

# **le boat**

## Who's on board?

### **LE BOAT TO LAUNCH FIRST NORTH AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN 2018 WITH BASE IN CANADA SERVING ONTARIO'S RIDEAU CANAL, A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

#### **CA\$16 Million Investment Will Feature Le Boat's Newest, State-of-the-Art Horizon Cruisers**

**Clearwater, FL (December 1, 2016)** – Le Boat, Europe's largest self-drive boating company, is poised to become a global brand with the launch of the company's first North American base of operations in 2018 on Ontario's historic Rideau Canal. The Rideau Canal, which opened in 1832, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a Canadian National Historic Site as well as a Canadian Heritage river. It is 202km (125 miles) long with 47 locks and is the oldest continuously operating canal in North America.

Le Boat, which has significant experience in launching new destinations, bases and fleet, will be investing CA\$16 million in Le Boat base infrastructure that includes the length of the canal from Ottawa to Kingston. It will open in the picturesque town of Smiths Falls, "Heart of the Rideau Canal," with a fleet of 16 state-of-the-art Horizon cruisers, which are especially designed to meet Ontario maritime and Le Boat customer requirements. The fleet will expand to at least 32 cruises over the next five years. Booking will begin in spring 2017, with the boating season officially launching in May 2018 and running through October every year.

The new Le Boat base on the Rideau Canal is expected to attract thousands of vacationers of all ages from the U.S., Canada, Germany, France and many other locations around the world, and contribute millions of dollars to the local economy through tourism, job growth, and supply chain support. Le Boat's international presence and extensive marketing initiatives and industry partnerships will also help to enhance the Rideau Canal's brand on the global market.

"We are extremely excited about establishing our footprint in North America, and especially pleased to be launching our new venture in the beautiful province of Ontario, Canada," said Cheryl Brown, Managing Director at Le Boat. "The Rideau Canal is a vacationer's dream, offering the best of all of Le Boat's European destinations in one place. It has the elegant beauty and charm of French waterways, the delightful lagoons of Italy, and the dramatic, scenic lakes and rivers of Ireland, Holland and Germany. Most of all, it is a mecca for lovers of nature, with every imaginable water sport such as fishing, paddle boating, canoeing, swimming, as well as hiking, biking and bird-watching."

According to Brown, a Le Boat survey of its customers – including respondents from the U.S., Germany, and the U.K. – found demand high for Eastern Ontario and the Rideau Canal. At least 88% of European respondents said they would travel to Ontario for a boating holiday, with the numbers rising to more than 91% among U.S. customers. Le Boat

customers represent vacationers from all walks of life, including small groups and couples, as well as families with children. Many come from affluent backgrounds, with the U.S. market particularly attracted to premium cruisers like the Horizon, which offers large forward staterooms, roomy top-deck areas, diverse amenities, and a high level of comfort.

To facilitate the ease of handling for new and experienced boaters alike, the Le Boat Horizon is equipped with bow and stern thrusters for easy manoeuvring into and out of locks. It is also completely bumpered for safety and has a capped speed at 10km an hour for the Rideau.

“We expect our new Le Boat base on the Rideau Canal to bring important economic benefits to Ontario,” said Brown. “We are also expecting extended stays in Ontario from visitors ‘book-ending’ their Rideau Canal excursion to enjoy the wonderfully diverse offerings of Ontario.”

### **About Le Boat**

Le Boat is the leading self-drive boating rental company, with more than 40 years of experience in the industry, operating its own fleet of 900 self-drive cruisers from a network of over 37 different departure bases across eight European countries. Renters can sleep on board in 5-Star comfort and style, saving substantially on hotel costs. All boats feature fully equipped kitchens, comfortable furnishings, showers and bathrooms, and warm air heating. They also feature air-conditioning, depending on the model. No experience or boating license is necessary. Instructions and an orientation are provided to first-time renters, ensuring they get the most out of their boating vacation. Unlike conventional cruises that follow a pre-planned itinerary, Le Boat provides guests with suggested itineraries but allows them to visit the towns and attractions that most interest them on a particular route. For more information, call toll-free at 1-800-734-5491 or visit [www.leboat.com](http://www.leboat.com).

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