



BEHIND HANOI'S SECRET DOORWAYS

打開河內秘密大門



Back alleys, parasitic architecture and a long history of eating and drinking establishments in private homes give the city's emerging speakeasy culture its own unique flair, as **Joshua Zukas** discovers

隱秘的後巷、寄生於城市空間的建築，加上私房菜食肆的悠長歷史，為河內最新崛起的地下酒吧文化賦予獨特風情。**Joshua Zukas**驚喜發現

Photos by **Bao Khánh**

It's early evening and camera-wielding sightseers cluster around St Joseph's Cathedral, the faded but iconic neo-Gothic edifice in Hanoi's ancient Old Quarter. Overshadowed by the lofty cathedral spires is a crack between the buildings, a barely visible alley leading to a signless rusty door. I slip down the alley, ring a buzzer, give my name and pass through the crimson portal.

The city roar vanishes with the closing door. I pass into a serene space of private conversations muffled by a smoky darkness and seize a spot at the bar – the last of only 15 seats – and inwardly celebrate having made a reservation earlier in the day. There's no physical menu, and instead the bartender describes the cocktails of the day, each one more intriguing than the last. I opt for the gin-based, purple-tinged Aviation.

Longer Than a Summer, which opened in January, is one of a handful of speakeasies creating a buzz in Hanoi. The Vietnamese capital has no shortage of creative cafés and boisterous bars, but hidden spots to nurse an after-work drink have been few and far between until now.

Once clandestine bars pushing illegal alcohol during American Prohibition, speakeasies are now found in cities across the world. These days, the word refers to covert bars that advertise sparingly – if at all – and offer somewhere to step back from everyday urban life.

Clockwise from right: A street in the Old Quarter; serving up a cocktail at Longer Than a Summer; a wall of vinyl records at Longer Than a Summer

順時針右圖起：
河內舊城區街景；
於Longer Than A Summer享受雞尾酒；
Longer Than A Summer內的黑膠唱片牆

In rapidly urbanising Vietnam, though, this global trend is taking on a distinct personality shaped by the country's history and architecture.

Unlike the United States, Vietnam never banned alcohol, but it did suppress private enterprise in the 1970s and '80s, a period known as the Subsidy Phase. During the clampdown, daring business owners responded with cafés, bars and restaurants that operated behind closed doors, much like the first speakeasies in New York. And even though economic reforms in the late 1980s and early '90s – known as Doi Moi – opened the country up for business, public eating and drinking establishments housed in private homes endure. Up until the end of last year, a family of six was living in the space that Longer Than a Summer now occupies, and it remains enveloped by other family dwellings.

"The Subsidy Phase shaped the customer culture of the city, and you can still see this today," explains co-founder Ben Khuat, who's dressed simply in sand-coloured chinos and a black polo with a messy mop of black hair. "Customers are comfortable going to private places, and business owners are used to doing things informally. That culture lends itself well to speakeasies, which sit comfortably hidden down alleyways."

Doi Moi ushered in a new wave of Vietnamese entrepreneurship and economic growth that ambitious Hanoians are still taking advantage of. It also relaxed the restrictions on artistic expression. Creatives here have channelled their

energy into crafting coffee shops for decades, but it's only in the last two or three years that they've turned their attention to the city's nightlife.

"Most of the owners of speakeasies are amateurs," Khuat says, himself involved in launching several vanguard establishments, including coffee shop group Tranquil. "Some are artists that want something special for Hanoi. They're not out to make money necessarily."

History and economics aside, Hanoi's tangled streets, hidden homes and ramshackle architecture are also particularly conducive to speakeasy culture. "During the colonial period, most buildings were built and owned by one person or family," Khuat explains. "After the revolution, estates were split between many owners. This created mazes within houses that still exist, so there are countless secret treasures across the city."

