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CONTACT: Molly Blaisdell – (925) 300-7252/molly@hooklineandthinker.com

Terry MacRae Biography: Building the Largest Dining and Charter Cruise Company in North America

Running a cruise and event company wasn't exactly the course Terry MacRae expected to take when he studied mechanical engineering at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. But with a little bit of luck and a lot of serendipity, he has taken what is now Hornblower Cruises & Events from a two-yacht charter company in Berkeley, Calif., to a fleet of 70 sightseeing and dinner cruise boats in nearly a dozen cities.

His journey was, to say the least, rather unique. After launching his career as an environmental engineer, MacRae rose through the ranks of Industrial Clean Air and later Ecolaire Systems, Inc., which acquired it.

As Ecolaire's vice president of sales, MacRae was always on the lookout for interesting venues in which to entertain clients. That's when he discovered Hornblower Tours and liked what he saw. After the company went on the market, he and a partner bought it, and MacRae set his sights in a new direction.

MacRae eventually bought out his partner and over the past three decades built Hornblower, boat by boat, into the largest dining and charter cruise company in North America. As his company dramatically grew its fleet and number of employees, its focus expanded from chartering private yachts for corporate events to operating cruises as a setting for high-school proms, weddings, gala fundraisers, dances, film shoots and private parties of all sizes and types.

During Hornblower's journey from a small time operator to a major cruise and events company, MacRae has worked hard to ensure that its mission remained the same: to deliver exceptional dining, entertainment and cruise experiences with an emphasis on safety, customer service and teamwork.

He steered the company's course as it expanded from two boats cruising out of the Berkeley marina to operate in six Northern California and Southern California locations, as well New York City; Corpus Christi, Texas; and its latest destination, Niagara Falls. Among its current fleet is the 127-passenger *Wild Goose*, a former minesweeper that belonged to actor John Wayne; the 2,200 passenger San Francisco Belle, which ranks as the largest dining yacht on the West Coast; and the next-generation Hornblower Hybrid vessels, of which the company now operates a total of four of the nation's only hybrid ferries.

Hornblower Cruises & Events is the largest dining and charter cruise company in America. In 2006, Hornblower subsidiary Alcatraz Cruises won a 10-year National Park Service concession, which makes it the exclusive operator of tours to San Francisco Bay's Alcatraz Island.

In 2008, another Hornblower subsidiary, Statue Cruises, was awarded a second National Park Service concession, this one to operate the ferry tours to the Statue of Liberty and the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, both located in the middle of New York Harbor.

Last year, Hornblower Cruises & Events reached another milestone when it won a competitive bidding process for a 30-year contract with the Province of Ontario and the Niagara Parks Commission to be the Niagara Falls Gorge tour operator. Hornblower Niagara Cruises began operating in May of 2014.

While expanding its fleet and territory, MacRae never lost sight of the importance of sustainability. Perhaps it's his background as an environmental engineer that inspired him, but he has made environmental protection and preservation a top priority.

The company's Respect Our Planet program includes initiatives designed to reduce its environmental impact and educate the public, encouraging them to take action in whatever way they can. Hornblower is also pioneering efforts to protect marine life, with one of its projects participating in an EPA-funded study of copper-free paints.

While it may take much more work to make the world and its waters more sustainable, it's efforts like these that will continue to distinguish MacRae. And as a forward-thinking leader whose innovations have made Hornblower the leader in its field, MacRae will ensure the company's continued growth and success for many years to come.

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Hornblower Cruises & Events has been the leading charter yacht and public dining cruise operator headquartered in California for over 32 years. The company operates over 70 vessels, including the three largest dining yachts on the West Coast, and has ports in San Francisco, Berkeley, Sacramento, Long Beach, Newport Beach, Marina del Rey, San Diego, and New York City. Two Hornblower subsidiary businesses, Alcatraz Cruises and Statue Cruises, are National Park Service ferry concessioners to Alcatraz Island and the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, respectively. In 2014, Hornblower began operating the third subsidiary, Hornblower Niagara Cruises, out of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. For more information visit: www.hornblower.com/pressroom

Alcatraz Cruises is the National Park Service concessioner of ferry service to Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. Alcatraz Cruises hosts nearly 1.5 million visitors annually. Alcatraz Cruises designed, built and operates the first hybrid ferry in the United States. The Hornblower Hybrid's revolutionary design has reduced fuel consumption by 75% and has already begun to be implemented in other parts of the country. For more information visit: www.alcatrazcruises.com/pressroom.