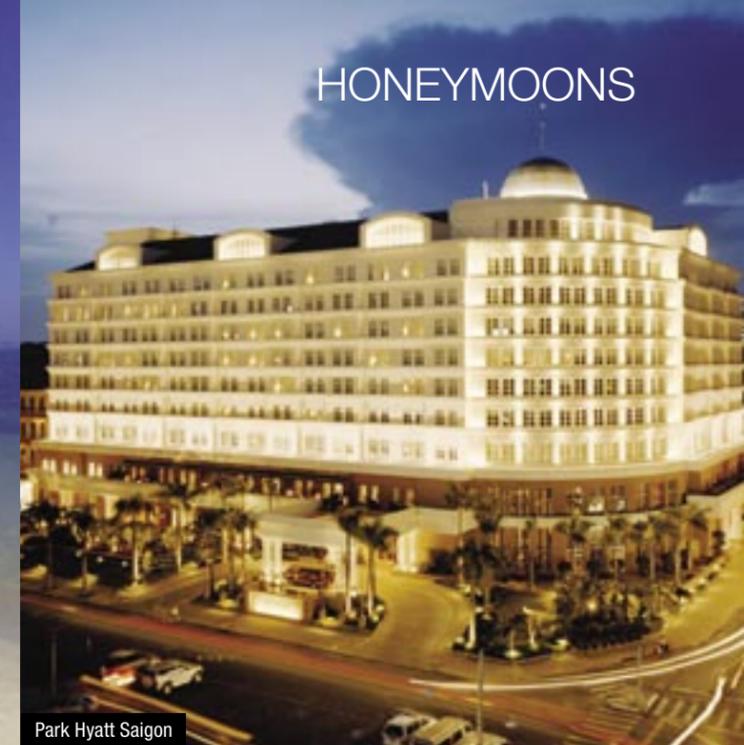




Evason Hideaway at Ana Mandara



Park Hyatt Saigon

The land of plenty

For a vibrant, exhilarating honeymoon with plenty of pampering down-time thrown in, the delights of Vietnam are waiting to be discovered

It might not be known as one of the most popular places on earth to honeymoon – yet – but that just makes Vietnam all the more special. One glance at the country's stunning natural beauty will make you feel like you've discovered a delightful secret. Think rich forests, deserted beaches, undulating paddy fields and lively cities, and you'll realise it offers everything you could possibly need for a truly adventurous honeymoon. This is one destination that's not going to remain a secret for long, so make sure you discover its untouched beauty before it becomes a regular on the honeymoon radar...

CITY LIFE

Ho Chi Minh – often more romantically referred to as Saigon, as it was until 1975 – is the perfect place to spend a night or two when you first arrive in Vietnam. The country's largest city, it's hectic and lively with mopeds darting in between the traffic, and an abundance of street markets, cafés and shops. It's a city that never sleeps and the exuberance is infectious. The Park Hyatt Saigon makes a great base. Don't miss a swim in the heavenly pool, a trip to the Xuan Spa and dinner at Square One where fabulous Vietnamese seafood and meat is prepared in front of you in an impressive show-kitchen.

A TOUCH OF CULTURE

Onwards from the city to Dalat in the south central highlands of Vietnam, and less than an hour's flight from Saigon. It's known as 'Le Petit Paris', with its own scaled-down version of the Eiffel Tower in the city centre, but the real highlight of this area is its natural beauty with waterfalls, lakes and flowers galore. The Evason Ana Mandara at Dalat is the perfect place to rest your heads. Originally built in the 1920s when the area was popularised by French occupation, the 17 newly restored colonial-style villas offer timeless elegance. A vintage Citroën transports you from the hotel reception

to your villa, and with its roll-top bath, wooden floors, open fireplace and crisp white bed linen, you could be forgiven for thinking you've travelled back in time. The resort offers an abundance of inspirational adventures, from yoga at the pagoda to Champagne and strawberries beside the breathtaking Xuan Huong lake. A visit to the bustling market is a must to give you a real taste of Vietnam, as is a journey on the cable car to Zen Temple. After a day of exploration, there's nothing better than lazing together by the pool or pampering yourselves in the Six Senses Spa before heading to Nine for Vietnamese culinary treats. A fun alternative is in-villa dining where the treats are brought to you – and a barbecue is a must.

