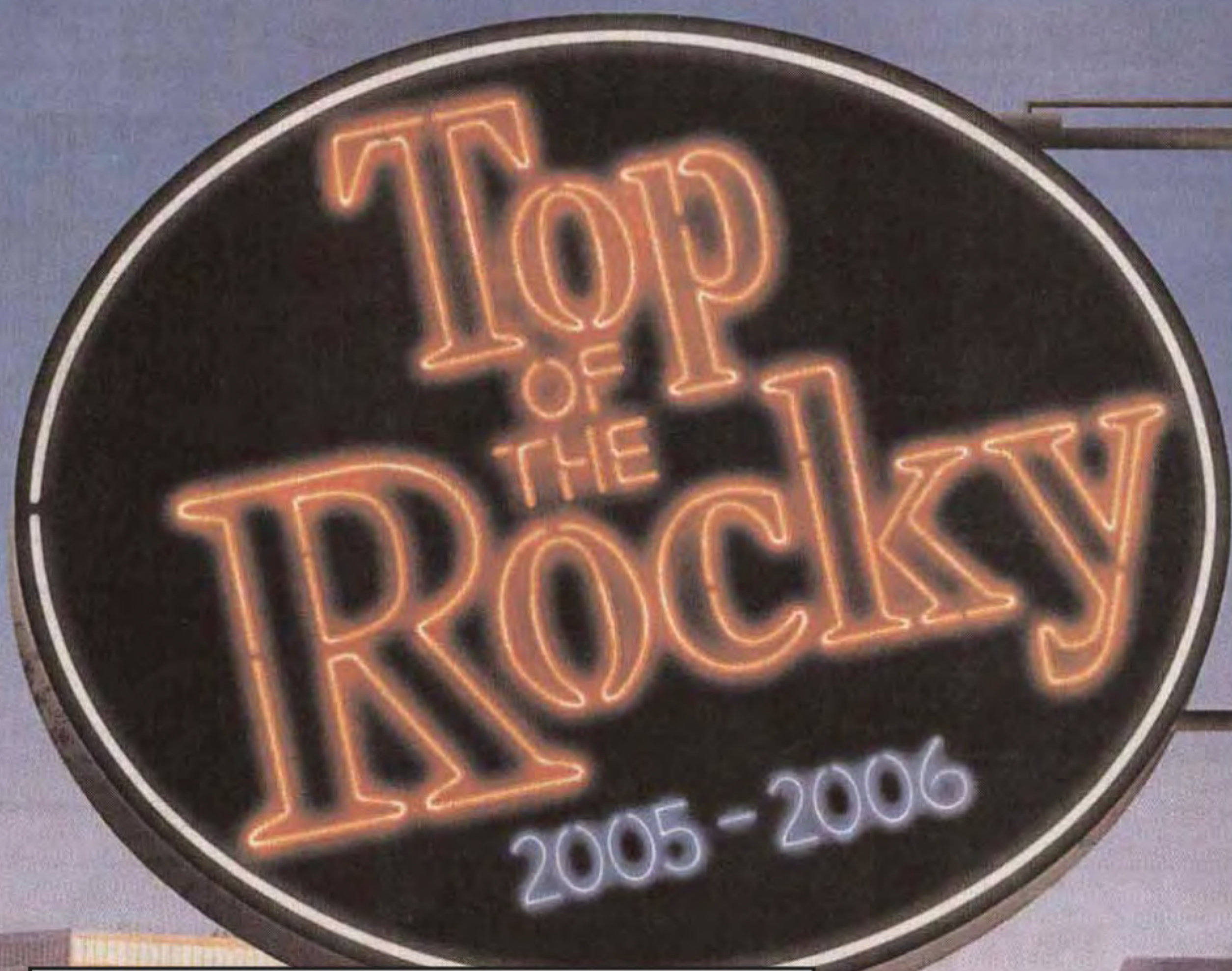


Rocky Mountain News



TOP OF THE ROCKY: **Eating and drinking**

New restaurant

■ Rioja

1431 Larimer St., Denver;
303-820-2282;
www.riojadenver.com

Why it's tops: No Denver restaurant debuted with more hoopla, but still this Mediterranean-influenced bistro exceeded expectations. We can't stop talking about chef Jennifer Jasinski's cravable flavors, the comfortable ambience and the crack staff. This one's a keeper.

People's Choice: Rioja