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[www.BiscayneTimes.com](http://www.BiscayneTimes.com)

Volume 7, Issue 3



# Gravy Train

By Erik Bojnansky

## Nearly 100 City of Miami employees made more than \$200,000 last year

Miami had only recently shed its notorious distinction as the nation's poorest municipality, thanks to the buoying effects of the real-estate boom, just in time to get clobbered by the nationwide recession/depression

rooted in the collapse of that very boom. Now the good times are over, and the city faces declining revenues across the board.

Yet even with an 8.2 percent unemployment rate for Miami-Dade and Broward counties, and shrinking tax

revenues, Miami, with a population of 404,048 and a median income just over \$26,000 per year, continues to compensate dozens of employees at pay rates far greater than comparable cities. Much of the expense is related to the city's lax

management of its fire department, where salaries negotiated by the firefighters' union are generous, and where vacancies

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**AUCTION \* AUCTION \* AUCTION**  
Miami Shores Commercial Land - 340 NE 99th Street

Vacant lot adjacent to commercial properties fronting NE 2nd Ave in Miami Shores. One of the last vacant lots in the Shores. Has plans to build a 3,500 sq. ft. home. Underlying C-1 zoning and could be rezoned for parking. Lot is 75'X 115' or 8,625 sq. ft. +/- . This is a reserve auction - seller reserves the right to determine a reserve price to sell. HK3022095 - 10% buyers premium to winning bid.

**Auction May 16, 2009 - Noon**  
Property preview starting at 11:00 am.

Brian Carter, P.A.  
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**Belle Meade Place Condo #19**  
645 NE 77th Street

Tropical waterfront building with pool and water views from condo. This 2nd floor one-bed unit features hardwood floors, gated parking, and an intimate living environment. Perfect investor unit. Rented until 10/09.

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Offered at \$1,200/month

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**Bayside Historic Gem**  
619 NE 72 Street

Beautiful completely renovated 3 bedrooms, 2 bath home w/ garage. Backyard pool & outdoor shower in private fenced yard. Charming historic home w/ front porch, original wood floors, working fireplace, tray ceilings, & original details. Quiet street in popular Bayside neighborhood, walk to buy/park, Starbucks, boutiques & cafes.

Offered at \$465,000

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**Miami Upper East Side 4-Plex**  
439 NE 82nd Street

REDUCED! Well maintained and updated four unit rental building. Building passed its 40 year certification. Fully rented. All units are large 2/1's. Each unit is separately metered for water and electric. Amazing opportunity. Seller motivated and will look at all serious offers.

Reduced to \$375,000

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**Upper Eastside - Shorecrest**  
8260 N Bayshore Drive

Wonderful 2BR/2BA home in Shorecrest on corner lot w/pool. Vaulted ceilings & wood floors, w/open floor plan & sun filled FL. room. Garage recently care. to 1BR/1BA in-law qtrs. w/own entry; extra space also great for home office/studio (tax records doesn't include extra sq. ft.). Well maintained & in move-in condition. Great fenced outdoor area w/pool on one side and patio on other, both w/lush tropical foliage.

Offered at \$350,000

Jeffrey J. Wilkinson, P.A.  
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jwilkinson@ellimanflorida.com



**The Church!**  
391 NW 31 Street

Simply incredible church. Very new to MIDTOWN. This property is an advertiser's dream as it is fully visible from I-95 and NE 36 street. Completely updated with 3 central w/c, ADA compliant, just waiting for a person with vision to transform into ultra-cool office/gallery, club, day-care, you name it! Huge parking lot. On the way to Mid-Town & Design District. Owner open for offers.

Offered from \$4,500/month

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**The Mansion!**  
45 NE 45th Street

Design District. Large bedrooms, master w/ bathroom and private balcony. Wood floors, arches everywhere. Split plan A/C. Double Lot! This place is incredible. This is NOT a home depot job! Great professional neighbors, many wonderful families, walking distance to the cafes, galleries, shops of the Design District. Lawn care included in rental. Make an offer! Totally Restored Design District Beauty!

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**Venetian Condo Water Views**  
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Approved short sale located in South Beach, on quiet Belle Isles, at historic Venetian Cove a 10 min walk to Lincoln Rd., opposite new dog park & fabbed Standard Hotel & Spa. This spacious 2 bedrooms / 2 baths unit offers views of Biscayne Bay & Miami Bch. Premier kitchen & baths w/marble flrs, custom closets, wired for stereo system & pool.

Reduced to \$559,000

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**Beautiful Roads Home**  
305 SW 31 Rd

SHORT SALE - 3 bedrooms / 2 baths nestled in one of the most desirable areas of Miami "The Roads". Centrally located just minutes to Brickell, Key Biscayne, Miami Beach, Downtown Miami, and Coral Gables. Charming home in very good condition with beautiful wood floors on a large lot. A wonderful place to call home.

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Amy Petto  
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apetto@ellimanflorida.com



**Short Sale - Design District**  
4720 NE Miami Court

Amazing 1920's bungalow in Design District. large 2 bed 2 bath, high end restoration. Short sale. The front porch overlooks quiet, tree lined street. Wood floors throughout, coral rock fireplace and lovely high ceilings. Big fenced garden. Kitchen has w/ appliances and granite...incredible value! Make an offer!

Offered at \$249,500

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**Downtown Business Building Available**  
278 NE 40 Street

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Reduced to \$5299,000

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 <p><b>Family Fest</b> AT THE ADRIENNE ARSHT CENTER Saturday, May 2nd</p>		 <p><b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> May 12-17</p>		<p><b>1</b> <b>Madama Butterfly</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p><b>Daniel Bernard Roumain</b> with special guest <b>Emeline Michel!</b> 8PM <b>K</b></p> <p>Recently seen as a special guest on "American Idol."</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>FREE Family Fest</b> 11:30AM-1:30PM <b>P</b></p> <p><b>Madama Butterfly</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p><b>New World Symphony: The Tchaikovsky Concert</b> 8PM <b>K</b></p>	
<p><b>3</b> <b>Madama Butterfly</b> 2PM <b>Z</b></p> <p><b>New World Symphony: The Tchaikovsky Concert</b> conducted by <b>Michael Tilson Thomas</b> 3PM <b>K</b></p> <p>Piano Concerto No. 1 Symphony No. 5</p>	<p><b>Madama Butterfly</b> May 1-9</p> 	<p><b>5</b> <b>Piano Slam – The Music Speaks</b> 7:30PM <b>K</b></p> <p><b>Madama Butterfly</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p>	<p><b>13</b> <b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p>Don't miss Opening Night – Direct from Broadway!</p> <p>"The grandest circus spectacle east of Vegas!" -<i>New York Magazine</i></p>		<p><b>8</b> <b>Madama Butterfly</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p>Puccini's heartbreaking tale of ecstatic love and tragic betrayal.</p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>Madama Butterfly</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p>Family fortune and honor—poor Butterfly forsakes them all for the officer who was no gentleman.</p>
<p><b>New World Symphony</b> America's Orchestral Academy</p> <p><b>THE TCHAIKOVSKY CONCERT</b></p> <p><b>Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor</b> <b>Vladimir Feltsman, piano</b></p> <p>May 2 &amp; 3</p> 		<p><b>12</b> <b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> <b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p>Sensational entertainment for audiences of all ages!</p>	<p><b>16</b> <b>Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy</b> 2 &amp; 8PM <b>Z</b></p> <p>A breathtaking and exotic universe!</p>	

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## COMMENTARY: FEEDBACK

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## FPL's Tree Assassins: It's All About Profits

Regarding Jeff Shimonski's tale of "Good Trees in Bad Locations" (April 2009), I might have preferred a headline like "Bad Utility Lines in Bad Locations."

Mr. Shimonski advises that "V-pruning of trees located directly beneath utility wires is now an accepted practice," and he notes that the "directional pruning" practiced by FPL "doesn't look very natural but is much better for the tree and allows for a longer pruning cycle." These are misleading observations which may unfortunately lead the layperson to buy into them.

The notion that any public utility has the inherent right to visually pollute our communities with unbridled overhead power lines, ugly concrete or tar-stained wood poles, and disastrous pruning techniques are anathema to sound residential planning and the highest standards of community design.

And the idea that the pruning of trees by FPL's "tree assassins" is "now an accepted practice" could not be further from the truth. Such action may be accepted by FPL, by Asplundh Tree Company (the "pruners"), and by the uninformed, but it is highly unlikely that even the most novice gardener would support

the argument that FPL cares about trees, or about how they are pruned.

One need merely observe the myriad examples of unprofessional, damaging pruning being practiced by FPL's minions to understand the significant degree to which our tree canopy and our community aesthetic are being sacrificed for FPL profits.

*Ted Baker, landscape architect  
Miami*

## Ikea Will Not Save the Shores

Jen Karetnick's article on downtown Miami Shores ("Ghost Village," April 2009) was not only interesting but helpful in terms of understanding why it looks the way it does (a ghost town). However, as one who has worked with similar downtowns hoping to restock themselves with shops, I can tell you that national chains will not even look at a place like NE 2nd Avenue. We're fooling ourselves if we think they will locate here.

National chains (retail and casual fine dining) will only locate in malls, big-box centers, and corner pod sites. They will not change their floor plan requirements no matter how affluent a neighborhood may be.

Our village fathers would be better off convincing the Village Place

landlords to incubate their empty shops with deeply discounted rents that would allow very small entrepreneurs to establish a foothold on the avenue for the first year or two. As a small business owner, I can tell you that my rent is my biggest concern. Surely it is better to get \$500 a month for 500 square feet, for the first year, than nothing.

*Jesse Walters  
Miami Shores*

## Winner of This Month's Clever Idea Award:

In one of Derek McCann's police reports ("Secure All Sticky Substances," April 2009) he mentioned a person who had his vehicle registration decal stolen. I'd like to offer advice to everyone on how to avoid that ever happening. Once you apply your decal, score it with a sharp knife or razor blade. I score mine about six times diagonally. If someone tries to peel it off, he can't take the whole decal but only a small portion of it. I have never lost a registration since I've been doing that.

Keep up the good work and thank you for a paper that is a treat to read.

*Name Withheld by Request  
Miami*

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Letters

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**This Month's Redundancy Award: Miami's Brain-Dead Politicians**

I'd like to compliment your newspaper on how well you keep the community informed on local issues. I never used to read *Biscayne Times*. I'd pick it up from the driveway and throw it away. But I made the mistake of opening it up one time and haven't stopped reading it since!

It gets me all fired up when I read about our wonderful, brilliant local politicians. In my 62 years, I have never seen a community with such a dysfunctional governing class as Miami. They are greedy, thoughtless, uncaring, lack any common sense, and don't seem to ever care about the opinions of the residents. Can you sense my disgust?

I read Erik Bojnansky's article about parks advocate Steve Hagen ("You've Got Mail...Lots and Lots of It," March 2009) and would like to say that, personally, I want to see Bicentennial Park remain as an open green space. Between

the city officials and the developers, they would take *all* of our parks and turn them into concrete.

Here's something else: I've noticed not one tree has been planted along Biscayne Boulevard since about December. They stopped somewhere around 62nd Street during the holidays. They were cutting the openings in the sidewalks and planting trees and then boom! *Nothing!*

What's going on? Has the city told the state that from 62nd Street to 87th Street they don't think trees are necessary? Excuse me, but I've always hated the way the boulevard looks south of Miami Shores and down past 79th Street. This is the section of the Boulevard that needs a face-lift the most. Come on, Miami, get off your dead ass and finish the project you started. We want to see more trees.

It's about time you brain-dead politicians started listening to the people of Miami.

Dennis Tinsman  
Miami Shores

**Live Green, Swim Green**

Jim W. Harper's article "New Ideas for New Pools" (March 2009) offers several great suggestions to reduce energy

consumption while heating your pool. I must respectfully object, though, to the statement that a bubble pool blanket can heat water as much as ten degrees. "Solar" bubble pool blankets are great for keeping heat in a pool (most of the heat loss in a pool comes from evaporation), but they do not effectively heat the water.

I have to add I was a bit surprised when the article made no mention of solar as a method of heating a pool. While heat pumps are certainly the next best alternative to solar, an average 400,000 BTU heat pump still produces more than 38 tons of CO2 emissions a year! Heat pumps use electricity, and as you may know, most electricity in this country comes from the burning of coal.

Solar, on the other hand, produces zero toxic greenhouse gas emissions. With no operating costs (solar energy is free and require little maintenance), pool owners typically see a payback period of two years or less. Most solar heaters available today carry at least a ten-year warranty, and systems have been known to last more than 20 years. For pool owners already heating their pools with a gas, electric, or propane heater, solar can be installed to work

as the primary source of heat, with the existing heater as a backup.

The bottom line is this: Heating a swimming pool with fossil-fuels is a luxury this country can no longer afford.

Dan Sizelove  
Aquatherm Industries, Inc.  
Lakewood, New Jersey

**No More Cookie-Cutter Hedges!**

Regarding Jeff Shimonski's article "Fear and the Fig Whitefly" (March 2009), he was right on point. Drive around our lush city and you'll see countless cookie-cutter ficus hedges. We are so privileged to live in a tropical paradise where you can grow countless other plants, which are much more interesting to the eye and which celebrate garden diversity.

Cheers for suggesting tough and beautiful varieties such as the colorful crotons, the loyal and everlasting silver buttonwood, and the feisty clusia. The whitefly will not feast on those and it will make for more interesting gardens. Thanks for this article.

Laura Santamaria  
Miami

Continued on page 19

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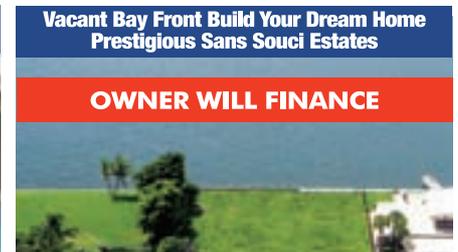
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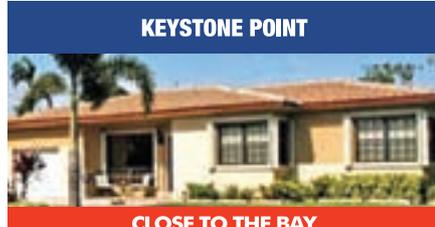
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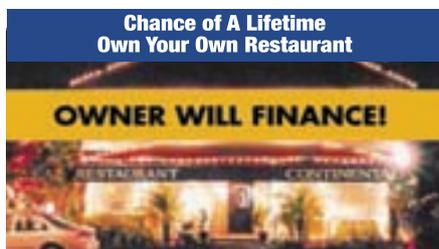
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# BizBuzz: May 2009

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt  
BT Contributor

If you're reading this column on May 2, but are not reading it at the Cinco de MiMo festival, head on over immediately. And bring your dog pal(s). Why? Because along with the people-oriented festivities are two doggie social events: the Pink Pooch Parade & Contest, and the grand opening of **Smiling Pets'** new Doggie Bag Café and Pet Boutique, in the vet clinic's breezeway. Actually the parade concludes at Smiling Pets (under the Coppertone sign, at 7310 Biscayne Blvd; 305-609-4288), where you and your canine pal can enjoy free "Mutt-inis" and dog treats.

