

CRITIC'S CHOICE CUTS

The best places to eat out during the holidays, gleaned from a year of restaurant reviews.

By [BRAD A. JOHNSON](#)



The Ranch

The Ranch has developed a reputation as being a steakhouse. And although technically it's not a steakhouse, I can see how people might jump to that conclusion. The bone-on cowboy rib-eye is quite possibly the best steak in all of Orange County. This is one of the best USDA Prime steaks that money can buy.

In the steakhouse tradition, the restaurant is designed so most of the seating is semicircular booths. Mercifully, the cowboy schtick doesn't feel at all like schtick. It comes across as authentic – and I say this as the son of a fifth-generation cattle rancher.

Much of the top-tier talent at The Ranch worked at one time or another at Napa Rose. That includes chef Michael Rossi and pastry chef David Rossi. Most of the produce served at The Ranch comes from the restaurant's own private farm in the foothills of Orange. And if ever there was a good argument for locavore cooking, it's the heirloom beet salad, the very best of its genre, with beets and oranges from the farm, along with watercress, almonds and crumbled, Spanish-style cheese.

Where: 1025 E. Ball Road, Anaheim

Don't miss: Escargot, popovers, ceviche, fried quail, lobster mac, lamb chops, cowboy rib-eye, pecan pie.

Phone: 714-817-4200