

America's Best New Bars & Restaurants

Denver
THE RATTLESNAKE CLUB
901 Larimer Street
303-573-8900

Now that it's all furnished—after five years of planning—it's hard to imagine the Rattlesnake Club not being an overnight success, which it was on opening late last year. First, you gut the landmark Tivoli Brewery, retaining its best structural details, including the twenty-foot arched windows, the rough textures of the wood and brick, and the enormous copper brewing kettles that dominate the two-story facility. Next you hire Michael McCarty, owner of the esteemed Michael's in Santa Monica, and recognized as one of this country's most innovative restaurateurs. Put him in cahoots with Jimmy Schmidt, the brilliant young chef who made his rep at Detroit's London Chop House, and concoct an exciting menu featuring the new cuisine of the American Southwest. Put in a casual grill room and romantic lounge downstairs and a stunning stylized dining room upstairs. Hockney, Cy Twombly, Richard Diebenkorn, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, and that kind, and you're on a roll.

One of the nicest things about the Rattlesnake is that you can drop in for a beer (have the grill room's own special pizza to graze on anything from a first-rate brew), a superlative "rattleburger," with some and have a great time for under ten bucks. Or go upstairs and dine splendidly on dishes like crab cakes and fire chips, fried oysters with spinach and baby green beans, and sensational desserts like white-chocolate ravioli with hazelnut sauce or pumpkin-maple ice cream with caramel-peccan sauce. All of this is brought off with a breezy panache that seems to grow out of the exercise of impeccable rather than trendy taste. For this alone, the Rattlesnake would be significant, and it may well be indicative of the direction of American restaurants for the next five years.

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