



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Than Mint Julep To Make Mr. Howard Proud

On his way to San Francisco to finally sign a lease for a restaurant space, Mehdi Zarekari decided to take the Harrison exit towards Oakland's Broadway Auto Row district to take a quick look at this "café" space beside a dealership that his wife insisted on seeing. She has seen a successful restaurant in a car dealership before and thought that the space could be what they were looking for. "We could just drop by. It's on our way anyway", she insisted.

"Thinking that this would just be a quick stop, I obliged", Mehdi said. As soon as I walked in, I knew that we have found the perfect place for Z Café & Bar. Built in 1924, for the Howard Automobile Company as a Buick showroom, the restaurant boasts of expansive showroom windows trimmed with dark stained wood, soaring ceilings, long granite bar and all original tile floors similar to cafes in Paris.

Originally, designed by architect Benjamin Geer McDougall who designed a number of prominent Oakland buildings including the ornate Cathedral building near downtown, the space is of landmark quality. Charles S. Howard (the infamous owner of Seabiscuit), wanted a glamorous state-of-the-art showroom and would not have settled for less. In the late '90s, Steve Simi, of Connell Jeep & Chrysler Dealership, led a team of engineers, architects and craftsmen for the major restoration of the building that included the creation of a café space right inside the showroom.

Now called, "Z Café & Bar", a few contemporary strokes give the space just enough twist to make it a truly charming spot. Taking the place of showroom lights, two over-sized pendant chandelier reigns over the main dining space. On the walls, the abstract photography of Klaus Lange lends a splash of color to the room. At the back of the restaurant, a private dining space done in deep earth tones and gold accents create a perfect ambiance for candlelight dining.

Charles Howard may not have envisioned a restaurant in his showroom, but the graciousness he had built into his showroom now compliments Z Café's inviting approach to food -- generous portions with simple flair. Always animated, the dining room comes alive with the flow of festive house flavored cocktails.

Z Café & Bar, located at 2735 Broadway in Oakland. Breakfast & lunch weekdays 7:00 am to 2:30 pm; dinner 5:00PM to 9:00PM Tuesday – Saturday; Sunday brunch 9:00am to 2:30 pm. Bar open daily. Al fresco dining at the patio. For reservations, call 510.663.2905

Resources:

Fixtures: Pendant chandelier from Lightspann Illuminations. Curtains from De Clercq's Theatrical Specialties. Floors: ¾" White, Gray & Navy Blue all original 1924 porcelain tiles from the Rigney Tile Company (no longer in existence). Similar 1" mosaic tiles American Restoration (in Arkansas). Furniture: Café chairs from Gar Products. Tables are custom-made for the restaurant.