Some secret treasures hide behind – or above – other businesses. To reach





“Some secret treasures hide behind – or above – other businesses”

某些隱世瑰寶就在
其他商店後方或樓上

傍晚時分，拿著相機的遊客圍在聖若瑟主教座堂外。這座宏偉的新哥德式建築位於河內舊城區，縱使披上歲月痕跡，但依然別具標誌性。教堂高塔下的建築物之間，有一條窄縫似的小巷，幾乎隱沒在城市裡，悄然引領至一道沒有招牌的生鏽大門。我無聲無息地溜進小巷裡，僅在幾米之遙的大批遊客並未察覺到我的舉動。我按下門鈴，報上名字，然後穿過深紅色的大門進內。

門一關上，城市的喧囂立即消失無蹤。我步進一個寧謐的空間，人們輕聲細語，整個地方都籠罩在煙霧瀰漫的黑暗中。我在吧檯坐下來，暗自慶幸今天預先訂了位——整間酒吧只設15個座位，這是最後一個。這裡沒有實體酒單，反之，酒保會為客人介紹是日特飲，一款比一款吸引。最後我點了紫色的氈酒特飲

「Aviation」。

Longer Than A Summer於今年一月開業，是河內其中一間掀起熱話的地下酒吧。越南不乏創意咖啡館和熱鬧酒吧，但能夠在放工後靜靜喝一杯的隱世地方卻為數不多。

於上世紀初的美國禁酒時期，地下酒吧曾經是非法售賣酒精飲品的秘密地點，但這種場所現已

遍佈世界各地。時至今日，「地下酒吧」這個名字是指那些鮮有宣傳且地點隱蔽的酒吧，為都市生活提供一處喘息的空間。而在高速都市化的越南，其豐富的歷史和建築，都為這股橫掃全球的潮流塑造出獨一無二的個性。

與美國不同的是，越南從來沒有禁酒，但在1970至80年代的「補助時期」，越南就曾經壓制私營企業。當時，大膽的商家閉門經營咖啡店、酒吧和餐館，情況有點像紐約的首批地下酒吧。到了1980年代後期至90年代初，即使越南推行經濟改革——又名革新開放（Doi Moi）——為國家打開營商大門，這些設於私人住宅內的餐飲場所依然繼續經營。Longer Than A Summer前身是一個六人家庭居所，直至去年底才變成酒吧，現在仍與其他家庭的住宅為鄰。

「補助時期造就了市內的顧客文化，至今影響力依然可見。」酒吧合辦人Ben Khuat說。這位現年36歲的創業家身穿淺棕色斜紋布褲和黑色polo恤，蓄著一頭凌亂的黑髮。「顧客喜歡前往私人地點，而商人也習慣了非正規的經營方式。這種文化與隱藏在小巷裡的地下酒吧甚為配合。」

革新時期促進越南企業新浪潮





CRAZY FOR COCKTAILS

Hunt down Hanoi's best hidden bars

雞尾酒狂熱
尋覓河內最佳的
隱秘酒吧

Longer Than a Summer

An intimate Old Quarter spot with just 15 seats.

位於舊城區，
僅設15個座位，
氣氛親密。fb.com/longerthanasummer

Mad Botanist

Head to the top floor for great views of St Joseph's Cathedral.

登上其頂層天台，
可飽覽聖若瑟主教
座堂的風光。

45 Ly Quoc Su

Bee'Znees

Pull back a bookcase to reveal a staircase to a suave saloon.

拉開其中一個書架，
會發現一條隱秘樓梯，
通往舒適的酒廊。

163 Phung Hung

Kumquat Tree

A swish bar with booth seating and a full cocktail menu.

設有廂房座位，
還提供款式齊全的
雞尾酒選擇。

1 Nguyen Khac Can

Mad Botanist, a speakeasy just steps from Longer Than a Summer, you'll need to pass through a Hong Kong dim sum joint and climb a series of covert staircases. Mad Botanist occupies the top two floors of a mismatched terraced building that's seen years of architectural extensions, conversions and attachments. The lower floor houses a cosy, air-conditioned indoor salon for quiet gatherings, with dark wood panelling, plush sofas and a multi-coloured bar boasting a kaleidoscope of spirits. But the real draw is the top floor, a panoramic outdoor rooftop that rewards visitors with refreshing angles on St Joseph's Cathedral.

"We prove that speakeasies don't have to be hidden away inside a building or in a basement. They can be outside spaces, too," bar manager Cong Thanh Nguyen says. Baby-faced, broad-shouldered and sharply dressed, 28-year-old Nguyen has worked with Mad Botanist since its inception two years ago. The speakeasy specialises in gin, of which there are over 100 different types, and draws a balanced mix of trendy Hanoians and savvy expats.

