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**Madame Tussauds Plans to Develop \$55M Museum**

By Bob Howard

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Madame Tussauds Hollywood

**HOLLYWOOD**-The latest sign of the ongoing redevelopment here is a new \$55 million Madame Tussauds wax museum, slated for a site at at Hollywood Boulevard and Orange Drive, that will be the first ever Tussauds museum to be developed from the ground up in the museum's 200-year history. The new Madame Tussauds Hollywood Inc. will be a project of the US Division of Merlin Entertainments Group, which expects to open the new venue is less than a year.

Designed by Los Angeles architect Michael Rotondi of JAG/RoTo Architects, the new Madame Tussauds will be a 40,000-sf, three-story building with underground parking. The new venue represents "the tip of the iceberg in terms of our expansion plans in the United States," says Merlin's managing director of property development, Nick MacKenzie.

When it opens in 2009, Madame Tussauds Hollywood will become the ninth museum in the Madame Tussauds worldwide portfolio. Merlin Entertainments Group, which is based in the UK, is represented in North America by Samuels & Company Inc., a Los Angeles-based real estate advisory and brokerage firm.

Samuels & Co. is Merlin's exclusive tenant representative for the expansion of its attractions in the North American market, according to the L.A.-based firm, which is headed by president Howard J. Samuels.

According to Samuels, Merlin expects to open two or three locations annually in top-tier retail centers as well as stand-alone city center attractions in various locations throughout North America. US venues now being developed by Merlin in addition to the Madame Tussauds Hollywood include a Legoland Discovery Centre in Schaumburg, IL; the Pepsi Globe and Legoland Discovery Centre at the Meadowlands Xanadu in East Rutherford, NJ and a Sea Life Centre in Carlsbad, CA.

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