

Starbucks opens first store in Vietnam

U.S.-based Starbucks Coffee Company opened its first store in Vietnam at the New World Hotel in downtown HCMC last Friday, sparking curiosity in a country with a different culture of coffee drinking.

With a total area of 500 square meters, the store is under the management of Coffee Concept Vietnam, a subsidiary of Hong Kong's Maxim Group.

John Culver, president of Starbucks Coffee China and Asia-Pacific, said his company is seeking retail spaces to open more outlets in the nation's big cities in the near future. Declining to elaborate on the number of stores to be opened this year and the long-term network development strategy in the country, Culver noted that his firm is looking to open hundreds of stores nationwide.

Starbucks has a profound understanding and respect for the coffee drinking custom of Vietnam which is also a major coffee exporter, Culver stated. Therefore, he said, Starbucks localized its first store in the country to turn it into the third most attractive venue for local consumers behind their home and workplace.

Specifically, Starbucks has launched a black coffee product suitable for Vietnamese coffee culture - Starbucks Asian Dolce Latte. After many years of purchasing coffee from Vietnamese farmers, Starbucks plans to continue enhancing cooperation with the farmers to provide products to domestic stores and over 60 overseas markets.

Starbucks' business strategy in Vietnam is pretty prudent and Culver expresses his confidence in the firm's success in the new market. The brand now has 3,400 stores in operation in China and Asia-Pacific with more than 50,000 employees.

Starbucks store in the New World Hotel on the opening day attracted a lot of young customers who were willing to stand in long queues to wait for their big chance to sample the 'new' coffee.

However, that image has stirred up a controversy and lively debate between young people using social network Facebook. Many shared the same voice that it is unnecessary to queue up at Starbucks to enjoy only a cup of coffee, while others argued that locals should get used to queuing up for services like in other countries.

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