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Going global, page 64


Sarj Stoeckl is, in a word, peripatetic. Born in Manila and based in New York since 2000, she has also lived in Italy, Germany and Washington, DC. She has worked in the investment banking, media, fashion and hotel industries, as well as at the United Nations. Always on the move, this freelance writer and graphic designer's next stop is a quick week-long trip to Madrid, Frankfurt and Paris.



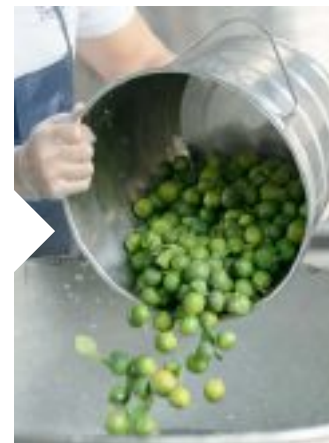
 **BAO KHANH** | vubaokhanh.com
Well, Hanoi there, page 89

Photographer Bao Khanh, who discovered a love of photography in his third year at college, is passionate about capturing portraits of ethnic groups in Vietnam and around the world. "Staying in Hanoi during Tet (Lunar New Year) should be on everyone's bucket list," he says about the capital city.



 **JOSHUA ZUKAS** | joshuazukas.com
Well, Hanoi there, page 89

Joshua Zukas is always looking for opportunities to delve into the mismatched neighborhoods of Hanoi – his home for the last six years. This month, Zukas recommends must-see spots in the city's up-and-coming areas. For his next adventure, Zukas will be on the hunt for boutique mountain lodges and authentic homestays in the mountainous far north of Vietnam.



 **MARISS GABRIELLE REYES** | marissereyes.com
The Filipino spirit, page 79

In this issue, California-born food writer Marisse Gabrielle Reyes rounds up a clutch of Philippine-made craft spirits. "I always love discovering the creative new ventures my fellow Filipinos are developing," says Reyes, whose list of places to visit this year includes Bali, Barcelona, Manila, Canada and London.



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Well, Hanoi there!

From intimate music venues in colonial buildings to bars serving up pho-inspired cocktails near railroad tracks, Hanoi's lifestyle scene is quirky and exciting. Here we show you three of the Vietnamese capital's must-visit areas

By **Joshua Zukas** Photography **Khánh Vũ Bào**



Vui Studio

Peer through the large windows of Vui Studio and you'll be greeted by Nordic-style blonde wood furniture displayed against floor-to-ceiling raw concrete.

This stylish loft is where a selection of contemporary artisanal goods is designed and showcased, including organic soap made from local ingredients, delicate scents that reflect Hanoi's four seasons and trendy accessories inspired by local culture. There's also a café serving quality Vietnamese and Western coffee, and occasional public music and film events in the upstairs media rooms. "It's more of a hangout space rather than a conventional concept store," co-founder Thai Nguyen says.

fb.com/vuistudio

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Tong Duy Tan street and the railroad tracks

No cars are allowed along Tong Duy Tan, making it one of Hanoi's most pedestrian-friendly roads. But you'll still need to keep a lookout for motorbikes and, of course, the trains at the railway tracks nearby. Attractions that surround the area include Quan Su Pagoda, the Vietnam Military History Museum and the Flag Tower, but you'll most likely be sussing out the cafés, bars, boutiques and street art as well.





Ne Cocktailbar

Award-winning mixologist Pham Tien Tiep is credited with conceptualizing the gin-based Pho cocktail, which, like Vietnam's world-famous noodle soup dish, uses cinnamon, star anise and cardamom, with chili and lime served on the side. "What's special about our menu is that it's very local," Pham says. "The use of traditional Vietnamese ingredients and flavors is reflected in our signature drinks." Quintessential local ingredients include lime and lemongrass, but Pham also has more daring ideas, like soya sauce and fish sauce.

