

[back to story page](#)

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Thursday, October 29, 2009

## Rodeo cooks up creative 'cowboy' grub

**[By Andrea Lin](#)***For the Journal*

Just when you thought the improbably timed parade of new restaurant openings had begun to slow, along comes a Rodeo to liven up the party. Rodeo Grill fills the space previously held by Range Café on Wyoming and is the newest culinary outlet for Matt DiGregory of both Range Cafe and Standard Diner. He put at the helm three experienced managers — two educated here at Central New Mexico Community College — and let them play with a "modern cowboy food" concept.

What does a modern cowboy crave? A Burgrito, of course. Rodeo Grill invented the term and claim they are "soon to be famous," but I'll let you in on a secret: It's a tortilla burger folded up like an envelope. Any fame will have to come from the taste, but luckily they're on the right track. Your Burgrito (\$9.95) comes with topping combinations chosen to complement the meats — hamburger is but one option in a list from chicken to veggie patty. We liked the comforting Cubano with requisite mustard and pickles, while Baja style features pico de gallo, jicama slaw and just a touch of chipotle — perfect for the mahi mahi.

While you wait on that entrée, appetizers will be keeping you busy, like fantastic thick chips to scoop up an order of guacamole (\$7.95) or the daily soup (\$3.95 cup), a dreamy sweet potato when I visited. From elsewhere on the menu we snagged two tamales (\$2.95 each), succulent Pulled Pork and Veggie with fresh cheese and zucchini.

I doubt cowboys eat Häagen Dazs, but here you can drink it in some of the most wonderful and weird flavor combinations ever invented for shakes (\$5.95). *Â*Mango Ole! kept the richness under control with a zesty chile-lime-rubbed rim. But for dessert in a glass, try the Perfect — chocolate and peanut butter — or get a kick in the pants from chile in the Mayan Chocolate. The flavors are daring in Vanilla Rose or Lemon Basil Blueberry, but you'll have time to sample the range during your inevitable return visits.

Other entrées hold to the same high standard. The Puerco Jalisco (\$10.95) plate's

pork melts in your mouth between bites of black beans and rice. Lovers of Frito pie have reason to smile when the crispy-savory bowl of Chilito Pie (\$7.95) is placed on the table, featuring homemade chili on those thick-cut chips.

Nothing seems out of place on Rodeo's menu. Anything unique is well-thought-out, tasty and vaguely familiar, especially compared with both the Range and Standard Diner. Like changing the holiday gathering from your grandma's to your aunt's house, the scenery might be new, but you can count on all the usual nostalgic touches from people to food, and it will just feel right.

Finish your experience with a slice of Pinto Bean Pie (\$4.50), a sweet confection not unlike pecan pie with no beans in sight, or go for the warming Caramel Apple Crisp (\$4.95). After those shakes, you'll probably want to skip the ice cream scoop on top.

## **Rodeo Grill**

LOCATION: 4200 Wyoming NE, 323-7633

HOURS: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. daily

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[Back to story page](#)