Los Angeles Times
FOOD

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK: THE CULVER CITY SCENE

CARLOS CHAVEZ Los Angeles Times

HANGOUT: *With a new location and cafe, Surfas is a one-stop feast. Stock up on pasta; eat a cannelé.*

RICARDO DEARATANHA Los Angeles Times

TRENDSETTER: *Kazuto Matsusaka's Beacon, opened two years ago, features sophisticated Asian fare in a sleek, contemporary setting. Above, grilled shrimp and green tea soba noodles.*

ANNIE WELLS Los Angeles Times

LUNCH BUZZ: *Ben Ford, above, tapped into a yearning for a casual place to hang out when he opened Ford's Filling Station, L.A.'s first official gastropub.*

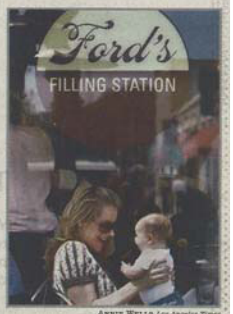
The chefs are coming — and so are the bakers, wine bars, foodies, cafes. Culver City is hot.

Something's cooking

By S. IRENE VIRBILA
Times Staff Writer

ANYONE who grew up in L.A. from the '30s through the '60s remembers running out to the Helms Bakery trucks that trolled the neighborhoods to buy all sorts of baked goods. Most of us too made a school field trip to the hulking bakery complex straddling Venice and Washington boulevards to see the magical transformation of flour, water and yeast into bread. Who could forget the way the scent of warm bread settled in a thick layer over Culver City in the early hours of the morning?

Not since Helms shut down in 1969 has Culver City been known for anything to do with food. But now, when restaurant openings in greater Los Angeles (except in Hollywood) have slowed to a trickle, Culver City is the site of a burgeoning food scene. An inviting collection of restaurants and cafes has cropped up in recent months, and more are on the way. The momentum started when Kazuto Matsusaka's Asian cafe Beacon opened almost two years ago. Now Surfas, the restaurant supply store in business since 1937, has moved into a spot on a highly visible corner and expanded with its own cafe. A cooking school down [*See Culver City, Page F4*]



ANNIE WELLS Los Angeles Times

PLAY: *Tammy Ehrenfeld and Natasha Halbfinger, 4 months, do lunch at Ford's.*