

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

### **MATRIX PRIVATE EQUITY PARTNERS INVESTS INTO MBO OF METROPRESS LTD**

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008:** Matrix Private Equity Partners (MPEP), the small buyout specialist, has invested into the MBO of Metropress Limited ('Metropress'). Metropress publishes the Antiques Trade Gazette ('The Gazette'), the leading weekly newspaper that provides the latest in market information, news and analysis to art and antiques trade professionals and collectors in the UK. Acknowledged as the 'Bible' of the fine art and antiques industry, The Gazette is a newspaper for serious buyers and sellers. MPEP has taken a significant minority stake in the business.

Based in London and Chelmsford, Metropress was established by a journalist in 1971, in order to launch The Gazette. The first publication to serve the antiques trade, it provides an accurate, balanced and impartial view of the art and antiques business and over this time, has built up a degree of prestige and trust unrivalled by other publications. As the first choice publication for auction industry advertising, The Gazette also publishes advertising for fairs, galleries, packers, shippers, insurers, career opportunities and a host of other services.

In 1994, Metropress was acquired by Daily Mail and General Trust PLC ('DMGT'), and since then has largely been left to its management to run as a stand alone business, with DMGT supplying some central services. In 2000, Metropress leveraged its existing auction house relationships by offering to manage their catalogue printing requirement. This has now been extended to offer an on-line option. In 2006, management launched the idea of Live Auctions, in order to address the potential offered by the internet. The business currently employs 53 people and its annual revenue is in excess of £6 million.

The strong management team that has been responsible for implementing the transition of the business from a paper-based publisher to one with an on-line presence, will be further augmented by the introduction of one of MPEP's Operating Partners, who has significant experience in the sector. MPEP has introduced Bob Fairchild as investing Non-Executive Chairman to the management. Fairchild is particularly suited to the deal, having previously been Managing Director of a successful joint MPEP and 3i investment, Landmark Information Group, which was sold to DMGT.

Anne Somers, Managing Director of Metropress said: "Matrix Private Equity Partners' supportive backing combined with Bob Fairchild's expertise and vision will really help to exploit the potential of the business. We very much welcome the investment by MPEP."

Jonathan Gregory of Matrix Private Equity Partners said: “Whilst we recognise that advertising spend may in the short term be susceptible to the prevailing economic environment, the transaction is modestly geared and we have built in protection to ensure that the VCT’s receive their yield. This, strengthened by the involvement of Bob Fairchild as Non-Executive Chairman, and a management team that has delivered strong profit and cash generation for its current owner and Metropress, means that the business is well placed to deliver further growth.”

- **Ends** -

## **Advisors:**

Matrix: Baker Tilly (London) – Stephen Mason and Kurt Tiedt, accounting due diligence  
PBD Consulting (London) – Lisa Whelan, commercial due diligence  
Marriott Harrison (London) – Duncan Innes, Jonathan Leigh-Hunt, Ben Devons, Hugh Gardner, Rebecca Briam and Chloe Hymas (legal)

Management: Vantis Corporate Finance (London) – Philip Marsden, Francesca Granelli and Mathew Lunn (corporate finance)  
Lewis Silkin (London) – Philip Lamb and Nadim Khan (legal)

Bank: Pinsent Masons (Birmingham) – Victoria Baker (legal)

Matrix Private Equity Partners – Jonathan Gregory, Eric Tung

For further information, please contact:

Equity Dynamics

Corinna Vere Nicoll 07825 326 440

Jane Kirby 07825 326 441



Matrix Private Equity Partners LLP  
One Vine Street London W1J 0AH  
t +44 (0) 20 3206 7000 f +44 (0) 20 3206 7012  
mpep@matrixgroup.co.uk  
www.matrixgroup.co.uk

## Notes to Editors:

### About Matrix

Matrix Private Equity Partners specialise in backing management buy outs and take a partnership approach to investing, working alongside ambitious, entrepreneurial management teams wishing to buy businesses, valued between £5 million and £20 million.

We currently have 40 companies within which we own equity, across a very broad range of industries and sectors, financing their expansion and acquisitions.

### Recent deals include:

- **Plastic Surgeon Fine Finishers** - £2 million management buy out
- **Monsal** - £5 million management buy out
- **Focus Pharmaceuticals** - £6 million management buy out
- **Blaze Signs** – investing £4 million acquisition finance
- **DiGiCo Europe** - £7 million management buy out

### Recent realisations

- **Holloway White Allom** – 5x cash return from recap
- **Apollo** – 2.5x return on original investment
- **Gyro** – 3.2x return on original investment
- **Ministry of Cake** – 2.5x cash return from trade sale
- **BBI Holdings** – 3x return on original investment
- **Secure Mail services** – over 3x cash return from trade sale
- **Original Additions** - The deal has repaid all our original funding but maintains the same Matrix shareholding

We are one of the leading UK Venture Capital Trust (VCT) Managers, advising on over £140 million of funds, and are the private equity arm of Matrix Group.

Matrix Private Equity Partners is recognised as one of the most solid and experienced teams and active investors in this segment of the private equity market.