

Los Angeles Times

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The dining area of chef Jeremy Fox's influential Rustic Canyon restaurant looks out onto Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica. But you'll be looking at the colorful shellfish pozole.



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times



KIRK MCKOY Los Angeles Times

In the top photo, a tasting sampler of the pork from Cook Pigs Ranch, while in the photo above, it's the Upside Down Fig Cake with bee pollen.

Rustic Canyon

1119 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, (310) 393-7050, rusticcanyonwinebar.com. 5:30-10:30 p.m. Sundays to Thursdays, 5:30-11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Full bar. Valet parking. Credit cards accepted. \$\$\$

11 We haven't quite taken Jeremy Fox for granted in Los Angeles, although we've come pretty close. The food whisperers know how good his cooking at Rustic Canyon can be, but they mostly tend to go when visitors from out of town drag them along. His seed-to-stalk love of pulses, chewy grains, rowdy Provençal herbs and ultra-seasonal vegetables is admirable, but every good chef here has a co-dependent relationship with the farmers market. His electric-green shellfish pozole is remarkable, conceivably the single best dish to be found in Santa Monica, but everyone has their favorite version of pozole, many of which involve grandmothers or a secret spot in East L.A. Knockoffs of his Beets and Berries dish have become ubiquitous; so are the Things in a Bowl it inspired. Could it be that Fox doesn't do the celebrity chef thing? Could it be that Rustic Canyon still functions more as a wine bar than it does as a gastronomic shrine? We probably all need to get over it.