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Media Release

"A Touch of Venice"

Immediate Release

September 19, 2002

Ottawa --- Miss Canada International, Lynsey Bennett, and Father Dominic Fiore from St. Anthony's Church to launch and bless La Notte d'Oro (the 'Golden Night') on Friday, September 20th, 2002, 10:30 am at the National Arts Centre's Le Café, 53 Elgin Street, Confederation Square.

Federicos Gondolas Inc. invites you to come and experience "*A Touch of Venice*" on the Rideau Canal.

Among the well known persons attending the official launch of Ottawa's and Canada's first Gondola will be Lynsey Bennett, Miss Canada International, and Father Dominic Fiore, who will bless La Notte d'Oro for a long and distinguished life, and Councillor Clive Doucet .



**Lynsey Bennett
Miss Canada International**



The traditional wooden Gondola was built for Federicos Gondolas by Master Builder, Doug Smith-Ginter, out of Newport Beach, California (<http://www.gondola.com/>). Brought to Ottawa last week in a private transport truck direct from the boat builder, the one tonne La Notte d'Oro was gingerly unloaded from its specially-built cradle by Corel Centre staff and placed gently on the boat trailer for its short remaining journey to its berth at the Dows Lake Pavilion.

Darcy McRae, recent graduate from the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University and President and Chief Gondolier of Federicos Gondolas Inc. said: "I believe that Ottawa needs more cool things to do and especially more romantic things for people to do. I noticed that these types of businesses are doing very well in places like Newport Beach, Irving, Las Vegas and elsewhere, so I decided to give it a try here. I mean what does Ottawa have? We have beautiful waterways and a Casino in Gatineau too."

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“A Touch of Venice”

Mr. McRae and his family and friends searched for the highest quality boat builder for four months before settling on Greg Mohr’s shipyard. “Darcy was a great client for us and our first in Canada. We only build one boat at a time and we’re pretty choosy about where our boats go. We had Darcy and his fiancé down here to Newport Beach during the summer for four days of training and Darcy took to it right away,” Mr. Mohr said.

“It was past midnight, but Princess Diana had only one thing on her mind: gondolas. As her personal protection officer, Inspector Ken Wharfe had to fulfill such whims without compromising the princess's security. ‘We did what people do in Venice -- but at 12:30 at night,’ he says of the 1990 outing. Then ‘we walked across St. Mark's Square, dancing in the rain.’ Diana, he recalls, was ecstatic. She said: ‘If I could have at least one of these every year, it would make everything worth living.’ It was an amazing experience.”

From *Diana: Closely Guarded Secret* by Ken Warfe with Robert Jobson, published by Michael O'Mara Books.

La Notte d’Oro is available for charter in Ottawa until October 15th, 2002. After that, the boat will travel to Miami for the winter before returning to Ottawa for the 2003 Season.

Federicos is offering \$35 off for all charters this introductory Fall Colours Season—they begin at \$55 for a couple and include complimentary (non-alcoholic) champagne and chocolates, served on a silver platter and from a silver vase. Children ride free.

“Ottawa has some of the most beautiful waterways in the world and sunset Charters are spectacular. I am glad to be a spokesperson for Federicos Gondolas—it’s an opportunity to showcase my home town and to help Darcy, a fellow Carleton student, create another reason for people to come visit our great City,” said Lynsey Bennett. The boat has a canopy and operates rain or shine.

“My family and I have been focused on building a bigger and better community here in Ottawa for many decades. We recently completed the expansion of the Southway Inn and we as a family and as a business want to support new start-ups in our city. Southway Inn is proud to sponsor the first gondola in Ottawa and in Canada.” Steve Zlepnig General Manager Southway Inn.

Couples will experience the traditions and rituals of Gondolas from centuries past. The Neo-Venetian gondolas are reminiscent of a horse-drawn carriage; they are powered by twin silent, environmentally-friendly electric motors with an elegant and distinctive interior. La Notte d’Oro can seat up to ten persons. Federicos Gondolas offers the most romantic water charter that anyone will ever experience.

Join us for “A Touch of Venice”. For more information, contact Darcy McRae, President and Chief Gondolier: darcv@gondolas.ca or 613.261.7232 cell.

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