A little later this month comes Mother's Day, which, according to the National Restaurant Association, is the most popular day of the year for restaurant dining. At the **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** (1085 NE 79th St.; 305-754-8002), Alex Richter will be cooking up the official Mother's Day feast on Sunday, May 10 from noon to 10:00 p.m. In addition to brunch specials, the regular menu is available, and seating is in either the cozy indoor dining room or the outdoor biergarten.

At **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), David Cohen is offering not one but three specials. Daily in May, anyone buying a dozen bagels gets to choose one of three freebies: a pound of cream cheese, an extra dozen bagels, or a coupon for a free dozen anytime in the following 30 days. On Tuesdays eat-in customers who buy an entrée and drink get a second entrée (of equal or lesser value) for free. And on \$5 Fridays, you can steal any hefty deli sandwich for a five-spot.

Speaking of steals: At noon on Saturday, May 16, **Douglas Elliman Florida** will be conducting a reserved-bid auction to sell an 8625-square-foot, commercially zoned vacant lot in Miami Shores — a rarity in the village. Bidding begins at just \$10,000, with a ten-percent buyer's premium going to the winner. Real estate broker Brian Carter (brcarter@ellimanflorida.com; 305-582-2424) says the land "could be developed or possibly used as more parking space."

"Everyone talks about it. No one does anything about it." In Miami that old saw about the weather could easily be applied to live music. But this month **Live! Modern School of Music** is doing something. On May 17, six of the school's bands will present a "Rockin' Out" concert downtown, at the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation. The program runs from 5:00-6:30 p.m. at 1018 N. Miami Ave. Price is only \$5. Cover songs will include selections from Guns N' Roses, Queen, and Metallica, so don't forget the black eye shadow. Info: 305-893-0191.

What's a place to do when its products are almost too unique to describe? Consider **Miami Beach Pebbles** and **luxé + natura**, two sister companies (parented by The Minimalist Group), at the same address (3214 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-438-1775) in Midtown. The former imports decorative pebbles, and also manufactures pebble tiles (flat, on-edge, or impossibly gorgeous custom-designed ones). The latter's specialty is designer items that mix luxury and nature, like acrylic resin LuxeCast panels with natural materials (bamboo, mahogany shavings, grasses, much more) artfully

embedded in them. You've gotta see it to believe it. So to encourage such viewing, TMG is giving away a *free* 40-pound bag of beach pebbles to browsers (or buyers, but no purchase necessary) every Saturday in May, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Looking for a Mother's Day gift that's as special as mom? At new, eco-friendly **Imagine Gifts** (Shops at Midtown, 3252 NE 1st Ave. #108; 305-704-8246), you'll find organic soy candles, hand-painted scarves, bath soaps, and locally crafted jewelry, plus recycled wrapping paper and unusual greeting cards. Tell Gregg or José Luis you read about Imagine in the *BT* and get an extra 15 percent off purchases of \$50 or more, May 4-10.

Throughout the month, mention the *BT* at Chantik Imports (7293 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-4578) for extra savings on selected items from the store's stock of Indonesian furnishings and accessories — lighting, masks, panels, carvings, ceramics, baskets, furniture, and art.

April showers bring May flowers — or at least they will if you plant the free packet of seeds **Allstate Insurance Company** (8703 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-754-0002) is offering this month to renters who drop by for a quote on renter's insurance. You may assume you personal possessions are covered by your landlord's insurance policy, but that's not true. Fortunately, says Allstate's Veronica Oliveraleon, for a renter's policy that protects your all stuff, "the typical annual premium for \$15,000 of contents is under \$300 — \$25 per month."

In response to overwhelming e-mails from wine-loving workaholics who were missing out on the Friday 4:00-7:00

p.m. wine tastings at **Laurenzo's Italian Market** (16385 W. Dixie Hwy.; 305-945-6381), the tastings have been switched to Saturday afternoons from noon to 5:00 p.m. Though tastings remain "100-percent complimentary," says Larry "The Wine Guy" Baker, the format has changed a bit. Themes continue to vary, but five wines are now sampled each week at the five-hour tastings. Those who particularly like one wine enough to want a full five-ounce glass can buy one for \$5. And those buying a case of any wines sampled (mixed or one wine) will get an additional five percent off Laurenzo's standard case discount. Just think "five" and you can't miss.

Finally this community newspaper would like to welcome a true community restaurant, **Joey's Italian Café** (2506 NW 2nd Ave.; 305-438-0488). You doubtless noticed that the restaurant, run by Joey and Thea Goldman, made its debut with the *BT*'s new ad space on the front cover. Many of you already know that Joey's is not Italian-American, not Argentine-Italian, not fancy-schmancy phony-baloney Italian/Continental. It is an authentic Italian hangout, where the chef is from Treviso and the prices are so low they're almost unbelievable. "Would you even believe me if I told you that some customers come in five nights a week?" laughs Thea. "I've had to put up a blackboard for specials because many people have already worked their way through the whole menu."

Something special coming up at your business? Send info to [bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com). For *BT* advertisers only.

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# Reality Check: Miami Is Going Broke

*No surprise, really, when you consider all the bloated salaries*

By Jack King  
BT Contributor

On the cover of this august publication this month you will find a story about the compensation of City of Miami employees. The story itself is pretty amazing, but sadly it's only a small part of the financial problems the city will encounter in the coming months and years. In fact the city is already in the throes of a budget shortfall, but you would never know it listening to the city commission, the mayor, and the city manager.

Actually, that's not quite true as Commissioner Tomas Regalado, who is running for mayor, has been railing about budget shortfalls for many months now. The trouble is that no one believes — or wants to believe — this is a problem. The city commission, the city management, and many of our fellow citizens are in full denial that there's even a problem. Believe me, there is, and it will only get worse.

Miami's finances are so out of whack that it may take a serious restructuring to get them back on an even keel. You'll recall that the city has some experience in this area. In the 1990s, the state had to step in and impose a little financial reality. It took several years to clean up the mess created by former city manager Cesar Odio.

Clearly the primary problem is employee compensation. The *BT*'s cover story will tell you there are 97 city employees who made more than \$200,000 last year. If that doesn't make you stop and think, consider this little factoid: There are some 4000 employees

working for the city, and the average compensation for those employees is more than \$100,000 per year. That's right, the average annual pay for a city employee is 100 grand. Obviously the city is a great place to work, so get in line — they're still hiring.

If you take the number of employees (4000) and multiply it by the average annual compensation, you'll get something close to \$400 million in city salaries. That's pretty astounding when you consider that the total annual budget for the city is just over \$500 million. That means roughly 80 percent of the city's budget is used to cover salaries. I don't have a MBA, but I cannot believe this is a sustainable business model — unless you're using taxpayers' money.

The fire department is one of the major problems in this salary predicament. The city has been reluctant to hire new fire-

**Roughly 80 percent of the city's budget is used to cover salaries. I don't have a MBA, but I cannot believe this is a sustainable business model.**

fighter trainees because there isn't really a need for them. There just aren't that many fires anymore. The city's fire department has been remarkably successful over the past 20 years in getting fire-suppression equipment installed in new buildings. That accomplishment, along with new, non-flammable construction materials, means they've effectively put themselves out of a job fighting fires.



Since it really doesn't need any more firefighters, the city hasn't been hiring any. So now the firefighters on staff are being promoted to middle management jobs (with no one to manage) and working tons of overtime so the city has the appropriate number of experienced firefighters on site, even though they have no fires to fight — thanks in no small part to lots of archaic rules that haven't been changed in years.

For some reason the city thinks this is a fine way to do business — paying out hundreds of thousands each year for no work. If city leaders believe this is a good idea, I wonder what they'll think when these guys retire and start drawing from Miami's pension plan. Will that be still more money for no work?

Every now and then, but not often, the city tries to do something about its unbridled spending. A couple of

years ago, for example, Commissioner Regalado introduced and the commission passed a resolution doing away with the city's Economic Development Department. The department had been around for years and had done little if anything. So it seemed like a good idea to get rid of an agency that had seven employees, including a director making \$165,000 a year, since it had no mission statement and no budget other than salaries.

Two years later the department remains operational, but still nonfunctional. I asked Regalado what happened and he told me the city manager (Pete Hernandez) just ignores the will of the commission when he wants to. In case you've forgotten, the city manager works for the mayor. This is the same city manager who swore on a stack of Bibles that no money for the Marlins stadium would come from the city's general revenue fund, and then came back a week after the stadium deal was done to ask for \$9 million from the aforementioned general fund for the Marlins.

I don't blame these problems and issues on the employees. Most of them come to work and do a good job within the parameters set for them by the unions and the administration. The problem is management and leadership, of which Mayor Manny Diaz has zero. Right now he's too busy painting the city green in hopes of ensuring his "environmental" legacy. And while he's painting, the city is cratering financially. Is Manny's middle name Nero?

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)




## Congratulations

The Shops at Midtown Miami is honored to announce our finalists who are passionate about volunteerism and demonstrate care, compassion and concern for others through community service.

<p>Damaris Agurcia Angel Arrieta Patricia Belfort Jerome Blain Tyler Cardona Mariel Cupp</p>	<p>Christopher Flores Sara Khan Ashley Lentz Arnold Soto Delaney Zambrano</p>
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It's been almost nine years since the last terrorist attack on American soil. Are you still worried?

Compiled by Victor Barrenechea — BT Contributor



**John Martin**  
Store Owner  
North Miami

I'm not worried at all because it hasn't happened yet. When it does happen, it's better to worry about it *after* it happens. I was afraid after 9/11, but time goes by. Time heals all wounds. I'm not saying that it won't happen; it probably will happen. [The terrorists] want you to feel like I do, then they sock it to you. But there are so many other things to worry about. It's not at the top of my list.



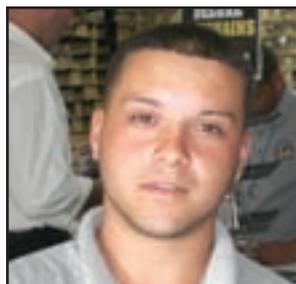
**Alicia Kuhnke**  
Boutique Owner  
Miami Shores

Yes, I am. Not as worried as I used to be. The fact remains that terrorism exists, but we have to go on. I'm not as worried as I was nine years ago. The threat is still there. It will always be there. But I think security has definitely picked up. I feel safer.



**Michael Morrow**  
Business Owner  
Edgewater

I'm not worried about terrorism. I wasn't worried then. I really don't think about it. We can't live in fear. But I'm a little more hopeful. We're taking a different approach to foreign affairs, less of a hard-line approach. That will perhaps make everyone feel safer. The way we're destroying the environment is a lot more pressing than the threat of terrorism.



**Ernest Castillo**  
Locksmith Technician  
Downtown

It's been almost ten years already. Five years ago, if you would've asked me that question, I would have been a lot more worried. I think we don't hear about it much anymore. I don't think we're safer. I think it's basically the same. But I'm more worried about the price of everything going up and the economy than I am terrorism.



**Amy Palma**  
Celebrity Make-up Artist  
Miami Shores

I'm worried. Just because it's been nine years doesn't mean it's any less of a threat. I'm still very concerned about it. I think we're still at risk. Probably even more so now that the war in Iraq has created more anti-American sentiment. I think people forget as time passes, but we're still in danger.



**Whitney Paden**  
Sales Manager  
Brickell

I actually am still concerned about terrorism, maybe even more so than before, because it's been a long time since we've had an attack. Almost too much time has passed. It makes me more uncomfortable. I think we're due for another attack. Maybe that's pessimistic, but I don't feel safer. I think if you're not concerned about it, you're living in denial.

## Congratulations to the finalists of the 2009 Knight Arts Challenge:

- 3D Miami/Frederic Snitzer • Actors' Playhouse Productions • Alliance for Musical Arts, Theater and Tutoring • Amy Rosenberg
- Available Space • BankAtlantic Foundation • BELIART/Bernice Steinbaum • Broward County Film Society • Christy Gast • Chopin Foundation
- City of Miami – Mayor's Office of Film & Cultural Affairs • Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation • COOPER • Eli Webberman • Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden • Florida Grand Opera • Friends of the Bass Museum • Girls' Club • Goldman Properties • Greater Miami Convention and Visitor's Bureau • Hannah Kahn Poetry Foundation • Jerome Soimaud • Kathleen Hudspeth • Locust Projects • Mario Ernesto Sanchez/Teatro Avante • Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs • Miami-Dade Public Schools • Miami-Dade Parks • Miami City Ballet
- Miami International Film Festival • Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc. • The Nature Conservancy
- New World Symphony • The Olympia Theater at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts • Performing Arts Center Trust • Plum TV
- Sculpture Key West • Sweat Records • UNCF/United Negro College Fund • Vizcaya Museum and Gardens • Wolfsonian-FIU • WPBT

Through the arts, we strive to bring our diverse community together and help transform South Florida. Winners to be announced Fall 2009. Visit [www.KnightArts.org](http://www.KnightArts.org) for more information.

 John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

  
[www.KnightArts.org](http://www.KnightArts.org)

# ON SATURDAY, DOUBLE DUTCH + YOUR WAY TO LOCUST PROJECTS.

**SATURDAY / MAY 09 / 7-10 PM**

**/ KATE GILMORE /** By Any Means

New York based artist Kate Gilmore will present “By Any Means,” a performance-based video and a site-specific sculpture in which the physicality of architecture and sculpture is pitted against the female body and will.

Located at Locust Projects\_155 N.E. 38th Street\_Suite 100

**/ SIMON BIRCH /** Raw & Loved

“Raw & Loved” is the debut exhibition by the Hong Kong based painter and video artist, known for his high-energy in-motion portraits.

