



## **Most Americans Still Believe in Love at First Sight; Macerich's 'Cupid-Ology' Survey Shows Shoppers Plan Budget Increase to \$144**

January 27, 2000

SANTA MONICA, Calif., Jan. 27 /PRNewswire/ -- Cupid may claim to use a bow and heart-shaped arrows to spread romance, but for the second year running, his retail budget has been a more powerful tool.

Santa Monica, CA-based Macerich Company's (NYSE: MAC) "Cupid-ology" survey identifies shopping patterns and trends of Valentine's Day shoppers. Shoppers this year will spend more on their Valentine than last year (\$144, compared to 1999's average of \$141), with men nearly doubling the expenditure of their female counterpart (\$198 vs. \$115).

"As we continue to listen to our customers, we're consistently seeing an increase in spending patterns during secondary holiday shopping periods, such as Valentine's Day and Halloween," said Susan Valentine, senior vice president and director of marketing for Macerich. "Knowledge of this transition affords our mall merchants nationwide an opportunity to better serve their customers. For Valentine's, the increase in shopping budgets lets us know that for many couples this year, retail is working alongside romance."

Romance, it appears, is for the young at heart, as almost 65% of American teenagers surveyed say they feel more romantic on Valentine's Day, compared to a low 37.5% of those surveyed over the age of 55. Overall, 54.5% of those surveyed get into the romantic spirit of the holiday, comparable to last year's figure of just over 50%.

If Valentine's Day is for romantic couples, Will Smith and Jada Pinkett-Smith should be more romantic than most, as about a third of Americans chose them as the favorite famous couple this season (31%). Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson (29.2%) and Tim McGraw and Faith Hill (21.9%) were also selected as model couples.

Out of the nearly 5,700 shoppers surveyed nationwide this year, 82% will go shopping for Valentine's Day, and most will choose to shop in February (58%). There will still be last minute shoppers, as 19.3% will wait until two days before the holiday.

A majority of shoppers this year will opt to buy the traditional Valentine's Day card (89.3%) and candy (76.4%), but most men will also add flowers to the list (82.6%). Seventy percent surveyed will visit or call a flower shop, 15% will visit a local grocery store, 8% will call a toll-free flower service and 7% will visit a florist on the Internet.

While most men and women resort to buying flowers or candy, only 15.5% surveyed prefer to receive either gift. Nearly 40% of men say they would prefer dinner with their Valentine, while women also said jewelry would be high on their list (28.4%). As for cards, almost 59% indicated a preference for store bought cards, over the 35% preferring to receive homemade cards and low 7% preferring an e-card.

Although for the second year running over 60% of Americans admit to believing in love at first sight, few Americans want to admit what visible feature first attracts them to someone. Almost 40% surveyed gave the standard "personality" as the most drawing characteristic of the opposite sex, while fewer than 20% chose physique (18.9%), smile (16.6%) or eyes (13.2%).

Random samples of shoppers completed the survey in targeted Macerich properties by answering questions on the Max Trak system of hand held units, an electronic data gathering and analysis tool.

The Macerich Company, which has ownership interest in over 50 malls across the continental United States, is one of the nation's largest owner/operators of regional malls. Founded in 1965, Macerich is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "MAC". For more information on Macerich, visit the Macerich web site at [www.macerich.com](http://www.macerich.com).

SOURCE Macerich Company

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