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Kitchen Confidential: Ben Ford

Posted Monday, December 18, 2006 9:53:50 AM

Super-cute, super-talented, and owner of the new, super-popular Ford's Filling Station, **Chef Ben Ford** is a driving force behind the Culver City revival.

Although he may have gained notoriety as the son of movie star Harrison, Ben has proved to be a chef to be reckoned with in the culinary world. While recovering from a baseball injury in college, Ben decided to leave USC to study at the University of Dijon in Burgundy, France. After finishing his studies in Spain and San Fran, Ben came back to LA and worked in several landmark restaurants including Campanile, Farm of Beverly Hills, and his own spot, Chadwicks. His new venture has won rave reviews for its laid-back, New American fare that features organic, fresh, and in-season ingredients.

In LA it seems like restaurants disappear more often than Britney's underwear—what makes a good place stick around?
I build my restaurants for the people of LA: the everyday man of Los Angeles and the locals. I think people get too carried away with the show and forget about who their customers really are.

What makes Ford's Filling Station stand out? Do you have a favorite item on the menu?
The atmosphere and the vibe coupled with great food and service. This week my favorite item is the Pork Porterhouse.

Is it the celebrity factor? How do you draw in an A-list crowd?
I don't know…who did you see in there?!?! I can tell you my favorite celebrity I ever served was Larry "Bud" Melman…I actually got a little nervous.

Is your job really as cool as we think it is?
I love this question. YES.

What do you really do all day? How much time do you spend at your establishment? How much time is spent cooking?
It's funny…you get into this business to cook so you don't have to be a businessman. Then, one day you wake up as a businessman who doesn't cook. The reality is I'm in the kitchen or working on new dishes 4-5 hours a day, but I wish it was more.

How often do you get hit on by customers? How often do you take up the offer?
Less than you think. My girlfriend, who I love very much, didn't like this question.

What is the most embarrassing thing you've seen someone do at your restaurant? Or better yet,

what's the dirtiest?
There have been rumors about Table 13, but I can't confirm.

What's your secret food indulgence?
Popsicles

Do you have any rituals when you are cooking? What's playing on the radio while you work?
I'm really methodical about my routines and how I set up. Sharp knife and a clean board are my main prerequisites. As for music…right now, Solomon Burke…and a minute ago, Willie Nelson.

Would you describe your favorite food-related moment?
There are sooo many…My time spent cooking with Juan Marie and Elena Azak in Spain. The most heartwarming of them all? Cooking for my son and watching him discover flavors for the first time and then hearing him say, "Daddy, you're the best chef in the world!"

-Katie Rosen