CHIPOTLE REOPENS DOORS TO RESTAURANT NO. 1 FOLLOWING FIRST RENOVATION IN 24 YEARS

The first-ever Chipotle opened in 1993 across from the University of Denver, where founder and CEO Steve Ells first started serving burritos inspired by San Francisco Mission District

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 7, 2017-- Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) has reopened its doors today to the first-ever Chipotle restaurant in its hometown of Denver following a summer long renovation. The original Chipotle location opened in the former Dolly Madison ice cream shop on East Evans Avenue across from the University of Denver, where founder, chairman and CEO Steve Ells himself prepared delicious food and served the very first Chipotle customers.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, Ells used a small loan from his father to open the first Chipotle, which was inspired by tacquerias he'd visit in San Francisco's Mission District while cooking at the famed Stars restaurant. Ells intended to use the first Chipotle as a cash cow to help him open a fine dining restaurant. Very quickly, however, Chipotle's fresh and delicious food, prepared using classic cooking techniques, but served quickly and affordably, took off. Ells opened the second Chipotle in 1995 and the third in 1996. Today, Chipotle has more than 2,300 locations worldwide and more than 60,000 employees. Despite its growth, the menu has remained remarkably similar, with only a few additions, including the burrito bowl, salads, vegetarian Sofritas, and most recently queso (the most requested item Chipotle didn't previously serve).

Much of the work at Evans was done behind the scenes. Chipotle expanded the cramped basement of the 850-square-foot restaurant to create additional storage and food prep space, allowing them to make the small open kitchen – still a hallmark design element of all Chipotle locations – more efficient. Work in the dining room updates the style of the small space, while preserving the original charm of the first restaurant.

"The Evans restaurant will always be special to me," said Ells. "I opened that restaurant with the novel idea to show that food that was served fast didn't have to be a typical fast food experience, and with the hope of financing a 'real restaurant.' Today, Chipotle has become plenty real and we are having a significant impact on the way people eat by making delicious food, made with whole, unprocessed ingredients available and affordable to everyone. That isn't something I could even have imagined when I opened that first restaurant 24 years ago."

ABOUT CHIPOTLE

Steve Ells, Founder, Chairman and CEO, started Chipotle with the idea that food served fast did not have to be a typical fast food experience. Today, Chipotle continues to offer a focused menu of burritos, tacos, burrito bowls, and salads made from fresh, high-quality raw ingredients, prepared using classic cooking methods and served in an interactive style allowing people to get exactly what they want. Chipotle seeks out extraordinary ingredients that are not only fresh, but that are raised responsibly, with respect for the animals, land, and people who produce them. Chipotle prepares its food using real, whole ingredients, and is the only national restaurant brand that prepares its food using no added colors, flavors or other industrial additives typically found in fast food. Chipotle opened with a single restaurant in Denver in 1993 and now operates more than 2,300 restaurants. For more information, visit Chipotle.com.

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Source: Chipotle Mexican Grill

Chipotle Mexican Grill
Chris Arnold, 303-222-5912
carnold@chipotle.com
