



December 19, 2006

Country Bumpkins

Used to be that you had to raise a barn or quilt a bee to get your friends together. (Okay, fine. You can't really quilt a bee.)

Now there's Rustic Canyon, Capo expat Josh Loeb's newly opened wine bar and seasonal kitchen.



Inside the warm, candlelit Santa Monica space, the affable staff will take you through the extensive wine list and weekly menu. (Loeb and exec chef Samir Mohajer, formerly of Axe and The Little Door, cook according to their finds at the local farmers' market.)

Mainstays include the mixed Moroccan salad plate with grilled flatbread and harissa, and a cast-iron burger with applewood smoked bacon and Point Reyes blue cheese. Pan-roasted chicken and root veggies, and almond tart with vanilla marshmallow cream have also been known to make an appearance.

Designed with the dinner party experience in mind, the food — and tables — are for sharing.

No barns, bees, or quilts necessary.

Rustic Canyon Wine Bar and Seasonal Kitchen, 1119 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica (310-393-7050 or rusticcanyonwinebar.com).