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La Dolce Vita Retreats Mixes Beautiful Locales With Enriching Educational Workshops to Create a Transformative Travel Experience

President Janice Briggs Moves From Hospital Philanthropy to Luxury Travel With a Twist to Create a Company Unlike Any Other

Irvine, CA (Nov. 24, 2008) – After years of working with major donors to some of the best and most prestigious hospitals in Southern California, Janice Briggs has married two of her passions – travel and experiential learning – to create a company that offers a series of retreats for women that are beyond compare.

La Dolce Vita Retreats mixes five-star accommodations with wellness seminars, cooking, fitness, perfume creation, yoga and other classes to create once-in-a-lifetime travel experiences at some of the most exotic locales in Europe and the Bahamas. Travelers will spend six days enjoying everything from meditation classes and nature walks to sailboat regattas and sunset cruises aboard private yachts. Each retreat is a holistic experience, geared toward creating wellness of mind, body and spirit.

Women who embark on a journey of enrichment with La Dolce Vita Retreats will be treated to unparalleled luxury. In Cote d'Azur, France, guests will stay in junior suites at a magnificent chateau that offers a panoramic view of the Mediterranean. The esteemed Chateau Saint-Martin & Spa was built on the ruins of an ancient Templar Commanderie and features a 32-acre park with a poetic garden, two clay tennis courts and a spectacular infinity pool. In Portofino, Italy, guests will find respite in the spectacular Hotel Splendido, a former monastery where gardens run down the slopes beneath the hotel to the sea and bushes of lavender and wild herbs grow thickly under ancient olive trees and tangles of bougainvillea.

The business is the realization of a lifelong dream for Briggs, an Irvine resident who also has launched a philanthropic effort, La Dolce Vita Women's Fund. La Dolce Vita Retreats will donate 5 percent of its profits to Karuna-Shechen, a charitable association that works in Nepal, Tibet and India. Karuna-Shechen provides education, medical and social services, care for the elderly, and assistance to individuals in need. The organization has built more than 30 humanitarian projects in its target area.

The company is currently accepting reservations for six retreats that will be offered next year, beginning with a March 23-28 excursion to the Cote d'Azur. Prices for the spring series of retreats range from \$7,850 to \$15,900 per person, excluding airfare. The other destinations in the 2009 season are Portofino, Amalfi Coast, Lake Maggiore, Tuscany (Florence), all in Italy, and a mother and daughter retreat on Harbour Island in the Bahamas. Each retreat includes presentations by a revolving guest faculty who specialize in facilitating personal growth, enhancing health and fitness and understanding nutrition and integrative medicine. Briggs, a professional life coach, also conducts workshops of her own that use art visioning projects to integrate her coaching tools with hands-on creative activities.

“This is for the woman who is looking for more than a spa experience,” Briggs said. “A La Dolce Vita Retreat is for somebody who wants to nourish her mind, body and spirit, and who wants to pursue total wellness.”

Briggs is confident the time is right for such a unique travel opportunity, despite current economic conditions. A La Dolce Vita Retreat is not for everyone, and women who comprise her clientele typically occupy an economic stratum where fluctuations in the economy are not going to affect their decisions about when and where to travel.

“When times are like this, you want to invest in yourself,” Briggs said. “This is a way to really focus on that. We need that more in hard times than in easy times.”

The retreats, which will nurture women, also make for a unique present, she said.

“Giving a gift like this in such times will be much more appreciated than another bauble,” Briggs said.

Americans as a whole are expected to continue traveling this season despite an uncertain economic climate. Leisure travel is expected to remain stable this year, according to a recent study by the Travel Industry Association, a non-profit organization that represents the \$740 billion travel industry.

Leisure travel is expected to dip only 0.2 percent this year, compared to business travel, which is expected to drop 3.7 percent in 2008, according to a study conducted recently by the organization's research arm. Nearly half of respondents said they planned to make no changes at all to their travel plans, regardless of the state of the economy.

About La Dolce Vita Retreats

La Dolce Vita Retreats provides women with international travel opportunities that combine experiential learning and creative self-expression to enhance the mind, body and spirit. These journeys of enrichment to European destinations and other exquisite locales provide nurturing and supportive environments for celebrating the camaraderie of women. The opportunity to relax while also expanding one's horizons makes for the experience of a lifetime. Learn more at www.ladolcevitaretreats.com