

PRESS RELEASE

NÉN LIGHT SAIGON BECOMES THE FIRST RESTAURANT IN VIETNAM TO ACHIEVE THE PRESTIGIOUS 3-STAR RATING FROM THE SUSTAINABLE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (THE SRA)

HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Nén, the fine-dining restaurant system, is proud to announce a significant milestone on the global sustainable culinary map: Nén Light Saigon has officially achieved a 3-star rating from the Food Made Good Standard – the highest level of recognition awarded by The Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA).

With this result, Nén Light Saigon not only becomes the first representative from Vietnam to reach the 3-star benchmark but also reinforces the strength of a restaurant system defined by a consistent philosophy – from Nén Danang (MICHELIN Green Star) to Nén Tokyo.

*The SRA's Food Made Good certification is the world's most rigorous sustainability standard for the hospitality and food service industry, providing a comprehensive assessment based on three core pillars: **Sourcing, Society, and Environment**.*

Impressive Figures from the SRA Assessment Report

Nén Light Saigon achieved an overall score of **73.8%**, securing the full 3-star rating with exceptional praise for its operational philosophy:

- **Sourcing (Score: 74%):** The SRA recognized Nén Light's efforts to honor Vietnamese culinary heritage through a short supply chain (with a sourcing-consumption radius of under 50km in Danang and under 200km in Ho Chi Minh City), working directly with local farmers and fishermen. Notably, the **Nén Farm** and **Nén Lab** projects were lauded as exemplary models for traditional organic farming and the promotion of **full utilisation** of ingredients, making sustainability the core of menu development.
- **Society (Score: 78%):** Community initiatives such as the **Nén Kids** project and educational partnerships with local universities reflect a sincere commitment to giving back to society.
- **Environment (Score: 69%):** The restaurant was commended for its profound approach to ingredient processing, from the use of **foraged ingredients** to maintaining high environmental standards in daily operations.

THE
SUSTAINABLE
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION



**The Sustainable Restaurant Association
is delighted to confirm that**

NÉN LIGHT

**has achieved 3 stars
in the 2026 Food Made Good Standard**

13/03/2026

Juliane Caillouette Noble
CEO, The Sustainable Restaurant Association

Brought to you by the The Sustainable Restaurant Association, the Food Made Good Standard is the world's leading sustainability certification for the hospitality sector.

The Standard is awarded to hospitality businesses worldwide that meet rigorous, measurable criteria across three focus areas: Sourcing, Society and Environment. This comprehensive evaluation of operations takes a holistic, 360-degree view of sustainability, providing a structured framework for measuring, improving and recognising sustainability performance across the global hospitality sector. This means not only reducing food waste, carbon emissions and water use, but also sourcing responsibly, designing menus that do good for people and planet, treating staff fairly and playing an active role in the local community.



www.thesra.org
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hello@thesra.org

18 Months of "Trial by Fire": Resilience and Redefining Industry Boundaries

The 73.8% score recently unveiled by The SRA is far more than a statistical achievement; it is the culmination of a rigorous **18-month journey** of operational transformation and radical transparency. For Nén, this was never about chasing a title - it was a definitive "trial by fire" that challenged every facet of our infrastructure.

Throughout this period, Nén navigated unprecedented systemic hurdles: from standardizing a complex hyper-local supply chain to engineering proprietary waste management and energy-tracking systems - all within the rapid-growth landscape of Ho Chi Minh City, where sustainable infrastructure often remains in its infancy. On multiple occasions, the uncompromising rigor of the Food Made Good Standard forced our team into an ultimatum: settle for short-term convenience or uphold our core values. We consistently leaned toward the latter.

Innovating from Zero: Establishing a New Standard for Vietnam

The Food Made Good Standard was inherently designed for developed markets with mature infrastructures - transparent supply chains, legal-safety certifications, and standardized ESG reporting. In Vietnam, where these frameworks are often fragmented or non-existent, Nén's assessment became a mission to build a proprietary ecosystem from the ground up.

- **Redefining Traceability:** Sourcing at Nén has evolved beyond commercial transactions into a rigorous, multi-layered verification system. The SRA mandates absolute transparency at the source - encompassing harvesting methods, ethical labor practices, and fair-wage welfare.

Facing a landscape where small-scale farmers and artisanal fishermen are unaccustomed to systematic documentation, Nén undertook a monumental task: meeting directly with producers at the source to co-create internal evaluation criteria and data-collection protocols. This was a long-term investment in mutual trust, proving that international standardization is not just possible but essential for the future of the local industry.

