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Times

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www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 6, Issue 8

DISTANT SHORES

Biscayne Bay may be our area's most prominent feature, but just try getting close to it

BY ROB JORDAN

Photos by Silvia Ros



The only sound in the world, it seems, is the rhythmic splashing of paddle on sun-speckled water. Boat traffic is light, the wind low on this weekday morning. A silent current propels us north as we paddle our brightly colored kayaks along downtown Miami's bayfront.

Rick Poston, a third-generation Miamian whose grandfather helped build Henry Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel at the mouth of the Miami River, is my travel companion. It's his 66th birthday. A volunteer with the Florida Paddling Trails Association, Poston is a steward for the

Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail, overseeing a segment of the statewide trail that stretches from John Pennekamp State Park to the northern end of Biscayne Bay. He had good-naturedly agreed to come on this somewhat quixotic mission.

We are looking for portals into Miami's soul. More specifically, we are looking for waterfront access points. Where and how can the average person get to the bay at any point along the ten-mile stretch from downtown's high-rise canyons to the mangrove forests of Oleta

River State Park? Not just get to the water, but get *in* it to cool off, swim, launch a boat, or just float around.

The waterfront, after all, is synonymous with Miami. It is one of the main reasons millions flock here for vacations and new lives. It is a point of meditation, a source of sustenance literally and spiritually, an ecological wonderland.

But for many Miamians, perhaps most, the waterfront remains out of reach, concealed behind the walls of condominiums and private homes, or posted with signs prohibiting fishing,

swimming, loitering, and a host of other innocent activities. As a 2006 study by the Trust for Public Land put it: "...A surprising number of South Florida residents rarely encounter the beautiful waters that characterize our community."

"Who is the waterfront for?" asks Greg Bush, a founder and current vice president of programs for the Urban Environment League of Greater Miami. "Is it for the people with the fancy condos that overlook the water?" Bush

Continued on page 14

Dining Guide

Miami's biggest and best listings.

Page 50



Community News

Boulevard construction was a bad dream.

Page 26



Park Patrol

Miami's oldest cemetery is no picnic.

Page 40



Our Correspondents

Why Liberty City is not Cuba.

Page 20



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					Jorge Celedón & Jimmy Zambrano 8PM K Two of the most acclaimed Colombian Vallenato artists play an energetic mix of up-tempo dance music and romantic ballads.	Milton Nascimento 8PM K One of the world's great voices joins the Jobim Trio for this unforgettable performance.		
			9	10	11			
			Firebird Chamber Orchestra Vivaldi, Telemann, Barber, Diamond 8PM P The Frost School of Music Passion and Pathos: Gala Opening Night 8PM K	Firebird Chamber Orchestra Vivaldi, Telemann, Barber, Diamond 8PM P	2nd Annual Adrienne Arsht Center Gala: "Coming Up Roses" 7PM Z Gala After Party 10:30PM P			
12	<p>An Evening with David Sedaris October 15 • 8PM</p> <p>Meet David after the show for a special book signing!</p>		15	<p>Giada De Laurentiis</p> <p>October 24 • 8PM Knight Concert Hall</p>		18		
Firebird Chamber Orchestra Vivaldi, Telemann, Barber, Diamond 7PM P			An Evening with David Sedaris 8PM K "One of America's most prickly and most delicious, young comic talents." - <i>The Washington Post</i>			17	Miami City Ballet Program I Ballets by Balanchine and Tharp 8PM Z	Miami Symphony Orchestra 8PM K Miami City Ballet Program I 8PM Z
19			22			24	25	
Miami City Ballet Program I 2PM Z Dan Zanes and Friends 2PM K Sure to have the whole audience singing along and dancing in the aisles!				Giada De Laurentiis 8PM K Food Network favorite, Giada De Laurentiis, reveals her secrets in an intimate one-on-one interview and sizzling cooking demonstration.	New World Symphony: America's Orchestral Academy 8PM K			
26	27	28	29	30	31			
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**Jack King: Angry Rants and Visceral Hatred?**

Jack King's opinion piece "Four Decades of Lessons Unlearned" (September 2008) concludes with this line: "This country needs Barack Obama." But he never really tells us why. All he writes is that he doesn't like the current administration, he doesn't think we are doing the right things, and believes Americans aren't working together. Well, most of us *are* working together, but perhaps not in some left-wing communal manner that would suit Mr. King better.

What he fails to explain is why Barack Obama is qualified to be President of the United States. The U.S. Senate had been in session only 143 days between his taking office as a senator and declaring himself a candidate for president. As the editor of his law school's review, he never wrote anything for publication. In fact as a professor of law, he never wrote anything.

His job as "community organizer" (also known as "outside agitator") was really just leading others to rely on government handouts. This is not the résumé of a leader, nor is it preparation for being president.

Mr. King's "Lessons Unlearned" is nothing but an angry rant from a man with visceral hate for anything and anyone he disagrees with. *Biscayne Times* readers deserve better.

Susannah Worth
Miami Beach

Fleeing Palm Bay Towers Was the Smartest Thing We Ever Did

My wife and I owned an apartment at Palm Bay Towers for a few years, and it was the most terrifying living experience I'd had since my freshmen year in college, more than 20 years ago. We were harassed so much from the condo commandos at Palm Bay that we decided to sell our apartment. It was a difficult task just to be on the elevator with such challenging people.

I found Rob Jordan's article ironic ("Up Close and Personal — and Vicious," September 2008) because the condo commandos referred to our two rescued, ten-pound poodles as vicious, but the article showed that the *people* were the vicious ones, and our dogs were scared of *them*.

Continued on page 6

Candidate Forums

In anticipation of the November 4 general election, two candidate forums have been organized for the benefit of Biscayne Corridor voters. On Wednesday, October 29, the two candidates vying for the state senate from District 35, Democrat Dan Gelber and Republican Dean Santoro, will speak and take questions. Also on that date, the four candidates for Clerk of the Circuit Court — Darrin McGillis, Alfredo Perez, incumbent Harvey Ruvin, and Julio Valido — will do likewise.

On Thursday, October 30, candidates for county property appraiser (a first for Miami-Dade), will appear. They are Pedro J. Garcia, Eddie Lewis, Gwen Margolis, and Jim Shedd.

The forums will take place at American Legion Post 29 and will begin at 6:30 p.m. The post is located on 64th Street east of Biscayne Boulevard, close to the bay. For more information, contact Bob Powers, president of the Palm Grove Neighborhood Association and forum host, at 305-299-0052.

— *Jim Mullin*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER STORY	POLICE REPORTS
Distant Shores.....1	Biscayne Crime Beat32
COMMENTARY	ART & CULTURE
Feedback.....4	Female but Maybe Not Feminist..... 34
Miami's King.....10	Art Listings..... 36
Word on the Street.....12	Culture Briefs 39
OUR SPONSORS	PARK PATROL
BizBuzz8	Miami City Cemetery: Dying To Get In 40
Advertiser Directory..... 8	COLUMNISTS
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS	Kids and the City: A New Take on Book-of-the-Month Club 42
Kathy Glasgow: Cuba's Open Doors 20	Tech Talk: Mac vs. PC — Making the Switch..... 43
Jen Karetnick: A Country Club in Terminal Decline22	Pawsitively Pets: One Command Solves the Problem44
Frank Rollason: Hair in the Hood..... 24	Harper's Environment: Kill Baby Kill 46
COMMUNITY NEWS	Your Garden: Butterfly Magnets and Wind Victims 48
The Boulevard Is Back!..... 26	DINING GUIDE
Market Rebounds! 28	Restaurant Listings 50
Further Adventures of the Boulevard's Big Man28	Wine: Red White & You..... 52
The High Cost of Pumping Gas29	

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Letters

Continued from page 4

We want to thank the residents of Palm Bay Towers because we sold our condo before the condo market crashed. We purchased a beautiful home, the pool is happy, and we come home to peace every night.

*Matt Bain
Baywood*

Amid the Parking Meters, Don't Forget Pedal Power

Regarding Elizabeth Joyce's article "Round One of the Parking Wars" (September 2008), as the Upper Eastside continues to think through its parking needs with the help of the Miami Parking Authority, I hope all concerned will remember to provide bicycle parking close to those vibrant new shops and café along the Biscayne Corridor.

Putting in sturdy, convenient bike racks would do a lot to help workers and the shops' patrons save on gas money while reducing noise, fumes, and traffic congestion on neighborhood streets.

*John D. Hopkins
Miami*

Wendy's Value: Reminding Us We're Not the Only Crazy

I've long been a fan of Wendy Doscher-Smith's "Neighborhood Correspondents" columns, but she has reached new heights of hilarity with her report from upstate New York ("Miami Has No Monopoly on Weirdness," September 2008). Knowing Wendy as the animal lover she is, I can actually picture her stalking the poor woodchucks in Endicott's Grippen Park.

It is my fervent wish that you keep Wendy on staff. She translates so well no matter where she lives, and let's face it, she lets us know that crazies live up North too!

*Pam Stack
Kendall*

Wendy's Value: Unplugging Her Computer and Staying Far, Far Away

I was ecstatic when I read that Wendy Doscher-Smith was going to stop writing her inane, boring, badly written, and just plain stupid column. I had hopes that the

editor would find a new correspondent for the Biscayne Park area, someone who would actually focus on Biscayne Park and its relationship to today's issues in general.

So you can imagine my horror and a disappointment when I opened my September *Biscayne Times* and found that the Dave Barry/Carl Hiaasen wannabe (which, trust me, she is not) was still writing her dribble and drab stupidity, the only change being that she is telling us about a place that once again is not Biscayne Park and has nothing to do with Biscayne Park.

*Fernando Garcia-Urbina
Biscayne Park*

Miami's True Grit Makes for Great Storytelling

I applaud *Biscayne Times* for two standout pieces of journalism in the August issue. I have always wondered about those two properties — the City Inn hotel and the Boulevard Theater ("Edifice Complex"). Writers Terence Cantarella (City Inn) and Erik Bojnansky (Boulevard Theater) really brought things to life and reported in an even-handed way, refusing to vilify the property owners and examining the facts from several angles.

Mr. Cantarella's article was particularly good journalism. I have to commend him for 1) sheer bravery and 2) real descriptive prowess. His prose is what I might expect from a national publication such as *The New York Times*. I feel proud to find him painting such a vivid (if hideous) canvas right here in Miami.

These are both stories about real Miami landmarks, owned by real Miami characters. If we want happy tourist stories, we can always snap on *Deco Drive*. I'm glad someone has the courage to portray the grittiness that gives the Magic City its real texture.

*Dale Hershman
Miami*

Bugged by Jen's Bug Column

After reading Jen Karetnick's column "Land of the Free, Home of the Bug" (August 2008), I had to write. We live in Belle Meade and we use a service that sprays for termites in our roof and crawl spaces, and we haven't had a bug problem in ten years. It's a lot less disruptive than tenting, and the pets don't freak out. Good luck to her!

*Alain Boyer
Belle Meade*



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BizBuzz: October 2008

Sales, special events, and more from the people who make Biscayne Times possible

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

In summertime the livin' is supposed to be easy, but foodies practically need a whole dedicated PDA to keep track of restaurants' weird, cut-back summer schedules. Fans of Greek food in this paper's area, however, can finally free up that RAM. As of October 20, the folks at **Ariston Restaurant** will be going back to their normal, easy-to-remember schedule. The North Beach restaurant will be open for both lunch and dinner, seven days a week.

No need to wait till Halloween to dress up in silly clothes and score treats. Chef/owner Alex Richter of the **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** extends an invite to "wear your lederhosen or dirndl and party with us" every night in October, from 5:00 to 11:00 p.m. (midnight on Fridays and Saturdays), during the German eatery's month-long Oktoberfest. Along with seasonal food specials, most served in cast-iron skillets, there's Paulaner's classic, creamy-headed, malty Oktoberfest-Marzen (considered throughout Germany to be the Oktoberfest beer by which all others are judged) and smooth, sweet, wheat-based Hefeweizen. Though it's a perfect occasion to enjoy the Haus's biergarten,

there's also a take-out Oktoberfest menu for those who'd prefer an at-home festival for 10 to 100 people.

Did we mention that the above irresistible beers are served in humongous one-liter steins? So suffice to say that there couldn't be a better month for **Shuichi Take Fitness Club's** October special: 20 percent off all one-on-one fitness packages for new club or at-home clients. Additionally, any current member who refers a new member will receive an extra month of membership.

The **Upper Eastside Green Market** gets in on the Halloween fun with its return to regular operation at Legion Park (66th Street and Biscayne Boulevard) on Saturday, October 25. Neighborhood kids are invited to dress up in their scariest Halloween costumes and join a parade around the park at 10:00 a.m. Judges will select the best of them at 11:00 a.m. The market this season will feature organic and locally grown produce, plus arts and crafts. Market maven Claire Tomlin says a licensed kitchen will be added for vendors who want to cook on the spot.

For serious décor mavens, having the same couch as someone else would be akin to Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton showing up at the Oscars wearing the same dress. But patrons of the Upper Eastside's **Casca Doce Studios**, founded

by Brazilian interior designer Ana Cristina Correia, needn't worry. The shop's new line of furniture and accessories by renowned, award-winning Venezuelan architect Fernan Hernandez is exclusive, not available anywhere else in town. Pieces debuting this month include a lounge chair, a cocktail table, and artwork made from bamboo.

Being a do-gooder always feels good, and occasionally it tastes good, too. During October at **Edible Arrangements** — where the "flowers" are actually cunningly carved fresh fruit — ten percent of the purchase price for two special bouquets will be donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, according to owner Reda Monem. The featured arrangements are the \$55 Breast Cancer Awareness bouquet (fresh strawberries hand-dipped in pink chocolate, in a pink ribbon-adorned pot) or the \$59 Awareness Celebration bouquet (the same chocolate-dipped strawberries plus pineapple daisies and stars, honeydew and cantaloupe blossoms, and skewered grape stalks).

At Children's Village Montessori School and Daycare, a weeklong book fair sponsored by Scholastic Press, October 13-17, will enable teachers and students to enrich classrooms with books of their choice (as long as Scholastic publishes them). How it works, according to

school office manager Mariela Monica: Scholastic sends the school hundreds of titles, in English and Spanish; teachers and kids go through the literary treasure chest and make "wish lists"; parents come to the fair, buy the books, and donate them to the school. Hours of the fair, which is open to the general public also, are noon to 6:00 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, and 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, with special events (including family story times and an exhibit of books created by the kids themselves) on the fair's final day.

Remember South Beach in the fun, low-rent, early 1990s, when drag queens and Jody McDonald's attitude-free afternoon tea dances ruled? Well, probably you don't remember, especially if you were there. But the new Sunday evening (6:00-11:00 p.m.) Good Life party at 55th Street Station's **News Lounge** will bring it all back, with McDonald spinning tunes, performances by local legends like drag diva Shelly Novak, complimentary champagne toasts at sunset, and select cheap drinks for the rest of the night. There's also something South Beach never had, even back in the day: free parking.

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Design District Art + Design 305-573-8116 Page 11	Florida International University 305-919-5700 Page 28	Dental Options 11645 Biscayne Blvd. #204 305-892-2960 Page 31	Arco Glass & Windows 617 NE 125th St. 305-891-2726 Page 49	Reef Evolutions 786-326-5184 Page 44	Rio Pet Spa NEW! 18170 W Dixie Hwy. 305-935-5551 Page 44	Miami Spaces 305-495-8712 Page 47	Buena Vista Bistro 4582 NE 2nd Ave. 305-456-5909 Page 61	Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus 1085 NE 79th St. 305-754-8002 Page 63
I.D. Art Supply 2695 Biscayne Blvd. 305-385-5586 Page 35	JLP Educational Services NEW! 305-537-2682 Page 30	Harmony Body Waxing & Nails 2512 Biscayne Blvd. 305-576-1551 Page 37	Avery Glass & Mirror 813 NE 125th St. 305-891-7734 Page 35	Sheds and Things 786-473-2846 Page 49	Suds Domestic 17033 S. Dixie Hwy. 305-233-6707 Page 42	Patrick McCoy & Keith Bacon Fortune International Realty 305-332-6164 Page 9	Chef Creole 200 NW 54th St. 305-754-2222 13105 W. Dixie Hwy. 305-893-4246 Page 60	River Oyster Bar 650 S. Miami Ave. 305-530-1915 Page 54
MilMo Biscayne Association NEW! 305-758-6144 Page 21	FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES	Hiperfit 7120 Biscayne Blvd. 305-762-6600 Page 17	Barnett Tree Service 305-538-2451 Page 41	INSURANCE & LEGAL SERVICES	Yvonne Colodny Circuit Court, Group 19 Page 22	Shops at Midtown New 3401 N. Miami Ave. 305-573-3371 Page 6	Côte Gourmet 9999 NE 2nd Ave. 305-754-9012 Page 58	Sheba Ethiopian Restaurant 4029 N. Miami Ave. 305-573-1819 Page 60
Tigertail Productions NEW! 305-324-4337 Page 7	Ascot Teak 12951 Biscayne Blvd. 305-892-2131 Page 47	M Power Project NEW! 9301 NE 6th Ave. 305-758-9600 Page 29	Biscayne Tile & Marble 880 NE 79th St. 305-758-7778 Page 37	Steven K. Baird Attorney at Law 305-754-8170 Page 25	Pedro J. Garcia Property Appraiser Page 19	Turnberry International Realty 305-632-1588 Page 2	Dogma Grill 7030 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-3433 899 NE 125th St. 305-89-DOGMA Page 55	Soyka To Go NEW! 5556 NE 4th Ct. 305-759-3117 Page 57
AUTOMOTIVE	Beau Living 8101 Biscayne Blvd. #102 305-751-1511 Page 5	Nails Etc. 5084 Biscayne Blvd. 305-754-0316 Page 48	Dart Services 305-758-1697 Page 22	The Nabors Group NEW! 954-364-7850 Page 23	Gwen Margolis Property Appraiser Page 30	18th Street Café 210 NE 18th St. 305-381-8006 Page 58	Dogma Grill 7030 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-3433 899 NE 125th St. 305-89-DOGMA Page 55	Sushi Square 7244 Biscayne Blvd. 305-754-3100 Page 51
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CLOTHING & JEWELRY			Joe Blair Garden Supply 320 NE 79th St. 305-757-5554 Page 41				Mike's at Venetia 555 NE 15th St. 9th floor 305-759-0122 Page 53	Wine 69 NEW! 6909 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-0122 Page 51



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The Three Amigos vs. the Dynamic Duo

Our Congressional delegation: The good, the bad, and the useless

By Jack King
BT Contributor

If you have not been living under a rock for the past year, you might have noticed that there is an election campaign for President of the United States going on, and to say the least, it is quite contentious. Many people decry these nasty elections, but there is great historical precedent. The first three United States elections for president (George Washington twice and John Adams once) had only one candidate. That all changed in 1800, when Thomas Jefferson, Adams's vice president, ran against him and won. By all accounts written at the time, it remains the nastiest presidential election in American history.

It might seem that this election is even nastier, but that's only because the advent of the 24/7 news cycle and the Internet have our face stuck in it more than we care to admit or care to like. Go vote for whomever you like. I am.

Beneath the presidential contest on our ballots there would normally be a race for a senate seat, but we are spared that this year in Florida. However, we still have action in the five area congressional seats. Or at least some action.

Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Kendrick Meek, who represent about two-thirds of the population in Miami-Dade County, have drawn only token opposition, and for good reason. Both are highly regarded by their constituents for their good work. They are highly respected in Congress and are considered to be effective legislators. Wasserman Schultz is listed as the top legislator in the Florida delegation by

Congress.Org, a watchdog group that rates members of Congress on their power and effectiveness. She is also ranked 24th in the House of Representatives, out of 435 members.

Meek is not far behind, being ranked fourth among the Florida delegation.

What this means is that they actually accomplish things, not just add their names to bills on which they didn't have any input and didn't do any work, a common practice among Congressional slackers.

The other three from South Florida turn out to be not quite as good. The three amigos — Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Mario Diaz Balart, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen — have been in Congress for years, yet we have little to show for it.

The Diaz-Balart boys are two peas in a pod. Their father was Rafael Diaz-Balart, a well-to-do, wheeling, dealing member of the Cuban aristocracy. His sister, Mirta, was married to Fidel Castro. The Diaz-Balart family, along with most of the Cuban aristocracy, were big supporters of Castro until the wheels fell off.

When the family got to Florida, they took up where they'd left off. Rafael became a power broker and a force to be reckoned with. He taught his boys well. Lincoln and Mario worked their way up through local, regional, and state government. Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1992; Mario in 2002.

When they arrived in Washington, they got the surprise of their lives: Nobody cared that they were Cuban. In political Washington, every Hispanic was a Mexican.

And then came the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994. The brothers immediately sold their souls to the Republican devil. They swore to vote exactly the way the party told them, and in exchange they

could have anything they wanted to keep Fidel Castro bottled up on the island. What a way to treat your uncle!

It was all truly wonderful for them. They were living the life the family thought they were going to have in Havana, only now the American government is paying for it. This *really* is the American way.

The third amigo, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, came to Congress in a slightly different way. She, along with Lincoln Diaz-Balart, was born in Havana (a fact, interestingly enough, that has been left off both their official Websites; Mario was born in the United States) and came to Miami at an early age. She was elected to take the seat of Rep. Claude Pepper, who passed away in 1989.

Rather than being raised as a professional politician, she was an educator. She also votes the Republican Party line almost all the time — with one exception: gay rights, of which she is an ardent supporter. I have never figured out where this comes from, but certainly something turned her head around.

While the Diaz-Balart boys have done nothing in Congress, Ros-Lehtinen has actually tried, though she's not been very successful, unless it's on issues that have near unanimous political support.

She also gets her head spun around on a regular basis. A case in point was her support of the federal/state purchase of the land south of Lake Okeechobee from Big Sugar to return the Everglades to something close to what it originally was. Just about everyone thought it was a great idea, and then along comes her husband, Dexter Lehtinen, who represents the Miccosukee Indians. He stopped the deal because the Indians

wanted their cut. Any possibility that Dexter had some inside information?

And the power ratings of the three amigos? Ros-Lehtinen does with best with a ranking of 16 out of 25 in Florida, and 288 out of 435 in the House of Representatives. Lincoln is 19th in Florida and 358th in the Congress. Mario is at 20th and 379th. Those are some powerful numbers!

All three legislators have drawn serious opposition this year, and it's about time. Annette Taddeo is running against Ros-Lehtinen and is hammering her on her connection to the pharmaceuticals industry, another area where Ros-Lehtinen has shown poor judgment in the past.

Former Cuban American National Foundation director Joe Garcia is running against Mario, and the way Mario is running his campaign, it seems he only wants to keep his seat so he doesn't have to get a real job.

Lincoln has drawn the toughest opposition in former Hialeah mayor Raul Martinez. This race has some odd history. In the late 1980s, Dexter Lehtinen, who was then the acting U.S. Attorney in Miami, indicted then Mayor Martinez on a slew of corruption charges, just as Martinez was getting ready to run for the vacant Claude Pepper seat. Martinez eventually beat all the charges, but his run for Congress was dead. Somewhere in the back of my sick-o mind, I wish Martinez were running against Ros-Lehtinen this time.

More than anything else, these contests will show us how much Miami has grown up over the past 20 years. Your guess is as good as mine.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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/ MIAMI ART MUSEUM STAFF EXHIBITION /

Walking through the galleries of Miami Art Museum it is easy to sense the energy that permeates through the works of art on view. But another, less public, source of creative energy flows deep within the core of MAM. MAM's Director Terence Riley recognized this characteristic and opened the door to an exhibit that highlights the creativity of the MAM staff. Located at the Buena Vista Building_ 180 N.E. 39 Street, Suite 120.

/ ¡QUE RICO! /

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/ e-World /

e-World at Ornare is a continuing exploration by Alex Vigilante of how popular culture, including those iconic figures who never had email accounts, expresses itself through Internet-based communications. The witty articulations are at times funny, at times poignant and at times a tad on the dark side, but always entertaining. Located at the Melin Building_ 3930 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Suite 102.

/ PetNet presents "Doggies in the District" /

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+ Thingvellir by Horst Wackerbarth, color photograph. On view at Wolfgang Roth & Partners Fine Art_ 201 N.E. 39 Street

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Who are you voting for in the presidential election and why?

Compiled by Victor Barrenechea — BT Contributor



Carlos DeCastro
Manager
 Upper Eastside
 Obama, because we need someone who can provide change for our country. McCain is too old, and we need someone with fresh ideas. I'm not saying McCain wouldn't change things, he just wouldn't change things enough. The idea Obama presents — he doesn't come from the old-style of politics. He's a new kind of politician. It's going to be my first time voting. I'm very excited.



Jason Jimenez
Business Owner
 Buena Vista East
 Basically, I'm voting for Barack Obama because after the last eight years, we definitely need a change. I just think he's a lot more progressive on the issues. He's actually looking out for the people. I saw him speak and there was a tangible feeling of hope in the room. People do believe in him. Also McCain made a very bad VP choice. She has no experience, she's anti-choice. The possibility of her being in office if something happens to McCain scares me.



Natallye Alzerreca
Store Manager
 Downtown
 Obama, just because I think that if we vote for McCain, it'd be like another Bush. Obama has a lot of change in mind. He's more concerned about Americans. Bush backs up McCain on a lot of issues. It'd be another sequel of the disaster that was the Bush administration. To me, McCain looks very fake, the same way Bush is very fake.



Andrew Sperber
Sales
 Midtown
 I'm not voting. I feel the vote is tainted because I feel there are too many uninformed voters, and I feel there should be a mandatory test in order to be allowed to vote that would measure people's awareness on the issues. I personally don't feel informed enough to vote. Most people vote based on minimal awareness of the politics behind each candidate, and my vote would be outweighed by theirs.



Rey Diaz
Cook
 Upper Eastside
 I'm not voting for anyone. I've never voted. Being a convicted felon, I don't think I have the right to vote, but I never had any interest in doing it anyway. I've never been into politics. I'm a working man, just struggling day by day to raise a six-year-old girl. The economy is just bad. Prices are up, gas is up. If I were to vote, I'd maybe pick McCain because of his military background. Hopefully, whoever wins will make our country stronger and better.



Matthew Minor
Bar Manager
 Downtown
 Obama. We need change. We've had eight years of one of the least successful administrations in American history. Obama is trying to make a better tomorrow. The decisions made in the next few years are going to affect our children and their children. There's not a lot to be said about McCain. He's a proven politician. He's a war veteran. Those are good qualities for a president, but Obama is more for the people — not just the wealthy, but the poor too.

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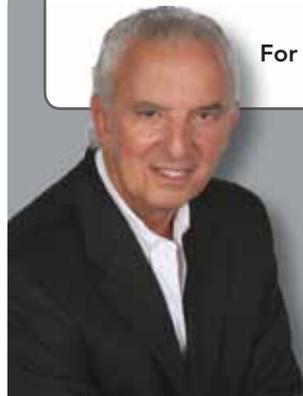


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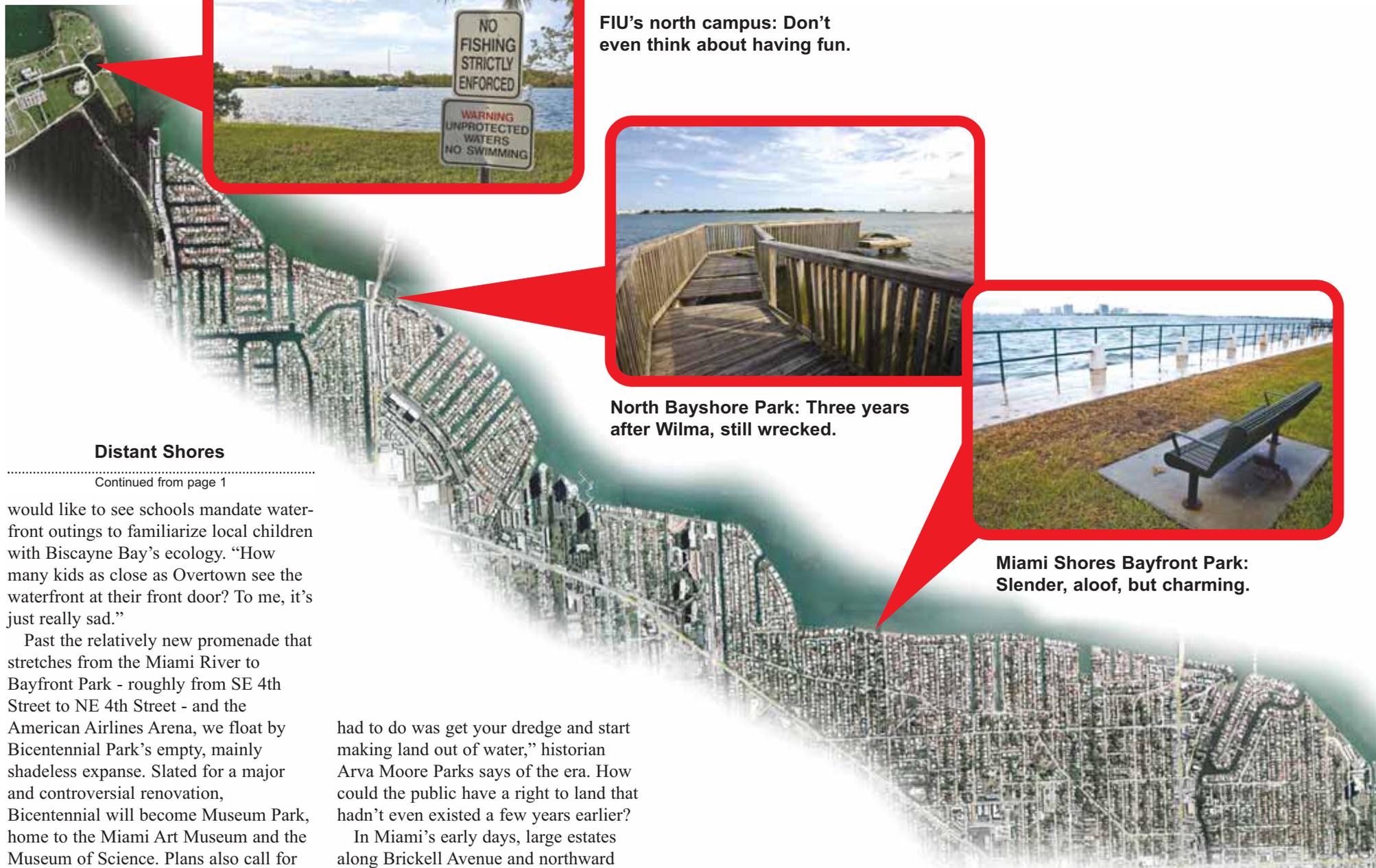
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FIU's north campus: Don't even think about having fun.



North Bayshore Park: Three years after Wilma, still wrecked.



Miami Shores Bayfront Park: Slender, aloof, but charming.

Distant Shores

Continued from page 1

would like to see schools mandate waterfront outings to familiarize local children with Biscayne Bay's ecology. "How many kids as close as Overtown see the waterfront at their front door? To me, it's just really sad."

Past the relatively new promenade that stretches from the Miami River to Bayfront Park - roughly from SE 4th Street to NE 4th Street - and the American Airlines Arena, we float by Bicentennial Park's empty, mainly shadeless expanse. Slated for a major and controversial renovation, Bicentennial will become Museum Park, home to the Miami Art Museum and the Museum of Science. Plans also call for extending a baywalk through the park, which stretches from 9th to 12th streets. The only apparent activity this morning isn't really activity at all - someone dozes by the water. A few steel ladders scale the imposingly high seawall at long intervals, but otherwise there is no way of reaching the water.

Limited as it is, Bicentennial Park represents a historic step forward for Miami in terms of waterfront access. Less than 40 years ago, the area was a collection of old warehouses, port facilities, and a contaminated oil depository. In the Seventies, the city carved out a waterfront parcel, and began transforming it into a 30-acre park. Before then, the issue of waterfront access was barely a whisper in Miami thanks to geography and politics.

During the early part of the 20th Century, developers created the shoreline out of watery mangrove wilds. "All you

had to do was get your dredge and start making land out of water," historian Arva Moore Parks says of the era. How could the public have a right to land that hadn't even existed a few years earlier?

In Miami's early days, large estates along Brickell Avenue and northward gobbled up waterfront land. Over time, most of these properties were broken up and developed as condominiums or smaller private homes. A few were deeded to the city or county as parkland, according to Parks. Even with the newly available waterfront, however, local residents didn't necessarily rush to take advantage, Parks says. Herself a native of Miami Shores, Parks recalls thinking of Biscayne Bay as dirty. The ocean was the destination. "You wouldn't go to the bay," she recalls.

As late as the 1960s, waterfront lots along the Miami River and parts of the bay were used for parking garages. At least one trailer park occupied prime waterfront real estate near 109th Street. "It's interesting the way people viewed waterfront," Parks says. "They just didn't seem to appreciate it."

That lack of appreciation was reflected in Biscayne Bay itself. The bay struggled for decades with fluctuating salinity

levels owing to the canal and water-control system. Direct discharge of sewage into the bay and its tributaries continued until the 1950s.

Conditions have improved markedly since the county created a management plan for the bay in the Eighties. Today the overall health of the bay and its seagrass beds is "outstanding" and people should not think twice about swimming or fishing, according to Susan Markley, a senior biologist with the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management.

