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**THE AHWAHNEE PRESENTS THE 85TH SEASON OF
THE BRACEBRIDGE DINNER**

Performances of “the country’s premiere Christmas dinner” and concerts by Andrea Fulton Chorale begin December 13; tickets and overnight packages available now

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif., August 25, 2011 – The Ahwahnee, a recently renovated, full-service, AAA Four-Diamond hotel nestled amongst the snow-capped mountains and majestic cedars of Yosemite National Park, is the ideal setting for the holiday magic and splendor of *The Bracebridge Dinner*, celebrating its 85th season this December. This remarkable American theatrical tradition transforms the hotel into a 17th century English manor for a feast of food, song and mirth for eight performances, held from December 13-25. Visitors are also invited to attend complimentary concerts featuring world-class artists singing holiday, pops and Broadway standards in the hotel’s Great Lounge on nights alternating with *The Bracebridge Dinner*.

Produced by San Francisco Bay Area-based Andrea Fulton Productions, *The Bracebridge Dinner* is an evening celebration that transports guests to Old England, where more than 60 elaborately costumed, professional singers and other performers enact a holiday banquet with Lord Merrick of Bracebridge and his entertaining household. The scripted show offers laughs, spectacular musical numbers, and a touching reminder of what is truly important during the holidays. *The Bracebridge Dinner* is recognized as one of the most sought-after holiday events in the U.S. In 2006, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, “*Bracebridge* is, without much doubt, the country’s, if not the world’s, premier Christmas dinner.”

During each *Bracebridge* performance, up to 300 guests enjoy a lavish, seven-course feast by The Ahwahnee’s Executive Chef Percy Whatley, with service meticulously choreographed as part of the pageantry. The Ahwahnee Dining Room, with its 50-foot ceiling topped by massive log beams, serves as the Great Hall at Squire Bracebridge’s manor. The entire room is a stage, crowned by an elaborate Squire’s table and decked with holiday decorations, many of which are restored originals from the first productions in the late 1920s.

The 2011 performances of *The Bracebridge Dinner* take place December 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 25, at 6 p.m. The following one- and two-night lodging packages for two are available:

	Two-night Package*	One-night Package*
The Ahwahnee	from \$1,780	from \$1,305
Yosemite Lodge at the Falls	from \$1,092	from \$961
Wawona Hotel	from \$1,148	from \$999

The Bracebridge Dinner lodging packages include:

- Dinner for two at *The Bracebridge Dinner*, excluding alcohol (*Dinner is on the second night of a two-night Bracebridge Package*).
- Professional group portrait sitting to commemorate the event.

- Shuttle services to The Ahwahnee for *The Bracebridge Dinner* guests staying at Yosemite Lodge at the Falls and Wawona Hotel. Complimentary after hours shuttle service is also available.

Dinner-only tickets are available for \$425 (adults) and \$265.50 (children 12 and under), including tax and gratuity. Please call the reservations desk to make a dinner-only reservation at (801) 559-4884. Single tickets are not available online. For more information or to make reservations, visit <http://www.yosemitepark.com/bracebridge> or call (801) 559-4903.

CONCERTS

Enhancing *The Bracebridge Dinner* experience at The Ahwahnee are five concert presentations in the hotel's Great Lounge on nights alternating with *Bracebridge* performances by the Andrea Fulton Chorale, soloists and dancers. The *Ahwahnee Pops* concerts feature holiday favorites, and the *Say it with Music* concert is a showcase of selections from Broadway sensations *Chicago*, *Les Miserables*, *The Producers*, *La Cage aux Folles* and more. Producer Andrea Fulton also reads "The Nutcracker Suite" on Christmas Eve. Admission to the performances listed below is complimentary and open to the public:

The Ahwahnee Pops – A Concert of Music of the Christmas Season

December 15 and 19, 8 p.m.

December 23, 2 p.m., followed by Christmas caroling and the arrival of "Santa Claus"

Say It with Music – An Evening of Musical Theatre

December 17 and 21, 8 p.m.

