

Additional Tributes

Dear Natalie and Miranda,

All of us here are greatly saddened by this news and send our deepest sympathies to you both and the family. Roland was a wonderful person and a great character and I always held him in the highest regard. I have known him since the Time Off days, in fact, Roland was the one that helped me launch my career back in 1988 when we developed TOM for him. I will always remember him fondly for giving me that start in life.

He will be very much missed.
You have our thoughts at this time.
Andrew
Ambrit Ltd
andrew@ambrit.co.uk

Dear Miranda and Natalie,

I never met your father just spoke to him on the telephone a few times over the last 8 years that I have been at Travel Weekly, and off all the people I have spoken to he was by far the most polite and gentle off all.

He was a true gentleman and you are lucky to have such a father.

I am very sorry for your loss.
Kate x
Kate Baldwin, PA to Publishing Director & Sales Director, Travel Weekly
Kate.Baldwin@rbi.co.uk

Dear Natalie and Miranda

I know that I have not had the pleasure to meet with you and just wanted to share my thoughts on reading the news about Roland this week. I received your email from my friend Barbara Smith at Thomas Cook.

It was with great sadness that I read the announcement about Roland this week and I was so sorry to learn of his death. Roland was such a veteran and pioneer of the industry and I so admired his energy for life and passion for the industry. I met Roland some time ago through CIMTIG and I only hope that I can be as dedicated to the industry as he was. He is a hard act to follow.

He will be sorely missed and I know that my colleagues who used to work at Thomas Cook who know him recognize the great contribution that he made to the UK travel industry. He will be admired for his integrity and the amazing relationships that he fostered in the industry. I will especially remember him for his joie de vivre and the twinkle in his eye that he always had.

I was wondering if Roland had a particular charity or cause that he supported that he would like his friends to contribute to in his memory.

My sympathy goes out to you and the family.

Best wishes

Kathryn

Kathryn Bullock, Villas For Travel Ltd

kathrynbullock@btinternet.com

Miranda

When thinking about how I would remember Roland best it would certainly be his love and enthusiasm for France and the french lifestyle-He loved Paris, the bustling cafes and brasseries and always marvelled at the efficiency and friendliness of french waiters- One of his favourite places was the Terminus Nord Brasserie opposite the Gare du Nord where, in the young days of Time Off we stopped for a glass of Chablis and a plate of oysters before catching the train back to London. Roland had exacting standards, it was tough working with him but also immensely enjoyable and fun and I learnt invaluable lessons-least of all how to avoid any establishment with plastic flowers!

I feel very privileged to have been part of the great Time Off adventure and will miss Roland enormously.

Claudine

claudiademire@onetel.com

Dear Miranda,

I am so sad. Even sadder that with the limited time I cannot make his funeral. I loved him like a son and he treated me like one. May he rest in the greatest peace.

I hope you are O.K. and with condolences, I also wish you the very best.

Kindest regards,

Alistair

alistairwhy@hotmail.com

Dear Miranda and Natalie

Your message came as a great shock to me. I've known Roland for many years and always felt he would be around forever. I used to jokingly call him 'Old Roland' because he used to call me 'Young Barbara'. In reality, he was the one who seemed forever young.

He was a very special person, whom I first met as a business colleague when I worked for Thomas Cook, but who became a close personal friend.

Sadly I can't get to London for the funeral - I live in Cornwall. However, I will be thinking about you all. It's a very difficult time, but I'm glad that he slipped away peacefully. In time, I'm sure all our memories will be happy ones.

I have taken the liberty of passing on your message to some of our old Thomas Cook colleagues, whom I'm sure would want to know, so you may get a few messages of sympathy from them as well.

With warm thoughts on a dark day,
Love
Barbara
Barbara Smith
barbarasmith@clara.co.uk

Dear Miranda

I was very sad to hear that Roland passed away and send you my deep sympathy and condolences for your loss.