As Poston and I paddle on, he points out the *Miami Herald* building just north of the MacArthur Causeway. He helped build it as a young ironworker before shipping off to Vietnam with the Marine Corps. Now a structural engineer, he has spent years inspecting waterfront buildings such as the *Herald's* headquarters, which he's certain is headed for the wrecking ball. "This is going to be a condo," he predicts.

"A huge condo."

We pause for a few minutes to appreciate the building's private waterfront, lined with benches, palms, and flowering plants. No one is enjoying the view at this hour. But then, only *Herald* employees are allowed there. It's fenced off to the public.

Not much farther along, we glide past Margaret Pace Park. Remodeled five years ago, the eight-acre park is a waterfront gem amid the new, sparkling condo high-rises that line N. Bayshore Drive between 17th and 21st streets. Again, not much activity on a weekday morning, but we spot a couple of areas where adventurous souls could slide a kayak into the water or go for a dip.

From Pace Park, it is a while before

Continued on page 15

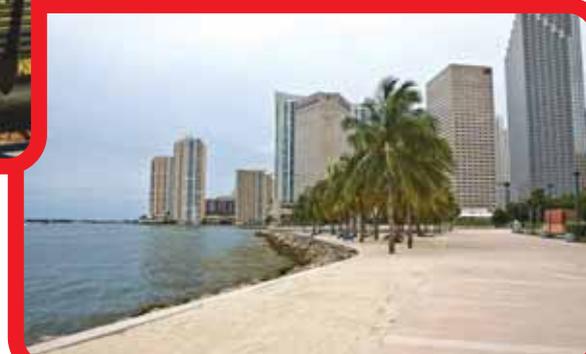
Morningside Park: A rare bayfront triumph for ordinary people.



Magnolia Park: Not exactly inviting at water's edge.



Edgewater: Nearly 20 streets meet the bay, but don't get any ideas.



Bayfront Park: Enjoyable, though contact with the water is difficult.

(c) 2008 Google Imagery, Digital Globe, Sanborn, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, GeoEye, Tele Atlas

Distant Shores

Continued from page 14

we come upon another good water access spot. In the meantime, there are at least a dozen dead-end streets in the 20s and 30s that allow at least a glimpse of the bay, albeit crowded by parked cars and “No fishing, swimming, or loitering” signs. There’s plenty of grassy space to stretch out where 28th Street meets an inlet, and another shoreline empty lot between 31st and 32nd streets, both unbuilt high-rise sites. A few condominium parking lots here and there command priceless waterfront views.

More hopeful are the occasional small waterfront walkways where newer buildings meet the bay. A 1979 amendment to Miami’s city charter requires that all newly constructed buildings be sited at least 50 feet back from the water to allow for public walkways.

Longtime Miami attorney and activist Dan Paul, the amendment’s champion, recalls, “The government was primitive. They didn’t stand up and show any leadership to the public in terms of preserving these places.” Since then, however, local government has not become as enlightened as Paul had

hoped. Using a provision in the charter, the city commission has granted numerous waivers to the mandatory setback.

“People feel helpless, powerless about a lot of the decisions made about the waterfront,” Poston says. Developers, he points out, are generally the largest contributors to local political campaigns. One of their primary concerns is protecting their stake in waterfront land. “The waterfront,” Poston says with a nod toward the shore. “That’s where the money is.”

For some, the waterfront is also a kind of sanctuary. At 27th Street, a man holding a bible stares out on the blue expanse.

He seems to be intoning prayers. Nearby is a solitary fisherman, seated on an upturned bucket and holding his fishing rod as though it were an afterthought. Urban anglers like him seem to be the most common waterfront habitués.

Crossing under the Julia Tuttle Causeway at 36th Street, we come across a few little waterfront spots in quick succession. There’s Stearns Park, a tiny, dog-friendly piece of green below and between the causeway’s east-bound and west-bound lanes. Then there’s Magnolia

Continued on page 16

Distant Shores

Continued from page 15

Park, a somewhat grander open space that features a waterfront gazebo and riprap in place of a seawall. Tiptoeing into the water looks quite possible here, but signs clearly prohibit such frivolity.

Between 40th and 50th streets is the private community of Bay Point. You can look at the sprawling homes from the water, but good luck to any nonresident trying to get past the guard gate and anywhere close to the waterfront.

Next up is Morningside Park, a grand dame of bayfront parks, stretching from 50th Terrace to 55th Terrace. The nearly 40-acre park inside the historic Morningside neighborhood offers not only a wide boat ramp but also a smaller ramp and floating dock for paddle craft. Kayak rentals are available here Friday through Sunday for only \$5 an hour.

Another boat-ramp option is nearby at Legion Park. It's not so much *in* the park as next to it, at the end of 64th Street, though it is managed by the city's parks department. The floating docks here and at Morningside double as great ways to

slip into the water for a swim.

A few blocks north of Legion Park is Baywood Park, a shoebox-size green space at 70th Street favored by dog-walkers. A seawall cancels the likelihood of getting in or out of the water. In fact, high seawalls and private homes block access to the water from here north to the 79th Street Causeway.

Just past the causeway, Poston and I decide to call it a day. As we pull up to a seemingly abandoned dock, Poston recalls coming to the spot when it was Mike Gordon's restaurant, one of the area's only bayfront eateries. Now a lonely-looking sales center announces plans for two 20-story condominium towers called Oasis.

On another day, I set out from Pelican Harbor Marina just off the 79th Street Causeway. My paddling partners for the first few hundred yards are Marsha Colbert and Pamela Sweeney, manager and environmental specialist respectively of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve. The state-protected preserve is made up of two separate portions of the bay, one to the north of Biscayne National Park (our location) and one to the south. In

all, the preserve encompasses 69,000 acres, or 107 square miles of submerged land. Combined with the 256-square-mile Biscayne National Park, it is a body of water spreading more broadly than the Netherlands Antilles.

Colbert and Sweeney speak energetically and enthusiastically about the bay, its unique attributes, all the wonders it has to offer. Including the preserve and the national park. Biscayne Bay, they explain, is a shallow lagoon with an average depth of six to ten feet. It is carpeted with seagrass beds and inhabited by more than 500 species of fish and more than 800 bottom-dwelling (benthic) species, such as shrimp, crabs, sponges, and spiny lobsters.

Endangered creatures such as sea turtles and manatees roam these waters. So do all feather of birds. The bay is a major stopover for migrating North American shorebirds, with several islands serving as important rookeries, boisterous with the racket of different avian conversations. "People drive to the Keys to interact with species that are *right here*," Colbert says with some exasperation.

After exploring a few islands that have

been replanted with native species as part of a county project, we go our separate ways.

In quick succession, there's a long, narrow inlet between 83rd and 84th streets and another between 86th and 87th. There's Lake Belmar at 89th Street and Lake Ward at 90th Street. Two gardeners on their haunches look up at me and wave. A maid in uniform scurries from one room to another across an elegant house's patio. But it's all private property. No parks and nowhere to sit by the water here. And then, all of a sudden, there is.

At 94th Street a dramatic seawall rises up to a green railing. This is Miami Shores Village Bayfront Park. It's about three blocks long, a narrow but pleasant strip of parkland. A long-haired young man on a bench is the only person using it on this day. Signs prohibit fishing and dog-walking. A prominent security camera surveys the scene from its perch on a tree.

At the foot of 105th Street, an elderly gentleman is sitting on a bench at the mouth of the Biscayne Canal. The spot is owned by the Shores Condominium,

Continued on page 18

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Distant Shores

Continued from page 16

where he lives. He says doesn't know of anywhere for a regular Joe to get to the water between the canal and Oleta State Park. He's half right.

Past a ghostly empty marina around 112th Street, at the foot of the Broad Causeway at 123rd Street, is a unique little locale. It's called North Bayshore William Lehman Park. Badly damaged during Hurricane Wilma in 2005, the pocket park's wooden boardwalk remains closed, leaning precariously over the water. It's a shame, because it looks like a good spot to get up close and personal with the bay. People used to fish from it, hoping to land something big from the offshore reef.

The rest of the park is open, and there's even a worn-down patch of shoreline that would be perfect as a ramp for your kayak or canoe. The park, owned and maintained by the City of North Miami, is open from sunrise to sunset and offers great views of the Intracoastal Waterway and a few islands.

From the Broad Causeway north to the campus of Florida International

University, it's pretty bleak for seekers of the waterfront: private homes and condos all the way — not even a dead-end street.

The sense of opportunity lost continues up to FIU, where the shoreline becomes something altogether different. In places sandy or rocky, in others lined with mangroves, the coast here is calm and inviting. There are plenty of great waterfront walking trails, one of which you can reach from NE 135th Street in the Arch Creek East neighborhood, and plenty of beautiful spots to sit and take in the view. Low-lying areas close to the water abound. Unfortunately most of them are studded with signs prohibiting fishing, swimming, and "watercraft landing."

More and more cities in the U.S. and abroad are realizing the potential of their waterfronts as public resources. As of last year, New York City had about 60 miles of waterfront access in the plans or under construction. New York law mandates new buildings provide public access to the waterfront and "view corridors" from the street.

Unlike many cities, however, Miami's waterfront was never abandoned or

blighted by large-scale industrial development. Therefore other cities' tactics for reclaiming waterfront land — easements from private property owners, the use of eminent domain, or simply making cheap purchases — haven't been available to Miami. But, says Ann Breen, co-director of The Waterfront Center, a Washington-based nonprofit educational group, there is hope for the Magic City.

After all, Milwaukee managed to avoid private-property issues on its riverfront by building a public promenade out over the Milwaukee River using stilts. Philadelphia's city planners got moving on the long-stagnant Penns' Landing waterfront when a University of Pennsylvania group held public meetings on the subject and presented a civic vision for redevelopment.

"It takes leadership," Breen says. Miami needs political and business officials to team up with other community leaders on a plan for meaningful public access, Breen argues. "Somebody's got to step up to the plate," she says. "I feel sorry for Miami. It deserves better."

There has been no shortage of talk and

planning for waterfront access over the years, especially in the City of Miami. Ever since passage of the so-called Dan Paul amendment mandating a 50-foot setback, many city officials have envisioned grand waterfront plans. Despite this, Miami 21, the massive land-use document intended as a blueprint for the city's long-term development, sets forth no specific intention to increase waterfront access.

There are, however, separate proposals for promenades and green spaces along the water at locations such as Dinner Key in Coconut Grove and Bicentennial Park. There is also a stated goal to continue downtown's baywalk, now little more than a connection from the Miami River's mouth to Bayfront Park, well up the river and as far north along the bay as possible.

As more people begin to appreciate the value of the waterfront, they will demand more access to it, Dan Paul believes. "The public," he notes, "has been asleep from the point of view of their rights."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

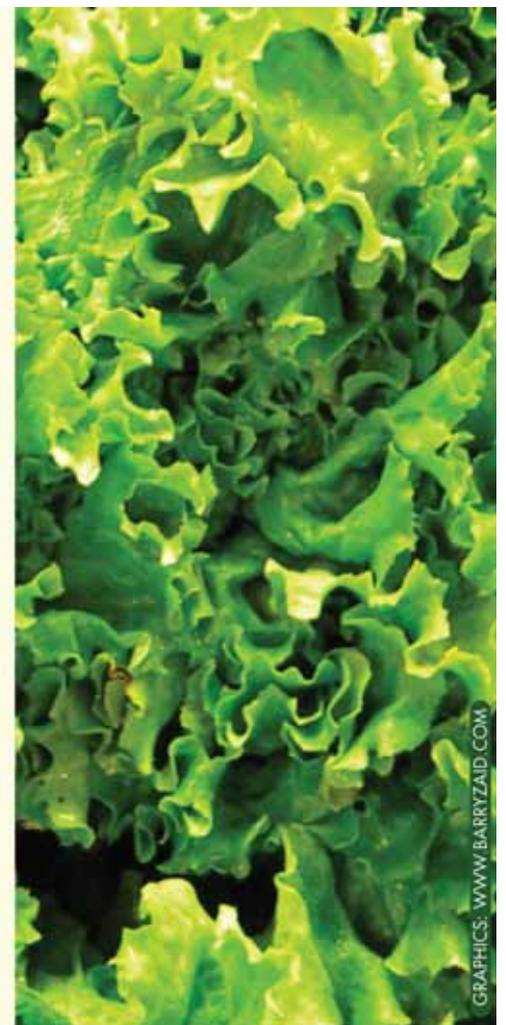


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Cuba's Open Doors

Here in Miami, we keep them locked shut

By Kathy Glasgow
BT Contributor

Her legs were painfully scabbed and scarred by recent surgery, but last month my tough little mother-in-law marched me down a muddy dirt road in eastern Cuba to consult Barbarito.

Most of my husband's huge extended family lives among the hills and mountains outside Santiago, in cobbled-together homes offering neither modern amenities nor security from weather or intrusion. The full force of Hurricane Ike had missed us, but even as my *suegra* and I were picking our way along a gully to Barbarito's cavelike altar-room, the storm was laying waste to parts north and west across the island.

We peeked into a little shack where two massive, hard-looking women in dirty Spandex were mired in a beyond-repair sofa. A crate of incongruously green avocados sat at their feet. A



smashed white sandal lying just on the threshold appeared (only to me, I'm sure) portentous of something. My mother-in-law, Antonia, stepped inside and asked after Barbarito. The woman nearer the door, the one with short platinum hair, sagging eyes, and a fat moist cigar

clamped in the left side of her mouth, assured us he was around somewhere.

By the time we reached Barbarito's grotto, he was sitting in his chair (one of those classroom seat-and-desk combinations), waiting to receive us in smoky obscurity. Arrayed on ledges and

high tables behind him were statues and figurines of *santos* and *orishas*, along with their favored offerings and all the other objects and talismans that collect on altars.

Barbarito's demeanor is opaque; his eyes are downcast, his speech barely audible. His skin is the color of fresh blood mixed with dark chocolate, and there's no gray in his hair. A smoothly curved, deep scar runs from his right temple to the jaw.

He's never asked me for money, but his counsel has always been on target. However, like all such small-town holy men with a reputation for expertise on the astral and spiritual planes, Barbarito is not necessarily highly regarded by everyone in the community. A lot of people, including most of my in-laws, don't go so far as to call him a fraud but dismiss him as ineffectual. They would consult him, though, if desperate.

Continued on page 21

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Doors

Continued from page 20

Several years ago Barbarito was the victim of an unusually (for Cuba) violent attack. A man from a local family, one of six or seven foul-tempered brothers, walked to Barbarito's property (I still couldn't say exactly which little shacks and patios comprise "his" property or who exactly lives there besides Barbarito and his 20-something son), and during an extended rampage, laid waste to everything in sight, including the *spiriritista's* beloved *santos*; smashed furniture and dishes and walls; and sent the goats and chickens and children fleeing. (Barbarito's long scar did not come from that incident. My mother-in-law doesn't know what caused it, and I haven't had the nerve to ask him.)

I don't know of any reason for the rampage other than alcohol. There are probably many details nobody has the patience to explain to me in a context I could immediately understand. Barbarito has recovered and replaced what was broken. The attacker, forever afterward identified as the man who trashed Barbarito's place, was nevertheless not

prosecuted or punished (at least on the material plane). He died while in his 40s, though, about two years ago. All of those brothers are dead now, except one, who lives in Miami.

I was thinking about violence and safety, about feeling secure and fearless in one's own home, as I rode in a bus across Cuba last month. I know most of these *BT* columns from Liberty City have centered on crime and delinquency, and I don't like to obsess on those things because I feel I'm falling into the classic trap of assuming (and assuming everyone else assumes) that Liberty City is nothing but a ghetto. But it's true that a community's level of crime is a basic indicator of quality of life, and my husband and I have been struggling to deal with the crime-related decline in our own living standards.

When I was in Cuba, I naturally compared conditions there with those in Liberty City, which superficially has some of the same demographics (to begin with, a dysfunctional economy and majority black population). Cuba is a Third World country, and standards of living for the most part are low despite touted recent investments from China,

Venezuela, and other friendly nations.

Still, the plumbing problems at my house are nothing compared to those of most Cubans. I thought my trips to the island would eventually inure me to the absence of running water and air conditioning, the indecent sanitation, the grime and rot of utterly dilapidated dwellings, and their total lack of privacy. Instead I grow less accustomed. Whenever I'm there, I daydream about what paradise it must be to stay in a hotel and take a shower and dress without my clothes immediately sticking to my sweat-slicked body. I'd still be reading *Granma* or *Juventud Rebelde* with breakfast, though, sadly aware that the state continues to insult the intelligence of the Cuban people.

So I don't think I have any romantic feelings left for Cuba, unless my profound love for the music of Paulito FG counts. But there's something I kept noticing this last time — nothing new, but given the environment of fear in which I've been living the past few years, something precious and puzzling. It's the open doors. An image: the big tourist bus — ViaAzul — speeding away from the sun over the

potholed highway at dusk, the countryside verdant in the rainy season, cattle herds restless before the approaching darkness, and then a country house where ordinary people are wrapping up an ordinary day's activities, clearly visible in the yellow overhead light, there for anyone on the highway to observe.

My first thought on seeing these bucolic snapshots was a vague mental montage of some old movie scenes in which strangers arrive at a modest farmhouse way out on a country road and proceed to murder everyone in the hard-working farm family. What an American reaction!

Then I thought about the house in Havana I'd just left, where neighbors, friends, and family come and go, day and night, and how the doors and windows are rarely shut. It's not that crime doesn't exist in Cuba; it's not that people aren't conscious of crime or want to prevent it. But the fear and stress and off-the-charts violence that we in the United States now consider normal and unavoidable — that doesn't exist in Cuba. At least not yet.

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A Country Club in Terminal Decline

Jews aren't the problem anymore — outreach is

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

In my business, the oft-repeated saw that “you can’t write what you don’t know” has always been gospel to me. I’ve mentioned the Village’s pink elephant — ye olde Miami Shores Country Club — a few times in this column. But as my knowledge of the place has come anecdotally, I decided I should become personally acquainted.

Aside from the fact that it took eight years for me to set foot in the door — nothing to do with the anti-Semitic history of the property and me being a Jew and everything to do with an absence of community recruitment — it wasn’t difficult. The first event I attended there, just a few weeks ago, was a bar mitzvah, a very nicely handled one at that. My husband and I were impressed enough with the facilities, dressed up and on best behavior as they were, that we could picture holding Zoe’s celebration there in a few years.



So I took a friend up on his invitation to meet my husband and me for drinks there one Friday night so I could see what the place was really all about, age spots and all. The friend, who joined about a year ago on a golf and social membership, has always been honest

about its pitfalls, including a lack of outreach and a social-member register where the median age is about 82. But he sees so much possibility in this property and thinks if we enroll, and persuade some other mutual friends to do likewise, we can revitalize the club by

BT photo by Andrew Leins

sheer numbers. Get the majority seat, so to speak.

I see his point. After all, the Miami Shores Country Club is the only fully stocked bar and true liquor license in town (or to be technical, straddling or even a mite over the Miami Shores/North Miami border). I’ve never been a fan of country clubs in general, but the social, economic, and purely legal value of having a Village haunt where we could hang out with neighbors and have a safe, short walk home (for those of us on the west side) is tremendous.

My husband and I agreed to the invitation. We had drinks at an attractive, roomy sunken bar. But without miniature egg roll appetizers and their attendant aroma floating through the room, we got a good idea of what it really smelled like: a pervasive undercurrent of must, mildew, and assorted adult diapers. And what it looked like: It was dominated by

Continued on page 23



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Decline

Continued from page 22

the longstanding Old Guard. If their glares mean anything — and I think they do — we “young” (read: middle-age) whippersnappers don’t stand a chance.

Every Friday night is the same: They dress as if for a wedding or bar mitzvah, greet each other effusively at happy hour while snacking on cheese cubes that have seen better methods of refrigeration, and then adjourn to a dining room that never fills up, let alone turns tables. Meanwhile at the bar, a few couples might down a quick hamburger after a tennis game, or a drinker or two will put away martinis after 18 holes on the golf course. But nowhere will you see the kind of group we comprised: making merry and more than ready for some social life in the Shores. Weeknights, you can imagine, are even less active.

I’m not saying the Miami Shores Country Club needs to turn into some kind of pub just to please my friends and neighbors. And I’m sure golf fees and banquets bring in enough to keep it running at a bare-bones level. But when you look closer — even just at the carpet — you get the

feeling the income is really not enough. Frankly, I was shocked by the death rattle you can almost hear in these rooms. And no, it’s not coming from the current clientele, though they will die off eventually, and from the looks of some of them, sooner rather than later. No, Miami Shores Country Club is a ghost property in the making. But why? Doesn’t anybody involved in this venture want to prevent a terminal decline?

Apparently not. Staff I questioned about possible improvements just shrugged, as if they’ve heard these plans before and nothing has happened. And though my friend was enthusiastic enough to inform a board member that he’d brought in two new couples for the evening, the board member didn’t even say hello, let alone try to recruit us.

The Miami Shores Country Club could actually be a kind of rousing retro success. In this depressive economic climate, which is only going to get worse, folks want to stay close to home and are looking for affordable and dependable entertainment. The Miami Shores Country Club could provide that, if it cared to. At \$300 annually, its social

membership rate is reasonable enough. But presently there’s no real reason to purchase one.

It’s not too late to reinvigorate these halls. My friend who brought us to the club is bursting with ideas to attract new members: Open the bar and dining room to Shores residents once a month, following the example of the Aquatic Center. That keeps the so-called riffraff out, but exposes a whole new potential membership. Send event calendars with coupons to new Shores homeowners and offer ten-percent discounts on Sunday brunch as an introduction (once you’ve got them there, give them a tour). Heck, why not send coupons to *all* homeowners within Village limits. In the time I’ve lived here, I’ve never received any kind of mailer or invitation from the Miami Shores Country Club. In this age of virtual advertisement, you’d think they’d at least have an e-flyer announcing weekly gatherings and opportunities. If you were a member, you could look forward to these events and plan your week around attending; if you weren’t, they might make you consider becoming one.

What kind of events roster are we talking about? Certainly livelier than the one

that exists now with the once-weekly golf and tennis tournaments and seafood buffet. Other than that, it’s all about some high school’s senior prom and someone’s wedding reception. These are fine things to hold there, but they only fill the weekend. There are plenty more days — and opportunities for income potential — to consider.

I’d begin by welcoming the whole community instead of catering to golfers and seniors. I’d promote Family Nights, where parents could come in for happy hour and their children could watch DVDs — or go one better and install a game room for teenagers. Parents would be happy to know where their kids were at night, and maybe the pre-driving set would actually welcome a semi-cool place to hang out and see their friends from the area. No doubt the coins would roll in.

When I brainstorm about it, I can see how the Miami Shores Country Club might become a powerful social force for the Village again. But as it stands, I’m not going to bother trying to change an institution from the inside when I don’t even like the way it smells.

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Hair in the Hood

The Chop Shop celebrates two years on the block

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

Rather than limit my monthly writing to political screeds, I've decided to take an occasional detour into some of the Upper Eastside's more eclectic offerings. For my first excursion, I've chosen a local business called Chop Shop Barbershop at 7283 Biscayne Blvd.

The phrase "chop shop" transports me to my younger days. Back in those days (and still, I suppose), a chop shop was the name given to a place where stolen cars were taken in the dark of night, quite literally to be chopped into pieces. The car's body was of no consequence and thus was dismantled with saws and torches to glean the much-sought-after treasures inside — transmissions and even entire engines — before the light of day.

The particular Chop Shop I've discovered locally, however, falls into a different category altogether. It is actually an



BT photo by Andrew Leins

"urban barbershop" that is the entrepreneurial brainchild of brothers Amir and Edward Youssef.

Back in a galaxy far, far away — known as New York City — Edward (or Big Ed as he is affectionately and aptly known by locals) was cruising through a particularly seedy part of the Bronx one evening when he spotted two neighboring

establishments — a chop suey restaurant and a barbershop — both with partially defunct neon signs. Of course, the signage on the left, for the restaurant, had only the word *Chop* illuminated. Above the business on the right only the word *Shop* was still glowing.

Big Ed pounced on the fortunate accident, deciding he'd stumbled upon a

brilliant name for a barbershop. More than ten years ago, he and Amir opened the first Chop Shop, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. But things did not go very well. They were located in a ghetto neighborhood not very conducive to survival — either for the brothers or their business. So they picked up and moved to Miami.

Amir began working as a waiter in local restaurants (the Forge, Monty's, and the like), but he kept alive his dream of opening another Chop Shop. Shortly after Amir and Big Ed moved here, the 9/11 attacks took place in New York. Amir's mother told the boys not to come back. "It is very difficult here for Arabs or those of Arab descent," Amir remembers her telling them: "You two stay in Miami and make your livelihood there."

They took her advice and began planning in earnest to open their second Chop Shop. It all finally came together two years ago, when the Chop Shop made its debut on the MiMo Historic

Continued on page 25



11th Judicial Circuit of Florida Run-Off Election November 4, 2008



<p>STEPHEN T. MILLAN Admitted to the Florida Bar May 2, 1991</p> <p>Years Practicing Law Over 17 years</p> <p>Miami-Dade County Bar Association Rating 65.45% Exceptionally Qualified or Qualified</p> <p>Practicing Experience Federal & State Court Criminal Defense Law Bankruptcy Law Immigration Law Family & Probate Law</p> <p>Work Experience Assistant State Attorney for 7 years prosecuting in the divisions of: Career Criminal/Robbery Narcotics • DUI/Traffic • Felony Trial</p> <p>Married with 5 children</p>	<p>YVONNE COLODNY Sept. 23, 1999</p> <p>Only 10 years</p> <p>39.71% Unqualified</p> <p>State Court only</p> <p>Only worked in the Public Defenders Office</p> <p>Single</p>	
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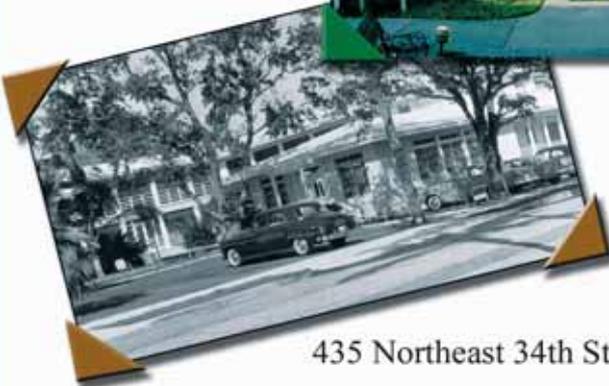
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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

Hair

Continued from page 24

District section of Biscayne Boulevard. In the beginning they had just two barber chairs. They now boast eight busy chairs for the barbers, who sport black smocks with bright yellow Chop Shop logos.

So just what is an “urban barbershop”? I can tell you it is different from any barbershop I’ve ever visited. By way of explanation, there’s an old country-and-western song by Tom T. Hall that describes the secret to longevity as “faster horses, younger women, older whiskey, and more money.”

Well, you could say Chop Shop Barbershop is built around a lifestyle that’s about faster and sleeker cars, beautiful women, parties, rap music, and of course, more money.

Put another way, hip-hop is the rock and roll of the current generation. Remember how our parents charged that the rock-and-roll culture, spawned during the time of Elvis and the Beatles, would be the ruin of our generation? I hope we learned from those fallacies and can be more tolerant of today’s younger set. After all, the hip-hop generation will

eventually be lamenting whatever pop culture movement takes its place.

Chop Shop caters to the hip-hop generation’s young urban men (and a few women), ages 4 to 40. Its customers are predominantly black and Latino, with a sprinkling of white boys — don’t forget Eminem! The hip-hop look they come in for is an exercise in precision. Razor cuts around the scalp and beard makes the hair look like it’s been applied, much like the snap-on hairpieces of our toy cowboys and Indians of old. There is a very distinct line where the forehead stops and the hair begins.

You don’t really get this type of look at your average mainstream barbershop, which usually caters to people like me, who just want to get a quick haircut and get on with our day. We’re really not looking for a hairstyle to make any statement except, “We keep ourselves groomed and presentable.” But the urban hairstyle says, “Here I am. Deal with it!” And Chop Shop, straight down to its décor, is one of the places filling the demand of that market.

Not unlike the set of a rap video, everything in Chop Shop is sleek and bright, just like the cars and motorcycles

the lifestyle glorifies — picture *The Fast and the Furious* and *Tokyo Drift*.

The waiting-area chairs are actually car seats mounted on polished aluminum diamond plates. The walls are covered with photos of beautiful cars and beautiful women — sharp and snazzy, but just tasteful enough that daddies can bring in their little boys and bond with them in the world of hip-hop. Photos of local clients and celebrities also grace the walls. Which ones? Chris Nuñez from *Miami Ink*, Shannon Briggs (the heavy-weight boxing champ), former Atlanta Falcon Andre Rison, Sticky Fingaz of the rap group Onyx (don’t tell me you haven’t heard of Sticky Fingaz!), and many other TV personalities.

So just how does he market his baby? First, he never forgets the clients and always shows respect. “Of course, we are here to make money,” Amir notes, “but you do that through respecting your client, and that brings them back.” Ultimately he and Big Ed would like to create a Chop Shop franchise, but that’s not so easy. Amir explains that although several celebs have offered him money for the name and the look, “once you sell

the name, you have nothing.”

“It will come in time,” Amir adds. “We have to keep things in perspective. We are just two young entrepreneurs from Jersey trying to impact the market — trying to bring ‘urban’ to the mainstream, and it can’t be rushed.”

Based on the observations of this good ‘ol *Miamuh* boy, the brothers are off to a strong start. In fact I just might have to drop in for a “fade” or “blow out” cut, or even a “bigen” dye job one of these days. Don’t believe me? Just wait and see.

The shop is open seven days. For more information visit www.chopshopbarbershop.com or call 305-756-8102.

Crime Update

You may recall my June column about seeing a burglar carrying a large saw on his shoulder and following him out of Belle Meade (“A Week in the Life”). After the property owner he’d victimized and I spent a year going to court about his case, the culprit recently accepted a plea deal for seven years in prison. It was worth the effort!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Steven K. Baird, P.A. Attorney at Law

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The Boulevard Is Back!

Construction nightmares are but a memory, though not everyone is smiling

By Erin Polla
BT Intern

The bulldozers are gone. The asphalt has been steamrolled. The dust has settled. And Biscayne Boulevard, after four years and \$45 million worth of reconstruction, has its game on — smooth and wide and flowing freely. According to the Florida Department of Transportation, the massive project, which aggravated countless

thousands of drivers and inflicted serious damage on many Boulevard businesses, officially concluded on Tuesday, July 1.

Now we have the landscapers, cutting holes in sidewalks and planting trees, applying nature's balm to help heal the wounds. That work is scheduled to be finished in December. The wounds, however, will linger. Those business owners who managed to survive the construction (an unknown number of them did not) still must reckon with commuters who

simply could not tolerate the congestion, found alternative routes, and have stuck with them.

Surely you remember why. Driving practically anywhere along the Boulevard was often a nightmarish experience — accelerating briefly, braking suddenly, inching along in bumper-to-bumper traffic. Multiple sections were narrowed to one lane each way, sometimes for weeks. And at one point, construction was taking place simultaneously at various points from 104th Street all the way down to 37th Street.

