



## What About Vietnam - S5-E26 - Wellness Tourism in Vietnam – A Fresh Take from Hoi An

**Kerry Newsome:** Xin chào and welcome to the What About Vietnam podcast. I'm delighted to be here in Hoi An and learning more about wellness and the various modalities springing up all around the township. You know, in my short time here, I've been amazed to find some new and interesting variations on the theme designed to build our strength from yoga classes and even TRX on the beach to learning about what ails us through our hair follicles and a hair follicle analysis and treatments like vitamin C, IV drip procedures. And then following right behind you, you'll find on every single corner, a massage and spa establishment, promising everything starting with pampering and blissful moments of relaxation at very affordable prices. You can possibly afford to do more than one during your stay. And don't miss the new hair baths. They are divine. More on that. And I'll put some links in the show notes. first a little bit about my guest today. As our focus in today's episode is going to be on the peaceful riverbanks of Hoi An at the beautiful Namia River Retreat, joining me is someone I really admire, and that is Michelle Ford. Now, Michelle is not only the general manager of NAMIA, she is also the founding partner and CEO of Lumina Wellbeing, a consultancy shaping integrated wellness experiences across Asia. She actually brings decades of experience to the table, having launched over seven wellness lifestyle hotels in Vietnam and managed 15 luxury spas across Thailand and the Maldives. She's been on the show before, and while we did it remotely, it's been lovely to spend some time with her and do this interview with her on location. So just great to have her on board. You might know her name more from her pioneering work at Fusion Maya. I mean, a location that really hit accolades under her leadership and earned some global notoriety in the time. Michelle is now leading the charge at Namiat River Retreat which opened under her guidance in late 24. So it's a real newbie. With a deep respect for Vietnamese healing traditions and a passion for mindful, sustainable luxury, Michelle is setting new standards for wellness hospitality. Deanne Pham, also on the show as Director of Sales, she will be joining us and I'll be happy to share her extensive background as well a little bit later. I hope

you'll settle back. We've got a big show ahead. Wellness is our focus today and if you're looking to build that into your holiday in Vietnam, you're in the right place. So let's get to it. Firstly, over to you, Michelle. Lovely to have you on the show. Great to see you after all this time.

**Michelle Ford:** Thank you for having us. It's so nice to see you in person this time too.

**Kerry Newsome:** Yes, that remote thing is kind of fun, but not quite as nice. I really want to dig deep into this subject and I know you're well positioned to ask these questions. So forgive me if we kind of get a bit deep and meaningful, but I think that's going to help people make some choices about their wellness state in Vietnam. So can you give us just a bit of an overview of the current state of wellness and wellness tourism in Vietnam?

**Michelle Ford:** Yes, I would say it's really on the rise now. There's so much awareness for wellness tourism. I would say almost every project now is interested to integrate wellness in some way into their offerings. And the market is demanding it too. So it's really at its infancy, but on the rise fast.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I think if I was to say that Vietnam probably wouldn't feature as number one on the list of countries in the Southeast Asia region, that'd be fair to say, wouldn't it, at this point?

**Michelle Ford:** Yes, absolutely. We still see much more awareness for tourism and Bali, sorry, not for tourism, for Thailand and Bali. India, you know, all these have a stronger reputation for wellness and retreats and wellness programming, but Vietnam has all of that. It's just not had the same level of awareness and opportunity to showcase what is on offer in terms of Vietnamese wellness.

**Kerry Newsome:** And like, I think if I was to draw on my own personal experience in Vietnam, it is an evolving landscape. I think that wellness and spas and spa resorts and things like that, whilst they were used as words to describe some places in Vietnam, they didn't actually kind of go hand in hand with luxury. They didn't kind of go with a very holistic approach, did they? They were kind of started up and they'd have a spa room and then they'd kind of advocate to be a spa and wellness retreat, where that wasn't really quite the go, was it?

