves, creating a modern space without being rigid. Moreover, the curved walls are simply and artistically decorated - the focal point being a collection of large bronze leaves holding candles which hang on the walls.

When it comes to location, La Spa is proud that each facility enjoys a prime spot in Hanoi's Old Quarter making La Spa very convenient for visitors and Hanoi residents alike. In terms of location if one pinpoints each La Spa in Hanoi on a map then that of Hang Be takes center stage. In addition, it is the first branch to be opened after the La Spa rebrand and as such embodies the pure essence of everything La Spa aspires to be.

*By Ton Khanh Nhi*



# Therapy for the feet & soul

According to the concept of Oriental medicine, the feet are regarded as a second heart. Every part of the body, each organ, is connected to the feet. Because of this importance, we should not ignore this part of the body and should always take the opportunity to rest and care for our feet.

Every La Spa customer is thoughtfully, spiritually and warmly welcomed - no matter if one is a regular customer or visiting La Spa for the first time. The foot-cleansing ritual is an indispensable first step in all therapies at La Spa regardless of the time you spend at the spa or which service you have chosen. Even a facial is preceded with the foot ritual. The process helps release tension and refresh the body. Instead of just using a dry towel or a damp cloth to clean your feet, the foot ritual begins with a foot wash. The feet are soaked and washed in a bowl of warm water infused with three natural ingredients which are used in many daily activities of Vietnamese people: ginger, lemongrass and

cinnamon. The therapist then applies gentle pressure to the key pressure points to reduce tension. This is followed by massaging the soles of the feet and then the whole foot.

Foot massage is good for health, it soothes pain and relaxes the feet. The therapist completes the treatment by drying the feet with a soft towel symbolizing the removal of any negative energy, the welcoming of positive energy and a balancing of the mind, body and spirit before the main treatment commences.

In addition to the direct and practical benefits of helping your feet breathe and relieve any discomfort after a long day on your feet, the foot ritual provides valuable time for the customer and therapist to become acquainted and establish a friendly atmosphere, so the customer feels comfortable for the upcoming service.

*By Bui Kim Thoa*





# HOLIDAY DE-STRESS



What is a holiday for? It should be for “a break from work”, or “for reading bestsellers in the sun, slightly drunk on local wine and weather”. Many people travel as a way to relieve stress, and nowadays a spa experience has become an essential part of trips away, equally important as sightseeing and discovering new cultures.

Why include a spa visit as part of your holiday? Because most spa treatments are beneficial to your health. A good massage treatment can, for example, be an ideal start to your holiday after a long cramped flight. Experts particularly recommend a hot stone massage to encourage blood flow, relieve body pain and promote deep relaxation. A foot massage can be particularly helpful for those who regularly put their feet through their paces - city sightseeing on foot or trekking long distances.

Nowadays, society and the workplace put huge amounts of pressure on people; thus, many of us choose to travel and incorporate a spa experience as a way to relieve stress. There is no need to feel guilty or selfish when putting your health first. If we neglect the importance of self-care it will eventually take its toll on us emotionally, mentally and physically. When visiting a spa you will be immersed in a calm space with soothing

music, natural aromas and the taste of herbal teas to purify the body, restore energy and balance the body and soul.

Along with discovering a new cuisine, stunning landscapes or historical sites, spas are nowadays becoming part of a country's distinctive character as the style of spas and treatments can express local cultures and lifestyles. The spa experience has become a must-do activity when traveling, especially when it comes to well-known forms of treatments such as Thai massage, Japanese reflexology or Vietnamese blind massage.

Although many people travel as a way to relieve stress, for some the thought and activity of travel can bring its own anxieties. For example: fear of flying, financial concerns, what or what not to pack, how to make the best travel arrangements and so on. The spa experience can help soothe the mind, body and spirit and put worries to one side.

Visiting a spa is a great de-stress activity and even if you are someone who finds it hard to relax and switch off, incorporating a spa visit into your holiday makes the overall experience extra special.

*By Bui Kim Thoa*

# Aromatherapy DURING YOUR TRIP

“Essential oils help to boost immunity and to fight infection”

“Essential oils help to reduce emotional stress and anxiety.”

