

The swimming pool of Saigon  
Phu Quoc Resort & Spa



THANH TUNG

# Make It Legendary

From relative obscurity, Phu Quoc has become one of the greatest attractions of Vietnam, thanks to the efforts of Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa, along with improvements by local authorities

By Dat Tien

With its abundance of beaches, white sands and warm sunshine, Phu Quoc Island in Kien Giang Province is unmatched as a destination where international tourists can feel completely safe and inspired. The island's beauty lies in its wildness and primateval natural beauty.

Traditional festivals that have been part of the life of the locals for years are also a magnet, luring tourists from around the world to visit and explore the island.

However, the island has become a popular tourist

destination not just because of its natural attributes, but also thanks to the efforts of people who have made it a place which tourists chose to re-visit again and again. Part of this effort has come from the Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa, and in particular Phung Xuan Mai, general manager of Saigon-Phu Quoc Joint Stock Company and Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa. In May 2007, Mai was awarded a third-class Labor Order by the State President for his achievements.

Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa is a shareholding company under the management of Saigontourist Holding Com-

pany. The company, which was established in 1999, has 90 four-star bungalows and rooms. When Mai joined the tourism industry on Phu Quoc Island in 2000, there was very little to promote it as one of the most attractive destinations in the world. The room occupancy of local hotels reached 20% per year on average and there was a bare minimum in terms of services for the international tourism market.

Mai has had a dramatic impact on the hotel as well as the island. He has improved the hotel's management system and service levels and he also opted to increase the

number of services available so as to target a diversified pool of tourists.

His tactics were complemented by the improvements implemented by the government of Kien Giang Province, and as a result the number of tourists visiting the island has increased annually by 100%. Since 2005, the average room occupancy on the island has reached 60%, with Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa enjoying a market share of 25% of tourists and 40% of revenue from the island's tourism.

The key to this success lies in the hotel's efforts to promote local tourism at



ism fairs and exhibitions in Germany, France, Russia, Japan and Australia, as well as its active participation in prestigious tourism organizations. Moreover, the hotel has been proactive in attracting tourists from international markets such as the U.S, Spain, Taiwan and South Korea. It has opened rep offices in HCM City, Hanoi and Can Tho.

Since 2002, the hotel has also attended commercial units (Global Distribution System) dedicated to the tourism industry, such as World Hotels, Hi-Tek and Generate, to explore a new pool of tourists through sales on the Internet. The hotel's information is available on three websites, [www.vietnamphuquoc.com](http://www.vietnamphuquoc.com), [www.phuquoc.info](http://www.phuquoc.info) and [www.sgphuquocresort.vnn.vn](http://www.sgphuquocresort.vnn.vn).

The strength of Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa is its commitment to providing high quality services and products. For example, Mai came up with the idea of introducing tourists to the coral reefs of the island by setting up scuba diving packages. This has resulted in the island being named one of the best destinations in the world for swimming and diving.

The hotel also offers fishing tours, water sports and visits to small neighboring islets, which encourages visitors to extend their stay

average tourist visit was two days; in 2006 that had increased to four days.

The hotel's main tourists are international, coming primarily from the U.S., Russia and Australia.

According to Mai, a manager must maintain close contact with heads of departments to control and maintain the quality of services and products, thus ensuring that the hotel maximizes its input and output.

Talking about himself, Mai said, "Having the confidence to make decisions which will enable me to achieve my business goals, as well as satisfying my thirst to conquer challenges, is my target."

As a result of the success of Saigon-Phu Quoc Resort & Spa, Saigontourist is investing in two new projects on Phu Quoc, one of which is a 209-hectare, five-star complex to the north of the island, with total investment of up to US\$1 billion.

#### **SAIGON-PHU QUOC RESORT & SPA**

Add: 1 Tran Hung Dao St., Phu Quoc District, Kien Giang Province  
Tel: 0773.846999, email: [sgphuquocresort@hcm.vnn.vn](mailto:sgphuquocresort@hcm.vnn.vn), website: [www.sgphuquocresort.com.vn](http://www.sgphuquocresort.com.vn)



# Food For Ladies

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, hotels and resorts offer attractive gastronomy programs and entertainment shows

#### **Rex Hotel (141 Nguyen Hue St., Dist. 1, HCM City. Tel: 8292185)**

There will be a Western and Asian buffet on the Rooftop Garden from 7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., with music performance by a Flamenco band from the Philippines. Diners will be served with wine and soft drink and ladies will receive flowers and free cocktail and juices. This buffet costs US\$35/adult and US\$20/child. Also on the International Women's Day, ladies participating in parties will receive free roses.

#### **Bong Sen Hotel (123 Dong Khoi St., Dist. 1, HCM City. Tel: 8238014)**

Bong Sen is offering noon and evening buffets. Menus are prepared according to the wishes of diners. Many dishes will be available, including seafood, roast chicken, grilled shrimp and more. In addition, there will be two special dishes especially for the ladies: strawberry, chocolate- or honeybee-sauce

crepes at noon and a special variety of pie served with vegetables and yogurt. Tickets cost VND110,000/person at noon and VND190,000 at night. Special seafood set menus will be available at the hotel's Executive Lounge on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., costing US\$15/diner, including free fruit juice and gifts.

#### **Tan Cang Resort (A100 Ung Van Khiem St., Dist. 1, HCM City. Tel: 5128775)**

The resort is offering buffet on the riverside, which will take place at 6 p.m. The buffet features a menu of over 30 dishes such as palace salad, spring rolls and cream spring rolls. Mineral water and soft drinks are free of charge. The resort will also arrange special gifts for ladies and a painting area dedicated to children. Those booking 10 tickets at a time will be offered one free. The ticket costs VND150,000/adult and VND90,000/child.