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Sonoma and Z Grill under new ownership

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Two of the most delectable additions to Flower Mound in the last 5 years has been Sonoma Grill and Wine Bar in Parker Square and Z Grill and Tap at 2321 Cross Timbers. Dining at Sonoma is more than a culinary treat; it is an elegant experience that begins with a robust wine selection, continues with a marvelous choice of mouth-watering appetizers, followed by an eclectic mix of aged beef, fresh seafood, poultry, pastas, pizzas, lunch sandwiches and more and ends with a sumptuous dessert, all of which is enjoyed in an atmosphere of original oil paintings, tastefully sprinkled throughout the casual décor. Z Grill is more of a family-style restaurant and sports bar with a huge and assorted menu that includes everything from juicy burgers to super salads and sea food entrees. If you're a sports enthusiast, there are fifteen hi-definition televisions surrounding the large interior, providing entertainment from every direction.

Jan Zwerver, who created the vision for the two very popular dining establishments, has recently sold both businesses to Al Abbood, a Southlake resident with a distinguished career in retail business at the executive level. Mr. Abbood was, for many years, a senior executive with K-Mart and Eckerd Pharmacy. As a director of sales for the eastern United States he has acquired extensive experience in management and marketing. When he decided to switch careers, he began looking at several restaurants in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. "I'm a very harsh critic," he said during an interview, "and I used to visit Sonoma and Z as a patron, and I was always satisfied." He is so pleased with the reputation of the two entities that he doesn't anticipate any major changes. However, Mr. Abbood has some ideas to increase the visibility of his new purchases. One of them is to include a unique type of entertainment at Z's on those nights when major sporting events are not being viewed by patrons.

Other ideas include rewarding the employees who work hard by allowing managers to become partial owners. In addition, he has plans to franchise the two name brands into other areas, perhaps eventually having five of each throughout the metroplex. Furthermore, the new owner wants to engage with the community, much like his predecessor. "I believe strongly in giving back to the community," he said. His most fervent desire is to provide assistance to poor and underprivileged children. "I want to do my best to help these children and bring a little more joy into their lives," he added. To kick off his plan, Mr. Abbood is offering patrons 20 percent of their bill (excluding alcohol and taxes) if they bring in a new, unwrapped toy to donate to the "Toys for Tots" program. The offer began November 19 and will continue through December 13.

Jan Zwerver will remain with both restaurants through the Christmas and New Year's holiday to help with the transition. When asked what he enjoyed most about the five years that he owned and operated the two restaurants, Mr. Zwerver said: "I have some great memories of the way things have progressed in the community that we've served. I'm proud of our efforts to bring hope to so many through our sponsoring and catering of many worthwhile causes. I just want to say a heartfelt thank you to this marvelously philanthropic community for giving us a chance to be a part of it."