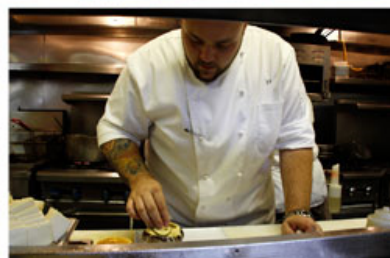


A HAMBURGER TODAY

BURGERS. WITH KETCHUP, MUSTARD — AND OPINION.

One of L.A.'s Best Burgers at Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica

Posted by [Damon Gambuto](#), September 23, 2009 at 2:30 PM



Rustic Canyon

1119 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401
([map](#)); 310-393-7050;
rusticcanyonwinebar.com

Cooking Method: Griddled

Short Order: An obsessive, young chef puts together one of the best burgers in town.

Want Fries with That? Yes! Fresh cut and twice fried makes for excellent and straight forward fries.

Prices: Niman Ranch Burger (with fries), \$16

Notes: If you are looking for the full treatment, ask for your burger smothered and you'll get a perfectly fried egg and thick-cut Niman Ranch bacon atop your already massive burger.

The truly seasonal and obsessively sourced menu at [Rustic Canyon](#) is a decidedly contemporary take that has its roots in the oldest traditions of feeding ourselves. That is to say, there was a time when every human menu was seasonal and locally sourced. These days, our food economy has been so thoroughly reconfigured by modernity that we don't find it odd to pay less for food driven, shipped, and flown thousands of miles before they hit our plates.

Now that we are slowly waking up to the perils of big agriculture and the pleasures of proximity, it's understood that part of a chef's duty is cultivation, even if only the kind that blossoms relationships with the best local farmers. Rustic Canyon's chef **Evan Funke** is perfectly suited to obsess over produce and just about everything else that has to do with his kitchen.

The beef for Rustic Canyon's **Niman Ranch Burger** comes from the vaunted Alameda institution. It's an 80/20 blend that Funke has ground to what I would call medium. The Gruyere is cave-aged and the bun is the brioche-style from [Rockenwagner](#). Usually just the mention of the brioche bun sends my eyes rolling in fancy-pants-fueled burger angst, but I've had this one before (at [The Golden State](#)) and know it to be excellent (mostly because it barely shares any similarities to most brioche buns). The wild arugula and five onion "fondue" (leek, Bermuda, Spanish, Spring, and Brown) that top the burger are, of course, from local farmers. The bread and butter pickles and herb rémoulade are made in house.