The last phase of the project took place within Miami city limits, from 87th Street southward. People engaged with that stretch of the Boulevard — whether drivers or bus riders or business owners — suffered the longest. With that in mind, and with a guarded sense optimism, the *BT* sought to conduct an unscientific survey. We attempted to contact as many businesses as possible along the Boulevard between 87th and 14th streets, record their names and phone numbers, and as time permitted, ask this

Continued on page 27



1. El Q-Bano Latin Café, 305-758-2550
2. Michel Contessa Antiques and More, 305-761-5243
3. Arts and Antiques, 305-528-7007
4. Mercato D'Epoca, 305-305-9443
5. Artistic Antiques, 305-751-5222
6. Deco Dreams, 305-975-8156
7. Gustavo Olivieri Antiques, 631-537-2811
8. Big Daddy's Liquors, 305-757-1917
9. Miami Subs Quickway, 305-757-0730
10. Laundry Partners, 305-759-3990
11. Estrella Insurance, 305-757-5900
12. Shorecrest Dry Cleaners, 305-751-5828
13. Sweetcakes, 305-333-5894
14. Studio Blue Bamboo, 305-762-4044
15. Ralph Choeff Architect, 305-892-6262
16. Dr. Lynn Labrousse Chiropractor, 305-757-5117
17. M.A.D.E. Miami Antiques and Design Expo, 305-757-2044
18. Don Bailey Floors, 866-721-7171
19. Cartronics, 305-751-5598
20. East Side Chiropractic, 305-403-2595
21. Surprise Barber and Beauty Salon, 305-754-0205
22. Gifts and Occasions, 786-312-6867
23. D & F Tax Multi Services, 786-472-5537
24. Pineapple Blossom Tea Room, 305-754-8382
25. Monique Fashions Boutique, 786-663-8875
26. Unisex Beauty Salon, 305-751-5003
27. Classy Dry Cleaners, 305-754-6300
28. Youth Expressions, 305-758-3831
29. Fairwind Sunglasses, 305-758-0057
30. Jiffy Lube, 305-758-1101
31. Biscayne Tire and Auto, 305-759-0925
32. Bistro 82, 305-403-2995
33. McDonalds, 305-756-0400

34. Payless Shoe Source, 305-751-5870
35. Beau Living, 305-751-1511
36. Wireless Connections and More, 305-758-7135
37. China Palace Restaurant, 305-751-6688
38. Spyro Sushi and Thai, 305-758-0516
39. State Discount Insurance, 305-759-2193
40. USA Nails, 305-757-6698
41. Check Cashing, 305-758-8526
42. Café Chin Fung, 305-758-5414
43. Fast Jewelry #2, 305-754-5042
44. 79 Café, 786-991-3304
45. Elida-Elitu Fotos y Formularios, 305-759-0059
46. Wendy's, 305-576-4488
47. CITGO Gas, 305-754-5031
48. Advanced Auto Parts, 305-757-2220
49. The Boulevard Theater, 305-756-0121
50. Red Light Regional Dining, 305-757-7773
51. Motel Blu, 305-757-8451
52. Center of Art, 305-490-4551
53. Gourmet Station, 305-762-7229
54. No Fear Computer Sales and Repairs, 305-759-5146
55. Broadway Art and Framing, 305-754-1773
56. Class One Barbershop and Beauty Salon, 305-758-0823
57. Lambda Passages, 305-754-6900
58. Galata Towers Shop 2, 305-759-8470
59. Ver Daddy's Taco Shop, 305-303-9755
60. Royal Budget Motel, 305-754-7901
61. Metro Force Security, 305-759-1010
62. Oyuki Clothing Boutique, 305-722-0672
63. Mr. B Custom Tailor, 305-758-4180
64. Maude Beauty Salon, 305-758-3935
65. Rafiul Food Store and Beauty Supply, 305-756-3000
66. Yao Animal Hospital, 305-751-8552

67. Royal Motel, 305-754-7901
68. SmilingPets.net, 305-754-0844
69. Open Doors, 305-751-1022
70. Transit Shop, 305-754-2866
71. Divine Trash, 305-751-1973
72. Sushi Square, 305-757-2111
73. Moshi Moshi, 786-220-9404
74. Le Café, 305-754-6551
75. Meduhr Body Waxing and Nails, 305-758-5750
76. Wrapstars, 305-756-5755
77. Chop Shop Barber Shop, 305-756-8102
78. Quiznos, 305-754-2400
79. Che Sopranos, 305-754-8282
80. King Motel, 305-757-2674
81. Camelot Inn, 305-751-3877
82. Hiperfit, 305-762-3999
83. Moonchine, 305-759-3999
84. DP Printing Signs and Copies, 305-757-2282
85. Jimmy's East Side Dinner, 305-754-3692
86. Eastern Video, 305-759-7111
87. Dogma Grill, 305-759-3433
88. Karma Car Wash and Café, 305-759-1392
89. Rapunzel Salon, 305-756-3909
90. Jamboree Lounge [Marcy: no phone]
91. Casa Toscana, 305-758-3353
92. Tyler Galleries, 305-759-4242
93. Uva 69, 305-754-9022
94. Saturn Motel, 305-757-8891
95. Michy's, 305-759-2001
96. Hiho Batik, 305-754-8890
97. Wine 69, 305-759-0122
98. Una Luna Boutique, 305-758-1771
99. Soma Day Spa, 305-757-7662

100. BP Gasoline, 305-754-2522
101. Starbucks, 305-758-1619
102. Subway, 305-758-7990
103. Casca Doce Studio, 305-757-6001
104. ABB Body Waxing, 305-756-7794
105. The Boutique Kitchen, 305-756-0084
106. Biscayne Inn, 786-235-2300
107. Kingdom, 305-757-0074
108. VN Nails, 305-757-1597
109. Smile Mobile, 305-960-7380
110. Rio's Flowers, 305-751-0993
111. New World Health Centers, 305-754-8966
112. Mercy Supermarket, 305-759-7737
113. Davis Motel, 305-759-5823
114. Julian Chang, 305-751-8900
115. Rebel, 305-758-2369
116. Underdog Denim Boutique, 305-756-5151
117. Freckles, 305-754-0570
118. Motel South Pacific, 305-756-0105
119. Sinbad Motel, 305-751-3110
120. Cleanway Cleaners, 305-756-8226
121. Morningside Liquors, 305-754-2221
122. Europa Car Wash and Café, 305-754-2357
123. Leo's Touch Hand Car Wash, 305-751-7906
124. Andiamo Pizza, 305-762-5751
125. Burger King, 305-751-3130
126. Chandli Liquors, 305-751-5775
127. To Go Sushi, 305-759-0914

128. The Honey Tree, 305-759-1696
129. Canela Café, 305-756-3930
130. Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robbins, 305-762-6796
131. Kim's Valet Cleaners, 305-758-7405
132. Planet Lighting, 305-757-5001
133. In Motion Dance Center, 305-751-2229
134. Bhoom Shanti Fashion and Décor, 305-758-8282
135. Glo, 305-758-2727
136. World Wide Photo, 305-756-1744
137. Motel Best Value Inn, 305-751-8696
138. Bayside Motor Inn, 305-754-4581
139. Bank of America, 305-576-4200
140. Publix, 305-573-8601
141. CVS, 305-576-4347
142. Wachovia, 305-573-0399
143. Luna Café, 305-573-5862
144. Art By God, 305-573-0161
145. Denny's, 305-573-8901
146. Shell Gasoline, 305-576-7172
147. Taco Bell and Pizza Hut, 305-576-5832
148. McDonalds, 305-573-6064
149. Pollo Tropical, 305-572-9844
150. Wendy's, 305-576-4488
151. Regions Bank, 305-576-2984
152. Bays Inn Midtown, 305-572-9550
153. Midtown Inn, 305-573-7700
154. Walgreens, 305-573-0130
155. Sun Inn Chinese, 305-576-1728

Boulevard

Continued from page 26

question: Three months after the end of roadway construction, how's it going?

We didn't include businesses operating in office buildings, and it's possible we missed a few others. If you think your business should have been included with the map and listings below, please drop us a line.

Convenience stores and similar small businesses report severe damage during construction, and unfortunately not much has changed since it ended. Amil Rahmn, of Mercy Supermarket (6600 Biscayne Blvd.), says, "We're dying and can't even pay our rent." A nearby bodega, Rafiul Foodstore and Beauty Supply (7400 Biscayne Blvd.), echoes that grim assessment. "It's been three or four months and still nothing. No one even came in for the 'For Sale' sign," says

employee Mohammed Faruque, pointing to a black-and-orange sign on the front of the building announcing that the store is for sale.

Jino Dwe of Cartronics (8250 Biscayne Blvd.) says the construction chased away customers and ruined his business. "They are not coming to Biscayne anymore," he laments. "It killed all of us."

A clerk at Fast Jewelry #2 (7917 Biscayne Blvd.), who wishes to remain anonymous, boils over with frustration: "Things are extremely slow. Nothing has changed since the construction ended. It's still dirty, there are still bums, and there is still crime."

High expectations of booming business along a post-construction Boulevard have been met for some. Kenny Beck of Broadway Art and Framing (7551 Biscayne Blvd.) says he just had "the best summer in ten years." Bartender Kendall Larned of Kingdom (6708 Biscayne Blvd.) notes that the popular

open-air restaurant "did all right during the construction, but business has picked up tremendously."

Stacey Robinson of Karma Car Wash and Café (7010 Biscayne Blvd.) points out that not only are they doing "wonderfully," another upside to the end of construction is the beginning of social cohesion. "The community has grown," she says, "and now they're coming together more."

Make that literally as well as figuratively. Today you can walk up and down the Boulevard without dodging heavy equipment or twisting an ankle. And while there appears to be much more window-shopping, it isn't always translating into sales. Says Carl Masello of Miami Antique and Design Expo (8330 Biscayne Blvd.): "Things are not really that great. More people come in, but they are not necessarily buying."

Michel Contessa, owner of Michel Contessa Antiques and More (8650 Biscayne Blvd.) sees the same phenomenon.

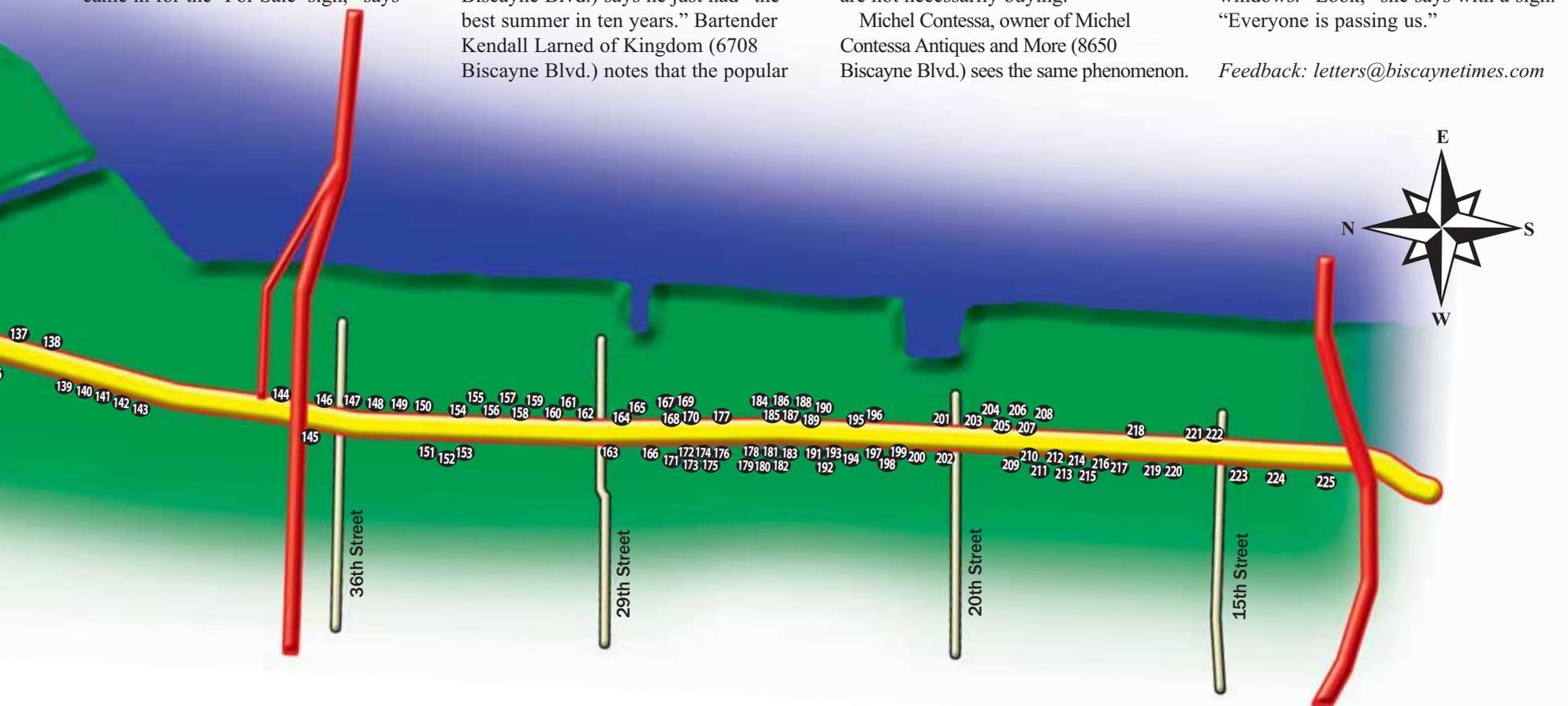
"More people come in now," he says. "They are coming back. It's only a little, but it's an increase."

Though it may seem counterintuitive, some businesses actually did *better* during the chaos of construction. As Yani Yuhara, part-owner of the Japanese restaurant Moshi Moshi (7232 Biscayne Blvd.), explains, "The completion of the construction is a double-edged sword. Traffic is moving smoothly, but people are just passing us now. At least with the slower traffic, people could see us and our sign."

Rick Dagostno of Underdog Denim Boutique (6665 Biscayne Blvd.) agrees. "Now that it's done," he says, "it's a freeway. Cars are just *zooming* by."

Over at Moonchine, the Thai-Vietnamese restaurant (7100 Biscayne Blvd.), Preedaporn Satiraprapkul sums it up as she gazes out her floor-to-ceiling windows. "Look," she says with a sigh. "Everyone is passing us."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



- 156. Pronto Supermarket, 305-573-3831
- 157. Boulevard Liquors, 305-573-4974
- 158. Starbucks, 305-576-1379
- 159. Nativo Design, 305-573-1011
- 160. Max Muscle, 305-395-7794
- 161. Kore, 305-573-8211
- 162. Sabor a Peru, 305-573-9637
- 163. Sunbelt Rentals, 305-572-9980
- 164. Service Center, 305-572-0090
- 165. Subway, 305-576-5099
- 166. Granite Transformations, 786-497-3003
- 167. Papa John's, 305-576-7272
- 168. Money Gram, 1-800-926-9400
- 169. I.D. Art Supply, 305-576-5222
- 170. Luigi Hair Styles, 305-571-7279
- 171. Delicias Peruanas Restaurant, 305-573-4634

- 172. Harmony Body Waxing and Nails, 305-576-1551
- 173. Long Live Rock & Other Obsessions, 305-200-3612
- 174. Shirley Pear Lingerie Boutique, 305-572-1326
- 175. Creative Office Solutions, 305-407-8907
- 176. Junior's Pet Grooming, 305-571-1818
- 177. Latin Café 2000, 305-576-3838
- 178. Mario the Baker, 305-438-0228
- 179. Personal Touch Valet Cleaners and Tailors, 305-438-0008
- 180. T.O. Cutz Barbershop, 305-572-0606
- 181. Minuteman Press, 305-571-0377
- 182. The Loft Sofas, 786-228-8981
- 183. Kom Furniture and Accessories, 305-576-4566
- 184. L and R Grocery, 305-576-6309
- 185. Sumba Graphic Design and Printing, 786-282-8510

- 186. Tip Top Cash Checking, 305-573-9820
- 187. Le Paris Beauty Salon and Spa, 305-573-6139
- 188. Omni Business Services, 305-576-7755
- 189. Metro PCS and Vigo [Marcy: no phone]
- 190. K and S Dry Cleaners, 305-571-1919
- 191. Public Storage, 305-573-8266
- 192. Subway, 305-571-9088
- 193. Stoal Outdoor Concepts, 305-573-1117
- 194. La Provence French Bakery, 305-576-8002
- 195. Sounds Good Stereo, 305-576-4665
- 196. Maino Churrascaria, 305-571-9044
- 197. Braman Motors, 886-821-5416
- 198. Par Invest Private Mortgages, 305-571-9666
- 199. Bengal Modern Indian Cuisine, 786-683-5382
- 200. National Eagle Bank, 305-576-1957

- 201. Staples, 305-573-1680
- 202. Bacardi, 305-573-8511
- 203. Court Furniture Rentals, 305-576-0660
- 204. OXO Cleaners, 305-933-9915
- 205. The Daily Creative Food Company, 305-573-4535
- 206. Salad Creations, 305-576-5333
- 207. Paul Anthony Salon and Day Spa, 305-571-7277
- 208. Citibank, 305-577-3097
- 209. Synergy Wellness, 305-371-5775
- 210. The Scoot, Skate, and Bike Company, 305-358-7004
- 211. Body Temple Day Spa, 305-371-0029
- 212. Pet Place, 305-372-2433
- 213. Bin No. 18, 786-235-7575

- 214. Sake Room Sushi Lounge, 305-755-0122
- 215. Milan Kitchens, 305-372-9030
- 216. Downtown Divas, 305-808-9588
- 217. Herval Furniture, 305-377-1221
- 218. Abrams Fabric, 305-379-8997
- 219. Burger King, 305-379-0468
- 220. Checkers, 305-579-2117
- 221. Marriott Hotel, 305-374-3900
- 222. Miami International University of Art & Design, 305-428-5700
- 223. Oriental Rug Co., 305-374-3976
- 224. Concert Association of Florida, 305-808-7446
- 225. Adrienne Arshnt Center for the Performing Arts, 305-949-6722

Further Adventures of the Boulevard's Big Man

Eric Silverman and his Vagabond Motel may soon be in the market business

By Terence Cantarella
BT Contributor

Market reports have dominated the headlines for months now. Bad debts, rising inflation, housing bubbles, and government bailouts have become topics of conversation for even the most financially illiterate among us. But along the Biscayne Corridor, there's been market talk of a different sort — talk that has more to do with orchids, honeydews, and organic vegetables than mortgages or Wall Street.

We're speaking, of course, about farmers markets.

On September 17, in a 6-2 decision, the Miami Planning and Advisory Board (PAB) approved the creation of a special "Market District" along Biscayne

Boulevard from NE 51st Street to NE 77th Street. The proposed district, which now must be ratified by the city commission, would allow qualifying property owners to operate outdoor markets in front of their businesses on Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Until recently, a temporary special-events permit was required for such activity, and it had to be renewed weekly.

The new ordinance aims to bring more visitors and much-needed revenue to



BT photo by Silvia Ros

September 4 community meeting: Eric Silverman persuaded almost everyone.

Boulevard businesses, while also taking a step toward creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, similar to neighborhoods in other U.S. and European cities.

To qualify for an open-air market, a property must measure at least 15,000 square feet. Very few properties in the designated area are that large. Exactly how many remains unclear — maybe three, maybe four. But one man whose property *does* qualify, and who plans to take full advantage of the new law when it takes effect, is Eric Silverman. His historic Vagabond Motel at 7301 Biscayne Blvd. is considered the premier property along the Boulevard's Upper Eastside, and he is fervently working toward opening an outdoor weekend market in his large front parking lot by Saturday, November 1.

Silverman expects that other businesses eventually will set up shop indoors at the Vagabond. A vintage store, a fish

Continued on page 30

Market Rebounds!

No, not Wall Street — the Upper Eastside's very own green version

By Nina Korman
Special to BT

"Region Park is the best market I've ever done. The community's reception has just been phenomenal," says Claire Tomlin of the Upper Eastside Green Market, which after years of anticipation began this past January and took a brief hiatus over the summer.

Tomlin should know. For more than a decade she has produced green markets in South Florida — on Lincoln Road, in Normandy Isle, in Aventura Mall, and on Fort Lauderdale's Los Olas Boulevard. This year she will add new ones in



Photo by Bill Mathisen

Claire Tomlin with supporter Commissioner Marc Sarnoff: More vendors, more products.

Surfside and Palmetto Bay.

Reopening on Saturday, October 25, the Upper Eastside incarnation promises to be better than ever. Its new name, the Upper Eastside Marketplace, will reflect the addition of vendors offering juried, handmade arts and crafts along with those returning to sell fresh produce, plants, and specialty food

items. (The number of vendors will total 50, up from last season's 30.)

Ironically, a new "market district" along Biscayne Boulevard, recently endorsed by Miami's Planning Advisory Board to help Vagabond Motel owner Eric Silverman establish his own outdoor market, has inadvertently bolstered Tomlin's business. Hence the inclusion of previously excluded arts-and-crafts items.

A few activists from nearby neighborhoods have expressed concern that the two markets might cancel each other out. Tomlin, however, is not worried about the

Continued on page 30



Please join us for The South Florida Coast: New Horizons in Science and the Humanities

Thanks to a grant from the Florida Humanities Council, Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus and the College of Arts and Sciences present a lecture series to focus attention on some of our state's most vexing environmental concerns. Lectures will take place at the Kovens Conference Center on the Biscayne Bay Campus at 7:00 PM as follows:

- October 16** An Alligator Eating Its Own Tail: Florida in the 21st Century
A lecture by author/environmentalist Alan Farago.
- November 13** Spirituality Goes Green: Scientific and Spiritual Approaches to Global Warming
A panel discussion on personal values and environmental awareness.
- December 4** A reading by poets Robert Wrigley and Campbell McGrath
Explore the connection between nature, community, and a sense of place.



FLORIDA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

These events are free and open to the public. To RSVP please call 305-919-5700. Visit us online at bbc.fiu.edu.

The High Cost of Pumping Gas

A popular service station attracts a police chief's wife and crooks too

By Erik Bojnansky
Special to BT

The Sunoco gas station on the corner of N. Miami Avenue and 54th Street is in the news again. BT readers may recall its last mention in these pages. That was back in May, when we recounted the harrowing story of attorney Abbie Cuellar and her encounter with thugs who leaped from their car and began shooting at her as she drove up NE 4th Court ("Perception vs. Reality"). Cuellar had just left the Sunoco station, and some observers speculated that she may have been targeted while buying gas there.

Such speculation was based on the station's reputation as a hot spot for crime. "That's a hub of activity," says Miami Police Maj. David Magnusson, who until recently commanded the department's North District. "This gas station is very big, clean, and centrally located — [and] bad people go where people park." That reputation has been reinforced several times recently, most notably on September 7. That's when Noreen Timoney, wife of Miami Police Chief John Timoney, was robbed.

Because the station and its commercial plaza are big and busy, some people become complacent and let down their guard. "You feel you are safer," Magnusson says. That can result in people neglecting to take basic precautions, like locking car doors. A thief can pounce and swipe a car's valuables within seconds, especially, Magnusson adds, if they're good at it.

Noreen Timoney pulled her Lexus into the station at about 9:30 a.m. on that



BT photo by Andrew Leins

Sunday. While she was preoccupied with her gas transaction, facing the pump, she didn't notice that a Nissan Maxima had pulled up alongside her car, maybe 15 feet away. Apparently she also didn't notice that her front passenger door was unlocked, a fact that did not escape the attention of Nissan's occupants.

The Sunoco station's surveillance video camera caught it on tape: A young man, a passenger in the Nissan, steps out of the car, crouches down low, and takes five quick steps over to Timoney's vehicle. He then smoothly opens the passenger door, reaches in and grabs her purse from the front seat, closes the door, and scurries back to the Nissan. He jumps in and the car takes off. Timoney saw none of this, and didn't even realize until minutes later that her purse was missing. Her loss in cash, jewelry, credit cards, and other items was estimated at more than \$2700.

The incident wasn't reported by the *Miami Herald* until six days later, and then it was only a brief item with no reporter's byline, buried inside the local section. But it certainly caught the

attention of CBS 4 reporter and commentator Jim DeFede, a former *Herald* columnist. His resulting story, "A Tale of Two Thefts: Why It's Good to Be the Chief's Wife," compared police response to the Timoney crime and to a similar incident that took place not far away, at the discount gas station on Biscayne Boulevard at 54th Street.

Once Timoney realized she'd been robbed, it didn't take long for police to show up in force — six patrol cars, burglary-unit detectives, and a crime-scene technician. The victim on Biscayne Boulevard parked her 2008 Mercedes at a pump, locked her doors, and went inside to prepay for gas. During those brief moments, and in broad daylight,

thieves smashed her car window, grabbed her purse, and sped off. According to DeFede's report, the police who responded wouldn't even dust for fingerprints, though a handprint was clearly visible. "The disparate treatment between how the police handled the two identical incidents raises questions as to

Continued on page 31

INCIDENT NUMBER		OFFICER ASSAULTED		LED		PPF#	
269764		OFFICER ASSAULTED		OFFICER ASSAULTED			
1 OFFICER KILLED PREVIOUS		1 OFFICER KILLED PREVIOUS		1 OFFICER KILLED PREVIOUS		1 OFFICER KILLED PREVIOUS	
2 OFFICER KILLED ACCIDENT OR		2 OFFICER KILLED ACCIDENT OR		2 OFFICER KILLED ACCIDENT OR		2 OFFICER KILLED ACCIDENT OR	
3 OFFICER ASSAULTED NO INJURY		3 OFFICER ASSAULTED NO INJURY		3 OFFICER ASSAULTED NO INJURY		3 OFFICER ASSAULTED NO INJURY	
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Police report: The contents of Noreen Timoney's stolen purse.

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Adventures

Continued from page 28

market, bookstore, coffee shop, and artists' spaces are just some of the enterprises he imagines in his revived venue (see *BT*'s September cover story, "Big Man on the Boulevard"). Silverman's ultimate goal is to create a bustling gathering place, complete with indoor retail, the outdoor market, a swimming pool, and even a pool bar. The Vagabond, he claims, holds the only full liquor license on the east side of the Boulevard from downtown to at least NE 132nd Street.

Market

Continued from page 28

imminent competition to the north at the Vagabond, graciously saying, "It's a pretty property and I just wish him the best."

Broadening the focus of her market, Tomlin says she'll be responding to the public's desire for organic goods, having formed an alliance with a South Florida farm growing four acres of organic produce. Eggplant will be harvested in late October. Tomatoes and squash will be

"That's the drive-home side," he reasons. "So the opportunity is there."

Silverman was the leading proponent of the Market District, and as the only property owner with concrete plans for an outdoor market, his motel has been a major focus at public meetings. The overwhelming majority of neighboring businesses and residents support Silverman's plan, as evidenced by a petition he circulated, as well as a show of hands at recent meetings of the MiMo Biscayne Association and a September 4 community meeting at Legion Park. Some locals have even billed him a visionary set to

ready by November. "I couldn't be happier," she says. (Full disclosure: *Biscayne Times* is a market sponsor.)

While hard economic times are bad for most people, Tomlin notes they are oddly favorable for market producers. Potential vendors hoping to raise extra cash have inundated her with phone calls. But folks wanting to make and sell grandma's banana bread can't legally produce it out of their own home kitchen. So Tomlin has made arrangements with a fully licensed kitchen at the nearby American

transform the MiMo Historic District, the strip of Biscayne Boulevard from NE 50th Street to NE 77th Street known for its midcentury motels designed in the unique, modernistic style known as Miami Modern (MiMo).

Some local preservationists and homeowners associations haven't been so easily sold on the idea. Among their concerns are traffic, sanitation, and a fear that an outdoor market would provide Silverman and other owners of historic properties with a convenient way to avoid costly restoration work, generating income instead from open-air markets.

Legion Post #29, where would-be vendors can rent space, whip up their homemade creations, then peddle them at the marketplace.

Quality vendors are important, but ultimately Tomlin understands a lovely setting in Legion Park can't be beat. "Families really enjoy coming to the park," she notes. Catering to them, she has planned concurrent events, such as horticultural lectures and cooking demonstrations by Boulevard chefs. On opening morning this month, kids are

Teri D'Amico, a local interior designer who shares credit for coining the term "MiMo," voiced her objections at the September 4 community meeting, taking many residents by surprise with the intensity of her opposition. "This is *not* a good thing for the neighborhood," she insisted. Her fear was that the area will become something akin to a flea market or junk bazaar.

That issue was addressed at the September 17 PAB meeting. Discussion mainly centered on enforcement of the

Continued on page 31

invited to don costumes for a Halloween parade, then participate in a judged costume contest and bob for apples. Afterward parents can enjoy an organic-food presentation.

"It has proven to be a real community happening," Tomlin says of the market. "It becomes like a town square." Neighbors can mingle, shop, and enjoy the outdoors every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. through the middle of May.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunoco

Continued from page 29

whether Timoney's wife received preferential treatment," DeFede said in his September 17 report.

Major Magnusson, who now oversees the police department's communications division, insists the differing responses had nothing to do with Noreen Timoney being the chief's wife, but everything to do with her being the third victim in a series of car burglaries at nearby gas stations. Officers responding to Timoney's

call quickly realized there was a pattern, Magnusson says: "By the third time, we realized something was going on." Between the Sunoco's surveillance tape and other descriptions provided by witnesses, a suspect was in custody within hours. He is 18-year-old Alvens Loriston.

Since this past January, Magnusson notes, there have been four car break-ins at the Sunoco station, as well as one battery and one assault in which a police officer was injured. Dawan Malik, owner of Trendsetters clothing store, which is

located within the Sunoco plaza, believes far more than four break-ins have taken place at the station. "It's probably more like four a month," he says. Malik likes his business location because there's lots of foot traffic, but he fears it's only a matter of time before someone tries to rob his store — unless the landlord makes the plaza safer. "You need 24-hour security," he warns, "because you never know what can happen."

Sunoco station manager Atiq Khaw insists the plaza is safe and that serious

incidents are rare. He argues this point inside his bustling convenience store, as he steps behind a transparent wall of thick glass that protects the cash register. But an eavesdropping customer flatly contradicts him as she leaves the store. "The whole area is crime!" she says loudly. "There's nothing here but crime!"

Responding with a smile, Khaw says, "She is telling you, subtly, that you should leave before you get robbed."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Adventures

Continued from page 30

terms of the proposed new law, which contains lots of specifics. For example, the markets are limited to the sale of handmade crafts, fresh fruits and vegetables, prepared raw foods, and drinks derived from fresh fruits and vegetables. No outdoor market may be located closer than 1500 feet to another outdoor market, and display areas can only be along the Biscayne Boulevard frontage and 25 feet from any residential property.

The ordinance also states that market

hopefuls must obtain a Class 2 Special Permit, issued by the city's planning department. Among other things, the permit requires any applicant to provide a detailed business plan. "We work closely with the NET office to help us get feedback," explained Assistant Planning Director Carmen Sanchez. "We issue the Class 2 permit. If they [property owners] don't behave, we'll get the complaint and we'll refer it to the enforcement department." If owners fail to comply, the permit is revoked and the market is instantly out of business.

Board member Betty Gutierrez still felt

there weren't enough limitations in the ordinance and warned that good intentions sometimes go awry. Nina West, another board member, believed a review period should be included in the ordinance. The proposal passed 6-2, and then was amended to include a review after four years.

Arva Moore Parks, the PAB chairwoman and respected Miami historian, concluded the meeting on a positive note. "I hope in four years we'll have a totally revived MiMo District and no one will want to waste time with this," she said of the review provision.

"You have the best people there," noted

board member Janice Tarbert, speaking of the Upper Eastside generally. "You're going to be enormously successful."

Tarbert just may be right. The Biscayne Corridor lacks a focal point similar to Miami Beach's Lincoln Road or Coconut Grove's CocoWalk, an oft-heard lamentation from residents. The Vagabond market project may prove to be a testing ground for what could become a very popular idea.

Now, if we could only do something about those financial markets.

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Benefits of Raising Children — The Palin Effect?

6400 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

Victim was living with a new boyfriend for more than a year. He was on the rebound after a bitter divorce. One night the ex-wife entered the home through the unlocked front door and started an argument with the girlfriend. The boyfriend heard the commotion and came out of the shower, naked. Seeing the old goods, the ex-wife attacked the girlfriend, punching and slapping her before the ex-husband pulled her away. The identity of the former wife has been confirmed, but at press time charges have not been filed. Victim is concerned because the ex-wife “has small children.”

The Long and Winding List

900 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Man was living large in a 512-unit building where all but 12 of the apartments are

empty owing to construction. Residing in such exclusiveness, and supervising the property, the man was a constant victim of theft. He stopped calling police after he was allegedly told by one of Miami’s finest: “Stop calling after every robbery!” However, he methodically compiled over two months a record of stolen items. The list included, among other things, 20

garbage disposals and 20 kitchen sinks. He continues keeping the list.

If It Fits, You Must Convict

7900 NE 2nd Ave.

Doctor had secured his practice at four in the afternoon, but when he returned the following day at 9:00 a.m., he found his

glass door busted open. He had experienced a similar incident at another location. Speaking with a neighborhood denizen one day, the doctor learned of a possible suspect. Police were called and approached the suspect, who was hanging out at a convenience store. They brought him downtown for voluntary fingerprint and DNA samples. DNA found on glass shards from the broken door matched the man’s DNA. He was arrested, though he wouldn’t admit to the break-in. He did, however, offer that he’d helped to move furniture two years earlier which may explain the DNA samples. At least this worked for O.J.

Love in the Time of Pepper Spray

300 Block NE 82nd Street

A woman had broken up with her boyfriend five months earlier, but now he was calling from Broward, where, he

Continued on page 33



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POLICE REPORTS

Crime Beat

Continued from page 32

said, he'd been in a fight. He needed a place to crash. The ex-girlfriend refused. According to the police report, "She have a new boyfriend now and do not want him to come over." (It's unclear if the officer was attempting to capture the local patois or whether that's just how the officer writes.) Predictably the ex-lover, thinking he still had a chance and not wanting to be alone, came over and banged on the woman's door. He managed to pry it open and grabbed her neck. Did her new boyfriend save the day? No. She took care of business herself by unloading on her ex with a can of pepper spray, which officially cemented their breakup. Note to new lover: When it's time, you'll know.

Bottoming Out on Internet Addiction

700 Block of NE 22nd Street

More than once in "Biscayne Crime Beat" we've detailed instances in which criminals have broken into homes and slept in their victims' beds, sometimes without stealing anything. In this

instance, the object of interest was a computer, not to steal but to use. The victim arrived home and noticed an unfamiliar odor in the air. Her computer was turned off, though she had left it on. When she booted up, strange e-mails and passwords appeared on the screen. The intruder, it seems, had used her home as a cyber café. No arrests, but it is classified as a burglary.

Battered, Saved, Then Robbed

7800 Block NE Miami Court

A distraught woman was temporarily living in a domestic-violence shelter. Upon going to sleep, she placed her valuables (wallet and cell phone) under her pillow as a safety precaution. However, when she awakened the next morning, the items were gone. She explained to police that she had tossed and turned in her sleep.

Losing a Good Customer

100 Block of NE 1st Street

Even longtime customers can't be trusted anymore. This man entered an establish-

ment he has patronized on a regular basis and asked to see a particular Rolex watch. His wife was waiting outside in the car, so he asked if he could show it to her before he made his purchase. The store owner comfortably agreed since this was a customer he knew, a customer who had pumped much money into his business. However, the man got into his car and simply drove away. Numerous attempts have been made by the owner to reach him, but to no avail.

