

Den Gion Ninh Chu Resort in Phan Rang, Vietnam

Spread over more than nine hectares, the resort is perfectly suited to its environment. Statues of Cham dancing girls, carved stone panels, and clay water jars reminded us that we were in the territory of the former Cham kingdom, which flourished in central Vietnam from the second to 15th centuries. Like the Cham towers scattered throughout this region, the resort was decorated in soft shades of red and brown.

Most of the statues in the resort were made by Dang Nang Tho, a master potter from Bau Truc village. Inspired by ancient Cham designs, Mr. Tho uses local materials to create unique sculptures. Like the statues, the rooms combined traditional motifs with modern touches. While we checked into a small villa, some adventurous guests chose to sleep in tents. Following a swim and walk on the white sand, we joined a party grilling fresh seafood over a campfire on the beach.

The sunset transformed the waves into a tapestry of colors: pale blue, green, indigo. Starting out to sea I saw a flock of

Mai fish leaping above waves, as if to welcome me to Ninh Chu Beach.

Come dark, the atmosphere was romantic. The lights from the Sakaya Restaurant were reflected on the sea, while the clay lanterns that lined the resort's paths gave the scene a cozy glow. We sat near the sea and ate fresh prawns and sashimi, washed down with wine. The lights of the squid fishing boats sparkled offshore, forming a glittering string on the horizon.

Listed as a three-star resort, when finished, Den Gion will feature 100 rooms, 36 bungalows and a campground big enough to hold 40 tents. While many visitors will be content to spend their time swimming and sunbathing, various interesting day trips are available.

Day trips

Ninh Chu Beach is surrounded by historic and scenic sites - perfect for excursions should you tire of sea and surf.

Vinh Hy Bay

Visitors to Vinh Hy bay can explore the culture of the Raglai people, visit an ancient Viet fishing village, and feast on fresh seafood.

Po Klong Gairai Tower

Dedicated to King Porome (1627-1651), this tower is the site of the annual Kate festival, which attracts thousands of worshippers.

Bau Truc Village

Using local clay and outdoor kilns, potters from Bau Truc village have been making jars and pots for centuries.

Ngoan Muc Pass

Ngoan Muc pass provides travelers with stunning views over Phan rang and its environs.

My Nghiep Village

East of national Highway 1A, the Cham village of My Nghiep still produces traditional Cham brocade. Visitors may watch the women working at their looms.

Nam Cuong Sand Dune

Located near the Cham village of Tuan Tu, this immense sand dune is the site of various festivals. Visitors coming during Muslim holy month or Ramadan will witness colorful celebrations.

About the Author

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