

For Immediate Release
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**Eli Hengst Jared Rager Announce Partnership Changes Underway at Redwood,
Sonoma Restaurant and Blue Ridge Restaurant**

Washington, DC, (March 30, 2009)-- Eli Hengst and business partner Jared Rager recently finalized the terms of an equity sale that gives Jared sole ownership and management control of Redwood Restaurant, located in Bethesda, Maryland.

Hengst, who owns the majority interest in the partner's new restaurant, Blue Ridge in Glover Park (opening mid-April), will act as Managing Partner at Blue Ridge as well as their Capitol Hill favorite, Sonoma Restaurant and Wine Bar. Hengst has also formed a new company with partners Barton Seaver and Douglas Singer to develop a long-held space at 1612 14th Street NW.

"Eli and I are dividing to conquer, allowing us to focus more fully and completely on our endeavors, with me concentrating on Redwood, and Eli on opening Blue Ridge and running Sonoma's day-to-day operations. On peak days, Redwood serves 600 to 700 guests, and we felt that this level of business merited my full-time attention - especially as we head into Spring on Bethesda Row," said Jared Rager.

The business partners agreed that dividing their responsibilities and ownership to permit the highest level of personal attention on each restaurant was the best solution for a growing company.

"I'm looking forward to getting back to my roots - opening intimate, ingredient-driven, neighborhood restaurants in Washington," said Hengst. "I've always felt a strong sentimental connection to the city its neighborhoods. It all started as a kid watching my dad open and manage the Four Seasons Georgetown in the late 1970's, to working with Constantine Stavropoulos to open Tryst and The Diner in Adams Morgan, and most recently to developing my own group of restaurants united by a philosophy of seasonality, sustainability, and community."

"The opportunity to get back to the city," Hengst continued, "to and work with my good friend Barton Seaver on Blue Ridge and then on our forthcoming partnership on 14th Street is a natural extension of the affection I have for DC's neighborhoods."

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