Rooftop Hygiene

1200 Block of N. Miami Avenue

Police responded to a burglary-in-process report. An alert citizen had called police when she saw a man rummaging through her neighbor's backyard shed. Then the man ran to the front house. By the time police arrived, the man was on the roof. Dressed in black shorts and a black wife-beater, he was using a hose to wash himself. When he gave in to police, he explained his need to shower. This did not impress the officers. He was promptly arrested.

Slipped a Miami Mickey?

900 Block NE 2nd Avenue

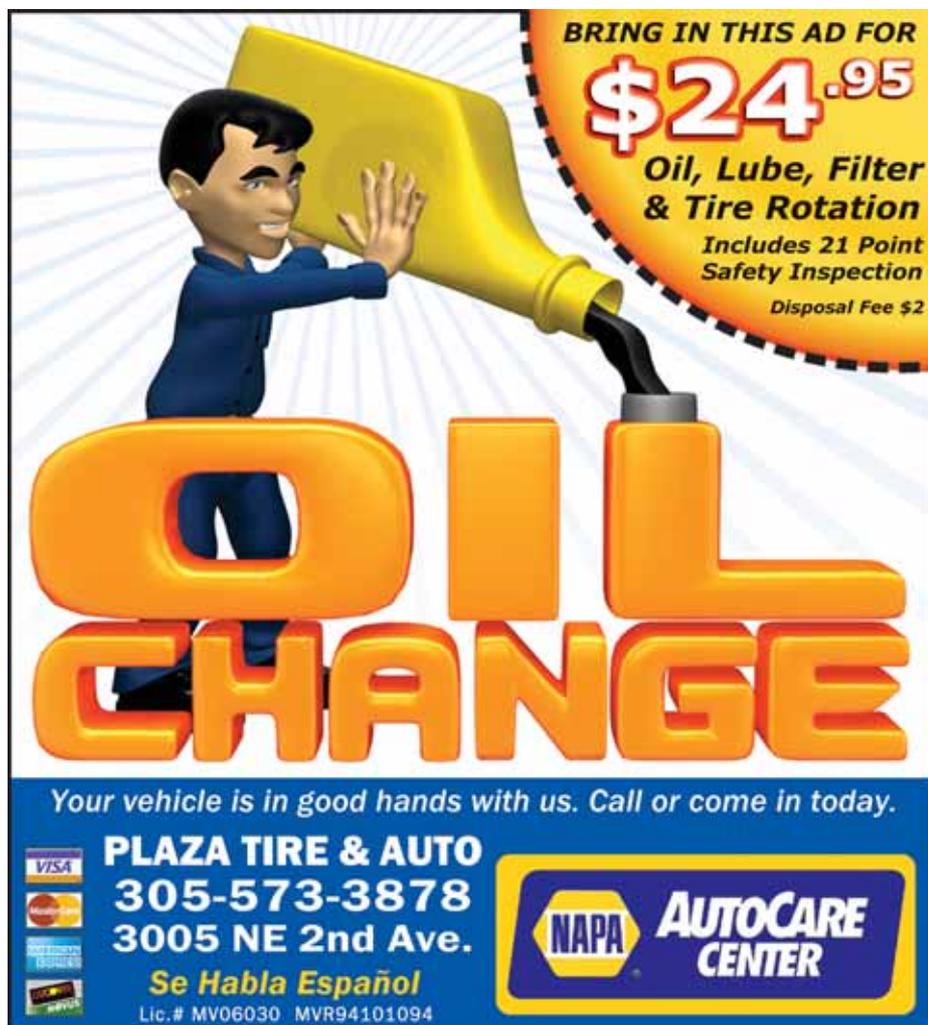
A man had been at a popular nightclub and claimed he had only one drink. Hours later he awoke from some kind of blackout and found himself at the intersection of Miami Avenue and 20th Street. His money, not surprisingly, was gone. He claims police were in the area, but they refused to file a report. The man believes he had been drugged by a mysterious enemy.

The Passion of the Score

NE 14th Street and 1st Avenue

An amorous man had hit it off with two women, getting it on in the corner of a bar. The trio decided it was time to get a room. The man drove the two women in his car and stopped at an ATM machine to withdraw cash to pay for what surely would be a gloriously sleazy night. While he was at the machine, however, he couldn't find his bank card. He turned around and saw the two women running away. Apparently they had pinched the card during their tender embraces at the bar.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Female but Maybe Not Feminist

A couple of guys put together a show by women

By Victor Barrenechea
BT Contributor

Yes, Miami may have Naomi Fisher, Wendy Wischer, and Cristina Lei Rodriguez. But compared to the number of Miami men making names for themselves in the art world, it seems our female artists have yet to break through the artistic glass ceiling.

"It's just the reality of the way it is," says local artist Pepe Mar. "[Just] go to Chelsea [the New York City gallery district] or something, and count the number of male solo shows versus women solo shows." In response to this local predicament, Mar and Miami painter Aramis Gutierrez have curated an all-female exhibition, "The Continuing Adventures of Our Heroine," which opens later this month at the David Castillo Gallery.

"We were kind of picking up on the fact that there are not that many female artists in Miami," says Gutierrez, who, like Mar, is represented by the gallery. "It was nice to put a spotlight on some emerging female artists."

Shows of this nature are not without precedent. Recent exhibitions, such as "Global Feminisms" at the Brooklyn

"I wonder if people think 'masculine' work is more aggressive and 'female' work is more passive."

Museum in New York, and the traveling "WACK: Art and the Feminist Revolution," have certainly put a spotlight on femme-centric art. Locally, too, there's the current "Dark Continents" show at North Miami's Museum of Contemporary Art, which explores the connection between feminism and nature. But "Continuing Adventures" doesn't address typical issues of feminism and gender politics; in fact, very few the works contain any kind of overtly feminist subject matter.

"I think we wanted to avoid a stereotypically 'feminist' show," Gutierrez explains. "We just wanted to do a show about people making art who happen to be female — which kind of is an



Guest Room, an oil painting by newcomer Natalya Laskis.

underrepresented niche in the Miami art scene."

The show brings together seven artists, each at a different stage in her career. You have Michelle Weinberg, Francie Bishop Good, Lee Materazzi, and Susan Lee-Chun. Only two non-Miamians will be taking

part: Jaimie Warren from Kansas City and the wildly successful New York photographer Cindy Sherman. They will all be joined by newcomer Natalya

Laskis, a young painter for whom this is only the second show in a gallery setting, and the first ever in Miami.

Laskis, who paints in oils, says, "I think this is more important than [my other show]. People will be more critical of the work because of my association with Hernan." She is referring to perhaps Miami's best-known artist, Hernan Bas, for whom she works as an assistant and whom she considers something of a mentor. "He's a big influence on my work," she acknowledges, though she won't go so far as to consider herself his protégée.

Most of her work is about her twin sister and based on photos she has taken on

about what constitutes a feminine aesthetic, wondering whether it's a particular sensitivity or a particular way of stylizing that makes a work "feminine." "I wonder if people think 'masculine' work is more aggressive and 'female' work is more passive," she says. Her own work is often compared to that of Erwin Wurm, which leads her to conclude that neither gender can corner the market on the specific traits a work can embody. Even Mar and Gutierrez characterize their work as having a predominantly "feminine" sensibility. "I think in Miami, there are a lot of male artists who speak in a feminine voice," says Gutierrez.

For this show, Materazzi will have three photographs, each depicting someone caught in exaggeratedly complicated and cluttered domestic situations. "I try to pick [situations] that an everyday person has trouble with," she explains, "these frustrating moments you encounter in everyday life." *Hose*, for example, depicts a man tangled up in an uncoiled garden hose, while *Underwear Drawer* shows a woman engulfed in piles of clothing, her head stuck in an unkempt dresser drawer. In each photograph, the subject's face is obscured, so that while the surrounding circumstances seem fraught with tension, the people themselves appear quite relaxed, almost accepting of their discomfort. The absurdity of the domestic situations tinge the works with an element of dark humor.

Korean-American performance artist Susan Lee-Chun will execute a project titled *You're Cordially Invited to Tea Time*, in which she will not physically participate. "I've always been the instigator," she explains. "This time I want people to come into the work on their own."

Her piece, which touches upon issues of ethnicity and identity, centers on a company known as The Suz and represents the different aspects of Lee-Chun's



The logo for Lee-Chun's fictional corporation, The Suz.

family trips to Thomasville, Georgia. Lakes, streams, and hunting lodges evoke a mood of quiet tranquility and nostalgia. Each finished painting is marked by some obscuration of detail that Laskis achieves by limiting the amount of brushstrokes. The goal, she says, is show more with less.

Photographer Lee Materazzi, also represented in the show, says she thinks the exhibition may raise questions

Continued on page 35

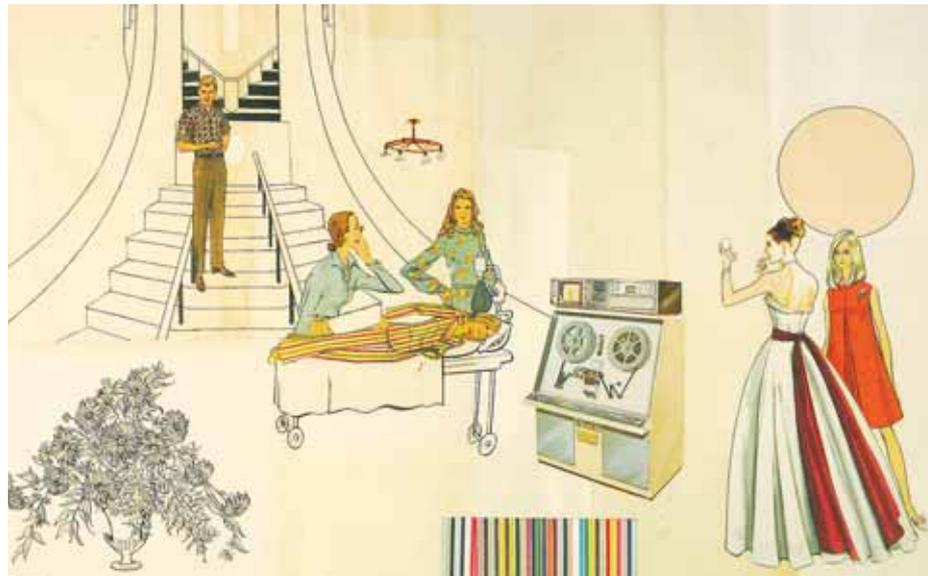
ART & CULTURE

Female

Continued from page 34

personality through characters she has created and performed throughout her career. Meet “Sue,” Lee-Chun with a blond wig, who represents an Americanized Asian. There’s the more aggressive “Sioux,” who rejects that assimilation and is characterized by a headpiece with a protruding rhino horn. Then there’s “Su,” the bridge between the two. Headshots of the three characters combine to create The Suz company logo.

Lee-Chun hopes to occupy the space with a quasi-corporate tea party that’s almost Starbucks-like. Viewers will be encouraged to sit on pillows emblazoned with The Suz’s company images, atop an octagonal platform. As soon as four people seat themselves, a professional caterer will be instructed to serve tea. The setup will be decorated in an Asian style Lee-Chun describes as not Korean, but rather generic Asian. “People feel like it’s all kind of the



Michelle Weinberg’s collages evoking the 1950s and early 1960s.

same,” she says. “Race tends to oversimplify branches of ethnicity.”

Very subjective and personal world views seem to be the common threads among all the works on display, be it Sherman’s costumed self-portraits or Weinberg’s collages that simultaneously romanticize and criticize the notion of 1950s housewives.



Among the domestic situations explored by Lee Materazzi.

All in all, Gutierrez and Mar agree that the discovery of a younger generation of local female artists was the most exciting part of putting this show together. “You do find all these little pockets where artists are working that you just didn’t think about,” says Gutierrez. “Hopefully, this show will influence some of the younger female artists.”

“*The Continuing Adventures of Our Heroine*” opens October 11 at David Castillo Gallery, 2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami. For hours and more information call 305-573-8110; or visit www.castilloart.com.

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www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

Through October 4:

"Mimicry" Maria Fernanda Cardoso

October 11 through November 1:

"Mad Cow" by Billie Grace Lynn and "Wish You Were Here" by Betty Rosado

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

BKHF GALLERY

1929 NW 1st Ave., Miami
305-432-2807

www.bkhfgallery.com

Through October 8:

"German Photography Today" with Martin Denker, Hans Kottler, Dandita Hofer, Hannes Norberg, Thomas Ruff, and Thomas Struth

CAROL JAZZART CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906

www.cjazzart.com

By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com

October 17 through November 8:

"From dark to light.....and back to darkness" with Kevin Arrow, Farley Aguilar, Kuhl and Leyton, and Matthias Saillard

Reception October 17, 7 to 10 p.m.

CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION

541 NW 27th St., Miami
305-571-1415

www.visual.org

October 11 through November 21:

"Photographer Poet" by Clarence John Laughlin

Reception October 11, 7 to 9 p.m.

CHELSEA GALLERIA

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-2950

www.chelseagalleria.com

Through October 8:

"Pushing the Envelope" by John Westmark, Vanessa Tomchik, Yasmin Spiro, and Tonel

October 11 through November 3:

"Sections of Time" with Eduardo del Valle and Mirta Gomez

Reception October 11, 7 to 11 p.m.

CITY LOFT ART

61 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-9006

www.euartgallerymiami.com

Ongoing exhibition "Acrylart" with various artists

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

COLLINS BUILDING

139 NE 39th St., Miami
lostflipflop@gmail.com

Through October 17:

"SCHADENFREUDE" with Jesper Alvaer, Brock Enright, Christopher Russell, Al Jaffee, George Woodbridge, and more



Kris Knight, *Spook*, oil on canvas, 2008, at Spinello Gallery.

DAMIEN B. CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

282 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-4949

www.damienb.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110

www.castilloart.com

Through October 4:

"Tuttle" with various artists

October 11 through November 1:

"The Continuing Adventures of Our Heroine" with Lee Materazzi, Natalya Laskis, Susan Lee-Chun, Francie Bishop Good, Michelle Weinberg, and Cindy Sherman

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

DETAILS FACTORY

2085 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1729

Call gallery for exhibition information.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804

www.dlfinearts.com

October 11 through November 1:

"24 Hours" by Ralf Peters and a solo show by Trisha Brookbank

Reception October 11, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046

www.diasporavibe.net

October 9 through November 18:

"Caribbean Crossroads Series — Stitches in Time" by Erman

Reception October 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278

www.dorschgallery.com

Through October 4:

"A Mechanical Advantage" by Robin Griffiths and

"Yonder" by Brandon Opalka

October 11 through November 8:

"A Stone's Throw" by Mark Koven and "Classroom" a curatorial experiment

Reception October 4, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

Reception October 11, 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994

www.dotfiftyone.com

Through October 25: "Perpendicularity" by Mark Indig

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART

2214 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-303-8852

www.edgezones.org

Call gallery for exhibition information.

ELITE ART EDITIONS GALLERY

151 NW 36th St., Miami
305-403-5856

www.elitearteditions.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

ETRA FINE ART

10 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-4383

www.etrafineart.com

October 11 through November 30:

"Memories: Large Format" by Marco Otero

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976

www.snitzer.com

Through October 4:

Solo show by Lorie Beltran

October 11 through November 18:

"The Unexplained" by Hernan Bas

Reception October 11, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

GALERIE EMMANUEL PERROTIN

194 NW 30th St., Miami
305-573-2130

www.galerieperrotin.com

Through November 15:

"The Undoing" by Daniel Arsham, "AXIOM" by Conrad Shawcross, and "Saturated" by KAWS

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288

www.gallerydiet.com

Through October 4:

"Tempest Prognosticator" by Andrew Mowbray

October 11 through November 1:

"A Strange Day in July" by

Samantha Salzinger

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

GARY NADER FINE ART

62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256

www.garynader.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

GO GO GALLERY

2238 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-0696

www.gogogallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645

www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com

Through October 4:

"New Media Festival III Edition" with various artists

and a solo show by Vanessa McKnight

October 11 through November 22:

"A Slice of the Action" by Jonathan Stein and Carl

Pascuzzi and "80-150 Times a Second" by

Irene Pressner

Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

Temporary location:
314 NW 24th St., Miami

305-576-1880

www.haroldgolengallery.com

October 11 through November 1:

"Living Dead" with Pooch and Paul Torres

Reception October 11, 7 to 11 p.m.

Continued on page 37

ART & CULTURE

Art Listings

Continued from page 36

IN-DEPENDENT GALLERY SPACE

175 NW 22nd St., Miami
305-672-1002
www.in-dependent.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

JULIO BLANCO STUDIO

164 NW 20th St., Miami
305-534-5737
www.onemansho.com
Through October 11:
"Body Language — A OneManShow" by Julio Blanco
October 11 through November 8:
"The Project Room" by Julio Blanco
Reception October 11, 7 to 11 p.m.

KARPIO + FACCHINI GALLERY

1929 NW 1st Ave., Miami
305-576-4454
www.facchinigallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-2000
www.kevinbrukgallery.com
Through November 11:
Solo show by Christian Curiel
Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
Call gallery for exhibition information.

LEITER GALLERY

6900 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-389-2616
Call gallery for exhibition information.

LOCUST PROJECTS

105 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Through October 31: "Dream-Cum-Tru" by Clifton Childree
Through December 31:
"New Work (wall painting)" by Ed Youngs

LUIS ADELANTADO GALLERY

98 NW 29th St., Miami
305-438-0069
www.luisadelantadomiami.com
Through October 8: "Never Back to School" by Luis Rodrigo
October 11 through November 30
"Vanishing Point" by Ricky Rayns
Reception October 11, 6 to 8 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
Through October 15: "Starting Over" with various artists

MIAMI ART GROUP GALLERY

126 NE 40th St., Miami
305-576-2633
www.miamiartgroup.com
Ongoing show with Jeff League, James Kitchens,
Jamali, Hessam Abrishami, Goli Mahallati, Tom
Rossetti, Ismael Gomez, and more

MIAMI ART SPACE

244 NW 35th St., Miami
305-438-9002
www.miamiartspace.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAM-DADE COLLEGE, CENTER GALLERY

300 NE 2nd Ave.,
Bldg. 1, Room 1365, Miami
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Call gallery for exhibition information.



Hernan Bas, *Tarot Reading*, charcoal and graphite on blue paper, 2008, at the Fredric Snitzer Gallery.

MIAMI EVENT SPACE

7820 NE 4th Ct., Miami
305-438-9002
www.miamieventspace.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

1501 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-428-5700
www.mymiu.com
October 10 through October 24: "Dade County Public
Schools Faculty Exhibition" with various artists
Reception October 10, 5 to 9 p.m.

MILOU GALLERY

17 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-8450
Through October 25:
"The Pucker-Up Project" with Perry Milou, Thomas
Dellapenna, and Denise Fike

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through October 18:
"Vanishing" with Pablo Soria, Luis Camejo, and Ryder
Cooley
October 25 through November 22:
Solo shows by Pedro Pablo Oliva, Rene Francisco,
and Ryder Cooley
Reception October 25, 6 to 9 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2900; www.praxis-art.com
October 11 through October 31:
A solo show by Ruben Torres Llorca
Reception October 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

SPINELLO GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-271-4223
www.spinellogallery.com
Through October 4: "Emotional Response Can Be
Deconditioned" by Federico Nessi
October 11 through November 1:
"So Long Scarecrow" by Kris Knight
Reception October 11, 7 to 11 p.m.

STEVE MARTIN STUDIO

66 NE 40th St., Miami
305-484-1491; www.stevemartinfineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

Continued on page 38



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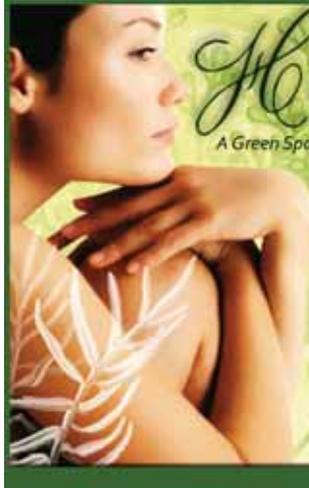
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ART & CULTURE

Art Listings

Continued from page 37

SUYU ART GALLERY

12399 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami
561-201-2053
www.suyucultural.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

TWENTY TWENTY PROJECTS

2020 NW Miami Ct., Miami
786-217-7683
www.twentytwentyprojects.com
Through October 5:
"AND THEN" by Mark Gibson

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE

2200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-284-2542
October 3 through November 21:
"Where Are U Now?" alumni exhibition with various artists
Reception October 3, 6 to 9 p.m.
Exhibit located at the College of Arts and Sciences Gallery, 1210 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables

UNDERCURRENT ARTS

3449 NE 1st Ave., Miami
305-571-9574
www.undercurrentarts.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

UNTITLED 2144

2144 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-2112
www.untitled2144.com
Through October 25:
"Euro Photo Group Exhibition" with Domiziana Giordano, Emanuela Gardner, Pierre Sernet, and Alejandro Garmendi
October 30 through December 2:
Solo show by Burhan Dogaçay
Reception October 30, 7 to 10 p.m.

WALLFLOWER GALLERY

10 NE 3rd St., Miami
305-579-0069
www.wallflowergallery.com
myspace.com/wallflowergallery
Call gallery for exhibition information.



Matthias Saillard, *Untitled 5 from Luan Series*, Pilot pen on paper, 2008, at Carol Jazzar Contemporary Art.

WHITE VINYL SPACE

3322 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-776-1515
www.whitevinylspace.com
Call gallery for information.

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-455-3380
www.cifo.org
Through October 5:
Solo show by Isabel Muñoz

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

11200 SW 8th St., Miami
305-348-0496
http://thefrost.fiu.edu/
Call for operating hours and exhibit information.

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535; www.lowemuseum.org
Through November 2:
"Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archeology"

MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami
305-375-3000; www.miamiartmuseum.org
Through October 12:
Solo exhibition by Sean Duffy
Through November 2:
"Selections from the Permanent Collection" with various artists
October 16 through January 25:
"Moving Through Time and Space" by Chantal Akerman
October 31 through January 18:
"MBE: A Flying Machine for Every Man, Woman and Child" by Yinka Shonibare

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211; www.mocanomi.org
Through November 9:
"Dark Continents" with Ida Ekblad, Hadassah Emmerich,

Naomi Fisher, Elke Krystufek, Marlene McCarty, Claudia and Julia Müller, Paulina Olowska, and more
October 11 through November 9:
"The Blue Ribbon" by Pablo Cano

MOCA AT GOLDMAN WAREHOUSE

404 NW 26th St., Miami
305-893-6211; www.mocanomi.org
Through October 11:
"Selections from the Permanent Collection" with various artists

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051
www.margulieswarehouse.com
Call for operating hours and exhibit information.

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-6090
www.rubellfamilycollection.com
Call for operating hours and exhibit information.
Through November 28:
"Hernan Bas: Works from the Rubell Family Collection" by Hernan Bas; "John Stezaker: Works from the Rubell Family Collection" by John Stezaker; and "Euro-Centric, Part 1: New European Art from the Rubell Family Collection" with various artists

WORLD CLASS BOXING

Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection
170 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-438-9908
Appointment only: dennis@worldclassboxing.net
Through October 18: "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" curated by Desiree Cronk with Peter Garfield, Candida Hofer, Catherine Opie, Gabriel Orozco, Sean Duffy, Alice Channer, Thomas Demand, and more

Compiled by Victor Barrenechea
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to art@biscaynetimes.com

Shhh... Arts at St Johns has a ghastly secret! Tenth Season Showcase takes a surprising twist



To Each His Own, Artist: Ed King
This and other works on view at event.

Saturday, October 25

Reception at 7:30pm, Performance at 8pm

There's "Mystery on the Menu" -
will you uncover the Arts at St Johns Secret?

Hosted by the Claridge Hotel South Beach
3500 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach

\$60.00 per person, tax-deductible donation

Reservations required; tickets available online at
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Culture Briefs

From Brazil With Passion

Milton Nascimento joins the offspring of another Brazilian legend, Antonio Carlos Jobim, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of their nation's greatest gifts to the world: bossa nova. On **October 4**, Paulo and Daniel Jobim, the bossa nova maestro's son and grandson, will reprise many Jobim classics. Adding Nascimento's singular vocal interpretations promises an original musical experience. The performance, presented by the Rhythm Foundation, takes place at the Adrienne Arsht Center (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) and begins at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$38.50 to \$78.50. Call 305-949-6722 or visit www.arshtcenter.org.

Dragon Boats and Egg Rolls

Chinese Dragon Boat festivals — intended to honor the legend of the dragon and patriotic poet Qu Yuan — date back 2000 years. The United Chinese Association of South Florida keeps the tradition alive in Miami. On **October 4 and 5**, more than 30 teams will race across Biscayne Bay, each accompanied by a drummer. On land there's plenty more entertainment: international dance, food, and music; a "dragon land" kids area; a kite competition; even an egg-roll-eating contest. The fun takes place at Haulover Beach Park Marina (10800 Collins Ave.). Races begin at 9:30 a.m. daily; the entertainment kicks off around 11:00 a.m. Admission is free. Call 305-345-8489 or visit www.miamidragonboat.com.

Wet Dreams

Hundreds of images depicting University of Miami School of Architecture students' visions for a publicly accessible Miami waterfront promenade are on view from noon to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday until November 7 at the Miami-Dade College Freedom Tower (600 Biscayne Blvd.). Speakers for the "On the Waterfront: Miami's Seven-Mile Promenade" symposium on **October 6** at 5:00 p.m. include Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, UM School of Architecture Dean Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and others. A reception follows from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is free to all events. Call 305-284-5002 or visit www.arc.miami.edu/rsvp-for-events.

A New Season From Tigertail

Tigertail Productions, the 29-year-old arts organization whose motto is "art with edge," launches its new season on **October 7** with a free party from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., hosted by home furnishings boutique Open Doors (7300 Biscayne Blvd.). The party will preview new shows, and the eclectic Alfredo Triff Trio will play. Then on **October 10**, Tigertail presents the trio of classically trained Dutch jazz trumpeter Eric Vloeimans, guitarist Anton Goudsmit, and pianist Harmen Fraanje at the Byron Carlyle Theater (500 71st St., Miami Beach). Tickets are \$25 general admission, \$15 seniors/students, and \$50 VIP. Call 305-324-4337 or visit www.tigertail.org.



Not the Straight Man

New York Times best-selling author David Sedaris brings his self-deprecating, autobiographical, and sometimes scatological brand of humor to the Adrienne Arsht Center at 8:00 p.m. **October 15**. From *Naked to Barrel Fever* to *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, his books have sold more than seven million copies, and he has received Best Spoken-Word Album and Best Comedy Album Grammy nominations. Sedaris's insights rip through varied topics, from family to drug use to being gay. He'll sign copies of his new tome, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, after the show. Tickets are \$35 to \$60. Call 305-949-6722 or visit www.arshtcenter.org.

Murderous Mystery Tour

If there's one thing the Magic City has in spades besides sunshine, it's Mystery, Mayhem, and Vice — so that's the perfect name for the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's upcoming three-hour

coach tour, which departs from museum headquarters (101 W. Flagler St.) at 1:00 p.m. on **October 18**. Guide Paul George will spin true tales of murderous mobsters, drug smugglers, and other bad guys and gals galore as the bus rattles from the Miami City Cemetery to Al Capone's Palm Island home to the South Beach doorstep of ill-fated designer Gianni Versace, and beyond. Tickets are \$44 (HMSF members pay \$39); advance reservations and payment are required. Call 305-375-1492 or visit www.hmsf.org.

Fright Night Comes to the Enchanted Forest

Halloween Haunted Trails at the Enchanted Forest Park (1725 NE 135th St.) offers a kinder, gentler fear factor. On **October 25** scare-lovers can stroll phantasmal paths, take a hayride (frightening if you suffer from allergies), have their faces painted, and watch dance performances. Costume contest participants are guaranteed a prize. The park is open from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. and admission is free for kids who are North Miami residents. Refreshments will be sold on-site. Call 305-895-9840 for more information.

Cheetahs Invade Miami

The high-pitched squeals echoing through the city aren't the cries of majestic cats but the elated wails of "tweens" begging their parents to take them to the Cheetah Girls (TCG) show at the American Airlines Arena (601 Biscayne Blvd.) on **October 25**. Hot on the heels of their third Disney movie, *The Cheetah Girls: One World*, TCG perform the Bollywood-inspired music of their One World Tour beginning at 6:00 p.m. sharp. Tickets are \$32.25 to \$42.25. Call Ticketmaster at 305-358-5885 or visit www.aaarena.com.

Halloween Meets Dr. Dolittle

A two-day homage to the scariest holiday this side of Thanksgiving will possess Jungle Island (1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Watson Island) from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on **October 25 and 26**. In addition to its trademark animal exhibits and shows, Jungle Island's annual Halloween Spooktacular will offer kid-friendly activities such as Creepy Cookie decorating, a Goblin

Pie-eating contest, Magical Arts and Witch Crafts, a bounce house, a DJ, games, and more. Vie for prizes during the costume contest (noon to 3:00 p.m.) at the Garden Outpost. Admission is \$29.95 plus tax for adults, \$23.95 plus tax for kids. Call 305-400-7000 or visit www.jungleisland.com



Photo by Jim W. Harper

Scaretastic Cemetery

Peripatetic historian Paul George celebrates his birthday on **October 31** by leading visitors through one of South Florida's most historic graveyards. The Ghosts of Miami City Cemetery Night Walking Tour (8:00 to 10:00 p.m.) exposes the tombstones marking this city's most mysterious deaths, earliest settlers, and original movers and shakers. Flashlights and advance reservations are suggested; costumes are optional. Park inside the front gate of the cemetery (1800 NE 2nd Ave). Tickets are \$30 (HMSF members get in for \$25). Call 305-375-1492 or visit www.hmsf.org.

Boulevard Haunts

The MiMo Biscayne Association presents MiMo-Ween, a series of Halloween-themed parties and events along Biscayne Boulevard from 55th to 77th streets on **October 31**. There will be kid-friendly activities from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., with a children's costume contest set for 7:30 p.m. sharp at the Upper Eastside Garden (7244 Biscayne Blvd.). Adults can party the night away in costume after 9:00 p.m. at various local haunts, including Kingdom (6708 Biscayne Blvd.), UVA 69 (6900 Biscayne Blvd.), Che Sopranos (7251 Biscayne Blvd.), and the haunted house at Red Light (7700 Biscayne Blvd.). For a full list of activities, visit www.MiMoBoulevard.org or call 305-758-6144.

Dying to Get In

A rich history underfoot at Miami's city cemetery

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Here's a holiday affair you won't read about in *Martha Stewart Living*: a cemetery party! Just assemble your least-favorite family members and drive over to the Miami City Cemetery — it's open 365 days a year. This cemetery isn't just for Halloween anymore, although the Historical Museum's tours that evening are legendary. On any day, it's the most historic place in Miami.

It's also quite green and shady, having been given the Fairchild touch in its early days, and managed today by the parks department of the City of Miami. Bring your picnic blanket and commune with nature's finest dust.

Don't miss the historic marker and the small, Spanish-tiled "visitor's center" in the middle of the park. A line of plaques pay tribute to the cemetery's sextons, including its first, known as "Mad Russian" Korsakoff. There is also a bizarre marker in the floor for a time capsule buried here in 2004 by the Omni Community Redevelopment Agency. The bathrooms tend to be locked, and the current sexton may be nowhere to be found.

This ten-acre plot was purchased from Mary Brickell by the fledgling City of Miami in 1897 at a cost of \$750. It is listed on the National Register of Historic



The cemetery's original ten acres were purchased from Julia Tuttle in 1897. Cost: \$750.

Places and the Florida Jewish Heritage Trail. Who knew? The Jewish section, along with the black section, the Confederate section, the Catholic section, and more, were products of their times. Lest we forget our history of segregation, it is all laid out here in black and white, in the form of 9000 people, six feet under.

Strolling among the vaults and tombstones, you browse a who's who of early

Miami. The first body buried here, in 1897, was an unidentified black man with no marker. In the western, black section, several tombstones bear witness to black men who signed Miami's original charter of incorporation in 1896. Lying against the fence is Miami's first black lawyer, Richard E. S. Toomey. Judge Lawson E. Thomas was a pioneering legislator and reportedly the first black judge in the South. Nearby is the tombstone of Bernard Mackey, a member of the popular singing quartet the Ink Spots.

You'll also come across Dr. James Jackson (of hospital fame); John Sewell, Miami's third mayor (1903-1907); and Julia Tuttle, the "mother of Miami." Near the center is a lovely Art Deco mausoleum inscribed simply with "Burdine."

Some of the mausoleums are boarded-up, a testament to the graveyard thieves who repeatedly have stolen decorative entrances. Some gravestones are worn and neglected; others are quite stately. While mostly historic, the cemetery still witnesses about 15 burials a year. New arrivals vying for the 1000 remaining plots must be related to someone previously interred.

The strangest-tomb award goes to Mr. William Miller, who left this inscription to describe his wife's remains: "The body of Carrie Barrett Miller was moulded in



One of many reminders that Florida was a founding member of the Confederate States of America.

this solid block of concrete — December 4, 1926. After the body has gone to dust, her sleeping form will remain." In other words, he placed her body inside the chamber and poured concrete over it.

