



**TEMPLES & WATERWAYS *of*
VIETNAM & CAMBODIA**

with former U.S. Ambassador James Rosenthal

November 4 – 19, 2010

with a post-trip extension to Laos



Dear Club Member:

I am pleased to invite you to join a custom-designed journey that explores the magnificent temples and scenic waterways of Vietnam and Cambodia and offers a post-trip extension to Laos. This trip to Southeast Asia has been carefully crafted and throughout the program I will share my knowledge of and experiences in the region.

Explore Vietnam from north to south, as we walk among impressive ruins, ornate colonial buildings, temples and pagodas that reveal the country's prominent imperial history and the influences of Buddhism and Hinduism. Travel through the Mekong Delta by traditional boat, discovering local houses and visiting floating markets along the many rivers and canals. Then fly to Siem Reap, Cambodia, where we spend three days discovering the fabled Angkor temple complex, including spectacular Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. An extension program to Laos is also offered.

We hope you will join me and other Club members on this exclusive program. The region's stunning natural beauty, varied and ancient cultural diversity and the hospitality of its people are certain to make this an extraordinary travel experience. Space is limited, so we encourage you to register today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Rosenthal".

James Rosenthal

**For reservations or information, please call us at (415) 597-6720,
or email travel@commonwealthclub.org**



Wat Xieng Thong in Luang Prabang, Laos

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS EXCITING PROGRAM:

- ❁ Learn about Vietnam from former U.S. Ambassador James Rosenthal
- ❁ Travel by boat on the Mekong River to experience daily life on the water
- ❁ Discover the cultural cities of Hue and Hanoi, Vietnam's elegant capital
- ❁ Enjoy an overnight cruise aboard the elegant *Emeraude* on spectacular Halong Bay
- ❁ Experience the charming town of Hoi An, a well-preserved traditional Asian fishing port
- ❁ Explore Cambodia's majestic Angkor temple complex, including the legendary masterpiece Angkor Wat
- ❁ Optional post-trip extension to Laos



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Vietnam and Cambodia evoke images of imperial dynasties, spectacular Buddhist and Hindu temples and verdant landscapes dotted with patchwork-patterned fields of rice. Join us as we explore major cities and off-the-beaten-track places in two of Indochina's most intriguing countries.

VIETNAM

Vietnam's topography is remarkably varied and sublime. A country of profound natural beauty, Vietnam encompasses the immense Red River and Mekong Deltas; soaring mountains and jungle-clad forests traversing nearly the length of the country; terraced rice fields; and a winding coastline that offers white sand beaches. First settled more than 4,000 years ago, Vietnam reflects the influences of a succession of empires and would-be conquerors in its architecture, religion, and traditions. Throughout its turbulent history, Vietnam has managed to preserve its rich civilization and highly cultured society.

CAMBODIA

Our focus in Cambodia is the sacred Angkor temple complex (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the crowning achievement of the Khmer empire and acknowledged as the most exquisite example of ancient architecture in Southeast Asia. We tour the colossal masterpiece Angkor Wat, with its five towers, perfect symmetry and exquisite reliefs; the 12th-century city of Angkor Thom, once home to a million people; Ta Prohm, an ancient Buddhist monastery that has succumbed to the jungle.



TRIP LEADER

James Rosenthal is a retired career diplomat and former U.S. Ambassador. His 34-year career

with the U.S. State Department began in 1956 and includes serving as political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam, 1961-1965; a member and deputy director of the Vietnam Working Group at the State Department, 1967-1970; a member of the U.S. delegation to the peace talks on Vietnam in Paris, 1970-1972; and Director of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia affairs for the State Department in Washington, D.C., 1975-1977. He served as Chief of Staff of the Woodcock Mission to Hanoi in 1977, which was sent to initiate negotiations on the key issue of Americans missing in action in Vietnam. He then served at the U.S. Embassy in Malaysia, helping oversee the region's largest Vietnamese refugee program. Mr. Rosenthal also has served in diplomatic posts in the Republic of Guinea in West Africa and in the Philippines. He is a former Executive Director of the Commonwealth Club of California (1990-1996) and has taught political science and

international relations at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Mr. Rosenthal is a native of San Francisco and a Stanford University graduate.

