



What About Vietnam - 2 - 11

[Greg Norman isn't the only one raving about Golf in Vietnam](#)

Kerry: Xin Chao and welcome to What About Vietnam. Today in our episode, we explore Vietnam as a golfing holiday destination, and we take the journey with the lovely Chrissy Hordern who joined me on a familiarization tour back in May 2019.

Now, while Vietnam has over 60 courses to choose from, our focus was on central Vietnam. Vietnam is certainly popping up on the radar as a major golfing destination. Let me assure you, Chrissy Hordern herself has played all over the world and has hosted groups to the U S masters. And she's a very experienced and talented player. She's got a lot of knowledge and I think the kind of person to give you some qualification, just on how the courses do compare with the ones that she's played within other countries.

Chrissy herself is a tour host, and ambassador for Teed Up Golf in Australia and as I mentioned, a very talented player and in the group really gave everyone some stick during the 10 days that she was with the group, and enjoying the courses in Vietnam.

I think to give the listener who is a golfer, the information they need to decide, you know, what about Vietnam as a golfing destination, Chrissy will have a lot to offer you. You'll soon pick up I don't play golf, but as I was the Vietnam host, it was my job to show her my Vietnam, which just quietly I think she fell in love with.

Golfers stay tuned we are up early and about to tee off, welcome to the show, Chrissy Hordern.

Chrissy Hordern: Thank you, Kerry, great to be with you this afternoon.

Kerry: We've got a lot to get through and you know, really going to be picking your brains, but I'm going to start right at the beginning and I'm going to start when you got the invitation to come to Vietnam. What did you think about that idea? Firstly, first impressions.

Chrissy Hordern: Well, I was really excited about the possibility of going to Vietnam. Because as you said, I'd never been to Vietnam before and actually I have very limited experience really in golfing in Asia and I know that Vietnam is an increasingly popular golf destination. So, I was keen to go and experience it really, it

was a wonderful invitation and one that I jumped at and was lucky enough to get a seat on.

Kerry: Great. And I was glad to have you for two reasons. One, because you had traveled extensively around the world playing golf and as you say, your experience in the Indochina region was fairly limited in this area. So, first impressions of Vietnam for you were?

Chrissy Hordern: Well, I guess in a nutshell it was wonderful, how many days? 10 days, 7 days and I actually can't wait to go back. Unfortunately for COVID that's been a bit of a spanner in the works just for right now, but I'm keen to get back there and take people back there as soon as it's possible to travel. I had a great time, I absolutely loved it and I guess first impressions it's busy, it's everything you expect from Asia. I think there were 90 million motorbikes or 130 million motorbikes in Hoi An city.

Kerry: You can usually add so many zeros to that and that will probably be close.

Chrissy Hordern: So, yeah, it's out of control, but you know, the great part about that is that once you actually get on a golf course, or once you get to a spa or a retreat you can just step out of the craziness and into luxury and just have this wonderful combination of everything.

Kerry: So, our first stop is Hoi An and we're going to use Hoi An as a bit of a base to play two courses; Vinpearl Nam, Hoi An, and Montgomerie links. So, Chrissy Hordern tell us a little bit about your stay at the Nam Hoi An resort and those courses that we played from that hotel as the base.

Chrissy Hordern: Well, the Vinpearl resort was a great place for us to be based really. I mean, it's on the coast right on the beach there and there's a thousand miles of coastline in Vietnam and this is a fantastic sort of part of it.

It's a very big hotel, I think it's about 430 rooms and a hundred add villas where we stayed, and they were really well appointed. And you know, it's got all those facilities that you want from a big hotel. So, it's got gyms, spas, pools, all that sort of thing. And located in close proximity to the golf courses, so that was a great place for us to be. Personally, I guess I'd probably prefer something smaller, but for a golf holiday and particularly if you've got a short period of time and you just focused on that one sort of area, I'd say it's a great spot to be.

