

A veteran passenger of more than sixty cruises, Camille Pepe Sperrazza has earned the title, "Commodore Camille."

THE WORLD AWAITS ... TRULY

Camille Pepe Sperrazza turns retirement career into continuing education.

By Jennifer Reynolds

Camille Pepe Sperrazza established The World Awaits Travel in 2008, hoping to gradually build it into her "retirement career." People warned, "No one uses travel agents anymore. You won't make any money." Yet The World Awaits Travel has grown faster than Camille hoped, and she's one of *Travel Agent* magazine's Top 25 Agents of 2013. A journalism teacher in Brooklyn, New York, she'll retire next year and devote her considerable energy to her new career.

The travel transition extends from a love that's led Camille to visit seventy-plus countries and sail on sixty-some cruises. Her writing expertise benefits her clients: www.thejournalismteacher.com includes articles about favorite destinations and restaurant, hotel, and activity recommendations—giving readers the "inside scoop." But her articles are more than reviews; they capture emotions places can evoke, connect to history, and show a humor that makes scrolling through them a joy. "I'm motivated to write about destinations I've experienced, to remember them, and also to provide people with an idea of what to expect. I try to capture feelings or a taste of the culture, rather than list facts that can be found everywhere. My writing is a teaching tool."

Camille's education experience provided a natural segue. "Teaching is about inspiring people; so is the travel business. People fear the unknown, and when they speak to someone who's traveled the globe—and who's come home, safe and sound—they think, 'I can do that, too!' Like teaching, it's about getting people over their fears; providing guidance, encouragement, and knowledge so they feel secure about what they're doing."

She's thrilled to have created a business from scratch, and delights in its growth. Camille attributes her success to self-discipline. Her biggest challenge is finding time for all she needs to accomplish; discipline helps her manage. "I respond to clients promptly, because I believe in that kind of service." She maintains nontraditional hours. "As many people work during the day and can't talk about vacations during that time, they find it advantageous to receive personalized service at hours convenient for them." She also attributes her success to honesty and being straightforward about experiences clients can expect. "I really don't try to 'persuade' people. I don't consider myself a 'salesperson,' but rather, an educator."

Camille's daughter, Bernadette, is also

a part of her success. Since childhood, Bernadette has enjoyed travel—and has had a personality that allows her to make friends easily and feel comfortable anywhere. In addition to working at The World Awaits Travel, she's senior sales manager at J Rosen Showroom, which specializes in beachwear and provides a natural link for travel promotion. "I love traveling with my daughter, and I'm so happy we share a passion for travel, learning, and discovery," Camille said. "Working together keeps us close, but we have other jobs that keep us busy." For those whose agencies have become family businesses, she advises, "Enjoy the time with your children! There's nothing more rewarding than sharing your dreams with them. It makes work 'fun.'"

Camille is also co-director of a new NACTA chapter in the New York City area. Part of the appeal was partnering with Cheryl Jones Felton, marketing director of Unique Weddings and Tours agency in Brooklyn. As a team, they'll work to educate area agents, reaching out to travel consultants, letting suppliers know how to find them, and providing a support network, so agents can socialize and learn from each other. 🌍