Parasitic architecture, where additional structures are attached to "parent" buildings for the purposes of extension, often to bewildering visual effect, has been a feature of Hanoi for decades. "In the Old Quarter they build and live on top of each other," Nguyen explains. "Some visitors

can be shocked by this, but it's just part of the city."

Across the Old Quarter and also hiding above the line of sight is Bee'Znees, which officially opened its doors – or book case, in this case – in April. Like Longer Than a Summer, Bee'Znees blends into the surrounding small family homes. At street level, Bee'Znees is a quaint bookshop offering a cluttered collection of literature. But pull back one of the bookcases, and you'll discover a secret staircase leading to one of Hanoi's suavest saloons.

"One time a lady came in because she saw a book she liked," Bee'Znees co-founder Jasmine La chuckles. "She asked me if she could buy it, so I laughed and just gave it away. Then I invited her up to the speakeasy and she was amazed." Donning a tailored dress and stylish bob, La epitomises Hanoi's new wave of trend-setting urbanites. "That's the best way someone can find us – by complete chance," says Duong Ngo, who co-founded the speakeasy with La. Both La and Ngo have office day jobs in Vietnam's lucrative hospitality industry.

"We're both professionals, and we find that there's a lack of quiet places to go after work," Ngo explains, sporting a fitted white business jacket as if she has come straight from the office. "We wanted to create a cosy second home. And we picked the 1920s concept to fit with the



Left to right:
A view of St Joseph's Cathedral from the rooftop of Mad Botanist; Cong Thanh Nguyen, bar manager of Mad Botanist; the interior of Bee'Znees is inspired by 1920s America

本跨頁左至右：
Mad Botanist頂層天台
盡享聖若瑟主教座堂景致；
Mad Botanist酒吧經理
Cong Thanh Nguyen；
Bee'Znees的室內裝潢風格
仿效1920年代的美國



和經濟增長，抱負遠大的河內人仍然受惠於此。措施亦放寬了對藝術表達的限制，幾十年來，市內的創意族群傾力開設咖啡店，但直至最近兩三年，他們才把創意投向晚間消遣活動。

「大部分地下酒吧的東主都是業餘人士。」Khuat說。他本身也有份創辦幾間新潮的消閒場所，包括連鎖咖啡店Tranquil、創意工作室Vui和休閒餐廳Monsoon。「他們有些是藝術家或創意工作者，希望為河內創造一些獨特的亮點，創業未必只為賺錢。」

除了當地的文化和經濟外，河內的蜿蜒街道、隱世住所和搖搖欲墜的建築物，也是衍生地下酒吧文化的理想環境。「於昔日的殖民時期，多數建築物都是由一人或一個家庭建造和擁有。」Khuat解釋說。「改革後，那些

大宅被分成多個業權，令市內現存的房屋都變成迷宮一樣，蘊含無數秘密寶藏。」

某些隱世瑰寶就在其他商店後方或樓上。要前往Longer Than A Summer附近另一間地下酒吧Mad Botanist，先要經過一間港式點心店，再登上隱蔽的樓梯。Mad Botanist佔據一幢排屋的最高兩層，建築物多年來經過多番增建、改建和加建，令整體風格不一。樓下那層是配備空調的舒適室內空間，讓人靜靜地聚會談天；酒吧以深色木材和奢華沙發為設計元素，吧檯後方放置了琳瑯滿目的烈酒，營造色彩繽紛的效果。不過，頂層才是其真正魅力所在：天台盡享環迴景色，讓無懼熱浪的客人坐擁不一樣的視角，飽覽聖若瑟主教座堂美景。

「我們證明了地下酒吧毋須隱藏在建築物內部或地庫。室外空間也一樣適合。」酒吧經理Cong Thanh Nguyen如是說。現年28歲的他，擁有一張孩子臉，肩膀寬闊，衣著乾淨俐落，自兩年前Mad Botanist開幕後便效力至今。這間地下酒吧主打氈酒，有過百款選擇，深得時尚的河內人和居於當地的外國人歡迎。