Kerry: And it's in an ideal location from a transport perspective to access the courses that we played as it's about 20 minutes out of the actual old town itself. The Nam, Hoi An Golf Club or the course itself is actually right at the resort, along with a Safari park and Nam Hoi An land, which is a bit of a mini-Disney land. I mean, it's a space, all of it, let's be truthful there. So, we were able to get you onto the course nice and early and very easily, because you were actually staying at the resort to actually access your play on your first day. So, it was a new course, wasn't it? It was about a year old.

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, the other great thing is that it's located pretty close to Danang and to the airport. So, it was actually a quick hop when we actually arrived in, which was fantastic as well.

We got in pretty late, so that was great, it wasn't a long journey to actually get there. Yeah, the golf course the Vinpearl Golf course is within the resort. It's about a five-minute drive and that was fantastic. You know what, I think if you going on a golf trip, probably that's a really good golf course to kind of launch your holiday. It's a link style course, it's relatively new, it's built on sand dunes as links courses are, it's got nice and a generous fairway, and it's just a really nice golf experience. So, as I say, a nice place to start and instantly, you sort of introduced to golf in Vietnam with the caddies that are there. And they are predominantly. I am not sure if it's mandatory to have a caddy in Vietnam, but I would say to people, you know, don't even think about not having one. It's all part of the Vietnam experience. And they're predominantly women, they're gorgeous, they go out of their way to help you. I think costs 140,000 dong, which is about \$8.50 to actually secure a caddy. And that just bear in mind that that amount of money just goes to the administration.

So, that doesn't really go as far as I understand, I don't think most of that goes to the caddy. So, they are then reliant on about a 20 us dollar tip at the end, and they work incredibly hard for the \$20 tip. So, they'll guide you and make sure that you don't go down the wrong path, they'll stand at the tee and tell you the best direction to hit off the tee. They may never have had around a golf in their entire life, but they have been trained within an inch of their lives on where to hit for each shot on that specific golf course and also, they can just read those greens impeccably. And they know that their tip is probably based on how many putts you seek. So, I'd say put your trust in them and you'll putt really well. In fact, I don't think I've ever had better in my life, they were fantastic and they'll, they'll get water for you, they'll steer the cart, they'll get food, they'll do all those sorts of things.

And at the end of the round, they'll give you a little paddle that has their name on it and you basically, you're invited to put the pedal into a box and I think there's about four boxes and so you are rating them. So, if you had an excellent experience, you put it in box one, if you had a not such a great experience, you put it in box four. So, they're working really hard to get their name in box one. There must be some sort of incentive program associated with that, I don't know possibly that the people who are rated number one or that the caddies that are rated number one, maybe given the best and high net worth players when they come individually or whatever. But anyway, it all helps to really maximize the level of service they over deliver. And it's a great part of that experience and very cheap.

Kerry: And let's face it that's kind of a unique aspect to playing golf. Isn't it in Vietnam? I mean, definitely that's a kind of a personality to it. It adds I think just some uniqueness to it and as you say, like the stories about the paddle, that's the first time I'd heard about that. I know they work hard for their, for their tips and for any praise that they get just lap it up. But I think just how they feature in the whole game experience is unique to Vietnam.

Chrissy Hordern: Definitely, and, you know each course has its own crew of caddies that have a different uniform. So, and they're gorgeous, like for instance, at

Montgomerie links, they've got, what I'd assume is the Montgomerie Tartan from Scotland. And so, that features very much in the you know, in the caddy uniform, but it's got its own sort of Vietnam flavor. So yeah, it really is, I think a very special part of the experience.

Kerry: So, moving from the Vinpearl Nam, Hoi An Golf Club, the next day we played Montgomerie links. So, tell us just a little bit about that course. I mean, it's been designed by the golfer Colin Montgomerie who you would know all about, but tell us about that course.

Chrissy Hordern: Well anyone who is a golfer and has been playing as long as I have, knows Monte really well. I mean, he's a legend of the game. And clearly, he loved Vietnam and being from Scotland, you know, the opportunity to create a golf course, that's on the coast there, and a link style course was obviously really up his alley. And I think he's probably very proud of it. It's set at the foot of the Marble Mountains sort of on the central coast and from various hills, you can actually see the Marble Mountain.