**Michelle Ford:** Yes, I think the whole holistic package didn't come together in the more affordable segment or in the luxury segment. Both had their own strengths and weaknesses. But now you really see with the better awareness of wellness and what it means, the skills on the rise in terms of wellness practitioners. Spaces being designed better to accommodate retreats and programs, we really see that we're getting to be in a better position to offer the market the same level of luxury wellness that you can find abroad.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I think that's where the comparison is going to come. I think particularly for the Westerner, as in you're Australians, you're US, you're Europeans, UK, you know, a lot of my listeners are coming from these regions. So their expectations are quite different, I think, to our Vietnamese neighbours. So if you're talking about Japan, Taiwan, Korea, all the rest of it. I think those countries are looking for something different to us. Would that be fair to say?

**Michelle Ford:** Yes, for sure. I think also as our modern lifestyles in the West have got more stressful, more pressured on time, we really value our time away and we really need much more deeper relaxation than before, where a general holiday would have sufficed. Now it's not really enough. And in terms of our current lifestyles, it's already much more modern too, in terms of better food, doing our yoga practices at home, and we really want to continue that on our holidays.

**Kerry Newsome:** So, Michelle, let's explore a little bit more kind of post-pandemic trends. I mean, we can't leave COVID out of the picture. And I do think it influenced some wellness tourism advocacy for Vietnam. And I think even Vietnam tourism saw that there was an opportunity for this genre of travel to grow. What would you say were some of the big factors there?

Michelle Ford: Yes, I mean, there's such a strong awareness after COVID in terms of understanding what is wellness and why it's important to us in our lives. In the Vietnamese market, particularly, health and wellness come hand in hand, very strongly focused on types of food and organic, natural food, but also the pollution on the rise in Saigon and places like that. They really value also the fresh air and the nature connection. Other activities linked to wellness like trekking really became super popular, just getting out into nature. In terms of the industry itself, I had attended a hospitality event prior to COVID as a speaker and there was almost no interest in wellness and the wellness was not on the conversation in this event at all. And last week I attended another event in Saigon and every single operator was talking about wellness. Wellness was the main subject of this event. So we're talking about that level of awareness in three years from almost nothing to the main subject on the table.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I find that fascinating because, as you say, if COVID did nothing else, it forced us to evaluate our level of health from a very holistic perspective. And then also, I think when the doors opened, I think people then took great care and consideration around where they were going to go, that they felt safe. And they, you know, because Vietnam kind of weathered the storm relatively well, I think, in terms of other countries. But also seeing Vietnam take that and be able to step up now onto the plate of wellness is just it's really inspiring and I've seen it myself in various locations around Vietnam, not just in Hoi An, but certainly, you know, up in Yen Bai, I was visiting up there recently and beautiful property up there called Garia. And, you know, I've been to Hue and you would be aware, Michelle, of the Alba Resort. And, you know, now here we are in Namia And Hoi An really needs this level of wellness, I think. Even though you may be a little bit remiss by thinking, oh, it's got spas and massage places and all the rest of it, that doesn't actually equal wellness per se, does it? I think people say, oh, it's got spas and you can get a massage and whatever. But for me, when I come to a wellness retreat, I'm looking for something more than just a spa and a massage. I'm looking for a feeling. I know it kind of sounds a bit cliché, but it's that zen, isn't it? It's just that quietness. So talk to us, Michelle, about you know, how you see that being created in Vietnam? Because it's a fairly noisy place. Yes.