Located at AE District in the Marcy Building\_3852 N. Miami Avenue

**/ THE ANNUAL COUNTY WIDE STUDENT ART SHOW /**

This annual juried exhibition is an impressive collection of over 500 artworks from students attending the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Organized and presented by Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Social Sciences & Life Skills, Art Education Program. Located at 4141 N.E. 2nd Avenue\_Suite 102

**/ HAITIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM /** History Since 1804

The Haitian Heritage Museum is proud to present “History Since 1804.” This exhibition shows the richness and beauty of Haitian history through facts, pictures, and artist renditions dating back from that fateful day of December 5, 1492, through the first successful slave revolution of 1804, to the striving Heritage of today.

Located at 4141 N.E. 2nd Avenue\_Suite 105 C



**+** Double Dutch, by Kate Gilmore, 2004. Video still, courtesy of the artist and Smith-Stewart Gallery.

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COUNT	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT NAME	TOTAL EARNINGS	COUNT	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT NAME	TOTAL EARNINGS
1	JON	HART	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	308,317.88	50	WARREN	BITTNER	DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY	LAW	224,892.67
2	FERNANDO	ACOSTA	SERGEANT AT ARMS	MAYOR'S OFFICE	295,075.22	51	JORGE	BARRETO	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	224,486.80
3	LAURA	BILLBERRY	DIRECTOR	PUBLIC FACILITIES	291,637.81	52	RALPH	PARKER	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	224,255.74
4	JOHN	TIMONEY	CHIEF	POLICE	290,532.66	53	RICARDO	SANDA	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	223,918.41
5	JULIO	MESTAS	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	288,575.59	54	BRUCE	OESTREICH	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	223,619.86
6	JORGE	VALLADARES	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	280,579.55	55	MICHAEL	WINCHESTER	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	222,921.24
7	CHRISTOPHER	MUSSER	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	279,551.33	56	EDDY	RODRIGUEZ	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	222,589.30
8	PRISCILLA	THOMPSON	CITY CLERK	CITY CLERK	277,172.48	57	RICARDO	ROQUE	LIEUTENANT	POLICE	222,214.45
9	JUAN	MESTAS	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	276,364.93	58	THOMAS	GABRIEL	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	221,707.94
10	PEDRO	HERNANDEZ	CITY MANAGER	CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	274,980.88	59	JOSE	ECHAGARRUA	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	220,635.08
11	CRAIG	RADELMAN	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	274,640.02	60	ALFREDO	RODRIGUEZ	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	220,488.36
12	RAUL	FERNANDEZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	273,720.12	61	ELOY	GARCIA	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	220,274.91
13	MICHAEL	SHELTON	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	271,806.69	62	CARLOS	GARCIA	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	219,870.02
14	EDGAR	ACOSTA	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	270,270.48	63	JUAN	MEIZOSO	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	219,467.53
15	THOMAS	FLORES	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	267,704.93	64	JOE	BURNS	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	218,892.85
16	RICHARD	WALTERMAN	CAPTAIN	POLICE	266,781.99	65	BRENDA	HOPPE	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	218,113.05
17	JOHN	GONZALEZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	264,856.30	66	DAVID	DUENAS JR.	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	217,974.10
18	HUGO	RODRIGUEZ	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	261,448.53	67	WILLIAM	CHAPMAN	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	217,837.55
19	JULIE	BRU	CITY ATTORNEY	LAW	261,320.67	68	FRANK	MAINADE	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	217,186.11
20	WILLIAM	BRYSON	FIRE DEPT. CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	260,557.76	69	JAMES	PACE	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	215,597.73
21	ROBERT	SIMMONS	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	260,206.82	70	ROGER	HERNSTADT	ASST. CITY MANAGER	CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	215,538.27
22	ROY	HAMLIN	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	257,010.41	71	ROBERTO	HERNANDEZ	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	215,014.08
23	VICTOR	IGWE	AUDITOR GENERAL	INTERNAL AUDITS & REVIEWS	252,574.44	72	JOE	CABRERA	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	214,973.50
24	PETER	DARLEY	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	250,192.93	73	JOSEPH	FERNANDEZ	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	214,769.31
25	LUIS	DUTHIL	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	249,170.34	74	CRAIG	DUNN	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	214,596.93
26	DANIEL	MEADOWS	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	248,913.37	75	GARY	DAGNAN	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	212,977.30
27	DAVID	FARBER	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	248,829.11	76	RICHARD	HERRIN	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	212,317.92
28	RONALD	KHAWLY	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	248,318.41	77	RUBEN	BARGUEIRAS	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	212,223.39
29	HENRY	RODRIGUEZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	246,985.86	78	RICHARD	"TIERNEY, JR."	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	211,439.78
30	DAVID	MORA	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	244,874.94	79	EMILIO	SANCHEZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	211,431.10
31	FERNANDO	FERNANDEZ JR.	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	244,564.68	80	EARL	ALLEN JR.	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	210,611.30
32	MAURICE	KEMP	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	243,384.06	81	CHARLES	COLLIER	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	210,483.10
33	FRANK	MOORE	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	241,626.76	82	BARRY	GONZALEZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	210,211.25
34	WILLIAM	LEWYCKY	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	239,827.75	83	JAMES	PAUGH	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	209,677.14
35	LORAN	DOUGHERTY	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	238,242.05	84	JEFFREY	FITZGERALD	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	208,491.22
36	MICHAEL	BRATZ	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	236,601.90	85	DAVID	WALSH	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	208,428.88
37	MARIA	CHIARO	DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY	LAW	234,486.35	86	SCOTT	DEAN	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	208,359.31
38	EDWARD	PIDERMANN	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	234,075.98	87	JORGE	DU QUESNE	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	207,659.71
39	PHILIP	LEDEA	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	233,702.77	88	GEORGE	LAWRENCE	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	207,442.68
40	LARRY	SPRING	CFO	CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	233,525.45	89	CARLOS	PEREZ	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	205,760.67
41	JOSEPH	ZAHRALBAN	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	232,106.89	90	EDWARD	JARRELL JR.	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	205,024.13
42	J.	GUARDARRAMA	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	231,868.76	91	LESS	REDDICK	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	204,120.67
43	M.	JONES	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	231,739.16	92	MARIO	PATTERSON	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	204,054.87
44	CHARLES	MAREE	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	231,528.13	93	GUILLERMO	ANIDO	ASST. CITY MANAGER	CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	204,018.50
45	ALLEN	JOYCE	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	230,423.41	94	ALBERTO	LAGEYRE	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	203,410.60
46	ROBERT	"EVANS, JR."	FIRE OFFICER	FIRE RESCUE	229,622.92	95	MICHAEL	COLOMBO	MAJOR	POLICE	201,630.12
47	RAFAEL	DIAZ	ASST. CITY ATTORNEY	LAW	229,083.54	96	HUGO	GORT	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	201,153.27
48	REGINALD	DUREN	FIRE CHIEF	FIRE RESCUE	228,840.75	97	WILLIAM	SAVOY	LIEUTENANT	FIRE RESCUE	200,858.67
49	WALTER	GRANT	CAPTAIN	FIRE RESCUE	28,490.64					TOTAL	22,760,335.77

Figures represent total 2008 compensation, including overtime, settlements, retroactive pay raises, deferred compensation, health insurance, cell phone and automobile allowances. Some individuals who retired at the end of 2008 may have received unused vacation and sick time.

Continued on page 15

## Gravy Train

Continued from page 14

and strict staffing rules have pushed overtime pay through the roof.

In calendar year 2008, a total of 97 city employees received more than \$200,000 in compensation, costing taxpayers more than \$22.76 million, according to documents prepared by the city's budget office and department of employee relations. Interestingly, 84 percent of those individuals were middle- to high-level supervisors at the fire department.

Obtaining this information was not easy, even though under Florida's public records law it must be made available to anyone requesting it. In this case, a *BT* representative, frustrated in his efforts to acquire the data on his own, turned to a city commissioner for help. City bureaucrats did act on the commissioner's request and produced two spreadsheets listing every city employee whose total compensation in 2008 came to \$200,000 or more. The commissioner, however, has since asked not to be identified.

Other city officials, among them budget director Michael Boudreaux, city manager Pete Hernandez, and chief financial officer Larry Spring, all declined comment, didn't respond to e-mails (or in one case an office visit), and didn't return phone calls. No one, it seems, wants to discuss, or even be associated with, questions about how the city can continue paying such high salaries and balance the budget when property and resort taxes are plummeting. Even Mayor Manny Diaz, never at a loss for comment when talking about pet projects like a taxpayer-subsidized Marlins baseball stadium, was tight-lipped about the salaries. His spokeswoman, Helena Poleo, would only say this: "He does not have any comment."

Why the reluctance? Because the issue of overpaying city employees is a



**Firefighters make good money. With overtime, they make really good money.**



**Atlanta does more with less, and does it far less expensively than Miami.**

public relations minefield — especially when it involves the politically active fire union, known for its ability to mobilize during elections. As *BT* contributor Frank

Rollason, a former Miami firefighter and assistant city manager, put it in a March column analyzing a proposal to freeze the salaries of the city's *nonunion*

employees: "Union families vote in great numbers and are very active in supporting candidates who protect their salaries and benefits. Nonunion employees serve at the will of the manager and are safer targets...."

Obviously this is not a subject that Miami officials like to talk about. Compare that attitude to the City of Fort Lauderdale, which for the past two decades has annually released the names of its highest-paid employees. Headlines in the *Miami Herald* and *Sun-Sentinel* expressed alarm that 300 of Fort Lauderdale's 2500 employees made more than \$100,000 in 2008. Yet only 25 topped the \$200,000 mark, at a cost of \$5.4 million.

A more revealing city-to-city comparison is Miami and Atlanta. In terms of population, Atlanta (519,000) is substantially bigger than Miami (404,000), but the two cities are very close when it comes to cost of living and wage levels. Despite the need to serve 115,000 more residents, Atlanta has just 500 more city workers than Miami — 4500 vs. 4000. Plus the City of Atlanta is responsible for running Hartsfield International Airport, which is big and busy and comparable to Miami International Airport. But down here, the county operates the airport, not the city.

Somehow Atlanta manages to get everything done with just six city employees who make \$200,000 per year or more. Six. Of those, two are airport executives, meaning they have no equivalent in the City of Miami and shouldn't be counted. So a mere four City of Atlanta employees have salaries in the \$200,000 range, compared to 97 for Miami. (For more details, see accompanying charts.)

Atlanta's Big Six: Police Chief Richard Pennington, chief financial officer Margaret Crenshaw, chief operating officer Greg Giornelli, city attorney Elizabeth Chandler, aviation general manager Benjamin R. DeCosta, and aviation deputy general manager Arnaldo Ruiz. Total annual salary costs: \$1.33 million.

Miami may not have an aviation department, but it does have a fire department, officially known as the Department of Fire-Rescue. The department's current budget is \$80.1 million. Of its 685 employees, 81 received more than \$200,000 in total compensation in 2008. Capt. Jon Hart was the highest-paid person among that elite crew. In fact he brought home more money last year than

### Atlanta's Top Salaries

Organization	Job Definition	Name	Changed Value Salary Annual SUM
DOA Aviation General Manager	Aviation General Mgr	Decosta, Benjamin	275,907
EXE Chief Operating Officer	Chief Operating Officer	Giornelli, Gregory	221,109
DOF Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer	Glass, James W.	215,000
LAW City Attorney	City Attorney	Chandler, Elizabeth B	209,325
DOA Aviation General Manager	Aviation Depty Gen Mgr	Diaz, Mario C	205,323
APD Chief of Police	Police Chief	Pennington, Richard J	200,211

Continued on page 16



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COVER STORY



**City Commissioner and mayoral candidate Joe Sanchez: Couldn't be reached for comment. Coincidence?**



**City Commissioner and mayoral candidate Tomas Regalado: "It's good to work for the government, I guess."**

**Gravy Train**

Continued from page 15

anyone employed by the City of Miami: \$308,317.88.

Robert Suarez, president of the Miami Association of Fire Fighters union, says Hart, a rescue supervisor, and several other supervisors work marathon hours, sometimes as many as 100 per week, to offset vacancies that plague the department.

"The only way someone could have gotten that amount is an enormous amount of overtime," Suarez says. "That is not anyone's regular salary."

Also inflating firefighter salaries are three years' worth of retroactive pay raises doled out to lieutenants, captains, and chief fire officers after the Miami City Commission ratified the fire union's contract in 2007, Suarez says. Some of those payments were issued in 2008. As a result, several workers in the fire department were paid more than their bosses.

In addition to Hart, five who held ranks of captain and chief fire officer were paid more than city manager Hernandez, Miami's tenth-highest-paid employee, who received \$274,980.88. Eleven supervisors are listed as receiving more than fire Chief William "Shorty" Bryson, who pulled in \$260,557.76. Among them is Thomas Flores, who retired as an assistant chief and payroll division boss in 2008 but was brought back briefly as

a consultant to assist the city's payment of retroactive pay raises. Flores banked \$267,704.93, according to city documents, which would make him the 15th-highest-paid city employee.

Commissioner Joe Sanchez, a candidate for mayor, was unavailable for comment at deadline. But his commission aide pointed out that Sanchez was the lone vote against this year's budget because it raised residents' garbage fees — though garbage fees are not directly affected by employee salaries.

Sanchez's opponent for mayor, Commissioner Tomas Regalado, worries the City of Miami will soon face a huge deficit owing to declining property and resort tax revenues, which may lead to the firing of low-level, low-paid workers. "I think that there is a total divorce between reality and city business," Regalado says. "The administration has not figured out that we are in an economic crisis. My fear is that, come budget process, the little people will be the ones affected and the big salaries will not be touched. To me that is not only wrong but also immoral."

As Regalado understands it, there are plenty of employees among Miami's 4000-plus workforce who make more than six figures annually. "There are more than 700 employees who make \$100,000," he says. "That is a very accurate figure. I have heard that from people

Continued on page 18

City of Miami/Jorge R. Perez

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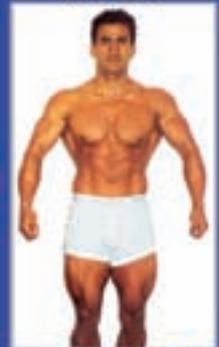
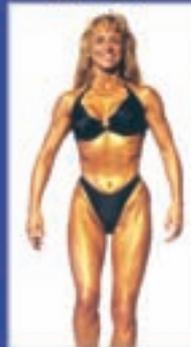
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## Gravy Train

Continued from page 16

who ought to know.”

Yet Regalado doesn't want to criticize firefighters' salaries, instead directing his ire toward “the suits,” upper management. “I think that probably they will try to shift the focus on uniform people, but there are a lot of suits who make a lot of money,” he says, adding that several city departments are top-heavy with three or four assistant directors.