I want to say again that I was very fond of Roland and had great respect for him. He was very special and his friendship was important to me. I enjoyed his company and telephone conversations with him over many years. I shall miss him.

I had regular telephone conversations with Roland about many things - politics, medicine, health, agriculture, the food industry - and including cooking. He would ask for culinary advice and would also tell me about dishes he had just made. He enjoyed cooking and had good taste. Occasionally he came to my house when I was trying out a recipe and he gave good advice about how to improve it.

With warm regards
Claudia
Claudia Roden
Claudiarod@aol.com

Dear Miranda and Natalie

May I first offer my sincere condolences on the loss of your father. It doesn't need me to tell you what a very special person he was.

I just expected him always to be there and never thought about him passing on. I wonder if you felt the same? I enjoyed only relatively recently one of his healthy lunches in his home and he joined me here for lunch as well. I loved his company and we had many scintillating conversations- not necessarily about travel, although we did have that in common. It is difficult to believe that these lunches will be no more.

He achieved and gave so much through 'Time Off'. I owned and ran 'Billington Travel' in Sevenoaks at the same time and he and I shared much in always wanting the best for our

clients and running our businesses with honesty and integrity and the personal touch they deserved.

I am sure he will be enormously missed by many and he will be very lovingly remembered.

Unfortunately I am not free to join you for the funeral and thanksgiving service, but my thoughts will be with you both in particular and the many others who are likely to be there with you. I would very much like to make a donation to his dearly loved charity and will do that direct with the funeral directors.

With warm regards and my thoughts for you at this time.

Wendy

Wendy Billington

wendy.billington@btinternet.com

Dear Miranda

You don't know me, but I first met Roland when I was CEO of Amex travel in the UK.

I wanted to offer you my heartfelt condolences and share my memories of him with you. He was a true gentleman. Thoughtful, straightforward, professional, fair - and above all principled. Our dinners were a delightful mix of good wine, good food and good conversation. In my career I have met many people with whom I did business who I didn't much care personally. Roland was one of the good guys. I'll miss him a lot and I won't be alone.

Please let me know when the memorial service is taking place. If I am in the UK (I live in San Francisco but travel a lot) I would like to pay my respects.

Best wishes

Christopher

Christopher Rodrigues

CJR@visa.com

I thought, as you are probably now seeing Roland off with so many well wishers, I would simultaneously think of him and remember in writing many of the things I appreciated about him.

SMALL STUFF

Keeping the requisite items ON THE DESK and IN PLAIN VIEW - I am not sure I have ever quite managed to get them in precisely the same position each time...but I remember him for the consistency of having my tools at hand. Eating tapanade and oat cakes - the very first time I had either was in his kitchen. Seeing ceramic tiles of such luminous colours - the very first time I met Mediterranean tiles was in the toilets at TIME OFF (where incidentally we all had OUR VERY OWN little fluffy coloured towels) and my eyes were never the same again, maybe this belongs in BIG STUFF... He loved my handwriting and always said so - that was nice - even in York a year or so ago - more than 25 years after working with him - he

commented on it. Whenever I rang him he ALWAYS knew who I was. Staff bonuses - these were generous and much appreciated - we do it at El Piano

BIG STUFF.

Beauty in the workplace - I have always had it since - always spent time and money ensuring others have it who are in my employ Attention to service - all the hand written notes WITH OUR BEST WISHES FOR A VERY PLEASANT STAY or WITH OUR VERY BEST WISHES (depending on whether it was a honeymoon or not...) he understood, absolutely, that life was in the detail. Now that I work in the restaurant trade I have applied that to what we do - in our business as in his, this is totally the case. He was commercially generous - pleased to be copied and happy to contribute (plastic wallets for example - I still have a stack). Humour - brothel creepers were a constant source of amusement to us with him - as his 'night staff' he would call in on his way out in the evenings and joke with us about many things - his footwear often being among them and of course, being a RAT CATCHER. Trust - he NEVER had a problem handing over his money, keys, business, to us as young people. I think I have done the same with my staff. It is a tremendous gift from older people to younger people - it demonstrates that you find them your equal and worthy - in effect it fosters self esteem, that one thing that you can never learn but only ever subtly acquire...and, without which, a life is immeasurably poorer Courage - I found him an exemplar of the human spirit.

