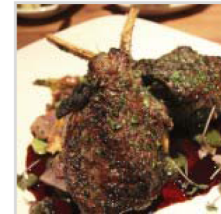


TCD Traveler: Skimping & Splurging at Disney West

June 16th, 2013 | By Robert Bundy

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Splurge: Though our local friends enthusiastically recommended this place, I have to admit I wasn't sure that I wanted to dine at The Ranch. It was a short drive from the hotel, and we were all feeling a bit tired that night, so we debated going. Learning that the adjacent Saloon—part of the restaurant—is where the live country music and line-dancing takes place did not further rouse my enthusiasm. When we finally arrived at what looked like an industrial office park, my suspicions were only raised further. Boy, oh boy, was I wrong. The Ranch is a wonderfully sophisticated, yet unpretentious, mecca for serious foodies, recently named one of the Top Ten New Restaurants in the Country by Gayot.com, and enthusiastically recommended by the Zagat survey. Chef Michael Rossi, who recently cooked for the James Beard Foundation, may be holding court in a restaurant influenced by country music, but make no mistake; the man is a rock star.



Grass-fed lamb chops at The Ranch.



Grass-fed lamb chops with Rosa Bianca eggplant, spicy merguez sausage, taggiasca olives, chickpeas, and harissa at The Ranch.

Our family enjoyed a fantastic meal here, with one inventive, delicious dish following another until we finally collapsed into a happy stupor. After settling into our booth, we enjoyed a consultation with gifted Master Sommelier Michael Jordan (stop that sniggering), who divined exactly which wines from his exalted 14,000-bottle cellar (no, that's not a typo) would most perfectly accompany our meal.

The marvelous vintages he trotted out were only the first of many revelations at The Ranch, including menu items like the Ceviche Trilogy with crab & coconut curry, lobster & mango, and shrimp & heirloom tomato versions (using the Ranch's own farm's more than 70 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, including several that are nearly extinct). Or the wild Burgundy escargot with hazelnut spaetzle, hen-of-the-woods mushrooms, and parsley & green garlic foam, beautifully paired with a glass of Kistler's *Les Noisetiers* Sonoma Coast chardonnay. Or the grass-fed lamb chops with Rosa Bianca eggplant, spicy merguez

sausage, taggiasca olives, chickpeas, and harissa, matched with a David Arthur Napa Valley Cabernet. Or the playful, buttered-popcorn-flavored ice cream. Or the deconstructed brownie.

If you have to pick just one splurge to enjoy on your family vacation to Anaheim, The Ranch, unequivocally, is it. I'd eat ramen noodles breakfast, lunch and dinner for a solid month to earn the chance to dine here again. Did I mention that I highly recommend it?