

Naples luxury travel adviser meets Duchess of Cambridge

Andrea Stetson, Special to the News-Press Published 12:12 a.m. ET April 12, 2015 | Updated 8:38 a.m. ET April 13, 2015



(Photo: Special to Coastal Life)

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Claudia Gordon not only got to meet and eat lunch with the Duchess of Cambridge, she got to have a personal, friendly conversation with the future queen. "I asked her if Prince George was excited about the new prince or princess that was coming and she said yes and that he is a toddler and is talking and walking," Gordon began. "Then she told me that his daddy, Prince William, was visiting China. After hearing this he went to the china cabinet, opened it and proclaimed 'daddy is not here.' She said they would work on his geography."

It is amazing moments like this that highlight a 31-year career in the travel business for Gordon, who owns Naples Luxury Travel Advisors in Naples. She was invited to the 105th birthday celebration for the Goring Hotel that included a luncheon with the duchess. "The Goring Hotel is an iconic hotel in London," Gordon explained. "It sits right behind Buckingham Palace. The owner and manager invited me. They knew me because I sent many guests there over the years and I love the hotel. I got a phone call and then I got an invitation by mail. It was very, very special."

Getting an invite to a special occasion like this comes after years of making contacts around the world for her travel company. This is not the typical travel business that simply books an airline, ticket, hotel or tour. Instead it is a personalized service that creates unique itineraries and personal experiences for clients. "My clients are looking for something distinctive and individual," she said. It could be a private tour of a country or city. It could be a cooking lesson in the home of a native of India, or it could be placement on a tour with special benefits.

While Gordon admits the Internet has changed the way people book travel plans, she has something the Web can't offer. "They appreciate what I can filter for them," she said. "I save them time. I can get right to it. I know they are looking for something distinctive on every single trip."

She also solves travel problems along the way. Mary Scanlon was on a cruise and planned to meet her daughters at a port in Apia in American Samoa. Just 48 hours before the boat was to port, bad weather diverted the vessel to Fiji. "It was an issue, but Claudia solved it," said Mary's husband, Timothy Scanlon. "She got the girls to Fiji. She's the best." Gordon has been booking trips for the Scanlon family for eight years now, sending them to places ranging from New Zealand, Peru and the Galapagos Islands, to the Middle East, Asia and most of Western Europe. "She is very knowledgeable about travel," Scanlon said. "She has good resources. She has good common sense. She is very good on the follow-up which is important. Since we started with her she has never, ever dropped the ball. Besides that she is a nice person."

Nancy and George Woltz have also had trips planned by Gordon, including a trip around the world. "All of our adventures usually involve Claudia," Nancy Woltz said. "It is really nice to find someone who knows what you like and the type of people you are." The Woltzes have been everywhere from Easter Island, Samoa and New Guinea to Paris and South Africa. They are leaving this week for a trip to Japan. "You just pick up the phone and it is taken care of," Woltz said. "You are not dealing with things — she deals with it. When you have good service you stick with the person that provides it." Woltz said seeing Gordon get invited to meet the duchess just reinforces the power and connections of her travel agent. "I told her the next time she gets to do something like that I want to go with her," Woltz said. "My husband wants to go as well."

If you go:

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