He was always striving, never more than with his GROOVER, to get it right. I believe I always saw the boy in him, the abandoned child, and that same abandoned child in me, as well as the parent in me, cared for that side of him. Hence our long association I suppose.

Thank you RC. Vaya con dios Roland. Godspeed.

Maggot

Collage International

m@collage.co.uk

Hi Miranda

I just had to let you know what a wonderful afternoon I had yesterday remembering Roland. The ceremony was so full of emotion - by that I mean joy, sadness, respect, tears and laughter - a real celebration of his life.

I worked at Time Off for seven years in the 80s, it was my first job after leaving school. I didn't appreciate at the time what a great start it was to my working life. I spent time in reservations, docs and even booked french hotels!

I discovered yesterday that the things I automatically do now, such as - make sure telephone wires are not tangled, cross out and re write NEVER write over the top, always answer the phone after three rings and take the callers name and phone number straight away.....the list goes on and on - my ex colleagues from Time Off do the same!!!!!!!

I am now a Managing Director of two companies (machine embroidery and workwear). I think Roland would have found that rather amusing/unbelievable seeing as I was so scatty and messy in my 20s! He was a huge influence in my life and I didn't fully realise how much until yesterday.

I feel so privileged to have known him and for sharing yesterday with his family and friends.

Thank you so much.

Kind regards

Mandy

info@surreyembroidery.co.uk

Dear Miranda

It was very good to meet you and other members of the family yesterday. Thank you for the moving celebration of Roland's life and for including me among your guests for the reception afterwards.

Roland showed me great kindness when I joined ABTA 12 years ago and we remained firm friends and kept in touch via the Borges'.

I shall miss him dearly and send you and the family my sincere condolences on your loss.

With kind regards

Ian

PS Good to see Guido again after 36 years!

Ian Reynolds

ian.reynolds@blueyonder.co.uk

Hi Miranda

It was lovely to see the memorial web-site you created for Roland. You invited additional memories and tributes so here is mine.

Roland and I did not get off to a good start. He could be temperamental and as a travel agent in the 1970s, I and other colleagues were often treated to acerbic comments either about our company or our clients. So when I became Sales Director of a prestigious regional travel chain in the 1980s, I wouldn't allow the company to actively promote Time Off. I was worried that if we needed Roland's support with a client or with a marketing initiative, how far we received that support would depend on his mood. He was also inclined to be rude to our staff!

At one point, our preferred short-break operator was having consistent problems with quality and service both to us and our clients so we de-listed them. After a discussion with my MD, we decided to replace them with Time Off. I called Roland and explained why we had not favoured Time Off in the past but said that we would regard his company as one of two preferred companies on a six month trial basis. He asked me what commission levels we wanted. I said I was happy with his normal commission rates for the period of the trial but if we proved as productive as we usually were for preferred suppliers, I would expect his top rate thereafter.

It was from that point that Roland and I became firm friends. This was not as you might expect, because I had elevated Time Off but because I had done it without trying to screw

commission out of him before proving our productivity. He saw that as a demonstration of integrity and integrity was a most valuable and admirable trait so far as Roland was concerned.

I left England two years ago to come and live in Melbourne (Australia). For 20 years up until that point, Roland and I met every few months for dinner, often at Pizza on the Park. He was never short of advice and when I told him the chance had come for me to live in Australia he called me a lucky bugger and said that had he been 30 years younger, he would have moved himself. He clearly loved the country and now I can see why. I came back for a wedding in June and Roland met me for a glass of red wine at the Mortimer along with other ITT members.

I will miss our e-mails and his advice. I will miss his values. He wasn't afraid of controversy but he supported those organizations and people to the end who had won his trust. He was an honorable man and he taught me that to be like him in this respect is something to strive for.

