



What About Vietnam - Series 2 - 4

Tam Ky and Tam Thanh Beach - Not on the regular Tourist Track YET!

What about Vietnam? My name's **Kerry Newsome** and I'm your host.

Today. We're going to be talking about a place I've wanted to learn about myself for quite some time. It's a place called Tam Ky and very close to Tam Ky is a beach called Tam Thanh. Very small Vietnamese style beach. Very local, very authentic area. I've asked **Sander Seymore** to come on today because he runs a consulting company called Keyway Consulting, and in that role is talking to many people in the region and in the hospitality and tourism industry. So, he has some very good knowledge to share with us about going to happen in tourism in this area and just what's available to the tourist if they would like to go there and visit.

Hand on heart. I haven't been there myself yet, but I've wanted to go. And because it is so close to Hoi An, it does make an ideal day trip or possibly overnight trip. I hope you will welcome Sander to the program as he had a lot to share with us about this area. Good morning, Sander How are you?

Sander Seymour: Hi. Good morning. It's Ah, nice and hot here in Vietnam.

Kerry Newsome: Would I expect anything different in July in Vietnam? No,

Sander Seymour: no, Absolutely not. Now it is great at the moment.

Kerry Newsome: It's great to have you on the program. And you're going to be talking about a place that I in all the times I've been there, haven't managed to visit, which I feel very bad about because I've wanted to, but literally haven't got there. So we're gonna be talking about Tam Ky. Yes. Yeah.

Sander Seymour: This is the **capital** of Quang Nam, where Hoi An is located, which I'm sure you've talked about extensively before.

Kerry Newsome: Yes, yes. So maybe give us a little bit more as far as our location point of view. Where is Tam Ky. Am I even saying it right like Tam Ky.

Sander Seymour: It is fine. And and both of us are going to be saying all of the words incorrectly, so well done.

Kerry Newsome: Yeah, yeah, I feel good with that yet. So where is it? Actually,

Sander Seymour: it's Ah, it's about ah, 45 kilometers south of Hoi An.. Um, which would be about 65. 60 south of Danang, which is quite a large city. That would be the closest large city. Tam Ky is Ah is also a pretty large city, actually.

Kerry Newsome: okay. I keep thinking of Tam Ky as more like a village rather than a city.

Sander Seymour: Yeah, they designated it as the capital of Quang Nam. Um and so now it is It's more, quite like a city. There's actually ah, south of Tam Ky. About 30 minutes. There's also quite a large seaport, , in Quang Nai, um which means there's a lot of big industrial area. And there's also, for example, Kia Motors operates a factory out of there. And so there's, um along with being the government area, off of Quang Nam. That means there's a lot of infrastructure and a lot of work down there, except it's just not a big tourist area yet.

Kerry Newsome: YET. Okay, So if I am a tourist Ah, how long is it going to take me to get there, Say from Hoi An. And like, what's the best way to get there, I'm aware of many tour operators that offer different ways, but what what would you recommend the best way to get there?

Sander Seymour: I think at this point, like you said, the tour operators would be the best. You can take a private car. You can even take a taxi. Of course. But the tour operators from, say, if you rented a room or a hotel in Hoi An, and that would be the best way to get there. Um, mainly because in Tam Ky, like I was saying, there is not a lot of tourism there, so there's not a lot of English spoken there yet, so it can be a little difficult to get around if you, uh, if you're on your own. Okay. For example, if you rented a motor biker a car,

Kerry Newsome: Yes. Yes. Ah, and I do know some people who yet just just head off in that direction as ah as a key place to visit on a bike. But what they do there, I haven't actually got any feedback. So it's good to have this chat. I mean, how do you come to discover Tam Ky. How did it get on your radar

Sander Seymour: Basically because my fiance is from Tam Ky. Um, I've been working for a couple of years now in Hoi An and Danang, Um, and I met my fiance here, and we visited Tam ky.

I think 3.5 years ago was the first time I came there with her, I barely knew her. So I've slowly kept going back to visit her family. And so basically, she is my tour guide. I'm very lucky. I

I get to see a city runs that's completely Vietnamese operated. There's not a lot of Westerners there, and it's actually ah, it's quite an upper middle class city. Um, I mean, with a lot of cars and wide roads, and, uh, it's not based on tourism, so So it's not tourism based and focused, which is a quite unique for a lot of people who travel just to places like Hoi Ani and see the touristy areas of Danang or even Hanoi.

Kerry Newsome: Yeah. You know, I'm really glad you've touched on that. Because, as I said, when I think of Tam Ky my vision off it is this small, touristy place with a village on a beach. I am I have not thought it about it in any respect to how you're describing it. So, I mean, what is it so special? About Tam Ky. It comes up on lots of discussions. So tell us about why a tourist might like to visit it.

Sander Seymour: Well, let me differentiate Tam Ky from Tam Thanh, which is about 11 kilometers outside of Tam Ky. It is where, uh, probably if you were a tourist, you'd want to start there, because that is where the Mural villages are located.