Whereas Vinpearl is in an area where there's a lot of construction happening and so, I guess what you're seeing on the horizon at Vinpearl, although it's a really great golf course the surrounds maybe not quite as attractive, but once you start to get to courses like Montgomerie links the scenery really starts to become a feature.

And yeah, I mean, there's more water holes that you'd normally find on a traditional links course in Scotland. And the pot bank, well they're nothing like they are in Scotland. They're more sort of, I guess, wasteland, which is probably a really good thing. But yes, it's a world-class course, it's very, well-regarded, it's got lots of facilities, it's got a wonderful golf clubhouse and a PGI Academy, that kind of thing. So, I would say a golf trip to Vietnam is probably not a golf trip without, including Montgomerie links.

Kerry: So, we were staying as we mentioned out at the resort, which has a little bit of inconvenience as far as transport is concerned into the old town. So, it's about a 15-to-20-minute trip back into the old town. We did spend a couple of nice nights, if you recall, in the old town. I certainly enjoyed taking you on a river cruise where we had dinner on the cruise, but you tell your experience of Hoi An and the old town experience.

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, look, I loved the old town of Hoi An, and I guess if I was taking a group of people back there personally, that's where I would elect to stay. Look at it as you say, it's a UNESCO world heritage site now. It's being renovated, I think sort of very much for a showcase really for the tourists, but it's not, I don't think it's kitsch at all.

I think it's just got a wonderful charm; it's located on a river that was say in the old days was a flourishing port and a meeting place of East and West, and you still get that feeling there that the people who live there, I think are very proud of it. You've got museums, assembly halls, temples, a lot of the old homes have sort of wooden doors and carved things and open airy rooms. And many of those have been sort of, I guess, converted into fun restaurants and things. You've got rooftop bars, it's a

lovely atmosphere. And I think it's been really well restored, and some gorgeous hotels and I think a great place to stay.

Kerry: And it's walkable, isn't it? Like, it's easy to wander around. It hasn't got the chaos of a major city, like Saigon.

Chrissy Hordern: No, not at all, it's easy to walk around,

Kerry: But you might have to step over a few wires here and there.

Chrissy Hordern: Not just the wires there are street vendors everywhere. And yeah, as we said 50 million motorbikes and that kind of thing, but it's not actually as you said, it's not as chaotic as the big cities. I mean, its just built on a whole other level. But I just think it's got a wonderful charm, you could walk everywhere, you can go to restaurants, the bars were fun, you know, you can have tailoring done. There's a lot to do for non-golfers, for instance, if you've got people with you who are non-golfers, they can happily fill in several days, I think you know, in the old city of Hoi An and certainly not run out of things to do.

Kerry: Definitely, and I think also it's very much, well from my perspective. Anyway, it seems to create a different atmosphere at night, like with the lanterns. How did you find that atmosphere? Because that's quite an experience.

Chrissy Hordern: It's very special, I just loved it. And that's why for me, I think that it has a lot more charm and character than probably you sort of staying on the coast. Yeah, can't wait to go back really.

Kerry: That makes two of us. So, as far as the heat is concerned, how did you find the heat? Now you'd had two days playing, we did manage to play early in the morning, and I think that's probably worth mentioning, but how did you go with the heat and how did, how did the people you were playing with go with the heat?

Chrissy Hordern: Some managed it better than others but look I'm a bit of a Queensland girl these days, so to be honest, I have to say that I think I coped with it pretty well. We were there in May, which means its starting to get hot, it was hot. I can't remember, but it would have been late thirties every day and if you're not used to the humidity, which I'm used to it so if you're not, it's a challenge. The great thing about the golf of course, is that you're in carts all the way, and the caddies will have ice with them. And they'll have these funny little sort of ice pouches that just fit in around your neck, which are fantastic, and they keep filling those up at ice stations and things.

Kerry: And umbrellas.

Chrissy Hordern: And umbrellas and they hold an umbrella over your head when you're going onto the green, etc. I was absolutely fine but again, if I were taking a group of people back there, I probably would go earlier than May. Because you

know, a lot of people would find it challenging and some of the people actually in our group found it challenging and actually towards the end, I think a couple elected not to play the final round golf, crazy I don't know why they did that. But I think a lot of that was actually just really due to the heat.

