



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE BALLANTYNE AWARDED 2010 FORBES TRAVEL GUIDE
FOUR STAR RATING**

Recognized for Lodging at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, Gallery Restaurant & The Spa at Ballantyne

CHARLOTTE (November 13, 2009) – The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge has been honored again by Forbes Travel Guide, formerly Mobil, with several Forbes Four Star Awards for 2010, including lodging at **The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, Gallery Restaurant** and **The Spa at Ballantyne**. Defining the industry’s highest standard for excellence in hospitality for more than fifty years, Forbes Travel Guide is the originator of the prestigious star rating system and provider of one of the most comprehensive evaluation systems of hotels, restaurants and spas in the world. Charlotte’s only hotel to be awarded, The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge’s complete review can be found online at www.forbestravelguide.com.

Continuing to meet Forbes’ bar-setting service standards, The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge is one of 160 Four Star hotels in North America. Gallery Restaurant is one of 156 Four Star restaurants in North America. The Spa at Ballantyne is one of 107 Four Star spas in North America.

“We are committed to delivering exceptional service to our guests each day, and we are honored to be recognized again by Forbes Travel Guide for our ongoing efforts to provide an extraordinary experience,” said Steven Kalczynski, General Manager of The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge.

“We’re thrilled to have our brand join Forbes. The 2010 edition is the first under the Forbes Travel Guide banner and we look forward to a long and successful partnership with Forbes,” said Shane O’Flaherty, President and CEO of Forbes Travel Guide, who noted that while the hospitality industry has been challenged this year, it has risen to the occasion. “With an unprecedented downturn in the economy this year, properties have taken steps to refine their processes to become more efficient. Yet, it is important to note that the employees of these same properties have remained as engaged and passionate as ever about providing the best guest experience that they can.”

Forbes Travel Guide’s ratings process is based on more than 750 standardized criteria for hotels, making it the most rigorous and comprehensive in the industry. The process begins with a facility inspection that considers every aspect of the property, including its overall cleanliness, condition and location. To achieve Forbes Travel Guide Four and Five Star status, properties must meet or exceed the bar-setting service standards, which are determined through an unannounced, undercover service evaluation conducted by Forbes Travel Guide’s expert inspectors.

About The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, a member of Starwood's The Luxury Collection, is a Mobil Four-Star and AAA Four-Diamond award-winning hotel located in Charlotte, NC. Featuring 214 luxurious guestrooms, The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge offers a Conde Nast Johansens award-winning Spa and Golf Club, professional tennis and golf instruction, health facilities, 20,000 square feet of meeting space, four-bedroom Cottage and a 40,000 square feet Lodge group retreat with 36 spacious guest rooms. The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge was awarded the 2008 Tiffany Trophy, an annual award presented by The Luxury Collection to the hotel or resort with the highest overall guest satisfaction score in North America. The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge ranked among the top business hotels in the U.S. and Canada in *Travel + Leisure's World's Best Business Hotels* 2007 readers' survey. The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge is owned by Bissell Companies. For information and reservations, please contact The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge toll-free at (866) 248-4824, or visit the website at www.theballantynehotel.com. Become a fan of The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge at www.facebook.com/ballantynehotel or follow The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge at www.twitter.com/ballantynehotel.

About The Luxury Collection

The Luxury Collection® brand, part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Inc., is an elite group of distinctive properties ranging from imperial palaces to romantic hideaways, from historical landmarks to tropical resorts, recognized as some of the finest hotels in the world. To sophisticated travelers worldwide, The Luxury Collection delivers the finest hotel experiences through their unparalleled attention to their guests' needs and preferences, their exceptional and distinctive properties and seamless integration of the customs, culture and environment of each property's locale. There are over 50 *The Luxury Collection* hotels and resorts in more than 25 countries, each reflecting the true essence of the destination.

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