Regards
Peter
Peter Holyoake
peterh@bigpond.net.au

Hello dear Miranda,

Yes! I feel somewhat guilty at not contacting you until now, since Roland's truly 'lovely' funeral. I think Roland has got his whip out making me work so very hard now.

I will welcome talking with you Miranda but first must say, you must be very proud to have Roland as a father as I strongly believe he is still very much with us in spirit. Not only was Roland's Humanist funeral so beautiful, which will be long remembered by his many friends and family, R. Castro in Memorium is also 'superb', a word he often used. Somewhat hard of hearing myself I will very much enjoy reading this. I have only just learnt we have things in common. I too spent my early life living in a big house in Dulwich. New laid eggs with chickens running all over the place, my father running out in the road shovelling horse manure from the road to put on his tomatoes, bring back wonderful memories. I had no idea we walked the same paths in Dulwich.

Roland and I go back a long way to Bon Voyage days before he formed Time Off with Jackie and a lot of the staff. I miss Roland very very much. Many early morning 'perky' phone calls "Hello young Sheila it tis I". To be called young at my age only ever came from Roland and it was better than taking a pill in the morning!!! He bit my head off on the Wednesday when I asked him if he was eating. People die from over eating he said implying I did not know what I was talking about. Only a fool would argue with Roland when he is in one of those moods.

One could see very clearly, when he and Alison joined me at the House of Lords for a Travel luncheon in July that he was very frail and deteriorating. I remember saying to Alison, "I do not feel we will have him for much longer and I wanted it to be 'a special day'". I firmly believe he wanted to close the last chapter of his book, and be remembered as he was. He could be a cantankerous old bugger, that enjoyed making 'mincemeat' out of comments and

words, but he was no fool. He knew! He had a brilliant brain. A great person and a very interesting, somewhat complex, character. He was 'his own person' and I was rich in his friendship. Yes! Did I hear someone say 'A small man but a Giant' hear! hear!

Renewed appreciation for everything. Roland would have been really proud last week. It is such a pity we have to go to 'pastures new' before we truly never know how much we are loved. I bought the Gate Cook book. Great food. A touch of 'giant' Castro is rubbing off on me. I do hope we can still celebrate his memory on the 6th January next year, in true 'Champagne Castro style'.

Big hug! chin up! and very best wishes Miranda.

Sheila

Sheila Gray

sheila@grayrecruit.co.uk

15 September 2006

Dear Castro Family

I and my wife, Chisne and our two daughters, Alix, now in Auckland, and Elizabeth, in Sydney, were immensely saddened by today's thoughtful telephone call to learn that Roland's splendid life's journey has ended. We send you all our loving thoughts with our deep sympathy.

How well I remember that first meeting with Roland in Cairo in 1940. My great friend, Dan Pierce, and I as a couple of civilians turned soldier with the New Zealand Forces used to escape the Army routine on Saturday afternoons - before we were thrown into battle - by listening to recordings of Beethoven and Mozart played on an ancient horn gramophone at the American University. There we sat behind a handsome, auburn haired youth to whom we talked during the intervals and with whom we struck an immediate accord.

That led, after the first three meetings, to an invitation to visit the beautiful family home on Gexira Island. the memory of the lovely family life of the Castros during those war years has remained vividly in my mind - long after the horrors of battle have receded ...

I shall never forget that first firm handshake with Roland when I felt, also, the integrity that literally shone through his eyes from the innermost depths of his being. That was the beginning of a respect which grew with the years - a respect which was later shared by my family whenever we saw Roland on our many travels to London.

It is my hope that when the days of immediate sorrow are over the family will find consolation in the great pride you must feel in Roland's achievements and the high principles for which he stood and by which he lived. Just as I will find consolation in the fact that I was proud to be his friend.

With much love to you all,

Max Gunn

Max and Chisne Gunn

A/463 Remuera Road

Auckland 1005, New Zealand