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ANOTHER BLOOMING BUYOUT FOR MATRIX PRIVATE EQUITY PARTNERS

- MPEP bridges funding gap to small buyout market-

Matrix Private Equity Partners (MPEP) proves that the small buyout market is currently the engine room for UK SME growth with its funding of the £12 million MBO of CB Imports Plc announced today. CB Imports is the UK's leading importer and distributor of artificial flowers and floral sundries. This is the fourth transaction that MPEP has completed since the summer, following the MBO of Westway Cooling and the realisations of Tottel Publishing and Pasta King, which represented returns of 4 times and 3.2 times money for MPEP VCT investors.

The CB Imports group of businesses was founded in 1990. Operating from a national distribution centre in Leeds, the Company is the UK's leading importer and distributor of artificial flowers, floral sundries, glassware, giftware, basket ware and Christmas decorations. The company also operates a division of wholesale cash & carry outlets trading by the name of Country Baskets; with warehouses in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow. Country Baskets sells directly to florists and gift shops through its cash and carry outlets, whilst the CB Imports side supplies other wholesalers, garden centres and volume retailers. The market supplying florists is highly fragmented and Country Baskets is unrivalled in its product range and its ability to offer highly competitive prices due its scale. The Company is planning to roll out further outlets across the UK as part of a new growth phase supported by Matrix. The first new outlet will open in January in Gateshead with a series of further sites planned.

The company employs 270 people and has a turnover of circa £20 million.

Ashley Broomberg a partner at MPEP who led the deal, said: We were attracted to CB Imports because it is a long established, profitable business which is a clear leader in its market. The business has traded very strongly over the last year showing the strength of being a price leader in the current environment. The fragmented nature of its market means that there is a significant opportunity to expand the business through a rollout of further outlets across the UK. There is very strong interest being shown by prospective customers in the new site being opened in Gateshead in January and we plan further geographic expansion over the next few years. We are delighted to have been chosen, in a very competitive process, to be the Company's funding partner as it embarks on this growth phase."

Steve Wood, Managing Director of CB Imports commented: "We have traded strongly through 2009 and year on year benchmarks remain robust. Whilst the floral industry has been impacted by the economic downturn, it is generally robust and we are currently benefiting strongly from increasingly value focused customers. We are a well established business with a good track record of delivering profits. The MPEP team has eased us through the MBO process and now we look forward to further growth opportunities and expanding geographically."

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Matrix Private Equity Partners LLP ['MPEP']

MPEP is a leading VCT Manager in the UK, advising £115 million VCT Funds under Management across five Income & Growth VCTs. Its MBO focus and success was recognised at the unquote" British Private Equity Awards 2008, where MPEP won the award for "VCT Manager of the Year".

MPEP is a stable, experienced team with an excellent record of realisations. Over the past two and a half years, eight separate cash realisations have been achieved by MPEP, returning £41.5m, a 3.1 X multiple of the £13.3m cost. They are Holloway White Allom (5.0x), BBI (3.3x), Ministry of Cake (2.5x), Ruskin (3.0x), Apollo Lifts (3.0x), Gyro (3.0x), Tottel (4.0x) and Pasta King (3.2x).

Since 2004, MPEP has raised £85m for its Income & Growth VCTs. MPEP LLP is jointly owned by its investment team and Matrix Group.

Matrix Group

Matrix Group is a privately owned financial services business founded in 1987 whose areas of expertise include Asset Management, Corporate Capital, Property and Specialised Finance.

Matrix Group Limited is the holding company for the following business activities:

ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Alternative Funds of Funds
- Cash Funds
- Hedge Funds
- Private Client Investment Management
- Private Equity
- VCT Services

CORPORATE CAPITAL

- Broking
- Corporate Finance
- Market Making
- Primary and Secondary Issues
- Research

PROPERTY

- Development
- Investment
- Management

SPECIALISED FINANCE

- Alternative Energies
- Private Equity Fund Placement
- Project Finance
- Structured Finance

To date, Matrix has raised around £7.5 billion for its investment products and currently has over £2.5 billion of funds under management.

Matrix's staff of around 200 is based in the West end of London, at One Vine Street, W1.