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**For immediate release**

**Heritage Line poised to create upscale cruising benchmark with launch of luxury Mekong riverboat in 2009**

Heralding what it describes as a new era for first-class cruise travel in Indochina, Heritage Line has today unveiled its plans to launch and operate one of the most luxurious boutique cruise vessels ever seen in the region by mid 2009 – the *MV Jayavarman*.

Operated by Ho Chi Minh-based Heritage Lines and part of a project estimated in excess of USD4 million, the 58-metre deluxe river boat has been conceived in what the company describes as a fusion of traditional eastern shipbuilding craft and avant-garde French colonial design overlaid with state of the art technology.

The *MV Jayavarman* will make its maiden voyage sailing the Mekong River from Ho Chi Minh via Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, the jump off point for Angkor Wat, in mid-June 2009.

Easily boasting the most spacious cabins of any vessel currently plying the Mekong, each of the *MV Jayavarman*'s 27 staterooms comes complete with private balcony.

Accommodation ranges from two themed Royal Junior Suite (26m<sup>2</sup>) to 11 Deluxe standard 'Indochina-style' cabins (24m<sup>2</sup>) and 14 Superior standard (21m<sup>2</sup>), each of which will be themed individually.

The ship's spacious facilities also include a spa, a spacious restaurant serving eastern and western cuisine, two expansive lounges, a shop and a library spread over 800 m<sup>2</sup> on a total five decks.

Heritage Line Managing Director, Thomas Peter said while great pains had been gone to ensure the *MV Jayavarman* would deliver the highest levels of service, the same process had also gone into the selection of the vessel's 38-strong handpicked local and internationally recruited management team.

Following her maiden voyage *MV Jayavarman* will commence operation of a medley of Mekong Delta cruise itineraries structured over two, three, four, five and eight days.

These include an eight-day 'The lost civilization' itinerary from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap, a five day 'Serenity cruise' linking Phnom Penh with Siem Reap and a four-day 'Pearl of the Orient' program offering passage between Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh.

Mr Peter said all of the itineraries have been created to offer *MV Jayavarman*'s passengers with an extraordinary opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the delta's unique environment with several 'hands-on' cultural activities.

These include visits to floating markets, bicycle rides to remote villages and fishing communities and getting involved with local humanitarian projects.

Passengers can even attend a cooking school run by a Vietnamese family.

"This cruise is unique in the sense that our guests are given the chance of experience both pure luxury on-board as well as chance to be a part of the local culture," Mr Peter said.

"It is the experience and interaction with locals that will be unforgettable."

*MV Jayavarman* is the first of two vessels the company plans to have operating between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap by 2010.

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