FROM LEFT: Beacon's sunny dining room; pristine polenta cake and steak tartar at Ford's

ceilings. Chef/owner Kazuto Matsusaka—who worked with Wolfgang Puck at Spago—showcases his culinary skills with a fusion-laced menu. Choose from a succinct sushi list, or from such inventive dishes as ahi tuna pizza, crispy oyster lettuce cups, and udon noodles with braised pork belly. Inspired options extend through to the sweet end: Top dessert picks include the black sesame crème brûlée and the Rice Krispy sundae.

Nearby, you'll find the newly opened **FORD'S FILLING STATION** (9531 Culver Blvd., Culver City, 310.202.1470) from chef/owner Ben Ford. With its proximity to Sony Studios, the intimate, gastro-pub-style bistro caters to a mix of casually dressed locals, industry folk and the occasional celeb—including the chef's father Harrison Ford and his gal pal Calista Flockhart, both of whom were spotted here on opening night. Favoring organic, upscale comfort food, chef Ford—who honed his skills at esteemed L.A. spots Campanile and Chadwick—exercises his sophisticated hand on pub-grub-inspired entrées like beer-battered fish 'n' chips with asparagus, flat-iron steak with spinach soufflé, and jumbo shrimp. Other recent highlights from the seasonally evolving menu included hand-chopped steak tartar with truffle potato chips and a chunky meatloaf burger with tomato chutney. Complementing the menu's masculine edge, the bistro's rich brown palette is culled from leather-backed banquettes, dark-stained tables, the exposed kitchen's toasty, wood-burning brick oven, and a wraparound patio made for mingling. ■

> “Culver City is often overlooked as merely a thoroughfare between trendier 'hoods.”