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Meritage Hospitality Group Announces the Appointment of Joel Medina as Corporate Culinary Manager

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (August 14, 2023) – **Meritage Hospitality Group Inc.** has expanded its casual dining operations team with the hire of veteran Culinary Specialist Joel Medina.

Joel joins Meritage with over 25 years of culinary expertise including experience in Italian, Mexican, International, Classic French, Steakhouses, airline catering, food brokerage, casual dining and fine dining. He brings a passion for cooking, food research and development and a great deal of knowledge in front of house operations at the General and District Manager levels. He is a father to two amazing young people and husband to an incredible woman.

"We are thrilled to have Joel join our team, **Morning Belle** has been a local favorite since 2019 and Joel's expertise comes at the perfect time as we look to update our core menu offerings and elevate our playfully sophisticated brand," said Mike Thorp, Manager of Operations.

The Casual Dining segment of Meritage's business includes two **Stan's Tacos** and three **Morning Belle** locations throughout Grand Rapids. Stan's Tacos provides a unique, lively atmosphere that invites guests to kick back with great music & friends while enjoying delicious tacos and *the best margaritas, EVER!* The a-la-carte style menu features a variety of popular Mexican favorites scratch-made from fresh ingredients.

Morning Belle features a bright, floral atmosphere that includes white brick and shiplap walls, warm cedar accents, vibrant garden fabrics and fresh plants. The restaurant offers several made to order items both healthy and indulgent, including savory avocado toast, frittatas, egg white omelets and the popular Glazed Doughnut Waffle. The Morning Belle drink menu centers on several house made mimosas but also includes several other brunch cocktails such as the Belle Mimosa and Morning Sunrise Bellini.

"I am looking forward to using what I have learned throughout my career to bring my love for food and customer service to Meritage," said Medina "We are on the cusp of some very exciting developments, and it is my goal to contribute to Stan's and Morning Belle in ways that help us anticipate the future and expand the brands as far as we believe they can go."

About Meritage Hospitality Group

Meritage Hospitality Group, headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is one of the nation's premier franchise operators, with 380 restaurants and approximately 12,000 employees located across 16 states in the U.S. The Company is one of the largest Wendy's restaurant operators in the world, and owns several proprietary restaurant brands including Morning Belle and Stan's Tacos. The Company recently entered into a development agreement to build up to 200 Taco John's restaurants in the midwestern U.S. commencing in 2022.