

A Trip To Vung Tau – Modern Vietnam is a nice place to visit and you wouldn't mind staying there for a while

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By Tony Wells

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Modern Vietnam is a nice place to visit.. and you wouldn't mind staying there for a while.

Being an American and growing up during the Vietnam War era, I always wanted to see what the post war Vietnam was like now a days. During the Vietnam war I was to young to be drafted but I clearly remember all the hype in the USA over Vietnam and war. I can even remember my older brother actually joined in the anti-war protests and burned his draft card.

As luck would have it, one of the companies that I often free lance worked for secured a submarine cable laying project in Vietnam and asked me if I was interested to go there. Most definitely I wanted to go there.

As our plane touched down in the now Ho Chi Minh City, I tried somehow relate back to how the soldiers would have felt when they had landed there in Saigon back during the war. I can tell you this, the feelings they would have had wouldn't have been good at all knowing there's a chance that they could be killed there.

While driving from the airport to our hotel I even saw several of those old concrete machinegun bunkers. Even though the war had ended over 20 years ago, it was still clear that Vietnam still had many reminisces of it's war era days.

Traffic was chaotic at best. Many intersections didn't have traffic lights and it also seemed that some people drove on whatever side of the street they pleased. Definitely, anyone from any western country wouldn't want to even attempt to drive a vehicle on the streets of Vietnam.

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The architecture in Ho Chi Min City is a major reflection of French design with a mixture of Asian influence. The government buildings and churches were all beautifully designed and up kept quite well throughout the city center.

Vung Tau

The following morning we headed down south to the port town of Vung Tau. Vung Tau is at the entrance to the Saigon river. It is about a 6 hour drive from Ho Chi Min City to Vung Tau. During the Vietnam war the American soldiers used Vung Tau as an R&R area (Rest & Recreation).

Since the war ended the Russians have turned Vung Tau into an Offshore Oilfield supply base. They even have a large compound there where all the Russian's oilfield workers and their families reside.

There's also a few bars along the street directly opposite this huge Russian compound. The Russian's visit these bars for drinking, socializing and shooting pool, etc. I would shoot pool there also and I

happened to meet a few nice Russians there. They were oilfield workers on their time off.

Back to the bars.. there were several bars on the main strip there [which runs along the beach]. Most of the bars also served good western food and had pool tables in them also. Of course there were some beautiful and sexy Vietnam ladies there also.

I can't exactly put my finger on it but there's something about Vietnam girls that makes them extra sexy. Almost all of them have the typical long black hair (very long, in fact) and that alone makes any woman sexy in my opinion.

But, the Vietnamese ladies have their own special dress, the Vietnamese Long Dress, known locally as the Ao Dai. It is a one piece dress and the color is usually white. What's really sexy about this dress is the extremely high slit up both sides of it. Wow.. it seems like the slit is going all the way up to and even pass their asses and it makes the ladies look so very sexy when you see them walking or riding their bicycles down the street.

To top off their sexiness, they are usually donning a typical straw coned hat on their pretty little heads while outdoors to protect them from the sun also. Great combo and when you personally witness it, it would bring the average horny man down to his knees in no time.

Jam Packed Beaches

Our project was not on the same beach with the rows of bars, but on the other windward side beach. We couldn't work there during the day time on weekends cause the beach was always jam packed with people sunbathing, swimming and having a great time..

Unlike so many other Asian countries I've visited where hardly any of the locals seemed to sunbath or even swim at the beach, it seems that the Vietnamese people really do love the beach and sun. On weekends it would get so crowded that you could barely even find a space to sit.

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Also packing the beaches were the assorted food vendors selling everything from cold drinks to fresh lobster. Beach chairs and large umbrellas were also available for rent there.

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end so when we finished that cable laying job I had no reason to hang out in lovely Vung Tau anymore so we packed our bags and headed back north to Ho Chi Minh City.

American War Crimes Museum
(now the name has been changed to Remnants of War Museum)

When I heard about there was a museum in Ho Chi Min called the American War Crimes Museum, of course I had to go to see what it was all about. Well, as you can all imagine just by reading the name of the place I think you already have a pretty good idea as to what to expect there.

Inside this museum you will find all kinds of items dating back from the Vietnam war. Most of the items, if not all, were of American manufacture. Outside of the museum were such large items as tanks, anti-aircraft guns, helicopters and even one or two old American aircraft.

There were also numerous smaller items such as a large variety of old USA ammunition, plane

wreckage (from shot down American airplanes) and downed helicopter parts.

