\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

***First new-generation Vantage ship delivered***

*The 135m-long cruise ship River Discovery II has left Shipyard De Hoop’s harbour and is on its way to Amsterdam, where, on Sunday, 18 March 2012, the ship will be officially christened. The River Discovery II is the first in a series of four cruise ships that Shipyard De Hoop is building for US tour operator Vantage Deluxe World Travel.*

***New generation of cruise ships***

Eleven years ago, Shipyard De Hoop built its first ship for Vantage. The River Discovery II is the first in a series of new-generation ships. These ships have a classic retro look but feature the very latest technologies. Never before has De Hoop designed a 135m ship for this customer, the maximum length allowed by EU regulations. The second ship, ms River Splendor, also 135m long, is currently under construction on the slipway and will be delivered in early 2013. For the third ship, ms River Venture (110m), the preparatory work is in progress. This ship will be delivered in the course of 2013. The production of the fourth ship, also 135m, will be started soon.

***Innovations***

The new-generation Vantage ships have many innovative features:

1. Efficient propulsion system: The vessels are propelled by two Caterpillar C32 engines in combination with Veth rudder propellers (2x745kW). This allows the ships to be classified as “green ships”, with low emissions (Tier 2).
2. Energy savings: The entire ship is equipped with LED lighting. With some 2,600 lights using 3W instead of 445W, this results in enormous energy savings.
3. Special hull shape: The special hull shape allows a minimum draught of 1.45m. This means that even in shallow water, Vantage ships can keep going when others cannot. In addition, Vantage ships can reach the desired cruising speed of 22km/h using relatively little power, which saves a considerable amount of fuel. Moreover, the low resistance and smart construction make for fewer vibrations and less noise, resulting in more comfort for passengers.
4. New systems: A high-tech audio system has been installed in the public areas of the ships. In addition, entertainment-on-demand (film, video and internet) and a GPS tracking system are available in the cabins.
5. New ceiling design: Passenger ships are usually fitted with system ceilings (separate tiles) and/or fixed plaster ceilings. Plaster ceilings are generally considered more attractive, but have the disadvantage that the wiring and piping above the ceiling are only accessible by breaking it open. What’s more, these ceilings are very heavy. A system ceiling does not have these disadvantages, but is regarded as old-fashioned. De Hoop developed a framework combined with a new type of stretch ceiling, bringing together the advantages of the two types of ceiling.
6. User-friendly interior: The high-quality interior is (and will continue to be) low-maintenance. This means that the ship-owner and the crew can spend more time entertaining their guests.
7. Hydraulic sliding roof: At the back of the ship, above the bar and the conservatory, there is a hydraulic sliding roof that can be fully opened and closed within three minutes. The ship therefore always has plenty of outside space, including on routes where passengers are not allowed on the 1,300m2 top deck due to low bridges.

**Vantage Deluxe World Travel**

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2013, Vantage Deluxe World Travel is a world renowned tour operator known for delivering the best value in deluxe travel - guaranteed. River cruises in Europe are among Vantage's most popular programs, and the company owns a fleet of luxurious river cruise ships that sail the Rhine, Danube, Main, Moselle, Saone and Rhone rivers in addition to exclusively chartering a number of others. Vantage’s Memorable Journeys include upscale escorted tours to a variety of destinations in North and South America, Africa, Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia, and the South Pacific. Vantage travel programs offer the industry’s most comprehensive sightseeing journeys making guests feel like locals instead of tourists and turning a vacation into a trip of a lifetime. Vantage provides quality travel experiences and services that exceed the expectations of customers. For more information on current travel programs, please visit <http://www.vantagetravel.com/>.

***Shipyard De Hoop***

Shipyard De Hoop is a Dutch designer and builder of custom-built vessels. These include both sea-going vessels and those for inland waterways. Designing and building a completely new ship calls for an innovative and creative approach – and a good nose for the latest developments and possibilities. This is what sets De Hoop apart from the competition. Shipyard De Hoop’s order book is well-filled, and the company has grown substantially in recent years. De Hoop operates from two yards: De Hoop Lobith in the east of the Netherlands (10.5 hectares and 130 staff) and De Hoop Foxhol in the north of the country (2.5 hectares and 65 staff). The yard has three slipways, the largest of which measures 200m x 60m. De Hoop has its own engineering department as well as in-house expertise in all the disciplines required to build a complete vessel. This means that De Hoop is able to offer rapid delivery and a high degree of flexibility and quality.

*Shipyard De Hoop, ship designers & builders since 1889*

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