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WORLD POKER TOUR® TEAMS UP WITH MEKHI PHIFER FOR THE 7TH ANNUAL WPT INVITATIONAL

The Invitation-Only Poker Tournament at Commerce Casino Will Benefit Phifer's Charity— The Vine Group USA—to Support Educational Efforts in Africa

LOS ANGELES (FEBRUARY 12, 2009) – Mixing glamour, grit and a good cause, the hottest names in Hollywood will square off against the biggest names in poker for the 7th Annual [World Poker Tour® \(WPT\) Invitational](#). The three-day Texas Hold 'Em tournament kicks off Saturday, February 28 at the prestigious [Commerce Casino](#) in Los Angeles, giving celebrities the chance to beat top poker pros for charity, cash and poker glory.

Adding a new twist to the event, WPT and Commerce Casino will accept “re-buys” for the first two hours of play, giving any guest with little or no chips the chance get back in the game for a minimum donation of \$200. One hundred percent of the re-buy proceeds will benefit [The Vine Group USA](#) (TVG), a non-profit organization set up to provide educational assistance in the form of scholarships, textbooks, and technological equipment to academic institutions in various English-speaking countries in Africa.

“The Vine Group USA is very pleased to partner with the World Poker Tour and Commerce Casino for the Invitational—this is an event that everyone loves to be a part of,” said [Mekhi Phifer](#), actor and Chairman, TVG Board of Trustees. “Attendees will be able to have fun at the tables while learning about our organization and the important cause it supports.”

“The Invitational is always one of the most exciting and entertaining events on our schedule—it’s where celebrities gawk at poker players who gawk at celebrities,” said Steve Lipscomb, WPT Founder, President and CEO. “The re-buy factor will certainly add a whole new flavor to the WPT Invitational experience, and we couldn’t be happier that it also supports a great organization like The Vine Group.”

Reaching its seventh year on the WPT tournament circuit, the Invitational has become a highly popular event among celebrities and poker pros alike. [Mekhi Phifer](#), [Vince Vaughn](#), [Paris Hilton](#), [Jason Alexander](#), [Ben Affleck](#), [Mena Suvari](#), [Don Cheadle](#), [Jon Favreau](#), [Ricki Lake](#), [Ray Romano](#), [Camryn Manheim](#) and [Brad Garrett](#) are just a few of the celebrities who have tried their hand against legendary pros like [Daniel Negreanu](#), [Doyle Brunson](#), [Phil Ivey](#), [Gus Hansen](#), [Chris “Jesus” Ferguson](#) and [Jennifer Harman](#).

“Everyone looks forward to the Invitational,” said John Griffo, Director of Poker Operations, Commerce Casino. “We are thrilled that this event has become a ‘must- attend’ for top names in the entertainment and poker worlds. You would be surprised by some of the celebrities that do really well, especially after never holding a poker chip before. This year by adding the re-buy, the real winner will be The Vine Group.”

Commerce opens its doors to invited players, celebrities and guests at 6pm on February 28 for red carpet arrivals and cocktail hour. Before taking their seats, attendees will have a chance to brush up their poker skills with WPT Boot Camp instructors Jules and Crispin Leyser. The event is not open to the public.

Players who survive the first day of play will reconvene at 3 pm on March 1 for the second day of play. The last six players will meet March 2 on the WPT stage to compete for their piece of the \$200,000 prize pool put up by Commerce Casino, which includes a \$25,000 seat into the WPT World Championship in April at Bellagio. The Final Table is recorded for broadcast on Fox Sports Net (FSN) and will air in a two-part episode during FSN’s Sunday Night Sports Block this May. Check your local listing for dates and times as programming is subject to change.

To request media credentials for this event, please contact Kimberly Burghart at kburghart@worldpokertour.com. Celebrity client relations handled by Feinstein/McGuinness PR. All submissions should be directed to wpt@fmpr.tv. To obtain audience tickets for the TV final table, please email atimpson@worldpokertour.com.

For more event information, visit www.worldpokertour.com/season_vii_celebrity_invitational.aspx

About WPTE

WPT Enterprises, Inc. (Nasdaq: WPTE) is one of the most recognized names in internationally televised gaming and entertainment with brand presence in land-based tournaments, television, online and mobile.

WPTE has led innovation in the sport of poker since 2002, when it ignited the global poker boom with the creation of the World Poker Tour® (WPT) television show. Based on a series of high stakes poker tournaments, WPT is now broadcast globally and will premiere its all-new seventh season on Fox Sports Net’s national sports network in the United States in 2009. WPTE also offers a unique online subscription and sweepstakes-based poker club, ClubWPT.com, which operates in 38 states across the U.S.

Additionally, WPTE owns and operates WPT China, a multi-media company based in Beijing specializing in television production, online and mobile games supporting the WPT China National Traktor Poker Tour™.

WPTE has a 10-year exclusive partnership with the China Leisure Sports Administrative Center to market and build the sport of poker in China. WPTE also participates in strategic brand license, partnership and sponsorship opportunities. For more information, www.worldpokertour.com. (WPTEG)

About Commerce Casino

Commerce Casino is the largest poker casino in the world. There are more than 200 poker tables featuring just about every form of poker: Texas Hold 'em, 7-Card Stud, Omaha, Lowball, Pot Limit, Mexican Poker, Pineapple, Draw, Low-Ball and many others. Also offered are Pan and California games. Commerce Casino is also recognized for its innovative "Bring Your Home Game to Commerce" program which enables poker fans to invite their friends and family for a casual home game, bachelor party or birthday celebration with a professional dealer in the casino setting.

Commerce Casino is located at 6131 East Telegraph Rd., Commerce, CA 90040, just off the Santa Ana (5) Freeway at the Washington Blvd. exit. The phone is (323) 721-2100. For more information, go to www.commercecasino.com.

About The Vine Group

The Vine Group USA Inc (TVG) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization established in 2000 to provide educational resources to tertiary institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to alleviate poverty and help in building a workforce necessary for a sustainable economic development. We at TVG believe in poverty reduction through quality education and gender equality.

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