drapes, open-air baths and private plunge pools on the beach. Couples who like the idea of stepping straight out onto the sand should opt for a beach pool villa, while if you're looking for something a little more secluded (and don't mind climbing a few steps!) choose a hilltop villa. There's also one presidential villa, a 20-minute walk or short boat ride from the main restaurant and set in a private bay. With dedicated butler and in-villa spa treatment room, this must be as close to heaven as it's possible to get. After the cooler highland climate of Dalat, Nha Trang is hot, hot, hot all year round. All you need to pack is your bikini and a lightweight summer dress – you won't want to venture far from this paradise. If you can tear yourselves away from the beach, watersports are in abundance, while the Six Senses spa blends into the rocks and offers an unrivalled selection of holistic and signature treatments using natural plant essences. As the sun goes down, a sunset cruise with Champagne and canapés is the perfect way to see more of your surroundings. For the ultimate in romantic dining, the restaurant is right on the beach, with fabulous views over the bay and a mouthwatering Vietnamese menu (the stir-fries are second to none). If you want to get even closer to the gentle water that laps the shore, you can also dine on the picturesque wooden terrace over the rocks.

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

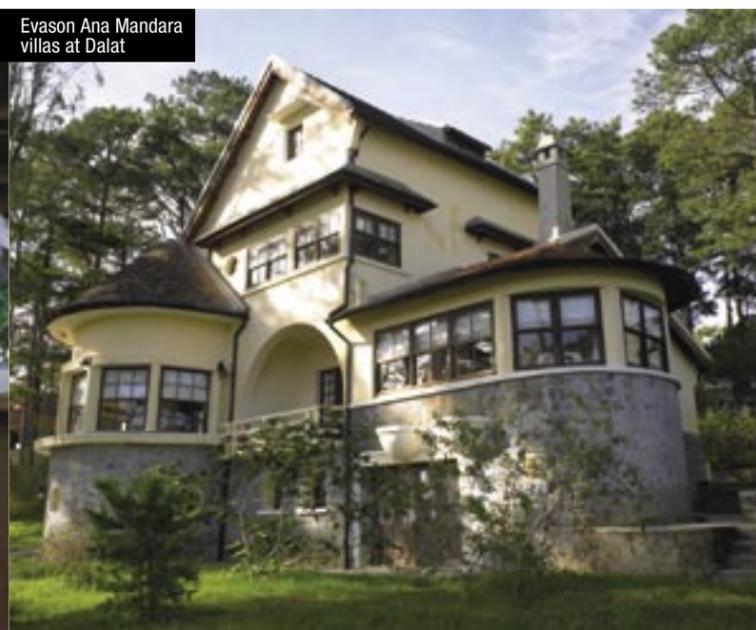
Extend your holiday with a stopover in Bangkok. It's just a short flight from Vietnam into Thailand, and this buzzing city offers delicious cuisine and great shopping. The contemporary Millennium Hilton Bangkok hotel is the perfect place to stay. Take in the city views from the Three Sixty bar before dining at Mango Tree in the Silom Road area. With its frenetic, colourful street life, it will assail all your senses and leave a lasting impression long after you return home – a must-have requirement of any honeymoon. 📍

GETTING THERE

📍 **When to go:** Vietnam is hot all year round, with temperatures in Nha Trang ranging from 26°C to 38°C. The best time to go is December to April. The wet months are from May to November.
 📍 **How to book:** Kuoni Travel (01306 747008, www.kuoni.co.uk) offers two nights at the Park Hyatt Saigon, two nights at Evason Ana Mandara at Dalat, three nights at Evason Hideaway at Ana Mandara and two nights at the Millennium Hilton from £1,980 per person, including flights with Thai Airways and transfers.
 📍 **Flying time:** 11 hours 30 minutes from London to Bangkok, and 90 minutes from Bangkok to Ho Chi Minh.



Evason Hideaway at Ana Mandara



Evason Ana Mandara villas at Dalat

WORDS: KATE SMALLWOOD