

Community Outreach

By
Michelle
Lloyd

PHOTO BY PIER LAURENZA, INSTRUCTOR YAN VANNAC



I usually jump at any chance to meander over to Phnom Penh for the weekend. I enjoy the change of pace. So when I learned that Yogeswari (Estelle Eichenberger), a senior level Jivamukti teacher based in New York City was holding a workshop at the Nataraj Yoga studio, I, of course, jumped. Not only was the workshop very grounding and enlightening, I also had the chance to learn about community outreach programmes spearheaded by the director of the studio, Isabelle Skaburskis.

Yogeswari, as the founder of the AZAHAR Foundation, was Nataraj Yoga's first sponsor. AZAHAR is a non-profit organisation that supports youth in developing countries through non-violent conflict resolution, cross-cultural communication and vocational opportunities. Together, they have sent eight children from the Kien Khleang orphanage centre to a private school for English skills and computer classes, and also offer weekly yoga classes to a group of fifteen children.

BREATHE, SMILE, JOIN AND HELP
On Sunday afternoons the children make their way over to the studio for an hour-long

class, allowing them the space to develop awareness, move and breathe. Their yoga instructor of the last two years is Yan Vannac, a Cambodian native sponsored through Nataraj Yoga who received his teaching certification in Australia. He is the first certified Cambodian yoga instructor. His smile and energy fills the room and the children seem to be completely at ease and receptive to him.

There are several other inspiring and admirable outreach programmes facilitated by the Nataraj team, such as one to survivors of human trafficking and families devastated by land grabbing and mass evictions. To find out more information about Nataraj Yoga and Yogeswari, visit their websites at www.yogacambodia.com and www.yogeswari.org.

Next time you are over the border, stop in and say hi. And if you can, join a class. You'll be sure to find a peaceful space, beautiful staff and students, and groovy energy!

Michelle Lloyd is a yoga instructor at Saigon Yoga, www.saigonyoga.com. You may contact her at michellelloyd@gmail.com or on 0909 648193. 

martial arts and spinning. The centre also contains a spa and a restaurant serving up calorie-calibrated meals to help members stay in line with individual fitness programmes.

Nutrifort
2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, Q1

Tel: 3825 8560
nutrifort@hcm.fpt.vn
www.nutrifort.com
Famous for its own range of food supplements such as protein bars and energy drinks, this comprehensive health, fitness and nutritional centre offers California spinning and customised exercise programmes for all levels of fitness.

Park Hyatt Fitness Centre

2 Lam Son Square, Q1
Tel: 3824 1234
A swimming pool, steam room, Jacuzzi and fitness centre make up this upmarket health centre. A three-month full membership costs US\$570, off-peak is US\$300.

Pilates 1-on-1

Tel: 0908 378 290
pilates1on1@yahoo.com
Cesario Schurt is a certified instructor in mat Pilates and uses the Polestar Pilates method, which tones abdominal, thigh and back muscles, builds strength, increases flexibility and agility and develops core control. Offers private Pilates sessions at home or in the health club, for individuals and groups.

Renaissance Hotel Health Club

8-15 Ton Duc Thang, Q1
Tel: 3822 0033
Exercise with an unsurpassed city view at this health club with gym, swimming pool, steam room and massage parlour. A good place to take time out at the pool-side bar. Costs US\$20 a day or US\$100 a month.

Saigon Fitness Co.

New World Hotel, 76 Le Lai, Q1
Tel: 3822 8888
Medium-sized gym with new cardio equipment and spacious changing rooms with adjustable shower settings. Also has an excellent guitar-shaped outdoor pool. Standard monthly membership costs US\$150 while a day pass goes for US\$20.

Star Fitness Gym

Manor Apartments, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
Tel: 3514 0255
Steve Chipman, who had a hand in establishing gyms at the Sofitel hotels in both Hanoi and Saigon, is behind Star Fitness – Vietnam's second largest gym. Membership gives free access to regular fitness classes and involves a one-time entry fee, plus monthly subscriptions.

Sofitel Plaza Fitness Centre

17 Le Duan, Q1
Tel: 3824 1555
Membership costs US\$600++ for six months and US\$1000++ for a year at this small but well-equipped gym. Equipment is modern and staff members are extremely helpful. Yoga classes are just one of a number of fitness classes offered.

football, soccer & rugby

Australian Rules Football

www.vietnamswans.com
vietnamswans@gmail.com
The Vietnam Swans play regular international footy matches around Asia. Training sessions are held weekly in both Saigon (2.30pm Saturday, RMIT University, D7) and Hanoi (midday, Saturday, UN International School, Ciputra). Social functions aplenty for everyone. Regardless of age, preferred sport or ability, all are warmly invited to become an active part of an inclusive Club. Contact Nick on 0937 683 230.

Les Gaulois de Saigon

www.gauloisdesaigon.com
gauloisdesaigon@gmail.com
These French footballers invite fellow players and their families to come and join social training sessions, with the emphasis on making new friends and getting together to enjoy the sport. Contact Sebastien on 0919 691785 or Romain on 0908 060139.

Olympique Saigon

astere@hotmail.fr
This predominantly French side has been playing for over 10 years, and won the 2008 Champion's title. Contact Fred on 0919 709024 or Jeremy on 0903 039086 for info.

RMIT Vietnam

sports.recreation@rmit.edu.vn
A team made up of university students is the new player on the SIFL scene, with their own on-site football ground which includes two new pitches.

Saigon Japan

hisanori@hcm.v.vn
Contact Kotani Hisanori on 0903 805963 to find out more about this friendly bunch of Japanese football-playing expats, part of the SIFL.

Saigon Raiders

jon.hoff@saigonraiders.com
The team is part of the Saigon International Football League, with regular games against local teams in the nearby provinces. A sociable football team always on the hunt for enthusiastic new talent for weekly training sessions and matches. Contact Jon Hoff.

Saigon Rugby Club

www.saigonrfc.org
saigonrugbyfootballclub@yahoo.com
Social touch rugby is played every Saturday afternoon for adults at RMIT University from 4pm. The Saigon Geckkos welcome both men and women of all nationalities to join and enjoy a few beers afterwards. Do regular tours of the region for tournaments, as well as invite visiting teams for ladies' touch rugby, contact rugby and men's over-35 contact rugby. Beginners welcome.

Saigon Saints

chris@saigonsaints.com
www.saigonsaints.com
Players train weekly and tour to places like Phan Thiet to play in other local and international tournaments. New players are actively encouraged to join this SIFL expat football club, running since 1995.

golf courses

Bochang Dong Nai Golf Resort
Trang Bom Town, Thong Nhat District, Dong Nai

Tel: 061 386 6288
www.vietnamgolfclub.com
This 300-hectare golf resort is about 50km away from the city in Dong Nai Province. Incorporates a 27-hole-course, a villa complex, bar, bbq area, sauna, Jacuzzi and pool tables.

Dalat Palace Golf Club

Phu Dong Thien Vuong, Dalat
Tel: 063 382 1101
dpgc@vietnamgolfresorts.com
Overlooking Xuan Huong Lake, the 7,009-yard course is often described as the most beautiful course in Vietnam, characterised by pine tree surroundings, crisp mountain air and a challenging element golfers of all levels will enjoy.

Ladies' First Golf

www.ladiesfirst-golf.com
Ladies.FIRST is a non-profit association of women golfers in Ho Chi Minh City, organising monthly tournaments whose format varies from month to month, including single stroke play, individual stableford and two-ball scramble.