“Essential oils help to promote restful sleep.”





Much scientific research has been conducted into the benefits of essential oils and many articles have been written on this subject. It is well known that oils are good for health but not everyone truly understands the proper use of these essences. In this article we look at the practice of Aromatherapy and some basic wellness therapies which incorporate essential oils as part of their overall efficacy.

The most common use of essential oil is when it is applied directly onto the skin. Visiting Vietnam is fun. It is a country well known for a wonderful cuisine, stunning countryside, centuries old-history and friendly locals. However it also has its own share of bugs and mosquitos. It is unpleasant being bitten by an insect. Some people are so preoccupied by bugs that they bring with them a great amount of medicine and sprays to combat mosquitos. However, there may be an easier solution which is simply to carry around a small bottle of lavender or lemongrass essential oil. Rubbing onto one's skin a mixture of one drop of lemongrass essential oil with a tablespoon of coconut oil can make an effective insect repellent. Or simply apply two-three drops of lavender essential oil which will help sooth insect bites.

For people who suffer from motion sickness, traveling can be a nightmare. However, there is an effective anti-stress and anti-anxiety treatment using peppermint, lavender or ginger essential oils to help reduce the feeling of such sickness. Place a few drops of your favorite scent onto a handkerchief and inhale. Breathing in scents such as peppermint, ginger or lavender can help combat feelings of nausea.

Summer is the best time for a beach trip. Sun provides a dose of Vitamin D, sand is a natural exfoliator, while the sea is full of anti-aging minerals and a relaxing time on the beach decreases stress levels. On the other hand, such activities can increase the risk of sunburn which damages the skin and hair. But once again essential oils are on hand. Instead of taking all of your body skin care and hair products to the beach, you may like to consider some natural recipes that care equally for you from head to toe. Combine five drops of lavender, five drops of rosemary and two of lemongrass essential oils with coconut oil. Place in a small zip bag then soak in warm water to heat up. Apply the mixture to your hair and wrap for 20 minutes, shampoo and rinse as usual. This is a natural hair conditioner that helps to reduce dandruff and relieve itching. It also promotes faster hair growth and improve scalp health. If you burn easily in the sun then consider natural cooling remedies such as lavender, chamomile or eucalyptus essential oils which help heal skin and cool burns.



There are more than 90 types of essential oils, each with its own unique aroma and most of them are safe to use. You should do some research into your specific health concern to find out what essential oils are best for you. One of the most important things to be aware of about essential oils is that not all are created equally. When buying such oils, you should select those that are 100% pure and locally sourced.

Finally, essential oils have another part of play in a spa experience by infusing the air with pleasant natural aromas, such as lemongrass as in La Spa, to create a refreshing ambiance helping to relax the body, calm the mind and revive the senses.

*By Nguyen Thu Nga*





# Our staff Van Anh

“Choose the job you love and you’ll never work a day in your life” – Unknown.

Easy to say but among the billions of people who make a living on this earth, how many of us have chosen the profession we actually love where work is more of a hobby than a job and where it is a pleasure to go to work? The first time I met Van Anh was in 2015 when she timidly walked into La Spa on her first day. The 22-year-old, who was already married with a one-year-old son, started her first ever job on the recommendation of a friend. Having no idea what to expect, this young girl was determined to learn everything there was to know about the spa profession and to financially provide for her small family.

She had a tough three-month apprenticeship but soon rose to the challenge thanks to her quick, smart nature. Time passed and she not only became a great employee, but Van Anh was, and is, also much loved by all her colleagues. She came up with the idea of staff motivational outings and became the life and soul of events. In 2016, her efforts were rewarded when she was voted the La Spa employee for “Connecting People”. This award honors individuals at EHG who have influence, show inspiration, and who exude positive energy to all their colleagues. Van Anh became an

integral part of the operation and La Spa also became a part of her. Her enthusiasm and efforts paid off. In more than 300 customer feedback reviews for 2018 Van Anh achieved her highest record with a 100% excellent rating. Many customers remember her name by heart. Despite the fact that La Spa’s main clients are visitors to Hanoi, here for a short time, in October 2017 Van Anh received 13 customer requests for her to be their therapist. 2017 continued to be her memorable year when she was awarded the title ‘Excellent Staff Member of the EHG Group’. I can confidently say she truly deserved the award that year. She worked extremely enthusiastically, a young person who wanted to prove and challenge herself, with the heart of a genuine therapist.

