

Italian-style opulence in Vietnam



A Grand Deluxe King bedroom at the Reverie Saigon in Ho Chi Minh City.

By Kristy Alpert

Towering above the bustling crowds of marketgoers and rising high above the hypnotic scents from the food stalls below, the Reverie Saigon's arrival in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City in late 2015 marked a welcome and extravagant departure from the city's norm.

The scene outside the hotel is pure Vietnam, sandwiched between Dong Khoi Street and Nguyen Hue Boulevard, but inside the hotel is a dreamlike escape into a world of Italian opulence.

According to Kai Speth, general manager of the Reverie Saigon, "What we endeavored to present all along is a design experience like nowhere else in the world so the unprecedented bringing together of what are some of Italy's most recognized design brands under one roof culminates in an experience that's very deliberately intended to captivate at every turn."

The hotel's design goes far be-

yond its vivid color schemes and eccentric art collection and drips daringly into the territory of textures and technologies.

The spaces throughout the property are all at once bold in their extravagance and sophisticated in their approach. Each of the 286 guestrooms and suites features an exquisite appreciation for Italian craftsmanship, where modern technologies and amenities are artfully cloaked in contemporary, classical or hand-crafted pieces from renowned Italian brands such as Medea, Grifoni and Le Porcellane.

"We wanted to introduce the new and unseen vs. the disappointingly familiar and predict-

able," Speth said. "Ho Chi Minh City captivates at every turn, and it seemed only fitting to do the same from a hotel perspective, especially since we had our eye on raising the bar on hospitality industry standards here all along."

Despite the hotel's non-native palazzo ambience and appearance, it has been eagerly em-

braced into its Vietnamese community.

While locals and visitors alike flock to the hotel's five trendy eateries and bars for everything from happy hours to corporate events, the location of the Reverie makes it easy for anyone craving a bit of local life to get a taste without going far.

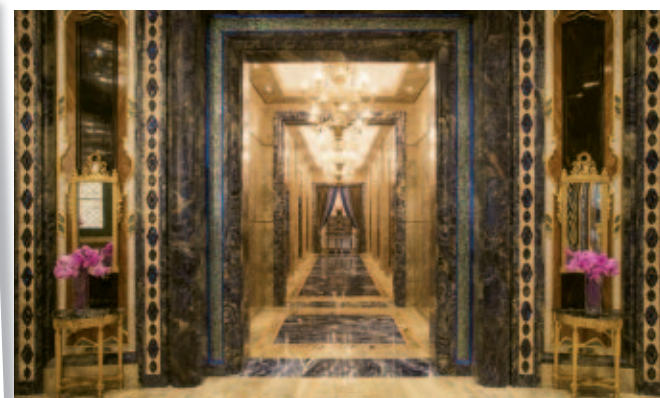
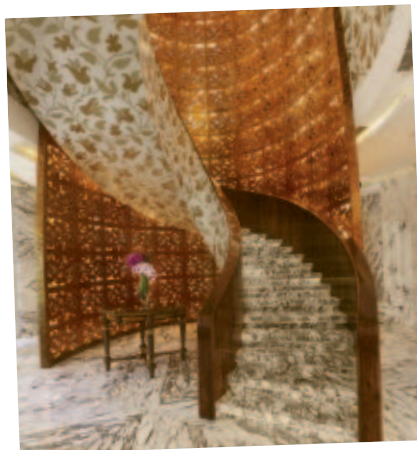
The hotel is within walking distance to many restaurants serving traditional Vietnamese dishes, such as SH Garden, where an ancient wooden elevator transports diners to the rooftop restaurant to indulge in delicacies such as *bun tom chanh day* (prawn and passion fruit noodle soup) while overlooking the city streets below. Venturing a few blocks farther from the main tourist streets will have visitors dining with expats and fashionable locals at Propaganda Vietnamese Bistro. The restaurant serves arguably the best spring rolls in the city and is one of the only places around

town that pairs dishes made with local ingredients and wines from around the world.

There's no shortage of entertainment on property at the Reverie — with its 12,900-square-foot spa and fitness center, outdoor swimming pool and 16 elegant event spaces — but getting off-property is a snap with the hotel's preferred tour operator, Trails of Indochina. A friendly, English-speaking tour operator (ask for Le Kha) picks up guests from the hotel and offers a day of adventure exploring Ho Chi Minh City and beyond, from the tunnels in Cu Chi to the coconut groves along the Mekong River delta.

"We consider it integral to engage with the local community," Speth said. "And I'm quite confident that a visit to the Reverie Saigon will certainly be remembered in more ways than one."

Room rates start at \$350. See www.thereveriesaiгон.com.



Left, the reception area for the Reverie Saigon's 12,900-square-foot spa; other facilities include an outdoor pool and 16 event spaces. Above, the hotel's lobby.

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Hahoe Yangdong

Cathay Pacific's welcome retreat

Getting to Vietnam well-rested and happy is a breeze thanks to Cathay Pacific's multiple flights to Vietnam's hub cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Danang. Travelers from the U.S. need only disembark once from their journey overseas in Hong Kong Airport, where a new business-class lounge awaits ready to refresh travelers before they head on toward their final destination.

Located in the Pier section, the lounge was designed by Studioilse to feel like a quintessential Hong Kong street with fast and slow lanes that enable guests to enjoy the space at their own pace. The space is all at once inviting and easy to navigate, featuring Cathay Pacific's signature

noodle bar, a full-service bar, self-service kiosks for quick snacks and drinks, a calming tea house and 14 shower suites.

The Pier Business Class Lounge is open from 5:30 a.m. until the last departure and is

available for first-class and business-class passengers, Marco Polo Club silver members and above; friends and family members of qualified members; and Emerald and Sapphire Oneworld members. — K.A.



Cathay Pacific's business-class lounge in the Pier at Hong Kong Airport has a full-service bar among its amenities.