This parklike cemetery sits two blocks west of Biscayne Boulevard in a forgotten block, across the street from the 18th Street Café. Lost souls of the living variety drive, pedal their bikes, or amble down the paved road that divides the cemetery into equal halves of north and south. At either end of this "Central Avenue" are arched iron gates that read, "City of Miami Cemetery."

Two attractive structures surround the cemetery. Immediately north is the historic and beautiful Temple Israel of Greater Miami. To the south, the modern PARC Lofts dominate an empty skyline, although that is changing too. Next to it is another, taller loft project.

But the large empty lot immediately south of the cemetery reveals the pervasive ugliness of the Omni area. (A shopping mall may or may not be built there.) The overall impression outside of the cemetery is: "Drive through as fast as you can."

Inside the cemetery, however, is dappled shade and rows of coconut palms. Getting back to the cemetery's Catholic

Continued on page 41

MIAMI CITY CEMETERY

Park Rating

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Picnic tables: No
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Athletic fields: No
Night lighting: No
Swimming pool: No
Special feature: Historical gravesites

PARK PATROL

Cemetery

Continued from page 40

section, look for the tomb of John B. Reilly, the first mayor of Miami. You can also find Frank Kanen, the father of the Redland.

One of the two roundabouts along Central Avenue is dedicated to the Confederate Army. Many tombstones throughout the cemetery feature the inscription "C.S.A." for the Confederate States of America. There is also an American Legion section with many veterans of World Wars I and II memorialized with simple, ground-level tablets.

The Jewish section was added in 1915 and walled in as prescribed by tradition. The white wall is quite low, but the entrance has an imposing black iron gate adorned with large Stars of David. Many tombstones contain both English and Hebrew inscriptions. A common date of death is 1918, the year of the Spanish flu epidemic.

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida exposes the cemetery's spookiest elements with tours on Halloween evening and on November 1. The Halloween event (see "Culture Briefs,"

page 39) also corresponds with the birthday of its guide, Dr. Paul George, the undisputed guru of Miami's history. His tours are highly recommended.

The cemetery welcomes lovers of tropical plants, as there are many varieties here, and even a few showpieces. Some of the sinuous gumbo limbo trees have snaked their roots around tiny tombstones. Other tree trunks provide a dark backdrop for white *angelitos lindos*.

Although run by the parks department, the Miami City Cemetery will never be a park in the traditional sense. Tossing a Frisbee would be possible, but improper. Having a picnic is proper, but possibly disconcerting. The clear theme in this park is death.

Still, anyone with an interest in Miami's history must visit this place. It reminds us of the early families who came here and created something out of nothing. It also reminds us that Miami was racially (and religiously) segregated for most of its history.



It may not be a true park, but it is lovely, it's open 365 days a year, and it's free.

When it was created, this cemetery was located in woodlands north of the city's limits. Those woods and boundaries are long gone, but fortunately its silent residents have held fast to this

sliver of green space in Miami's concrete jungle.

Resting in peace here is a good thing.

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41

A New Take on the Old Book-of-the-Month Club

Kids receive quality literature centered on the Jewish experience

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

Anyone who has been reading this column for any amount of time knows that my kids have a lot of books. I annually provide suggested summer reading ideas, I have promoted that kids read banned books, and I've covered LGBT family reading suggestions. I make no secret of the fact that I believe reading is central to our kids' development, and reading together is one of the most basic and enriching ways we can affect our kids' lives.

Clearly, I'm a fan of kiddie lit. So when I was approached some months ago to serve as the local professional for a national Jewish kids' book initiative, I stopped to consider it — and took up the offer. Modeled after Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the PJ Library sends a new, age-appropriate Jewish kids' book monthly to the homes of Jewish children across the country. In Miami-Dade, 1800 of the free subscriptions are available for children ages six months to five and a half years, through the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

The diverse collection of books is carefully vetted by a panel of early-childhood and literacy professionals, resulting in an extremely strong selection that challenges kids appropriately through their literary and artistic merit. A far cry from when I was a kid, contemporary Jewish children's literature flows with current trends, providing families with real literature worthy of bedtime stories. The books are filled with wonder, authenticity, relevance, and simply good illustration.

In addition to encouraging families to cuddle up at night with the Jewish experiences, the PJ Library aims to engage young



families actively and in person. Thus there is also a host of exciting and creative programming on tap.

Our Miami PJ Library site joins others that have had great success in communities across the country, from Portland, Oregon, to western Massachusetts, where it originated. Through the generosity of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, local funders the Blank Family Foundation, and in-kind support from the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, we are able to bring this innovative outreach program to our community.

The program is being launched here with 20 "Implementing Partners" (synagogues, schools, JCCs) who have provided access to their members for a mass-mailing, as well as participating in program development and by promoting the program through regular newsletters and notices. An initial communitywide mailing has been implemented and includes a book as well as an invitation to sign up for one of our 1800 available subscriptions. In Miami-Dade County, 45,000

households will be receiving the timeless and beautifully illustrated *Something From Nothing* by Phoebe Gilman, which made me cry the first time I read it.

On Sunday, September 21, we held our first event at the Miami Children's Museum. It was great seeing quite a few friends and neighbors there with their kids. Participants heard Rabbi Gayle Pomerantz of the Open Tent, one of PJ Library's Implementing Partners, tell a story. They then participated in a Rosh Hashanah crafts project and were treated to story time featuring PJ Library books about Rosh Hashanah.

The PJ Library will also be present at Children's Alley at the Miami Book Fair International with story time and crafts projects inspired by Todd Parr's *The Peace Book*, another PJ Library selection. And I'm working with Miami-Dade Public Library System to develop programs collaboratively, including some PJ Library story times throughout the system in November in honor of Jewish Book Month. You can catch it in the Biscayne

Corridor at the Lemon City library branch, 430 NE 61st Street (305-757-0662) on Wednesday, November 19, at 10:30 a.m.

For more information about The PJ Library and to sign up for a free subscription, check out www.jewishmiami.org/pjlibrary.

Theater Classes for Kids in Miami Shores

Kids from 6 to 12 years old can experience some serious theater training with the Pegasus Project, an initiative of some figures from Miami's professional theater community. The program was co-founded and designed by Edgar Caraballo, Carolina Fonseca, Jesus Quintero, and Melissa Almaguer. The four are professional actors and educators who have taught in a variety of countries and have spent years focusing their talents on educating students of all ages about theater arts.

The program includes a series of classes called Performance 1. These classes meet once a week for nine weeks, each class running one and a half hours. Every child will receive training in the basics of acting, music, and dance. Each group's class culminates in an "open class" in which students share with family and friends what they've learned.

Classes take place Mondays at the Miami Shores Community Center from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. On Sundays they're held Barry University from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The price of any nine-class session at the Shores Community Center: Miami Shores residents \$200; nonresidents \$250. At Barry University it's \$200. For information e-mail PegasusProjectEducation@gmail.com or call 786-237-9344

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Mac vs. PC: Making the Switch

There's a reason you never see an Apple store empty

By Marc Stephens
BT Contributor

Maybe it's because I'm a tech guy, but everyone in my orbit who makes "The Big Switch" always seems to tell me about it first. Voice low, eyes wide, they confess to robbing a liquor store, or running off with another woman: Having loved their sleek and functional iPods and iPhones for years, they finally broke down and crossed all the way over to the Dark Side. And yes, they are inevitably happier as a result.

PC makers abound, but there's only one Apple, which creates both advantages and disadvantages for prospective buyers in terms of price, software integration, and overall compatibility. With only 6.5 percent of worldwide market share compared to Dell's 31.4 percent (all stats are from Gartner, Inc.), Apple may be a small player in absolute terms, but they remain a definite "prime mover" as measured by growth and influence.

And it's not hard to see why. Both the iPod and iPhone remain the gold standard in personal-service hardware — two near-miraculous pieces of machinery, as practical and well-designed as they are addictive. Who wouldn't be tempted to thrust their daily computing chores into the 21st Century at long last, and with the same company that made music and communication so much fun?

But first the downside. For better or worse, we live in a PC-oriented world, with some 90 percent of networks, software, and other interfaces geared toward

the generalized Windows-based personal-operating system. Apple computers by necessity remain the odd men out.

Whether at work, at home, or on vacation, iMacs and MacBooks often require a specially dedicated support apparatus to function and/or connect properly. In fact a lot of hotels and workplaces won't even support them at all! I myself have seen commercial, open-access wireless networks reject a Mac connection out of hand, and for no discernible reason, even though these same networks will accept Japanese- and German-made PCs without so much as a hiccup. Anecdotal or not, such examples are real, and must be taken into account. Remote computing remains a hit-or-miss proposition even under the best of circumstances; traveling with a Mac may sow additional uncertainty into the mix, which on a business trip can be an absolute killer.

Alongside such proprietary hardware obstacles, most people who switch from PC to Mac must also learn to navigate the inevitable "two-timing" challenge. Unlike longtime Apple owners, a PC user also faces the irreducibly back-breaking chore known as "migration" — i.e., relocating all of your resident programs, games, and vital work processes to a new and different computing platform. Laziness and/or technical difficulties often follow, so that in many cases this transformation is never fully realized, leaving our poor idealistic Mac owner with a shameful PC crutch sitting back home in his den — not to mention the massive headache of switching back and forth from machine to machine, depending upon the task at hand.

Which brings us to disadvantage #2: Monopolist economics. With so many big-league manufacturers jockeying for your computing dollar, the PC industry benefits from all the advantages inherent in good old capitalistic competition, not just in terms of quality, but also with regard to price and service. A bigger market means more players, which in turn means more products, from the machines themselves to third party applications to their integral operating systems and software.

Random Silicon Valley geniuses fomenting the next seismic computing breakthrough are logically going to concentrate on the PC market first, with Apple coming as an afterthought, if at all. And with HP, Dell, Acer, et al., all selling similar PC-based computers, prices are bound to keep dropping — toward the \$700 to \$800 range as of now for a respectably powerful Inspiron laptop, as opposed to a loaded MacBook, which can run you twice that. Quite a persuasive demonstration of varying market approaches, given that Apple is still a monopoly while the PC has been "open-source" for nearly three decades!

But Apple is also a smart, innovative company, yielding numerous advantages for its customers as well. Fewer targets equals fewer opportunities for mischief, meaning that most of the bad guys hacking networks and writing viruses over in Bulgaria aren't all that interested in assaulting Macs in Miami. Moreover, a sleek and tactile design aesthetic suffuses the entire Apple product line, making them a joy to use,

especially when compared to the PC's conventionally boxy posture and overall trial-by-committee demeanor.

Then there are the many operating-system advantages to consider. The general Microsoft Windows graphic interface was likely lifted from the Macintosh decades ago anyhow, and for all the MS-Windows iterations since that time, the Mac operating system still enjoys a well-deserved reputation for stability and dependability far beyond that of XP. Besides, if it is Windows interoperability you want, the Mac operating system now comes preloaded with Apple's "Boot Camp," a built-in Windows interface that allows all Microsoft-related software to run locally, as if it were resident on a genuine PC. If not, most business suites (including MS Office, QuickBooks, and Web browsers) are also available in fully functional Mac versions, and Mac browsers are configured for seamless use of nearly all major Internet sites.

In the end, it's been my experience that people in nontech industries often do best with a Mac. When your profession consists of logging into various disparate computer networks at multiple companies, it definitely pays to conform. Otherwise the choice is yours. So I'll leave you with just one final question: Have you ever seen an Apple store empty?

Me neither.

Have a tech question? E-mail it to Marc Stephens at tectalk1 "at" bellsouth.net

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One Command Solves the Problem

When your dog behaves badly, don't hiss at him — try this

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

Many times I get calls from prospective clients with out-of-control dogs — untamed, wild animals that pull them down the street, jump on them, jump on their friends and children, steal food off the counter. Sound familiar? Perhaps this could be a dog you know — or own!

People are always asking me what to do, what tone of voice to use, or to explain to them their dog's underlying motives. Common belief: "He's trying to dominate me!" Sometimes when I enter a client's house, they are pointing and hissing like a snake at their boisterous pet. A certain television personality would have them believe hissing is a cure for everything.

Well, I'm here to say you don't need to hiss, yell, or become an advanced canine-obedience star to make your dog behave at home. In fact you need to do less. A lot less. And you and your dog need to get *happy* — "sit happy," that is. Sure, your dog knows how to sit, but is he "sit happy"?

A sit-happy dog is pleased to always be sitting. He "throws" sits at you wherever you are. Sitting is a major problem-solver. Your dog cannot jump on people or counter-surf if he's sitting. In fact, most dogs bark less, if at all, when sitting as opposed to standing. Of course, all dogs know how to sit, but I'm sure some of you are thinking: "I ask Frankie to sit but he still jumps on me!" This is because he is not sit happy, yet. So let's all get happy!

Remember I said you have to do less? Well, it's true. From now on, you have



BT photo by Marcy Mock

one task: to reinforce sitting. Stop yelling, saying no, and talking to your dog in general if he is not sitting. Your job now is to give him what he wants only if his hind quarters are on the ground. So let's start practicing.

Bring a bag of tasty kibble or even better, delicious treats, on your next walk. Every 20 feet or so, stop and ask your dog to sit. When he does, reward him with a tasty morsel. Continue stopping and asking him to sit all throughout the walk. Most dogs catch on quickly that your stopping means they should be sitting. You can even do this around the house. Most of

your dogs probably follow you around. Walk back and forth from room to room, treats in hand. Stop walking and look at your dog. When he sits, give him a small treat. He will never know when you will

Your dog cannot jump on people or counter-surf if he's sitting. In fact, most dogs bark less, if at all, when sitting as opposed to standing.

reward him, and he will start sitting more in hopes you will.

Is Frankie jumping on friends and

family? He must now sit to greet them. He must not be able to get petted by or be near humans if his rear isn't firmly planted on the floor. This is very hard for most dogs, as jumping up to greet is natural canine behavior. But practice makes perfect, and in time it will come.

Catch him in the act. If your dog is sitting, whether you asked him to or not, reward him with a treat, ear rub, attention, whatever he likes. He will start to sit more and more by sheer reinforcement of the reward.

Make him sit to get everything he wants in life. Think of "sit" as a dog's way of saying please. It is his way of asking politely for something. Does he want to go outside? He has to sit at the door. Does he want you to throw the ball? Again, he should sit. Waiting for his dinner? You guessed it, sit. Sit sit sit! If your dog wants to be let in to the dog park to play with his friends, he must sit before you open the gate. This is called using "life rewards." He will sit for everything he wants in life.

I once had a client, a female college student with a hyperkinetic new Weimaraner puppy who could not sit still if his life depended on it. Like a whirling Dervish, he spun around her apartment as if the furniture were race-track pylons. Young Chino pounced on everyone he met and dragged this poor girl everywhere he wanted to go. He was too strong for her, and growing by the day.

Naturally part of the cure for him was exercise, as all dogs need. But then we began implementing the plan to get

Continued on page 45

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COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

Command

Continued from page 44

Chino "sit happy." I needed to find out what made this puppy tick. I learned that Chino was bonkers for tennis balls, completely obsessed by them. Great! I told my client that from now on, she would carry a tennis ball or two wherever she went. He would have to sit to get her to throw it or toss it to him. She could also just show it to him to get his focus on a walk or distract him before he got into trouble if need be.

We used treats in our program, too, as he was also very food-motivated. By the third

By the third class, Chino was a completely changed dog. He ran up to me off-leash — and sat, wagging his stump of a tail.

class, Chino was a completely changed dog. He ran up to me off-leash — and sat,

wagging his stump of a tail. On a walk, he stayed close to his owner and stared at her the whole way, hoping to earn his prized possession, sitting every few seconds in hopes of a cookie or ball-toss.

Remember to watch your timing. Your dogs hind end should be down on the ground when you reward him. Your dog may still try some of the bad behavior for a while, as it worked perfectly for him in the past. Just

ignore it. Remember, you have only one job: Reward sitting. By focusing on one command, you can have an exceptionally well-behaved dog who will also be happy, sit happy. Perhaps more important, *you* will be happy.

Lisa Hartman is head dog trainer for Pawsitively Pets. You can reach her at pawsitivelypetsonline@yahoo.com or www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com.

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Kill Baby Kill

Why would county commissioners want to make it easier to hurt manatees?

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Why does Miami always find a way to screw things up? Just when our manatees were feeling cozy and protected — WHAM! — along comes the *S.S. County Commission*. This death ship is currently holding public hearings, at a cost of \$700,000, about weakening Miami-Dade County's protections for the federally endangered species.

Even Gov. Charlie Crist took a moment out of the tanning salon last year to halt a state committee from considering a downgrade of the manatee's status. These gentle giants need safeguarding just as children walking to school need crossing guards. No debate necessary.

Meanwhile, all five council members in the City of North Miami approved stronger waterways ordinances on September 9, which will help to protect manatees visiting those canals and parts of Biscayne Bay.

But enough about them; let's get back to me. I have been to manatee heaven and hell. Last summer, in 15-foot-deep water off South Beach, peering directly down with my goggles, I saw a huge dark shape slowly fill my field of vision. After a moment's panic, I saw that I was floating above an aggregation of seven manatees. There, within earshot of the nightclubs, was nature at her best. But that was then.

Flash-forward to this summer's vacation in Vero Beach and a day trip to nearby Sebastian Inlet State Park, popular with the surfing crowd and akin to a



Photo by Patrick M. Rose, Save the Manatee Club

Commissioner Natacha Seijas is "no fan" of these slow-moving creatures.

combination of Miami-Dade's Haulover and Oleta parks. From the fishing pier jutting into the Atlantic, I spied two undulating manatees headed toward the beach. One parked itself in the gentle surf at the shoreline. But the surfers were not so gentle with the languid sea cow.

Here's where the manatee and I entered hell together. The surfers were imbibing while tossing around a football, and they took the manatee's presence about as seriously as their drinking games. Can you catch the football if I throw it near the manatee's tail? Hey, how about jumping over its back for a Hail Mary? Can you hit the manatee in the face when it surfaces to breathe?

When we three horrified onlookers

tried to intervene, we were mocked and very much outnumbered by the crowd of young people. Their response: "Dude, why do you have to ruin our party?" When the situation got worse, we pleaded with the lifeguard to do something.

Natacha "Barracuda" Seijas has stated that manatees are "dumb" and a nuisance. Thanks, Miami, for re-electing the "Cruella de Vil of Biscayne Bay."

Instead the "lifeguard" told us to leave the beach and to stop bothering his friend, who had just threatened to punch me in the face.

At some point while I was searching for a park ranger, filing an official complaint

with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and venting frustration about the ignorance and hostility of Sebastian Inlet's locals, the manatee swam away.

Although I believe most people fall into the camp of wanting to save manatees, there are clearly Floridians who could care less. The latter respect the manatee about as much as most highway drivers respect armadillos. It is somewhat easier to forgive the millions of tourists to these parts who have no idea what a manatee is and how few there are left. These people, the indifferent and the ignorant, are why manatees must be fiercely protected.

They must also be protected from the ignorance of Miami-Dade County Commissioner Natacha "Barracuda" Seijas, who has stated publicly that manatees are "dumb" and a nuisance. Thanks, Miami, for re-electing the "Cruella de Vil of Biscayne Bay," as local commentator Jim DeFede has dubbed her.

Seijas appointed a law-breaker to the 14-member committee that is reviewing Miami-Dade County's 1995 Manatee Protection Plan. Her appointee, Dick Bunnell, is still on probation and was fined \$150,000 in 2004 for failing to obtain federal permits to build docks in protected waterways, as reported in June by the *St. Petersburg Times* (<http://tampabay.com/news/environment/wildlife/article615077.ece>).

"A lot of people have a business interest on the [Miami] River. That's as plain as day," says Pamela Sweeney, a manatee expert and environmental specialist

Continued on page 47

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COLUMNISTS: HARPER'S ENVIRONMENT

Manatee

Continued from page 46

with the state-established Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve. "Lots of folks on the [manatee-review] committee feel that our plan is too rigid and offers too much protection. But our plan is considered very efficient and one of the most respected."

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) agrees, and they sent a letter on December 18, 2007, to Carlos Espinosa, director of the Miami-Dade Department of Environmental Resources Management, explaining, "We believe that the existing plan is a good one that works to protect manatees while still directing coastal development projects to appropriate locations in the county." They went on to state that "four manatee carcasses have been removed this year from the [Miami] River, including deaths from watercraft and entanglement."

Hello, Miami commissioners! You are wasting your time and taxpayers' money. The FWC is not going to approve a weaker plan! The review committee

needs to stop catering to special interests, meaning dock builders and developers. Its next public meeting, set for October 1, will include FWC officials and Sweeney's Manatee Awareness Group (see www.miamidade.gov/derm/manatee_agendas_and_information.asp).

According to Sweeney, at previous meetings the public has voiced the opinion that the plan should be strengthened instead of weakened. Manatees must be protected from extinction. The only thing in Miami

At Miami Seaquarium, take a look at the scars on manatee Phyllis, then ask yourself: Why would Miami want to put more of these creatures at risk?

that needs to disappear from existence forever is this committee. But sadly, too many people don't seem to care enough to do anything. "We have a crisis on our hands with people's apathy. The threats just keep increasing," says Katie Tripp, director of science and conservation for Maitland-based Save the Manatee Club.

Tripp thinks statewide efforts during the past 30 years have helped stabilize the manatee population, which reached a peak of 3300 individuals in the 2001 aerial count. Last year's count found 2817 individuals. "But we don't really know how many manatees is enough," she says. Moreover, she adds, "If we protect manatees, we protect all types of aquatic species."

One of the saddest commentaries on the plight of the manatee is that scientists use propeller scars to identify individuals because the majority of them have been struck by motorboats. Tripp says one manatee was found to have 50 distinct scars from 50 separate hits.

In addition to fast-moving boats, threats to the manatee include loss of habitat, red tide (toxic algae blooms), and cold stress syndrome from water that dips below 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Their temperature sensitivity is what causes manatees to migrate like snowbirds — their numbers swell to around 200 in Miami's waterways in the winter.

Tripp describes the population on Florida's east coast as "stable." But stability should not be mistaken for security. In 2007 Miami-Dade recorded 13

deaths, of which only 4 were classified as natural. And with an increasing human population and growing boat traffic, South Florida is a dangerous place for manatees.

As residents, though, we can do our part to make the environment safer for them by educating children and neighbors about these magnificent mammals. People who live on the water can obtain free "manatee safety" signs from the Save the Manatee Club. For more information call 800-432-5646 or e-mail education@savethemanatee.org.

Anyone witnessing a problem involving manatees should immediately call the FWC hotline at 888-404-3922 (*FWC or #FWC from a cellular phone). A second option is to call the Marine Animal Rescue Society, in Miami, at 305-546-1111.

If you want a guaranteed encounter with a manatee, visit the Miami Seaquarium. Take a close look at the scars on Phyllis, one of the residents, and then ask yourself: Why would Miami want to put more of these creatures at risk?

Indeed, Miami, why?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Butterfly Magnets and Wind Victims

Suggestions for attracting butterflies and avoiding toppled trees

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Last fall I began noticing large numbers of butterflies at Jungle Island, where I work. During the past several years, I would see the occasional butterfly or two that would blow in with the wind from somewhere off-shore of Watson Island, and of course the many smaller species of butterflies and moths that were utilizing the tiny flowering plants in the lawn areas. But when I started seeing dozens of large butterflies at one time, I took notice. One day last fall I saw large numbers of Julias, an attractive migratory species from South America, congregating in a single area of the park.

This congregating has continued intermittently since last year. The Julias were mostly in a very dense area of vegetation. When I made my way inside the area, I found that a weedy passion vine had established



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Passion flowers are a larval food plant for many species of butterflies.

itself and was growing throughout and over many of the other plants. This vine is *Passiflora foetida*, originally from South America but which has

naturalized in many other tropical zones of the world. Julia butterflies breed on passion vines. Now I let the vine grow until it becomes a nuisance,

and then pull out almost all of it, leaving a little bit to grow back.

Be aware this plant is an invasive exotic and should not be purposely propagated, but if it does show up in your garden, you can control it for the butterflies, as well as for the flowers, which are very attractive. Ever since we've been cultivating this passion vine, there has been a fairly stable population of Julias in the park. One time I took a photo of a group of Julias and was able to count 25 in a single cluster.

Another plant that does a great job attracting butterflies is the Fire Bush, *Hamelia patens*. The Fire Bush we are growing at Jungle Island is what would be called, in the nursery trade, an African Fire Bush. This is not the typical Fire Bush that used to be found in South Florida, with softer, often chewed-up leaves, more brittle branches, and a shorter life span. The plants, at least at

Continued on page 49

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COLUMNISTS: YOUR GARDEN

Butterfly

Continued from page 48

Jungle Island, will grow into a very large shrub or small tree. The leaves are shiny and waxy looking, and it flowers profusely. Through DNA analysis we know that this form of *Hamelia* originated in Mexico, was brought to Europe, Africa, and Asia in the 1800s, and is now starting to naturalize in our area.

I have seen dozens of butterflies being attracted to the flowers of this Fire Bush. On a recent hot afternoon (butterflies are most active at the hottest time of the day), I counted four different butterfly species within 15 minutes visiting two large plants at the park. These two plants are underneath a large Lysiloma tree, which also happens to be in flower — small, cream-colored, powder-puff flowers.

This is one of the best viewing areas in the park for butterflies. Sulphur-colored butterflies along with whites, greens, and some other color variations that I have not been able to identify are profuse here.

For many years I have been growing different species of pipe vine. These were always short-lived vines with very exotic-looking flowers. At the park we have several plants of *Aristolochia elegans* (pipe vines) growing in containers in our two plant nursery areas. Pipe vines are larval food plants for a number of species of Swallowtail butterfly. When we started placing some of these container plants in different locations, I started noticing Swallowtail butterflies flying throughout the park. This is the first year I've begun to see this species regularly.

When I started seeing dozens of large butterflies, I took notice. One day last fall I saw large numbers of Julias congregating in a single area of the park.

Hurricanes are devastating events for gardens. The high winds we had recently reinforced a few horticultural principals for me. One is that native plants don't necessarily withstand high winds better than other plants. I know this

goes against current plant dogma, but our recent high winds came from a direction opposite that of Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma of a few years ago. This exposed certain trees at the park to wind stresses they had not experienced since being planted within the past five years. Two pigeon plums, *Coccoloba diversifolia*, were blown over. Both of these native trees were planted close together, were about 15 feet tall, and were very healthy, with nice canopies. The root balls had pulled half-way out of the ground.

When we pulled both trees out to replant them, I was amazed at the small size of the root balls. They were the size of a 14-inch nursery container, with a few straggling roots outside this dense area. Both trees had been in containers at one time and had become root bound. All of the main structural roots reached to what had been the edges of the pot and turned down. Being planted in the ground for five years had not been enough for these trees to send out stabilizing roots that would support the trees in high winds.

You can check this out for yourself.

Go to a healthy-looking tree that has been planted in the ground for a few years, push and pull on the trunk, and watch the ground. Do you see the ground cracking eight to ten inches away from the trunk in a circular fashion? If you do, this tree was probably pot bound at some point in its life before being planted in the ground. The main structural roots are likely pointed down where the ground is cracking. This tree, whether a native or not, is a good candidate for wind-throw during the next hurricane because of poor root-system structure.

Don't plant root-bound trees and expect them to stand up to high winds. And don't plant trees with poor branch structure and expect them to withstand a strong storm. Have your trees pruned professionally on a regular basis.

Jeff Shimonski is an ISA-certified municipal arborist, director of horticulture at Jungle Island, and principal of Tropical Designs of Florida. Contact him by e-mail at jeff@tropicaldesigns.com, or visit tropicaldesigns.com.

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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

Six more Biscayne Corridor restaurants added this month! Total: 193. Look for **NEW!**

Restaurant listings for the *BT* Dining Guide are written by Pamela Robin Brandt. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but restaurants frequently change menus, chefs, and operating hours, so please call ahead to confirm information. Icons (\$\$\$) represent estimates for a typical meal without wine, tax, or tip. Hyphenated icons (\$-\$\$\$) indicate a significant range in prices between lunch and dinner menus, or among individual items on those menus.

\$ = \$10 and under

\$\$ = \$20

\$\$\$ = \$30

\$\$\$-\$\$\$ = \$40

\$\$\$\$ = \$50 and over

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

Abokado

900 S. Miami Ave.,
305-347-3700

www.abokadosushi.com

Hamachi chiles rellenos? Shiso leaf "nachos" topped with raw spicy tuna, kaiware sprouts, and other Asian ingredients? The Viva, a sushi roll that starts with standard Japanese stuff (spicy tuna, cucumber, avocado), adds typical Latin sabor (jalapeño, cilantro), wraps it all in a flour tortilla, and garnishes it with South of the Border heat (spicy snow crab mix)? Miami hasn't tended to initiate too many food "firsts," but this Japanese/Pan-Latin fusion place is surely one. Intended as the groundbreaker of an international chain, this stylish indoor-outdoor eatery features inventive makis (executed by Hiro Asano, formerly Bond Street's sushi maestro), plus LatAmer/Asian small plates and meals like pasilla chile-braised short ribs with wasabi-shiitake grits. Prices are higher than at neighborhood sushi spots, but in keeping with Abokado's Mary Brickell Village neighbors. \$\$\$

Acqua

1435 Brickell Ave., Four Seasons Hotel
305-381-3190

Originally an Italian/Mediterranean restaurant, this comfortably elegant, upscale spot switched chefs in 2006 (to Patrick Duff, formerly at the Sukhothai in Bangkok), resulting in a complete menu renovation. Thailand's famed sense of culinary balance is now evident throughout the global (though primarily Asian or Latin American-inspired) menu, in dishes like yuzu/white soya-dressed salad of shrimp tempura (with watercress, Vidalia onion, avocado, pomegranate), a tender pork shank glazed with spicy Szechuan citrus sauce (accompanied by a chorizo-flecked plantain mash), or lunchtime's rare tuna burger with lively wasabi aioli and wakame salad. For dessert few chocoholics can resist a buttery-crust tart filled with sinfully rich warm chocolate custard. \$\$\$\$

Azul

500 Brickell Key Dr., 305-913-8254

Floor-to-ceiling picture windows showcase Biscayne Bay. But diners are more likely to focus on the sparkling raw bar and open kitchen, where chef Clay Conley crafts imaginative global creations – many of them combinations, to satisfy those who want it all. One offering, "A Study in Tuna," includes tuna sashimi, Maine crab, avocado tempura, and caviar, with several Asian sauces. Moroccan lamb is three preparations (grilled chop, harissa-marinated loin, and bastilla, the famed savory-sweet Middle Eastern pastry, stuffed with braised shank), plus feta and smoked eggplant. Finish with a vanilla soufflé your way, a choice of toppings: chocolate, raspberry, or crème anglaise. \$\$\$\$

Bali **NEW!**

109 NE 2nd Ave., 305-358-5751

While Indonesian food isn't easy to find in Miami, downtown has secret stashes – small joints catering to Asian-Pacific cruise-ship and construction workers. Opened circa 2002, this cute, exotically decorated café has survived and thrived for good reason. The homey cooking is delicious, and the friendly family feel encourages even the timid of palate to try something new. Novices will want Indonesia's signature rijsttafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be heaped on rice. Once you're hooked, there's great gado-gado (vegetables in peanut sauce), nasi goreng (ultimate fried rice), and laksa, a complex coconut-curry noodle soup that's near-impossible to find made properly, as it is here. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$\$\$

The Bar at Level 25 (Conrad Hotel)

1395 Brickell Ave., 305-503-6500

On the Conrad's restaurant/lobby-level 25th floor, the expansive, picture-windowed space around the corner from the check-in desks used to be just a lobby extension. Now it's The Bar, which is not just a watering hole with panoramic views. At lunch it's an elegant sandwich bar; at night it's a raw bar (with pristine coldwater oysters) and (best) a tapas bar serving pintxos. That's just the Basque word for tapas, but as interpreted by Atrio's chef Michael Gilligan, there's nothing mere about the generously portioned small plates. They range from traditional items like cod fish equixada (a zingy bacalao salad) and saffron-sautéed Spanish artichokes to inventive inspirations like foie gras and goat cheese-stuffed empanadas, or Asian-inspired soft-shell crab in airy tempura batter. \$\$\$

Blu Pizzeria e Cucina

900 S. Miami Ave. (Mary Brickell Village)
305-381-8335

www.blurestaurantsgroup.com

More than a mere pizzeria, this spot sports a super-sleek Upper Eastside (of Manhattan) interior. If that's too formal, opt for a casual patio table while you study the menu over an order of warm, just-made gnocchetti (zeppole-like bread sticks, with prosciutto and savory fontina fondue dip), or creamy-centered suppli alla romana (porcini-studded tomato and mozzarella rice croquettes). And don't worry. The place looks upscale, but prices of even the fanciest seafood or veal entrées don't exceed \$20. The fare fashioned by chef Ricardo Tognozzi (formerly from La Bussola and Oggi) is wide-ranging, but as the name suggests, you can't go wrong with one of the thin-crust brick-oven pizzas, whether a traditional margherita or inventive

asparagi e granchi (with lump crab, lobster cream, mozzarella, and fresh asparagus). \$\$\$

Café Sambal

500 Brickell Key Dr.

305-913-8358

www.mandarinoriental.com/miami

Though the Mandarin Oriental Hotel describes this space as its "casual hotel restaurant," many consider it a more spectacular dining setting than the upscale Azul, upstairs, owing to the option of dining outdoors on a covered terrace directly on the waterfront. The food is Asian-inspired, with a few Latin and Mediterranean accents (sushi, plus creative fusion dishes like tangerine-anise spiced short ribs with scallion pancake, or a tempura-battered snapper sandwich with lemon aioli). For the health-conscious, the menu includes low-cal choices. For hedonists there's a big selection of artisan sakes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Caribbean Delight

236 NE 1st Ave

305-381-9254

Originally from Jamaica, proprietor Miss Pat has been serving her traditional homemade island specialties to downtown office workers and college students since the early 1990s. Most popular item here might be the week-day lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry – doubly true thanks to the home-baked Jamaican desserts. \$

Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103

www.doloreslolita.com

It's hard to figure why a Mediterranean/Latin restaurant (with Asian touches) would be named after a line in a 1950s novel about a New England pedophile. But everything else about this casually stylish spot is easy to understand — and easy on the wallet. All entrées cost either \$18 or \$23, a price that includes an appetizer — no low-rent crapola, either, but treats like Serrano ham croquetas, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. And all desserts, from tiramisu to mango carpaccio with lemon crème, are a bargain \$2.50. The best seats in this hip hangout, housed in the old Firehouse 4, are on the rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

1744 SW 3rd Ave., 305-858-0608

This festively decorated indoor/outdoor bistro packs a lot of party spirit into a small space, a large variety of food onto its menu, and a very large amount of informal retro California-style fusion food onto its plates. To the familiar Latin American/Italian equation, the owners add a touch of Cal-Mex (like Tex-Mex but more health conscious). Menu offerings range from designer pizzas and pastas to custardy tamales, but the bistro's especially known for imaginative meal-size salads, like one featuring mandarin oranges, avocado, apple, blue cheese, raisins, candied pecans, and chicken on a mesclun bed. \$\$

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

398 NW N. River Dr., 305-375-0765

Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries

about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the rustic outside dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market to see what looks freshest. Best preparations, as always when fish is this fresh, are the simplest. When stone crabs are in season, Garcia's claws are as good as Joe's but considerably cheaper. The local fish sandwich is most popular – grouper, yellowtail snapper, or mahi mahi, fried, grilled, or blackened. The place is also famous for its zesty smoked-fish dip and its sides of hushpuppies. \$\$\$

Grimpa Steakhouse

901 S. Miami Ave., 305-455-4757

www.grimpa.com

This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery at Brickell Plaza is more sleekly contemporary than most of Miami's rodizio joints, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish – 16 cuts at dinner, 12 at lunch. And included in the price (dinner \$47, lunch \$34) is the traditional belly-busting buffet of hot and cold prepared foods, salad, cold cuts, and cheeses, plus additional accompaniments – like irresistible cheese bread – served tableside. A pleasant, nontraditional surprise: unusual sauces like sweet/tart passion fruit or mint, tomato-based BBQ, and mango chutney, along with the ubiquitous chimichurri. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Indochine

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1525

www.indochinebistro.com

Indochine has succeeded by morphing from mere restaurant into hip hangout. Copious special events (art openings, happy hours with DJs, classic movie or karaoke nights, wine or sake tastings) draw everyone from downtown business types to the counterculture crowd. Not that there's anything "mere" about the range of food served from three Asian nations. Light eaters can snack on Vietnamese summer rolls or Japanese sushi rolls, including an imaginative masago-coated model with mango, spicy tuna, and cilantro. For bigger appetites, there are Thai curries and Vietnamese specialties like pho, richly flavored beef soup with meatballs, steak slices, rice noodles, and add-in Asian herbs and sprouts. \$\$\$

Iron Sushi

120 SE 3rd Ave., 305-373-2000

(See Miami Shores listing)

La Loggia Ristorante and Lounge

68 W. Flagler St., 305-373-4800, www.laloggia.org

This luxuriantly neo-classical yet warm-feeling Italian restaurant was unquestionably a pioneer in revitalizing downtown; when it first opened, eating options in the courthouse area were basically a variety of hot dog wagons. With alternatives like amaretto-tinged pumpkin agnolotti in sage butter sauce, cilantro-spiced white bean/vegetable salad dressed with truffle oil, and soufflé di granchi (crabmeat soufflé atop arugula dressed with honey-mustard vinaigrette), proprietors Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira continue to draw a lunch crowd that returns for dinner, or perhaps just stays on through the afternoon, fueled by the Lawyer's Liquid Lunch, a vodka martini spiked with sweetened espresso. \$\$\$

Continued on page 52



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Red, White, and You

Agreeable wine for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

Around about the middle of October, we all start feeling a little crabby.

