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**CELEBRITY CHEF AARÓN SÁNCHEZ BRINGS HIS TALENTS  
TO ZÓCALO MEXICAN GRILL & TEQUILERÍA**

**CLEVELAND – June 4, 2008** – Cleveland’s East 4<sup>th</sup> Street has landed another famous chef. New York City-based chef Aarón Sánchez has partnered with Zócalo Mexican Grill & Tequilería to develop a new menu, sharing his award-winning knowledge of and passion for Mexican cuisine with guests of the Cleveland restaurant. The new menu debuts June 19.

The son of celebrated Mexican cooking authority Zarela Martínez, Sánchez is one of the country’s leading contemporary Latin chefs. He has two acclaimed restaurants in New York City, Paladar and Centrico, and is author of “La Comida del Barrio.” In 2005, he was nominated as the Rising Star Chef of the Year by the James Beard Foundation. That same year, he was named one of *People En Español’s* 50 Most Beautiful People. A former co-host of Food Network’s “Melting Pot,” Sánchez introduced a national audience to his technique and creativity with contemporary interpretations of classic Latino cuisine.

“The opportunity to come to an up-and-coming food city such as Cleveland is why I got involved with Zócalo,” Sánchez said. “It gives me the chance to share my food and my culture with a new audience.”

Sánchez joins his good friend Michael Symon of Lola on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, heightening the culinary reputation of the expanding, eclectic neighborhood. The two dynamic chefs have been good friends for many years and competed against each other last year on Food Network’s “The Next Iron Chef” competition. It was his friendship with Symon that led Sánchez to Zócalo.

“I have a dear friend in Mike Symon, who shook up the food scene here in town, and he suggested that I pair with Zócalo to improve upon what was already a very good restaurant,” Sánchez said. “It has been a dream relationship, and we’re dedicated to turn a good Mexican restaurant into a great one.”

Bringing a new, fresh approach to Mexican food, Sánchez said he kept a great portion of the menu concepts the same, like featuring dishes authentic to three distinct culinary regions of Mexico: Yucatan, Puebla and Veracruz. He has added his background and experience to tweak some recipes, adding authentic identity and contemporary technique. As an example, Sánchez has added corn tortillas to the taco dishes, which is the way they are served in Mexico. He also has brought traditional cheeses and chiles to accent dishes and new earthenware tableware to accent the colors and flavors of the food.

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“I want to elevate the perception and expectation of Mexican food,” Sánchez said. “I want to give this food some respect.”

Having the star chef join the Zócalo family is a great achievement for both the restaurant and for Cleveland, explained Tony Penn, chief operating officer of Trifecta Management Group that operates the restaurant. “Obviously, we are thrilled to have Aarón involved with Zócalo,” Penn said. “We were very happy with how Zócalo has been received in the Cleveland market, but Aarón’s participation will take our concept to the highest culinary level.”

Sánchez is excited to be a part of the Cleveland dining scene. “I love the renaissance the downtown area is experiencing now, as well as the caliber of chefs and food that is being served on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street,” he said. “That makes this the ideal home for me.”

Zócalo Mexican Grill & Tequilería brings the tastes of Mexico to Cleveland’s East 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The restaurant’s menu taps the spices, flavors and ingredients authentic to three distinct culinary regions of Mexico. Zócalo’s tequilería features a signature tower with 99 different types of tequila, a selection of Mexican beers, tequila flights, upside-down margaritas, a tasting room and tequila masters who can help guide guests on their tequila selection.

Zócalo Mexican Grill & Tequilería is located at 2071 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. in Cleveland. Open seven days a week, restaurant hours are 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and 11:30 a.m. to 12 a.m. weekends. Zócalo’s bar is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. For more information, call 216-781-0420 or visit [www.zocalocleveland.com](http://www.zocalocleveland.com).

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