Um, so the tanking is the city? Yeah. I think that's what you were getting at. Tam Ky is the city center. I think a lot of people passing through would bypass Tam Ky. At the moment. It's Ah, it's a basic city centre, but it's more commercial and for Vietnamese. There's not a lot of tourism there at the moment. But for some people, if you are a if you are interested in Vietnam or you want a little more, uh, bit of a Vietnam experience compared to, say, maybe Hoi an ancient town just very touristy, that would be a nice place to check out.

Kerry Newsome: Okay, so if I separate, those two places. From what you're telling me, there's probably two different sets of things to do, Okay. So, Tam Thanh has the mural village, maybe talk a little bit about the mural village because I've seen some lovely pictures of kids doing some fun things in that village. And, um, you know, I've got a friend of mine. Ah, who also goes there a, Vietnamese friend. Ah. She goes there to just have ah, like a beach experience. So, talk a little bit more about Tam Thanh.

Sander Seymour: Sure, Tam Thanh is one of the next areas designated for ah tourism in Vietnam specifically because it is an easy drive from Hoi An. Roughly 45 minutes to an hour. Um uh, easily accessible, free way to get there. They've just completed a new bridge to get there.

Um, right now it is. Ah, sort of like your your your friend described, its ah, fishing village. Um, but they put in a mural village there together with the, uh I think some businesses in Korea to try toe, get more tourism. Prior, it sort of was there, but it wasn't really, kept up. Since the Korean tools an interest, it was cleaned up and is a great idea. So now it's kind of Ah, it's There's a lot of changes happening there.

There's, ah, a lot of large groups like Sun Group, one of the largest real estate investment company in Vietnam. They plan to build golf courses and, uh, you know, high end resorts there. However, right now it is still quite a nice little fishing village. If you went there, say around one or two PM Obviously it would be hot and it would be empty.

You wouldn't see anybody there, but about five or 6 p.m. You will get the flood of After the sun goes down, you will get the flood off of locals, government workers and all the the 9 to 5 job people. They will flood into Tam Thanh and visit the fish restaurants, the local seafood restaurants and the beach will be packed with games and volleyball. It'd just be a flood of people. But if you go during the day, it is it's kind of your own little beach.

Kerry Newsome: Ah, Vietnamese obviously taking advantage of it. I mean, obviously they know where the best spots are. Let's face it, Um I mean, when I think about a tourist, however going there, I know a friend of mine did a a sidecar trip down there, and they went as a family in the sidecar thing which looked hilarious like the photos are traveling down and but they I think they might have gone maybe mid morning or early morning and ah, they stayed in the mural village and they did some. Kid stuff. You know, there was things that kind of were geared towards kids and families, and, you know, they had a nice Vietnamese snack. I mean, are there things like that to do in the village?

Do you know much happening there?

Sander Seymour: That village scene, thats obviously great for kids cause if you go down there right now as a Westerner and you bring your kids, um, that will bring the families out and and they want to interact, especially if you have kids. You know how friendly Vietnamese are with kids. So there are some small shops that have opened up next to the art village. When I let me explain the art village a little more, it's Ah, it's basically murals done. Um, the painted murals done with a lot of local artists. Some artists from Korea, um, there are some kinds done to honor their fishing heritage. There are some basket boats that have been painted. There are some sort of small tower set up that the kids can climb on and take pictures and view the ocean. There's, of course, a couple of temples there you can check out. But I think if you did a day trip there, uh, the reason I say it's it is a very interesting location. As you know Hoi An is quite ah, full. There it is almost at the peak of the tourism.

Kerry Newsome: We are recording these on the 14th of July in 2020. So, uh, yeah, maybe it was at its peak but now, not so. Yep.

Sander Seymour: Yes, thinking of that. So, for example A large development with the casino and golf courses that is about seven kilometers from Hoi An. So that's to the south so you can get to Hoi An.

Um, and then there's also ah, a new French distillery that's open down there, and that's maybe eight or nine kilometers. So on your way to Tam Thanh and Tam Ky, there's starting to be more and more activities and tourist stuff. So if you started yeah, and I think it would be important to mention the Heroic Mother Statue that's also on the way to Tam Ky, Um, if you were traveling down the main ocean road, you would, ah sort of go inland to Tam Ky. It would sort of go back to the coast to Tam Thanh. So right in the middle of that, there is a they call it the Heroic Mother Statue. It was, um, a statue created to honor. Ah, the women of the what? We would call it the Vietnam War. They would call it the Liberation War. So there's a really nice museum there, Its good to see the history. From the Vietnamese perspective.

Kerry Newsome: Is it like Lady Buddha up in Danang? Is it similar to that?

Sander Seymour: Different? Oh, it's, um it would Ah, it has the faces of about 11 Vietnam mothers on bears. A couple really famous one that one of the mothers they will talk about supposedly lost about 11 sons and grandchildren, and she became sort of ah patriotic for the for the Vietnamese, and to talk about the love for country.

So you can visit the museum that's under these statues. It's big, big statues. It is fascinating, with lots of open spaces. There's restaurants across the street, small restaurants. When I say restaurants, I mean little red chairs and canopies where you can buy cold water and coconuts.