Perhaps at the beginning Van Anh had never considered a career as a spa therapist but the serendipity of meeting La Spa opened her eyes to a career that she now loves and which loves and respects her in return.

*By Ton Khanh Nhi*

# A day in the spa life of Nhu Y

Unicorns, leprechauns, minotaurs, jackalopes .... and people who love their jobs. We wouldn't blame you if you think the latter statement is a fantasy. The idea of really loving your job may seem like a tale from an ancient book of mythology, like these imaginary creatures. However, there are people who truly adore their work, loving what they do and taking pride in doing a good job.

This segues neatly into the La Spa experience. The La Spa team come to work feeling really happy and at the end of each day they leave feeling even more contented, particularly Nguyen Nhu Y. Nhu Y is one of La Spa's Senior therapists and we challenge you to find another person who adores their job as much as she does. Plus, hers is a story of real inspiration. Nhu Y joined the EHG housekeeping department in 2017 as a public cleaner but showing an interest in the spa business and proving herself to be a dedicated hard worker she was given the chance to re-train as a La Spa therapist. She studied for eight at La Spa and is certified to treat clients using advanced massage techniques that allow her to manipulate soft muscle issue. This requires advanced training, commitment and dedication. Now she is one of the leading lights on the team; so let's take a look at a day in the life of Nhu Y.

First things first – the morning routine. Working in hospitality, especially in the spa industry, demands exceptionally high standards of personal grooming. This includes healthy hair tied back with clips, light make-up with a splash of lipstick for the natural look, clean uniform, good personal hygiene and of course a natural genuine smile and







happy demeanor. Nhu Y is like a ray of sunshine. She arrives at 8am to set everything up ready for the first La Spa customer at 9am when the spa opens. One of the therapist's first jobs of the day is to prepare the treatment rooms. To lay out crisp clean towels, decorate the areas with fresh flowers and ensure all treatment rooms are well stocked with products. White daisies are Nhu Y's favorite flowers; she places three to four daisy mums in glass bottles positioned around the spa to bring a touch of freshness. Other daisies are floated in the copper bowls of water placed under the treatment beds. Any excess flowers are kept fresh for the following day by wrapping them in a silky wet cloth and keeping them chilled in a box in the fridge, while old flowers can be revived after a few hours soak in clean water. The job looking after the flowers may sound easy but attention to detail and patience are needed as flowers play a very important part in the life and image of La Spa.

Nhu Y usually has her first guest booked in for a 9am treatment and on typical day she will have up to five clients.

The lunch break is the best time of the day for Nhu Y to relax, recharge the batteries and refocus her mind for the afternoon sessions. It is also a chance to catch up with her EHG colleagues from other departments.

After lunch before the afternoon clients arrive, Nhu Y re-checks the treatment rooms for cleanliness, stock levels and to ensure everything is suitably prepared. Of course at the end of the day after the last client and before going home her final job is to clean and clear the rooms ready for the next morning.

This typical routine is not just Nhu Y's but all the La Spa therapists who, like Nhu Y, are attentive, caring, happy and always looking forward to the next day.

*By Nguyen Thu Nga*





# GOING GREEN with La Spa Vietnam

The Hanoi summer months are traditionally very hot and humid with temperatures seldom below 32oC. However, in recent years the heat has been steadily rising, particularly this year where the thermometer has frequently been above 36oC making summer 2019 the hottest on record for 100 years.

The severity of the heatwaves can, in part, be attributed to natural elements but also to urban development, the effects of global warming and the way mankind is treating the environment.

This June, joining the growing movements around the world promoting environmental awareness and sustainable practices, Ms Kim La Spa Director

formed the La Spa Go Green team as part of the Elegance Hospitality Group's environmental protection program. She is a passionate environmentalist and knows everyone has a responsibility to help our planet. The focus is on creating a strategy to greenscape the workplace and inspire others to go green. To quote the African proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together".

