+ *dining + drinking* ***guide***

FORD'S FILLING STATION

JEANS AND FLIP-FLOPS

Chef Ben Ford's take on the gastro-pub exceeds expectations. The crispy polenta cake with mascarpone and tender beef cheeks with Israeli couscous are absolutely divine.

JEANS AND FLIP-FLOPS

apple pan
10801 w. pico blvd., l.a., 310.475.3585
Go for the wonderfully drippy Hickory Burger, grilled by grizzled old men in white paper hats who've manned the same spot at the counter since before L.A. lost its football team. Their apple pie recipe dates back to 1881, which, in L.A., makes this place a historical landmark. **I**

bandera
11700 wilshire blvd., brentwood, 310.477.3524
We hate to even bring up the fact that Bandera is a chain restaurant because this place is actually far better than most independents in town. The cornbread is addictive. The Martinis are strong. The ribs smackilicious. But beware, the wait for a table can be unbearable on weekend nights, and they don't take reservations for small parties. **M**

border grill
1445 4th st., santa monica, 310.451.1655
Celebrity chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger have elevated regional Mexican cooking to a sophisticated artform without sacrificing authenticity or flavor. Handmade tortillas (notice the tortilla "factory" in the front window), refreshing Margaritas, fabulous tres leches—this is the way Mexican food was meant to be enjoyed, only better. **M**

the counter
2901 ocean park blvd., santa monica, 310.399.8383
Your server will hand you a clipboard and pencil, on which you can design your own burger by mixing and matching unorthodox toppings such as microgreens, roasted chiles or blue cheese. This fun and delicious twist on a burger joint has a surprisingly good wine and beer list, too. **I**

doughboys
8136 w. 3rd st., l.a., 323.651.4202
Young actors in flip-flops and trucker hats lounge on the corner waiting for a table at this see-and-be-seen café. Soups, salads and sandwiches are top-notch, especially the pistou soup and French dip sandwich. **I**

el cholo
1121 s. western blvd., l.a., 323.734.2773
Only a misinformed food snob would dismiss this classic as inauthentic. El Cholo (at this location at least) is the pinnacle of California Mexican, serving the best combination plates in the state. And, hey, the Margaritas are great and the Pac Man games still work. **I**

ford's filling station
9531 culver blvd., culver city, 310.202.1470
Chef Ben Ford's take on the gastro-pub exceeds expectations, with casually comfortable atmosphere and a menu sure to please the die-hard foodie. The crispy polenta cake with mascarpone and tender beef cheeks with Israeli couscous are absolutely divine. **M**