PROGRAM COST INCLUDES

- Lectures by former U.S. Ambassador James Rosenthal
- All flights within Southeast Asia, starting in Hanoi and ending in Siem Reap (or Luang Prabang on the extension)
- Thirteen nights accommodations in Vietnam and Cambodia (three nights in Laos on the extension)
- Breakfast daily, 11 lunches, and 10 dinners, including welcome and farewell dinners (breakfast daily, 2 lunches and 3 dinners on the extension)
- All sightseeing, admission fees and excursions as outlined in the itinerary, including sightseeing by boat
- Gratuities to drivers and guides
- Coordinated group transfers on the program dates
- Local English-speaking guides and a Siemer & Hand tour manager throughout the program
- Pre-trip service, suggested reading list and pre-departure information



That Luang temple in Vientiane

broad tree-lined boulevards, and beautiful lakes. Enjoy a cyclo (bicycle rickshaw) tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter, a colorful maze of alleys where commercial life thrives. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner. **SOFITEL METROPOLE HANOI (D)**

HANOI

Sunday, November 7 Embark on a sightseeing tour of Hanoi, including Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and former residence, and One Pillar Pagoda, a shrine where couples hoping to bear children make offerings. Stroll through the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's oldest institution of higher education.

SAN FRANCISCO – HANOI

Thursday, November 4 & Friday, November 5 Depart San Francisco or another departure city for Hanoi, Vietnam, and cross the International Date Line.

HANOI

Saturday, November 6 Arrive in Hanoi this morning and proceed to the hotel. The bustling capital of Vietnam has retained its ancient culture, French colonial architecture,

After lunch, visit the Museum of Ethnology followed by a traditional Water Puppet Show. Enjoy pre-dinner drinks at a local artist's home together with Hanoi art specialist Tuong Linh before dinner at the Press Club. **SOFITEL METROPOLE HANOI (B,L,D)**

HANOI – HALONG BAY

Monday, November 8 Depart Hanoi and drive through the rich farmlands of the Red River Delta and the scenery of rice fields, water buffalo and everyday Vietnamese village life. Arrive in Halong and board *The Emeraude*. With luxurious air-conditioned cabins, a restaurant, two bars, and a sundeck, this is the ultimate Halong Bay experience. Cruise among hundreds of islets to discover unspoiled pockets of Halong Bay and visit Sung Sot cave. After the sun sets, enjoy a scrumptious buffet dinner. **ABOARD EMERAUDE (B,L,D)**

HALONG BAY – HANOI – HUE

Tuesday, November 9 Enjoy an early morning Tai Chi class on deck, then return to Halong City. Continue to Hanoi for our flight to Hue, the former imperial capital of Vietnam. Upon arrival, enjoy dinner together. **LA RESIDENCE HOTEL (B,L,D)**

HUE – DANANG — HOI AN

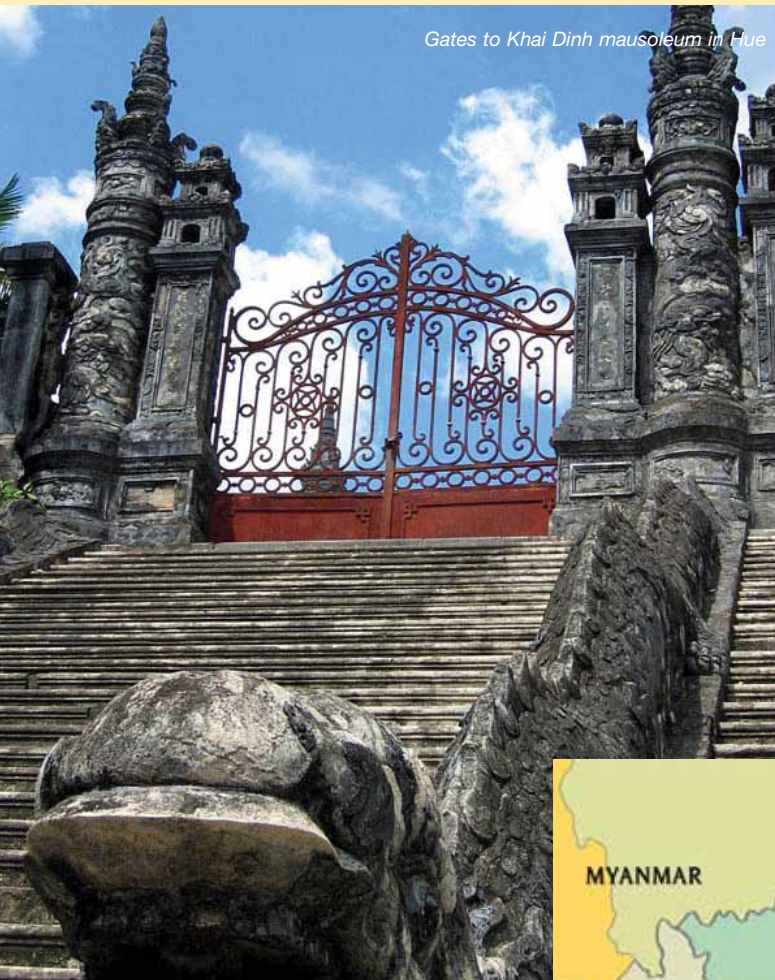
Wednesday, November 10 A morning boat trip on the Perfume River takes us by tranquil settings of gardens and lakes to Hue's best-known religious site, the Thien Mu Pagoda. Afterwards, enjoy lunch at a traditional 'garden house' that has connections with the ancient Hue Royal Imperial Court. See the elaborate mausoleum of Emperor Tu Duc, as well as the Imperial Citadel from where the Nguyen Dynasty ruled between 1802 and 1945. Next, drive south to Hoi An, once one of the major trading centers in Southeast Asia. The town still exudes a distinct Chinese atmosphere with its tile-roofed historic homes, bridges, and narrow winding streets. Tonight, we enjoy dinner at the hotel. **LIFE RESORT (B,L,D)**

