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Remodeled Vung Tau to reopen in San Jose

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Vietnamese cuisine aficionados are rejoicing that the wait is almost over: Vung Tau, a landmark of classic Vietnamese gastronomy for 19 years in downtown San Jose, is expected to reopen Monday after a major remodel.

The five-month redo has transformed the restaurant. The building, formerly a Harvest Inn diner, had seen little change since family matriarch Chac Do purchased it in 1987. The Engstrom Design Group, which also designed the family's Tamarine restaurant in Palo Alto, has incorporated serene sea tones to honor the city of Vung Tau in Vietnam, hometown of the family that owns the restaurant and a city famous for its seafood. Bamboo decorates the interior, and fish baskets were used to create lamp shades for the tables.

But don't worry — the restaurant will maintain its casual atmosphere and traditional menu. Vung Tau is at 535 E. Santa Clara St.; call (408) 288-9055.