But even without overtime, firefighters make a decent amount of money. According to Lt. Ignatius “Iggy” Carroll, Jr., spokesman for the fire department, the salary range for rank-and-file firefighters is between \$44,685 and \$67,993 per year. Officers make more. A fire lieutenant's salary range is between \$51,823 and \$81,191. A fire captain's is from \$59,956 to \$93,934. Chief fire officers are paid between \$69,351 and \$108,653. Assistant fire chiefs, deputy fire chiefs, and fire chiefs earn salaries between \$133,134 and \$223,391.

Union president Suarez points out that fire-rescue responds to 90,000

emergency incidents a year, with 80 percent having to do with medical emergencies and 20 percent dealing with fires. Suarez also insists that the city would not have to add so much overtime on top of firefighters' base salaries if the city were more adept at filling vacant positions and issuing promotions. Right now there are eight captain vacancies and ten lieutenant vacancies within the fire department, Suarez says. Since the fire-union contract requires firefighters attached to a station, a fire truck, or a rescue vehicle to be supervised, supervisors such as Hart must work far beyond their normal 48-hour shifts.

“I know one of the reasons [Hart's] salary was high is the city's delay in promoting captains,” he says.

Suarez, a lieutenant, claims he is actually frustrated that so much money is going to overtime. He fears that equipment needs may suffer. “It kills me because it all comes out of the fire

department's budget,” he says.

Firefighters, administrators, and department heads were not the only employees who received more than \$200,000 in 2008, according to the city's spreadsheets. Number two on the list was Fernando Acosta, a Miami police officer and sergeant-at-arms for the Miami Commission. Acosta earned \$295,075.22 in 2008, according to the city's spreadsheet. Reached at the mayor's office, Acosta had this to say: “I wish I made that

**Firefighters, administrators, and department heads were not the only employees who received more than \$200,000 in 2008, according to city records.**

much money.”

Then he referred all questions to police Chief John Timoney. (Timoney is number four on the

city's list, at \$290,532.66.)

The Miami Police Department's public information office did not reply to e-mailed questions about Acosta's responsibilities as sergeant-at-arms. “He drives the mayor around — that's it,” says Tomas Regalado dismissively.

With memories still fresh of a recent sergeant-at-arms controversy at Miami-Dade County, where sworn officers chauffeured county commissioners last year at a cost of \$743,845, *BT* attempted to ask Mayor Diaz how Acosta managed to be paid more than Timoney in 2008, as well as what duties he performs. In response, mayoral spokeswoman Poleo suggested that *BT* “look up” the sergeant-at-arms job description.

The city's Employee Relations Department describes a sergeant-at-arms as “an executive-level position” filled by a sworn police officer “responsible for maintaining order and providing security during any official assembly of the city commission.” The officer also provides “protective coverage” to city commissioners and is responsible for “coordinating necessary transportation for city commissioners to meetings and special events.”

In other words, chauffer city commissioners around town and make sure nobody gets out of hand at city hall.

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Letters

Continued from page 6

**So Who Really Cares? You Care, That's Who.**

After reading Wendy Doscher-Smith's column about her use of the "F bomb" ("Me and My Foul Mouth," March 2009), I would say that any person claiming "not to care" is usually defending a weak position, and certainly persons who feel shame for their actions should realize the fault is all their own. I appreciate the ridiculousness of censoring language, but it's far more ridiculous to see a grown woman put herself in the emotional position of a second-grader over it.

Other people exist, and you are accountable for the consequences of your actions.

*Rajan Purcell  
Bayside*

**The Uncluttered Life**

Thank you so much for Jim W. Harper's timely article "World-Class Gluttons" (February 2009). As a personal organizer who specializes in helping people de-clutter their homes, I regularly

see the effects of Americans' unthinking consumption, bringing me regular business from those who need help in getting out from under piles of unnecessary belongings.

We Americans regularly purchase hundreds of items because they catch our eye or seem to be a bargain, without ever asking ourselves whether we truly need them. The environmental movement is often regarded as being made up of holier-than-thou, goody-two-shoes people, but really, many of the modest practices they (and Harper's article) espouse are in the consumer's best interest. Purchasing less-than-necessary items costs money and emotional energy, and it requires one to have ever-larger (and more expensive) dwellings to store things.

I'm hoping that the silver lining to the current economic crisis is that people begin to evaluate their true material needs and priorities, financial and personal. The burgeoning frugality-simplicity-environmental movement is not just good for the environment and the pocketbook — it's great for the spirit, too.

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# Rackless in the Village: A Two-Wheeled Odyssey

*The Shores is not exactly bicycle-friendly*

By Jen Karetnick, *BT* Contributor & Cathi Marro, Special to *BT*

**H**ave you ever noticed the lack of bicycle racks in the Shores? I didn't. Perhaps because, like the gas guzzler I am, I drive everywhere I go around this tiny village of ours. But my dear friend Cathi Marro, a professional musician (I play flute with her in the Miami Shores Flute Ensemble), who lives just outside the Miami Shores in unincorporated territory, likes to two-wheel it, for both economic and ecologic reasons.

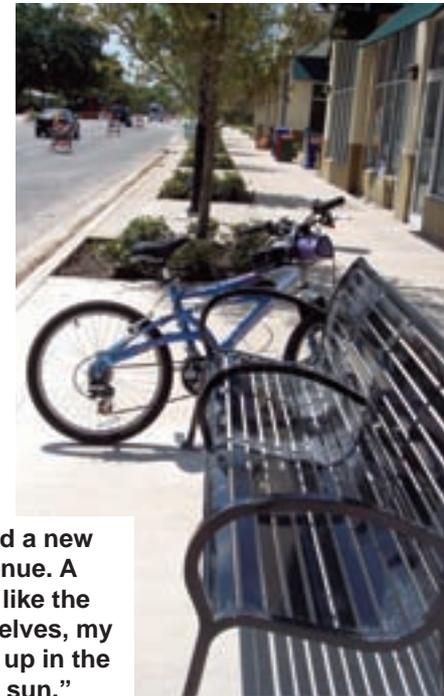
For some time now, as she gets more and more frustrated, she's been sending me photos (with captions!) of everywhere she has to chain her bicycle when she makes a stop in the Shores.

I've decided it would benefit all of us — villagers and our newly elected leaders alike — to see her photo essay. And before you take note of her eccentric sense of humor, let me just tell you: Yes, she happens to be good friends with another of our *Biscayne Times* columnists in addition to me. Can you guess who?

"I enjoy riding my bicycle around the village. One of my favorite stops is Starbucks. As if the parking lot isn't enough of a disaster for cars, I have even more trouble parking my bike. I used to chain it to a stop sign in a patch of grass on the corner. It was the only place I could find when Starbucks first opened. That spot disappeared quickly as they put up a giant sign and bushes so I can no longer get to the stop sign."



"So lately I've been chaining up to this handicapped parking sign a few doors down."



"Recently I discovered a new bench on NE 2nd Avenue. A bit inconvenient and, like the black benches themselves, my bike seat really heats up in the blazing South Florida sun."

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"The more I look around, the more I realize there are bike racks all over Miami Shores. I could use that LEFT LANE CLOSED AHEAD sign!"



"Signs often make counterintuitive bike racks."



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# Put On a Happy Face

*With a little help from the city, MiMo can dazzle us once again*

By Frank Rollason  
BT Contributor

Let's say you're driving along Biscayne Boulevard in the Upper Eastside. It's rush hour, so you're moving somewhat slowly — slowly enough that you have a chance to look around. That's when you notice a storefront business you haven't seen before. Must be new, you think.

The next thought is an important one: "Maybe I'll check it out this weekend." Or conversely: "Ugh. No way I'm going to visit that place — it's a dump."

What attracts you during that initial encounter? What repels you? Chances are it's the way the business presents itself, its "face," so to speak.

Enter the City of Miami's "commercial façade program." This is a city initiative that's been around for years, but like most programs of its ilk, it gets little publicity. Property owners and business proprietors learn about it mainly by word-of-mouth.



The idea behind the program is to stimulate economic activity by putting on the happy, inviting face that prompts you to think, "Yes, I'll stop by this weekend." It's common sense, really. A place whose public façade appears menacing — or even just neglected — will not attract the curious customer who'll never discover what treasures or professional services lie just beyond the door.

Miami's façade program can provide pressure cleaning and painting, awnings,

doors, showcase windows, signage, and security shutters or impact glass for qualified businesses. How much funding are we talking about? Up to \$10,000 per business is available on a sliding scale of participation by the business owner. For instance, a grant of between \$5000 and \$10,000 would require the business to kick in 15 percent (\$1500 for a full \$10,000 grant), with the city funding the other 85 percent (\$8500). Not a bad

return on investment!

And what are the rules for participating? First, the business must be located in the City of Miami and must possess a valid occupational license and certificate of use. The business will also have to supply a current property survey and proof of flood insurance. In addition, the business must be located within a census

*Continued on page 23*



BT photos by Frank Rollason

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## NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

### Happy Face

Continued from page 22

tract designated as financially depressed or lower-income. The bulk of the MiMo Historic District (Biscayne Boulevard between NE 50th and NE 77th streets) qualifies. The program operates out of the city manager's office through the Office of Economic Development, with direct services being supplied by local community-based organizations (CBOs), which are located throughout the city.

For the Upper Eastside, the CBO is the Rafael Hernandez Housing and Economic Development Corporation. The contact person is Henry Mojica, who is the project manager for the façade program. Henry can be reached at 305-576-9895 or via e-mail at hmojica@bellsouth.net.

I can hear the cynics among you saying, "Great, there's a program, but does anyone really get any money?" The answer to that question is a resounding Yes! Thanks to the efforts of Henry and the MiMo Biscayne Association, several businesses in the historic district have already benefited. Uva 69 received a grant for awnings, Carl's Motel El Padre received a grant for impact

windows, the South Pacific Motel received a grant for painting, and the Biscayne Inn received a grant for a new neon sign. (See accompanying photos.)

Other local businesses have been approved and are awaiting funding from next year's budget. On that list are the Shalimar Motel for painting; Hiperfit gym for painting; Casa Toscana for painting, doors, and signage; Jamboree for painting, doors, and signage; as well as Moonchine Asian Bistro for awnings.

Like most good things, however, the façade program isn't without its detractors. It appears that our District 2 city commissioner, Marc Sarnoff, is not convinced that funding for this program should continue — or continue with the same sliding scale of participation. I attended a MiMo Biscayne Association meeting on the evening of April 15 to listen to the commissioner present his position on the program to a group of 17 property and business owners along Biscayne Boulevard in the Upper Eastside.

To say that his comments put a damper on the groups' hopes would be an understatement. The commissioner explained that, in general, he

was "philosophically opposed to using CDBG [Community Development Block Grants] for façade grants," which is how the program is funded. He elaborated by saying, "I have a philosophical problem with refunding those [businesses] that have received [façade grants] already in the past four years, and using public money on a private building."

Lest anyone misunderstand, he reiterated his position: "I've never been a fan of the façade program — I don't think it's a proper use of [community development] money." When asked by attendees how he intends to spend CDBG money next fiscal year, the commissioner replied that he was "inclined" to fund projects dealing with children. "When the competition [for money] comes down to children or something else," he said, "I will support the children." Before the meeting ended, however, he wavered between "I'm not sure what I'm going to do" and "I've decided to fund [the façade program] at a lower level than before."

Recently, in response to a letter he received from one of the historic district businesses extolling the virtues of the program, he forwarded the e-mail to city staff with the

following comment: "I am not familiar with this program — what can you tell me about it?" (You'd hope that, after two and a half years in office, the commissioner would have heard from city staff about the program's benefits. His four colleagues on the commission all support it.)

In light of the uncertainty over the façade program's future in District 2, I suggest that those of you who'd like to see it continue — especially those of you who've already been approved for funding — contact Commissioner Sarnoff and present your case in hopes of persuading him to keep it going, and to maintain the existing formula for participation. This is one city program that really works. It's an integral part of the MiMo Historic District's efforts to recapture the relevance it once had, when the area was an attraction for thousands of travelers along U.S. 1. It can be that again — with a little help from the city.

Contact Commissioner Sarnoff at his city hall office (305-250-5333) or via e-mail ([msarnoff@miamigov.com](mailto:msarnoff@miamigov.com))

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# Dark Skies, Cold Rain, and Death

*Memories of a massacre too close to home*

By Wendy Doscher-Smith  
BT Contributor

The Friday morning when 14 people were shot dead just blocks from my house in Binghamton, New York, was typical of early April, a.k.a. The Spring Lie. Which is to say that outside the many large windows of my home, the weather was about as cheery as a proctology exam.

When we bought this house, the windows were a draw. However, all I've wanted to do for months now is draw some heavy curtains over them, shutting out the funereal skies. I'd also shut out the roar of the buses and the neighbor's howling dog. The poor beagle is on a tie-out, the owners leaving him out each night until they retire. Cruel and stupid behavior to inflict on a dog.

But let's step back to a time before the eight-month winter here in South Alaska transformed me into a grumpy, miserable prick I don't even recognize. It was late summer, and the Vitamin



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

D-Deficient Darkness that burrowed inside me was only in the amoebic stage. Back then, the windows seemed lovely, and I knew not of the helpless dog and rumbling buses.

My husband and I chose to live in the West Side neighborhood of Binghamton

because of its beautiful Victorian homes and its proximity to downtown. While house hunting, we considered surrounding areas, including a suburb called Vestal, though I quickly dismissed it as a bit too Stepford for me. Besides the lovely homes, there are maybe five other

things I like about living here. One of them is the cultural diversity.

Growing up in Miami, as a non-practicing Jew, I had an identity crisis. I related more to the Cuban community. In Binghamton there are many cultures that are radically different, from Greek Orthodox to Ukrainian, Italian to Protestant. The very presence of the Southern Tier Melting Pot made me feel a little less homesick.

For me, living in Miami and moving to Binghamton was like eating Cap'n Crunch Berries your whole life and then switching to All Bran. I needed some Fruit Loops, Frosted Flakes, and Sugar Pops. In the various cultures, I found my fix. After all, Binghamton was crowned the "Capital of the Pierogy Pocket" by Mrs. T's pierogies. Just down the street from our house is the Euro-Mart, run by an older Ukrainian woman in a floral apron. The inventory, including strange chocolates, uncovered

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## NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BISCAYNE PARK

### Dark Skies

Continued from page 24

baked goods, and dried-up sardines, made me feel oddly at home.

Johnson City, which is minutes away and is one of the “Triple Cities” that also includes Binghamton and Endicott, is home to many Ukrainians as well as Asians. The American Civic Association shooter, Jiverly Wong, lived there. His 13 victims hailed from eight different countries.

