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**COSTA MESA INVITES HBO'S TONY SOPRANO
TO WAKE UP AND SEE THE REAL CITY OF THE ARTS**

COSTA MESA, Calif., March 00, 2006 – HBO's famous fictitious gangster Tony Soprano has recently been spending some time in Costa Mesa. Well, that is, in a dream state brought on as a result of being shot. At one point in his dream while *staying* at a hotel that more than resembles The Westin South Coast Plaza, Tony asks a bartender what goes on in Costa Mesa. He replies, "Around here, it's dead."

The Costa Mesa Conference & Visitor Bureau could not disagree more with the statement, and invites Tony to wake up and see the real *City of the Arts*.

Nestled near the Pacific Ocean just 35 miles south of Los Angeles, Costa Mesa is viewed by many to be Orange County's cultural center and Southern California's very own international-style destination.

Costa Mesa beckons to travelers who want the appeal of faraway places without crossing any borders. For example, at internationally acclaimed South Coast Plaza, *The Ultimate Shopping Resort*™, shoppers are invited on a virtual visit to 17 countries represented there. South Coast Plaza's unsurpassed marquee retailers include Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Fendi, Louis Vuitton, Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany, and many more.

A Mecca for lovers of the Arts, Costa Mesa is home to the Orange County Performing Arts Center, and in September 2006, will welcome the much-anticipated 2,000-seat Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall and 500-seat multi-purpose Samueli Theater. Also at home in Costa Mesa is the Tony Award-winning South Coast Repertory (SCR) Theatre. Artists from the four corners of the globe regularly perform on stage in Costa Mesa.

Like other international destinations, Costa Mesa's many sidewalk cafes, bistros and reservations-only hotspots offer an array of dining adventures, featuring cuisine from around the globe. Among the many nations represented here are China, Cuba, Greece, France, India, Japan, Mexico, and New Zealand. And yes, Tony, Costa Mesa offers some great Italian dining, too.

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Near to Costa Mesa are miles of sparkling beaches, as well as championship-quality golf courses. A mild year round climate allows visitors to enjoy walking tours of Costa Mesa's remarkable collection of works of art, including those of Jean Dubuffet, Isamu Noguchi, Henry Moore, Joan Miro, and Charles O. Perry, among other world-class artists.

"We don't mind HBO taking a tongue-in-cheek look at Costa Mesa, and are willing to forget about it, but we do want fans of the Sopranos series to know what our city really offers leisure and business travelers," said Tom Smalley, general manager, Avenue Of The Arts Costa Mesa, and president of the bureau.

However, Costa Mesa does have an offer that visitors can't refuse: The "2006 Fly/Drive & Dine on Us" promotion, which begins April 7 and runs through September 10, 2006, based upon room availability and with hotel rates as low as \$109 per night.

When travelers book a two-night minimum stay in a participating Costa Mesa hotel this spring and summer, they will receive a \$30 per night dining certificate upon checking in for each night they stay in the hotel that is redeemable at many fine Costa Mesa area restaurants.

Additionally, a \$30 reimbursement on their airfare or purchase of gasoline will be mailed to guests, along with a gift certificate package worth approximately \$250, within a few weeks of their stay in Costa Mesa. The gasoline or airfare reimbursement is limited to one per hotel reservation.

Costa Mesa's luxury hotels include Ayres Hotel & Suites by (714.549.0300), Costa Mesa Marriott (714.957.1100), Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa (714.540.7000), Holiday Inn Costa Mesa (714.557.3000), Holiday Inn Express Costa Mesa (949.631.6000), Residence Inn by Marriott (714.241.8800), The Westin South Coast Plaza (714.540.2500), and the Avenue Of The Arts Costa Mesa (714.751.5100).

For more, call 714.435.8530 or 800.399.5499. Visit Costa Mesa online at www.costamesa-ca.com.

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