**Michelle Ford:** I think Vietnam is really good that we can create this middle way of wellness, if I can call it like that. where it's not a normal resort with just a spa that's kind of a luxury service here and there during your stay, but it's also not a strict regimented retreat that you've chosen for a specific purpose or a need that you have in your life at that time. Having this middle wellness lifestyle orientation, I feel, is something that we can all integrate into our daily lives and be sure that it's something we do while we're on holiday, but also while we're at home. So we gather these practices and things to take with us. So when we do it that way, it's not just the spa, it's the food, it's the philosophy of the team, it's the activities. It has to be a good quality yoga or an excellent quality meditation, not someone that was trained without all the qualifications behind it, for example. and someone that can really hold the space to guide this gentle transformation or give us new awareness that we didn't have back home because we are practicing yoga or meditation already.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I think one of the things that I noticed about coming into NAMIA was, as you say, the level of training and the quality of staff, because it's almost the devil of detail, isn't it? Yes. It's the, you know, like I just absolutely loved, you know, being told about a ritual bath. to help sleeping. Now, being an insomniac, just the fact that that was something that this retreat had been thoughtful enough about to consider, see, that's another aspect to me of wellness. So not only is it a peaceful environment, as you say, with great practitioners, but I think a place that can envelope a very broad spectrum of holistic wellness, I think is going to be a game changer.

**Michelle Ford:** Yes. I think firstly, if you're doing wellness in this way, the philosophy and the training of the staff have to be there because that links very much to our way of life, our mindfulness practices or our sustainability practices, which again, we'll be able to touch on better. And in addition to that, in terms of the wellness products, it's not just selecting a nice scent that's relaxing. It's being more targeted that we're building a program, speaking to the herbalist to understand what is going to help us achieve the goal of deeper rest or better sleep.

**Kerry Newsome:** And where do you see the greatest challenges coming down the path for wellness in Vietnam?

**Michelle Ford:** It is always partially people because the hospitality already has difficulty in some way to attract and retain people. But I think on the other hand, there's opportunities for those willing to invest in the people because if we, for example, train newcomers to the wellness industry, we will get them on a path that set them for life. We have to invest more time, energy and resources in the beginning, but long term, we have a much greater impact, not just on their lives, but also how they bring it to others.

**Kerry Newsome:** And as you say, I mean, The challenge with staff I don't think is unique. I would say most hotels and resorts that I get to stay at, and I've got to know over the years, I think have all found, and especially since COVID, there was a lot of people that left the industry as a result of COVID and chose other careers. So that kind of left a bit of a gap, I think. And finding you know, people to bring back or new people to start investing. And then, you know, where is the schooling coming from? It's got to be coming from organizations, as you say, that are willing to invest in those people to train them because, you know, there's there's no actual major tourism training and, you know, F&B kind of stuff available in Vietnam.

**Michelle Ford:** There's starting to be, you know, in terms of one hotel school in Fukuoka as well. But I would say hoteliers have to invest on the ground with their people. We have to start where we are and then the rest will take place. And it becomes so critical because people are joining for these values. And if you are not showing that you are living by these values, they don't want to join also. You know, so we have to really understand the mindset shift of people that want to join. They want to know that they're connected to this value and this vision.

**Kerry Newsome:** So when I'm looking to advise my clients about a wellness package or a wellness stay in Vietnam, what should I be telling them that they should be looking for as far as a minimum standard that they should look for? And what kind of price levels are they having to expect that they need to pay to get that?

**Michelle Ford:** Maybe I have to think for a second.

**Kerry Newsome:** Okay, that's okay. Maybe I'll put it another way. So, when I'm talking to my clients, which as I said, my audience is global, so when I'm doing trip plans for people and bringing them over, some will ask about a small chunk of that stay that they will want to go and stay at a wellness retreat. They want to break up the trip. They're coming maybe for 20 days or something like that. And they want to have three to five days where they just want to get away from it and they want to spoil themselves with a retreat. So what should they be looking for? What should I say to them that is a minimum standard that they should expect as a wellness retreat?

**Michelle Ford:** I think a cohesive program, you know, not just the spa services and then you can have the meal in the restaurant off the a la carte and so on. I think it should be a designed program or package that includes the meals, the food, the activities, the treatments, all under one theme and one targeted goal. Because without that, the experience will feel a little bit ad hoc.