I know the American Civic Association building, but the day of the shootings it took me a second to figure where it was. Since I’m a photographer, the Binghamton architecture, with its decaying iron and filthy brick, appeals to me. Still, of all the hundreds of pictures I’ve shot, none are of that building. Architecturally, the ACA structure is nothing special. Now, of course, the whole world knows what it looks like.

When the news broke about some kind of shooting, I figured it involved an argument between two drunken townies over who bagged a 14-pointer during hunting season. (Translation: the number

of antlers on a deer.) Jeremy sent an e-mail warning me to avoid downtown. I almost dismissed it. I was supposed to go downtown to get an enlargement of a picture made for a client. But I imagined the local cops would be all flustered about this shooting, whatever it was, and I’d get stuck in traffic. So I decided to do it another time.

Instead I headed for Vestal, a few minutes away, for a photo shoot. On the way, I got a text from a friend who works at NBC in Miami asking about the shooting. I thought that was weird as she never texts me. Then I got a call from another friend in Miami. Weird again, as she didn’t usually call. I dismissed it as well. It wasn’t until 20 minutes later, when I called her back and then got to a television, that I realized this wasn’t some routine, boozy gunplay.

Stories of random shootings and multiple deaths are always shocking. When it happens blocks from your house, in a small community, it’s downright fantastical. When it happens and you are a journalist who lives in the locale, it is uncanny.

My immediate reaction was to race back to Binghamton and cover the story.

At that point, about 1:00 p.m., the entire city was on lockdown. Binghamton High School is practically across the street from the American Civic Association. Countless times I’ve driven by those kids all bundled-up as they wait after school for city buses to take them to the mall or home or wherever freezing high-schoolers go.

As a journalist, I also knew that the ACA itself was probably on bigger lockdown than the city. I felt at once neutered and elated. I could walk there from my house. I could dodge anyone I had to, or sneak in anywhere I had to in order to take pictures. I had done it before.

But I stayed at my friend’s house in Vestal, transfixed before the television, watching the whole thing unfold on international news. I had done the photo shoot there I intended to do, and lingered long afterward.

Thing is, as hard as I have tried to fight being a part of this community, I think I finally felt a connection that day. Maybe it was because I’ve spent many hours on the streets outside the massacre site, my camera in tow. Maybe it was because I bought a pair of eyeglass frames across the street from the ACA, or that I

take that left turn on Front Street off of Main Street almost daily.

Later that night it rained. The bridge into the city was jammed with satellite news trucks. The American Civic Association was still yellow-taped. We drove by the service held at the church near the scene.

Yet for all the insanity of the day, it was still just early April in Binghamton. And with the heavy rain came the worms — never one of my favorites. (As a kid in Miami, I refused to leave the house when they emerged, and here, years later, I’m no different. I had to be piggybacked to the car.)

But the worms are a sign of new beginnings. And even as I cringed at the sight of them, I knew they meant spring had arrived. I hoped the worms marked new beginnings for the victims’ families, as well as for Wong’s family. They also suffered a loss, and deserved our thoughts and prayers.

For a moment, as a bus whooshed by and the neighbor’s beagle howled, all felt normal in Binghamton. And for that, on the third day of April 2009, I was grateful.

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

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# Fort Knox Redefined

*You've finally brought home one too many Picassos. Now what?*

By Anne Tschida  
Special to BT

The entry to Museo Vault is flanked by two small but sleek art galleries, with floor-to-ceiling windows facing NW 29th Street. Inside one are sculptures made from old drive-in movie speakers, staplers, radio parts. Viewed in this nicely air-conditioned space, the exhibit "Rocket Man" is pretty cool all around. It turns out to be a prescient preview to what stands behind the tightly sealed doors of the Vault.

The Museo Vault, opened this past November, is an art storage, services, and shipping facility. But that makes it sound prosaic. Unlike the intentionally retro "Rocket Man" in the front annex, this place is truly space-age.

After handing over ID to security, the first of many thick, heavily video-monitored doors opens, revealing five floors and 86,000-square-feet of state-of-the-art everything, or so it seems. There's the handsome and expertly lit viewing room, where collectors, artists, and museum curators can show guests artwork in a posh setting. There's the security-intense loading dock and also the crating and packing center, where craftsmen build customized shipping containers and insulated casings. Upstairs: color-coordinated storage and office rooms, and hanging panel spaces. The whole building is cocooned by a hyper climate- and humidity-controlled system, and happens to sit on some of the highest land in Miami.

That, at least, is according to the project's founder and owner David Lombardi, a prominent developer in the Wynwood arts district. The elevation of the property is an extra bonus here in flood-prone hurricane alley, Lombardi points out as he maneuvers another high-tech entry into another part of the Vault. In fact all of this techno-gadgetry has a distinct purpose and makes a distinct statement: This is a unique art-services center, and it was built in Miami for a reason.

We have growing art collections and galleries, with increasingly important and expensive work, and handling all of it should not be left to amateurs, especially on this southern tip of Florida. That would be the thinking behind the \$10 million facility for Lombardi, whose Wynwood Lofts were some of the first spaces built specifically for artists and



**David Lombardi's new venture carries a message: In the art world, Miami is now on the map.**

artist studios, and which he says are now all occupied.

Lombardi explains how humidity and water are the worst enemies of art; so the humidity inside Museo Vault is constantly monitored with 50 sensors, and water sprinklers will only activate in very targeted areas in case of fire. The lights are covered in UV protection sleeves, and the entire building has a back-up power system to keep those climate and security controls running even if a dreaded hurricane should hit. Says Lombardi: "It provides a [new] infrastructure for Miami."

That safety structure is especially necessary here in Florida,

according to Jane Hart, curator of exhibitions at the Art and Culture Center Hollywood. "Even compared to a similar place like L.A., our humidity and salt are brutal here," she says. "Serious collectors need a serious storage space." Hart points out that as household collections have grown along with the status of art, "people have more stuff in their homes than they can handle. It's become popular to rotate your collection, and it is now very important to safely store what you are not showing."

There's more to the facility than doors and climate, says a proud Lombardi on this hot spring afternoon. "We have the best people providing the services." Almost on cue, Alan Myers, the fine arts collection manager, steps out of an elevator. He had served a 17-year stint at the Whitney Museum in New York before coming to Miami. Lombardi remarks that Myers had just changed the protective plastic covering on a painting, and Myers explains that leaving it on too long can cause harm. He gets very personal with the art, even visiting a

collector's home first to get to know it and then "figure out the best way to store it."

Hands-on care extends to the crating

and shipping side of the business as well. There are legion shipping disaster tales, of art arriving late for an opening, and worse, arriving damaged or half dismantled. And packaging contemporary art is no small task — pieces can include room-size installations, delicate rice paper, glass sculptures. From the back of the huge crating room, one carpenter remembers trying to transport an enormous metal sculpture from the artist Britto, which he said eventually had to involve forklifts.

**All this techno-gadgetry has a distinct purpose and makes a distinct statement: This is a unique art-services center, and it was built in Miami for a reason.**

Security measures at the Vault include confidentiality about what art is already in storage and who owns it — Lombardi and his staff don't want to give potential thieves any extra information. But a major Miami collector, Dennis Scholl, doesn't have to follow a similar vow of silence. He was recently named Miami program director for the Knight Foundation, which includes leading the \$40 million Knight Arts Challenge; and parts of the collection he created with his wife Debra currently are showing in an exhibition at the Frost Art Museum at FIU. "I can't imagine a better place to have important objects if you want them protected," he says. "The space is world-class — well thought out, organized, and ready to handle almost any kind of art object. It's a dramatic upgrade from existing facilities."

But while many seem to agree there is a need for such up-to-date services, even Lombardi acknowledges the timing might be off. "Unfortunately," he says, "we opened just as the recession hit the art market." The occupancy rate is not nearly as high as he had hoped at this point, and they are not running at full capacity in terms of services, "but we'll wait it through, like everyone else."

A potential client arrives to take a tour. If Lombardi's dream succeeds, the client might be one who catalogues his collection using the viewing room as camera-ready documenting space, and in the future will log-on on the Vault's secured Website to check out his artworks, or show them to others, maybe while he's in Paris.

"It is a high-quality project, and anything of high quality gets high marks from me," says Michelle Weinberg, local artist and director of the Girls' Club, a private art foundation and alternative art space. "But obviously the economy at this moment may make it a challenge to launch."

Scholl says that Museo Vault's presence means more than merely additional storage space: "This concept is another statement about Miami's position as an important city in the art world. We're one of the largest collecting cities in America now. It's an amazing facility, and I do hope they do well."

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

BT photo by Silvia Ros

# A School Is Born

*Coming to the neighborhood: A dream called Miami Arts Charter School*

By Margaret Griffis  
Special to BT

After summer vacation, when the lights switch on again at Miami-Dade public schools this August, several hundred lucky students will have a new school in the Design District to call their own. Instead of stuffing the usual pencils and notebooks into their backpacks, though, these kids will also carry paint brushes and ballerina slippers to classes at the Miami Arts Charter School, which will occupy the former Channel 10 studios at 3900 Biscayne Blvd.

Miami Arts Charter, or MAC, is the latest charter school to open in the county. Founded by husband and wife educational team Alfredo and Christine de la Rosa, MAC will provide the conventional middle- and high-school learning experience, but it will also offer students an unparalleled opportunity to develop



BT photo by Silvia Ros

**Alfredo and Christine de la Rosa had a vision: A arts program forever protected from budget cuts.**

their creative skills. Even as other public schools see their arts and music budgets dwindling dramatically, visual artists,

dancers, actors, musicians, and creative writers will find a nurturing environment at this new campus.

This focus on the arts is possible thanks to a relatively new educational movement that blossomed in the 1990s. Basically, charter schools are autonomous public schools, licensed and monitored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools officials. Like the standard version, the charters are open to all children living within the county, their students pay no tuition, and they receive local, state, and federal tax dollars for their operating expenses. Unlike most public schools, however, charters are not constrained by attendance boundaries; they can accept students living anywhere in the state.

In 1996 the first charter schools appeared in Florida; today more than 70 are operating in Miami-Dade County alone. The main difference between charter and standard public schools is that decision-making, beyond that which is prescribed

Continued on page 29

# Low Turnout but High Hopes

*Political newcomer Donald Shockey sails to victory in Miami Shores*

By Mark Sell  
Special to BT

Miami Shores prides itself on being Mayberry in the hood. Twenty minutes from downtown, five minutes from Little Haiti, seven minutes from Liberty City, ten minutes from the beaches — this verdant, closely knit village of 10,000 has the good sense to get its rest. Conveying that impression of restfulness and insularity takes work: a dedicated management and elected council, a friendly and alert constabulary, efficient public works, tough zoning, persnickety code enforcement, a dense social network, municipal taxes, a decent budget, and just a touch of the old NIMBY syndrome (not in my backyard).

The April 14 Village Council election nudged the village awake with a surprise: the strong second-place finish of relative political newcomer and new vice mayor Donald Shockey, a 51-year-old urban planner and self-styled change agent. (He served from 2002 to 2004 on the Planning and Zoning Board, where he was known as equable in his dealings and passionate

about landscaping and aesthetics.)

Evidently a good portion of the 19 percent of the electorate (1308) who actually did show up to vote for the three open slots on the village council were ready to mix it up. Judging from the “bullet voting,” in which voters selected just one candidate instead of the allotted three, some of them voted for Shockey to the exclusion of the others, as if to mix things up a little more.

“People see the village as being old-fashioned, which has its advantages and disadvantages,” Shockey said in a post-election interview. “There is a general feeling that new blood can’t hurt. There’s a feeling that decisions are made, if not behind closed doors, at least behind doors not as open as they could be. So this candidacy was about being more inclusive, getting more people involved. Sustainability is also huge.”

Shockey (690 votes) came in just behind Al Davis (724 votes), who is now mayor for the third time. Both will serve four-year terms. Incumbent Councilman Prospero Herrera II (675 votes) won a two-year term, and knocked out highly regarded incumbent Hunt Davis (Al’s



**Donald Shockey: For one dollar per year, he’ll now grapple with some million-dollar problems.**

nephew, with 619 votes) and second-time contender Eddie Lewis (361 votes).

Shockey, Herrera, and Al Davis will join incumbents and village mainstays Steve Loffredo, an attorney, Herta Holly, a school administrator. Village manager Tom Benton, a 37-year employee who rose through the ranks, will remain.

“I was surprised that Hunt Davis didn’t make it back in,” said Robert Bourne, a prominent local Realtor and major contributor of time and treasure to

public schools and local civic causes. “I was not surprised that Donald Shockey won, but I was surprised that the election got so close. And I was disappointed at how few people voted.”

Hunt Davis put his Vanderbilt MBA and experience running a small business to use in his two years on the council, mastering the budget, embracing Doctors Charter School, and mud-wrestling with the Florida Legislature on the village’s behalf. He’s just 39 years old, so no one expects him to disappear.

At any rate, change is coming on the council, but — as poet Carl Sandburg once said of frost — on cat feet. Shockey is but one vote in five in a weak-mayor/strong manager government, and he needs to get his bearings among four seasoned colleagues.

