

Celebrate Chinese New Year at Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens

1/19/2011

Dramatic Display Welcomes Year of the Rabbit Now Through March 5

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 19, 2011 PRNewswire/ -- Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens invites guests to celebrate Chinese New Year – Year of the Rabbit, with a unique display replete with symbolic meaning and tradition. A serene sanctuary guided by the ancient practice of Feng Shui – the art of using surroundings to attract harmony, balance and positive life energy – is on display now through March 5.

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The majestic centerpiece of this exhibit is a 35-foot Chinese Junk Boat with a 38-foot mast inspired by traditional 15th century fishing vessels. Making its debut at the Conservatory, the boat was created using teak, mahogany and cedar by Daniels Wood Land, Inc. – which is best known for building full-scale replicas of The Black Pearl for Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie franchise. The ancient vessel is surrounded by a zig-zag bridge – a design that follows the principles of Feng Shui, providing a difficult route for negative energy and bad spirits – as it leads to a striking, wing-tipped Ming Dynasty-styled gazebo.

Nearby, a 12-foot rabbit with a luxurious coat comprised of more than 4,500 live sedge plants, watches over eight babies at play within a forest of bamboo trees and Taihu rocks. Stones are viewed as essential features of any traditional Chinese garden and symbolize the larger world around us. After spending decades forming underwater, Taihu stones were chosen because they are believed to encourage circulation of ch'i, or natural energy.

Just steps away from Bellagio's furry fortune ambassadors, an 18-foot-tall Chinese God of Prosperity is found amidst gold leafed I-Ching coins, a traditional Chinese money symbol. Widely recognized as the strongest symbol of good fortune and great luck in the New Year, the God of Prosperity is flanked by two Ming Dynasty-styled dings, ancestral vessels that protect against bad fortunes.

Celebrating one of the greatest archaeological finds in history and appearing for the first time in the Conservatory are seven replica Terracotta Warriors, covered in crushed walnuts and ground carrot seeds, accompanied by a horse-drawn carriage. A form of funerary art, the original Terracotta Army was buried with the First Emperor Qin in 210-209 BC in the Shaanxi Province and later discovered in 1974 by a group of farmers digging a well.

The teachings of Feng Shui also are used to position the flow of water into Bellagio's Conservatory, and not away, ensuring the flow of positive energy. Oversized red silk Chinese lanterns throughout the Conservatory add to the auspicious nature of this spectacular exhibit.

Legend has it that Buddha asked all the animals to meet him on Chinese New Year. Twelve came. The fourth animal in the Asian zodiac, the rabbit serves as a symbol of fortune and longevity. Those born in the Year of the Rabbit tend to be lucky, articulate and ambitious.

On view through March 5, the Chinese New Year exhibit within Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens is complimentary to the public and open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Chinese New Year Exhibit Fast Facts:

Display dates:	January 7 - March 5
Chinese New Year dates:	The Year of the Rabbit is February 3, 2011 - January 22, 2012
Chinese Junk Boat:	
Height	38 feet
Length	35 feet
Rabbits:	
Mother	4,500 live plants
Babies (8)	500 live plants each
Terracotta Warriors	7 total replicas and a horse-drawn carriage
God of Prosperity	18-feet tall

SOURCE MGM Resorts International

For further information: Shant Apelian, Public Relations of MGM Resorts International, +1-702-650-7562, sapelian01@mgmresorts.com