**Kerry Newsome:** So, so that I understand, so you are saying that a room rate actually comes with an all-inclusive kind of activity package, which it essentially does here in Namia, which I liked. And the reason I liked it, and I don't know whether it's appropriate to say this, But then I have the choice to say no to any of it, but I have the choice to say yes to everything without feeling I've got to put my hand in my pocket again. So that's a luxury in itself. You know you've paid for your room rate and appreciating the fact that it's probably more expensive than you would pay in an average hotel. But the fact that it comes with, you know, your beautiful breakfast, you know, your ritual bath, your access, free access to the gym, you know, your lovely spa treatment and all those things without thinking about it. I can just leisurely take all that in without the fear of, oh, can I afford that? Or, you know, should we do that or that kind of thing?

**Michelle Ford:** And you know, money is one part, but the other part is also this feeling, this like inner guilt that we carry to take that time for ourselves. That is. And now that it's kind of assigned to you, there's something that releases that inner guilt that, can I take 90 minutes now? You know, I should spend it with the family or I should do this. You know, all of that is released and you feel more interested and willing to join something with a peace of mind. Kerry Newsome: I totally agree. I don't know why we're guilty about looking after ourselves or treating ourselves, but we are. And I hope we can inspire people to rethink that through the show. But lovely to have you on, Michelle. Is there something else you'd like to kind of share with my listeners about the wellness spectrum in Vietnam so that we can wrap up?

**Michelle Ford:** get in while you can, because it's going to become more and more and more popular. And what it's offering right now is very fresh, very authentic, and very unique.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I think one of the things, if I can just add to that, I think there is a feeling that Vietnam really wants to impress. They really want to step up to the plate. So there's no complacency. You know, it's the new kid on the block, really, in as far as comparisons to other Southeast Asian countries like we talked about with Bali and Thailand. And I think the fact that it does want to impress means that they are well tuned to go the extra mile. And I think that's what I'm seeing.

Michelle Ford: Absolutely. When Vietnam starts a movement, it moves fast. They've got the resources and the people to make it happen. So I believe Vietnam will be a major player in the wellness industry in the future.

**Kerry Newsome:** Michelle, thanks for coming on the show. It's been lovely to chat and we will share more about NAMIA because I'm going to bring the lovely Deanne on and we're going to dig deep into NAMIA. As we continue our deep dive into the wellness spirit of Namia River Retreat, I'm delighted to introduce another key voice behind the magic. Deanne Pham, Director of Sales at Namia joins us. Deanne brings an inspiring mix of sharp commercial insight and soulfulness to the show and Her wisdom in this role is quite expansive. She's had 15 years across luxury hospitality, inbound travel, international media, and destination management. She's played an essential role in shaping NAMIA's market presence. I first met Deanne in her role at the Alba Wellness Retreat. So it's a welcome and joyful surprise to meet up with her again at NAMIA and have time with her here on location. I think what really makes Deanne's perspective special is her holistic background. She's not just a sales leader, she's also a certified yoga teacher, a Reiki master, and a holistic health coach. Her lived experience in wellness allows her to connect Namia's vision with what today's mindful travelers are truly seeking. And I think she's got some good homegrown instincts to that. She has this incredible ability to bridge the practical and the spiritual and I can't wait for you to hear how she weaves those together in today's show.

So let's welcome Dien the program. Now, Deanne, it's great to have you on the program. It's been a while since we've chatted. Last time I got together with you, we were talking about another wellness retreat, which is called ALBA and it's in Hue. And I had a divine stay there. Oh, that's probably pre-COVID. And to me, that was kind of my early journey into wellness in Vietnam. So, you know, being knew with the podcast and I was only a couple of years into the podcast at that stage. I felt I had to get my head around wellness. I could see the change coming and I could see development everywhere and it was a great start. But now here we are in Hoi An with Namia and great to see you now in the role of Director of Sales. So let's dig deep. Deanne, how does Namia Retreat cater to kind of the ever-changing needs and expectations of travellers? Because, you know, let's face this, you know, us travellers can be demanding at times, you know, what are they looking for in a wellness retreat at Namia?

