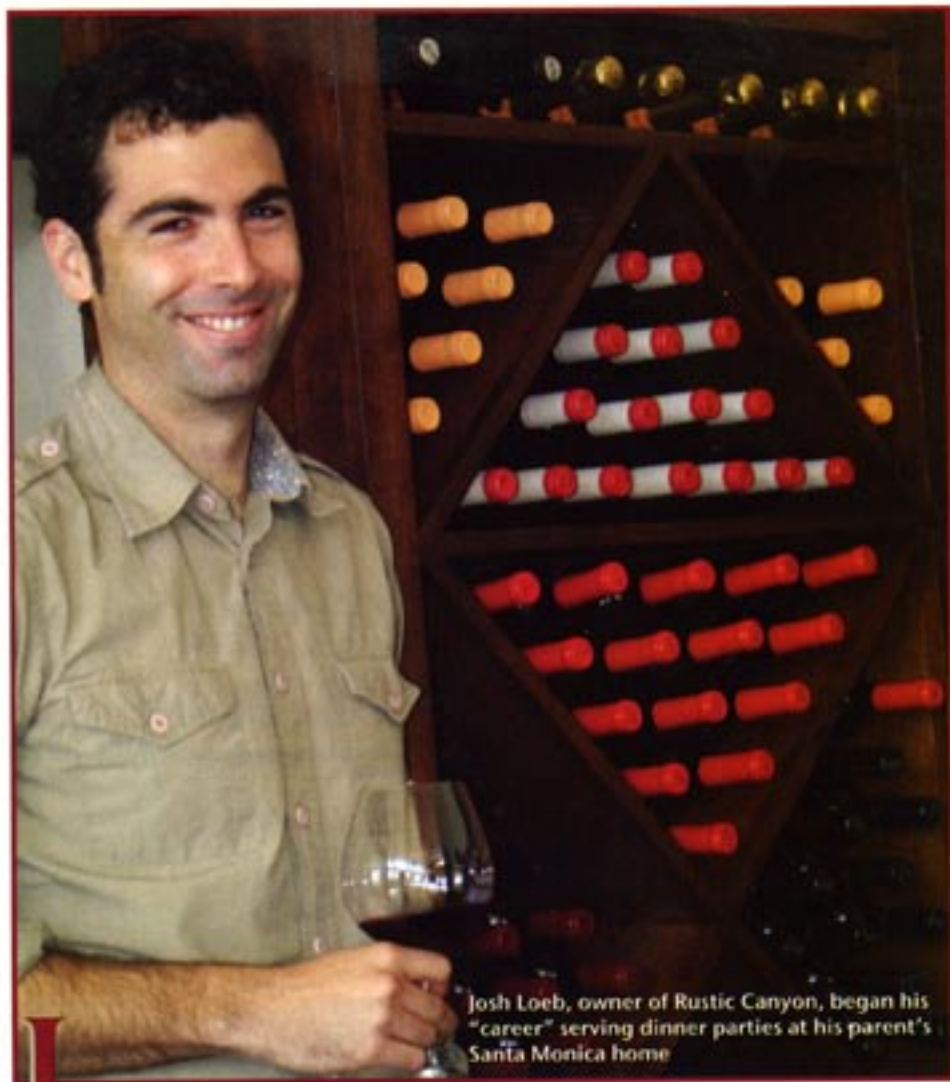


RUSTIC CANYON REDUX



Josh Loeb, owner of Rustic Canyon, began his "career" serving dinner parties at his parent's Santa Monica home

It is uncommon, when a restaurateur recites his past, to hear no stories about "growing up in the industry, washing dishes at age 11." The chronicle of Josh Loeb's lead-up to his newly opened Rustic Canyon Restaurant in Santa Monica reflects this exception to the rule.

"I never worked a day in a restaurant," he tells TASTING Panel. The 31-year old discov-

ered his talent by chance, a devotion to bringing people together over the celebration of food and wine.

Five years ago, Loeb found himself at a seamy L.A. bar, bored and out of sorts. "I wanted to figure out what I should be doing with my life. The only thing that popped in my head was inviting a bunch of friends to my house for brunch."

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LESS THAN SIX MONTHS OLD, THIS SANTA MONICA WINE BAR & BISTRO MORPHED FROM THE ART OF THE HOME DINNER PARTY

By Meredith May

It was his love of entertaining—in the form of cooking, choosing the wine, setting the table and even arranging the floral centerpiece for the table—that set Loeb on his current path.

The Los Angeles native realized that throwing home dinner parties was fulfilling. He began scheduling 12-person monthly "events," writing and sending out three-course menus. The first 12 people to respond gladly paid \$25 for the opportunity. His email list grew and so did the buzz on his food artistry.

Real Experience

"My passion for these dinners elevated to the point of acknowledging I wanted my own restaurant," admits Loeb. He sought out on-premise jobs, from host to server to wine bar manager. But it was through the wine program at Capo, under the tutelage of co-owner Bruce Marder, that Loeb got his chops.

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Namesake

Rustic Canyon is an open, airy wine bar and bistro on Wilshire Boulevard. It is named after the cozy neighborhood in the Santa Monica Mountains where he grew up and continues to be the lovely home where his parents reside.