

TRAVEL + LEISURE

SOUTHEAST ASIA

SEPTEMBER 2015

the
Style
&
Design
issue

ISSN 1906-0823



9 771906 082018

TravelandLeisureAsia.com

SINGAPORE S\$7.90 / HONG KONG HK\$43
THAILAND THB175 / INDONESIA IDR50,000
MALAYSIA MYR18 / VIETNAM VND85,000
MACAU MOP44 / PHILIPPINES PHP240
BURMA MMK35 / CAMBODIA KHR22,000
BRUNEI BND7.90 / LAOS LAK52,000

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the Serpentine

Design Stars 2015

These six firms are creating the new must-see destinations in cities across the world—plazas transformed into urban sculptures, restaurants that feel like time capsules, light-filled museums that upend our expectations about how to view art. Plus: six more much-anticipated design-driven openings. BY CHEE PEARLMAN AND ASHLEY NIEDRINGHAUS



JOSÉ SELGAS AND LUCÍA CANO OF SELGASCANO, CREATORS OF THIS YEAR'S SERPENTINE PAVILION, IN THEIR HOME OFFICE OUTSIDE MADRID.

COURTESY OF SELGASCANO

KENT LUI TACTICS

LEADING SAIGON'S DESIGN REVOLUTION.



THE REVERIE SAIGON, IN DISTRICT 1, IS A VIBRANT ODE TO VIETNAM'S LAYERED PAST. Inset: KENT LUI.

Saigon is one of Asia's great boomtowns, shining brightly as a home for up-and-coming artists and designers, culinary bigwigs and nightlife-hungry locals and tourists. As cultural shifts go mainstream, the long favored French influences are giving way to something distinctly Vietnamese. Architect Kent Lui of Kent Lui Tactics, who designed Hong Kong's skyline-shaping International Finance Centre and HSBC Building, is at the epicenter of creating Saigon's new design identity. For Lui, this new Saigon pulls from a mix of French, American and Chinese motifs while honoring and incorporating local influences. In creating this new vision, Lui seized the opportunity to work on District 1's Times Square building, a 39-story structure on two of Saigon's most legendary streets, Dong Khoi and Nguyen Hue. Times Square's all-glass façade has an integrated light projection system, a first for the city, which will be used to illuminate the

exterior with light shows and future New Year's Eve celebrations. Knowing this project, if done correctly, could change the way the world views Saigon and Vietnamese design, Lui and his team spent more than seven years perfecting their plans.

The grand dame of the mixed-use property is the city's newest and unapologetically opulent hotel, The Reverie Saigon (thereveriesaigon.com). At first blush, The Reverie, which occupies the upper and lower floors, seems like a far cry from traditional Vietnamese design. But Lui is quick to point out the Vietnamese people's fondness for all things colorful, energetic and lively as the central motif. Take, for example, the vibrant Murano glass installation on the ceiling of the ground floor lobby, which forms the geographic silhouette of Vietnam or admire the richly colored, handblown glass chandeliers and vases by famed Italian glass designer Venini. "Drawing inspiration from outside of Vietnam is, in many ways, illustrative of the country's storied past," he says. "Which is why the hotel is outfitted in an eclectic and internationally sourced arrangement of furnishings, decorative pieces and textiles." With one eye on its rich history and another on its bright future, Saigon is ready for its new-aged renaissance.



COMING SOON

Lui will continue to be a driving factor in architecture and design in Saigon. At the Union Square Building, a yet-to-be-named five-star hotel in District 1 broke ground in July 2014. With an open concept design centered on ancient European style and plans to showcase an impressive art collection, the hotel has an anticipated opening date of mid-2017.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE REVERIE SAIGON; COURTESY OF KENT LUI