



Rib Eye to the Soul: The Best Steak in Los Angeles

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Nothing fritters away the frustrations of the day like the ultimate dynamic duo of an ice-cold martini followed by a sizzling hot steak. That is unless the steak suffers the indignities of a sloppy prep and a poorly rendered side of beef. What should be simple and serene often succumbs to chefs who over-think the process of delivering lean, well-aged beef, seasoned subtly and then prepared to perfection.

So we present a handful of carnivore caverns in LA with a level mooing field of ordering nothing but a simple rib-eye prepared medium-rare each time.

The Best:

Larsen's (Encino)

Grade: A

Sometimes it takes a new cut on the block to learn from other's mistakes and make their own mark. Larsen's has succeeded. Located on Ventura Boulevard in Encino at Woodley, the place feels like a cool jazz bar from decades past brought into the present with a hip wait staff and a fire-pitted outdoor patio.

There's a science to Larsen's take on steak.

Traditional quality steakhouses serve mostly USDA Prime corn-fed beef. A few premier steakhouses dry-age their beef on premises for up to 21 days. Larsen's requires four to six weeks of aging and keeps a highly skilled butcher at the location at all times to monitor airflow temperature and humidity.

During dry aging, the prime meats' natural enzymes act as soothing tenderizers. At the same time, moisture evaporation improves the supple texture and hearty taste of the meat, making it richer and more buttery. Dry aging continues until a thin coating develops on the meat surface. This coating seals in flavor and juice and is later trimmed off.

Furthermore, their diligent method of preparation includes slowly searing the meat in its own natural juices at 500 degrees, rather than blast-cooking it at 1500 plus degrees like most steak shops.

They also excel in service, automatically splitting a Fred Flintstone-approved 32-ounce rib eye, baked potato and Caesar salad without being prompted or charging for the process. Classy.

From the perfectly shaken ice-cold martinis to the softness of the piano to the backlit menus that render a Kindle-like presentation to the ordering process, Larsen's has paid attention to details and created an instant classic in a city's sea of cooked cow.

Always bet on the underdog.