**Dien Pham:** Yeah, when I experienced both, let's say, a comprehensive and intensive wellness retreat and also now at Namia, I think that nowadays people looking when they come to the wellness retreat, let's say Namia River retreat, ***it's more lifestyle retreat rather than hardcore***. When I come to some wellness show and expo, and people a little bit hesitate about hardcore health, then they have to stay disconnected. Or when they have to strictly go vegan, I mean it's very good, but to the majority of people, It's more about lifestyle wellness and they can be also be educational, very light. They can bring something home to start and transform their lifestyle. So Namya Refugees have a tackle on that angle of the needs of people to be on both relaxation and culture, but still experience something about lifestyle wellness and they can take home. start to restart their life in the ways be easier and more wellness-oriented.

**Kerry Newsome:** And are there specific experiences that they're looking for that they have highlighted that they really want to experience here?

**Dien Pham:** I would say in terms of the wellness, the first thing is the traditional Vietnamese herbology or called Tuoc Nam. So that is inclusive and 90 minutes wellness journey every

day inspired by **Vietnamese herbology**. and also all **the mindful moments, also inspired by Vietnamese ways of mindfulness. For example, silent walk, inspired by Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh. The lantern ritual, very much inspired by Hoi An lantern releasing.** Also Vietnamese Zung Sing or Tai Chi, the way that Vietnamese people practice in the morning around the Hoan Kiem Lake.

For some cultural experience, like morning guided bicycle trail to see the old town in the morning, which is very authentic, sitting by the river, have some coffee. So that is the experience I really want to highlight. And last but not least, the Hoi An, the Two Bone River is very beautiful and stunning with the sunset. And we offer complimentary sunset cruise all the way down to Old Town. And you can see beautiful, stunning and peaceful sunset with some cocktail and canapé is the iconic experience you shouldn't miss when you stay at Namia.

**Kerry Newsome:** And what's the kind of feedback that you're getting from clients after they have their stay and they experience some of these things? What are they saying to you?

**Dien Pham:** One key word to pop up in my head is quality sleep.

Kerry Newsome: I can relate to that.

**Dien Pham:** Yeah, because we incorporate the thing that the environment of Namia is surrounded by the river, which already make you feel impregnated and calm and combined with the quality of linen on the bed and the atmosphere and all the treatment about Vietnamese herbology. and also good food. And I got some people said that I sleep like a baby for a long time, especially some busy people, some people traveling, jet lag, or busy thinking like us. And they can be able to switch off, reset in very short time and have quality sleep. And that also combined with the sleep yoga as well.

**Kerry Newsome:** Are you targeting a particular audience? Are you targeting a particular age group? Talk to us about the people that you're attracting. Who's coming to NAMIA?

**Dien Pham:** I would say there are two major targeting audience in terms of demographic. The first one is something people more mature, let's say from 30 plus, wealthy and well-educated and very strong focus on sustainability as well. So they are busy people, well paid, but sometimes they get very little me time, so they're looking for some retreat that they can reset, retract, and rejuvenate as well. The second audience, or let's say targeting client, I think that even now with young trend setter, I mean, we're talking about Gen Z, the people now are so young, but they catch the trend. They want to stay something they can look after themselves when they still can stay hybrid and working when they travel. So they love something funky. but still sustainable, but also photogenic as well, and some well-tech in terms of the well-being.

**Kerry Newsome:** Okay, so this is a good segue into talking about sustainability. How does NAMIA integrate sustainability into its wellness programs?

**Dien Pham:** We think when we're talking about client needs and the journey, and we always see that wellness, luxury and sustainability, it's three very crucial angle and go harmony with each other. In terms of the sustainability at NAMIA, we will divide in terms of economical sustainability, social and environment. For that, we will practice, like eliminate all the single-yeild plastic within the resort and set up different refilling water station in the resort. For social, for environment, we use all the eco-friendly cleaning supplier. Try to good for the team, good for the environment, but also for the guest feeling. We also recruit, I think, 89% of the local staff to really bring the livelihood and the career opportunity for the local people. And with all the beautiful product setting in the spa area, in the breakfast and in the

area, we try to go as much hyper-local supplier as possible. to really showcase what the best we have in the local area to showcase to our guests and that get a feeling of very authentic.