The Go Green team formed of all La spa employees, braved Hanoi's summer heat in July. A month after laying the campaign foundations, La Spa Go Green kicked off early morning 10 July 2019 with Go Green Day, demonstrating that actions speak louder than words. The day's agenda included information about





La Spa Go Green team and project ideas, the La Spa Go Green Handbook was launched and participants took part in team building activities.

The event ended with a 'green-off' competition. Participants were divided into 4 teams. Their task was to clear up the rubbish littering the street around Hoan Kiem Lake. Prizes of recycled tote bags were awarded to the winning team which collected the most rubbish in the 20 minutes' time limit. Whilst this activity was a fun experience it conveyed a serious message driving home the importance of environmental concern and action to all La Spa team members.



Ms. Kim shared her concerns: "the Earth is facing many problems and sadly no part of our planet has been left unaffected by human actions. We don't know how to fix the holes in the ozone layer. We don't know how to bring back extinct animals. And we can't bring back the forests that once grew where there are now deserts. We don't know how to mend the Earth, but we can stop breaking it! And we can do many things to help us effectively contribute towards saving it. For instance, we can start planting more trees in our backyards and gardens. Statistics say that a single tree can soak up to one ton of carbon dioxide in its lifetime. If your outdoor space is limited then consider keeping small plant pots on your balcony, outside your door or by windows. Every little bit helps. We can stop wasting energy at home and the office by turning off all electrical devices when not being used and to stop leaving water taps running. Whilst I don't deny the usefulness of plastic, the side effects are eyesores everywhere. Plastic items litter streets and roads, they are dumped in rivers and the sea causing irreparable harm to wildlife, plants and even the human populace. So let's unite and commit to protecting our natural environment at all costs because if we don't then









no one else will which means the next generation will have to live with the consequences."

The La Spa Go Green initiative is laid out in the "La Spa Go Green Handbook". This is an inspiring instructive guide about how the planned goals can be achieved, to encourage the whole spa team to adopt the go green vision and to encourage everyone to believe they can have a positive impact on the environment. The handbook shows how one can start with baby steps and then progress to living the green good life by consuming less natural resources and creating more for environment. It includes basic tips and tricks for building a sustainable workplace and how to adopt an eco-healthy lifestyle. High on the agenda is the ban on single-use plastics in all La Spa areas and the encouragement of a green lifestyle including "eat green", "green transportation" and "shop green". The handbook concludes with an open question: "I choose to live green today, how about you?"

La Spa Go Green Day is the first step of many to come in the overall plan. La Spa's growing environmental awareness is higher than ever and the team and guests can look forward to forthcoming green initiatives such as "Flea Mark Day", "La Spa Arbor Day" and even encouraging guests to Go Green with La Spa.

Through this initiative La Spa strives to become the first name in Vietnam's spa industry and be recognized as a business that cherishes nature and which is actively doing something towards restoring the environment.

*By Nguyen Thu Nga*



# Guide to different types of spas



## Do you know what a spa is?

To the novice the idea of going to a spa may be rather daunting since they may not know what to expect or about the finer points of spa etiquette. So a number of questions are raised, such as:

- Why does one need the services of a spa?
- What should a spa be like?
- What kind of spa should one go to?

This article will help you to get the answers to these questions.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries "spa" referred to a wellness resort centered around mineral springs where visitors could benefit from the healing waters. Nowadays it means a place to receive massage therapies, facials, body scrubs and other services carried out in either day or overnight spas.

We list here the main different types of spa and what you need to know about them to be a savvy spa consumer:

## Day spa

About 80% of spas are day spas. As the name implies this

type of spa does not offer accommodation. Treatments can be single packages for an hour or so, or a number of treatments over the course of a day. A day spa offers body massages and facials on a day-visit basis. Such spas may also provide additional services such as manicures and pedicures. Amenities include changing rooms, robes and slippers, steam room, sauna, and a "tranquility room" with healthy treats such as herbal teas, lemon water and dried fruit and nuts.

