

Jared Rager - CEO - Home Grown Eats, LLC

Jared Rager, a Maryland native and graduate of Middlebury College, left the corporate world of General Electric behind over six years ago to establish a series of neighborhood-based, independently owned restaurants: Mendocino Grille, Sonoma Restaurant and Wine Bar and Redwood, with Blue Ridge in Glover Park slated to open in spring 2009. These gathering places showcase locally sourced, farm-fresh ingredients, and launched the wine bar culture in Washington for friends and family to celebrate everyday events and special occasions.

Jared has over a decade of experience in project development, management, sales, and marketing, a great foundation for his business operations, including site development, construction and financing of restaurant endeavors. In addition to overseeing the behind-the-scenes aspects, Jared fully enjoys the "front end" of the business as well, actively managing his properties on a daily basis and interacting with customers and the local community to ensure the experience at his restaurants is constantly improving.

Jared's first foray into the restaurant world was the purchase of Mendocino Grille (2003). He worked with co-owner Eli Hengst to establish the Georgetown restaurant as one of Washington's premier eateries (*Washingtonian's* 100 Very Best Restaurants List from 2005 - 2008) before selling the restaurant in 2008.

In 2005, Jared financed and opened Sonoma Restaurant and Wine Bar on Capitol Hill. Under Jared and co-manager Eli Hengst's direction, the restaurant opened to rave reviews from the community and food critics, alike. Tom Sietsema, food critic for the *Washington Post*, wrote, "I'd love to keep Sonoma a secret, but I knew it was too late the day it opened." In 2007, Sonoma won the Restaurant Association's RAMMY for 'Best Neighborhood Restaurant.'

More recently, Jared financed and opened his first solo operation: Redwood Restaurant and Bar located on Restaurant Row in Bethesda, MD. Redwood provides the DC suburbs with a great city experience: a warm, yet elegant gathering place providing the best organic food sourced locally at a great price. Recently voted by Bethesda readers "Best New Restaurant" in *Bethesda Magazine* 2009" and selected by *Washingtonian* magazine as one of the DC area's "Top 75 Bars in 2009," Redwood is rapidly becoming the destination of choice for the greater DC community.

In April 2009, Jared looks forward to opening his third venture in partnership with Eli Hengst: Blue Ridge Restaurant in Glover Park. This simple farm-to-table restaurant will set a new standard for ingredient-driven neighborhood dining. Barton Seaver will head the kitchen, with Justin Guthrie, a nationally recognized mixologist at the vanguard of the cocktail revival who is running the spirits program. "We look forward to serving the bustling Glover Park community in the near future," says Rager.

Jared's goal is to create a series of restaurants that serve an important niche in Washington's restaurant scene: places with unparalleled food (organic and locally sourced) paired with great wines in a relaxed atmosphere, at a reasonable price point. This philosophy has inspired Jared's independent company name: Home Grown Eats - look for a new destination restaurant and bar in your neighborhood soon. Jared Rager resides in Washington, DC with his wife Lily and his two young sons.