[fb.com/necocktailbar-174456829728862](https://www.facebook.com/necocktailbar-174456829728862)



Zo Project

Breathing fresh life into Vietnam's age-old papermaking tradition, boutique owner Tran Hong Nhung works with craft villages to realize her creations, which include notebooks, postcards, lampshades, earrings and handheld fans that spill out from the shop and onto the makeshift sidewalk displays. The railway tracks seem an unlikely choice to display delicate paper crafts, but for Tran, there isn't a better place. "I was impressed by how quiet it was even though it's located in between two busy main streets," says Tran, who moved the shop here from West Lake in 2016. "It looked like a small village right in the center of Hanoi."

zopaper.com



The Railway Hanoi

Quach Thi Thao was one of the first visionaries to set up shop next to the railway tracks, a popular tourist attraction in itself. An unpretentious and cozy café and bar, The Railway Hanoi gets busy in the late afternoons when you're most likely to catch the Reunification Express squeeze past the houses. "I love connecting people and I love trains," says Quach, who theatrically announces each arrival by bellowing "Choo choo!". "Having a café here gives me the chance to do both at the same time," says Quach, who serves a range of drinks, including a small selection of cocktails and craft beers. **[fb.com/therailwayhanoi](https://www.facebook.com/therailwayhanoi)**





The Hanoi Social Club

Owner John Kis opened this three-floor café and bar in 2011 to season Hanoi's live music scene with overseas acts, local experimentalists and traditional music from Vietnam's mountain regions. "I challenge people to consume music more mindfully," Australian-born Kis says. "A little like musicians playing in your living room, my gigs are low-volume, cozy and intimate." Housed in a quaint French colonial building, The Hanoi Social Club hosts regular live indie performances on Tuesday nights. Visit this Instagram-worthy joint for an international fusion menu that includes a wide variety of vegan and vegetarian options, or swing by for a cocktail.

fb.com/thehanosocialclub

NEW DESTINATION!

PAL starts flying 4x weekly between Manila and Hanoi on March 31, 2019.



Ray Quan

This hole-in-the-wall eatery serves up traditional Vietnamese food, but it's probably more famous for its dizzying selection of bizarre alcoholic beverages. Enormous jars of rice wine with pink lemons, mountain apples and various reptilian corpses adorn the inside space. After you've had a look around, try and grab one of the track-side tables outside to feel the wind on your face from the passing trains as you chow down. Food highlights from head cook and tavern owner Bui Thi Dong Thanh, otherwise known as Te, include roasted ribs with a rich tamarind sauce and a sweet but sharp banana blossom salad.

48 Duong Le Duan, Van Mieu, Dong Da



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Between the Old Quarter and West Lake

The neighborhood wedged between the Old Quarter and West Lake blends many of Hanoi's most appealing features: tranquil lakes, century-old trees, grand architecture and spirited street life. Truc Bach Lake is encircled by places of worship worth discovering, including Tran Quoc Pagoda and Quan Thanh Temple. Roaring Phan Dinh Phung street is a tunnel of evergreen flora lined with magnificent architecture, from the gleaming Cua Bac Church to the imposing Cua Bac Gate.



Ma Xo

Ma Xo is the kind of place that you'll be itching to tell your friends back home about. This lakeside café with sidewalk seating and comfy lounge chairs plays chill mixes during the day that progress to jazzy beats after the sun goes down. Kick off your shoes and pop in for a creamy egg coffee or cocktail, or tuck into one of their culinary creations from a small but inspired food menu. Highlights include the roast duck, *banh da* (rice wrap) and avocado *pho cuon* (noodle roll) dish, a fresh take on Truc Bach's specialty fresh spring rolls.

fb.com/ma.xo.cafe

Tranquil Books & Coffee

Escape the traffic of Phan Dinh Phung and kick back at this hip café and reading room which stretches across three floors, with a rooftop terrace boasting views of Cua Bac Church and the surrounding mansions, and a gigantic curved window that bathes the café in natural light. "We wanted to create a space in which people could take some time for themselves, perhaps with a book in hand," co-founder Khuat Anh says.

fb.com/tranquilnguyenbieu



Manzi

Cultural restrictions make opening a contemporary art gallery a bit of a challenge in Vietnam, so in 2012, founders Bill Nguyen and Tram Vu registered Manzi as a café and used art as décor instead. Located in an airy 20th-century French villa, Manzi's art events regularly push boundaries. "If people like the art, then great. If they don't like it, that's also great," Vu says. "The point is to get a reaction." Sketches, paintings, prints and sculptures from Vietnam's most promising artists are showcased in a small room upstairs.

fb.com/manzihanoi



54 Traditions

Poke your head into 54 Traditions and discover a hidden treasure trove of ethnic art, antiques and material culture from Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups – all curated with an anthropological approach in mind. You'll likely be treated to a free private tour of over 1,000 objects on display by New York-born Mark Rapoport, a doctor and ethnic art enthusiast who moved to Hanoi in 2001. Together with his business partner Nguyen Thi Nhung, he has continued amassing his collection, which includes tribal textiles, ancient artifacts, shamanic objects and more.

