

Fiji's

Best

*Chef of
the Year:
From
Bologna
to The Ranch*

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Eats*

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THE RANCH
RESTAURANT & SALOON
MICHAEL ROSSI
Executive Chef

ELSEWHERE:

*Restaurant
Chains'
Systemwide
Sales Up*

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Peaceful and chic: The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon like stepping into elegant ranch dining room



The Great Room



The Dining Room



The Study



LOCATED ON THE 6TH FLOOR ABOVE THE RANCH RESTAURANT & SALOON

The Private Dining & Events Center features the Award-Winning Ranch Restaurant cuisine crafted by Executive Chef & Certified Sommelier, Michael Rossi, providing guests with the highest quality in food, beverage and service. The combination of cuisine and a unique venue is guaranteed to impress even the most discerning of guests.

6TH FLOOR ROOMS	CAPACITY	RESTAURANT	CAPACITY
The Study	40	The Carolina Room	16
The Dining Room	60	The Porch & Patio	70
The Hospitality Suite	100	SALOON	CAPACITY
The Great Room	264	Available for Buyouts	350

FOR RESERVATIONS PLEASE CONTACT OUR PRIVATE DINING & EVENTS SALES MANAGER, GINA MAURI AT 714.687.6320 OR GMAURI@THERANCH.COM

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Italian With Drive to Cook Realizes Food Lover's Dream

Family Ties, European Training Fuse at The Ranch

By FIFI CHAO

It's part of my job to watch what a lot of chefs are doing. Some, of course, are more impressive than others. Watching a fine chef open a restaurant and keep on doing his job so well that the public, year after year, continues to embrace the concept and the food makes for a great candidate for Chef of the Year.

Michael Rossi, executive chef at **The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon**, meets all of the criteria and is our pick.

Michael had an interest in good food and camaraderie at the table from a young age. He was surrounded by his close-knit Italian family, who were always cooking the old family recipes and sharing them at gatherings. His fascination with food eventually led him to the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, where he graduated at the top of his class.

He then set forth on an international culinary adventure to broaden his skills and follow his passion. First to the island of Maui for an internship learning Hawaiian fusion cuisine from pioneering chefs **Roy Yamaguchi** and **David Abella** of the highly successful Roy's restaurants. He returned to California and diversified by learning about Mexican cuisine.

Michael's desire to know even more about international food was the impetus for him to

attend the Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners in Costigliole d'Asti, Italy. He worked at Michelin-starred restaurant **Il Principe** in Pompeii, which in turn led him to Bologna, where he worked alongside one of Italy's greatest chefs, **Bruno Barbieri**, at the two-star Michelin restaurant **Locanda Solarola**.

Back in California once again, the food and wine crowd discovered Michael in the kitchen with famed chef **Andrew Sutton** at Disney's elegant Napa Rose restaurant. The Ranch was being built, and the marriage of fine restaurant concept and passionate chef came together. The Ranch has gone beyond the borders of Orange County with its fame and gained some national attention for this unique restaurant and its food.

Chef Rossi has proven he's a culinary hero and certainly deserves the Chef of the Year

award.

The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon itself is a dual-concept venue, as the name indicates. It's the brainchild of **Andrew Edwards**, founder and owner of **Extron Electronics**, a manufacturer of components for AV media integration systems that employs about 2,000 around the world. The company's headquarters are in Anaheim, and Mr. Edwards, possibly the most friendly businessman and unlikely restaurateur to ever come out of North Carolina, loves fine wine and great food made from farm-fresh products, and he's smitten with America's iconic country music and the kind of down-home dancing it inspires.

Andrew built a new headquarters building in 2012 and decided that was his opportunity to incorporate into the structure a fine-dining establishment and a separate western saloon for genuine fun. Word quickly spread about the restaurant's beauty and its superb food and wines, and it instantly became a destination-worthy venue.

The Ranch is peaceful and chic. Beautiful woods and leather make a forward statement. Fine designer elements throughout offer a memorable visual experience. The kitchen is partially visible along the back wall of the main dining area, and the bar shows off a superb display of alcohols. A few thousand bottles of global wine are celled here, and the wines-by-the-glass program is impressive. The grandest surprise is that the commitment extends to keeping food and wine prices in the affordable range.

Andrew and Chef Michael found themselves sharing the passion to serve carefully plated, fantastic tasting farm-to-fork fresh food in a lovely atmosphere, and the public has been relishing the seasonal American regional cuisine for four years now.

Michael also owns a fully organic agricultural operation nearby whose crops are used exclusively at The Ranch. There are many varieties of fruit trees and a vast array of garden vegetables, fruits and herbs. Its supply of heirloom tomatoes alone is mind-boggling. The cooking is rounded out with specially bred animal and sustainable fish products and additional produce from local farmers.

I can't imagine anyone passing up the fabulous hot popovers served with organic butter and preserves made in-house. They are a divine



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first nibble. For starters, I have also raved about the Fried Petaluma Quail many times. Wild Escargot from Burgundy with hazelnut spätzle and hen-of-the-woods mushrooms and a Ceviche Trilogy appetizer are two more re-orders I've made. On the green side, the Lobster Cobb Salad is pretty terrific. My soup-lover husband goes for the Soup of the Day, always made with seasonally appropriate ingredients.

The huge Cowboy Ribeye steak has been hailed by many as the best steak in Orange County. It's a 36-40-ounce hunk of fabulous meat meant to share. There are also other steaks suited to single servings. Grass-Fed Lamb Chops are on the current menu, sided with cannellini beans and artichoke. Pork Delmonico is a stand-up favorite with its complement of turnips, peaches and polenta. Fresh

fish entrees and Maplewood Smoked Free-Range Chicken also find their place at the main-dish table.

The pastry chef, who happens to be Chef Michael's brother, ends our dining with sweets as captivating as the meal we just had. Freshly baked Pecan Pie, seasonal cobbler, Sticky Toffee Pudding, and a chocolate thing called Milky Way with a Twist have all graced my table.

If you are looking for a fine-dining experience where quality is the cornerstone, The Ranch is keeping it real with soulful food that touches people on an emotional level. Keep in mind that there's no cover charge to go next door to the saloon if you've eaten in the restaurant. Work off some of those calories.

The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon: 1025 E. Ball Road, Anaheim, (714) 817-4200. Dinner nightly, 5-10 p.m. Saloon open Wednesday 5:30-closing, Thursday-Saturday 5:30 p.m.-2 a.m., family Sundays 4-10 p.m. ■