

Mildred Seay LaBar  
Grove Park Inn  
Director of Publicity

Asheville, N.C.-Grove Park Inn was host September 10-13 to Mr. Nguyen Van Son, assistant manager of two hotels in Dalat, South Viet Nam, a pro-Western area in a global hot spot flickering with threat of a new brush fire war in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Son, a native of Haiphong in <sup>Now</sup> Communist held North Viet Nam, is studying American management practises in the hotel industry under the Viet Nam Project at Michigan State University. His mother and a sister reside with him, his wife and five children at Dalat. Two brothers are still deep in territory north of tiny Laos, the present natural target Mao Tzetung may keep hot while he lets Formosa cool. The brothers send postcards south, checkmarked with the familiar Communist "I am well" type of communication.

The Palace Dalat and the Dalat Hotel are owned by the Vietnamese government. Like many other enterprises, they were formerly owned by the French government prior to the 1954 Geneva settlements that divided Viet Nam and took the French out of Indo-China.

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2-Mr.Son-Grove Park Inn

Located in a mountainous area 186 miles from Saigon, the hotels, located side by side, have a total of 120 rooms staffed by a total of 50 (cq) persons. Dalat Hotel was built in 1918 and the Palace in 1925. Mr.Son became affiliated with the hotels in 1944 under French rule. In 1956 the Vietnamese took over from the French.

Food at the two hotels is chiefly French, but distinctly American and Continental cuisine is also offered. Lunches have fixed prices and set menus. The dinner hour is strictly European from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m. Basic foods served are soup, seafood from the China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, beef from neutral Cambodia, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, duck, fruit and cake. Dalat is the vegetable capitol of South Viet Nam.

Most of Mr.Son's guests prefer cheese and crackers for dessert. His lone personal complaint of American food is that it is "too sweet."

All canned foods, especially fruits, are imported from the United States. Melons and strawberries are raised locally.

All dishes at the two hotels are washed by hand. Housemen do all work in the housekeeping department, even to the turning back of bed linen and adjusting of mosquito netting before guests retire for the night. The hotels have no steam tables. Food is kept warm and transported via portable carts with alcohol burners. The hotels have separate dining rooms and bars. Much imported French wine is served.

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3-Mr.Son-Grove Park Inn

Daily room rates vary from \$5-8. Seasonal, weekly and monthly rates are available.

Twelve million people live in South Viet Nam. The two hotels are the most popular resorts in the land for residents who seek escape from the tropical heat of coastal Saigon. Open the year round, the resorts take care of the most guests during the sunny season from November to April. The steaming monsoon season is from May to November.

Mr.Son left Viet Nam by plane in March of this year and landed in San Francisco. During his one year school term at Michigan State he has visited hotels in Indiana, the Plaza and the Statler in New York City and Grove Park Inn.

Previous French owners of the hotels he operates sent him to Paris to study in 1953-54. Most Frenchmen have now left predominately Buddhist Viet Nam but Protestant missionaries still carry on their own work, he said.

Mountain square dancing at Grove Park Inn was no novelty to Mr.Son. The dance was introduced in his native land by American advisors at military academies.

The 63,000 square miles of his land on the 17th Parallel mainly exports rice, rubber and mahogany. Machinery and canned goods are imported from the United States and textiles from Japan. The country imports all makes of American automobiles and some from France and Germany. In fact, Mr.Son said, there are "too many cars in Saigon. We, too, have our traffic problems."

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4-Mr.Son-Grove Park Inn

Mr.Son saw all phases of all department operations at Jack Tar's Grove Park Inn where a resort operation has been combined with the effeciency of a chain operation.

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