

Coffee Time With Industry Vets: Perillo Tours' Steve Perillo

By **Jessica Poitevien** - February 2, 2018



Steve Perillo in Capri.

Steve Perillo, president and owner of **Perillo Tours**, may not remember much from his first trip to Italy (other than the transatlantic cruise that got him there), but the country clearly left its mark on him as he currently spearheads the largest company in the U.S. leading travelers to Italy. He represents the third generation of this more than 70-year-old family business. Perillo is a fan of taking photographs as souvenirs and listening to podcasts on planes. We'll let him explain this and more in this installment of *Coffee Time With Industry Vets*.

Where did you go on your first trip and how old were you?

My first real trip was a biggie and one I'd like to repeat soon. It was an old-fashioned transatlantic "crossing" from New York to Naples aboard the **Greek Line's** *TSS Olympia*.

The whole family went in '67 when I was 12. It was the first time I tried champagne and man did I feel it, especially with the way ships 'rolled' in those days. You definitely knew you were at sea back then!

Funny, I remember nothing of the two weeks we spent in Italy. But the sailing remains clear in my mind. I still have the little trophy I won at the costume party. I was a playing card—51 cards short of a full deck.

The cruise came with a 'Greek festival spirit!'



What is your most vivid travel memory?

About 90 minutes north of Venice are the Dolomite Mountains. Cortina is a fancy ski town up there. In the summer, it looks better than the 'Sound of Music' mountains. My family and I spent an afternoon there. At dinner that night, we all said the same thing: we wanted to die, right then and there. It seems counter-intuitive to have this feeling in an unbelievably beautiful setting, right? You should want to live more than ever! None of us have had that feeling since, but it was real. Who knows the psychology behind this?

What was the "Aha" moment that led you into the travel industry?

The "aha" moment was when my father showed me how much money he was making in the travel business.

Where did you go on your honeymoon?

That remains to be seen. Probably Positano or St. Barth's.

What was your favorite trip you took last year and why?

Last year I went to Italy, Malta, Colombia and Iceland. Favorite? Probably Iceland because it's so unusual. Even with sleet pelting your face, it's so idyllic!

Where would you like to go that you have yet to visit?

Right now, the most fascinating place on earth is North Korea.



Perillo poses with travel agents at The Vatican.

Do you always buy a souvenir the first time you visit a destination?

My best souvenirs are photographs.

You can tell us—do you collect magnets from the destinations you've visited?

New refrigerators are made of "non-magnetic stainless steel," so I'm sorry to say the days of destination magnets are over.

What do you do to pass the time on the plane ride to your destination?

Podcasts and movies, especially the podcast "Stuff You Should Know."

Who is your favorite travel companion?

Usually whoever is enjoyable at home will work out well on the road.

If there were one hotel room in the world you could call home the rest of your life, which would it be?

Easy! **The Pierre Hotel** in New York City.

What is the best food you've had on a trip? The strangest?

Hot dog at Wrigley Field in Chicago. The strangest...Cervelli di vitello = Calf brains.

What can't you travel without?

Bose QuietComfort 35 wireless headsets. But bring the wire to plug into your seat's armrest.

Who is the most interesting person you've met while traveling?

Johnny Walker.

Tropical beach or Snowy Mountain?

Beach!

City or countryside?

City!

<https://www.recommend.com/get-inspired/coffee-time/coffee-time-industry-vets-perillo-tours-steve-perillo/>