

## TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS

# Gwiin Correa

Travel Professional Interviews

Agency Membership

Agent Membership



**Gwiin Correa, MCC**

# Owner/Travel Advisor, Memorable Moments Travel Monrovia, CA

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## **Describe your career as a travel agent. How long have you been in the business? What attracted you to it?**

I opened my agency in 2005 because I love to travel to different places and experience different cultures, art, food, and people. I have friends and family that have never traveled outside of their neighborhoods, and I wanted to change that. So, in 2007, I began to focus and specialize in group and celebratory travel, but whether your group is 2 or 30, my passion is to help create moments that will last a lifetime, anywhere in the world. As a travel designer, I look forward to crafting a one-of-a-kind travel itinerary full of memorable moments for my clients.

## **What is your approach to serving clients?**

With my experience as a former Civil Rights practitioner, I've developed a listening ear, a passion for people, and a fine attention to detail. These skills, combined with my knack for planning and uniting people made opening Memorable Moments Travel as a Virtuoso travel advisor more than twelve years ago a joyous celebration of my concern for humanity and my foundational belief that travel expands our worldview and connects us with others. I love when a client comes back from a trip, and they feel changed! My favorite part of being a travel designer is that I love to design and handle all the options and details so that all my client has to do is pack—and if they experience a hiccup during their journey, I've got their back. My motivation is to encourage travel by making it as easy as possible. I am here to get them there.

## **What is your biggest challenge when selling cruises and how do you overcome it?**

I have many clients that are cruise rookies. Because I specialize in groups, I get many seasoned travelers that invite their friends, family members, and colleagues that have never cruised. The group environment makes the rookies feel safe, less fearful and I promote an environment where the experienced travelers share with the group.

I prepare “Tips for Cruise Rookies” from my own experiences and from clients’ that provide input to heighten awareness and address questions and concerns in advance. My clients feel that I am there for them and it gives them confidence to cruise.

## **What has been a career highlight, thus far?**

I’ve recently returned from a Family and Friends Alaska cruise with a wonderful group of people on Royal Caribbean’s *Ovation of the Seas*. Most in the group were cruise rookies and some had mobility challenges. As a Certified Accessible Travel Advocate with Special Needs Group, I was able to assist with the rental of equipment to help the clients get around and navigate the very large ship. I was very pleased that the group, including the first-time cruisers enjoyed the cruise immensely and sent me emails stating, “Gwiin was extremely professional, we were a priority, which made us feel so special without any concerns. She provided pertinent information, walked us through the entire process, and kept us up to speed with any updates. We were very pleased with such a smooth process; we can't wait to plan another trip with Gwiin at Memorable Moments Travel!”

## **How has your CLIA membership and certification helped you as a cruise travel retailer?**

The CLIA training that I’ve received helped me to carve out my niche in the travel industry. It gave me the tools and education that I needed to attract pied pipers and sell group travel. Knowledge is power and I continue my education by attending conferences and learning. CLIA training is specialized to help you qualify clients to fit the right cruise product with the right client. Qualifying is key, and the CLIA training helped me to perfect that skill. My business has grown 62-percent since last year due to the increase in selling group cruises.

## **What consumer trends are you seeing in cruise sales?**

More celebratory groups and incentive group sales this year opposed to last. I see more people traveling together because it forms a special, life-lasting bond - Memorable moments are experienced and multiplied when shared with friends and family.

Planning a cruise vacation can be stressful. When traveling with a group, clients benefit because I take care of all of the details and they benefit from the well-traveled veterans in the group, distinctive accommodations, and a superb blend of activities that are designed specifically for the group. Everyone in the group feels special!

I expose my clients to one-of-a-kind hidden gem locations to food and wine recommendations to contextual historical information, I love to design adventures where they may immerse themselves in the destination to enrich their visit and give them the chance to explore their destinations like locals.

Safety is a very important part of traveling. I reassure my clients that traveling with a group provides safety in numbers. They will always have other guests with them to assist in an emergency. They will not be alone if an emergency happens. Group travel helps my clients feel safe and secure. And, group travel may be cost-effective - not only can group trips be easier on my clients' frame of mind, but they tend to be more kind to their wallets. The cruise lines offer special group discounts to help make the travel experience more affordable, easy, and fun, ultimately giving clients more experience per dollar. My groups love the value that they get by cruising.

## **Now for a little fun... if you were working as a crewmember aboard a cruise ship and you could have any job you want, what would it be?**

The cruise director! I know how to get a party started and I love for people to enjoy themselves. When I am with my groups, we dance, laugh, sing, and play games onboard the ship on sea days. We take group excursions and enjoy local cuisine. I love to plan and implement it all! We have a great time creating and sharing in those memorable moments!

