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Leisure travelers are doing less of the things that characterized the economic hardship of recent years and are now adopting more behaviors that confirm the importance of travel in their emerging lifestyles, according to the new MMGY Global/Harrison Group 2012 Portrait of American Travelers, which surveys a nationally representative survey of 2,527 U.S. households. The annual survey reveals that while the average number of overnight leisure trips taken during the past year has remained essentially unchanged versus the previous year, the motivations underlying these getaways are evolving. “Trading down,” “staycations” and other cost-conscious travel behaviors that emerged during the Great Recession have waned, and the new findings bode well for a boost in 2013 travel spending thanks to a renewed interest in quality experiences that Americans deem “worth it.”
According to the MMGY Global/Harrison Group 2012 Portrait of American Travelers today’s travelers place a high value on the emotional power of travel. More than nine in 10 travelers agree, "The memories I get from my vacations make the trip worth it.” This and other emotional connections echo throughout the study, suggesting this sentiment is the primary reason for renewed interest in travel by consumers who endured years of having less money and time to do so.

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