Inside the museum there were many items which included small arms such as guns of all sizes and calibers, knives, ammunition and a variety of other artifacts. All USA made of course.

The most disturbing items in this museum, at least for me, were the numerous photographs which were hanging on the walls throughout. When you see photo's of American soldiers smiling and holding up their trophy's (being a couple of cut off heads of dead Vietnamese soldiers) that's enough to turn anyone right off. Of course, that's the reality of war and I'm sure this kind of shit was done on both sides and probably even considered normal at the time, but, it's not the kind of thing I needed to be reminded of at the moment. I'd much rather be sitting in some bar with a couple sexy Vietnamese ladies on either side of me whispering sweet nothings in my ears!

I'd seen enough so decided to try and look for this street which was selling antiques which a friend of mine had told me about. "Not only were there some great antiques for sale there", he had told me, "but there's also American war items which were left after the war for sale there". When the Yanks suddenly pulled out of Nam in 1975, apparently they left behind entire warehouses full of new and used military goods. My friend had actually bought a brand new Helicopter Pilots helmet (still wrapped in its original plastic)!

I didn't actually see his supposed Helicopter Pilots helmet or know if he was kidding me or not but I definitely wanted to go find this place. When I arrived there I did see a hell of a lot of antiques for sale, including US military stuff.

I could handle being offered the assorted collection of old brass and stainless steel USA Zippo

cigarette lighters but what was a bit disturbing to me were the numerous USA soldiers dog tags they were peddling. Why in the hell would I want to purchase an old dog tag? Especially if they were real.. and were taken off of dead US soldiers. Hell, some of them even appeared to still have blood stains of them so I had to tell them `thanks but no thanks' to that offer.

No, at the street I was on I definitely didn't see them selling anything as good as a Helicopter Pilots helmet so now I'm wondering whether my friend was pulling my leg or not.

The following day as we flew out of Vietnam I just had to think once again how happy any soldier would have been to see that site and know he'd survived the jungle, the VC and most of all his commanding officer screaming in his ear everyday. LOL

Would I go back to Vietnam? Heck yes. I had a great time there and I'd recommend it for anyone who needs an adventurous place to go in Asia.

Tony Wells is an American who's first Asian eye-opening experience was in 1982 when he went there to work as a Commercial Oilfield Deep Sea Diver. He's currently writing a book about his life's story as the only Black American Commercial Diver in SEA and all other his wild and crazy experiences in Asia. He has also written articles for airline in-flight magazines such as; Silver Kris, Wings of Gold, and Hemispheres as well as some local Singapore newspapers.

The Modern And Traditional Anniversary Gift List

By John H. Rogers

People have celebrated wedding anniversaries since antiquity, each culture having its own set of practices covering what presents have been exchanged. Over the years certain gifts have been set aside for specific years, creating a traditional anniversary gift list. The traditional anniversary gift list was created at a point in time when people had less starting out in wedded bliss, so the list is a somewhat practical one. This traditional anniversary gift list was actually comprised of items which would be of real benefit to the new couple.

As the years have gone by, a newer anniversary gift list of a more modern nature has arisen to appeal to the more affluent modern couple. With the newer trend of later marriages, there is less need for starter items for newlyweds, as each usually has a lived alone and acquired items on their own which will be added to the combined household. This is completely opposite the traditional way of staying home until a suitable candidate was received for marriage.

This newer anniversary gift list also allows for practical gifts within the first few years of marriage, but it also has diamonds showing up three times as opposed to the traditional anniversary gift list with its one occurrence of diamonds. There are instances though, where both anniversary gift lists name the same gift.

Anniversary gift lists are nice a nice reference to get ideas for your anniversary, but a gift that is given out of love and that comes out of the understanding of your spouse will outdo a listed gift on any day.

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So with that thought in mind, here's the traditional versus modern anniversary gift list. May all your anniversaries be happy and full of love.

1st year Traditional List: paper Modern List: clock

2nd year Traditional List: cotton Modern List: china

3rd year Traditional List: leather Modern List: crystal, glass

Want to learn more about

anniversary gift? Make sure you

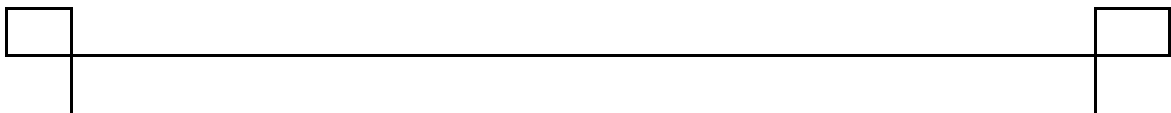
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