## Destination Spas

Destination spas focus on promoting a healthy lifestyle through wellness programs. Activities may include exercise classes, lectures and talks aimed at physical and mental wellness, and fitness programs designed to support and enhance one's well-being. Normally packages are based on a minimum 2-3 nights stay. Prices are usually all-inclusive of accommodation, a certain amount of therapies, talks and activities. Meanwhile, an important factor for any destination spa is the location.



### Resort and Hotel Spas

In the 1990s, many resorts and hotels began including in-house spas for guests as part of the overall facilities and services. The guest therefore didn't have far to go for a spa treatment and it was convenient having such a service all under one roof. As the concept of going to a spa has developed in importance and popularity over the decades, so spas in resorts and hotels have increased in number, service and sophistication. Many also include gyms and sometimes personal trainers are on hand. Others may develop into wellness centers specifically aimed at improving health.

### Medical Spas

A medical spa is a combination between a medical clinic and a day spa operating under the supervision of a medical doctor. The most common services rendered at this type of spa include laser treatments, laser hair removal, IPL (intense pulsed light) treatments, injectable treatments like Botox and fillers, chemical peels, skin tightening or skin rejuvenation and treatment of cellulite.

*By Nguyen Thu Nga*



# The lotus. The spirit of the nation



The lotus flower has been voted Vietnam's national flower. Every summer, the light pink and white colors of lotus petals accompany flower vendors along the streets, creating one of Hanoi's unique beauties. The lotus buds are shy like a young Hanoi girl - pure and tender.

The lotus is considered a symbol of nobility due to its miraculous properties that no other species of flower can possess. Planted in the mud at the bottom of ponds, lakes and rivers the leaves float

on the water's surface like large flat umbrellas while the petals open in the morning. Lotus flowers are associated with the sun as they bloom during the day and close at night, sinking beneath the surface. In particular, where lotus flowers grow, the water is filtered, the cool air is pleasant and everything becomes pure and noble.

The beauty of the lotus is expressed both in its scent and color. Lotus scent is not strong and passionate as other flowers, such as the rose or





lily, but everywhere there are lotuses so an area of space is filled with an unusual, gentle and charming fragrance. Although the flower is not necessarily gorgeous and tall, it warms the heart when watching the layers of delicate lotus petals awake before the morning sun.

The lotus flower also represents female fertility as well as birth or rebirth. In Asian mythology, it symbolizes the female reproductive organs from which new life is born.

The flower also embodies multi-purpose properties. Apart from its delicate beauty, many lotus elements are edible and/or have a useful purpose, especially medicinally. Lotus flower tea can lower cholesterol and help improve circulation while the flowers are used to stop bleeding. The seeds can be used to combat digestive disorders, spleen, kidney and heart ailments and reduce blood pressure. On the culinary side, dried flowers are incorporated as a seasoning in cooking, the stems in salads and the seeds roasted as ingredients in soups and sauces.

Vietnam maintains a long-standing love affair with the lotus. Numerous traditional folk songs and poems pay tribute to the flower, which is the most common representative symbol for the culture and lifestyle of the Vietnamese. It rises from the mud up to the sun without being polluted. It represents strength and stands for divine beauty that can come from impurity as well as representing the growth and prosperity of the Vietnamese over 5,000 years.

