

No lost property at the Caravelle

By Jenny Burns

Over the years I have managed to leave everything from jumpers to underwear at an assortment of hotels around the world. Had it not been for the staff at Caravelle Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City bathers would have been added to that list.

Just as I was finalising my checkout reception informed me I had left something in my room. A few seconds later my bathers appeared in a small bag. It seems checking rooms for left items is part of the Caravelle's service. A colleague who also managed to leave goods in her room received a similar bag.

Such service was typical of our three-night stay. Given the difficulties Vietnam's tourism industry has and is still going through as a result of SARS, the enthusiasm and optimism of the staff was most refreshing.

And given the financial strains that the past few months must have caused, there was no skimping on service.

Every day my fruit basket was restocked while all used bathroom amenities were replaced.

A morning and afternoon service ensured the room had a just cleaned feel, while for those who found the pillows a little firm, feather pillows instantly appeared. No one complained about the comfort of the huge king size bed or the most comfortable couches and chairs.

Another of the advantages of the five star 335 room hotel is its location - it's opposite the opera house and surrounded by markets and shops. It's also in the heart of the business centre and to cater for the business market there are executive floors, known as signature floors and an executive lounge - the Signature lounge. Each room features IDD telephone lines, satellite television (which includes CNN and the ABC) CD players, in-room safe and tea and coffee making facilities.

The hotel is home to one of Ho Chi Minh city's most popular bars, the Saigon Saigon. The bar dates back to 1959



and the original 10 storey Caravelle hotel. It was the gathering place for war correspondents, journalists and generals during the Vietnam War.

After opening in 1959 as the Caravelle, the hotel was renamed Doc Lap Hotel in 1975 in commemoration of Vietnam's

liberation. The original hotel was closed in the mid 1980s for refurbishment and with the addition of a new 24 storey tower was reopened in 1998.

The hotel now features five restaurants and bars, business centre, a beauty centre and a spa and fitness centre which features a steam bath, sauna and modern fitness equipment. The centre leads to a free form pool which is ideal for a swim after a workout or for a leisurely swim. And if you happen to leave your bathers drying after your swim you can be assured hotel staff won't let you forget them!

For more information on the Caravelle telephone 0011 84 8 8234999 visit the website www.caravellehotel.com or email hotel@caravellehotel.vnn.vn