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September 1, 2010

## Style Meets Sustainability in New York City's Herald Square Candice Olson and The Portuguese Cork Association Introduce the Natural Beauty of Cork Flooring to North America

**NEW YORK** – New York, a city already famous for high style and a cosmopolitan culture, got a little more chic with the launch of the North American Décor(k) Tour in Herald Square today, courtesy of the Portuguese Cork Association (APCOR).

The goal of the Décor(k) Tour – which will visit 16 cities across the United States and Canada – is to educate consumers about the different styles and varieties of Portuguese cork flooring, and will feature a 53 foot-long mobile showroom designed by “Divine Design” host Candice Olson. Inside the showroom, visitors will enjoy a “feet on” experience of cork flooring’s unique comfort and resiliency while viewing different room layouts and flooring applications designed by Olson. Additional displays will allow visitors to see how cork stands up to moisture, heavy foot traffic and allergens, providing users with durable, comfortable flooring that can last years.

With more families spending time “living” on the floor, the floor has taken on a larger role as a functional living space. Therefore, it has become more important for flooring to be comfortable, durable, stylish and highly functional. Cork flooring fulfills all of these requirements. Another important benefit is that cork is *the* most environmentally friendly flooring choice because it is completely renewable, 100 percent natural and recyclable – three essential qualities for a modern and environmentally friendly society. Incredible inherent properties, including sound and temperature insulation, cushioning and water resistance provide homeowners even more reasons to choose cork as a flooring option.

“The choice of flooring is always an integral element in my designs,” said Olson. “When homeowners are building their nests, they must think about how much time will be spent on their floors. Cork flooring is a perfect choice for the home because it can provide a desired, stylish look while remaining functional and environmentally friendly.”

Through Olson’s beautifully designed settings for the Décor(k) Tour, it is easy to see that cork flooring is the ultimate in eco-chic. With inspirational designs ranging from traditional and vintage to artistic and modern, luxurious textures and shades, classic patterns and elegant finishes, the options available for cork flooring in North American homes are truly limitless. It has become a viable contender as the centerpiece of any home.

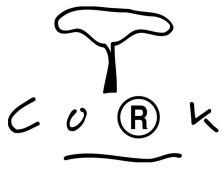
Cork is more than 50 percent air, which makes it lightweight and highly resilient. Consequently, cork often does not show dents or grooves the same way wood flooring can. It has excellent insulating properties and is warmer under foot than a cold tile. It is also allergy free and easy to maintain – great for a healthy, safe home.

“Cork has been used as flooring for a very long time because of its natural beauty, durability and renewability,” said Piet Dossche, chairman of APCOR North America Flooring Group and president & CEO of USFloors, Inc. “New finishing techniques and improved technologies have revived an interest in cork flooring. No other floor covering can match the combined benefits of cork.”

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Cork's journey begins in the *montado* (the Portuguese cork oak forest) where the time-honored tradition of the cork harvest takes place. Only after a maturation period of 25 years have these majestic giant cork oak trees carefully transformed their outer shell into a thing of beauty. This natural process gives way to cork flooring. During the harvesting of the bark, which can only take place every nine years, the tree is never cut down or harmed. The quality of cork actually improves with every harvest.

The cork oak forest has been developed and maintained to sustain a triple bottom line industry – one that is good for the people, for the planet and for the economy. Portuguese cork makes for authentic, high quality and eco-efficient cork flooring that is created with true craftsmanship and care.

Following the New York City launch on September 1, the Décor(k) mobile cork flooring showroom will visit a number of U.S. and Canadian cities.

For more information about the Décor(k) Tour locations and dates and the unique style and esthetic aspects of cork flooring, visit [www.realcorkfloors.com](http://www.realcorkfloors.com).

#### **About APCOR**

APCOR's mission is to represent and promote the Portuguese Cork Industry, with more than 250 members, representing around 80 percent of the total national cork production and 85 percent of all cork exports. APCOR is also responsible for promotional activities, with added value to cork, on both a national and international scale, providing, in addition, an extensive Information Resource Centre on cork.

#### **About Décor(k)**

The Décor(k) mobile showroom has been created by APCOR to tell the story of cork flooring, beginning with the cork oak and the harvest of the cork bark through to the versatility and beauty of the finished product from an interior designer's perspective. Visitors to the Décor(k) showroom will learn how the cork oak bark is fashioned into beautiful cork flooring and will be invited to experience six different room concepts created by Divine Design's Candice Olson and featuring the very best of Portuguese cork flooring. The Décor(k) Tour will be visiting 16 cities in the United States and Canada over the next ten months.

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