寄生建築是指在「母體」建築上附加額外的結構，作為伸延樓宇的方式。這些建築物看似耐人尋味，數十年來已成為河內的特別風光。「在舊城區，人們層層疊疊地加建，築成自己的家。旅客或會被嚇倒，但這就是河內市

的一部分。」Nguyen續道。

在舊城區另一方，Bee'Znees同樣隱藏於視線範圍以上。該酒吧於一月試業，並在四月正式打開大門——或書架。一如Longer Than A Summer，Bee'Znees與周圍的小型住家環境完全融合。從地面看，Bee'Znees是一間充滿懷舊風情的書店，堆滿文學書籍。但當你拉開其中一個書架，便會發現一條隱秘的樓梯，通往年輕專業人士的聚腳地。他們來自不同國家，在河內最具文藝氣息的雅座酒吧品嚐雞尾酒。

「有一次，一位女士因為看到一本喜歡的書，所以走進來。」Bee'Znees合辦人Jasmine La笑言。「她問我可否買下那本書，我就笑起來，然後把書送給她，再邀請這位女士上酒吧，她頓感驚歎不已。」La穿著量身訂造的連身裙，蓄著bob髮，堪稱新一代河內時尚先驅的典範。「尋找這間酒吧的最佳方法，就是偶然遇上。」Duong Ngo與La一同開設地下酒吧，而兩人本身都在蓬勃的越南酒店業擁有正職工作。

Ngo穿著稱身的白色商務外套，彷彿剛從辦公室過來似的。她說：「我們希望營造舒適的第二個家，也選取了1920年代的設計概念，配合禁酒時期主題。」裝潢元素包括富有時代特色的牆紙、古董風格檯燈，而吧檯上方有一張二戰前地圖。

儘管Bee'Znees向美國地下酒吧文化致敬，但卻充分發揮河內的焦點個性。一排窗戶展現舊城



Prohibition theme.” That includes period-appropriate wallpaper, antique-style table lamps and a pre-World War II map above the bar.

Despite this homage to the American speakeasy legacy, Bee’Znees couldn’t be anywhere else but in Hanoi. A sequence of windows offers enchanting views over the Old Quarter streets, festooned with leafy trees and knotted wiring. Step out onto one of the tucked-away balconies and you might catch the Reunification Express as it rumbles past on century-old train tracks. “Being here and looking at old Hanoi, overlooking the train tracks, is all very classic and atmospheric. It just works,” La says.

The co-owners wanted somewhere secret and private, but they concede that there’s also practical business sense behind opening a nightlife spot somewhere inconspicuous. “It’s expensive to rent places right on the street,” Ngo says, remarking on the notoriously high rents in the capital. “It’s much cheaper to rent somewhere down an alley or up a stairway. That’s one reason why a speakeasy is a viable business idea in Hanoi.”

The menu fronts classic cocktails such as the Manhattan and Old Fashioned, a nod to the era that gives Bee’Znees its inspiration, though there’s a selection of signature cocktails, too. “It sounds strange, but we are sentimental about a foreign past that we never experienced,” Ngo reflects. “We adore the legacy of America in the 1920s. We romanticise it.”

While he agrees that outside influence has been essential to the city’s speakeasy scene, Sean Halse, the British-born bar manager at Kumquat Tree believes



Left to right: The interior of Kumquat Tree; Bee’Znees co-founders Duong Ngo (left) and Jasmine La; Sean Halse, Kumquat Tree’s bar manager

左至右：
Kumquat Tree的裝潢設計；
Bee’Znees合創人Duong Ngo（左）與Jasmine La；
Kumquat Tree酒吧經理
Sean Halse

Hanoi’s idiosyncrasies have had a role to play. “Hanoi has its own unique take, because the people here crave privacy. That’s why we have private booths and hidden corners.” In contrast to the gregarious Saigonese, Hanoians are said to be more introverted, opting for small gatherings over large parties.

Kumquat Tree was one of Hanoi’s first speakeasies when it opened in December 2017. The French Quarter venue emanates swanky modern vibes, similar to the modern-day speakeasies of New York and California. It’s also plugged into the

international bar scene, hosting bartenders and DJs from around the world. On 13 July, it’s hosting Devender Kumar, bar manager at Hong Kong’s three-Michelin starred Otto e Mezzo Bombana.

