

National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey Officially Opens October 6, 2017

[National Geographic Encounter](#) will open to the public in Times Square on Friday, October 6, 2017, with Ocean Odyssey, a first-in-kind immersive entertainment experience that transports audiences on a breathtaking undersea journey from the South Pacific across the ocean to the west coast of North America. SPE Partners, creators and producers of National Geographic Encounter, has engaged a world-class global team of **Academy, GRAMMY®, and Emmy® Award-winning artists**, including the design firm Falcon's Creative Group and the visual effects team behind "Game of Thrones," to produce this never-before-seen experience that is changing the landscape of entertainment and cinema. Through ground-breaking technology, audiences go on a digital "underwater" dive and come face-to-face with life-size photo-real versions of some of the largest and most interesting creatures of the sea. "Working on this project has been an extraordinary ride," says **Emmy® Award Winner Thilo Ewers, VFX Supervisor** on the project from Pixomondo. "We have pushed the boundaries of visual effects by not only developing dozens of unique photo-real underwater species in a completely immersive environment, but also by taking on one of our biggest challenges to date: creating 3D stunning media in 8K resolution at 60 frames per second! National Geographic Encounter is a game-changer in this industry as it melds the boundaries between realtime interactive media and traditional media, and our team is having a ball helping bring it to life." Additionally, GRAMMY® Award-winning composer David Kahne has collected hundreds of underwater sounds from libraries all over the world to create a state-of-the-art sound experience featuring a majestic ocean soundscape which graces the space across 230 loudspeakers and 180 independent sound channels. National Geographic Encounter has also been nominated for an IFMA Award for Excellence in the Design and Construction category. National Geographic Encounter is not a museum, exhibit, movie, aquarium or virtual reality; instead, the producers consulted with dozens of technologists and scientists to create a new kind of immersive experience that guests can walk through to share stunning ocean encounters with friends and family. Blockbuster new science – some of it not even published yet – was used in its creation. National Geographic Encounter is also working with marine biologist, professor and National Geographic Emerging Explorer **David Gruber**, Chief Science Advisor to the experience and who specializes in bioluminescent and biofluorescent marine animals. **National Geographic Encounter Ocean Fun Facts:**

- Guests will get up close with dozens of species, including sharks up to 20 feet long, a 50-foot Humpback whale, playful sea lions, and a pair of battling Humboldt squids which could have as many as 40,000 teeth each;
- The coral reef was built from a process called photogrammetry, where more than 1,300 photos were taken on location in the Solomon Islands. The 2D photos were then used to construct 3D models of coral;
- Kelp found throughout the experience is modeled after the Giant Kelp species, which grows at a rate of up to 2 feet per day;
- 120,000 fish make their appearance in the grand finale.

Once visitors "resurface" to land, they can learn about their experience, track their trip, and listen to sounds of the animals they have encountered along the way. Guests will also hear from renowned ocean explorers and marine biologists, including National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence Sylvia

