



For Immediate Release

Have a whale of a time with Necker Belle's new whale watching charters

23 June 2011 – In February and March 2012, [Necker Belle](#) will be introducing whale watching charters in the Silver Bank situated approximately 100km north of the town of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic and 138km southeast of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

During the winter months the North Atlantic Humpback whale starts a long annual migration from north to south. The exact route they take can vary, but one area they're sure to visit is the Silver Bank, now famous as a breeding and calving zone for the whales, attracting more humpback whales per year than anywhere else on earth with 5-7,000 each season.

With it being their mating season, guests will undoubtedly get to see some amazing action while they're performing elaborate courtship rituals humpback whales spend a lot of time on the surface, often as a group of males strutting their stuff as they try to impress the females. This behaviour often turns to aggression as the whales ram and flop over each other to get the best position.

In collaboration with Aquatic Adventures led by expert Tom Conlin, from the 16th February - 25th March 2012, Necker Belle will be offering guests the opportunity to spend 2.5 days of their weekly charter watching the whales. However, they don't just get to watch from the deck of Necker Belle as they'll have the opportunity to get into the water – known as a soft in-water encounter – to get even closer to these magnificent creatures. The contact will be passive floating in snorkelling gear allowing the whales to develop an interest and approach as they feel comfortable.

In preparation for this fascinating and rare opportunity, guests will be provided with a presentation and video footage of whales in action highlighting whale behaviour and anatomy.

Sir Richard Branson commented: "I am so excited that we're able to offer this unique experience to guests chartering Necker Belle. These world-renowned whales are truly fascinating creatures and I have already put my name down to experience this amazing opportunity!"

The weekly charter rate for these unique whale watching itineraries is US\$130,000* plus APA, which includes accommodation onboard Necker Belle, a dedicated crew and whale watching.

Necker Belle, is a magnificent 32 metre catamaran sailing tailor-made itineraries year round. With spacious common areas and beautifully appointed cabins with en-suites, Necker Belle is perfectly designed for fun and relaxation.

For further information, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- An advance provisioning allowance (APA) equivalent to approximately 25% of the weekly rate will be charged in addition to the weekly rate to cover the operating expenses of the charter such as fuel, food, port fees, harbour dues, customs, water and electricity, personal laundry, all provisions, wines, beers, spirits, soft drinks and consumables for your party. You're welcome to view the APA tally onboard at any time and when your cruise comes to an end, the captain will work out if you owe us, or we owe you!
- This offer is subject to availability and set arrival and departure dates will apply
- All our normal terms and conditions apply

Virgin Limited Edition is an award-winning collection of unique retreats, chosen for their beautiful locations and magnificent surroundings; each offers a sense of fun, style, luxury and exceptional personal service. The group includes Necker Island in the Caribbean's British Virgin Islands, Ulusaba Private Game Reserve in South Africa, The Roof Gardens and Babylon Restaurant in London; Kasbah Tamadot in Morocco, The Lodge in Verbier, Necker Belle, a 105 foot luxury catamaran and Necker Nymph, a three man aero submarine.

Virgin Limited Edition aims to make a credible contribution towards creating a sustainable economy and to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

For bookings please call 0800 716 919 (toll free) or +44 (0) 208 600 0430 alternatively visit www.virginlimitededition.com for more details.

Aquatic Adventures:

Tom Conlin, founder of Aquatic Adventures, was the first operator to run a "Whales of the Silver Bank" expedition. He has 21 years experience over a 216-week time frame working whales on the Silver Bank. Coupled within these 21 years of understanding behaviours and movement of the "Whales of the Silver Bank" comes experience, knowledge and interaction with dozens of various marine mammals in different locations around the world. With 83 additional weeks working with dolphins, sperm whales, sharks and 25 various cetaceans throughout his 21 years; his experiences and knowledge base combined, makes the Aquatic Adventures Team leaders in the field of interacting with humpback whales on the Silver Bank.

www.aquaticadventures.com