HOI AN

Thursday, November 11 Enjoy a walking tour of the ancient town center, taking in the 400-year-old Covered Bridge, the colorful open market, and the wonderful



Our ship, the Emeraude, on Halong Bay



pagodas and traditional houses. After lunch, the remainder of the day is at leisure. Optional activities include a visit to the nearby pottery village of Tranh Ha or to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of My Son, Vietnam's most important Cham site. Tonight, dinner is on your own. LIFE RESORT (B,L)

HOI AN – HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON)

Friday, November 12 This morning, we fly to Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, the economic powerhouse of this rapidly developing country. Upon arrival, we drive to the Cu Chi Tunnels, located outside of Ho Chi Minh City. Stop for lunch at a local restaurant and then visit the tunnel complex. Tonight, enjoy dinner at Xu restaurant. HOTEL CARAVELLE (B,L,D)

HO CHI MINH CITY

Saturday, November 13 This morning, we take a cooking class. Start early at a local market with your host to shop for ingredients. Head back to the house to start the class, and eventually eat the results for lunch. After lunch, return to the center of town for a sightseeing tour, including Notre Dame Cathedral and the General Post Office, designed by Gustave Eiffel. We also visit the Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum. Dinner is on own tonight for a chance to explore the many fine restaurants in town. HOTEL CARAVELLE (B,L)

HO CHI MINH CITY – CAN THO

Sunday, November 14 This morning, visit beautiful Thien Hau Temple. Then, embark on a scenic drive to the Mekong Delta, stopping at the Cao Dai temple in Ben Luc. In the village of My Tho, enjoy a lunch featuring a Mekong River specialty, the “Elephant Ear” fish. Continue the drive to Can Tho and check into our luxury hotel. Gather for dinner tonight at the hotel. VICTORIA CAN THO RESORT (B,L,D)

CAN THO – HO CHI MINH CITY *Monday, November 15* Enjoy an early morning boat ride and breakfast on the *Lady Hau* through canals and visit Cai Rang's floating market, where rowers carefully balance longboats loaded with fruits and vegetables. Drive back to Ho Chi Minh City with a stop for lunch on the way. Back in Saigon, we enjoy dinner at the hotel. HOTEL CARAVELLE (B,L,D)

HO CHI MINH CITY — SIEM REAP

Tuesday, November 16 This morning, fly to Siem Reap, Cambodia. In the afternoon, visit Angkor National Museum. Tonight, enjoy a dinner and dance show. VICTORIA ANGKOR HOTEL (B,D)

SIEM REAP

Wednesday, November 17 This morning, explore the intricately carved Khmer ruins at Angkor Wat, one of the world's most impressive temple complexes, and learn about archaeology and the Khmer civilization from a local archaeologist. Also visit picturesque Ta Prohm, famous for the massive banyan trees strangling its walls and towers. After lunch, tour the complex of Angkor Thom, which was probably more opulent than most European cities in the late 12th century. Visit the famous Bayon Temple; Phimeanakas Temple within the Royal Palace enclosure; Baphuon Temple; the Terrace of the Elephants; and the Terrace of the Leper King. Return to the hotel and enjoy dinner on your own. VICTORIA ANGKOR HOTEL (B,L)

SIEM REAP

Thursday, November 18 A boat trip on Tonle Sap Lake offers an opportunity to see how local people live in floating houses. Afterwards, we visit a handicraft center. This afternoon, drive to Banteay Srei, a temple containing exceptional carvings in pink sandstone. Tonight, visit the gallery of

American photographer John McDermott, known for his atmospheric and classic images of the Angkor temple complex. Following a cocktail reception with Mr. McDermott, attend a farewell dinner at the Foreign Correspondents Club.

