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MOCKINGBIRD BISTRO WINE BAR WELCOMES RAWAD SEMAAN

HOUSTON – December 3, 2012... Owner/Executive Chef John Sheely of Mockingbird Bistro Wine Bar is pleased to welcome Rawad Semaan as manager at the award-winning bistro.

Semaan was born and raised in Lebanon and, at age 18, came to Houston in 2001. His first job was as a valet at Cafe Annie, where he worked alongside his brother. In 2003, he enrolled in the Hilton School of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston and moved inside the famed restaurant and began bussing tables then became a waiter and bartender. Cafe Annie's owners asked Semaan to split his time at Cafe Annie and one of their other concepts, Taco Milagro, as bartender. He graduated from U of H in 2007 with a B.S. in Hotel Management. That same year he helped to open The Grove, a restaurant in downtown Houston, as restaurant manager and beverage director, and in 2010 he worked as general manager of two sister restaurants located in a two-story space, Ava and Alto.

Semaan joined the Mockingbird family late in fall 2012, helping to manage the dining room and front-of-house service and assisting with private party bookings until owner Sheely's new restaurant, Osteria Mazzantini, opens in spring 2013, at which time Semaan will become its general manager.

"Detail to attention is key in this business, and I pride myself on being extremely detail-oriented," says Semaan. "For a complete dining experience, the food and the service should be given the same level of care and consideration. That is my goal."

In his free time, Semaan loves to try new restaurants around town and enjoys creating inventive cocktails. In fact, while working at The Grove, he won a national Bombay Sapphire cocktail contest that was featured in *GQ* magazine.

Award-winning Mockingbird Bistro Wine Bar is located at 1985 Welch at McDuffie, nestled between the River Oaks and Montrose neighborhoods. The restaurant is open Monday through Friday for lunch, Monday through Sunday for dinner; and for brunch on Sunday. Mockingbird is available for private parties and special events. Visit the restaurant online at www.mockingbirdbistro.com, and follow them on Facebook and Twitter at @MockingbirdHOU.