- **Engineering an Independent Data Infrastructure:** Parallel to sourcing, Nén established an artisanal data-archiving system from scratch. By classifying ingredients through risk-assessment groups and linking origins and seasonality directly to every dish on the menu, Nén achieved a level of traceability that sits far outside the standard scope of traditional restaurant operations.
- **Adaptive Environmental Stewardship:** The greatest barrier was not a lack of will, but a lack of infrastructure. In the absence of synchronized municipal waste-sorting or organic treatment systems, Nén engineered internal measurement methodologies. From tracking raw material input-waste ratios to pioneering "upcycling" techniques within the kitchen, every solution was a bespoke response to local realities rather than a mere copy of foreign models.

- **Institutionalizing Human Values:** Nén transitioned from "natural cultural practices" to a "codified system" of human-centric values. Respect, growth, and professional equity were translated into institutional policies: from unbiased recruitment and structured interdisciplinary training to comprehensive mental health support.

This 18-month commitment to sustainable seafood, CO2 emission tracking, and community empowerment is the ultimate testament to Nén's vision: **Sustainability is not a marketing veneer; it is the fundamental architecture of our brand, established since day one.**

Official Statement from The Sustainable Restaurant Association (The SRA)

In a joint statement, The SRA emphasized: *"The strides Nén Light Saigon is making to celebrate Vietnamese culinary heritage, support local communities, and mitigate environmental impact are truly remarkable. As a fine-dining establishment deeply rooted in Vietnamese flavor and tradition, Nén Light Saigon stands out for its profound intentionality behind every ingredient on the menu."*

Systemic Synergy: Three Locations, One Vision

While the 3-star accolade is formally awarded to Nén Light Saigon, it is a testament to the collective excellence and shared philosophy of the entire Nén ecosystem:

- **Nén Danang – The Origin and the "Green Star" Compass:** The invaluable insights gained from Nén Danang's **MICHELIN Green Star** status serve as the strategic compass for the entire group. Pioneer experiments in sustainable agriculture in Central Vietnam provided a wealth of empirical knowledge, empowering Nén to confidently scale specialized initiatives such as **Nén Farm** and **Nén Lab**.
- **Nén Tokyo – Global Ambition and Precision:** Operating in Japan - the world's most demanding culinary landscape - has catalyzed a system-wide elevation of professional standards. From guest experience to sustainable back-of-house operations, every minute detail has been calibrated to meet the highest levels of precision and refinement.

Today's 3-star SRA result is the convergence of dedication across three cities, cementing Nén's position as a vanguard in the sustainable culinary revolution. This achievement reaffirms that regardless of geography, the Nén spirit remains steadfast: honoring local culture through a lens of absolute responsibility and resilience.

Nén believes this milestone will serve as a catalyst for a new era in Vietnam's F&B industry, inspiring a systemic shift toward conscious dining. By elevating "hyper-local" ingredients onto the global stage with a deepened sense of responsibility, Nén continues to prove that cultural heritage and sustainable innovation are inseparable.

Closing Statement from Nén

“The 3-star certification from The SRA is a profound milestone that fortifies our resolve to lead this movement. It is a reminder of our responsibility as a pioneer. The past 18 months were not merely an assessment, but the inception of a long-term commitment. Nén will continue to demonstrate that Vietnamese cuisine can - and does - stand at the forefront of the world’s most stringent sustainability standards,” a representative from Nén shared.

ABOUT NÉN LIGHT SAIGON

Nén Light Saigon is a premier fine-dining establishment in Ho Chi Minh City, pioneering a contemporary culinary philosophy rooted in Vietnamese hyper-local ingredients. Driven by a visionary creative team, Nén Light serves as a sanctuary where the art of culinary storytelling meets enduring sustainable values, offering guests a singular, multi-sensory journey.

ABOUT NÉN

Nén is a vanguard fine-dining group with a strategic presence in key international hubs: Danang, Saigon, and Tokyo. Mission-driven to elevate Vietnamese gastronomy globally, Nén operates with absolute philosophical consistency, championing indigenous sourcing and sustainable excellence across every operational touchpoint, from farm to table.

ABOUT THE FOOD MADE GOOD STANDARD (THE SRA)

Established by **The Sustainable Restaurant Association (The SRA)**, **Food Made Good** is the world’s leading sustainability certification for the hospitality sector. The standard evaluates businesses through a rigorous 360-degree framework encompassing: Environmentally Positive Sourcing, Social Impact, and Operational Stewardship (including carbon footprint and waste management).

The SRA is also the authoritative body behind the **"Sustainable Restaurant Award"** for the prestigious **World’s 50 Best Restaurants**. Today, the Food Made Good Standard is recognized as the global "Gold Standard" for sustainability within the F&B industry.

Media Contact:

Ms. Momo - Brand Manager
Email: momo@restaurantnen.com
Phone number: (+84) 988 64 0107
Website: restaurantnen.com