**Kerry Newsome:** I must admit yesterday I was really impressed with my time in the spa, not just about the spa, but the use of your local herbs and the infusion of those local herbs into the spa treatment. So like when this lovely girl broke those leaves of that beautiful basil and all those, the fragrances, the aroma was just so enriching, that aroma kind of stayed with me like nothing else has whenever I've kind of been in these environments. So I'm really impressed with that. And as you say, I think the harmony that you've been able to create with the villas and the closeness to the river and the foliage and the beautiful greenery setting, You know, you do feel like you are a world within a world in Hoi An. And, you know, I'm a regular visitor to Hoi An as as you would know. So I've been coming for probably 14 years. So it's it's kind of crazy to me because. As many times as I've been here, I don't think I've felt like I've been in Hoi An but out of Hoi An. but I'm still in Hoi An while I'm here in Namia. So I can access it very easily, which is great. But I don't feel like I've got the hubba hubba of Hoi An right on my doorstep. You know, I'm not going to have karaoke start up next door or all that kind of thing. So it is delightful in that. And I think that's a joy for your senses as a person. And, you know, as you say, you're attracting that busy person and certainly a lot of my listeners are busy, well-educated, you know, above that 40 range where their careers are on fire and they've got, you know, demanding families and, you know, they're looking for an escape. So, you know, it's great that you now offer this so close to the beautiful town of Hoi An and everyone can access that. What would you say, you know, would be key for people to experience at Namia that as a minimum thing, they have to at least do this to get the best out of Namia? What would that be? Just the spa treatment or is it something else?

**Dien Pham:** Let me think for a minute.

**Kerry Newsome:** That's OK. I mean, I would I'll tell you what I would pick. I'm going to definitely do the bath ritual. because that's something I have not experienced. And maybe you can explain how it works, but from what I understand is the bath has some herbs in the bath and you enjoy a tea with it. Is that right?

**Dien Pham:** The bath and the tea is separate. So one day you can have a bath soak ritual and the other day can be sleep enhancement tea. So that not go pair up but separate alternatively.

**Kerry Newsome:** I might pair it up just because I'm an insomniac. I need a lot of help in sleep.

**Dien Pham:** Yeah, but when talking about apart from some key thing you shouldn't miss, so that I would say the evening in-room ritual and emphasize that is the herbal bath ritual. I can spend a week to talk about that because I keep talking with Michelle. Let's say our Heartful daily life ritual and I have been experiencing that since my childhood because We really want to bring something very authentic in our Vietnamese well-being ritual and introduce to our guests. Because in my childhood, whenever we get sick, get cold, stomach upset, my mom always have extra herb remedy ready to make decoction for us or to make the bath so we can soak our entire body into the steam with the herb scents beautifully. And for me, the bath ritual is not only way we're looking our body, but also our soul, because my mom passed all the compassion, the love to us. And then when we get sick, we serve into that, we serve into the recipe of the heartfelt care, and we recover very quickly. And that's the way we try to transform our daily ritual to the guests also. And I hope our

guests can feel that when they enjoy everyday bath ritual at Namya River Retreat in the private pool villa.

**Kerry Newsome:** And would you have like a memorable experience or a feedback from a client that stick in your mind that they really enjoyed? Is there someone or an experience of someone that they shared with you about their stay that you can recall?

