

# BAR STOOL



**J**aspas on Dong Khoi is a bit of an institution in Ho Chi Minh City; a drinking and eating staple on the famous street for 12 years and counting. The Al Fresco Group-owned bar and restaurant has recently reopened after a thorough makeover.

The refurbishment has seen the space open up — with much larger windows and cleaner, more neutral colours befitting the more international outlook they are hoping to

achieve. Photos of the old Saigon on the walls remind the clientele that it's not a total break from the past— but the design is much more modern and in keeping with the 21st century.

## Upstairs, Downstairs

Nathan, the brand manager of Jaspas, says that with so much change going on in Ho Chi Minh City, it was the right time to give the place a facelift. This spirit has extended to their food and drinks menu too; Nathan says that

they've been influenced by healthy food from Hong Kong, alongside their familiar favourites such as their New Zealand Waikato beef (VND450,000 for a 250g sirloin) and Australian black angus (VND625,000 for a 200g rib-eye). Burgers start at VND225,000 with thick chips and a side salad.

Upstairs caters more for diners, while downstairs focuses on drinkers. Nathan says they are not trying to compete with the high-end cocktail bars in the city, but the selections

# Jaspas



PHOTOS BY MIKE PALUMBO

on offer from the eclectic cocktail menu are very good.

I try the Banoffi Scotch (VND145,000) which is excellent. Banana and scotch whisky don't seem like the most natural bedfellows but they complement each other well, beneath the smattering of nutmeg powder. I also try the Jaspas ginger spice — which is a gin-based cocktail featuring ginger ale, fresh ginger and a sizeable jalapeno chilli perched on the glass. It manages to be both spicy and refreshing.

## Beer and Smoothies

Tiger draught (VND55,000) and Heineken (VND60,000) are available, along with the other bottled beers you'd expect to find at a bar that caters to a mainstream clientele. They've also expanded their wine list, which now includes almost 70 different reds or whites. To draw in the after-work crowd, there is a 4pm to 7pm happy hour, with a buy-two-get-one-free offer on a range of spirits and beer.

Jaspas also has a range of speciality smoothie flavours such as avocado and coconut, aloe vera and mixed fruit and frozen berry delight (VND90,000).

As it begins its new chapter, Jaspas still has its prime location on a corner of one of Saigon's most famous streets, and it's still a good place to stop by for a drink or bite to eat with friends.

Jaspas is located at 33 Dong Khoi, Q1, HCMC 