

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Hornblower UK Holdings Ltd Acquires City Cruises**

**31 October 2019 London:** City Cruises, the largest tour boat operator on the River Thames announced today that the company has been acquired by Hornblower UK Holdings Ltd, an American dining and excursion cruise operator based out of San Francisco.

The sale of City Cruises, formerly owned by Gary and Rita Beckwith OBE, chairman and CEO respectively, will mean greater investment opportunities for the brand in 2020 and beyond. All staff will be retained and Gary and Rita will stay on as consultants for several months to assist with the transition.

Hornblower has been operating for 35 years in the US and runs popular river cruises, harbour cruises, whale watching trips and ferries throughout North America including iconic trips to Alcatraz in San Francisco, The Statue of Liberty in New York and Niagara Falls in Canada. They are the largest river and harbour cruising company in the US.

Following on from their first purchase, Fuel Barge Freddy, in 1976, Gary and Rita ventured into pleasure cruises on the River Thames in 1985, operating to Kew and Hampton court with their first boat, The King. This was followed by the acquisition of a company and two boats operating to Tower Pier in 1988. City Cruises was founded in 1996 and now comprises the operation on the River Thames, City Cruises York, City Cruises Poole, ThamesJet and R.S Hispaniola.

Over the last 34 years, founders Gary and Rita Beckwith built up the company's fleet to be the largest river cruise operator on the River Thames and the couple are widely acknowledged in the tourism industry as pioneers championing domestic tourism. Last year they entered The British Travel and Hospitality Hall of Fame.

Gary Beckwith commented, "We believe the sale of City Cruises to the Hornblower Family of Brands will take the brand to the next level of success. We have always been at the forefront of change and believe our growth and success over the years is testament to our commitment to embracing innovation, constantly investing in our vessels and our customer experiences, and our dedication to providing outstanding customer service every day of the year. We have been honoured to be at the helm of City Cruises and believe the business we started will further flourish and grow under the new ownership of Hornblower."

Terry MacRae, CEO of the Hornblower parent in the US commented, “We are incredibly excited to acquire City Cruises which we believe to be the best leisure cruise operator in Europe today. We have long had the ambition to enter the European market and it makes perfect sense to start our journey in one of the most iconic cities in the world.

Under the expert stewardship of Gary and Rita Beckwith, City Cruises has earned an enviable reputation and we are honoured to build on their legacy in 2020 and beyond.”

**Note to Editors:**

For more information please contact Sarah Long at [citycruises@finnpartners.com](mailto:citycruises@finnpartners.com) or call 0207 326 9880 / PR@timeout.com

**About City Cruises**

City Cruises plc is the leading operator of passenger services on the River Thames, carrying in excess of three million passengers annually on our extensive sightseeing, entertainment and charter services. 2016 saw customer satisfaction levels at an all-time high with over 90% customers very likely or rather likely to sail with City Cruises again. The company’s Net Promoter Score sits at 9.4 out of 10. City Cruises has been in operation since 1985. It has a fleet of 24 river vessels, operating on the Thames and river Ouse in York as sightseeing boats and in Poole as a coastal cruise operation. Visit: [www.citycruises.com](http://www.citycruises.com), [www.thamesjet.com](http://www.thamesjet.com), [www.citycruisesyork.com](http://www.citycruisesyork.com) and [www.citycruisespoole.com](http://www.citycruisespoole.com).

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