

# CITROËNS IN VIETNAM

I recently came upon forgotten photos of cars I had seen on a holiday in Vietnam in 2007 with my wife Sue. We became courageous and freelanced like backpackers, but used a big wheeled suitcase so we would not be mistaken for young things! The suitcase was so big that when we got into a Daihatsu taxi in Hanoi the back seat needed to be tilted forward against us in the back.

Anyway, we found it easy to get around and the hotel staff were always helpful about our forward journey. We spent a month, starting in Hanoi in the North and ran out of time in Ho Chi Minh city (old Saigon). We found everyone to be lean, hard working and rather young overall. We were told that the majority had been born since the end of the “Vietnam” war as we know it, or the “American” war as they knew or think of it. I fortunately missed the conscription that could have sent me there, but still feel some guilt over our involvement in an attempt to stop the communists spreading as the domino theory of the 1960s espoused.

We did know it had been a French colony from 1858 to 1954 so we knew it would have some French cuisine remaining and this proved to be correct, with the breads in particular. I also was on high alert for French cars, having a 2CV and a GS at the time, (I have since acquired a Renault 16TS and a CX 2.5 auto). As you may remember USA and its allies including us moved in in 1972-73 so I was wondering, what car influence would I see from that time. And I wondered if any cars had survived the shocking destruction of the mighty US war machine but I was pleasantly surprised that clearly many had.



We saw a Traction in Hanoi (left) which is where we started our journey, but found another and an R4 in the Indian hill station equivalent of Dalat where there are a couple of lovely French hotels including a Sofitel from the 1920-30s which clearly used a Traction for their guests. This town being at altitude would have had a pleasant climate and good escape from the humidity and crowds of Saigon. Note, below rear window SOFITEL DALAT PALACE.

