

Dining | WeekendPass

Eating Around

DEBUTS

Zengo Opens, Adding Asian-Latin Zing to 7th Street NW

On Monday, Placido Domingo, Chinese drummers and a number of scantily dressed Asian dancers officially opened **ZENGO**, the newest fusion restaurant to open in the 7th Street corridor downtown. The Latin-Asian restaurant, designed by the esteemed firm Adamstein & Demetriou, is a two-level restaurant and lounge that will serve as Domingo's "home away from home" when he's in town as general director of the Washington National Opera.

Mexico City-born Chef Richard Sandoval and Shanghai-born Chef de Cuisine Alan Yu have crafted a trans-Pacific menu, tapping culinary elements from Asian and Latin



Team Zengo includes Chef de Cuisine Alan Yu, co-owner Placido Domingo and Chef Richard Sandoval. Notice the glazed pastry lookalikes bobbing behind them.

traditions. Where else might you find roasted plantains (\$5) and Oregon Kobe beef (\$10 per oz.) on the same menu?

Appetizer offerings include wonton tacos that mix pickled ginger with mango salsa (\$11) and barbecue baby back ribs that fuse chile chipotle with orange hoisin (\$10), along with an assortment of ceviches from an upstairs bar (\$9-\$12), sushi rolls (\$10-\$13) and dim sum (\$8-\$10).

The curved concrete bar downstairs will add to the increasingly vibrant lounge scene downtown. There are numerous mojito variations (\$8-\$9) and an Asian-inspired drink called the Blushing Geisha (\$11) that mixes vodka, sake and cherries.

A word to the wise: Beware of the lack of restroom signage on the second floor. The open layout of the mens' and womens' facilities back near the kitchen could cause

a scandal if you consume one too many raspberry caipirinhas (which go for \$9).

And be careful when ascending or descending the grand staircase. Hovering above are so-called clay pods that are supposed to look like smooth pebbles dancing from the ceiling. Many guests on Monday believed them to be oversized glazed pastries (perhaps pre-Lenten Polish Paczkis?), floating in mid-air. MICHAEL

GRASS (EXPRESS)

→ 781 7th St. NW; 202-393-2929. (Gallery Place-Chinatown)