Kerry: Struggling due to the heat.

Chrissy Hordern: Yes, absolutely.

Kerry: And I think, when I talk to people and they are considering going, I do try and encourage them to go earlier in the year, you know, around the, the kind of March, April, probably latest as the best time of the year. Because let's face it, you want to enjoy the experience, you don't want it to be unbearable out there. And if everybody's wanting to play early while you're going to struggle to get that tee times that you want. So, I think sharing with our listeners, if we can encourage them to go earlier in the year, I think that's the best idea.

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, well I think correct me if I'm wrong. But I think the rainy season is actually from May through September, so you want to avoid the rainy season and the heat. So yeah, absolutely. I would say probably depending on where you go, of course, North or South it differs a little bit, but you probably February, March would be ideal February, March early April. But I know people that have gone in October, November and really enjoyed it as well.

Kerry: Being in October at the moment which I believe Hoi An is flooding. So, you know, it's a bit "luck of the draw." Countries that live on that part of the globe, but yeah, who knows. Now we went on to Ba Na Hills after this. And we, we went up to the Ba Na Hills theme park, but we also played then at the Ba Na Hills golf club, which is kind of at the base almost of the Ba Na Hills theme park. Maybe tell us a little bit about that experience.

Chrissy Hordern: Ah, Ba Na Hills was wonderful and I think more like Montgomerie links, I put it as a definite on your list of courses as its designed by a PGA tour player Luke Donald. And I think it's actually Luke's first golf course design and one that he should be really proud of and it's managed by IMG, so, it's a pretty sort of sleek operation.

It's located in the foothills of Ba Na Hills. And look, it's won lots of awards, it's set amongst impressive mountain ranges, it's challenging, it's exciting. And really the two nines are quite different than the first nine is sort of say Parkland with a bit of forest and the back nine sort of weave its way through the hillside. So, it's got some blind holes as well, as certainly some blind shots up on the greens.

You've got no idea where the hell you are going that's why you kind of rely on your caddy, where do I hit? So, actually, I mean, I was just itching to go back and play it again. Because once you actually played it once, you know, you do have a better idea of where you're going, yeah, that was certainly a really special experience.

They've also got look, there's a mix of playing lengths there and what I mean by that is there's various tees. So, you can either elect to hit off a longer tee or a, or a shorter tee. And so, for the higher handicappers, for instance, for the women there is a much shorter tee to hit off, to make the round, I guess, more enjoyable for those that are going to take a few more shots than those on a lower handicap. And I think that's a great thing actually about, Vietnam really and golf in Vietnam is that it's a fantastic destination for golfers of all abilities. The lower handicappers will be really challenged, but the higher handicappers have an equally enjoyable experience. And you know, other destinations in the world are not quite so user-friendly particularly for those on a higher handicap.

Kerry: And what would you say because when we think about golf and certainly from a planning and a tour perspective. First things come to mind to me is kind of a bunch of guys getting together and going away on a trip, you know, kind of a bit of a boys trip. I mean, how would you rate Vietnam and your experience of that, is it the place for the boys trip? You know, are they going to get to do what they want to do there. And maybe speak a little bit to the entertainment side of it.

Chrissy Hordern: Sure, well I mean, it's a great destination for groups of boys who may be celebrating a 40th birthday or a 50th birthday, or I don't know, just having a boys week way.

And I think you can actually go for a week if you were just going for a week, I'd say, just go to somewhere for instance, like you Hoi An or Danang, and play all the courses in or around that one area don't try and do too much. And so, you could have a great week of golf and you know, the food and beverage side of things is look, the foods absolutely fantastic and alcohol is very, very cheap, particularly beer, if you're a beer drinker. So, it is one of those destinations that really, you're not worried about your credit card statement when you get home, it's a very inexpensive destination.

You'd almost have to say that really, it's a first world experience probably at more third world prices in a lot of instances. That may change there's so much construction things going on. You kind of feel like Vietnam it's about to go to a whole new level.

Kerry: Yeah.