But inside there is like a sort of underground in an air conditioned museum where there's a lot of relics from from the war that went on here in the sixties. Um, it's pretty amazing to see Yeah, and it's a comfortable, air conditioned museum, so it's a nice break.

Kerry Newsome: Um, so if you were talking about a visit to this region, do you see it as a day trip for a tourist? Or would you recommend? I mean, do you have any favorite accommodations or places to it? I know my friend. That had a guide here. She went actually in, like November, so it actually rained and carried on with storms and all sorts of things when she was there. But she absolutely loved the fact that it was quiet; it was right on the beach. You know, she literally had the accommodation or home stay or whatever to herself and, you know, just lapped it up, you know, having some some peaceful time away.

But for tourists, you know, Are they gonna make it a day trip, or would you recommend a night there or have you got any good ideas? I mean we appreciate now it's all gonna be Vietnamese, but there's nothing wrong with that.

Sander Seymour: Yeah, it's It's all gonna be Vietnamese. Of course. Um, I actually took my mother, who lives here in Vietnam at the moment, and we went down there, and she I say, I use my mother is as an example because, being 73 , she wants comfort. So for her comfort level, we stayed at Tam Thanh Beach Resort. That's probably the main large one. It's a government-owned hotel, but it's got a beautiful outdoor pool overlooking the ocean; its a pretty high standard place.

Um, I work in Tam Thanh sometimes. So, about 11 kilometers outside of the beaches, Tam Ky's city centre, and I stay at Moun Thanh Hotels (See Episodes notes) I think you're probably familiar with that chain. I would, uh, I would consider it equivalent to like Hilton. We have Hilton in the United States that I'm sure you have in Australia. But, uh, that's sort of your basic four-star hotel. With your buffet breakfast, you can get Western food and Western amenities those two are the most comfortable located on the beach.

A lot of people have realized that this is gonna be the next, um, tourism spot. So the majority of oceanfront property has been bought up. There are big plans. I have yet to check it out, but one group is doing something called You- Retreat.

So there I've been following them and spoke to them on the phone a few times about They're creating a small home stay style retreat for Westerners. So things like that are kind of coming up soon. As of now, you can stay at a nice place for equivalent of 50 to \$60 a night, which is high for that area.

Um, and then there are some small home stays as well. So, um, I think you know, if you're on a time limit, depending on how, and what kind of, ah vacation time you have, You could do a day trip. You could do a an overnight stay.. And a long the way: You could see the mother statue. Maybe go for the, uh, the distillery on the way back, I think. Probably the best.

Yes. So you could do that in a day being 45 kilometers 45 50 kilometers round trip. He could be back in the day,

but staying the night. You know,...

Especially in these towns that aren't based on tourism. They move very slow. So So your time frame is it's not gonna be like the West. Um, you might run into some random things that are no cows in the road that will hold you up for some time, things like that.

Kerry Newsome: Ah, and I mean, let's face it, that's that's definitely the authentic stay. That's more of an immersive stay. And as you say, the fact that the area has recognized the fact that it's got so much to offer in that authentic way, its a diversion from the touristy kind of aspect with the old town. So I guess if you want to escape that and get in touch with the very real Vietnam, that's how I always saw it. Would I be right in saying that? I

Sander Seymour: Think absolutely. The word authentic is a nice, is a nice description because they're not based on tourism. So that would be a real nice way; to see how normal Vietnamese live without the benefit of tourism and how they operate their daily lives.

I have a great story about the local Fishing village, which is the reason why I became so invested in that area, is ah,

I met an older lady and through my fiance was translating, and she said that she was there all her life. She was a fisherman. Their fishing. Then they also made ah fish sauce the famous fish sauce there. That was, um but ah, when she was old enough to retire and she had some money, she wanted to move into back Tam Ky, because she didn't need her fishing village. So she sold her land in Tam Thanh on the beach for the equivalent of about a few \$1000 USD Just nothing. And you know, now there's a golf course being built there.

So the idea that Tam Thanh Beach could ever be anything but a place to support Tam Ky to the local population down there was unheard of. So they're only now realizing its value to Westerners.

Kerry Newsome: Oh, yes. And as soon as that realization happens, in come the developers.

Sander Seymour: Yeah, we might be too late. I'm pretty sure it's all been bought up.

Well, actually everything's on hold now. So? So we are hitting the pause button for everyone. I believe, including devoted developers. So when Tam Thnanh does open back up, I think it will still be there, but busy in construction and tourism development.

Kerry Newsome: Fantastic. Look, thanks very much for being on the program. I think I'm gonna put some links from our chat in the episode notes. So people watch out for that. As

Sander mentioned a few places that I think would be handy for people to know about if they were to explore that area.

I really appreciate you being on the show. Um, thanks for coming on.

Sander Seymour: It was nice to see you. I'll see you in person again. Okay, Kerry

Kerry Newsome: U bet, as soon as they open the gates.

Okay, then Thank you for listening. Check out the episode notes for more information. Don't forget to subscribe. Rate review and stay tuned for more fun adventures in Vietnam