



**DON JUAN'S ROMANTIC MEXICAN FOOD  
GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK  
Site Medallion No. 58  
325 E. Main St.**

The late Don Chiavario opened Don Juan's in 1966. Don was living in California at the time and Mexican fast food restaurants were just starting in that area. He saw how popular that type of restaurant was becoming and decided to open his own. After scouting out several locations he decided on the Dallas area. He chose Grand Prairie for many reasons. One of which was the proximity to the aircraft plant with thousands of hungry lunch customers and another was the availability of a suitable building that he could remodel to suit his needs.

The building he found was a former Griddle System restaurant, opened in 1950. The Griddle was a popular diner in the fifties and early sixties. Don designed and did most of the remodeling to convert the building to Don Juan's. He opened the business in September of 1966. Fast food was not very common in Grand Prairie at that time and Mexican fast food was non-existent. Don Juan's was one of the first restaurants in Grand Prairie to have a drive-through.

The business prospered and grew but Don did not stay in one place very long, so back to California he went. He had several different managers operate the business for a few years but being an absentee owner did not work out well. In 1975 Don sold the restaurant to two employees. This partnership ran the restaurant for several years. Eventually one of the partners bought out the other. Jim Parker operated the restaurant until about 1989 when his younger brother John took over the reins. John has been operating the restaurant since then. Jim and John both started working at Don Juan's part time while they were in high school.

The business has continued to prosper and grow. Very little has actually changed from the day Don Chiavario first opened the business. The beans and meat are still cooked fresh everyday. Chili, burrito sauce, hot sauce, guacamole and almost everything else is still made from scratch each day using the same recipes that Don perfected back in 1966. Don Juan's has always tried to provide good food and service at reasonable prices in a clean and pleasant atmosphere.

Don Juan's is now one of the oldest restaurants in Grand Prairie. There are only two other restaurants in Grand Prairie that have been in business at the same location longer than Don Juan's, Theo's Drive In and Bob's Shakes and Burgers.