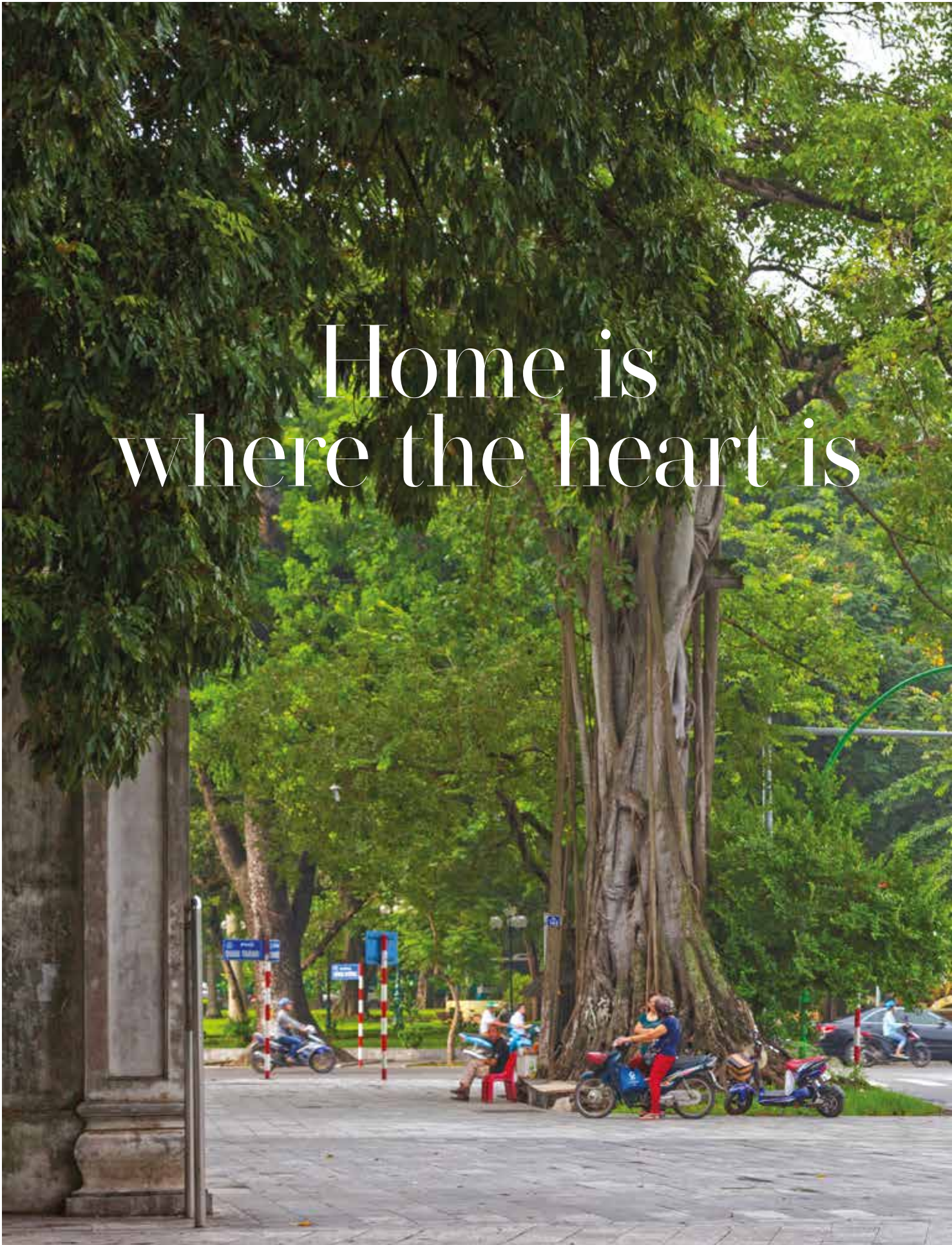
#### Extra information

\*\*\* the core of the lotus seed is one of five essential ingredients included in La Spa's Autumn tea. It gives it a light bitter taste which helps with relaxation and can help treat insomnia.

