Now Available: *Kyo-Machiya* - Authentic Kyoto-Style Town Houses as Overnight Tourist Accommodations in Kyoto, Japan’s Cultural Capital

Kyoto, Japan … April 29, 2006 … Japan welcomes tourists to stay in its various traditional and unique lodging establishments that offer a cultural experience above and beyond the mere comfortable bed and color television found in standard Western-style hotels. In Japan, travelers can sleep in: an inexpensive guesthouse or *Minshuku*, a luxury inn or *Ryokan*, a Buddhist temple or *Shikubo*, and now, in Kyoto only, a refurbished traditional merchant townhouses known as *Machiya* or "*Kyo-Machiya*" specific to Kyoto.

The *Iori Weekly Machiya* is a corporation that provides comfortable authentic Kyo-Machiya accommodations to visitors. Tourists can choose from five different conveniently located Kyo-Machiya that can house a couple or a group of up to 16 people. *Iori* means retreat, and while all of these Kyo-machiya are equipped with modern amenities -- kitchen, baths, toilets, heating and cooling units, high-speed DSL Internet access, they still maintain their traditional Japanese ambiance that is a pleasurable cultural escape from our Western-style house or apartment. And, unlike a ryokan-stay, over-nighting in a Kyo-Machiya provides a feeling of ownership of the entire house. But of course, you still have concierge services!

The Iori Weekly Machiya also offer on-premises traditional arts programs called "Origin," through which guests can experience the origins of Japanese culture. Workshops are available in: Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy, Noh drama, Traditional Dance and more.

**How this Iori Weekly Machiya came about:**

The Kyo-Machiya’s distinctive wooden architectural style, practical housing technique and cultural features have been valued and continue to be seen as historical and cultural symbols of Kyoto by most local residents. The majority of Kyo-Machiya owners, many of whom operate small shops within the Kyo-Machiya, continue to preserve them for the generations to follow. However, sometimes it is the case that the real estate value is just too tempting. As a result, quite a few Kyo-Machiya have already been demolished to make way for high-rise apartments and other buildings.

The Iori Project came about in 2004 as an attempt to halt or at least minimize the destruction of these historic structures and to acknowledge and promote their value and importance to Kyoto’s future development. The project was in line with Kyoto City’s Kyo-Machiya Revitalization Plan launched in 2000, where residents, citizens, business owners and corporations apply collaborative efforts to preserve and renovate Kyo-Machiya.

Those Kyo-Machiya that have been refurbished enhance Kyoto’s back streets with their picturesque charm, and beckon tourists with their cameras on afternoon strolls. Some Kyo-Machiya are open to visitors eager to peek inside. Others have been transformed into restaurants and cafes, and finally, there are the Iori Weekly Kyo-Machiya, with their organized arts and cultural packages and transformative overnight stay experiences.

Iori Weekly Kyo-Machiya prices start at 35,000 yen (about $305) per day for an up to four-night stay in a two-story house that includes … First Floor: Entrance, Kitchen, Wooden Bath, Living Room (8 mats), and Garden; Second Floor: Tatami Room (6mats), Wooden Floor Room (80 sqm). Rates drop to 24,500 yen (about $213) per day for stays of eight nights or more.

**Further Information:**

More information on the Iori Project and to book Kyo-Machiya:
Information on Alex Kerr and associates, founder of the Iori Project:

More information about Machiya: www.jnto.go.jp/eng/spn/kyoto/walking/02.html

More Information about Kyoto City: raku.city.kyoto.jp/sight_e.phtml,

Information about Kyoto Prefecture: www.pref.kyoto.jp/visitkyoto/en/

Information about tours to Japan: www.japantravelinfo.com