Chrissy Hordern: It does have that feeling and so I guess part of me thinks I really want to get back there soon before, you know, while it's still really authentic. And that's the part I still love about it now is that it's still that way, although there's so much of the old new, and a lot of new is happening it still feels like a very authentic experience. So, yes great for the boys' trips and great for couples too sort of traveling together and there's really, there's accommodation to sort of Absolute luxury and style, or you can... and it's still very affordable. Or you can stay in a really nice hotel that's really pretty cheap.

Kerry: Yes, and I think the fantastic thing about Vietnam, it does offer that range. I mean you can spend a hundred dollars a night and get four-star quality. And I think that's quite rare. I mean, if you would agree with me.... in Australia, four-star is pretty average, a four-star hotel or a three-star hotel is not flash at all. Where four-star over there is still pretty flash.

Five-Star obviously I think for what you pay in Vietnam and because depending on the rate of exchange, what dollar you're using, you are getting a good bang for your buck kind of thing. It's buying you a lot more in Vietnam than it is in say, if you exchange rates into Europe or the U S etc., Because you're losing so much on the exchange rate where you're gaining in most cases in Vietnam.

Chrissy Hordern: Sure, I mean, I think it's a very affordable destination, you know what I mean. I go to a lot of places in the world, you know, for instance you know, I take groups into the U S masters for instance, and as much as sort of every golfer probably has that on their bucket list to once in their life go to the U S masters, I'd say, you know what, absolutely do it, if you can.

Financially, it really is out of reach for a lot of people and even a lot of iconic golf courses in the U S are out of reach. I mean, for Pebble Beach, now probably it's about 600 us, it's very difficult to access unless you're actually staying at the lodge at Pebble Beach. So, you know those things really if you're going away with a group of mates, for instance, that's just for the most groups, it's just not a possibility, ...whereas you can go to Vietnam and you can have a really great time and it's just not going to cost you a lot and it's going to be accessible a lot more people.

Kerry: Sure, now we did a little detour while we were at Ba Na Hills and where did we go, Chrissy Hordern?

Chrissy Hordern: We went to this extraordinary French replica village called at the top of Ba Na Hills which waslook it's at the end of the longest non-stop cable car in the world. And I have to say, I think that was actually the best part of the trip, it's extraordinary. And that was really special and the scenery going up and back is incredible. And at the top you've got sort of this massive Buddha. I think it's about; I don't know how tall it is, it's just absolutely massive. You've got manicured gardens; you've got this fantastic sort of golden bridge that's held up by these giant hands. The giant hand I think they are stone, are they stone? They look like they're stone it's just fantastic. But the whole, the whole experience up there is it's very kitsch, I have to say it is kitsch, but you know what, when I got home and looked at all the photos, they're fantastic. I just go, oh, wow! That's impressive.

Kerry: So, I'd say as long as you actually know what you're in for, I'd still, if I had a group of people and half were playing the golf course, I'd still send the others up to Ba Na Hills to have a look at it.

Chrissy Hordern: For the day, maybe.

Kerry: Yeah, I have a day trip up there. And I think it's actually, it's a nice day trip. Yes, it's got the secret gardens, it's got the funicular up too, as you say, the Buddha, in its original form it was a wealthy retreat for the French when they occupied

Vietnam. So, some of that replication of buildings, etc., where we think it looks a little bit, Disneyland is actually taken from its pure origin, which was because it's a lot cooler up there.

The French used to try to escape the heat because traditionally they wouldn't have been accustomed to that level of heat. So, going as high as that to get away from it was their plan and they built these little chalets. The Mercure Hotel actually runs and operates, I think about six of these chalets around the actual Hill development, but someone took it over and has converted it into a theme park. So, it's really designed for families and possibly more for Vietnamese to visit who may never get to Disneyland & who may never get to the theme parks that we may be accustomed to in our countries.

It was really designed for them. And I think you'll agree that they are 90% along with the Koreans and maybe Taiwanese people who love it as well. I think it's something that they just say is WOW, as they kind of entry pointing to what France or French colonial village may look like.