*By Vu Hong Diep*



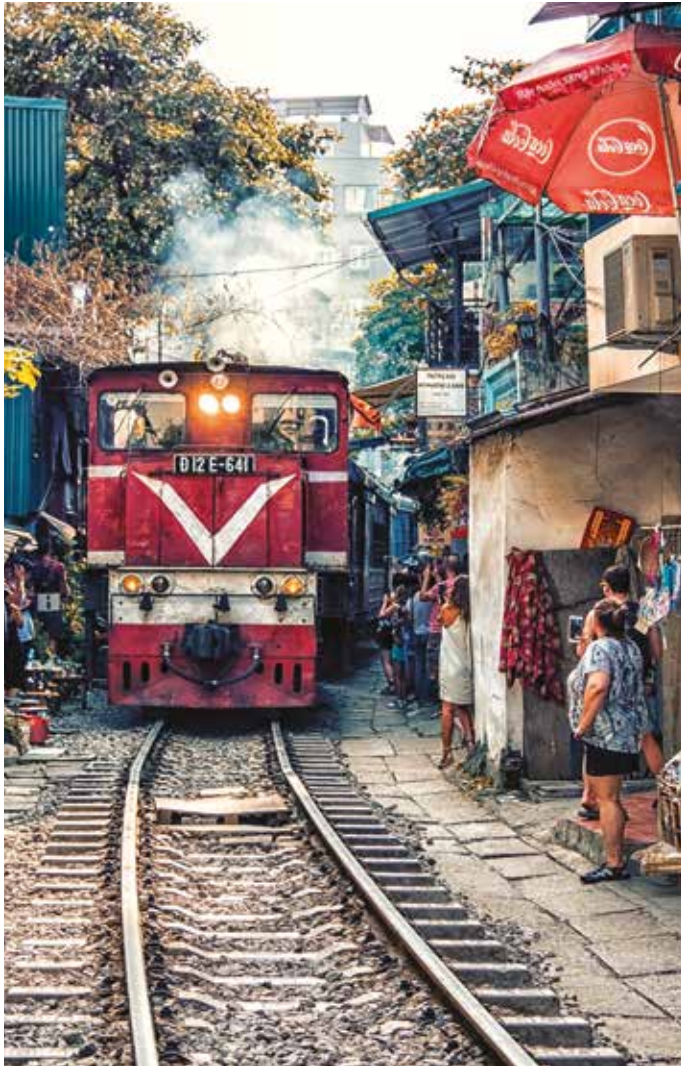
Home is  
where the heart is











Although I was not born in Hanoi, I moved here when I was two years old so this beautiful city has always been part of my very first precious childhood memories.

I was living with my family on the second floor of a communist-style condominium, the facade sporting Hanoi's signature classic yellow ochre walls. Here, I would play hide-and-seek with the other neighborhood children. I remember my grandfather would always wake up at 5am and climb to the terrace to perform his early morning exercises while my grandmother went to the wet market right in the front yard of our building to purchase fresh vegetables, delicious meat, fish and shrimp. They would both come back home together by 6am at which time my mom started preparing the family breakfast. While this is not the main meal for Vietnamese it is full of flavor and nutrients. Every night before going to sleep I would dream of what we would eat for breakfast the next day. I would choose between hundreds dishes like bread with pâté and eggs, glass noodles with goose, minced meat porridge, sticky

rice with caramelized pork and lean pork paste, chicken Pho and so on. My breakfast would be completed with a cup of homemade yogurt. After eating, my father took me to school by motorbike traveling along the tree-lined streets flooded with the dawn's golden sunlight.

After the morning rush hour Hanoi reverts to a slightly quieter, calmer place. This is a great time for sightseeing by walking around Hoan Kiem Lake to observe the elderly practicing Tai Chi and line dancing, visiting the Thang Long Imperial Citadel to soak up the capital's ancient history and culture or simply wandering the Old Quarter streets. The latter brings to life the image many people have of Hanoi with the hustle and bustle of market traders against a backdrop of colonial architecture and a maze of narrow alleyways.

Hanoi's evening rush hour is from 5pm to 6pm. The whole city is transformed into a hectic, turbulent whirlwind loaded with scooters, cars, bicycles, cyclos and buses and a cacophony of tooting horns. But this is also the best time of





day to wander down the alleyways and grab an early evening snack from a tiny street food stall. Sitting at a low plastic table with a handful of other people you can enjoy some of Hanoi's street food delights like fried fermented pork roll, fried eggs with mugwort, sweet and sour grated salad and so on.

Hanoi starts to take on a more absent feel when people are back home with their families having dinner, watching TV or chatting until bedtime. Hanoi late at night is a lot quieter. In my dreams I hear the sound of trains whistling at midnight, the distant calls of the street hawkers or sometimes the mewing of a lost kitten.

Hanoi has changed an incredible amount over time. The old buildings are being replaced by modern apartment blocks, people are increasingly shopping in supermarkets and mega malls rather than markets. There is a burgeoning number of different nationality restaurants - Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Italian ... and increasingly young people are leaving Hanoi to live and study

abroad or in other cities in Vietnam. But for me Hanoi is the only place where I want to spend the rest of my life.

As a wise man once said: "Home is where the heart is".

