

Orange Coast

THE MAGAZINE of ORANGE COUNTY



KICKASS WOMEN.

PLUS: A COOL ENCLAVE IN SANTA ANA
& O.C.'S CAN'T-MISS EVENTS

Dame Connie Spenuzza

Author and Philanthropist

Spenuzza is an award-winning author with 13 published books—proceeds from the sales of which are donated to fight human trafficking. Born in Ecuador, she was raised in both California and France. She speaks four languages and has visited 128 countries.

What characteristics do you feel helped you succeed?

→ Resilience forged my path, optimism lit the way, and discipline anchored my dreams. Creativity, no innate gift, blooms with courage—risks embraced, failures transformed. Its journey demands dedication, bending the rules yet honoring the craft. Success whispered through persistence: a melody only heard by those who dare to create, to endure.

What is one habit or routine that helped you become successful in your career?

→ A goal-oriented mindset guides my success, turning aspirations into milestones. Clear objectives, disciplined routines, and commitment drive momentum. Vision, structure, and perseverance transform dreams into reality, making each of my days a purposeful step and a testament to the power of intention.

What was the best advice you received when you were first starting out?

→ Forty years ago, I stood before Toni Morrison, sharing my dream—a book on Latin American art theft and human trafficking. Her words, resonant and eternal: “If there’s a book you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” She kindled my purpose, unyielding.

“Vision, structure, and perseverance transform dreams into reality...”



Pam Waitt

President of OC Restaurant Association Inc. and Founder of TacoTuesday.com, OC Restaurant Week, and the Pacific Wine & Food Classic

Waitt started the OC Restaurant Association Inc. in 2007, putting a spotlight on the county's robust dining scene and organizing fantastic culinary events year after year such as the ever-popular OC Restaurant Week.

What was the worst advice you received?

→ I was once told to play it safe and avoid risks. I've learned that when people tell you what you can't do, they're often revealing their own limits, not yours. True growth comes from taking bold steps outside your comfort zone.

What characteristics do you feel helped you succeed?

→ Curiosity has been a driving force in my success. It fuels my desire to learn, adapt, and grow, opening doors to opportunities I may have otherwise missed. Combined with resilience to face challenges and authenticity to build meaningful connections, curiosity keeps me inspired and pushes me to reach new heights.

What moments in your career have had the most significant impact on who you are today?

→ The moments that have impacted me most are the messages we receive from people sharing how much they've enjoyed OC Restaurant Week or our events. Knowing we've helped create meaningful memories gathered around a table is deeply fulfilling and inspires everything I do. **OC**

“Curiosity has been a driving force in my success. It fuels my desire to learn, adapt, and grow...”

Gina Maier Vincent

Speaker, Author, and Founder of Exquisitely Aligned—Designing Magnificent Futures

Maier Vincent's passion is inspiring and guiding people to create positive change in their lives as a visionary thought leader and master motivator. She recently published a book, "Exquisitely Aligned: A Pocket Guide to Design Your Magnificent Future."

What would you tell your younger self, knowing what you know now?

→ Hold tight to your vision—it's your compass through the bumps ahead. Trust that every twist and turn places you exactly where you're meant to be. Your journey begins with caring for your family and then expands to empowering the masses. Stay true, stay grounded, and believe in your unique path.

What have you learned in terms of how to navigate challenges?

→ I've faced challenges that, at times, felt impossible to survive. Each one, however, became a defining moment that taught me the power of resilience, clarity, and courage. My story isn't just about surviving—it's about what I've learned along the way that can help those who are "underliving" thrive.

What moments in your career have had the most significant impact on who you are today?

→ A mentor challenged me to write articles, and though it wasn't my thing, I leaned in. Drawing from my podcast, I discovered I had plenty to say. Now, I contribute to three Orange County magazines and have published my first book—proof that growth thrives outside your comfort zone.



GINA MAIER VINCENT'S WARDROBE BY INDIA KALISI, CLIENT ADVISOR-STYLIST AT SAKS FIFTH AVENUE, SOUTH COAST PLAZA