**Dien Pham:** Suddenly, I remember the moment in tears about one of the clients, one of the ladies. She accidentally got cold when she traveled and the stomach upset. And then we tried our best with our nurse coming to look after her, give her some of the facial reflexology and some electrical stuff as well. And then she recovered and she got all the treatment, she got all the herbal congee. And then when she checked out, she said that usually she complained when she got sick on traveling. But now she feels so grateful because without that, she didn't know that is how efficient and so beautiful is our Vietnamese herbology treatment is so efficient. And also she has been looking after by all amazing people that she feel as a family. And she checked out in tears. And then after one month, she go back to Vietnam. She come back to say hello, everyone. So that moment really touched our heart that when we serve by our heart with all the emotion and the care we get and we didn't expect anything back that how Vietnamese people and Vietnamese hospitality is and that make us very unique compared to other culture as well.

**Kerry Newsome:** And I think traveling, whether you like it or not, especially long haul travelers, I think it's something that I'm most careful when I'm doing trip plans is to remind people about the rigors of traveling. Traveling is quite harsh on the body and on our minds, et cetera, as well. But I think people, if you are thinking about a stay in Vietnam, I think you would be wise to incorporate some level of wellness and some kind of stay like this, just to go home feeling like you are recharged, not feeling like you've rung out and you've been everywhere in Vietnam and ticked all the boxes, but like you get home and you're exhausted and you haven't got that good feeling. You know, for me, I've always tried to go home feeling better than when I left. And, you know, I have to be well aware that whilst I've wanted to see a lot of Vietnam and there's so much to see in Vietnam that you want to do, try and incorporate just those few days, two to three days probably even. If you've got more time, more time. And I've got some clients that spent four or five days and wish they'd stayed seven. You know, I think everyone is unique, but I think incorporating some wellness into your stay in Vietnam will bring you back to Viet more times than, you know, your rush, rush, tick the boxes, top to bottom, bottom to top type tours, which Vietnam was very characteristic of certainly leading up to COVID. But Michelle and I talked about post-COVID and I think we are a changing landscape. Dan, can you share with us where people can find NAMIA? So your Instagram, you're on Facebook. Yeah.

**Dien Pham:** Yeah, so people can find us on Instagram, Facebook, on LinkedIn, by type Namia River Retreat. And we are so delighted to share all the meaningful and beautiful moment on social media.

**Kerry Newsome:** Excellent. Is there anything that I didn't ask you that I should have asked you about Namia that I should be telling everyone that's listening.

**Dien Pham:** Yeah, I think that's short and sweet enough to stick in the memory.

Kerry Newsome: Okay. Thanks. Thanks, Deanne. Look, Vietnam's always on the move, evolving, shifting, growing. It makes it hard to predict exactly where wellness traveler will land next, but I'll tell you this. Vietnam is climbing the ranks fast. And when I say wellness

travel, I'm talking about real rejuvenation, mind, body and soul. What's really elevating it now is the luxury factor, stunning resorts, top tier service, incredible food and a wealth of healing treatments delivered by people who really know their stuff. What each of us looks for in wellness is different. It's deeply personal, it's shaped by where we come from, our culture, our past travel experiences and of course our budget. So what works for me might be totally different from what works for you. That's why it really pays to stay curious, ask questions, dig a little deeper, do your homework, and most importantly, stay open to new experiences. As I said, be aware of those fresh herbs, that local feel, that authentic cuisine, and those beautiful warm smiles. If you don't get them, you're in the wrong place. you might just discover something incredible, as I said, a world within a world. I'll share some more details about my experiences in Namia and in Hoi An as I've experienced it this time. And I can honestly say I'm really impressed and truly loving my time. Thanks, Dien. Thanks, Michelle, for being on the show.

**Michelle Ford:** Thank you so much, Kerry, for having us. And so lovely to be enjoying this with this stunning view of the river today.

**Kerry Newsome:** It's just a gorgeous day, isn't it? Thank you.

I'd like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to NAMIA River Retreat for sponsoring this episode. While NAMIA is a valued sponsor, I want to assure you that the thoughts and insights I've shared throughout the show reflect my own genuine experiences and observations. As always, my goal is to bring you honest, inspiring stories to help you make the most of your travels in Vietnam and more particularly help you make wise choices. So, I hope you've enjoyed the program and I look forward to bringing you many more in the future.