54traditions.com.vn



Standing Bar

This craft beer-focused spot is perfectly positioned for afternoon beers with a lakeside setting and a sunset-facing terrace. Standing Bar showcases the best and newest beers produced in Vietnam – look for brews from Heart of Darkness and East West Brewing Company – serving as many as 19 different varieties on tap. Expect beers, ales and ciders as well as tantalizing tapas-inspired plates.

fb.com/standingbarhanoi

Home Restaurant

Savor traditional Vietnamese cuisine in a gleaming colonial house festooned with colorful hanging lanterns and tropical potted plants. The interiors draw from Hanoi's creative history, using celadon pottery and blending vintage and contemporary design elements to decorate the two floors. The menu features dishes from across the country, but with executive chef Nguyen Gia Thien – who hails from Hanoi – at the helm, it should come as no surprise that there's a heavy northern slant. "I want guests to feel like they're visiting a close friend when they come to Home," says Nguyen.

hanoi.homevietnamese.restaurant.com





Cugini - Ristorante Italiano

Italian chef Nico Ceccomoro teamed up with the people behind Cousins To Ngoc Van, West Lake's favorite European bistro, to launch this trendy restaurant set over several floors. The cuisine at Cugini is traditional Italian with a modern twist, and you can expect handcrafted pasta alongside wood-grilled meats. A collection of wines, mostly from France and Italy, gives you a choice of reds and whites to complement your meal.

[fb.com/cugini.tongocvan](https://www.facebook.com/cugini.tongocvan)



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To Ngoc Van and Dang Thai Mai streets

This small pocket off West Lake is brimming with cool cafés, hip bars, creative spaces and a lively restaurant scene. The nearby Flower Market is worth exploring especially late in the evening or during the lead-up to festival days. In the spring and summer months, the pools of West Lake blossom with lotus flowers.



Bao Wow

This fusion bao joint is the brainchild of Katie Taylor and Phan Nhu Long, who both aim to offer fun dining experiences in this up-and-coming Dang Thai Mai alley. They fill their *bao* (steamed bun) sandwiches with several different combinations, including Korean *galbi* (beef short ribs) with kimchi, and lentil falafel with pickled beets. Phan handles the cooking while Taylor manages things up front. "It's really important for us to make everything in-house and prepared on the day," says Taylor. "Everything – from the pickles to the *bao* – is made by us."

[bao-wow.business.site](https://www.bao-wow.business.site)



Phu Sa Lab

"We create art performances like nowhere else in the world," states Jolie Linh Nguyen, general manager of Phu Sa Lab, an experimental music theater in the West Lake area. The *ca tru* (a Unesco-recognized form of sung poetry) venue is filled with a tight web of tables and chairs crowded around a small stage. Drop by for showings on select Saturdays or check out a jazz showcase of indigenous Southeast Asian instruments, which takes place every Friday in March. [fb.com/phusalab](https://www.facebook.com/phusalab)



Caffe Doppio

This corner café painted in sunshine yellow brews the neighborhood's best coffee, from creamy cappuccinos to smooth *nau da* (Vietnamese coffee with ice and condensed milk). "Local coffee traditionally uses 100% dark roast Robusta beans," the unassuming co-owner of Caffe Doppio, Tran Huyen, explains. "But we use a blend of 80% medium roast Robusta to maintain flavor and 20% Arabica to round it off."

[fb.com/Coffee-Shop/Caffe-Doppio-183194242262824](https://www.facebook.com/Coffee-Shop/Caffe-Doppio-183194242262824)



Phu Specialty Tea & Coffee

What began as a private home in a three-story building quickly evolved into a café, gift shop, creative space and boutique guesthouse. The café specializes in quality tea and coffee, nut-based milk alternatives as well as savory sticky-rice dishes. Singer-songwriter and co-owner Le Cat Trong Ly also organizes regular workshops for budding artists, avid singers and specialty tea enthusiasts. There's a small collection of inviting rooms available if you're looking to base yourself outside of the center.

[fb.com/phuteacoffee](https://www.facebook.com/phuteacoffee)



Work Room Four

If you're looking for cool souvenirs, look no further than Work Room Four, a multidisciplinary creative studio with a gallery and store. Co-founder Claire Driscoll works with local and international artists and oversees the studio's own in-house production, which includes practical home décor, ergonomic crockery and affordable prints. Driscoll helps support Vietnam's art scene by co-organizing the annual Art For You art fair in late November, which exhibits the works of local artists at pocket-friendly prices. **workroomfour.com**