*By Bui Kim Thoa*





# Islands of Tea







When reading about tourism in Nghe An province, most people are probably familiar with Cua Lo Beach, Sen Village (Ho Chi Minh's native home) or Nghia Dan sunflower fields where the largest concentration of sunflowers in Vietnam are cultivated. However, not everyone knows that 50km from Vinh city (the capital of Nghe An) are the green tea plantations of Thanh Chuong District, central Nghe An, which increasingly lure large numbers of visitors each year.

There are about 180 families who grow tea across 420 hectares of land by Cau Cau Dam. The tea plantations are divided into around 35 small islets, each forming a one-hectare estate. 10 of the tea tree hills are open to visitors and the only way to access them is by motorboat which takes around 20 minutes or by rowing boat, which enhances the experience.

Although western Nghe An is well known for its hot harsh climate, the tea plantations by Cau Cau dam enjoy an extremely comfortable fresh environment. Visitors to Thanh Chuong may also be surprised by the area's extremely beautiful natural scenery. With blue skies, emerald waters and the dark green of the fresh tea trees, the effect is a picture postcard of rich colors and patterns.

The tea hill plantations are most beautiful at dawn when the morning dew drops still balance on young tea buds. Tours can be made of the 10 hills and locals have erected thatched huts where visitors can rest, sip bowls of green tea and snack on peanut candy. In addition, tourism is also associated with cuisine, not only sightseeing. One of the food specialties here is steamed chicken with tea leaves - a dish full of flavor. Thanh Chuong Tea has a distinct flavor and, together with the scenic experience, visitors will remember this beverage forever.

*By Le Thi Cham*



# Speaking Vietnamese

## DAILY CONVERSATION

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE	PRONUNCIATION
Hello/ Hi/ Good morning/ Good afternoon/ Good evening	Xin chào	Sin chow
Goodbye	Tạm biệt	Tam bee it
Good night	Chúc ngủ ngon	Chook ngu ngon
See you again	Hẹn gặp lại	Hen gawp lie
How are you?	Bạn có khỏe không?	Ban co kwe khome?
I'm fine, thank you!	Cảm ơn bạn tôi khỏe	Gahm un ban thoy kwe
What's your name?	Bạn tên gì?	Ban thane zee?
My name is...	Tôi là...	Thoy la...
Thank you	Cảm ơn	Gahm un
You're welcome	Không có chi	Khom go chee
Sorry/ Excuse me	Xin lỗi	Seen loy
No problem	Không sao	Khome xao
Yes	Vâng	Vung
No	Không	Khome
Can you help me?	Bạn giúp tôi được không?	Ban zoop thoy duc khom?
I don't understand	Tôi không hiểu	Toy kung hey-oh
I understand	Tôi hiểu	Toy hey-oh
Happy New Year!	Chúc mừng năm mới!	Chuck moong numb moi!

## SHOPPING

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE	PRONUNCIATION
I would like something else	Tôi muốn cái khác	Toy muan kai khac
Souvenir	Quà lưu niệm	Wa lew niem
Bag	Bao	Bao
How much?	Bao nhiêu tiền?	Bow neuw tee-en?
Can you give me a discount?	Bớt được không?	Bot duoc kung?
That's too expensive	Đắt quá	Dat wa
I can't afford it	Tôi không đủ tiền	Toy kung du tien
Ok, I'll take it	Tôi mua cái này	Toy moo-ah kuy nay
I don't want to buy this	Tôi không mua	Toy kung moo-ah
Smaller size	Cỡ nhỏ hơn	Cor nyor hurn
Larger size	Cỡ lớn hơn	Cor lurn hurn
What is this?	Cái gì đây?	Kie zee day
Can I have a look?	Tôi có thể xem được không?	Toy co the xem duoc kung?





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THERE ARE  
A THOUSAND WAYS TO  
TRAVEL AND JUST  
AS MANY WAYS TO SAY...  
THANK YOU

If our group continues to grow,  
it is above all thanks to all those travellers in search of  
new experiences, who do us the honour of staying at  
our hotels and using our spa service. We would also  
like to warmly thank all those who, every day, work  
towards making EHG an ever more prestigious and  
astonishing brand.