Earle, Bob Ballard and Enric Sala, who through transparent multi-media screens, share their inspiration and passion for the ocean. Audiences can enjoy a gaming challenge to clean up their own piece of the ocean and play with holograms of the biggest creatures. Everyone will have the opportunity to take an individual pledge to take action that makes a difference in ocean conservation, and share it with their social communities and on a live social feed. “We pushed the boundaries of typical attractions by combining National Geographic’s incredible storytelling with an innovative blend of immersive, cutting-edge visual effects and technology, resulting in a completely new kind of entertainment experience,” says **Lisa Truitt, Chief Creative Officer and a Managing Partner of SPE**. “For the first time ever, people will walk through the iconic Yellow Border and step into a world they could otherwise never see.” **Declan Moore, Chief Executive Officer, National Geographic Partners said**, “National Geographic Encounter applies cutting-edge technology to our legacy of transformative storytelling. Fueled by the excellence of our photographers and explorers, and the extraordinary array of talent assembled behind the creation of this experience, we know we will inspire and entertain our guests surrounded by the wonder of our oceans. This experience exemplifies our commitment to entertainment with a purpose.” The “entertainment with a purpose” ethos is also embedded in National Geographic Encounter’s choice of partners with sustainable practices, ranging from a furniture developer, Van de Sant, which creates product out of plastic waste recovered from marine environments, to caterers that source from local farms and use only sustainably harvested seafood, to retail products with eco-friendly packaging. In addition, National Geographic Encounter will feature an **interactive art installation, “Message in a Bottle,”** by National Geographic Emerging Explorer & Artist [Asher Jay](#). “Message in a Bottle” is a series of painted plastic bottles, some of which include a recorded voice from a celebrity, oceanographer or scientist. The voices, which include Ian Somerhalder, Kristin Bauer, Adrian Grenier, Katherine McPhee, David de Rothschild, Bob Ballard and others, convey a personalized inspirational message about the ocean. National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey helps support the National Geographic Society’s critical works around the globe, including the **Pristine Seas Project**. By returning a portion of its proceeds to the non-profit work of the Society, National Geographic Partners contributes to the Society’s critical work of exploring, understanding and protecting our ocean through scientific grants and programs. To learn more, visit www.natgeo.com/info. **Shubert Organization President Robert E. Wankel** stated, “We welcome our new neighbor in the theatre district, National Geographic Encounter, an exciting addition to the entertainment options in the Times Square area. For more than a century, the National Geographic brand has represented a consistent level of excellence around the world. We look forward to the opening of National Geographic Encounter in the heart of New York City.” National Geographic Encounter has a state-of-the-art private event space, managed by The Shubert Organization, and will feature preferred caterers including **Benchmarc Events by Chef Marc Murphy, Abigail Kirsh and TAO Group**. Ticket prices are .50 plus tax for adults, .50 plus tax for seniors 65+ and .50 plus tax for kids 12 and under. Groups of 10 or more will receive 15% off. Special educator rates will be available for local area school groups during select times. National Geographic Encounter is a timed ticketed walk-through experience that lasts approximately 90 minutes. Times Square Attractions Live, LLC (TSAL) is the trademark-licensed developer for National Geographic Encounter. TSAL is a partnership between Peterson Companies, a Washington DC-based real estate developer, and SPE Partners, a New York City-based entertainment developer. To download photos, visit <http://bit.ly/2eVDMNG>. For more information, visit NatGeoEncounter.com or follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) @NatGeoENCOUNTER. **ABOUT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS LLC** National Geographic Partners LLC (NGP), a joint venture between National Geographic and 21st Century Fox, is committed to bringing the world premium science, adventure and exploration content across an unrivaled portfolio of media assets. NGP combines the global National Geographic television channels (National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo WILD, Nat Geo MUNDO, Nat Geo PEOPLE) with National Geographic’s media and consumer-oriented assets,

including National Geographic magazines; National Geographic studios; related digital and social media platforms; books; maps; children's media; and ancillary activities that include travel, global experiences and events, archival sales, licensing and e-commerce businesses. Furthering knowledge and understanding of our world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 129 years, and now we are committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for our consumers ... and reaching over 730 million people around the world in 172 countries and 43 languages every month as we do it. NGP returns 27 percent of our proceeds to the nonprofit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit natgeotv.com or nationalgeographic.com, or find us

on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Google+](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Pinterest](#). **ABOUT SPE**

PARTNERS SPE Partners, LLC, is a New York City-based entertainment developer, founded by entertainment executives Alexander Svezia and William Pennell, with the vision of transforming the cinematic experience. The company is run by managing partners Svezia, Pennell, Christine Kurtz, a 25-year executive in New York commercial real-estate, and Chief Creative Officer Lisa Truitt, a 29-year veteran of National Geographic film, television, and specialty cinema. SPE aims to expand and revolutionize entertainment and storytelling, while delivering world-class guest experiences. SPE Partners is launching its portfolio of entertainment properties with National Geographic Encounter:

Ocean Odyssey. **ABOUT PETERSON COMPANIES** Peterson Companies is one of the largest privately owned real estate development companies in the Washington, DC region. Founded more than 50 years ago, the company is responsible for numerous prominent and successful mixed-use developments including National Harbor, a 350-acre waterfront resort on the Potomac River that is home to the MGM National Harbor Resort & Casino, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, Tanger Outlets and the Capital Wheel. For more information about the company, please

visit www.petersoncos.com. **MEDIA CONTACTS Shin-Jung Hong** Nicholas Lence ShinJung@nicholaslence.com +1 (212) 938-0005 **Cristyne Nicholas** Nicholas Lence Crisytne@nicholaslence.com +1 (212) 938-0002 **Heather Wyatt** National Geographic heather.wyatt@natgeo.com +1 (212) 822-7093 **Meg Calnan** National Geographic meg.calnan@natgeo.com +1 (202) 912-6703