

ACCLAIMED TEAM MICHAEL JORDAN AND MICHAEL ROSSI REUNITE IN THE O.C.

# Ranch Hands

by Rich Manning / photos by Leigh Castelli



**Master Sommelier Michael Jordan with one of the over 14,000 wines found on The Ranch's extensive list.**

What do you get when you combine an upscale restaurant, a country music dance hall and an office building set in an industrial section of Anaheim, CA?

Chances are “white-hot venue” is not the first thing that ruminates in your brain. Yet that phrase is the perfect description for

**The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon**, a whimsical food and entertainment complex whose culinary program is overseen by Master Sommelier Michael Jordan and Executive Chef Michael Rossi, the duo who previously turned heads at the Disneyland Resort’s critical culinary darling Napa Rose.

While the digs are surprising if not downright unorthodox—the completely separated dining and dancing venues occupy the ground floor of the audio-visual manufacturing company The Ranch owner Andrew Edwards founded in 1983—the food and wine program offered at the darkly elegant eatery offers a serious study in epicurean synergy.

“We signed on because Andrew made it clear that The Ranch would be a true collaboration of food and development,” explains Jordan. “There was a lot of meticulous planning that went into its creation.”

He isn’t kidding. To wit: Before The Ranch opened in January, Rossi spent a year and a half perfecting the farm-to-table concept that is the venue’s gastronomic hallmark, utilizing the venue’s own local farm and specially designed test kitchen to craft the dishes that appear on the current menu for Edwards’ business clients.

This same adherence to preparation enabled Jordan the freedom to stock the

venue’s wine cellar with over 14,000 hand-picked foreign and domestic labels, some of which will be displayed in the venue’s opulent private dining room when it is unveiled on the building’s sixth floor later this summer. Even though Jordan designed the wine program to feature scores of bottles specifically selected to put novice and intermediate



**Executive Chef Michael Rossi spent one and half years perfecting The Ranch's farm-to-table menu before the venue opened.**

wine drinkers at ease—“We don’t want to get too geeky or esoteric with our wines,” he says—true oenophiles will have the opportunity to revel in some indulgent and rare finds if they so choose, such as the bottle of ’98 Château Lafite Rothschild or the ’61 Domaine Leroy Grand Cru that have made their way onto the wine list.

Exorbitant offerings aside, The Ranch ultimately desires to use its unusual home base to achieve a noble yet simplistic goal. “All we want is to provide people with a comfortable, soulful dining experience,” Jordan states. “We want to create the kind of experience where people can come in and say, ‘this is good food.’”