Once he does get his bearings, expect Shockey to push for more inclusiveness and citizen participation, greater Internet access and transparency in the village’s dealings. He’s also expected to champion Doctors Charter School and to advocate

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**Shockey**

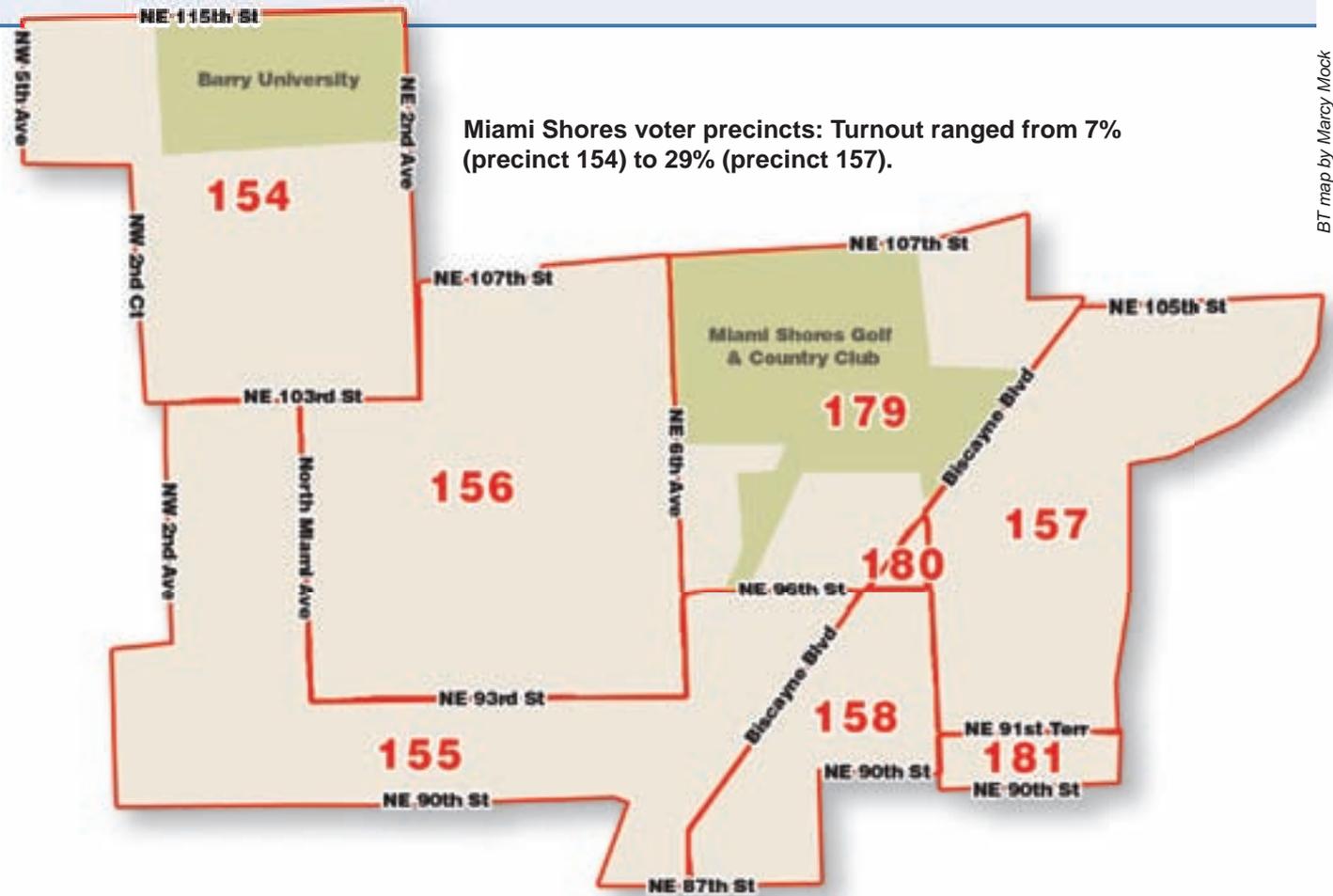
Continued from page 27

for various “green,” “sustainable,” and volunteer initiatives that bring people together and do not cost money.

He could create waves — if not win votes — by favoring an FEC passenger rail station at 87th Street, near Tropical Chevrolet, or raising the issue of term limits for the two boards with binding authority: planning and zoning and code enforcement. More broadly, expect greater outreach to neighboring governments and the county.

The immediate fiscal challenges are brutal: a shattered economy; decimated jobs and attendant foreclosures; a crippled housing market (unsold inventories are down to 165 from 234 a year ago, but prices are still falling); groaning and intractable pension costs; slashed revenue-sharing from the state; and lower property values and tax revenues. The result is a pinched budget (\$11.9 million, down \$500,000 from last year), higher millage (\$7.63 per \$1000 assessed

Continued on page 29



BT map by Marcy Mock

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**School**

Continued from page 27

by law, occurs entirely within the school itself.

As founder and executive director, Alfredo de la Rosa explains, "The thing that drove me the most is that I built several good [arts] programs over the years, and large systems and bureaucracies being what they are, they tend to have a decision-making process that doesn't always jibe with what any particular teacher is trying to do. The arts are frequently the first things to go. I just wanted to make sure that I don't continue

to build programs for kids that eventually, for whatever reason — financial, political, or whatever — end up being done away with. The only way to ensure that is to have control."

De la Rosa has worked as a public-school educator for more than 20 years, is nationally board-certified, and has launched a number of magnet schools already, so he has plenty of experience to guide him in this ambitious undertaking. He grew up in the Miami-Dade public school system, and would even ride his bike by the Channel 10 studios to class. "I never thought I'd open a school

there," he laughs. "Having a school like Miami Arts in the neighborhood benefits everybody. We'll be producing the artists and musicians and writers and painters of the future, who are going to ultimately stay here in Miami and contribute back to the arts community, or move on to the professional world as better people, better professionals overall, because of the discipline they'll be learning."

As for those Channel 10 studios, the serendipitous relocation of WPLG to Pembroke Park in March not only opened the door to MAC, it provided the school with a landmark building

that was already geared to high-quality arts production. Among other benefits, large interior open spaces will turn into rehearsal halls, while soundproof editing bays will become practice rooms.

MAC will be leasing the building from 3900 Biscayne LLC, an investment group that includes Miami architect Kobi Karp, who is known not only for his innovative designs but also for his commitment to preservation and green technologies. His architecture company is very active in remodeling the facility

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**Shockey**

Continued from page 28

valuation, up from \$7.14), and the threat of higher fees for strapped families.

So with all this, why would anyone want a tough job on the village council for a buck a year? "You have to have service in your blood," Bourne observed. "Candidates don't do this for fame or fortune. And they want to keep it going in the right direction."

(Bourne is on to something. Miami Shores commands fierce loyalty and a deep tradition of civic service.)

Shockey, trim and gray-haired, had strong support from the gay and professional communities, which put him just 34 votes behind 60-year-resident Al Davis, the florid, rotund, blunt-talking son of Alabama who calls the village "Mahmuh Shores." At age 69 he was elected mayor for an unprecedented third

time — about as close to Mayor for Life as the village charter allows.

The elder Davis is a conservative Republican but defies red-blue stereotypes. Flinty with public money, he is committed to preserving the A-rated but cash-strapped charter school, which has kept many families from fleeing the village over schools. Davis's fans are spread among the old guard, liberal professional types, and Miami Shores's influential

gay community. In fact, Shockey, Al Davis, and Hunt Davis were endorsed by SAVE-Dade, the gay-lesbian-transgender advocacy group.

As an election force, the gay community has come into its own as a significant minority, with a disproportionate share of voters and contributors. Some may be surprised to learn that Miami Shores has

Continued on page 30

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**Shockey**

Continued from page 29

the sixth-highest concentration of same-sex couples in the United States. Provincetown, Massachusetts, is number one; Wilton Manors in Broward is number four; and Key West is *behind* the Shores at number eight.

Shockey owes his victory to more than voters' desire for change. Even though he didn't decide to run until five

(The involvement of a political party in such a nonpartisan election is rare but has happened before. The Republican Party supported Karen Kirby for Miami Shores council in 1985; she was elected mayor. Shockey is a staunch Democrat.)

Candidate Shockey also benefited from the organizational skill of marketing veteran and entrepreneur Bob Domlesky, who advocates "green and sustainable" initiatives and signed on three weeks before the election because he wanted to jolt the village from its "somnia-  
lence."

The electorate — if narrow — is highly educated, and the population markedly more diverse than its apparent leadership. Roughly one in four households is African-American, nearly 14 percent West

Indian, 22 percent Hispanic, and 48 percent non-Hispanic white.

Miami Shores also trends blue, and slightly young, with an average age of 37. All eight precincts in Miami Shores went for Obama this past November, averaging roughly 70 percent. That varied from 57 percent in precinct 157 to 83 percent in precinct 154.

**Shockey: "There's a feeling that decisions are made, if not behind closed doors, at least behind doors not as open as they could be."**

weeks before the election, he says he managed to raise just over \$2000, about average for a council candidate. Yard signs sprouted like dandelions right at the end, following door-to-door campaigning, detailed position papers, and endorsements and phone-bank calls from the Democratic Party and SAVE-Dade.

**Summary Report: Miami Shores - April 14, 2009 General Election Unofficial Results**

**Registered Voters - Total 6,870**

**Ballots Cast - Total 1,306**

**Voter Turnout - Total 19.01%**

Village Council	Votes	%
<b>Al Davis</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>23.59%</b>
<b>Hunt Davis</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>20.17%</b>
<b>Prospero Guillermo Herrera, II</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>21.99%</b>
<b>Eddie Lewis</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>11.76%</b>
<b>Donald P. Shockey</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>22.48%</b>

When the time came to celebrate the three winners at the Miami Shores Country Club on April 21, many of the usual suspects turned out — a combination of bluebloods with lime-green blazers and white shoes, gay worthies exchanging kisses and "darlings," and newcomers taking in the scene. Marcy Orth, a Shockey backer who sets up on-location production shoots, was bemused.

"Look at this crowd," she said. "You honestly think this reflects the Shores? I go door-to-door to set up shoots, and we know

Miami Shores looks different from this. Look, I have nothing against marshmallow drops and Christmas tree lightings, but people have all kinds of belief systems and can always feel more included. You could have all kinds of community events bringing people together and they don't need to cost money. We can get creative. I'm ready for change, and I think that's what Shockey represents."

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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## School

Continued from page 29

as a school. Says de la Rosa: "We're very fortunate to have run into them, because it really is a big helping hand to have such expertise onboard."

Another mutual advantage to the community will be MAC's links to the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, which de la Rosa calls "among the best in the world." The dean of the Frost School, Shelton Berg, sits on the MAC governing board. "At a time of cutbacks," says Berg, "I think it's really important for something as essential as music and art that this school is starting. Music has never been more important to people than it is now. It's ingrained in everyone's life, and it's part of what weaves us together as a society. When it's cut from education, I think there's no regard for just how essential it is to the human experience. I call it the 'mortar of humanity' because it really is."

MAC will have its normal retinue of accredited teachers, but through the Frost School, students will have access to broader educational opportunities. Berg

elaborates: "Because we're such a great resource of talent, [MAC] is hiring some of our students [for tutoring and other instruction], and I think even some of our part-time faculty to do some teaching there, which means instruction will be at a very high level." The relationship between MAC and UM is still its early stages, Berg adds, and will develop and define itself over time.

Two other public schools offering an arts curriculum are practically neighbors: Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) is just across the railroad tracks from MAC, and the New World School of the Arts is nearby in downtown Miami. Both schools serve 9th through 12th grades (New World also features a college component), and both are magnet schools within the Miami-Dade County Public Schools system. Being magnet schools, as opposed to charters, means they don't enjoy the same level of autonomy MAC

will have. De la Rosa resists calling them competition and believes the three schools complement each other as there are so many Miami-Dade students who are interested in the arts. In fact, skills learned at MAC could help middle-school students get into New World or DASH if that's the path they wish to take.

MAC will, however, screen prospective

students much the same way as New World and DASH. Children will be required to apply and possibly audition for a spot

at MAC. If they are enrolling as beginners at the sixth-grade level, they will go through an interview to determine if the school is the best fit for them. As they mature as artists, they will have the opportunity to audition for specific programs and ensembles, or to simply complete their core academic studies.

Yes, just because MAC is an "arts" charter school doesn't mean students won't receive a rigorous education in math, science, social studies, and the

language arts. Nor will they get out of those dreaded P.E. classes. The academic program will operate within Florida's "Next Generation Sunshine State Standards," and the school will eventually seek accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

So what has been the most difficult part of creating a brand-new school? De la Rosa doesn't hesitate with an answer: real estate. It took nearly two years, he says, to find an appropriate location for the middle and high school, and he still hasn't found a building to house what will be MAC's already approved elementary school. So that part of the project will have to wait until at least the 2010 school year, if not longer.

What he and his wife won't have difficulty finding is enough talented students to fill the halls. The school held its first audition this past March at the University of Miami. More than 125 students participated. Auditions will continue through July or until there is a waiting list to get in. Interested students can apply online at [www.miamiartscharter.net](http://www.miamiartscharter.net).

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

**"I just wanted to make sure that I don't continue to build programs for kids that eventually, for whatever reason, end up being done away with."**



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# Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

## Revolution No. 9, the White Album

5400 Block of NE 1st Court

Police were called to respond to a report that a woman was being attacked by a white dude with dreadlocks. The suspect repeatedly tried to enter the apartment and, according to police, at one point threatened: "Bitch, I'm going to get you. Stop fucking with my family; you poured bleach on yourself." The bleach refers to another report filed earlier in the day by the same victim, who claimed someone threw bleach at her face. (Two police reports in the same day — hey, doesn't everyone do this on their day off?) When detectives came the next day to investigate, they were told that the apartment where the incident occurred, No. 9, does not exist. The owner, who has since foreclosed on the property, has never heard of the victim. Nevertheless, a letter will be sent to the phantom apartment.



## Tough Economy: Businesswoman Adds Burglary to Her Résumé

2200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Man observed a petite woman with long, shoulder-length red hair wearing a black suit jacket and matching pants. To complete the downtown professional



look, she was carrying a black briefcase. Appearances aside, the observer was about to witness a crime. The woman was let into his neighbor's apartment by a mysterious man who had no authorization to be there as the neighbor was on vacation. The apartment was ransacked (closet doors removed and clothes strewn about) and several pieces of jewelry

were stolen. The front door lock had been completely cut off. The woman left calmly carrying the same brief case with her obedient accomplice at her side. A perimeter was set up but no arrests were made, despite the detailed description of the woman in black.

## Worst-Case Scenario

100 Block of NE 68th Terrace

This victim came home to find his ex-boyfriend in the kitchen. The ex was not supposed to be there, but the victim never changed the security code to the apartment. This was not to be a pleasant rendezvous. The ex-flame grabbed the victim by the hair and screamed, "I'm going to kill your ass!" He punched the victim several times in the face, then grabbed a knife and forced himself on the victim. This horrific ordeal lasted close to two hours, until the victim was finally able to

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## Crime Beat

Continued from page 32

escape and call police. Think slow and hard Miami-ians: Is your future ex likely to do something similar?

## Upgrade that Security System

700 Block NE 62nd Street

A man left his condo's sliding door unlocked, but used a wooden stick to keep it shut. Security was on duty, so the man was not worried. He left for several hours, but returned to find his condo burglarized. Many items were missing, including his trusty wooden stick. This is the second incident in two weeks at this location. Time for an iron stick?

## Frustrated Salesman?

100 Block NE 69th Street

Answering the door, no matter where you are, can be dangerous. A man opened his door in response to a friendly knock and was promptly stabbed ten times. The knife-wielding nutcase ran

away and the victim was hospitalized. He has recovered.

