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**Red Elephant Pizza & Grill Introduces “Recession-Friendly”
Concept in Family Dining to Sarasota**

Successful former Outback proprietor to open Sarasota location

Opening day: January 18, 2010

Sarasota, FL – January 6, 2010 – Have you ever seen a Red Elephant? What is a Red Elephant, anyway?

Imagine a restaurant that shares your community’s values in addition to offering great value. Where top-notch service meets top-quality ingredients. Where a couple relaxing after a busy day at work can feel as comfortable as a group of fifth-graders fresh off the baseball field. Where people who love healthy salads can share a slice of the good life alongside pizza lovers.

You’ve just imagined a Red Elephant. **The Red Elephant Pizza & Grill** (www.redelephantpizza.com), open daily starting January 18, in Sarasota, is the brainchild restaurant concept of one of the most successful former Outback proprietors in the country. The University Parkway location is the 7th Red Elephant, with others in Tampa, Panama City, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee, home of the first Red Elephant that started welcoming guests over 3 years ago.

“Our dream from the start was to create a place that of course has great food, but, even more important, a place where people can recharge and reconnect,” says Red Elephant founder John Schrowang. “From day one, Red Elephant has attracted families, couples, students, and business people who need meal time as a way to catch up with each other, or to get to know each other a little better over lunch or dinner. Parents can also have an ‘adult’ conversation while their children are having fun in the restaurant’s kid-friendly game room.

“And in today’s tough times, the ‘recession-friendly’ value that we offer – an average of around \$10 per person for a meal – makes our customers appreciate us even more. People want a place that delivers warm, welcoming service and quality ingredients at comfortable prices. Everyone at Red Elephant makes this our mission everyday. This, plus little surprises like the bucketful of boiled peanuts on the menu, keeps people coming back again and again.”

Mr. Schrowang is tapping into his decades of highly successful restaurant experience to realize his dream; his 10-year track record as an Outback Steakhouse owner in Tallahassee earned him the “Proprietor of the Year” award during five out of those ten years. His partner, Carl Sahlsten (Vice President of Red Elephant Pizza LLC), was instrumental in building the Carrabba’s brand. As President of Carrabba’s Italian Grill, Inc., he was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company, including the growth of the concept from 6 to 70 restaurant locations.

While pizza plays the starring role on the menu, customer favorites also include the wide array of “Greener Pasture” offerings – fresh salads with homemade dressings. Also quite popular on the menu are the half pound Elephant Burgers, the Tuscan Roast Beef Dip and fire-grilled entrees including sirloin, chicken, mahi mahi and salmon topped with a variety of original tasty toppings. Huge homemade Elephant Ears top the list of desserts that both kids and adults enjoy.

On the Saturday evening prior to the Sarasota opening, the restaurant is hosting a private fundraising event whose proceeds will benefit the local YMCA, a partnership that reflects Red Elephant’s commitment to community involvement.

But that still leaves one question... *What is a Red Elephant?*

Mr. Schrowang smiles as he tells the story of the Red Elephant: “When Morgan, the wife of one of our partners, was growing up, her mom gave her this really cute red elephant doll. That red elephant went everywhere with her, even out to dinner with the family. They still laugh about that. Growing up she was always happiest when she was surrounded by family, friends, and her special red elephant. We strive to create that same feeling of comfort and fun in our restaurant. “

About Red Elephant Pizza & Grill

Red Elephant Pizza & Grill opened its first restaurant in Tallahassee, Florida, in 2006, quickly becoming a favorite of local families, businesses, and the FSU community. Embracing the idea that people eat out because they want to share great times around good food, Red Elephant now serves communities in 7 locations across Florida, with more opening in 2010. For more information, visit www.redelephantpizza.com.

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