

PRESS RELEASE

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Cantina Monarca to Bring Elevated Mexican Dining Experience to Seattle's Lake Union Waterfront

Popular Bellevue restaurant announces new flagship location opening in summer 2027 at Vulcan Real Estate's Lake Union Piers, combining exceptional Mexican cuisine, immersive design, and breathtaking waterfront views.

SEATTLE, WA | October 2026 — Cantina Monarca, the acclaimed Mexican restaurant known for its vibrant atmosphere, elevated cuisine, and inventive cocktails, is expanding to Seattle with an extraordinary new flagship location set to open next summer at Lake Union Piers.

Located at one of Seattle's most iconic waterfront destinations, the new restaurant will occupy about 8,300 square feet of interior space, plus 2,700 square feet of outdoor patio space. With sweeping views of Lake Union and the Space Needle, the project promises a distinctive dining and entertainment experience in Seattle.

Designed by award-winning architect Gulla Jonsdottir, the new Cantina Monarca will represent the most anticipated restaurant project yet from restaurateur Bernie Garcia, founder of Cantina Monarca and president of Elev8 Hospitality Group.



Conceptual rendering of Cantina Monarca, Lake Union Piers

A New Destination for Seattle Dining

Designed to be more than a traditional restaurant, Cantina Monarca Seattle will bring together exceptional Mexican cuisine, world-class hospitality, bold architectural design, and a vibrant social atmosphere.

The concept will feature lush greenery, natural materials, striking architectural elements, an expansive bar, and thoughtfully designed dining spaces that celebrate the beauty of its waterfront setting.

The restaurant's expansive outdoor patios will offer guests lakeside dining, cocktails, and memorable gatherings year-round.

"Our vision is to create something Seattle hasn't experienced before," said Bernie Garcia, founder of Cantina Monarca. "We want to bring together incredible food, outstanding cocktails, beautiful design, and an energy that makes people feel great the moment they walk through the doors. With this extraordinary location on Lake Union, we have an opportunity to create something truly special."

Rooted in Family Tradition, Inspired by the Future

Cantina Monarca builds upon a family restaurant legacy that began in 1978 with Moctezuma's Mexican Restaurant.

Drawing on decades of hospitality experience, Garcia launched Cantina Monarca in Bellevue to redefine the modern Mexican dining experience in the Pacific Northwest.

The Seattle expansion marks a significant milestone in the brand's evolution, bringing its signature hospitality and culinary creativity to an iconic destination.

"Creating restaurants and spaces that bring people together has always been my passion," Garcia added. "This project is an opportunity to take everything we've learned over the years and elevate it to an entirely new level. Our goal is to create one of Seattle's most exciting restaurants, a place that both locals and visitors will love coming back to."

A Transformative Addition to Lake Union Piers

The restaurant will join Vulcan Real Estate's Lake Union Piers development, helping continue the evolution of the South Lake Union waterfront as a vibrant destination for dining, recreation, and entertainment.

With its prominent waterfront presence and central location, Cantina Monarca is positioned to become a signature destination for the neighborhood and the broader Seattle community.

“Lake Union Piers was designed to be a place where Seattle comes to gather on the water, and Cantina Monarca is exactly the kind of destination we envisioned,” said Robert S. Arron, Senior Director of Marketing & Leasing at Vulcan Real Estate. “Bernie and his team bring an incredible commitment to hospitality, food, and design, and we’re thrilled to welcome them to the waterfront.”

Looking Ahead

Cantina Monarca Seattle is targeting an opening in summer of 2027, with additional details regarding the restaurant's design, culinary offerings, and opening timeline to be announced as the project progresses.

About Cantina Monarca

Cantina Monarca is an elevated Mexican dining concept founded by restaurateur Bernie Garcia. Building upon a family hospitality tradition dating back to 1978, the restaurant combines authentic Mexican culinary influences with contemporary creativity, innovative cocktails, distinctive design, and exceptional hospitality. Its flagship Bellevue location has established the brand as a destination for memorable dining experiences.

About Vulcan Real Estate

Through strategic acquisitions and innovative development, Seattle-based Vulcan Real Estate develops and manages a diversified portfolio of high-performing quality assets, including office, life sciences, residential and mixed-use projects.

The company’s integrated team of real estate professionals offers a full range of development and portfolio management services from site selection and urban planning to build-to-suit construction, leasing, financing, and asset repositioning. Its real estate model is based on quality, sustainable development that builds new value across the entire community.

Since 2000, Vulcan Real Estate has invested \$6.5 billion developing 52 projects comprising 10.3 million square feet of commercial space and 4,250 residential units. Sixty percent of the development projects are located in South Lake Union, renowned as one of the largest urban redevelopment projects in the country. The company has 5.4 million square feet under management.

Media Contact

Cantina Monarca / Elev8 Hospitality Group

marketing@elev8hg.com

Vulcan Real Estate / Paxson Fay

Tara Lyons

tara@paxsonfay.com

707.299.0870