We're still in the meat of hurricane season, and there's another six long weeks yet to go. The summer's heat and humidity have long since gotten old, and those of us who can't afford to get out of Dodge until the snowbirds begin their annual migration south are feeling seriously aggrieved.

But that's not why we're feeling crabby.

October 15 is the opening of stone crab season, time again to gorge ourselves silly on the ocean-sweet, dense, delicately flavored meat of *Menippe mercenaria*, preferably dredged through gallons of creamy mustard sauce and accompanied by a loaf of crusty French bread and simple green salad.

And of course, a chilled bottle of light, crisp, refreshing white wine.

To paraphrase the great satiric songwriter Tom Lehrer, I have a few modest examples here — some familiar, others perhaps not — but all wines that will play well with South Florida's favorite crustacean (and

just about anything else that comes out of the water), and still leave enough pennies in your pocket to add a couple of more jumbos to the pile.

Pinot Grigio may be the best known and most popular Italian white, but if enough people try **Bellini's 2007 Vernaccia di San Gimignano**, all that could change. This is a lovely wine, made from the Vernaccia grape, that balances a delicate acidity with a pronounced minerality and crisp citrus, peach and melon flavors.

And while we're on the letter V, Portugal's Vinho Verde is another lesser-known wine that's as perfect with stone crab as reservations at Joe's. The **2007 Neblina** is characteristic of the varietal, with a pale gold-green color, faint lemon-lime and green apple aromas, and a slight spritz and sweetness on the palate.

A little less characteristic is the **2006 Martin Codax Albariño**, and that's a good thing. The typically lush, floral aromas and flavors of Spain's premier white-wine grape are here more restrained; in their place are smoke, Meyer lemon, peach and pear — leaner than most Albariños but still fuller-bodied than acidic wines like Sancerre and Muscadet.

Of course, you can't talk about seafood wines without

mentioning Sauvignon Blanc, and some of the best values of this fish-friendly wine now come from Chile. The **2007 Natura** is very refreshing, with the kind of sharp grapefruit-citrus-green-apple acidity that can cut through the richness of shellfish like lobster and scallops.

Finally there is Pinot Grigio. Not from Italy, though, where too many Pinot Grigios taste as washed out as yesterday's laundry. The **2007 Clos du Bois** comes from California, where riper grapes give it a pleasing spice and fruitiness without compromising its essential lemon-lime character and its ability to make nice with our friend the crab.

The Bellini Vernaccia di San Gimignano, Neblina Vinho Verde, and Martin Codax Albariño are all available at Total Wine in North Miami for \$10.99, \$8.99, and \$11.99 respectively (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270).

The Natura Sauvignon Blanc and Clos du Bois Pinot Grigio can be found at most Publix, including the Biscayne Commons Publix (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171) priced at \$11.49 and \$12.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 50

La Moon **NEW!**

144 SW 8th St., 305-860-6209

At four in the morning, nothing quiets the post-clubbing munchies like a Crazy Burger (a heart-stopping Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun") unless it's a Supermoon perro, a similarly overloaded hot dog. For less dainty eaters, there's a bandeja paisa, a mountainous construction containing char-grilled steak, pork belly, pork-enriched beans, rice, plantains, eggs, and arepas. One hardly knows whether to eat it or burrow in to spend the rest of the night. While this tiny place's late hours (till 3:00 a.m. Thursday, 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to all the cholesterol-packed Colombian classics, there's a salad Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$\$

Latitude Zero

36 SW 1st St., 305-372-5205

Potted plants are the only sign outside this narrow storefront that the room inside is worlds more charming than standard downtown Latin eateries. This urban oasis is an artsy little white-tablecloth place (with alternating red tablecloths warming up the feel), but with no-tablecloth prices. While much of the menu is Miami's generic Latin mix, there is a separate Ecuadorian section that's a playlist of that country's culinary greatest hits. Standouts: encebollado, a centuries-old fishermen's soup given national individuality by yuca and zingy hits of lime; lighter caldo de bola, veggie-packed broth with plantain dumplings; and cazuelas, thick layered casseroles of mashed plantains and tomato-enriched seafood. No clue? Try a bandera, a mixed plate of Ecuador's most distinctive dishes, including shrimp ceviche. \$\$

Novecento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

www.bistronevecento.com

For those who think "Argentine cuisine" is a synonym for "beef and more beef," this popular eatery's wide range of more cosmopolitan contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic parrilla-grilled steaks are here for

traditionalists, but the menu is dominated by creative Nuevo Latino items like a new-style ceviche de chernia (lightly lime-marinated grouper with jalapeños, basil, and the refreshing sweet counterpoint of watermelon), or crab ravioli with creamy saffron sauce. Especially notable are entrée salads like the signature Ensalada Novecento: skirt steak slices (cooked to order) atop mixed greens coated in rich mustard vinaigrette with a side of housemade fries. \$\$\$

Oceanaire Seafood Room

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862

www.theoceanaire.com

With a dozen branches nationwide, Oceanaire may seem more All-American seafood empire than Florida fish shack. But while many dishes (including popular sides like bacon-enriched hash browns and fried green tomatoes) are identical at all Oceanaires, menus vary significantly according to regional tastes and fish. Here in Miami, chef Sean Bernal (formerly at Merrick Park's Pescado) supplements signature starters like lump crab cakes with his own lightly marinated, Peruvian-style grouper ceviche. The daily-changing, 15-20 specimen seafood selection includes local fish seldom seen on local menus: pompano, parrot fish, amberjack. But even flown-in fish (and the raw bar's cold-water oysters) are ultra-fresh. \$\$\$

Pasha's

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116

The original branch on Miami Beach's Lincoln Road was instantly popular, and the same healthy Middle Eastern fast food — made with no trans fats or other nutritional nasties — is served at the three newer outlets. The prices are low enough that one might suspect Pasha's was conceived as a tax write-off rather than a Harvard Business School project, which it was by founders Antonio Ellek and Nicolas Cortes. Dishes range from common classics like falafel and gyros to more unusual items like muhammara (tangy walnut spread), silky labneh yogurt cheese, and chicken adana kebabs with grilled veggies and aioli sauce. Everything from pitas to lemonade is made fresh, from scratch, daily. \$\$\$

Peoples Bar-B-Que

360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080

www.peoplesbarbque.com

Oak-smoked, falling-off-the-bone tender barbecued ribs (enhanced with a secret sauce whose recipe goes back

several generations) are the main draw at this Overtown institution. But the chicken is also a winner, plus there's a full menu of soul food entrées, including what many aficionados consider our town's tastiest souse. Sides include collards, yams, and soft mac and cheese. And it would be unthinkable to call it quits without homemade sweet potato pie or banana pudding, plus a bracing flop — half iced tea, half lemonade. \$\$\$

Perricone's

15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449, www.perricones.com

Housed in a Revolutionary-era barn (moved from Vermont), this market/café was one of the Brickell area's first gentrified amenities. At lunch chicken salad (with pignolias, raisins, apples, and basil) is a favorite; dinner's strong suit is the pasta list, ranging from Grandma Jennie's old-fashioned lasagna to chichi fiocchi purses filled with fresh pear and gorgonzola. And Sunday's \$15.95 brunch buffet (\$9.95 for kids) — featuring an omelet station, waffles, smoked salmon and bagels, salads, and more — remains one of our town's most civilized all-you-can-eat deals. \$\$

Prime Blue Grille

315 S. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, 305-358-5901

www.primebluegrille.com

This truly 21st-century steakhouse targets today's health-minded gourmets by serving only certified-organic Brandt beef — antibiotic- and hormone-free, as well as dry-aged, butchered in-house, and smoke-seared by Prime Blue's intense wood-burning grills and ovens. For noncarnivores, the menu gives equal time to fish, all caught wild, and offers dozens of cooked vegetable and salad options, including build-your-own. There's also a raw bar and a small steak/seafood retail counter. The décor is as modern as the menu. Instead of the stuffy men's club look, you have a soaring, light-hued, open-plan, indoor/outdoor space, with panoramic Miami River view. \$\$\$

Provence Gril

1001 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-1940

The cozy, terracotta-tiled dining room (and even more charming outdoor dining terrace) indeed evoke the south of France. But the menu of French bistro classics covers all regions, a Greatest Hits of French comfort food: country-style pâté maison with onion jam, roasted peppers and cornichons; steak/frites (grilled rib-eye with pepper-corn cream sauce, fries, and salad); four preparations of

mussels; a tarte tatin (French apple tart with roasted walnuts, served à la mode). Deal alert: An early-bird prix-fixe menu (5:30-7:30 p.m.) offers soup or salad, entrée, dessert, and a carafe of wine for \$44 per couple. \$\$\$

The River Oyster Bar

650 S. Miami Ave., 305-530-1915

www.therivermiami.com

This casually cool Miami River-area jewel is a full-service seafood spot, as evidenced by tempting menu selections like soft-shell crabs with grilled vegetables, corn relish, and remoulade. There are even a few dishes to please meat-and-potatoes diners, like short ribs with macaroni and cheese. But oyster fans will still find it difficult to resist stuffing themselves silly on the unusually large selection of bivalves (often ten varieties per night), especially since oysters are served both raw and cooked — fire-roasted with sofrito butter, chorizo, and manchego. To accompany these delights, there's a thoughtful wine list and numerous artisan beers on tap. \$\$\$

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001

www.rosamexicano.com

A branch of the original Rosa Mexicano that introduced New Yorkers to real Mexican food (not Tex-Mex) in 1984, this expansive indoor/outdoor space offers a dining experience that's haute in everything but price. Few entrées top \$20. The décor is both date-worthy and family-friendly — festive but not kitschy. And nonsophisticates needn't fear; though nachos aren't available, there is nothing scary about zarape de pato (roast duck between freshly made, soft corn tortillas, topped with yellow-and-habanero-pepper cream sauce), or Rosa's signature guacamole en molcajete, made tableside. A few pomegranate margaritas ensure no worries. \$\$\$

Soya & Pomodoro

120 NE 1st St., 305-381-9511

Life is complicated. Food should be simple. That's owner Armando Alfano's philosophy, which is stated above the entry to his atmospheric downtown eatery. And since it's also the formula for the truest traditional Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian

Continued on page 53

DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 52

entrées such as spinach and ricotta-stuffed crêpes with béchamel and tomato sauces. There are salads and sandwiches, too, including one soy burger to justify the other half of the place's name. The most enjoyable place to dine is the secret, open-air courtyard, completely hidden from the street. Alfano serves dinner on Thursdays only to accompany his "Thursday Night Live" events featuring local musicians and artists. \$\$\$

Taste of Bombay

111 NE 3rd Ave.
305-358-0144

No surprise that a place called Taste of Bombay would be an Indian restaurant. And depending mostly on the predominant nationalities of downtown construction workers at any given time, Taste of Bombay has also served sushi, Philippine, and Chinese food. Best bet, though, is the all-you-can-eat Indian buffet lunch spread, featuring six changing entrées (a mix of meat, poultry, fish, and vegetable curries) plus veggie pakoras, rice, salad, chutneys, hot naan bread, and a dessert. The place looks plain outside, but it's pleasantly exotic enough inside for a bargain business lunch. \$\$

Tobacco Road

626 S. Miami Ave.
305-374-1198

www.tobacco-road.com

Prohibition-era speakeasy (reputedly a fave of Al Capone), gay bar, strip club. Previously all these, this gritty spot has been best known since 1982 as a venue for live music, primarily blues. But it also offers food from lunchtime to late night (on weekends till 4:00 a.m.). The kitchen is especially known for its chili, budget-priced steaks, and burgers, including the mega-mega burger, a trucker-style monster topped with said chili plus cheddar, mushrooms, bacon, and a fried egg. There's also surprisingly elegant fare, though, like a Norwegian salmon club with lemon aioli. A meat-smoker in back turns out tasty ribs, perfect accompaniment to the blues. \$\$

Midtown / Design District

Adelita's Café

2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

From the street (which is actually NE 26th, not Biscayne) this Honduran restaurant seems unpromising, but inside it's bigger, better, and busier than it looks. Unlike many Latin American eateries, which serve a multinational mélange, this one sticks close to the source and proves a crowd-pleaser. On weekends especially, the two casual dining rooms are packed with families enjoying authentic fare like baleadas (thick corn tacos), tajadas (Honduras's take on tostones), rich meal-in-a-bowl soups packed with seafood or meat and veggies, and more. To spend ten bucks on a meal here, one would have to be a sumo wrestler. \$

Bin No. 18

1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

At this wine bar/café, located on the ground floor of one of midtown's new mixed-use condo buildings, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary cool (high loft ceilings) and Old World warmth (tables made from old wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's new smart, upscale residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger internationally themed Spanish, Italian, or French charcuterie platters at night. Though the place is small and family-run friendly, Venezuelan-born chef Alfredo Patino's former executive chef gigs at Bizcaya (at the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove) and other high-profile venues are evident in sophisticated snacks like the figciutto, a salad of arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking in a fenced lot behind the building. \$\$

Bleu Moon

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-373-8188

Deep inside the Doubletree Grand, this restaurant, which has panoramic Biscayne Bay views and an outdoor deck, is one of the few upscale dinner spots near the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. The eclectic menu is more Mediterranean than anything else, from old-fashioned favorites like lasagna to contemporary creations

like gnocchi with sun-dried tomatoes, sweet pea purée, pine nuts, and ricotta salata. But a few seafood sauces reflect Asian influences, and tropical Latin touches abound. Some of the most charming dishes are modernized American, and done well enough to make you nostalgic for 1985: creamy (but not gunky) lobster bisque, lump crab cake with fried capers, and a retro arugula salad with caramelized walnuts, bacon, gorgonzola, fresh berries, and raspberry vinaigrette. \$\$\$\$

Brosia

163 NE 39th St., 305-531-8700

www.brosiamiami.com

The reputation that Arthur Artile amassed after years as executive chef at Norman's and Chispa has made the Design District's Brosia an instant hit. The menu is Mediterranean-inspired, with a few items — like gazpacho Caprese — fusing cuisines, but most retaining regional individuality: Moroccan mussels in curry broth; shrimp and clams (with garlic, chorizo, and sherry) that scream "Spain!" The stylish space is a draw, too. Inside, all mahogany, leather, and luxuriant intimacy; outside, seating on an extensive patio shaded by a canopy of old oaks. And the convenient all-day hours (even breakfast) give it the feel of a real neighborhood restaurant. \$\$\$

Buena Vista Bistro

4582 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-5909

If a neighborhood eatery like this one — which serves supremely satisfying Italian, American, and French bistro food — were within walking distance of every Miami resident, we'd be a helluva hip food town. Located in the intimate space that formerly housed Restaurant A, it's the love child of Quebequise chef Claude Postel and his wife Callie, who runs the front of the house with exuberantly friendly charm. Like true Parisian bistros, it's open continuously, every day (until midnight!), with prices so low (starters \$5-8, entrées \$8-15) that one really can drop in anytime for authentic rillettes (a scrumptious spiced meat spread, like a rustic pâté) with a crusty baguette, steak with from-scratch frites, salmon atop ratatouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. And it's well worth a drive. \$\$

Charcuterie

3612 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7877

This Design District old-timer has hung on for close to 20 years as the District has gone through its mood swings. But it's no worse for the wear. The upstairs/downstairs space looks good as new, and is still almost impossibly cute. The menu, chalked daily on a blackboard, still features well more than a dozen typical French bistro specials like chicken Dijonnaise or almond-crusted trout in creamy, lemony beurre blanc. And the salads, soups, and sandwiches are still, invariably, evocative. Rough-cut pâté de campagne, topped with cornichons on a crusty buttered baguette is an instant trip to Paris. Though weekend nighttime hours were instituted several years ago, dinner is an on-again, off-again thing, so call first. \$\$-\$\$\$

The Daily Creative Food Co.

2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar — sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks — a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers (like the Biscayne Times: tuna salad with hummus, cucumber, roasted peppers, arugula, and sprouts on multigrain bread), giving diners something to chat about. For those who'd rather Have It Their Own Way, both sandwiches and salads can be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$

Delicias Peruanas

2590 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4634

Seafood is the specialty at this pleasant Peruvian spot, as it was at the original Delicias, run by members of the same family, eight blocks north on the Boulevard. There are differences here, notably karaoke on weekends — and a kitchen that doesn't shut down till the wannabe American Idols shut up, around 2:00 a.m. But the food is as tasty as ever, especially the reliably fresh traditional

Continued on page 54



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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 53

ceviches, and for those who like their fish tangy but cooked, a mammoth jalea platter (lightly breaded, fried seafood under a blanket of marinated onions - the fish and chips of your dreams). As for nonseafood stuff, no one who doesn't already know that Peru practically invented fusion cuisine (in the 1800s) will doubt, after sampling two traditional noodle dishes: tallerin saltado (Chinese-Peruvian beef or chicken lo mein) or tallerin verde (Italian noodles with pesto and steak). \$\$

Domo Japones

4000 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-5474
www.domojapones.com

Thin-sliced, white-fish usuzukuri sashimi garnished with sea salt and blood orange sauce; a scallop sushi roll flavored with truffle oil and cured plum; miso-glazed black cod. If the fare at Domo Japones, housed in the romantically renovated old Buena Vista post office, sounds unusually inventive and trendy, there's a logical explanation: Chefs Nao Higuchi and Timon Balloo are Nobu and SushiSamba veterans, and owner Amir Ben-Zion partnered in Bond Street. Harder to explain are maki combinations like shrimp and prosciutto with pineapple ginger sauce, or prices more South Beach than Biscayne Corridor. But sushi till midnight Thursday through Saturday (11:00 p.m. Monday-Wednesday) is a major neighborhood upgrade. \$\$\$

18th Street Café

210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8006
www.18thstreetcafe.com

Most of the seating in this cool little breakfast/lunch room is in a sort of giant bay window, backed with banquettes, that makes the space feel expansively light-filled, and quite nicely gentrifies its whole evolving Midtown block. This pioneering place deserves to survive, even if just considering the roast beef sandwich with creamy horseradish - an inspired classic combination that makes one wonder why more places in this town don't serve it. (We'll debate later.) Other culinary highlights of the classic "Six S" repertoire (soups, sandwiches, salads, sweets, smoothies, specials) might include a turkey/pear/cheddar melt sandwich, and really sinful marshmallow-topped brownies. \$

Five Guys Famous Burger and Fries

3401 N. Miami Ave. (Shops at Midtown), 305-571-8345
www.fiveguys.com

Like the West Coast's legendary In-N-Out Burger chain, this East Coast challenger serves no green-leaf faux health food. You get what the name says, period, with three adds: kosher dogs, veggie burgers, and free peanuts while you wait. Which you will, just a bit, since burgers are made fresh upon order, not steam-tabled. Available in double or one-patty sizes, they're well-done but spurtingly juicy, and after loading with your choice of 15 free garnishes, even a "little" burger makes a major meal. Fries (regular or Cajun-spiced) are also superior, hand-cut in-house from sourced potatoes; a changing sign reports the spuds' point of origin. \$

Fratelli Lyon

4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-2901
www.fratellilyon.com

This Italian café has been packed since the moment it opened. No surprise to any who recall owner Ken Lyon's

pioneering Lyon Freres gourmet store on pre-gentrified Lincoln Road (1992-97), another joint that was exactly what its neighborhood needed. The restaurant's artisan salumi, cheeses, flavorful boutique olive oils, and more on the ingredient-driven menu are so outstanding that one can't help wishing this restaurant also had a retail component. Well, maybe later. Meanwhile console yourself with the sort of salamis and formaggi you'll never find in the supermarket (as well as rare finds like culatello - prosciutto royalty), including a mixed antipasto esplosione that would feed Rhode Island. Entrées include properly al dente pastas, plus some regional specialties like Venetian-style calves liver, rarely found outside Italy. \$\$\$

Grass

28 NE 40th St.
305-573-3355

After a couple of years in hiatus, this Design District restolounge has reopened in the same outdoor courtyard space. What's new: "MeditAsian" chef Michael Jacobs and a menu that travels beyond pan-Asian and Mediterranean influences into the Americas. Entrées range from lowbrow comfort food (cunningly reinvented mini pot pies) to high-status extravagance (stone-seared, authentic Kobe steak). For healthy grazers, raw-bar selections include ceviches and a large seafood platter (lobster, shrimp, and lump crab with housemade dipping sauces). There's also a snack menu (pristine coldwater oysters, a crab salad timbale, parmesan-truffle shoe-string fries, mini-Kobe burgers) served till the wee hours, providing a welcome alternative to the Boulevard's fast food chains. \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Kafa Café

3535 NE 2nd Ave., 305-438-0114
www.kafamiddtown.com

Opened in late 2007 by a brother/sister team (both originally from Ethiopia, via San Francisco), this breakfast/lunch spot is located in the casually stylish indoor/outdoor multi-roomed Midtown space formerly housing Uva and Stop Miami. Nothing on the menu tops \$8, and portions feed an army (or several starving artists). Signature item is the formidable Kafa Potato Platter - a mountain of wondrously textured home fries mixed with bacon, ham, peppers, onion, and cheese; eggs (any style), fresh fruit, and bread accompany. Lunch's burgers, salads, and overstuffed sandwiches (like the roast beef supreme, a melt with sautéed mushrooms, onion, sour cream, and cheddar on sourdough) come with homemade soup or other sides, plus fruit. Not full yet? The pair plans expanded night hours with an authentic Ethiopian menu, pending wine/beer license approval. \$

Latin Café 2000

12501 Biscayne Blvd.
305-576-3838
www.latincafe2000.com

The menu is similar to that at many of our town's Latin cafés, largely classic Cuban entrées and sandwiches, with a smattering of touches from elsewhere in Latin America, such as a Peruvian jalea mixta (marinated mixed seafood), or paella Valenciana from Spain, which many Miami eateries consider a Latin country. What justifies the new millennium moniker is the more modern, yuppified/yaufied ambience, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. Delivery is now available. \$\$

Lemoni Café

4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-5080

The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the sparkling freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into constructing these mostly healthy snacks. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach salad (with goat cheese, pears, walnuts, and raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens - a hefty helping of protein without typical deli-style mayo overload. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban, but the deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream that dresses a veggie wrap might tempt even hardcore cholesterol fans to stick with the sprouts. \$\$\$

Lost & Found Saloon

185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008
www.thelostandfoundsaloon-miami.com

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crusted salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crusted wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

Maino Churrascaria **NEW!**

2201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-571-9044

This very upscale Brazilian steakhouse has all the features one expects at a rodizio-style restaurant, including all-you-can-eat meats carved tableside and a lavish buffet of salads, sides, salumi, and hot prepared dishes. What sets Maino apart from typical rodizio palaces is its family-run feel, intimate rather than intimidating, plus its attention to every detail (immediately obvious in the classy rustic/elegant décor, highlighted by striking onyx accents - bars, tabletops, and more). While it's rare at most rodizio joints to get meat done less than medium, Maino's eager-to-please servers here are happy to convey custom-cooking preferences to the kitchen - and they're English-speaking, too. One other welcome difference: As well as the one-price (hefty) feast, there are à la carte starters and pastas for lighter eaters and noncarnivores, and some lunch specials. Free parking, too. \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Mario the Baker

250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228
(See North Miami listing)

Michael's Genuine Food and Drink

130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550

Long-awaited and an instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from Michael Schwartz, founding chef of Nemo's in South Beach, offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes (\$4-\$8 for snacks and small plates to \$24-\$39 for extra-large

plates) to encourage frequent visits from light-bite as well as pig-out diners. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic and affordable wine list, and a full bar, with cut-rate weekday happy hour cocktails. \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Mike's at Venetia

555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-374-5731
www.mikesvenetia.com

There's no sign out front, but this family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of a waterfront condo building across from the Miami Herald, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists - and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks (not to mention a billiard table and 17 TV screens). Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good, and happy hour appetizers (like meaty Buffalo wings) are always half-price. Additionally, a limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$\$-\$\$

Orange Café + Art

2 NE 40th St., 305-571-4070

The paintings hanging in this tiny, glass-enclosed café are for sale. And for those who don't have thousands of dollars to shell out for the local art on the walls, less than ten bucks will get you art on a plate, including a Picasso: chorizo, prosciutto, manchego cheese, baby spinach, and basil on a crusty baguette. Other artfully named and crafted edibles include salads, daily soups, several pastas (like the Matisse, flocchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

Out of the Blue Café

2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-3800
www.outofthebluecafe.net

Forget impersonal chain coffeehouses. This artist-friendly, independent neighborhood café serves a full selection of coffee drinks made with the award-winning beans of Intelligentsia, a roasting company that works directly with artisan growers to encourage sustainable agriculture - and one helluva good cup of java. Also served: breakfast and lunch sandwiches, imaginative salads, soups, homemade pastries and creamy fresh-fruit smoothies. With tables, sofas, and lounge chairs inside an old Midtown house, plus free wireless Internet access, the space is also just a pleasant place to hang out. Owner Carmen Miranda (real name) says beer and wine will soon be available. \$

Pacific Time

35 NE 40th St., 305-722-7369
www.pacifictimemiami.com

Everyone knows Jonathan Eismann's original, now-defunct Pacific Time, for many years Lincoln Road's only serious contemporary restaurant. The question is: How different is its new incarnation? Very, and it's all good, starting with far superior acoustics (no more voice-shredding conversations!), an admirably green ecological policy, and a neighborhood-friendly attitude (including kid-oriented dishes, plus continuous service of inventive small plates and bar snacks). The food is also more intriguing - simultaneously complexly refined and accessibly clean. While the addition of

Continued on page 55



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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 54

Mediterranean influences to PT's former Pacific Rim menu may sound confusing on paper, trust us: A meal that includes a butter-grilled asparagus with prosciutto, soft-cooked egg Milanese, and preserved lemon; plus an Asian-accented creamy corn/leek soup with Peeky Toe crab dumplings, coriander, and mustard oil makes perfect sense on the tongue. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pasha's

3801 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-0201
(See Brickell/Downtown listing)

Pizzafiore

2905 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-0900

Those seeking dainty designer pizzas can fuhgeddaboutit here. At this New York-style pizzeria (which has roughly the same menu as North Beach's original Pizzafiore, but independent ownership), it's all about heftiness. A special slice/soda deal features two pizza triangles bigger than most Miami mini-skirts. Whole pies come medium (large), large (huge), and extra-large (think truck tire). And with fully loaded pizzas like the Supreme Meat Lover priced only a few bucks more than a basic tomato/cheese, it pays to think big about toppings too. Other Italian-American fare is also available, notably pastas and subs. \$-\$\$

Primo's

1717 N. Bayshore Dr.
305-371-9055

Relatively few people except hotel guests and condo residents are familiar with the Grand's restaurants (except for Tony Chan's). The imposing, cavernous lobby just doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hang-out vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to trendy prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas are also planned to please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées (whether traditional veal piccata or seared ahi tuna) topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$

Sake Room

275 NE 18th St.
305-755-0122

www.sakeroom.com

Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restolounge, which offers South Beach sophistication without the prices or attitude, thanks to charming proprietor Mario Cicilia. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotica or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites are here, but in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll (chopped Pacific yellowtail with scallions, sesame, roe, citrusy dressing, and refreshing shiso leaf), the lobster tempura maki (with veggies, chive oil, and an oddly wonderful tomato sauce), and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour mayo and a salad. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sheba

4029 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-1819
www.shebamiami.com

Combining contemporary Design District chic with traditional African craft (from its adjacent art gallery), Sheba's spacious setting is a soothing place to discover the exotic offerings of Miami's only Ethiopian eatery. Once diners adjust to eating with their hands (using injera, the sour-dough crepes accompanying entrées, as a utensil), the food is quite accessible. Both wats (meat and poultry stews) and tibs (sautéed dishes incorporating the familiar multicultural "holy trinity" of onions, tomatoes, and peppers) tend, like Cuban cuisine, to be spiced with complexity, not fire. A Best of the Best platter for two enables diners to sample most of the menu. \$\$\$

S & S Diner

1757 NE 2nd Ave., 305-373-4291

Some things never change, or so it seems at this diner, which is so classic it verges on cliché. Open since 1938, it's still popular enough that people line up on Saturday morning, waiting for a seat at the horseshoe-shaped counter (there are no tables) and enormous breakfasts: corned beef hash or crab cakes and eggs with grits; fluffy pancakes; homemade biscuits with gravy and Georgia sausage – everything from oatmeal to eggs Benedict, all in mountainous portions. The lunch menu is a roll call of the usual suspects, but most regulars ignore the menu and go for the daily blackboard specials. \$-\$\$

Tony Chan's Water Club

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, a huge bayside condo/resort hotel, looks far too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. The presentation is indeed elegant, but the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail (minced with mushrooms in lettuce cups). Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

W Wine Bistro

3622 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7775

Both bistro and retail wine shop, this Design District spot is run by Florent Blanchet, an energetic young Frenchman who was previously a wine distributor. His former gig led to connections that mean if wine lovers don't find the bottle they want in W's selection of roughly 200-labels (which emphasizes boutique and organic growers), Blanchet can probably get it within 24 hours. Food is sophisticated light bites like a shrimp club sandwich with pancetta and sun-dried tomato aioli; smoked duck salad with goat cheese croutons and a poached egg; and chocolate fondant. At night there are tapas. \$-\$\$

