

**TRAVELLING WITH TARGET:
THE SOCIALISTIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Da Nang, Vietnam, is about 90 minutes flying time from the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but the city of Da Nang, itself, must be between 50 years and 80 years behind, compared with the HKSAR in terms of all kinds of facilities.

Da Nang is one of the major port cities of Vietnam, being situated on the coast of the South China Sea at the opening of the Han River.

The city has a human population of about one million, men, women and children, scattered throughout the 485 square miles.

TARGET (泰達財經) visited Da Nang from April 15, 2014, to April 21, 2014, having booked a villa at the Danang Sun Peninsula Resort, which is managed by InterContinental Hotels Group, a hotel-operating company that manages 183 hotels in 60 different countries, one is told at the company's Internet site.

Well, while InterContinental Hotels Group may make the claim of being a luxury brand hotel and spa operator, this medium can assure **TARGET** Subscribers that the Danang Sun Peninsula Resort has a long way to go before it can be considered a luxury resort hotel and spa.

This resort hotel is beautifully situated, without question, overlooking, as it does, the South China Sea, and the staff, for the most part, does its level best to accommodate the guests, staying in the 197 hotel rooms and villas.

The resort has only been open for about two years and this is readily apparent if one stays there for more than three days.

Where this resort breaks down, among other things, is with regard to the cuisine that it tries to serve and the rank incompetence and/or contrived negligence of the cleaning staff.

The Cuisine

The only memorable meals that this medium can recall was the breakfasts at The Citron Restaurant where a lavish assortment of all kinds of mainly light foodstuffs are available at the well-stocked buffet counters.

From the traditional fare of international breakfast dishes, such as fried eggs with bacon or sausages, to authentic Vietnamese soup noodles, to American donuts, to an assortment of fresh fruit, to all kinds of breads, to imported, European cheeses, to fruit and vegetable drinks, freshly made while one waits, are just some of the mouth-watering temptations, awaiting hungry morning guests.

The restaurant overlooks the South China Sea and while partaking of one's breakfast, the scenery can only be described as captivating.

But as for the other food outlets, there is a great deal of work that needs to be done.

At the Barefoot Café, for instance, the service is abominable and, on the three occasions that this medium visited this well-appointed outlet, right on the seafront, the servicing staff, numbering six ladies, one of whom was from Eastern Europe, found it difficult to care for just four tables.

The three cooks in the morning were quite capable of baking fresh bread, but the hot bread was served somewhat lukewarm by the time that it reached **TARGET**'s table that was not more than three feet from the serving counter.

Nobody appears to be in charge of this entire food outlet.

At the Easter buffet dinner, on April 20, just looking at the decorations and the multi-coloured lights, surrounding the outlet, and the way in which the various food stations had been arranged in a semi-circle, it was a splendid sight to be sure.

But that was as far as this buffet went.

The potato salad was created out of half-cooked, boiled potatoes: It was completely inedible.

The fresh fish was barbecued and was quite acceptable, but the barbecued beef was similar to trying to eat beef jerky. This was due to some idiot, barbecuing the beef, over and over again, until it was really impossible to chew.

However, the Scottish smoked salmon was excellent – probably because the untrained Vietnamese cooks did not have to touch it, other than slice the salmon when called upon so to do.

And so it went on.

The Accommodation

For the brave souls that, after reading this report, determine to visit this resort hotel, beware of creepy crawlers!

Spiders and millipedes were living in the guest suites in which this medium was staying, during the seven-day trip.

When this was pointed out to Mr Bruno Fallegger, the Swiss-born, Resort Manager, he made a written note of the matter on his notepad, stating '*This is not right!*' But there was no follow-through and the well-fed spider, living in Villa 216, continued to forage for food to its heart's content, wrapped in the curtain that was its home away from home.

Because this resort hotel was carved out of a jungle, according to Mr Fallegger, creepy crawlers are difficult to control, he explained to **TARGET**.

However, it appears to this medium that a healthy spray of DDT or some other pesticide to the curtains, under the beds, and in the closets would go a long way to controlling the proliferation of creepy crawlers.

Still on the subject of cleanliness, members of the cleaning staff have very little idea as to what are their duties.

Throughout this medium's stay, not once was a glass or cup washed in the two villas after their use; and, the sideboard, on which the cups and glasses were arranged, was laden with dust and dirt.

The bathrooms were never cleaned, sufficiently – if at all – with soap residue, having made rings on the washbasins, left to adorn the expensive décor of the stone washbasins.

Due to the high humidity of Da Nang, the air-conditioning ducts drip water onto the wooden floors so that one has to be careful in the morning not to slip on what will, inevitably, become slime mold.

This situation is left unattended so that, by the end of the day, it is very necessary to place towels on the floor in order to absorb the dripping water.

Much more could be said about the situation at this resort, but suffice it to say, this is not a luxury hotel and resort.

Touring Da Nang City

If a guest determines to hire a motor car/van and driver from the resort in order to tour Da Nang City, he or she is wasting at least three hours and a relatively large sum of money.

There is little of great interest to see in the city and the two museums are, pretty much, a waste of time.

The market, to which one is taken, is that which one could expect to find in most cities in Asia and there is no reason to visit it unless one is desirous of obtaining a sweat bath – because the market and the museums have no air-conditioning installed.

On the two visits to Da Nang City, this medium was taken to two restaurants, both of which cater, especially, for tourists.

The dishes, at both of these restaurants, did not, in fact, resemble Vietnamese food, at all, but a type of ‘*Vietnamese*’ food that the natives of this city think would be palatable to ignorant tourists.

On one of the trips to the city – which takes 45 minutes from the resort – **TARGET** was taken to Marble Mountain where masons were carving images from stone, taken from the mountain.

The images were, simply, copies of faces of people, or animals, or historic settings, taken from history books. About the only thing that is unique or creative about these carvings were the prices.

In short, this place is nothing less than a tourist trap and, as far as this medium is concerned, it is method by which tourist guides are able to obtain commissions on the purchases of unwitting buyers.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is, in reality, only about 39 years old, following the victory of the country over the aggressors from the United States of America in 1975.

This victory ended many hundreds of years when the country had been successfully invaded and occupied by quite a number of countries, including the PRC.

That being said, this ‘*new*’ country is just in what could be termed as its neophyte stage of development.

TARGET shall, in about five years, return to Vietnam in order to see how this beautiful country has been retooled into, hopefully, a modern, 21st Century nation.

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