And then some of the other aspects of the gardens and the wine cellars, and things like that. So, that's kind of the background to Ba Na Hills, but I wanted you to experience it. And so, maybe say, okay, well, we've done that, but you know, it probably may not do that together. I know the boys in the group, they weren't overly thrilled, but once again, as I said, well, now when somebody says to you do you want to go to Ba Na Hills? You'll be able to give them a heads up as in to.

Chrissy Hordern: Oh, absolutely. I mean, I was so glad we went there and look as you say, it's not about us, you know? And I think different people want different things. And if you actually go up there knowing all those things, and I think if I sent people up there, I'd give them that kind of an intro as to the history and the background of it. I think there's a lot to love about it. So, I think don't rule it out, I think it's just one of those things you have to take it for what it is.

Kerry: Take it for what it is. Absolutely.

Chrissy Hordern: Exactly.

Kerry: So, then we moved on and we headed out to Lang Co to play the Laguna LangCo course. And we stayed at a resort out there, called Vedana Lagoon Resort. Tell us a little bit about your experience with the course and that location that we stayed at.

Chrissy Hordern: Well, from Ba Na Hills, we went to Vedana and we played the course the following day, and I think sort of having played sort of three rounds of golf and had a fairly hectic schedule, it was a perfect addition to the itinerary. You know, it was an opportunity to kind of get out of the hustle and bustle in the chaos and actually just stop. And you know It was hot and so, yeah, after sort of three or four days we were tired. So, it was a great place to go. I mean, the resort sits on about 27 hectares I think of land, right on one of the biggest lagoons in the whole of Southeast Asia. I think I'm right in saying that, and it's kind of low key, which is to love about it as well.

The accommodation is sort of villas & bungalows, beautifully appointed. They've got their own private sun decks and balconies that sort of lead out onto the lagoon or to a private garden. In fact, the bungalow that I had there was a veranda onto the water and then at the back, there was like almost little courtyard that was covered over in totally private and I had a rain shower there. So, having a rain shower there and just looking up at the stars and actually, I think we had a brief thunderstorm when I was under the shower, which it was just really special, it was absolutely fantastic. So, look it was a great place to just read a book, ride a bike. I had a 90-minute spa treatment, which I think was the best spa treatment I've ever had in my entire life.

Kerry: Yes.

Chrissy Hordern: The treatment rooms were all on some little bungalows, you know, again, sort of looking out over the lagoon and you had the boats going past with the fishermen in them, that kind of thing. It was just gorgeous and, you know, the dinner we had, I think there were two restaurants, we went to one obviously. And look the food was delicious a really nice atmosphere, but not stitched up or over the top or anything like that. It was just laid back and oh yeah, a lovely experience. I mean, my only regret was that we didn't have more time there to be honest.

Kerry: Yes, and I think the time factor is something I want to get to maybe a little bit further down the track during this conversation because time people say, oh, you know go for a week and you can play five courses and all the rest of it, but would you want to push yourself to that kind of level? Is the question maybe I'll ask you at the end, but tell us a little bit about the Laguna LangCo course itself.

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, well another golf course to love as well, designed by another golfing legend, Nick Faldo. Again, it's a link style course, but it's built in natural rugged terrain. There are mountains you've got coastal views. You really feel like you're in Vietnam. So, I loved that there's rice patties and all that sort of thing. So, yeah, I loved that course, and I can't wait. I'd happily go back there and play it time and time again.

Kerry: And I think out of the courses that you've got on offer in that what we would call central Vietnam region, we didn't get to play the BIG Danang course. And there's since our trip there has been the opening of Hoiana Shores. So, as you said before, basing yourself in Hoi An or Danang you do have access to a really great range of courses to give you I guess a variety of experiences and a variety of, is the word ambiance, as in you've said many times about Lang Co and Ba Na Hills, like you really felt like I'm really in Vietnam now. I'm in Vietnam and playing in the surrounds, you know, hitting across Paddy fields and things like that. So, we based this tour with you around this central region as a bit of a hub, and would you agree that it would be a good base to spread your wings as far as playing is concerned?