Zuperpollo Biztro Reztocafe

3050 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-8485
www.zuperpollo.com

Occasionally there's a sign out front of the office building housing this bistro, indicating that a branch of the popular Uruguayan eatery Zuperpollo (on Coral Way, since 1986) is within. Otherwise, since the restaurant opened

in 2006, locals have basically had to intuit its presence – way in back, past a guard desk and an elevator bank, behind an unmarked door. Once there, diners discover an extensive pan-Latin menu of breakfast food, salads, substantial meat and fish entrées, homemade pastas and soups, desserts, and sandwiches, including Uruguay's famed chivito, sometimes called "a heart attack on a bun": beef, bacon, ham, eggs, mozzarella, plus sautéed mushrooms and red peppers. And naturally, from the rotisserie, there's the zignature zuper chicken. \$\$\$

Upper Eastside

Andiamo

5600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751
www.andiamopizza.com

Sharing a building with a long-established Morningside car wash, Andiamo is also part of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station – which means ditching the car (in the complex's free lot across the road on NE 4th Court) is no problem even if you're not getting your vehicle cleaned while consuming the brick-oven pies (from a flaming open oven) that are this popular pizzeria's specialty. Choices range from the simple namesake Andiamo (actually a Margherita) to the Godfather, a major meat monster. Extra toppings like arugula and goat cheese enable diners to create their own designer pies. Also available are salads and panini plus reasonably priced wines and beers (including a few unusually sophisticated selections like Belgium's Hoegaarden). \$\$

Boteco

916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735

This strip of 79th Street, formerly known for its live bait and auto repair shops, is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats. But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pasteis (shrimp and hearts of palm-stuffed turnovers) to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

The Boutique Kitchen

6815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0089

What the sure-handed sensibilities of Haitian-American chef/owner Jean Sebastien (whose culinary training came from notable NYC fine-dining restaurants) does to his menu's basic dishes raises them to new heights, while keeping them comfortably homey. Melt-in-your-mouth oxtail comes with gently herbed polenta and thyme-spiked honey dressing; an equally slow-cooked roast pork sandwich is elevated by horseradish mayo and impeccable homemade slaw. And as for desserts: one bite of the peach cobbler, made by the chef's dynamic co-owner/mom Evelyne, almost makes one feel sorry for the Starbucks at the other end of this little shopping strip. \$-\$\$

Le Café

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-6551

For anyone who can't get over thinking of French food as intimidating or pretentious, this cute café with a warm

welcome, and family-friendly French home cooking, is the antidote. No fancy food (or fancy prices) here, just classic comfort food like onion soup, escargot, daily fresh oysters, boeuf bourguignon (think Ultimate Pot Roast), Nicoise salad, quiche, and homemade crème brûlée. A respectable beer and wine list is a welcome addition, as is the housemade sangria. Top price for entrées is about \$14. \$-\$\$

Canela

5132 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-3930

When this atmospheric little neighborhood oasis opened, the formula was Cuban cooking at lunch, Catalan tapas at night. The menu is now more uniform: contemporary Spanish and pan-Latin tapas, sandwiches, salads, sides, and entrées at all hours, just a far more elaborate selection at night. The tapas list is especially impressive, with all the usual Hispanic meat and cheese favorites but also an unusually large selection of seafood and vegetarian items such as espinaca à la catalana (spinach sautéed with pine nuts and raisins). Must-not-miss items include ultra-creamy croquetas (ham, cheese, chicken, spinach, or bacalao), grilled asparagus with aioli, and habit-forming Brazilian cheese bread. \$-\$\$\$

Captain Crab's Take-Away

1100 NE 79th St., 305-754-2722

The drive-through window says "fast food," and so do this long-lived seafood shack's low prices. And indeed there are three Captain Crab's Take-Aways (the others are in Carol City and Fort Lauderdale), all related to the sit-down Crab House restaurants. But there the resemblance to McFauxFood ends. For about the price of a bucket of the Colonel's chicken you can get a bucket of the Captain's savory garlic crabs. The King's burger meal or the Captain's similarly priced fried (or garlic boiled or New Orleans-spiced) shrimp meal? No contest. Also popular: crab cakes and conch (fried or in fritters and chowder). For fish haters, spicy or garlic chicken wings are an option; for kids, cut-price "first mate" meals. \$-\$\$

Casa Toscana

7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-3353

www.casatoscanamiami.com

Tuscan-born chef/owner Sandra Stefani cooked at Norman's (and briefly ran the Indian Creek Hotel's restaurant) before opening this Upper Eastside jewel, a wine market/eatery whose 30 original seats have been supplemented by a wine room/garden for tasting events and private dining. Stefani travels regularly to Italy to find exciting, limited-production wines and inspiration for truly Tuscan-tasting daily special dishes with honest, authentic flavors, such as grilled wild boar sausages with lentil croquettes. Favorites that show up often on the menu include pear and ricotta raviolini with sage butter sauce, grilled eggplant slices rolled around herbed goat cheese and sun-dried tomatoes, and a light ricotta tart with lemon and rosemary. \$\$\$

Che Sopranos

7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282

This branch of a Miami Beach Italian/Argentine pizzeria, housed in a charming bungalow and featuring a breezy patio, covers multicultural bases. If the Old World Rucola pizza (a classic Margherita topped with arugula, prosciutto,

Continued on page 56

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 55

and shredded parmesan) doesn't do the trick, the New World Especial (a Latin pie with hearts of palm and boiled eggs) just might. Also available are pastas, salads, sandwiches, dinner entrées (eggplant parmigiana with spaghetti, lomito steak with Argentinean potato salad), and desserts (tiramisu or flan). \$

Chef Creole

200 NW 54th St., 305-754-2223

Sparkling fresh Creole-style food is the star at chef/owner Wilkinson Sejour's two tiny but wildly popular establishments. While some meatier Haitian classics like griot (fried pork chunks) and oxtail stew are also available – and a \$3.99 roast chicken special is a hard deal to resist – the glistening fish display that greets diners as they walk in makes it clear that seafood is the specialty here: crevette en sauce (steamed shrimp with Creole butter sauce), lambi fri (a mountain of perfectly tenderized fried conch), poisson gros sel (local snapper in a spicy butter sauce), garlic or Creole crabs. Note for ambiance-seekers: The Miami branch has outdoor tiki-hut dining; North Miami's outlet, a former Carvel, has the same food but lacks the tropical charm. \$\$-\$\$

Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433

www.dogmagrill.com

What could induce downtown businessmen to drive to the Upper Eastside to eat at a few outdoor-only tables just feet from the busy Boulevard? From the day it opened, people have been lining up, even in summer's sweltering heat, for this stand's sauce-garnished, all-beef, soy veggie, turkey, and chicken hot dogs. The 22 varieties range from simple (the Classic, with ketchup, relish, and chopped onion) to the elaborate (the Athens, topped with a Greek salad, including extra-virgin olive oil dressing) to near-unbelievable combinations like the VIP, which includes parmesan cheese and crushed pineapple. \$

East Side Pizza

731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351

Minestrone, sure. But a pizzeria menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly many Italian-American pizzerias offer entrées like spaghetti and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/sage sauce, wild mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices. The East Side Salad includes goat cheese, walnuts, and cranberries; quaffs include imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. \$

Garden of Eatin'

136 NW 62nd St., 305-754-8050

Low profile would be an understatement for this place. Housed in a yellow building that's tucked in back of a parking lot behind a small grocery store, it's nearly invisible from the street. Inside, though, it has the comfortable feel of a beach bar, and generous servings of inexpensive Afro-Caribbean vegan food. Rastafari owner Immanuel Tafari cooks up meat and dairy-free specials, like Jamaican pumpkin/chayote stew in coconut milk, that depend on what looks good at that morning's produce market. Large or small plates, with salad and fried sweet plantains (plus free soup for eat-in lunchers), are served for five or seven bucks. Also available are snacks like vegetarian blue corn tacos, desserts like sweet potato pie, and a breakfast menu featuring organic blueberry waffles with soy sausage patties. \$

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

Home-meal replacement, geared to workaholics with no time to cook, has been trendy for years. But the Gourmet Station has outlasted most of the competition. Main reason: deceptive healthiness. These are meals that are good for you, yet taste good enough to be bad for you. Favorite items include precision-grilled salmon with lemon-dill yogurt sauce, and lean turkey meatloaf with homemade BBQ sauce – sin-free comfort food. For lighter

eaters, there are wraps and salads with a large, interesting choice of dressings. Food is available à la carte or grouped in multi-meal plans customized for individual diner's nutritional needs. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

(See North Miami Beach listing)

Jimmy's East Side Diner

7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: Breakfast at any hour. Admittedly the place closes at 4:00 p.m., but still. There are blueberry hot cakes and pecan waffles for sweet-tooth eaters; eggs any style, including omelets and open-face frittatas for those preferring savory; and a full range of sides: biscuits and sausage gravy, grits, hash, hash browns, even hot oatmeal. Also available are traditional diner entrées (meat loaf, roast turkey, liver and onions), plus burgers, salad platters, and homemade chicken soup. \$-\$\$

Karma

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-1392

A real car wash with meticulous detailing takes time. But killing an hour is a pleasure at this stylish car wash/tapas bar, where the elegant light fare occasionally even outshines the hand-washed automobiles. Vegetarians do especially well, with crusty baguette sandwich combos like brie, walnuts, and honey, or another featuring grilled artichokes and buttery St. Andre cheese. Lower carb items range from an imported olive assortment to an antipasto platter with Spanish Cantimpalo chorizo, manchego cheese, and garbanzos. There are breakfast and dessert pastries too. Beverages include organic coffee and soy chai lattes, as well as wines and an extensive beer list featuring Belgian brewskis. On Thursday nights the car wash transforms into a chic lounge until 2:00 a.m. \$\$-\$\$

Kingdom

6708 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-0074

This newly renovated, indoor/outdoor sports bar serves low-priced but high-quality steaks, plus more typical bar food that's actually far from the usual premade, processed stuff. Philly cheese steak sandwiches, big enough for two, are made from hand-sliced rib eye; sides include fries and beer-battered onion rings, but also lightly lemony sautéed spinach. And the burgers rule, particularly the Doomsday, a cheese/ bacon/mushroom-topped two-pound monster that turns dinner into a competitive sport. But even the smallest Queenburger (a half-pounder that's no sissy) is a perfectly seasoned contender. No hard liquor, but the beer list makes up for it. \$\$

Luna Café

4770 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-5862

www.lunacafemidtown.com

The ground floor of the Wachovia Bank building may not seem a particularly evocative locale for an Italian eatery, but once inside, the charming décor and the staff's ebullient welcome indeed are reminiscent of a café in Italy. The kitchen's outstanding feature is a brick oven, which turns out designer pizzas (greater in variety, lesser in cost on the lunch menu, in effect till 4:30 p.m.) and crisp-skinned roast chickens. Otherwise the menu holds few surprises – except the prices, surprisingly low for such a stylish place. No dish exceeds \$22. \$\$-\$\$\$

The Lunch Room

7957 NE 2nd Ave., 305-722-0759

Hidden in Little Haiti, this Thai/Japanese spot, which opened in 2005, remains one of the Upper Eastside's best-kept secrets. But chef Michelle Bernstein (of Michy's) and other knowledgeable diners wander over from the Boulevard for simple but perfect pad Thai, chili grouper (lightly battered fillets in a mouthwatering tangy/sweet/hot sauce), silky Asian eggplant slices in Thai basil sauce, and other remarkably low-priced specialties of Matilda Apirukpinyo, who operated a critically acclaimed South Beach Thai eatery in the 1990s. Though the casually cute indoor/outdoor place is only open for weekday lunches, "cantina" dinners can be ordered and picked up after hours. \$

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a résumé that includes top-chef gigs at upscale eateries like Azul, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a

homey restaurant in an emerging (but far from fully gentrified) neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquetas. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. Table-to-table conversations about the food are common, something that only happens at exciting, if not flawless, restaurants. And at this one, the star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Moonchine

7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999

Like its Brickell-area older sibling Indochine, this friendly indoor/outdoor Asian bistro serves stylish fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But the café also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced Moonchine fried rice or Popeye's Salad (spicy tuna, avocado, spinach, masago roe, sesame seeds, and a scrumptious sweet/hot kimchee dressing). Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories – except desserts (notably the chocolate bomb). There's also an impressive sake list, too. Coming soon: a large rear patio for dining and entertainment. \$\$-\$\$\$

Moshi Moshi **NEW!**

7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404

"Spruced up" is a supreme understatement for the space, formerly the Haitian hole-in-the-wall Fidele. Now a boutique Japanese eatery, this younger sibling of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an izakaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip décor is the food's unusually upscale quality. But this isn't surprising given the owners' previous work: Toshi Furihata and Hiro Terada were executive chefs at SushiSamba and Doraku. Yani Yuhara is an ex-Benihana manager. Sushi ranges from pristine plain individual nigiri (all the usuals plus rarer finds like toro) to over-the-top maki rolls like the signature Moshi Moshi (tuna, white tuna, salmon, avocado, masago, tempura flakes, spicy mayo). Tapas also go beyond standards like edamame to intriguing dishes like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank with a superior pop/spurt factor; rarely found in restaurants even in Japan, they're popular Japanese home-cooking items. And rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer/sweeter than Indian types) satisfy even the biggest appetites. \$\$-\$\$\$

One Ninety

26 NE 54th St., 305-758-7085

www.oneninetyrestaurant.com

When the original One Ninety, a hip Nuevo Hippie hangout in residential Buena Vista, closed because of rent increases in 2004, loyal patrons from all walks of life mourned the loss. In its new Little Haiti location, the space is much smaller but the loose vibe is the same, as are the eclectic live bands and some old food favorites: bacalao cake with onion, cuke, and tomato salad with lemony aioli sauce; ricotta-walnut agnolotti with butter and sage; and chef Alan Hughes's unique black-pepper-spiked white chocolate mousse (now presented as one of a five-item chocolate medley). \$\$-\$\$\$

Pineapple Blossom Tea Room

8214 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8328

www.pineappleblossom.com

The interior of this pineapple-yellow building is a soothing oasis offering traditional full English tea service – or a more zingy tropical fruit-flavored Caribbean variation. Whether your chosen brew is steaming Earl Grey or pineapple-mint iced tea, the scones (with thick cream and jam), tea cakes, cookies, and desserts, are hometown treats. Owner Frances Brown is a pastry chef. There's more substantial fare, too. Innovative wraps like Caribbean shrimp salad with tropical fruit salsa; salads such as warm goat cheese with fresh greens, tomatoes, dried cranberries, and candied cashews. Also offered are tempting take-out baskets like the Tea for Two (with tea, jam, scones, and cookies), great for gifts or for at-home teas. \$\$-\$\$

Red Light

7700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-7773

Only in Miami: From the rustic al fresco deck of chef Kris Wessel's intentionally downwardly mobile retro-cool river-front restaurant, located in a refurbished old motel, you

Continued on page 57

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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 56

can enjoy regional wildlife like manatees (Florida's own half mammal/half meatloaf) while enjoying eclectic regional dishes that range from cutting-edge (sour-orange-marinated, sous-vide-cooked Florida lobster with sweet corn sauce) to comfort (crispy-breaded Old South fried green tomatoes). The menu is limited, which makes sense with a chef-driven place; and it changes daily, which also makes sense at an ingredient-driven place. But several signature specialties, if they're available, are not to be missed: BBQ shrimp in a tangy Worcestershire and cayenne-spiked butter/wine sauce, irresistible mini conch fritters, and homemade ice cream. \$\$-\$\$\$

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002
With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from a new outdoor biergarten, this German restaurant is owner Alex Richter's one-man gentrification project, transforming a formerly uninviting stretch of 79th Street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauernwurst, spicy garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$-\$\$\$

Soyka

5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117
www.soykarestaurant.com
This expansive, contemporary hangout was often credited with almost single-handedly sparking the revitalization of the Biscayne Corridor's Upper Eastside. Now that the hype has calmed down, Soyka remains a solid neighborhood restaurant that, like restaurateur Mark Soyka's previous ventures (notably Ocean Drive's pioneering News Café and the Van Dyke on Lincoln Road) is a perfect fit for its area. Comfortably priced yuppie comfort food like meatloaf with mashed potatoes, crab cakes with spicy-sweet slaw, a wild mushroom/smoked mozzarella pizza, or a Cobb salad may not be revolutionary fare, but Soyka continues to thrive while more ambitious, nationally publicized restaurants like OLA have come and gone. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam

5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818
On the fairly standard menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) roes, and special sauces. Also popular are red and orange dragon rolls, similarly sauced makis of fried shrimp plus veggies, topped with, respectively, raw tuna and salmon. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$

Sushi Square

7244 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3100
At this tiny, trendy place, you won't find a menu dominated by the kinds of makis offered by most Miami sushi houses: Americanized, cream-cheese-stuffed, tempura-flake-covered. Instead numerous sushi rolls are filled with Japanese ingredients: the gobo shiso (Japanese mountain burdock root and shiso leaf); the shitake maki (sweet soy-simmered shitake mushroom). And many others are uniquely imaginative, like the Key West (key lime-marinated salmon, chives, cilantro pesto, and pear). There are equally unusual soups, salads, and starters, too. But if nothing appeals, the chef enjoys a challenge. Tell him, as Diaghilev instructed Sartre, to astonish you. \$\$-\$\$\$

UVA 69

6900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-9022
Owned by Sinuhé and Michael Vega of the bakery Cane á Sucre – now defunct but one of the Biscayne Corridor's first cool, contemporary cafés in the Midtown area – this outdoor/indoor wine bar serves the same purpose on the Upper Eastside, helping to transform a scuzzy commuter strip into a hip place to hang out. As for the food served, there are Cane's fresh-baked breakfast pastries, as well as more substantial lunch and dinner fare: a salad of

tempura-battered rock shrimp atop chayote slaw, elegant sandwiches like the Franco-Cuban Le Habanero (pulled pork, imported French ham, pepper jack, cornichons, and Dijon mustard on a housemade baguette), and a night-time tapas menu. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Ver-Daddys Taco Shop

7501 Biscayne Blvd.
305-303-9755
At this soulful taco shop, the menu descriptions are in common English ("cinnamon puffs" drizzled with honey and lime, not "buñuelos"). But taco fillings range from the commonplace (ground beef, shredded chicken) to more unusual pork in chili verde, fried potato, or Baja battered fish (authentically garnished with Mexican crema and cilantro-spiked cabbage). And all offerings can be loaded with other garnishes from the kitchen (refried beans, cheese, crema) or less perishable offerings from a salsa bar. For the health-minded, oils are nonhydrogenated, and sauces/seasonings are all housemade and free of preservatives. \$

Wine 69

6909 Biscayne Blvd.
305-759-0122
From the name, one might think this is just a wine shop. It's actually about wine, food, and art, and how they work together. Wines, about 200 labels, are available retail (at 35-50 percent of their marked prices, which are for in-house drinkers), with 40 sold by the glass. But the place's specialty is comparative flights of various wine types from different regions. Food, designed for pairing, includes a new \$25 three-course dinner. But the menu is mostly light bites with intriguingly inventive touches: a seared Cajun tuna salad with wasabi sauce; crab cakes with Asian sriracha chili sauce; a three-cheese soufflé. Especially impressive are some nicely priced cheese/charcuterie platters, served with fig tapenade, cornichons, fresh fruits, bread, and multiple sauces. And the art part encompasses revolving exhibits, plus an art lecture series featuring wines picked by owner Ben Neji to compliment the art. \$\$

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Barchetta on the Bay

1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-2228
Location, location, location. The truth of the old real estate cliché could not be better illustrated than at this reasonably priced Italian restaurant. While pastas like lobster ravioli in tomato/cream vodka sauce are under \$20, and no meat or seafood entrée exceeds \$30, the spectacular setting on Biscayne Bay is priceless. Floor to ceiling picture windows serve as the expansive indoor dining space's rear wall, but the primo seats are outdoors, in sheltered banquettes and patio tables where the water view, and carefree tropical party feel, is unimpeded. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bocados Ricos

1880 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-4889
Tucked into a mall best known for housing the Happy Stork Lounge, this little luncheonette joint services big appetites. Along with the usual grilled churrascos, there's an especially belly-busting bandeja paisa (Colombia's sampler platter of grilled steak, sausage, chicharron, fried egg, avocado, plantains, rice, and beans). But do not miss marginally daintier dishes like sopa de costilla, if this rich shortrib bowl is among the daily changing home-made soups. Arepas include our favorite corn cake: the hefty Aura, stuffed with chorizo, chicharron, carne desmechada (shredded flank steak), plantains, rice, beans, and cheese. Garnished with even more over-the-top abandon are Colombian-style hot dogs like the Perro Rico, topped with chicharron, chorizo, cheese, a quail egg, and pineapple to cancel out the cholesterol. Ha! But who cares? Strap on the med emergency bracelet and bring it on. \$\$

Japanese Market and Sushi Deli

1412 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-0143
Inside a small market that is, nevertheless, widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter to the left of the entrance. But chef Michio Kushi, who worked for years at the Sushin, Miami's first full-service Japanese restaurant, serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi – layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, more rice, and marinated fresh mackerel, pressed

into a square box, then cut into lovely one-bite sandwich squares. While raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées, like curried beef stew, that typify Japanese home cooking. \$

Mario the Baker

1700 79th St. Causeway
305-867-7882
(See North Miami listing)

Oggi Caffè

1666 79th St. Causeway
305-866-1238
www.oggicaffe.com
This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotic such as seaweed spaghetti (with sea scallops, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes). For those tempted by too much, ultra-accommodating servers have been known to allow half orders of two pastas. \$\$-\$\$\$

Shuckers Bar & Grill

1819 79th St. Causeway
305-866-1570
"Cheap eats and a million-dollar view" is the sound bite manager Philip Conklin uses to describe this outdoor beach bar, hidden in back of a bayfront motel. The joint dates from South Beach's late 1980s revival, but the kick-off-your-shoes vibe – not to mention the pool tables and jukebox – couldn't be farther from SoBe glitz. The food ranges from classic bar favorites (char-grilled wings, conch fritters, raw or steamed shellfish) to full dinners featuring steak, homemade pasta, or fresh, not frozen, fish. And since about half of the establishment is sheltered, the bites and bay view rock even when the weather sucks. \$\$\$

Sushi Siam

1524 NE 79th St. Causeway
305-864-7638
(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

NORTH BEACH

Ariston

940 71st St., 305-864-9848
It took a Greek place (Ouzo's, which moved to bigger SoBe quarters in 2007) to break the curse of this former restaurant jinx location. And Ariston continues the lucky streak with classical Greek cuisine based on recipes of co-owner Thanasis Barlos's mom Noni Barlou, and executed by CIA-trained chef Alexia Apostolidis. Skip the menu's puzzling Italianesque and generic Euro-American selections and concentrate on authentic treats like the lightest, most savory whipped tarama (caviar spread) west of Athens; ultra-rich tzatziki (Greek yogurt with cukes, garlic, and olive oil); bracing avgolemono (egg-thickened chicken/lemon soup); char-grilled sardines with greens and citrus dressing; or an inspired eggplant/ground beef moussaka, bound here with an almost sinfully custardy béchamel. \$\$-\$\$\$

Café Prima Pasta

414 71st St., 305-867-0106, www.primapasta.com
Opened in 1993 with 28 seats, this family-run North Beach landmark has now taken over the block, with an outdoor terrace and multi-roomed indoor space whose walls are full of photos of their clientele (including national and local celebs). Particularly popular are homemade pastas, sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence rather than Italian simplicity: crabmeat raviolotti in lobster cream sauce, black squid ink linguini heaped with seafood. Veal dishes, such as piccata with white wine-lemon-caper sauce, are also a specialty. Though romantic enough for dates, the place is quite kid-friendly — and on the terrace, they'll even feed Fido. \$\$\$

Continued on page 58



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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 57

Tamarind Thai

946 Normandy Dr., 305-861-6222
www.tamarindthai.us

When an eatery's executive chef is best-selling Thai cook-book author Vatcharin Bhumichitr, you'd expect major media hype, fancy South Beach prices, and a fancy SoBe address. Instead Bhumichitr joined forces with Day Longsomboon (an old Thai school pal who'd moved to Miami) at this unpretentious, authentic (no sushi) neighborhood place. Some standout dishes here (like shrimp and corn cakes with plum sauce, deep-fried sweet and sour fish, and roast duck with tamarind sauce) are featured in the chef's latest tome, Vatch's Thai Kitchen, but with Tamarind's very affordable prices (especially at lunch), you might as well let the man's impeccably trained kitchen staff do the work for you. \$\$-\$\$\$

MIAMI SHORES

Iron Sushi

9432 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-0311; www.iron sushi.com

With three Biscayne Corridor outlets (plus several branches elsewhere in town), this mostly take-out mini chain is fast becoming the Sushi Joint That Ate Miami. And why do Miamians eat here? Not ambiance. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. And though the bargain prices, and many menu items, are similar to those at other fast-food sushi places, there are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$\$-\$\$

Village Café

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-6453
www.villagecaferestaurant.com

There's an official Village Hall a few blocks up the road, but a popular vote would probably proclaim Village Café

the community center of Miami Shores. Few residents can resist starting the workday with unique breakfast treats like a pressed panini of ham, Brie, and caramelized apples. Later locals gather over a balsamic-dressed cranberry blue chicken salad (a grilled breast on romaine with gorgonzola, walnuts, and dried cranberries), pan-fried blue crab cakes with beurre blanc and crisp cayenne-fried onions, wonton-topped salmon Oriental, or homemade pasta. As for dessert, the pastry case speaks for village residents: Let them eat (fresh-baked) cake! \$\$-\$\$

Côte Gourmet

9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112
305-754-9012

If every Miami neighborhood had a neighborhood restaurant like this low-priced little French jewel, it'd be one fantastic food town. The menu is mostly simple stuff: breakfast croissants, crêpe, soups, sandwiches, salads, sweets, and a few more substantial specials like a Tunisian-style brik (buttery phyllo pastry stuffed with tuna, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes) with a mesclun side salad. But everything is homemade, including all breads, and prepared with impeccable ingredients, classic French technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café's baguette sandwiches. \$\$-\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Los Antojos

11099 Biscayne Blvd.
305-892-1411

If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be ajiaco. Both are thick chicken soups, full meals in a bowl. But veggies and garnishes vary, and this modest Colombian eatery is a handy spot to comparison-test such typical stews. Adventurous eaters may want to try another Saturday special, mondongo (tripe soup, similar to Mexico's menudo). For Colombian-cuisine novices, a Bandeja Paisa (sampler including rice, beans, carne asada, chicharron, eggs, sautéed sweet plantains, and an arepa corn cake)

is available every day, as are antojitos – "little whims," smaller snacks like chorizo con arepa (a corn cake with Colombian sausage). And for noncarnivores there are several hefty seafood platters, made to order. \$\$

Bagels & Co.

11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435

While this place is often referred to as Guns & Bagels, one can't actually buy a gun here. The nickname refers to its location next to a firearms shop. But there's a lot of other stuff aside from bagels here, including a full range of sandwiches and wraps. Breakfast time is busy time, with banana-walnut pancakes especially popular. But what's most important is that this is one of the area's few sources of the real, New York-style water bagel: crunchy outside, challengingly chewy inside. Those puffy half-donuts most places pass off as bagels aren't even contenders. \$

Bamboche

13408 Biscayne Blvd, 305-947-6339

Buried in a strip mall perpendicular to the Boulevard, Bamboche is worth the hunt on one of those head-splitting Saturdays, for a Haitian specialty not found in many area restaurants: bouillon tet cabrit, a soup packed with greens (like spinach, cabbage, cress, string beans) and root veggies that is reputed to be a miraculous hangover remedy. Along with bouillon, weekend specials include more unusual dishes like fritay, fried street snacks. Haitian standards (griot, tassot) are available daily, as are fresh-squeezed juices, lattes, and almost two dozen desserts. \$

Bar-B-Que Beach Sports Bar & Grill **NEW!**

12599 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-3141

On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday nights (starting at about 9:00 p.m.), there's karaoke at this expansive eatery, though from the décor – mixing Wild West rusticity with Key West flip-flops dangling from the ceiling – it's hard to know whether to brush up your Jimmy Buffett medley or "Tumbling Tumbleweeds." Concentrate instead on the barbecue, honest stuff that has been low-temperature smoked for 12 to 14 hours till tender yet resilient (not falling-off-the-bone, a sure sign of par-boiled cheaters' barbecue). Ribs are meaty (except for the aptly named, bargain-priced "bucket of bones," and while chopped pork may not totally satisfy North Carolina pulled pork purists, nothing within a 1000-mile drive ever does. Biggest winners: succulent sliced brisket and delightfully juicy chicken. \$\$

Burritos Grill Café

11717 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1041
www.burritosgrillcafe

Originally a friendly little 125th Street hole-in-the-wall that garnered raves for its limited menu of terrifically tasty treats, Mario and Karina Manzanero's café is now in more sizable and atmospheric quarters. But the friendly, family-run (and kid-friendly) ambiance remains, as do the authentic Yucatan-style specialties. Standouts include poc-chuc, a pork loin marinated in sour orange juice and topped with pickled onions and chiltomate sauce (roasted tomato/chili); tacos al pastor, stuffed with subtly smoky steak, onion, cilantro, and pineapple; sinful deep-fried tacos dorados (like fat flautas); and signature burritos, including the Maya, filled with juicy cochinita pibil, refried beans, and pickled onions. \$\$

Canton Café

12749 Biscayne Blvd, 305-892-2882

Easily overlooked, this strip-mall spot serves mostly Cantonese-based dishes, ranging from all the old Chinese-American classics (chop suey, moo goo gai pan, pu pu platters) through newer Americanized fusion favorites like honey garlic chicken, teriyaki beef, and crab Rangoon. But there are also about two dozen spicier, Szechuan-style standards like kung po shrimp, ma po tofu, and General Tso's chicken. And there are a few imaginative new items, like the intriguingly christened "Shrimp Lost in the Forest," Singapore curried rice noodles, crispy shrimp with honey-glazed walnuts, and Mongolian beef (with raw chilis and fresh Oriental basil). Delivery is available for both lunch and dinner. \$\$

Captain Jim's Seafood

12950 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-892-2812

This market/restaurant was garnering critical acclaim even when eat-in dining was confined to a few Formica tables in front of the fish counter, owing to the freshness of its seafood (much of it from Capt. Jim Hanson's own fishing boats, which supply many of Miami's most upscale eateries). Now there's a casual but pleasantly nautical side dining room with booths, and more recently added, a sushi bar stocked largely with flown-in Japanese fish just as pristine as the local catch. Whether it's garlicky scampi (made with sweet Key West shrimp), housemade smoked fish dip, grilled yellowtail (or some more exotic local snapper, like hog or mutton), perfectly tenderized cracked conch, or conch fritters (with just enough batter to bind the big chunks of Bahamian shellfish), everything is deftly prepared and bargain-priced. \$\$

Casa Mia Trattoria **NEW!**

1950 NE 123rd St., 305-899-2770

Tucked away, off to the side on the approach to the Broad Causeway and the beaches, this charming indoor/outdoor trattoria seems to attract mostly neighborhood regulars. But even newcomers feel like regulars after about ten minutes here, thanks to the staff's genuinely Italian ebullience. The delightful Italian accents don't hurt, either. As for the menu offerings, they're mostly classic comfort foods with some contemporary items as well. Housemade pastas are good enough that low-carb dieters should definitely temporarily fuhgeddaboudit, especially for the tender gnocchi with pesto or better yet, delicate fagottini – "beggar's purses" stuffed with pears and cheese. \$\$

Chéen-huyae

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

Diners can get some of the usual Tex-Mex dishes at this cute spot, if they must. But the specialty is Mayan-rooted Yucatan cuisine. So why blow bucks on burritos when one can sample Caribbean Mexico's most typical dish: cochinita pibil? It's currently LA's trendiest taco filling (and morning-after hangover remedy). But that city couldn't have a more authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish than Chéen's – earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$-\$\$\$

Continued on page 59

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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 58

Chef Creole

13105 W. Dixie Hwy.; 305-893-4246
(See Miami listing)

Chipotle Mexican Grill

14776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2779
www.chipotle.com

Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn tortillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas, all with choice of fresh garnishes. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). Additionally, all pork, plus a large and growing percentage of the grill's beef and poultry, is raised via humane and ecologically sustainable methods. And the food, while not the authentic Mex street stuff dreams are made of, is darned tasty, too. \$

DiBono's

15979 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-3330
www.louiesbrickoven.com

A pocket flashlight isn't a bad idea if you want to read the menu in this mood-lit room. But who needs to read it? There's a coal-fired brick oven, so order pizza, which comes out of the ultra-hot enclosure with a perfect crust - beautifully blistered, crisp outside, chewy inside. Appealing toppings include the Calabrese (Italian sausage, caramelized onions, kalamata olives, mozzarella, tomato sauce) and a more modern mix of mozzarella, tomato sauce, onion, thin-sliced prosciutto, and arugula drizzled with olive oil. For those craving more crunch than the latter pie's arugula salad, there are flavorful veggies from a hardwood-fired grill. Wings from the brick oven (spiced with roasted garlic and Italian herbs, topped with grilled onions) are a smokin' starter. \$\$\$