There’s no sign and you’ll need a pre-arranged code to get past the entrance – a mysterious red door decorated with oriental trinkets. The speakeasy is spread over two floors, with warm mood lighting and nooks crafted for intimacy. The menu, presented on an iPad, stands in contrast: an enormous selection of classic and signature cocktails, popular lagers and craft beers and a healthy number of non-alcoholic mocktails and juices.

“The vibe is a bit different to other places,” explains Halse, who also coordinates a range of events throughout the year. “It’s a spacious speakeasy – holding up to 80 people – and when we have DJs the atmosphere is electrifying. We’re trying to redefine what a speakeasy is supposed to be. You’re not just here to relax, but also to have a good time.”

For Halse, defining a speakeasy is less about the atmosphere and more about



offering a personalised experience. “We don’t have mixologists,” he states. “We have bartenders. They’re there to tend to the bar, keep it clean and build relationships with the guests.”

Kumquat Tree and Longer Than A Summer are at opposite ends of the speakeasy spectrum. Kumquat Tree attracts a bigger crowd with themed nights and international DJs and has a substantial cocktail menu. Longer Than a Summer won’t buzz you through if their handful of seats are occupied and it offers just four cocktails and four whiskeys that are introduced by the bartender.

All of this goes to show that while the speakeasy scene in Hanoi is still young, it’s diversifying to cater to a variety of tastes. Both bars have loyal followings and ambitious plans for the future. “I can’t say anything about it, but we’re opening our second location very soon,” Halse says. Khuat, too, is scouting for the perfect location for his second speakeasy, Sooner Than A Winter. But for him, it’s all about getting things right. “We’re not in any rush,” he says with a smile.

街道風光，滿眼綠樹細葉和糾纏打結的電線。踏出其中一個隱蔽的陽台，你或許可以看到南北鐵路隆隆駛過百年車軌的景致。

「身處此地觀看舊河內和俯瞰火車軌，一切瀟灑經典氛圍，效果如斯美妙。」La說。

她倆希望塑造私密的隱世空間，但同時承認，她們之所以在不顯眼的地點開設晚間娛樂場所，背後也有其商業考慮。「街上舖位的租金太高昂了。」Ngo坦言，並指出越南首都的舖租出了名難以負擔。「反之，小巷或樓上的舖租就便宜得多。這正是為何地下酒吧概念在河內行得通。」

酒單的正面，列出「曼克頓」和「Old Fashioned」等經典雞尾酒，向啟發Bee’Znees的時代致敬；翻到背頁，亦有多款特色雞尾酒選擇。「說來奇怪，因為我們對從未經歷過的外國歷史滿懷感觸。」Ngo思索道。「我們仰慕1920年代的美國文化，並將之浪漫化。」

生於英國的Kumquat Tree酒吧經理Sean Halse認同，外來元素是河內地下酒吧的核心，但他同時相信，河內的個性也有相當貢獻。「河內獨特之處，在於這裡的人都追求私隱，所以我們設置了一些私人間隔和隱蔽角落。」相比起熱愛交際的胡志明市人，河內人性格比較內向，喜歡小聚會多於大派對。Halse指出，其顧客通常都是情侶或三五知己。

話雖如此，Kumquat Tree煥發無窮活力。酒吧於2017年12月在法國區開幕時，是河內首批地下酒吧之一，散發時髦的當代氣息，可媲美紐約和新加坡的摩登地下酒吧。它也踏進國際酒吧圈子，雲集世界各地的調酒師和DJ。酒吧會於7月13日迎來香港米芝蓮三星食府Otto e Mezzo Bombana的酒吧經理Devender Kumar。

不過，由於此酒吧不設招牌，故此客人須預先領取密碼，才能進入這道綴以東方吊飾的神秘紅色大門。酒吧分佈於兩個樓層，瀟灑柔和的燈光，也設有隱蔽的

角落，營造親密的氛圍。酒單顯示在iPad上，涵蓋多款經典和特色雞尾酒、大受歡迎的淡啤酒和手工啤酒，還有一系列主打健康的無酒精特飲和果汁。

「這裡的感覺和其他地方有點不同。」Halse說。「這是一間寬敞的地下酒吧，可容納多達80人，DJ駐場時氣氛更熾熱。我們嘗試為地下酒吧重新定義。你來到不止放鬆心情，也能盡情享受歡樂時刻。」