VICTORIA ANGKOR HOTEL (B,L,D)

SIEM REAP – SAN FRANCISCO

Friday, November 19

Transfer to the airport for flights back home or continue on the extension to Laos. (B)



EXTENSION TO LAOS

SIEM REAP – VIENTIANE, LAOS

Friday, November 19 After breakfast at the Victoria Angkor Hotel, transfer to the airport for the flight to Vientiane. After check-in and lunch, begin our exploration of Vientiane, including the religious museums of Wat Sisaket, the oldest remaining temple; Wat Ho Prakeo, which contains an impressive collection of Buddha statues, antiques and artifacts; and the city's most popular landmark, Patouxay (Lao Arc de Triomphe), built in commemoration of those who died during wartime. We visit the home-studio of Carol Cassidy, an American who arrived in Vientiane in 1989 as part of a United Nations project to promote traditional weaving, and whose studio employs over 40 weavers creating woven silk pieces that reinterpret traditional Laotian design. Dinner offers an excellent opportunity to experience Lao cuisine while watching a show consisting of traditional Lao dances, songs and instruments. **SETTHA PALACE HOTEL (B,L,D)**

VIENTIANE – LUANG PRABANG

Saturday, November 20 Laos produces one of the most famous coffees in the world, often referred to as the 'Champagne of Coffee,' and this morning, we visit a coffee plantation. Afterwards, transfer to the airport for the flight to Luang Prabang. Enjoy a walking tour with Francis Engelmann, a ten-year resident of Laos, and an advisor to UNESCO. He is the author of several books on Indochina, and he takes us through ancient temples including Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Visoun and the National Museum. This evening, experience a private traditional Baci well-wishing ceremony, followed by a festive dinner. **VILLA MALY (B,D)**

LUANG PRABANG

Sunday, November 21 Those interested can rise early to witness local residents giving food to hundreds of Buddhist monks returning from morning prayers. After breakfast, travel up the Mekong River by boat and stop to visit the mysterious Pak Ou Caves, where hundreds of gilded and wooden Buddha statues are housed inside a towering limestone cliff. Return to Luang Prabang for lunch in the Old Quarter. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure. Tonight, enjoy dinner together before a visit to the night market. **VILLA MALY (B,L,D)**

LUANG PRABANG – SAN FRANCISCO

Monday, November 22
Fly back to the USA **(B)**



Incense at Thien Hau temple in Ho Chi Minh City



School girl bicycling in Hanoi

GENERAL INFORMATION

LAND PROGRAM COST: **\$5,595**
Per person based on double occupancy, and including all internal flights.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: *Subject to availability* **\$1,495**

LAOS EXTENSION PROGRAM COST: **\$1,445**

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: *Subject to availability* **\$ 295**

■ **LAND COST EXCLUDES:** International airfare to Hanoi and from Siem Reap (from Luang Prabang on the extension); meals not listed as included; charges for items of a personal nature including laundry, beverages and excess baggage charges; travel and accident insurance; passport and visa fees; and immunizations.

■ **GROUP SIZE:** This trip is based on a minimum of 15 participants and a maximum of 35 participants.

■ **DEPOSITS AND FINAL PAYMENT:** Reservations will be accepted in order of receipt if accompanied by a completed reservation form and a deposit of \$500 per person. **Final payment is due by September 3, 2010, and must be paid by check.** A significant change in the exchange rate or the cost of fuel, or any other unforeseen circumstance, could result in a slightly higher trip price.

■ **CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS:** Refunds, less a cancellation fee of \$350 per person, will be made if we are notified on or before September 3, 2010. No refunds will be granted after that date. All cancellations must be in writing.

■ **HEALTH:** All participants must be in good health. This program is active and involves walking over uneven surfaces and climbing stairs. Not all locations are handicapped accessible. Any condition that may require special medical attention or other accommodation must be reported at the time of your reservation.

■ **TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Travel insurance is strongly recommended. An application will be sent to participants upon enrollment.

■ **RESPONSIBILITY:** A detailed statement of limitations and exclusions of liability of Siemer & Hand Travel, Inc. and the Commonwealth Club of California for loss of property, injury, illness or death will be provided to passengers upon enrollment and is available to prospective travelers upon request.

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RESERVATION FORM

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San Francisco, CA 94105

Phone: 415-597-6720

Fax: 415-597-6729

Enclosed is my deposit for \$_____ (\$500 per person) to hold _____ places(s) on **Temples & Waterways of Vietnam & Cambodia**. Or, charge my deposit to:

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Card Number

Expiration

Signature as it appears on credit card

Name as it appears on passport

Name as it appears on passport

Street

City/State/ZIP

Telephone:

Home

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Email

☐ I/We would like to participate in the extension to Laos

Accommodations:

☐ I would like to have single accommodations at an additional cost of \$1,495 (\$295 on the extension) (subject to availability).

☐ I will share accommodations with: _____

☐ Please match me with a roommate (shares cannot be guaranteed)

☐ smoker ☐ non-smoker

I/We have read the General Information section of this brochure and agree to its terms.

Signature(s)

Date

CCCVCL10