

Life Resort's new GM targets refugees from global meltdown

Wellness property sees uptick in two-day stay packages

While the global economic crisis batters the hospitality industry worldwide, the new general manager of the Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon is positioning his property as an antidote to stress.

On May 1, the resort and its new general manager will debut a new series of two-day 'Discover Life' packages that trades on the resort's far-flung appeal.

For double occupancy, the new \$310 promotion includes a two night stay in a superior room with breakfast, airport transfers, a set dinner at Senses restaurant, 30-minute neck or head massage, free high-speed Internet, half-day bike rental and use of water sports equipment.

"Last week, I had a guest tell me she was checking in here so she could check out of the economic mess at home in Hong Kong," said Shane McKirdy, general manager of Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon. "I'm finding more and more this is what guests want: An utter break from the worries of the day."

Fifty minutes from Saigon by air, the Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon has established a reputation as Vietnam's premier wellness destination. The resort's appeal is borne of its remote location on the country's south-central coast, and its orientation around a suite of wellness options, from detoxification treatments to yoga, meditation and tai chi.

"We're close, and yet so far away," said McKirdy. "Though we're just 50 minutes from Saigon by air, the resort's remote location allows the kind of opportunity for escape that it usually takes hours and hours to achieve."

Vietnam Airlines also flies direct to Quy Nhon from Hanoi (1 hr, 40 min.) four times per week.

McKirdy, a seasoned manager of beach properties from the Maldives to Tasmania and elsewhere in Australia, recently took charge of the resort and started work on a number of new initiatives, in addition to a renewed focus on the two-night stay.

Next month, the resort is publishing a new menu with an expanded selection of Vietnamese cuisine. McKirdy has made a number of spa treatments available at poolside. And he's about to debut a new seasonal cocktail.

In the past, the Quy Nhon resort built its reputation on the back of longer 4-, 6- and 9-night stays. Guests tended to linger at the resort in the midst of a more arduous itinerary further south in Saigon, further west in Siem Reap and further north in Hanoi where the sites compelled all-day sight-seeing.

"Quy Nhon is where our guests checked in for the long haul," said Chris Duffy, general director of the Life Resorts. "That's still true. But the shorter, two-night stay is what's all of a sudden become very popular."