對Halse來說，地下酒吧的靈魂除了現場氣氛之外，重點其實在於個性化體驗。「我們沒有調酒大師。」他說。「但我們有酒保，他們會打理吧檯，保持整齊清潔，同時與客人打成一片。」

Kumquat Tree和Longer Than A Summer這兩間地下酒吧，在風格上截然不同。Kumquat Tree以主題之夜和國際DJ吸引眾多顧客，至於Longer Than A Summer的少數座位如果坐滿了，就不會再讓更多人進內。Kumquat Tree的經典和特色雞尾酒款式齊全，而Longer Than A Summer仍然未有正式酒單。每個晚上，他們都會提供四款雞尾酒和四款威士忌，全部都是酒保推介。

一切都證明了，雖然河內的地下酒吧文化依然年輕，但卻多樣化地迅速發展，滿足各種口味。上述兩間酒吧均吸引了一班忠實支持者，並已部署鴻圖大計。

「雖然不能多說甚麼，但可以透露的是，我們很快便會開設第二間酒吧。」Halse說，他希望將地下酒吧的概念發揚光大。至於Khuat也正在物色理想地點，開設第二間地下酒吧Sooner Than A Winter。但他認為，精益求精才是重點。「我們並不急於一時。」Khuat微笑著說。

 **Hong Kong Airlines flies to Hanoi daily. For more information, visit hongkongairlines.com**

香港航空每日均設有航班往來香港與河內。查閱更多訊息，請瀏覽hongkongairlines.com



Top places to eat, drink, stay and visit, recommended by Hanoi resident Jasmine La

居於河內的Jamine La推介城中最佳餐飲、住宿和觀光熱點



Eat 餐饗

Uu Dam Chay

Vegan food gets an elegant makeover at Uu Dam Chay, a hip restaurant spread over several floors. Locals and tourists alike come for the artistic, delicious fruit juices, and mouthwatering vegan hotpot.

Uu Dam Chay

時尚餐廳Uu Dam Chay分設多層，優雅演繹純素飲食。其充滿藝術感的美味果汁和令人垂涎的純素火鍋，令不少當地人和遊客慕名而來。

34 Hang Bai St;
udamchay.com/en

Nature 大自然

Halong Bay

Thanks to the recently opened Halong-Hai Phong Expressway, Halong Bay is now less than a two-hour drive from Hanoi. The twice-recognised UNESCO World Heritage Site is still one of Asia's great seascapes, ideal for leisurely cruises and adventurous kayaking.



HALONG BAY

下龍灣

幸虧下龍-海防高速公路於近期啟用，令下龍灣至河內的車程現在縮減至少兩小時。兩度獲聯合國教科文組織列為世界遺產的下龍灣擁有全亞洲最優美海上風光之一，適合寫意的遊船之旅和驚險刺激的獨木舟活動。

Culture 文化

Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

Escape central Hanoi and head to one of the country's finest museums. This celebration of the nation's diverse ethnic tapestry - Vietnam has 54 officially recognised ethnic groups - is set over two floors and across an expansive garden.

越南民族學博物館

離開河內市中心，前往越南最具特色的博物館之一——越南民族學博物館，認識當地54個官方認可的少數民族。這間博物館分佈於兩個樓層，並設有一個廣闊的花園。

Nguyen Van Huyen St;
vme.org.vn/home



VIETNAM MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY



THE CHI

Stay 住宿

The Chi

It stands out from Hanoi's other boutique hotels, thanks to spacious rooms, stylish interior design and a magnificent rooftop bar offering unrivalled views of St Joseph's Cathedral. The hotel is conveniently nestled between the Old

Quarter and the French Quarter.

The Chi

The Chi從河內芸芸精品酒店中脫穎而出，擁有寬敞客房、時尚室內設計，以及景觀一流的天台酒吧，盡享無與倫比的聖若瑟主教座堂景致。酒店地理位置優越，座落舊城區和法國區之間。

13 Nha Chung St;
thechihotel.com