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**New Latin-Asian restaurant by Mexico City born Chef Sandoval
marks homecoming for former Citronelle Chef Yu**

Zengo, in partnership with Maestro Placido Domingo, to open early October

Washington, DC -- Just steps from Chinatown's colorful and vibrant Friendship Archway, the new Zengo, a Latin-Asian restaurant by acclaimed Mexico City born Chef Richard Sandoval, is set to open in early October. The restaurant is located at 781 Seventh Street at Gallery Place/Chinatown.

Sandoval is opening Zengo in collaboration with the legendary Placido Domingo. The restaurant will serve as the "home away from home" for the Washington National Opera general director when he is in town. Domingo, whose grandmother owned a restaurant, has always dreamed of being involved in the restaurant business from the time he was a child. Sandoval and Domingo's partnership began with Pampano in New York, named best new restaurant in America in 2003 by *Esquire* magazine.

At Zengo, which translates to "give and take," Sandoval will merge the bold Latin foods of his heritage with Shanghai born Chef de Cuisine Alan Yu's Asian ingredients and techniques. The opening of Zengo marks a homecoming for Yu who grew up in the area working at his parents' restaurant in DC's Chinatown and went on to serve as executive sous chef under famed Chef Michel Richard at *Citronelle*. A graduate of the University of Maryland and L'Academie de Cuisine, Yu most recently worked as Executive Chef for Jean George Vongerichten's 66 restaurant in New York.

The collaboration between Sandoval and Yu will produce intriguing "sharable" Latin-Asian dishes, such as: *Won Ton Tacos, with Charred ahi tuna, Sushi rice, pickled ginger, and mango salsa; Achiote Grilled Mahi Mahi, with Fried Mojo Yuca, curried slaw and cilantro*. Highlights from the drink menu include Asian and Latin cocktails, such as the award winning *Mojito Cuzco* featuring white rum, mint, cucumber and lime, as well as signature "muddled" fresh fruit drinks mixed with alcohol.

The flavorful cuisine will be showcased against the interior designed by Adamstein & Demetriou. The award-winning architects studied Latin and Asian cultures to gain inspiration for the design, but purposely avoided stereotypical imagery. The design team instead created a light-filled two-story restaurant with soaring ceilings and a playful mix of soft and sensual forms, brightly colored faux iguana and lizard textures, and tones of mango and papaya mixed with primitive dark woods.

The 195-seat restaurant will feature a high-energy lounge on the first floor, with a curved concrete bar and wine bottles appearing to float in a grid formation. Oversized windows will open up into the street and a dramatic curved concrete staircase will be accentuated with clay pods hanging overhead, giving the appearance of smooth pebbles dancing from the ceiling. The second floor will feature a ceviche bar and open kitchen, as well as a spacious dining room adorned with a colorful mural by a local artist.

Sandoval owns six restaurants, including the nationally acclaimed Zengo located in Denver, Colorado. For more information, please visit www.modernmexican.com.

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