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**CINEVEGAS ANNOUNCES OPENING NIGHT FILM AND  
JACKPOT PREMIERES FOR 2009 FESTIVAL**

***11<sup>th</sup> Installment of Vegas Fest to Open with World Premiere of Hue Rhodes' "Saint John of Las Vegas" starring Steve Buscemi, Sarah Silverman, Romany Malco, Peter Dinklage, Tim Blake Nelson, John Cho and Emmanuelle Chriqui***

*Las Vegas (March 23, 2009)* – The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual CineVegas Film Festival will kick off with the world premiere of Hue Rhodes' *Saint John of Las Vegas*, and eight other films will have their world premiere at the Festival, it was announced today by Trevor Groth, Artistic Director. The 2009 Festival will be held June 10 – 15 at the Palms Casino Resort and Brenden Theatres.

Jump-starting this year's Festival is the world premiere of Hue Rhodes' *Saint John of Las Vegas*, which will screen at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. The film stars Steve Buscemi as an ex-gambler-turned fraud investigator who must return to Las Vegas to investigate an insurance claim.

The eight world premieres in narrative competition, also known as "Jackpot Premieres," include: David Barker's *Daylight*, about a pregnant woman caught in a life-or-death situation; Kyle Patrick Alvarez's *Easier with Practice*, based on the true story of a writer's funny and intimate long-distance relationship with a mysterious woman; *Etienne!*, the story of a man and his best friend, a dwarf hamster, from Jeff Mizushima; Robert Saitzyk's Alaskan-set thriller *Godspeed*; Patrick Hoelck's modern love story *Mercy*, written by and starring Scott Caan; *Patriotville* from Talmage Cooley, where a historical town gets an education about hope, heartbreak and how American history is really written; and Asiel Norton's *Redland*, about a family struggling to survive in rural isolation during the Great Depression.

"The independent film industry is going through a transitional period right now as innovative filmmakers must find new ways to get movies made and seen, which is why CineVegas is thrilled to open our 2009 Festival with *Saint John of Las Vegas*," said Artistic Director Trevor Groth. "Not only is it a fantastic comedy with

a phenomenal cast, including Steve Buscemi who is pound-for-pound the world's greatest actor, but it was made by a forward thinking company IndieVest whose revolutionary approach to film financing and distribution just might be laying the groundwork for future generations.”

In *Saint John of Las Vegas*, John (Buscemi) is an ex-gambler who has gone straight at an Albuquerque insurance company and begins an amorous relationship with smiley face-obsessed co-worker, Jill (Silverman), on the day that he gets promoted to Fraud Investigator. He's asked to shadow Virgil (Malco) the agency's maverick superstar, a lone wolf with a disdain for paperwork, as he sets out to investigate a claim by a wheelchair-bound Vegas stripper looking to recover \$200,000 in lost lap-dance wages. John and Virgil head to the outskirts of Sin City and encounter a host of bizarre characters, such as Smitty the Flaming Torch, the stripper, naked militants and a junkyard owner who just might be the devil himself. John struggles with the temptations of Vegas, and eventually discovers that Virgil has an agenda of his own.

“Our narrative competition this year represents the kind of aesthetic and thematic diversity that is alive and well in the American independent arena. Ranging from an exquisitely rendered period piece to a subversive political satire to love stories between a man and a woman as well as a boy and his hamster, they represent the kind of uninhibited and adventurous filmmaking that CineVegas has long championed,” Groth continued.

“Our 11th anniversary marks the return of past award winners to our competition. Scott Caan, whose film *Dallas 362* won our competition in 2003 returns with *Mercy*, which he wrote, produced and stars in alongside last year's Vegas Icon Award recipient, James Caan. We are excited to welcome them back to the Festival, as well as the first timers whose films collectively make up our strongest and deepest competition yet that will rock the worlds of our attendees as we crank it up to 11.”

The 11<sup>th</sup> installment of the Vegas Festival will also offer a selection of world and U.S. premieres of documentaries, advance screenings of high-profile films, the best new independent films, and a program of shorts and features from Nevada filmmakers. In addition, CineVegas has announced a new contest where film fans can enter to win all access passes to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival by watching the Jackpot Premiere trailers online at [www.cinevegas.com/trailers](http://www.cinevegas.com/trailers). The contest will be held from today until Monday, May 4.

*Saint John of Las Vegas* was produced by IndieVest, an independent film studio and financier with a member community of high-net-worth individuals who work together to produce top-tier feature films with guaranteed theatrical distribution.

The CineVegas 2009 Jackpot Premieres include:

**Daylight**

Director: David Barker

Cast:

**Easier with Practice (USA, 2009)**

Director: Kyle Patrick Alvarez

Cast: Brian Geraghty, Kel O'Neill, Marguerite Moreau, Jeanette Brox, Jenna Gavigan

While on a road trip to promote his unpublished novel, Davy Mitchell finds himself falling for a mysterious phone sex caller.

**Etienne! (USA, 2009)**

Director: Jeff Mizushima

Cast: Richard Vallejios, Megan Harvey, Caveh Zahedi, Rachel Stolte, Solon Bixler

After Richard's best and only friend, a dwarf hamster named Etienne, is diagnosed with terminal cancer, he decides to take his pocket pet on a bicycle road trip up the California coast to show it the world before he must put it to sleep.

**Godspeed (USA, 2009)**

Director: Robert Saitzyk

Cast: Joseph McKelheer, Cory Knauf, Courtney Halverson, Ed Lauter, Jesse Ward, Hallock Beals

An intense, dramatic thriller set in the lingering light of the Alaskan midnight sun.

**Mercy**

Director: Patrick Hoelck

Cast: Scott Caan, Alexie Gilmore, Dylan McDermott, Erika Christensen, James Caan, Troy Garity, Wendy Glenn

**Patriotville**

Director: Talmage Cooley

Cast: Justin Long, Rob Corddry, Emmanuelle Chriqui

**Redland**

Director: Asiel Norton

Cast:

**About CineVegas**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual CineVegas Film Festival will be held **June 10 – 15, 2009** at the Palms Casino Resort and Brenden Theatres in Las Vegas. The CineVegas Film Festival is a platform for artists and art lovers who are drawn to the edge. Held amidst the unique, unpredictable and intoxicating environment that is Las Vegas, the CineVegas Film Festival pushes the boundaries of cinema. The Festival annually presents work by innovative, uninhibited, and renegade artists to an audience of local and national film lovers, journalists, and film industry

representatives. **Robin Greenspun** serves as the festival's President, **Trevor Groth** serves as Artistic Director and **Dennis Hopper** serves as the Chairman of the Creative Advisory Board. For more information on the CineVegas Film Festival, please call 888-8VEGAS8 or visit [www.cinevegas.com](http://www.cinevegas.com).



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