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BACKGROUND MATERIAL
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Tom & Monica Karnes **OWNERS & CHIEF ROMANCE OFFICERS**

With 25 years of marriage and a combined 45 years in the travel industry, Tom and Monica Karnes know a few things about both romance and travel. It's not too surprising that the high school sweethearts formed LovinAway, a travel agency focusing exclusively on luxury romance travel.

The couple are third-generation owners of LaMacchia Travel – LovinAway's parent company and the agency that Tom's grandfather founded in 1931. They established LovinAway in 2014 to specialize in giving couples their dream destination wedding, honeymoon, destination vow renewal ceremony, anniversary getaway or romantic escape.

When Tom and Monica began dating in high school, Tom was already working at LaMacchia Travel and travel quickly became an important part of their relationship. Thumbing through the brochures highlighting spectacular destinations worldwide made the teenaged Tom realize that a career in travel would allow him to experience an endless variety of cultures, people and sites; that thought still inspires him more than three decades later. Monica's passion for travel is rooted in its ability to help people connect with family, whether traveling with family members, visiting extended family or exploring their family's roots and heritage.

The biggest driving force for both Tom and Monica, however, is the thrill they get from helping create once-in-a-lifetime experiences for their clients. They feel privileged to be part of something as special as a wedding, honeymoon or vow renewal ceremony. They take pride in making planning a trip stress-free for their clients and often being able to offer the "little extras" that make a trip all-the-more memorable.

Tom holds the Certified Travel Counselor designation from The Travel Institute. Recognized as an industry leader, he served on the advisory board for the Travel Leaders Network, the world's largest network of travel agencies, from YEAR to YEAR and created and presented a program titled "Making Being a Travel Agent Cool Again" in conjunction with vacation.com's regional seminars. He is a frequent contributor to TravelPulse.com and, since 2012, has hosted the monthly travel-focused radio program "Happening Q&A" on AM 1050 WLIP in Kenosha, Wisconsin.