Chrissy Hordern: Definitely, I mean, you've always got to leave something for next time and certainly you know, Greg Norman's BG Danang course and Robert Trent Jones Jr. Hoiana Shores as you say, which is new. I mean, they definitely will be on

my list for next time. So, yeah, as you say, if you've got a week, probably a week or 10 days, you can easily fill that being based in Danang or Hoi An and playing golf and allowing yourself a little extra time for a day or two off, I think we madly put together golfing itineraries and play six courses in seven days and time and time again, when you've done that, it's really great, but you get to the end and go, oh, I wish we'd had a day off in the middle. So, you know, I think try and mix it up if you can and try and just base yourself in one place, particularly if you've got limited time and I would say that's a great spot to go.

Kerry: And I think that was kind of my plan in building in the Vedana resort opportunity. As I just sort of felt that people would look for a little bit of a rest spot from the heat a little bit of chill out time, you know, a chance to be relaxed & kind of take the pace down a tad because you were going to be playing Lang Co the next day. And it had been a bit go, go, go, I felt. But everybody was so excited and keen and everything because you want to experience everything, but as you say, if you get to choose it yourself you might go and you know what, I could've done with just one extra night more and I hear that so much, so many times.

Chrissy Hordern: I think so, I mean, if it is the boys group, probably for the 50th birthday, they probably wouldn't be going to the spa resort. And so, it's probably for a slightly older demographic people that have more time. But then again, you are finding younger people going on these trips who actually need to check in with their office, they need to answer emails or be available to take zoom calls or whatever for a day. So, if that's the case, then actually you know, Vedana could be a really good place to have a down day where people can just attend to all those other things that they need to plus have a rest.

Kerry: Good idea. So, now we finish up at Lang Co, we then head to Saigon and we're down to our last sort of 24, 48 hours. And you're going to be playing at the Vietnam golf and country club course, which is located in fairly easy access from Saigon. So, we're back into crazy, we're back into a city, which is known for its craziness and you either get amongst it, or you don't. And I think we got amongst it by getting you around the town a little bit, took you to the local markets, Ben Thanh Market, which, you know everybody has to go to Ben Thanh Market, it's just kind of the thing you have to do. So, I think you we embraced that pretty well. And you're able to get all your bits and bobs to take home, you know, gifts and souvenirs, etc. But we managed to fit in also a little bit of extra tailoring, I believe, Miss Chrissy Hordern, just a few extra little things that I think we then shared amongst our luggage, if I recall. Am I right?

Chrissy Hordern: Absolutely right and you can go totally crazy, I mean and we did, I bought a lot of stuff and it was fun. I mean, even the trying on things and being measured up and all that sort of stuff. I guess with the beauty of hindsight, I'd say, and you'd probably agree with this, looked Vietnam was a great place to have clothes tailored. I would say, go with a plan, take some of the favorite items with you that you want to have copied or I think I'll just decide when I'm there often, it's just totally overwhelming. And you know, there's so many fabrics and so many designs and things you can often go home with things that you probably might never wear again, really. So, I would say you definitely go with your own stuff and a plan.

The other thing is, I'd say, look be aware of going home with too many Ao dais, which are the local dress. The Ao dais look just logo, which is on all of Vietnamese women. You know, everybody from the flight, the crews, all the women they wear them. Even the corporates just have sort of very modern contemporary Ao dais, which is sort of the flowing pants with the long tunic over the top. And to be honest, I thought I looked pretty good in the Ao dais as well. Until I actually got home in sort of contemplating wearing one to dinner and I was like, I shouldn't, you know what it's not really quite working for me.

Kerry: Oh, I can relate to that experience totally. And my friends and family go to me "don't wear one of those Ao dais to that party" and I go "what do you mean?" And they go we know that you go crazy with them, but they just don't fit the scene, and I get so disappointed about that. Because you're right, you get kind of drawn into it, don't you?

Chrissy Hordern: I think the thing is you're going to have to plan another trip back really to take them back to wear them. I really didn't learn the lesson because after going to Vietnam, I then ventured to India some months later and I've come home with a stash Saree. So, look, if you need a Saree at any time or any of your listeners needs one, give me a call.

