

In the past, speaking of Đà Lạt, many people usually think of tours for newly-wed couples because of its romantic scenes and cool climate. As the economy grows, the honeymoon tour becomes more meaningful to couples with high incomes and they tend to design their own tours or go to remote and new places. The economic growth also leads to more stress and people usually take a tour to deal with it. Đà Lạt with its favorable conditions in terms of climate, location, scenery, etc. could be an ideal place for relaxation tourism although it faces many rivals with the same conditions both at home and abroad, such as Pleiku in the South; Tam Đảo, Bạch Mã and Tam Đảo in the North; or Chiang Mai in Thailand and Kunming in China.

Đà Lạt could attract tourists from Southeast Asia because the distance between regional cities to Đà Lạt is equal to ones from them to Australia or China. Places in those two countries with the same conditions as Đà Lạt could be rivals to Đà Lạt.

Although Đà Lạt has favorable conditions for relaxation tourism, local authorities in the past failed to realize them and they were rather ambitious when designing tourism products that aim at various interests of tourists. And as a result, they damaged the Đà Lạt scenery and environment and failed to make the best use of existing advantages. Many tourists leave Đà Lạt and never come back because they didn't find it interesting except for a pleasant weather. This is the biggest shortcoming that should be dealt with in order to highlight its unique features.

Đà Lạt had better position itself as a place for relaxation for the middle class in the South and southern Central Vietnam with tours directing to Đà Lạt or connecting to Phan Thiết and Nha Trang. Tourism products of Đà Lạt should differ from ones from Bạch Mã with wild environment but less comfortable, or Sapa where is



Development of Principal Tourism Products for Đà Lạt

by MEcon. NGUYỄN THỊ KIM OANH

beautiful but too cold and far away from Central Vietnam, or Tam Đảo where services are cheap but poor.

As for foreign tourists, Đà Lạt could target at Asian businesspersons in Vietnam and tourists of the middle class from Southeast Asian countries. To these tourists, Đà Lạt is only a place in tours from north to south or connecting with other famous sites such as HCMC, Phan Thiết and Nha Trang. Đà Lạt Tourism should link closely with HCMC tour agencies because most visitors to Đà Lạt depart from HCMC.

To take such a position, the following measures are useful:

(1) Investment:

- Revamping old buildings (pagodas, villas, churches, etc.) and building new gardens in harmony with surroundings.

- Developing the Liên Khương Airport, building a railway from HCMC to Đà Lạt and other provinces in Central Highlands and coastal cities.

- Growing and processing herbs used as medicines and food; and

supplying such services as massage, sauna, acupuncture, etc.

- Encouraging production of specialties such as Đà Lạt red wine, flowers, vegetables, etc.

- Upgrading national routes going by Đà Lạt and coloring streets in the inner city with flowers and grass.

(2) Marketing:

- Opening a website for Đà Lạt Tourism with links to other sites relating to tourism in Vietnam and placing ads on trade magazines.

- Encouraging festivals of ethnic groups in Central Highlands and offering facilities and services to national and international conferences.

- The pricing strategy at present should aim at tourists of the middle class and tour packages of high quality could be designed for visitors of the upper class. In the future, the public image of Đà Lạt must be a place for high-quality relaxation tours.

- Helping the public get aware of environmental problems and behavior towards visitors, especially foreign ones; and giving training courses to workers in tourism facilities ■