



Maya Rigg

CEO of Elite Havens

Q: How has your definition of luxury evolved in the past five years?

Luxury used to mean grand gestures, champagne on arrival, marble everything. Today, it's the chef who remembers how you like your coffee, or the villa manager who knows the quiet beach where locals still fish at dawn. It's about feeling known, not just served. At Elite Havens, we've leaned into this shift before anyone else. Our teams aren't following scripts, they're sharing their home, their family recipes, and their favourite experiences. That authenticity, that sense of belonging in a place you're only visiting for a week, is what modern travellers value most. Luxury is no longer about excess. It's about emotional resonance, an experience that money cannot buy.

Q: How do you balance local cultural authenticity with global luxury standards?

We don't balance them, we blend them. Elite Havens was born in Indonesia 28 years ago, so we've never been foreign operators parachuting in. Our villa teams are local. They live in the communities they serve. That's not a marketing line, it's structural. When a guest wants to understand Balinese temple etiquette or find the night market locals actually eat at, our staff don't Google it. They know it. We pair that deep cultural fluency with world-class villa design, concierge precision, and service training. The result isn't compromise, it's synergy. Authentic experiences, delivered with class.

Q: What innovations have you introduced that resonate most with modern travellers?

The real innovation in luxury travel is intimacy. Everything we do is a love letter to the places we operate in: the people, the traditions, the ingredients, the stories that don't appear in any guidebook. Take our villa chefs — many are home cooks from the villages surrounding our properties, preparing recipes passed down through generations. Grandmother's sambal, slow-cooked rendang, nasi goreng from a recipe no restaurant has ever written down, using ingredients sourced within five kilometres of the villa. Guests aren't eating Indonesian food; they're tasting someone's childhood, cooked in their own villa kitchen. That's one expression of a philosophy that runs through everything we do. Real places, real people, real stories. That's what modern travellers are hungry for — and it's something a hotel simply can't manufacture.

Q: Looking ahead, what do you believe will define luxury hospitality in Asia over the next decade?

Depth over breadth. Travellers will choose fewer, longer, more immersive stays and they'll demand those stays feel locally rooted, not globally templated. The villa model is perfectly positioned for this: you're not a guest passing through; you're living in a place, guided by people who call it home. At Elite Havens, we're doubling down on that philosophy, training our teams not just in service excellence, but in cultural storytelling. The future of luxury in Asia isn't about being everywhere. It's about being from somewhere, deeply and authentically. And helping travellers feel that too.