Kerry: I did the same with the skirts in Myanmar, would you believe I came back with a whole heap of those, which were kind of required to getting into the temples in Myanmar because you've got to cover your knees. And I was wrapping these things, massive pieces of cloth, like in Saree, you know, you wrap them around yourself a hundred times. Oh yeah, I'm so glad you got sucked into that as well.

But we've got to finish on the last golf course, which is, we stayed at the Nikko Hotel, which was spectacular. Wasn't it? We had a gorgeous dinner on the top floor of the restaurant, it was amazing. But tell us about that course. Would you include the country club in your last course, if you were to go again or would you go somewhere else?

Chrissy Hordern: Look just before we get to that, I mean, you know, Saigon was just fantastic and incredibly chaotic. And I think the great thing about the Nikko staying there, which it's obviously a big chain hotels sort of throughout the world, but it was actually a great place to stay because it was located in that sort of district, one of the CBD in really close proximity to everything you need to all the cultural sites to great food, restaurants, all that kind of stuff and wonderful little precincts and all that sort of stuff. So, I would say it was definitely a great place to stay.

Kerry: We had a good guide, do you remember?

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, we did, the guide was terrific. And I mean, I guess the one thing people sort of say, oh, did you feel safe traveling Vietnam? I certainly felt safe because we had a guide with us and we had you the whole way, which was fantastic.

So, maybe that was a false sense of security. I didn't have the experience of the free independent traveler. However, everybody that I've spoken to who's been to Vietnam has never had a problem there. And I think because tourism is such a huge part, they they rely on it so heavily, economically that really, it's in the interest of the locals and the police to keep you safe. So, aside from, you know, the ATM scam or the taxi driver that might actually, not have the meter running, it's a very safe place, I think to travel. As far as the golf was concerned look, it was a really enjoyable course at the Country Club, it's located pretty close, as you say, it's got two courses in East and West course, we played the West course, it's a tree line, Woodland style course.

That was really enjoyable but probably not my favorite. It's hosted the Vietnam open and it's got generous fairways and undulating, grains, all those things. But I don't know, I suppose in comparison to where we played before it, maybe wasn't my favorite, but if you're in Saigon, you've got a set of golf clubs do it. And probably next time, I'd add in Twin Doves, which is about an hour out of Saigon. And I'd also looking forward to playing Long Thanh, which has got 36 holes, it's a different style of course, it's sort of built on former rice paddies as I understand. And I think it sounds fantastic.

Kerry: I agree, now as much as I would just love to relive this trip again and go on forever. I wonder if we could just wrap it up by maybe giving our listeners, I don't know, final tips, hints, advice. What would you say to people who are considering Vietnam? I mean, we're talking coming out of COVID people are going to be looking for their next destination. Vietnam is definitely up there in the top, I think 13 or 14 countries named as the best places to visit in 21/22. So, what advice would you share to people and golfers in particular?

Chrissy Hordern: Yeah, well, hopefully it is one of the destinations that will open up sort of fairly quickly post COVID. I'd say research where you want to go and particularly look at the weather you know, time, your trip around the best possible time.

Kerry: Thank you so much #ChrissyHordern for being on the program. It was really great to relive that trip and to get your insights on probably the more golfing type aspects, because I know we talked a lot about when we came back about your impressions of Vietnam and Hoi An and some of the places we stayed at, but it was just nice to get your kind of golfing insights to some of those courses probably we didn't get a chance to debrief.

Look, I'm sure listeners, if you are a golfer, if you're a partner to a golfer, if you're heading up a group of guys who are looking for a golfing destination in the future, I really hope that this episode was able to give you some insights into what you can expect, certainly in the central Vietnam district. Love to get your take on it, if you've already been, I like to say thank you to everyone that's supporting the program. We are really getting to cover some amazing stuff in Vietnam. I'm just so thankful for your support, I know travel just looks like something that doesn't even fit on a calendar at the moment. So, if you can use the program to get information, to help you make decisions in the future, my job is done. Thank you. Please rate, please share if you can, it all goes towards making the program just little bit more special and certainly for me, I truly appreciate it. Until next time. We'll see you in Vietnam.