D.J.'s Diner

12210 Biscayne Blvd., 305-893-5250

Located in a Best Western motel, this place, run by a Chinese-American family, serves mostly basic American diner fare - burgers, sandwiches, about a dozen dinner entrées, fresh-baked apple pie, and, oddly, a whole section of Caesar salad variations. But it's also a secret source for Chinese food, mostly chow mien/chop suey-type dishes, but also a few dishes such as eggplant with garlic sauce and ma po tofu that are a step up in authenticity. \$\$\$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner

13951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2255

When Sia and Nicole Hemmati bought the Gourmet Diner from retiring original owner Jean-Pierre Lejeune in the late 1990s, they added "Hanna's" to the name, but changed little else about this retro-looking French/American diner, a north Miami-Dade institution since 1983. Customers can get a cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing. For oysters Rockefeller/tuna-melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$\$

Here Comes the Sun

1288 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$\$\$

Ichi

13488 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-9334

Half sushi/sashimi, half cooked Japanese dishes, the menu is relatively small but covers most of the traditional favorites and a few surprises. Popular makis include the Dream (shrimp tempura, avocado, Japanese mayo, and masago), the vegetarian Popeye spicy spinach roll, and the deep-fried Crispy, a riceless salmon and veggie roll. Among cooked items, there's a large list of teriyakis, and a few dishes prepared with a different twist - panko-breaded pork or chicken katsu cutlets, for instance, that eschew the standard sweet sauce for curry. \$\$\$

Jerusalem Market and Deli

16275 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-9080

Specialties like shawarma, spinach pies, kebabs, hummus, and kibbeh (a savory mix of ground lamb and bulgur, arguably the world's most interesting meatball) are native to many Middle East countries, but when a Lebanese chef/owner, like this eatery's Sam Elzoor, is at the helm, you can expect extraordinary refinement. There are elaborate daily specials here, like lemon chicken or stuffed cabbage with a variety of sides, but even a common falafel sandwich is special when the pita is also stuffed with housemade cabbage and onion salads, plus unusually rich and tart tahina. For home cooks, there's also a limited selection of imported spices and staples. \$\$\$

Le Griot de Madame John

975 NE 125th St., 305-892-9333

When Madame moved her base of operations from her Little Haiti home to a real restaurant (though a very informal one, and still mostly take-out), she began offering numerous traditional Haitian dishes, including jerked beef or goat tasset and an impressive poisson gros sel (a whole fish rubbed with salt before poaching with various veggies and spices). But the dish that still packs the place is the griot: marinated pork chunks simmered and then fried till they're moistly tender inside, crisp and intensely flavored outside. \$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. Though Lime is now franchising, the chain's concept is "fast casual" rather than fast food - meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients aren't canned-type crapola. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the standard menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes fresh, never frozen, from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas for dieters and many Mexican beers for partiers. \$

Little Havana

12727 Biscayne Blvd

305-899-9069

www.littlehavanarestaurant.com

In addition to white-tablecloth ambiance that's several steps up in elegance from the majority of neighborhood eateries, this place features live Latin entertainment and dancing, making it a good choice when diners want a night out, not just a meal. It's also a good choice for diners who don't speak Spanish, but don't worry about authenticity. Classic Cuban home-style dishes like mojo-marinated lechon asado, topped with onions, and juicy ropa vieja are translated on the menu, not the plate, and fancier creations like pork filet in tangy tamarind sauce seem universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

Maleewan Thai & Sushi

2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0393

Redecorated (tasteful bamboo-matted walls, silk flowers) since the days - many days - this space was occupied by the kosher sushi spot Tani Guchi's Place, Maleewan is now a cozy, neighborly nook at which to enjoy all the standard Japanese and Thai selections. Cooked sushi is the strong suit here, particularly the signature mammoth-size Maleewan roll, given zing by pickled Japanese squash and savor by a crispy yellowtail tempura topping. If you're craving more creative fare, check out the handwritten specials board on your way in. \$\$

Mama Jennie's

11720 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Mario the Baker

250 NE 25th St., 305-891-7641

www.mariothebakerpizza.com

At this North Miami institution (opened in 1969) food is Italian-American, not Italian-Italian: spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, and hot or cold subs. No imported buffalo, arugula, or other chichi stuff on the New York-style medium-thin-crust pizzas; the top topping here is the savory housemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smashed garlic (\$4 a dozen, \$3 per half-dozen, which won't even last the ride home). New branches are now open in Miami's Midtown neighborhood and in North Bay Village. \$

The Melting Pot

15700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2228

www.meltingpot.com

For 1950s and 1960s college students, fondue pots were standard dorm accessories. These days, however, branches of this chain (originating in Maitland, Florida, in 1975) are generally the only places to go for this blast-from-the-past eating experience. Fondues are available à la carte or as full dip-it-yourself meals. Start with a wine-enriched four-cheese fondue; proceed to an entrée with choice of meat or seafood, plus choice of cooking potion - herbed wine, bouillon, or oil; finish with fruits and cakes dipped in your favorite melted chocolate. Fondue etiquette dictates that diners who drop a skewer in the pot must kiss all other table companions, so go with those you love. \$\$\$

North One 10

11052 Biscayne Blvd., 305-893-4211

www.northone10.com

For most chefs a Miami-to-Manhattan move is generally considered one of those offers you can't refuse. But after helming several NYC restaurants for China Grill Management, the homegrown married team of chef Dewey and sommelier Dale LoSasso returned to do their own thing in their own neighborhood. The menu is "creative comfort food": a shrimp waffle with basil butter; "steak

Continued on page 60

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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 59

and eggs" (a grilled NY strip with truffled goat cheese frittata, herb demiglace, and hash browns); a stone crab hot dog the chef invented for a Super Bowl party. The award-winning wine list inspires playfully themed pairing events like an Italian food/wine "Godfather" dinner. But it's not South Beach, so prices are reasonable, and parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Nuvo Kafe

13152 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-892-1441

Though the neighborhood is decidedly ungentrified, the interior of this café is an oasis of cultivated Caribbean cool and subtly sophisticated global fare. Haitian-born, Montreal-schooled chef Ivan Dorval formerly cooked at the Oasis Café in Miami Beach, as well as the Delano, and the varied background is reflected in cuisine that's chiefly creative Caribbean but with influences from the Middle East, Asia, Greece, and Italy. Homemade, health-oriented dishes include velvety ginger pumpkin bisque, unusually refined conch fritters (light batter, monster chunks of conch), West Indies crab cakes with citrus aioli, and a signature lavish, but only slightly sinful, Citadel Raw Fruit Pie. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Oishi Thai

14841 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4338

www.oishithai.com

At this stylish, dramatically minimalist Thai/sushi spot, the regular Thai and Japanese dishes are as good as anywhere in town. But the way to go is the menu of specials, many of which clearly reflect the young chef's fanatic devotion to fresh fish, as well as the time he spent in the kitchen of Knob: broiled miso-marinated black cod; rock shrimp tempura with creamy sauce; even Nobu Matsuhisa's "new style sashimi" (slightly surface-seared by drizzles of hot olive and sesame oil). Formerly all Japanese-influenced, the specials menu now includes some Thai-inspired creations, too, such as veal masaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and sizzling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

La Paloma

10999 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0505

Step into La Paloma and you'll be stepping back in time, circa 1957. Adorned with antiques (some even real) and chandeliers, the over-the-top plush décor was the American fine-dining ideal – half a century ago (though actually the place only dates from the 1970s). Cuisine is similarly retro-luxe: old-fashioned upscale steaks, chops, and lobster, plus fancier Continental fare. If you have a yen for chateaubriand, duck a l'orange, oysters Rockefeller, French onion soup, trout almondine, wiener schnitzel, and peach Melba, it's the only place in town that can deliver them all. A huge wine list fuels the fantasy. \$\$\$

Paquito's

16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-5027

From the outside, this strip-mall Mexican eatery couldn't be easier to overlook. Inside, however, its festivity is impossible to resist. Every inch of wall space seems to be covered with South of the Border knickknacks. And if the kitschy décor alone doesn't cheer you, the quickly arriving basket of fresh (not packaged) taco chips, or the mariachi band, or the knockout margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and harder-to-find traditional preparations like albóndigas – spicy, ultra-savory meatballs. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pasha's

14871 Biscayne Blvd., 786-923-2323

www.pashas.com

(See Miami: Brickell / Downtown listing)

Paul Bakery Café

14861 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-4443

www.paulusa.com

From one rural shop in 1889, the French bakery known simply as Paul has grown to a worldwide chain, which fortunately chose to open its first U.S. outlet in our town. One bite of the crusty peasant loaf, the olive-studded fougasse, or another of the signature artisan breads transports you right back to France. As authentic as the

boulangerie breads are, the patisserie items like flan normande (a buttery-crust, almond-topped apple-and-custard tart) are just as evocative. For eat-in diners, quite continental soups, salads, and sandwiches are equally and dependably French. \$\$

Plein Sud

12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-2355

The Boulevard may not be the Champs-Élysées, but diners could be fooled once inside this evocative French bistro. The ambiance is Old World, and the menu is solid and well executed. Starters range from country comfort (Lyonnais sausage with warm, vinegary potato salad; a charcuterie platter with homemade pâte) to urban sophistication (Maine lobster tail with celery remoulade). Entrées include long-stewed, creamy blanquette de veau, or a precision-cooked steak-frites (rib eye with crisp shoestring fries). For dessert there is the ubiquitous tarte tatin, caramelized apples atop puff-pastry crust. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sara's

2214 NE 123rd St., 305-891-3312

www.saraskosherpizza.com

While this mainly vegetarian kosher place is best known for its pizza (New York-style medium crust or thick-crust Sicilian, topped with veggies and/or "meat buster" imitation meats), it's also offers a full range of breakfast/lunch/dinner vegetarian cuisine of all nations, with many dairy and seafood items too. Admittedly the cutesie names of many items – baygels, bergerrbite, Cezarrrr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperrrr – may cause queasiness. But the schmopperrrr itself is one heluva high-octane veggie burger. \$-\$\$

Scorch Grillhouse and Wine Bar

13750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5588

www.scorchgrillhouse.com

Though some food folks were initially exasperated when yet another Latin-influenced grill replaced one of our area's few Vietnamese restaurants, it's hard to bear a grudge at a friendly, casual neighborhood place that offers monster ten-ounce char-grilled burgers, with potatoes or salad, for \$8.50; steaks, plus a side and a

sauce or veg topper, for nine bucks at lunch, \$15 to \$18.75 (the menu's top price) at night; and three-dollar glasses of decent house wine. Many other grilled meat and seafood items are also offered, plus pastas, salads, gooey desserts, and specials (events as well as food). \$-\$\$

Steve's Pizza

12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paper-thin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn't do the trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve's has, since 1974, been serving the kind of comforting, retro pizzas people crave at that hour. As in Brooklyn, tomato sauce is sweet, with strong oregano flavor. Mozzarella is applied with abandon. Toppings are stuff that give strength: pepperoni, sausage, meatballs, onions, and peppers. \$

Sun City Café

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-6955

Super-stuffed crêpes, made to order from scratch, are the main specialty here – some sweet (the Banana Split: fresh strawberries, sliced bananas, candied walnuts, ice cream, and Nutella or dulce de leche), some savory (the Sun City Steak: beef, mushrooms, onions, red peppers, Swiss cheese, and A1 sauce). But there's also a smaller selection of custom-crafted wraps, salads, sandwiches, and sides, plus smoothies, coffee drinks, even beer or wine. Free Wi-Fi encourages long, lingering lunches. \$

Sushi House

15911 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-6002

In terms of décor drama, this sushi spot seems to have taken its cue from Philippe Starck: Delano-like sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster makis: the Cubbie Comfort (spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy mayo); the Volcano, topped with a mountain of tempura

Continued on page 61



"Gracious service and a cozy setting make for an easy intro to exotic Ethiopian fare."
— Miami New Times 2005

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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 60

flakes; the spicy/sweet sauce-drenched Hawaiian King Crab, containing unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. To drink there are boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Twenty-One Toppings

14480 Biscayne Blvd., #105, North Miami
305-947-3433

A shooin to top many future "Best Burger" polls, this little joint serves sirloin, chicken, turkey, and white bean patties, topped with your choice of one cheese from a list of seven, one sauce from a list of twelve, and three toppings from a list of 21. And since the chef/co-owner is a culinary school grad who has trained in several cutting-edge kitchens (including David Bouley Evolution), the garnishes ain't just ketchup. There's Asian vinaigrette, gorgonzola, grilled portobellos, much more. If choosing is too confusing, try the chef-designed combos. \$\$-\$

Two Chefs Too

2288 NE 123rd St
305-895-5155

www.twochefsrestaurant.com

At this much-anticipated spin-off of Jan Jorgensen's South Miami Two Chefs, there are some differences in the menu. But the concept of New American comfort food -- familiar favorites modernized with the chef's elegant, unexpected creative touches -- is the same. So are many much-loved dishes like juicy bacon-wrapped meatloaf, flavored with a fusion Chinese black bean barbecue sauce, and perfect dessert soufflés (with crème chantilly plus caramel or chocolate sauce). New and notable: knockout artisan cheese platters (with choice of inventive garnishes: brioche frites, celery escabeche, Dijon mustard sauce, marinated olives, much more) that, with wine (from a relatively high-priced but high-quality list) make an idyllic light meal in themselves. \$\$\$

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like teriyaki fish (fresh fish sautéed with vegetables), curried chicken and veggies, spicy shrimp, or gyoza dumplings in tangy sauce. There's also an all-you-can-eat deal -- sushi (individual nigiri or maki rolls) plus tempura, teriyaki, and other cooked items for \$14; three bucks more for sashimi instead of sushi. \$-\$

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

No frozen pizza crusts or watery mozzarella here. No imported designer ingredients either. The pies are New York-style, but the dough is made fresh daily, and the cheese is Grande (from Wisconsin, considered America's finest pizza topper). Also on the menu are Italian-American pastas, a large selection of hot and cold subs, simple salads, and a few new protein adds -- grilled chicken breast, fried fish, or a steak. \$-\$

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

This old-timer's menu reads like a textbook on how to please everyone, with food ranging from traditional Chinese to Chinese-American to just plain American. Appetizers include honey garlic chicken wings or Buffalo wings. A crab-claw starter comes with choice of pork fried rice or French fries. Seafood lovers can get shrimp chop suey, or salty pepper shrimp (authentically shell-on). And snowbirds will be pleased to find a number of dishes that are mainstays of Manhattan Szechuan menus but not common in Miami: cold sesame noodles, Hunan chicken, twice-cooked pork, Lake Tung Ting shrimp, and peppery kung po squid. \$\$

Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich

13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451

The griddle has been fired up since 1954 at this indie fast-food joint, and new owners have done little to change the time-tested formula except to stretch operating hours

into the night and expand its classic griddled-or-fried-things menu to include a few health-conscious touches like Caesar salad, plus a note proclaiming their oils are free of trans fats. Otherwise the famous steak sandwich is still a traditional Philly -- thin-sliced beef, cheese, and onions on a buttered Italian roll (with tasty housemade sour cream/horseradish sauce served on the side so as not to offend purists). Extras like mushrooms are possible, not imposed. Drippin' good burgers, too. And unlike MacChain addicts, patrons here can order a cold beer with the good grease. \$-\$

Zipang

14316 Biscayne Blvd., 305-919-8844

It's appropriate that the name of this small strip-mall sushi spot refers to Japan's first and only sparkling sake -- something most Americans have never heard of, making the reference pretty much an insider's joke. Since opening several years ago, the restaurant itself has been one of our town's best-kept secrets. But the perfectionist chef/owner's concentration on quality and freshness of ingredients has made Zipang the pick of sushi cognoscenti like Loews's executive chef Marc Ehrler, who has named the unpretentious place his favorite Miami eatery, while admitting the obvious: "Nobody knows it." \$\$-\$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Bamboo Garden

1232 NE 163rd St., 305-945-1722

Big enough for a banquet (up to 300 guests), this veteran is many diners' favorite on the 163rd/167th Street "Chinatown" strip because of its superior décor. But the menu also offers well-prepared, authentic dishes like peppery black bean clams, sautéed mustard greens, and steamed whole fish with ginger and scallions, plus Chinese-American egg foo young. Default spicing is mild even in Szechuan dishes marked with red-chili icons, but don't worry; realizing some like it hot, the chefs will customize spiciness to heroic heat levels upon request. \$\$

Blue Marlin Fish House

2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822

Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery (which is covered, but otherwise open-air) is a rare surprise for nature lovers, especially since an eager-to-please young couple took over the daytime-only concession, upgrading the menu, at the start of 2008. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue first started producing in 1938 -- three varieties (salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin), available in a sampler, salads, sandwiches/wraps, or a delightfully mild smoked fish dip that may be Miami's best. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include roasted red pepper hummus, crab cakes, a delightfully light home-made Key lime chiffon pie, daily specials, and on week-ends, fish fries (with live music). For basic diners there are burgers and hot dogs. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

China Restaurant

178 NE 167th St., 305-947-6549

When you have a yen for the Americanized Chinese fusion dishes you grew up with, all the purist regional Chinese cuisine in the world won't scratch the itch. So the menu here, containing every authentically inauthentic Chinese-American classic you could name, is just the ticket when nostalgia strikes -- from simple egg rolls to pressed almond duck (majorly breaded boneless chunks, with comfortingly thick gravy). \$-\$

Christine's Roti Shop

16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean megacrepie made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and

Continued on page 62

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 61

more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries to choose from, including beef, goat, conch, shrimp, trout, and duck. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available: they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

El Gran Inka

3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910
www.graninka.com

Somehow, when setting off to try Key Biscayne restaurants (like Miami's original Gran Inka), we never make it past Jimbo's. So luckily, the newer branch of this upscale Peruvian eatery offers the same menu. Though diners will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town (notably a picture-perfect causa con camarones, mashed potatoes layered with shrimp), the contemporary Peruvian fusion creations are unique. Especially recommended are two dishes adapted from recipes by Peru's influential nikkei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Hiro Japanese Restaurant

3007 NE 163rd St., 305-948-3687

One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular snack stop after a hard night at the area's movie multiplexes (or strip clubs). The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami's Upper Eastside. \$

Hiro's Yakko-San

17040 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-947-0064

After sushi chefs close up their own restaurants for the night, many come here for a bite of something different. The specialty is Japanese home cooking, served in grazing portions so diners can enjoy a wide variety of the unusual dishes offered. Standard sushi isn't missed when glistening-fresh strips of raw tuna can be had in maguro neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Dishes depend on the market, but other favorites include goma ae (wilted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic stem and beef (mild young shoots flash-fried with tender steak bits), or perhaps just-caught grouper with hot/sweet/tangy chili sauce. Open till around 3:00 a.m. \$\$

Heelsha

1550 NE 164th St., 305-919-8393, www.heelsha.com

If unusual Bangladeshi dishes like fiery pumpkin patee (cooked with onion, green pepper, and pickled mango) or Heelsha curry (succulently spiced hilsa, Bangladesh's sweet-fleshed national fish) seem familiar, it's because chef/owner Bithi Begum and her husband Tipu Raman once served such fare at the critically acclaimed Renaisa. Their new menu's mix-and-match option also allows diners to pair their choice of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable with more than a dozen regional sauces, from familiar Indian styles to exotica like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. Early-bird dinners (5:00 to 6:30 p.m.) are a bargain, as some dishes are almost half-price. Lunch is served weekends only except by reservation, so call ahead. \$\$-\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

16350 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-2244

(See Miami Shores listing)

JC Food

1242 NE 163rd St., 305-956-5677

Jumbo's regular menu offers a large percentage of hard-to-find traditional Chinese home-cooking specialties (many using fresh and preserved Asian vegetables): pork with bitter melon, beef with sour cabbage, chicken with mustard green, cellophane noodle with mixed-vegetable casserole. Still, most diners come for dim sum, a huge selection served at all hours. These small plates include chewy rice noodle rolls filled with shrimp or beef, leek dumplings, crisp-fried stuffed taro balls, savory pork-studded turnip cake, pork/peanut congee, custard croissants, and for the brave, steamed chicken feet. \$\$

Kyung Ju

400 NE 167th St., 305-947-3838

Star of the show at this long-lived Korean restaurant (one of only a handful in Miami-Dade County) is bulgogi. The name translates as "fire meat," but isn't a reference to Koreans' love of hot chilis. Rather it refers to Korean-style barbecue, which is really not barbecued but quickly grilled after long marination in a mix of soy sauce, sesame, sugar, garlic, and more. Lovers of fiery food can customize with dipping sauces, or the eatery's many little banchan (included side dishes, some mild, others mouth-searing). Pa jun, a crispy egg/scallion-based pancake, is a crowd-pleasing starter. And if the unfamiliarity seems too scary altogether, there's a selection of Chinese food. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant

514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309

Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an unatmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and vindaloos are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$

King Buffet

316 NE 167th St., 305-940-8668

In this restaurant's parking lot, midday on Sundays, the colorful display of vivid pinks, greens, and blues worn by

myriad families arriving for dinner in matching going-to-church outfits is equaled only by the eye-poppingly dyed shrimp chips and desserts displayed inside on the buffet table. Though there's an à la carte menu, the draw here is the 100-item (according to advertisements) all-you-can-eat spread of dishes that are mostly Chinese, with some American input. It's steam-table stuff, but the price is right and then some: \$5.95 for lunch, \$8.95 for dinner. \$-\$\$

King Palace

330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339

The specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style barbecue (whole ducks, roast pork strips, and more, displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better-than-average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. Servers will also steer you to the good stuff, once you convince them you're not a chop suey kinda person. \$\$

Laurenzo's Market Café

16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381

www.laurenzomarket.com

It's just a small area blocked off by grocery shelves, buried between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style snack space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, steam-tabled but housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagiolo, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. \$-\$\$

Lemon Fizz

16310 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-6599

www.lemon-fizz.com

Like wraps? Then you'll love this Middle Eastern café's version made with saj, a circular Syrian flatbread similar to pita but much thinner, moister, and all-around better. Upon order, diners can watch the chef custom-cook their saj (on a scorching-hot, flying-saucer metal dome of the same name), then roll the beautifully surface-blistered bread around one of 27 stuffings, including za'atar and EVOO, brined olives and labneh (creamy yogurt cheese), falafel, steak, even dessert fillings like strawberries and Nutella. Also available: soups, salads, and substantial globally topped rice bowls, plus fresh fruit juices and smoothies. \$

Little Saigon

16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad, flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$\$\$

Mary Ann Bakery

1284 NE 163rd St., 305-945-0333

Don't be unduly alarmed by the American birthday cakes in the window. At this small Chinese bakery the real finds are the Chinatown-style baked buns and other savory pastries, filled with roast pork, bean sauce, and curried ground beef. Prices are under a buck, making them an exotic alternative to fast-food dollar meals. There's one table for eat-in snackers. \$

Matador Argentinean Steakhouse

3207 NE 163rd St., 305-944-6001

With Latin parilla places spreading here as fast as kudzu, it's hard to get excited about yet another all-you-can-eat meat spread. But Matador offers far more for the money than most. One dinner price (\$24.95, \$27.95 weekends) includes a salad bar of more than 30 items, unlimited grilled proteins (many cuts of beef, sausages, chicken, pork, assorted veggies, and even fish upon request), crunchy steak fries, a dessert (typically charged extra elsewhere), and even more fun, a bottle of quite quaffable wine per person. \$\$\$

Panya Thai

520 NE 167th St., 305-945-8566

Unlike authentic Chinese cuisine, there's no shortage of genuine Thai food in and around Miami. But Panya's chef/owner, a Bangkok native, offers numerous regional and/or rare dishes not found elsewhere. Plus he doesn't automatically curtail the heat or sweetness levels to please Americans. Among the most intriguing: moo khem phad wan (chewy deep-fried seasoned pork strips with fiery tamarind dip, accompanied by crisp green papaya salad, a study in sour/sweet/savory balance); broad rice noodles stir-fried with eye-opening chili/garlic sauce and fresh Thai basil; and chili-topped Diamond Duck in tangy tamarind sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

PK Oriental Mart

255 NE 167th St., 305-654-9646

While there are three other sizable Asian markets on this strip between I-95 and Biscayne Boulevard, PK has the only prepared-food counter, serving authentic Chinatown barbecue, with appropriate dipping sauces included. Weekends bring the biggest selection, including barbecued ribs and pa pei duck (roasted, then deep-fried till extra crisp and nearly free of subcutaneous fat). Available every day are juicy, soy-marinated roast chickens, roast pork strips, crispy pork, and whole roast ducks – hanging, as tradition dictates, beaks and all. But no worries; a counterperson will chop your purchase into bite-size, beakless pieces. \$

Sang's Chinese Restaurant

1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076

Open late (12:30 a.m. most nights) since 1990, Sang's has an owner who previously cooked in NYC's Chinatown, and three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esoterica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A limited live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. More recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Continued on page 63



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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 62

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea House 237 NE 167th St 305-654-4008

www.shingwangrestaurant.com

At this unique Taiwanese eatery, run by a trio of Taipei-trained female chefs, all seafood, poultry, and meats in the budget-priced entrées (\$6.95) are mock – imitations made from wheat gluten, tofu, and vegetables. But don't mock it till you try the quite beefy pepper steak, or smokin' duck, with slices that mimic the charcuterie item down to convincing faux fat. Other main dishes feature recognizable veggies or noodles, including appealingly chewy curried chow fun. As for the rest of the name: iced is shaved ice, an over-the-top dessert that's a sort of a slurpee sundae, with toppings that vary from the familiar (fresh fruits) to the weird (grass jelly, sweet corn, kidney beans, rice balls, chocolate pudding). And the bubble tea is a must-not-miss. Using housemade syrup (as opposed to most establishments' store-bought stuff), the cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors (mango, taro, even actual tea), all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, slurped through large-diameter straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

Siam Square 54 NE 167th St, 305-944-9697

Open until 1:00 a.m. every day except Sunday (when it closes at midnight), this relatively new addition to North Miami Beach's "Chinatown" strip has become a popular late-night gathering spot for chefs from other Asian restaurants. And why not? The food is fresh, nicely presented, and reasonably priced. The kitchen staff is willing to customize dishes upon request, and the serving staff is reliably fast. Perhaps most important, karaoke equipment is in place when the mood strikes. \$-\$\$

Tuna's Garden Grille 17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-2567

When Tuna's moved in 2006 from the marina space it had occupied for almost two decades, it lost its waterfront location, its old-fashioned fish-house ambiance, and its outdoor deck. But it has gained a garden setting, and retained its menu of fresh (and sometimes locally caught) seafood – some fancified, some simple (the wiser choice). Also continuing are Tuna's signature seasonal specials, like a Maine lobster dinner for a bargain \$15. Open daily till 2:00 a.m., the place can sometimes feel like a singles bar during the two post-midnight happy hours, but since the kitchen is open till closing, it draws a serious late-night dining crowd, too. \$\$

AVENTURA / MIAMI GARDENS

Anthony's Coal-Fired Pizza 17901 Biscayne Blvd. 305-830-2625

www.anthonyscoalfiredpizza.com

The last four digits of the phone number actually spell "COAL." And that's what it's all about here – a coal-fired oven (like that at Lombardi's, Patsy's, John's, or Grimaldi's in New York) producing the intense 800-degree

heat to turn out, in a mere three or four minutes, a pie with the classic thin, crisp-bottomed, beautifully char-bubbled crust that fans of the above legendary pizzerias crave – at any cost. Expect neither bargain-chain prices, a huge selection of toppings (these aren't the kind of clunky crusts you overload), nor much else on the menu except a hefty salad and some onion-topped chicken wings that are also coal-oven tasty. Anthony's does just a few things, and does them right. \$\$

Bella Luna 19575 Biscayne Blvd. Aventura Mall, 305-792-9330

www.bellalunaaventura.com

If the menu here looks familiar, it should. It's identical to that at the Upper Eastside's Luna Café and, with minor variations, at all the rest of Tom Billante's eateries (Rosalia, Villaggio, Carpaccio), right down to the typeface. But no argument from here. In a mall – a setting more accustomed to food court, steam-tabled stuff – dishes like carpaccio al salmone (crudo, with portobellos, capers, parmesan slices, and lemon/tomato dressing) and linguine carbonara (in creamy sauce with pancetta and shallots) are a breath of fresh, albeit familiar, air. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bourbon Steak 19999 W. Country Club Dr. (Fairmont Hotel, Turnberry Resort) 786-279-0658

www.michaelmina.net

At Bourbon Steak, a venture in the exploding restaurant empire of chef Michael Mina, a multiple James Beard award winner, steakhouse fare is just where the fare starts. There are also Mina's ingenious signature dishes, like an elegant deconstructed lobster/baby vegetable pot pie, a raw bar, and enough delectable vegetable/seafood starters and sides (duck fat fries!) for noncarnivores to assemble a happy meal. But don't neglect the steak – flavorful dry-aged Angus, 100-percent Wagyu American "Kobe," swoonworthy grade A5 Japanese Kobe, and butter-poached prime rib, all cooked to perfection under the supervision of on-site executive chef Andrew Rothschild, formerly of The Forge, meaning he knows his beef. (Mina himself is absentee.) \$\$\$\$

Chef Allen's 19088 NE 29th Ave; 305-935-2900 www.chefallens.com

After 20 years of success in the same location, many chefs would coast on their backlog of tried-and-true dishes. And it's doubtful that kindly Allen Susser would break out his many regulars by eliminating from the menu the Bahamian lobster and crab cakes (with tropical fruit chutney and vanilla beurre blanc). But lobster-lovers will find that the 20th anniversary menus also offer new excitements like tandoori-spiced rock lobster, along with what might be the ultimate mac'n'cheese: lobster crab macaroni in a Fris vodka sauce with mushrooms, scallions, and parmesan. The famous dessert soufflé's flavor changes daily, but it always did. \$\$\$\$

Fish Joint 2570 NE Miami Gardens Dr. 305-936-8333

Unless one's mind is already made up before getting here – and stuck on steak, pasta, or some other

land-based dish – loyal repeat customers know to ignore the small printed menu and wait for the table-side presentation of about ten catches-of-the-day, arrayed on a tray. Servers identify each fish, explain how it's to be prepared, and take your order. Whether it's a simple sautéed fillet or a slightly more complex preparation like shrimp/crab-crusting grouper, the kitchen's veterans know precisely how to cook fish. All entrées come with suitable starch and green-type vegetable, plus various other complementary freebies, so starters, salads, and sides aren't necessary. \$\$\$

Il Migliore 2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr. 305-792-2902

Reminiscent of an intimate Tuscan villa, chef Neal Cooper's attractive trattoria gets the food right, as well as the ambiance. As in Italy, dishes rely on impeccable ingredients and straightforward recipes that don't overcomplicate, cover up, or otherwise muck about with that perfection. Fresh fettuccine with white truffle oil and mixed wild mushrooms needs nothing else. Neither does the signature Pollo Al Mattone, marinated in herbs and cooked under a brick, require pretentious fancification. And even low-carb dieters happily go to hell in a hand basket when faced with a mound of potatoes alla Toscana, fried herb-sprinkled French fries. Located west of Biscayne Boulevard in the Davis Plaza shopping mall, across from Ojus Elementary School. \$\$-\$\$\$

Mahogany Grille 2190 NW 183rd St. 305-626-8100

Formerly Ruby and Jean's Soul Food Cuisine, a popular but strictly neighborhood cafeteria, Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves – and an international as well as local clientele – since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother Vincent Brown acquired the place in early 2007. The diner décor is gone, replaced by white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The food is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion, heaping platters from several African diaspora regions: Carolina Low Country (buttery cheese grits with shrimp,

sausage, and cream gravy), the Caribbean (conch-packed fritters or salad), and the Old South (lightly buttermilk-battered fried chicken). The chicken is perhaps Miami's best, made even better with the Grille's waffles. \$\$-\$\$\$

Pilar 20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777

www.pillarrestaurant.com

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Militello. He has been executive chef at Rumi, and cooked at NYC's James Beard House. Armed with those impressive credentials, Fredel and his partners launched Pilar (named for Hemingway's boat) aiming to prove that top restaurants can be affordable. Consider it now proven. Floribbean-style seafood is the specialty, dishes like fried Bahamian cracked conch with fresh hearts of palm slaw and Caribbean curry sauce, rock shrimp spring rolls with sweet soy glaze, and yellowtail snapper with tomato-herb vinaigrette and a potato/leek croqueta. Don't let the strip-mall location fool you. The restaurant itself is elegant. \$\$-\$\$\$

The Soup Man 20475 Biscayne Blvd. #G-8 305-466-9033

The real soup man behind this franchise is Al Yeganeh, an antisocial Manhattan restaurant proprietor made notorious, on a Seinfeld episode, as "the soup Nazi." On the menu: ten different premium soups each day (from a rotating list of about 50). The selection is carefully balanced among meat/poultry-based and vegetarian: clear and creamy (like the eatery's signature shellfish-packed lobster bisque); chilled and hot; familiar (chicken noodle) and exotic (mulligatawny). All soups come with gourmet bread, fruit, and imported chocolate. Also available are salads, sandwiches, and wraps, à la carte or in soup-plus combos. \$-\$\$

Sushi Siam 19575 Biscayne Blvd. 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)



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