The Nutcracker Suite – A Reading of the Magical Christmas Story by Andrea Fulton

December 24, 1:30 pm

THE HISTORY OF THE BRACEBRIDGE DINNER

The original production of *The Bracebridge Dinner* was created by Garnet Holme, a California pageant director, who conceived the event for The Ahwahnee's first Christmas in 1927. The inspiration for this yuletide ceremony was author Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book* (1819) which described Squire Bracebridge and English Christmas traditions. After Holme's death in 1929, Donald Tresidder, president of the Yosemite Park & Curry Company, asked world-famous photographer Ansel Adams to assume directorship. Adams, who was also a talented musician and pianist, worked with Ahwahnee interior designer Jeanette Dyer Spencer to improve the script, set and costumes. Adams continued directing and performing in *The Bracebridge Dinner* until his retirement from the production in 1973. Eugene Fulton, who took over the directorship from Adams, began as conductor of the Chorale in 1934, and served as musical director beginning in 1946 after a two-year production hiatus for World War II.

The current director and executive producer of *The Bracebridge Dinner*, Andrea Fulton, took over the role from her father after his death in 1978. Fulton grew up with *Bracebridge*, performing in the production since the age of five. She currently plays the role of Augusta Billingsly, Housekeeper of Bracebridge Hall. Margo McCarty, a performer in the Chorale for more than 20 years, was brought on by Fulton in 2004 to serve as co-executive producer. McCarty's husband, Michael McCarty, is co-artistic producer with Fulton and performs the role of Lord Merrick, Squire of Bracebridge Hall.

Many of the cast members have been with the production for 20 to 25 years, maintaining a longstanding tradition and consistent mark of theatrical and musical excellence. When not in *The Bracebridge Dinner*, most perform as soloists, choral singers and actors with major opera companies, theatre productions, festivals and symphony orchestras throughout the world.

ABOUT THE AHWAHNEE

The Ahwahnee is a full-service, AAA Four-Diamond hotel located in scenic Yosemite National Park, which is home to stunning natural beauty, bountiful activities and historic charm. The Ahwahnee is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and has been accepted as a member of Historic Hotels of America, a program that recognizes hotel properties for preserving and maintaining their historic integrity, architecture and ambiance. The Ahwahnee was recognized by *Conde Nast Traveler* magazine’s “Reader’s Choice Awards” in 2010 as one of the top 100 resorts in the United States. For more information, visit www.yosemitepark.com/ahwahnee.

ABOUT DNC PARKS & RESORTS AT YOSEMITE, INC.

Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts is an industry leader providing Stewardship and Hospitality in Special PlacesSM, with hotel, retail, food service, recreation and transportation operations at historic and scenic properties in North America and Australia. The company operates Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex and in Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Sequoia and Yosemite national parks, including The Ahwahnee and other Yosemite lodges; Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite & the Cottages at Tenaya Lodge; Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa in British Columbia; Niagara Falls State Park; The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake in Ohio; Gideon Putnam Resort in Saratoga; Holiday Inn West Yellowstone, Gray Wolf Inn & Suites and Yellowstone Park Hotel; and soon, LeMay – America’s Car Museum in Tacoma, Wash. The company also owns and operates five luxury resorts in Australia: Lizard Island Resort, Heron Island Resort, Wilson Island Resort, Kings Canyon Resort and El Questro Homestead and Wilderness Park. To learn more about Delaware North Companies’ hospitality management expertise, visit www.experiencednc.com.

**Package prices include gratuity, but exclude tax. Rates based on double occupancy. Additional costs associated with additional persons. Package may not be combined with other discounts, packages or special offers. No refunds for early check out or unused portions of package. Offer subject to change with NPS approval. Advance reservations are required. Package is for specific days, and The Bracebridge Dinner celebration will be on the second night of a two-night package. Additional person rates are available. Additional dinner tickets are available. Penalties will apply for cancellations made within 30 days of arrival date. Package rates do not apply to groups or suites.*

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Photographs available upon request.