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INTEREST IN EXOTIC CRUISES SURGES

Study from *Luxury Cruise News* Also Reveals Cruisers Intend to Spend More and Book Farther in Advance

CHICAGO (November 16, 2006) — Exotic cruise destinations such as the Arctic, Australia, the Baltic, Antarctica and the Orient have all seen a surge in popularity within the last year. This is according to a recent survey of 4,205 travel enthusiasts.

Of those surveyed, all subscribers to *Luxury Cruise News*, a popular e-newsletter published by Thomas, Townsend & Kent, 53.8% cited they're actively planning a cruise vacation. According to the national survey, conducted with market intelligence firm BIGresearch, the number of people planning cruises to the Orient has risen 81% since last year at this time. Other destinations that can expect to see more cruise business in 2007 are Australia/New Zealand (45% increase), the Baltic (37% increase), and the South Pacific with a 30% increase over last year.

The more traditional cruise destinations that have seen decreased interest are Mexico with survey results pointing to a 19% decline since last year's survey and the Caribbean with a 12% decline. Alaska is also down by 7.5%.

The rise in more exotic cruise vacations is due in part to the level of cruise experience. 28.6% of survey respondents stated they've taken seven or more cruises vs. 18.5% last year.

"The good news for the industry is that cruisers are incredibly loyal to cruising **but** destination is the main driver to rebook," said Roy Weiss, publisher of *Luxury Cruise News*. "Lines that offer diverse destinations have the opportunity to increase share among this very profitable segment," he added.

When survey respondents were asked how much they intend to spend on their upcoming cruise vacations, 31.6% stated they're budgeting over \$5,000 for their trip – a 51% increase over last year. They're also booking farther out – cruisers booking three months or more in advance has risen 16%.

Individuals interested in receiving a complimentary report on the findings of this recent study can request the information at the TTK website, www.thomastownsendandkent.com.

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