## Clothing Store Hit

7400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Owner secured her business on a Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. The next day, when she returned, it was obvious something was very wrong. The front door was ajar and approximately \$30,000 in items had been taken from the store. The angles of the security cameras were smartly shifted so there was no video evidence of the perps at work.

## Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Distracted

Omni

Waiting for the bus after a long, hard day of work, a woman inadvertently left her purse at the busy Omni bus stop, Biscayne and NE 14th Street. She realized this only after riding on the bus for several minutes. In a panic, the poor woman returned. Of course the purse was gone. A witness saw a man take it. This being Miami, the man did not turn it in to lost and found.

## Okay, Then Just Give Me Your Dog

Belle Meade

A man was walking his dog, Coco, when he was approached by a seedy couple asking for directions. Their destination was impossible to discern, and the dog-walker was unable to help. This angered the twosome, who demanded the man sell them his dog for \$400. The man refused, so the pair simply grabbed the dog and fled in a waiting car.

## Man's Bling Gets Pinged

100 Block of NE 11th Street

A man was in his car when a woman unknown to him opened his passenger door and took a seat next to him. The man later told police: "She was attractive, so I did not want to kick her out." A few seconds later, another woman arrived and sat in the back seat. Finally a third woman showed up. She actually opened the driver's door and sat on his lap. Ready for a wild adventure, the man asked them if they wanted to spend the night at a respectable Boulevard motel. Insulted, they promptly stole his Rolex watch and ran off. The man flagged down police in the area, but the women got away.

## Laundry Hell

2000 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

A woman was washing her clothes in her condo's tenth-floor laundry facility. While her garments were in the dryer, she left the laundry room. When she returned to retrieve them, the clothes were gone. No witnesses or fashion clones have been found.

## Plug in an Extension Cord, Go to Jail

200 Block of NE 62nd Street

During hurricanes, neighbors gladly shared their generators with others. Not now! A woman called police to complain about a neighbor who was possibly stealing her electricity. Police discovered an extension cord running from her apartment to his. The neighbor admitted he had been stealing her electricity. He was promptly arrested. Question: Why didn't the woman simply unplug the extension cord? Answer: We'll never know.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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# Ultimately It's All About People

A new show at MOCA may prompt you to ask: Why is that considered art?

By Victor Barrenechea  
BT Contributor

When it comes to Miami art, you'll find no greater mass gathering of people than at Art Basel Miami Beach. Thousands flock from disparate parts of globe each year to buy, sell, and appreciate art. Last year alone the fair attracted roughly 60,000 visitors, with 250 galleries and some 2000 artists participating. The impact of this spreads far beyond the confines of the Miami Beach Convention Center, with dozens of other events orbiting around Basel involving hundreds more galleries and thousands more artists.

"It's a major point of focus in the city," says Ruba Katrib, assistant curator at North Miami's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). But Art Basel is only one of many major fairs that have taken the art world by storm in recent years, and they have radically shifted its traditional practices. "I felt there wasn't enough examination of this event and its impact on the city," Katrib continues. "I felt it would be important to address it in some way."

That was her inspiration for creating "Convention," the upcoming show at MOCA, in which more than 15 international artists investigate the significance of art fairs, as well as festivals (art or otherwise), expos, conventions, and other large-scale public events. "The show is really thinking about this sort of mode of gathering," Katrib says. "It's not a show that has such defined parameters."

The works, she says, are split between more traditional, object-based works and works that are more situational or participatory in nature. Ultimately, it is an exhibition that explores the nature of human interaction.

The most ambitious participatory project of "Convention" is by Los Angeles artist Fritz Haeg, whose work commonly deals with the social relationships among people. The project has its roots in a previous work titled *Sundown Salon*, in which Haeg, from 2001 to



Keith Waddington and Mindy Nelson will host events at their home, not at MOCA.

2006, hosted in his own home a series of events — performances, improvised happenings — involving people from his local community.

This time Haeg has selected a Coral Gables couple, Keith Waddington and Mindy Nelson, and will be transforming their living room into a salonlike gathering space in which the couple will host their own events for their own community. According to Haeg, it's completely

**Haeg selected Keith Waddington and Mindy Nelson, and has transformed their living room, the current contents of which he has rearranged at MOCA.**

up to Waddington and Nelson to decide what kind of events they'd like to host. In the meantime, the current contents of the couple's living room are being removed and arranged within the museum by Haeg. As the exhibition unfurls, documentation of the various events at their Coral Gables home will appear in the museum. You'll find a bulletin board with photographs, and a video-screen showing footage of these events, as well as interviews with the couple.

Waddington and Nelson were chosen from a long list of local residents who volunteered to take part in Haeg's project. Waddington is a professor of biology



Dave McKenzie's *It's a Date* ballot box: He'll take you out to dinner and then — who knows?

at University of Miami, while Nelson is an ecologist and animal behaviorist currently working on contract with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Neither is significantly involved in the art world, which is how Haeg wanted it. As he puts it, he looked specifically for "people who are creative but are not artists." Their events will be invitation-only affairs, and only as public as the couple chooses to make them.

Most museum visitors will be unable to experience firsthand the situation that Haeg has created in the Coral Gables household. The fact that the project takes place predominantly outside of the confines of the museum serves to raise questions about the role of the institution itself.

New York performance artist Xavier Cha is presenting her work called

Continued on page 35

## People

Continued from page 34

*Rehearsal Space*, which similarly challenges the conventions of what can be — or should be — shown in a museum. Cha's project consists of a 20-foot by 30-foot wooden dance floor that will serve as an active rehearsal space for local choreographers and dance companies to develop and practice their routines.

Already 20 dance companies and choreographers have booked the space (and the museum is still looking for more volunteers to participate in the project). Cha points out the apparent shortage of practice spaces in the Miami area, making this something of an altruistic gesture toward the local dance community. "I'm just basically creating a space for dancers to rehearse," says Cha. "I wanted to open up the museum to people who wouldn't have access to that space."

By creating a situation in which a variety of people utilize the space, Cha calls into question not only the kind of work that can be displayed in a museum, but also the kind of people who have access to such facilities. Another interesting aspect of the work is that, at any

given moment, a visitor could step into the museum and find the rehearsal space empty. Cha has created the possibility for an event that the viewer may never experience.

The same concept plays heavily in New York artist Dave McKenzie's work *It's a Date*. This is the fourth time McKenzie has presented *Date*. The only object on display is a ballot box. Visitors fill out ballots with their name and contact information and place them in the box. Near the end of the exhibition's run, McKenzie will choose at random a name from the box and take that person to dinner. Says McKenzie: "For me it's about the kind of thing that an artwork could do that we can't maybe do on a normal basis."

Social conventions dictate that you can't (usually) just pick a random person off the streets and invite him or her to dinner. Yet in a museum setting, people line up to place their names in the ballot box for a chance to have dinner with a



**Sean Raspet's *Arrangement 38 (Crowds and Power)* (detail), vinyl banners, electrical conduit, zinc-plated chain, 2009.**

Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Reich Gallery

artists are more detached and direct with their pieces. Corey McCorkle contributes an array of carpet samples from the convention halls of New York City hotels. Sean Raspet creates carnival-style banners with various "clip-art" images printed on them, while local artist Jim Drain makes sculptures that mimic the kind of art-fair booth displays you might come across at an event like Art Basel.

"All the artists," observes curator Ruba Katrib, "are pretty much dealing with the language and aesthetics of these sorts of events. I think the question most people will be asking is: Why is this art?" And though she says the tone of the show is playful and humorous, she also adds, "I think that's an important question to consider."

*"Convention" opens May 21 and runs through September 13 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 770 NE 125th St., North Miami. For hours and more information call 305-893-6211 or visit [www.mocanomi.org](http://www.mocanomi.org)*

total stranger. "The dinners are really simple," says McKenzie, who pays for these meals out of his own pocket, not at the expense of the museum. "I don't promise to be the wittiest conversationalist, or that we're going to fall in love, or even that we're going to be best friends." Yet the potential for these scenarios is implicit in the work.

And while McKenzie takes on social interaction at a very involved level, other

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www.artnet.com/bgillman.html  
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**BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL**

180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami  
By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com  
www.basfisherinvitational.com  
Through May 9:  
"Out There" by Kathleen Staples  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY**

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-573-2700  
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com  
Through May 2:  
"Mostly Mutant" by Edouard Duval Carrie

**THE CALDWELL/LINFIELD GALLERY AND STUDIO**

8351 NE 8th Ct., Miami  
305-754-2093  
www.susannacaldwell.com  
Through May 22:  
"Exuberant Assemblages and Sculptures Made from Florida Wood" by Susanna Caldwell  
**Reception May 9, 4 to 9 p.m.**

**CAROL JAZZART CONTEMPORARY ART**

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores  
305-490-6906  
www.cjazzart.com  
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com  
Through May 10:  
"The Drawing Show" with various artists  
May 15 through June 8:  
"New Abstraction" with various artists  
**Reception May 15, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

541 NW 27th St., Miami  
305-571-1415  
www.visual.org  
Through May 21:  
"Visionary Photographer" by Clarence John Laughlin  
May 8 through May 9:  
"ARTISTS UNDERFOOT" performance art exhibition  
**Performances May 8 and 9, 6 to 10 p.m.**

**CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY**

250 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-292-0411  
www.charest-weinberg.com  
Through June 6: "Constructions...Deductions and Reductions" by Thomas B. Bowker

**CHELSEA GALLERIA**

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-576-2950  
www.chelseagalleria.com  
Through May 6:  
"Pulp" with Elsa Mora, Kate Kretz, Kent Henrickson, Brian O' Neill, Tina Salvesson, Reinerio Tamayo, and more

**CS GALLERY**

787 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-308-6561  
www.chirinosanchez.com  
Through May 24:  
"Stabbing Hate" by R.E. Sanchez

**DAMIEN B. CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER**

282 NW 36th St., Miami  
305-573-4949  
www.damienb.com  
Through May 6:  
"Broader Horizon" by Aline Jansen  
**"Broader Horizon will be held at a special location: 618 SW 8th St., Miami**



**Mitzi Pederson, *Untitled*, cinder blocks and glitter, 2009, at World Class Boxing.**

**DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY**

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-8110  
www.castilloart.com  
May 9 through June 30:  
Group show with Adler Guerrier, Aramis Gutierrez, Quisqueya Henriquez, Susan Lee-Chun, Pepe Mar, Glexis Novoa, Javier Piñón, Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova, Frances Trombly, and Wendy Wischer  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**DELUXE ART GALLERY**

2051 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-200-4971  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS**

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-576-1804  
www.dlfinearts.com  
May 9 through June 6: "Lost Horizon" by Felice Grodin  
"Painted" by Katrin Moller  
"2 Girls and a Boy" with Katherine Ordonez, Chottip Nimla, and Michael Okey  
**Reception May 9, 7:30 to 10 p.m.**

**DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY**

3938 NE 39th St., Miami  
305-573-4046  
www.diasporavibe.net  
Through May 21: "Runaway Reaction" with Marlon Griffith and Susan Mains  
May 24 through June 4: "Off the Wall/Experimental Series" with Carlos Alejandro and Roger Bowes  
**Reception May 29, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**DORSCH GALLERY**

151 NW 24th St., Miami  
305-576-1278  
www.dorschgallery.com  
Through May 9: "Brendan, Brandon, & Brenda" with various artists  
May 9 through June 6: "nota bene: Illustrated demons & allegories, stripped of one religion, culture or narrative, are cast adrift and, accordingly, find new haunts" with Arlen Austin, Rene Barge, Ernesto Caivano, Alyssa Phoebus, Shazia Sikhander, Reeve Schumacher, and Patricia Smith  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE**

51 NW 36th St., Miami  
305-573-9994  
www.dotfiftyone.com  
Through June 20: "Pornorama" by Gonzalo Fuenmayor and "timeless..." by Hernán Cédola  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**EDGAR ACE GALLERY**

7520 NE 4th Ct., Miami  
305-877-2401  
May 9: "Artist For Sale" by Max Emerson and The Physioc Twins  
**Reception May 9, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.**

**EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART**

47 NE 25th St., Miami  
305-303-8852  
www.edgezones.org  
May 9 through June 9:  
Solo show by Magdiel Aspillaga  
**Reception May 9, 8 to 11 p.m.**

**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  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**FACHE ARTS**

750 NE 124th St., North Miami #2  
305-975-6933  
www.fachearts.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY**

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami  
305-448-8976  
www.snitzer.com  
Through May 2: "DISLOCATION" by Timothy Buwalda

**GALLERY DIET**

174 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-571-2288  
www.gallerydiet.com  
May 9 through June 6: "Citygarden and Microscope" with Kristopher Benedict and Peter LaBier  
**Reception May 9, 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.

**HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE**

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-576-1645  
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com  
Through May 16: "Love Stories" with various artists and "Fashion Slave" by Claude Guenard  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY**

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-576-1880  
www.haroldgolengallery.com  
Through May 2: "The Exotic and Lurid Art of Richie Fahey" by Richie Fahey

**INTERFLIGHT STUDIO GALLERY**

250 NW 23rd St., Loft 206, Miami  
305-573-1673  
www.flightstudiogallery.com  
Through May 8:  
"Aviation Artists Quartet" with Herve Alexandre, Jo-Ann Lizio, PilotO, and Desiree Bordes  
Through May 31:  
"Taking Flight" by PilotO  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**JULIO BLANCO STUDIO**

164 NW 20th St., Miami  
305-534-5737  
www.onemansho.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**KELLEY ROY GALLERY**

50 NE 29 St., Miami  
305-447-3888  
www.kelleyroygallery.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

Continued on page 37

## Art Listings

Continued from page 36

### KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami  
305-576-2000  
www.kevinbrukgallery.com  
Through June 11: Solo show by Richard Butler  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

### KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-438-1333  
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx  
Through May 30: "Reflejando" by Oscar Aguirre  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

### LEITER GALLERY

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

### LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami  
305-576-8570  
www.locustprojects.org  
May 9 through June 28:  
"By Any Means" Kate Gilmore  
**Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

### LUIS ADELANTADO GALLERY

98 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-438-0069  
www.luisadelantadomiami.com  
Through May 31: "Homeless Boy" by Darío Villalba

### LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-1333  
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html  
Through May 30:  
Group show with various artists



**Kate Gilmore, *Double Dutch*, video still, 2004, at Locust Projects.**

### MARIO FLORES GALLERY

12502 NE 8th Ave., North Miami  
561-201-2053  
www.mariofloresgallery.com  
Through May 25:  
"EVANGELIZATION" by Mario Flores

### MIAMI CENTER FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS

1601 SW 1st St., Miami  
305-649-9575  
www.mcpagallery.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### MIAMI ART GROUP GALLERY

126 NE 40th St., Miami  
305-576-2633  
www.miamiartgroup.com  
Through June 1  
"Wake Up Your Walls!" with James Kitchens, Jeff League, Tom Rossetti, Gail Taylor, Shawn McNulty, Hessam, Goli Mahallati, and Gregory Deane  
Through July 1:  
"How Surreal Life Can Be" by Hector Armendariz

### 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.

### MIAMI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

1501 Biscayne Blvd., Miami  
305-428-5700  
www.mymiu.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### MUSEO VAULT

346 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-571-1175  
www.museovault.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami  
305-490-2976  
www.oh-wow.com  
Through May 9:  
"Make it Rain" by Scott Campbell  
**Reception May 9, 8 to midnight**

### PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-2400  
www.panamericanart.com  
Through May 23:  
"The Mystery of Migrations" by Carlos Estévez  
"Diptychs: One Lens, Two Visions" with Gory and Adrian Lopez  
**Reception May 9, 6 to 9 p.m.**

### PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-2900  
www.praxis-art.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### PUZZLEMENT GALLERY

81 NW 24th St., Miami  
917-929-8559  
www.puzzlementart.com  
Ongoing show with Kevin Brady, Manuel Carbonell, Nichole Chimenti, Carter Davis, Stephen Gamson, Raquel Glottman, Jim Herbert, Jennifer Kaiser, Alex Paiva Lopez, Andy Piedilato, Tomy F. Trujillo, Jonathan "Depoe" Villoch, and Giancarlo Zavala

### SPINELLO GALLERY

531 NE 82nd Terr., Miami  
786-271-4223  
www.spinellogallery.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### STASH GALLERY

162 NE 50 Terr., Miami  
305-992-7652  
www.myspace.com/stashgallery  
May 9 through June 9: "P(ART)Y" by Aholsniffsglue  
**Reception May 9, 7 to midnight**

### STEVE MARTIN STUDIO

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

### TWENTY TWENTY PROJECTS

2020 NW Miami Ct., Miami  
786-217-7683  
www.twentytwentyprojects.com  
May 9 through June 6: Solo show by David Rohn  
**Reception May 9, 7 to midnight**

Continued on page 38

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\$20 Blue Circle

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## Art Listings

Continued from page 37

### UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE

2200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-284-2542  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### UNTITLED 2144

2144 NE 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-576-2112, www.untitled2144.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### WALLFLOWER GALLERY

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

### WHITE VINYL SPACE

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

### WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS, FINE ART

201 NE 39th St., Miami  
305-576-6960  
www.wrpfineart.com  
Through May 16: "BERLIN - NEW YORK - MIAMI" by Freddy Reitz

### MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

#### CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-455-3380  
www.cifo.org  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

11200 SW 8th St., Miami  
305-348-0496  
http://thefrost.fiu.edu/  
Through May 10:  
BFA show with various artists  
Through August 16:  
"Because I Say So" sculpture from the Scholl Collection  
Through September 16:  
"Genetic Portraits" by Nela Ochoa

### LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

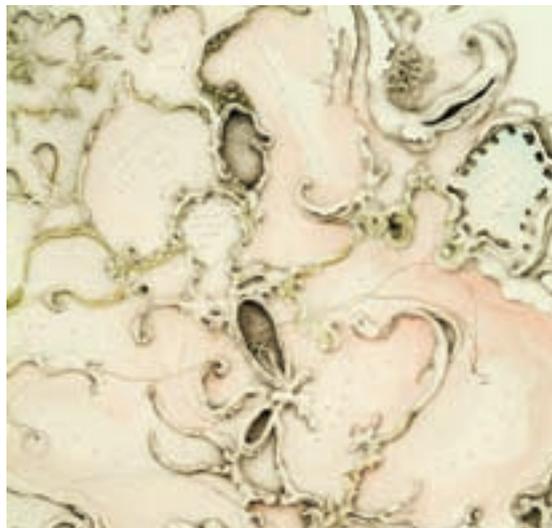
1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables  
305-284-3535  
www.lowemuseum.org  
Through June 14: "UM Students and MFA Exhibition" with various artists and "Naturell" by Carsten Meier

### MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami  
305-375-3000  
www.miamiartmuseum.org  
Through September 13:  
"NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith" with various artists  
Through October 11:  
"Recent Acquisitions" with various artists

### MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-893-6211  
www.mocanomi.org  
Through May 10:  
"Abstract Cinema" with various artists  
May 21 through September 13:



Patricia Smith, *Garland* (detail), ink and watercolor on paper, 16-minute loop, 2008, at the Dorsch Gallery.

"Convention" with Julieta Aranda, Fia Backström, Xavier Cha, Anne Daems & Kenneth Andrew Mroczek, Fritz Haeg, Corey McCorkle, Dave McKenzie, My Barbarian, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Sean Raspet, Superflex and Jens Haaning, and Miami's Jim Drain, Gean Moreno, and Bert Rodriguez

### MOCA AT GOLDMAN WAREHOUSE

404 NW 26th St., Miami  
305-893-6211

www.mocanomi.org  
Through June 27:  
Solo show by Luis Gispert

### THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami  
305-576-1051  
www.margulieswarehouse.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

### THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-573-6090  
www.rubellfamilycollection.com  
Call for operating hours and exhibit information.  
Through May 30:  
"30 AMERICANS" with Nina Chanel Abney, John Bankston, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Mark Bradford, Iona Rozeal Brown, Nick Cave, Robert Colescott, Noah Davis, Leonardo Drew, Renée Green, David Hammons, Barkley L. Hendricks, Rashid Johnson, Glenn Ligon, Kalup Linzy, Kerry James Marshall, Rodney McMillian, Wangechi Mutu, William Pope.L, Gary Simmons, Xaviera Simmons, Lorna Simpson, Shinique Smith, Jeff Sonhouse, Henry Taylor, Hank Willis Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Kehinde Wiley, and Purvis Young

### WORLD CLASS BOXING

Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection  
170 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-438-9908  
www.worldclassboxing.org/  
May 9 through June 1:  
"I think I was looking at that before" by Mitzi Pederson  
Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

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# Culture Briefs



## You Think That You Shall Never See...

Hearing about a plant like the Royal Poinciana or the Silver Tabebuia may seem like a call from some far-away place, but Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (10901 Old Cutler Rd.) is here to tell you otherwise at its annual Tropical Flowering Tree Society Show and Sale **May 9 and 10** from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can chat with experts and vendors about trees, vines, and shrubs on display and for sale. Tickets good for entire garden are \$20, \$15 for seniors, \$10 for children 6-13, and free for younger children and members. Discount coupons are available on the Fairchild Website. Call 305-667-1651 or visit [www.fairchildgarden.com](http://www.fairchildgarden.com).

## Ahoy, Mom!

Make points with mom the day before Mother's Day by taking her out on the water for a glorious boat tour, historically helmed by the esteemed Paul George, on Saturday, **May 9**. He'll show and tell her about colorful and notorious Stiltsville, those houses elevated above Biscayne Bay, and other rich trinkets of Miami's coastal history, like the Cape Florida Lighthouse, and Key Biscayne. Sponsored by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, the tour leaves Bay-side Marketplace (401 Biscayne Blvd.) at 10:00 a.m., returning at 1:00 p.m. Advance reservations and payment required. Tickets are \$39 for HMSF members, \$44 for nonmembers. Call 305-375-1621.

## Like Father (J.S.Bach), Like Son (C.P.E. Bach)

Imagine growing up in the shadow of your famous father who just happens to be musical genius Johann Sebastian Bach. The offspring, you'd think, would wisely find another line of work. Not

so. All four of the master's sons pursued musical careers, and one, Carl Phillip Emanuel, managed to make a name for himself. On Saturday, **May 16**, tribute will be paid to father and son by the Miami Bach Society Orchestra at St. Martha's Church (9301 Biscayne Blvd.). Don Oglesby conducts the orchestra. In addition, solo pianists Paul Posnak and Shelly Berg (UM music school dean) will perform the elder Bach's keyboard concerti. The music begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$20. Go to [www.saintmartha.tix.com](http://www.saintmartha.tix.com) or call 1-800-595-4849.



## South Florida's Own Cirque

Let your family's imagination fly into a fantastical jungle with *Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy*. Behold an international cast of 28, including acrobats, gymnasts, contortionists, strongmen, balancing artists, and singers. The production company originated right here in South Florida in 1993, and is not to be confused with Cirque du Soleil. Our homegrown troupe brings its latest creation from Broadway to the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) **May 12-17**. Tickets are \$25-\$62. Shows begin at 8:00 p.m. Matinees at 2:00 p.m. The final performance is at 7:30 pm. Call 305-949-6722 or visit [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org).

## Orchid Obsession

The beauty and sheer exoticism of orchids have captivated, even obsessed, generations of expert gardeners. But there are many beautiful varieties that just about anyone can grow at home. Learn about these mysterious plants (including their ingenious pollination methods) at the annual Redland International Orchid Show, one of the largest in the U.S. The county's Fruit and Spice Park (24801 SW 187th Ave.) plays host

**May 15-17**. An eye-popping number of specimens will be on display, experts will speak, raffles will be held. Supplies and plants for sale will be also available. Tickets are \$7. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 305-247-5727 or go to [www.fsp@miamidade.gov](http://www.fsp@miamidade.gov).

## Got a Question? Here's the Answer

Worried about healthcare? Debts? The mortgage? Then get yourself to Unity on the Bay (411 NE 21st St.) on Saturday, **May 16**. That's where more than 35 public and private institutions will join forces for a free community-resource fair to help the many South Floridians who now find themselves in need. The fair will benefit those who are facing foreclosure, bankruptcy, or immigration woes; those struggling with credit-card debt or who are in need of loan modification, food stamps, unemployment assistance, or mental health services; those who are uninsured or need health screenings for high blood pressure, diabetes, or HIV/AIDS. Whew! It'll be a one-stop shop for all your problem-solving needs. The fair runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For info go to [www.unityonthebay.org](http://www.unityonthebay.org) or see page 6 in this issue.

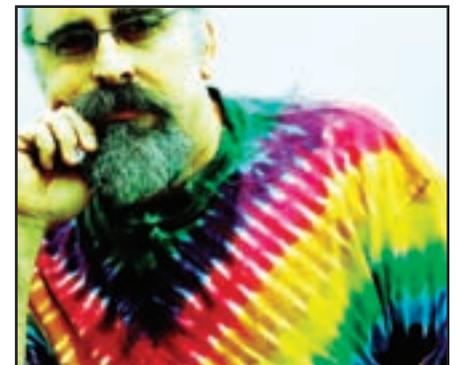
## Bike Riders Unite!

If you've ever ridden around Miami on a bike, you know what we're talking about. It's nuts! Make your presence known. Stand up for your right to share the road downtown at the free City of Miami-sponsored Bike Miami Days on Sunday, **May 17**. The city will block traffic along stretches of Flagler Street and S. Miami Avenue for this monthly event. Become part of a growing movement to encourage Miami and other cities to create more bike paths and amenities for two-wheelers. Power to the bike! From 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Visit [bikemiamiblog.wordpress.com](http://bikemiamiblog.wordpress.com) for parking, bike route, bike rentals, lunch spots, and all things bike.

## Shining Young Stars of the Symphony

As its season comes to an end, the South Florida Youth Symphony performs its Shining Stars concert, including guest jazzman Joe Donato in a tribute to Duke Ellington Sunday, **May 17** in the Lehman Theatre at Miami-Dade

College north campus (11380 NW 27th Ave.). Pianist Adriana Quesada performs Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 17. Dancing to A Chorus Line will be the talented young ladies of Conchita Espinoza Academy, directed by Danella Bedford. The program begins at 4:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Students and those under 8 or over 55 are \$5. Call 305-238-2729.



## Long Hair, Beads, Sandals, Incense — Far Out!

Growing nostalgic for a little peace, love, and happiness? You can find it, along with hundreds — no, *thousands* — of others at the 6th Annual Greynolds Park Love-In (17530 W. Dixie Hwy.) on Sunday, **May 17**. Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels will be groovin' with their chart-topping, 1960s rock and roll. There'll also be a costume contest (think Haight-Ashbury), vintage VW bugs and buses, and food for the whole family. Also performing: Rewind, Blackstar, Brokedown, Miami Rock Ensemble. It's all free (naturally!), though there's the usual Greynolds parking charge. The love flows from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Call 305-945-3425.

## The Play's the Thing

The precocious young artists at Miami's New World School of the Arts (25 NE 2nd St.) take center stage at the conservatory's 19th annual New Playwrights Festival **May 21-24**. Two plays are featured, written by and performed by NWSA students, in evening performances at 7:30 p.m. Weekend matinees at 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$5 to each play. Call 305-237-7855 or visit [www.nwsa.mdc.edu](http://www.nwsa.mdc.edu).

Compiled by BT intern Brian Horowitz

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

# Green on Blue

Three waterfront parks offer tranquility amid the traffic

By Jim W. Harper  
BT Contributor

Sometimes you open the fridge and see nothing, even when it's full of food. But look again with new eyes and you might find a tasty meal.

A similar thing happens when arriving or leaving the City of Miami on Interstate 195 or 36th Street along Biscayne Bay. You probably see nothing but water and condos, but your peripheral vision may find some unexpected patches of green.

This hidden-in-plain-view waterfront greenway sits in the shadows of the condominium known as Blue, a 35-story reflective building designed by Arquitectonica and shoehorned in between I-195 and NE 36th Street as it approaches the Interstate toward Miami Beach. As with many public spaces in Miami, this one spins stories of great potential, neglect, and a partial resurrection.

The waterfront here is composed of three mini parks trisected by the causeway and 36th Street and operated by the City of Miami, although there is some confusion concerning its ownership of one of them. The parks mainly serve the residents and vagrants of Edgewater and, in particular, the condominium communities of Charter Club, Blue, and Miami Bay Club. To the west, the Taco Bell and Denny's on Biscayne Boulevard are



Magnolia Park: Great views, kiddie soccer heaven, direct water access.

within walking distance. To the east, the Julia Tuttle Causeway snakes across the bay to Miami Beach. The cars whizzing on and off the highway make the area decidedly pedestrian-unfriendly.

The smallest of the three parks has created the biggest fuss. Blue's backyard on the bay, Martell Park, has crisp signs from the City of Miami that designate it as an official dog park. The park may be temporary, as the City of Miami rents

it for \$1 per year from the Florida Department of Transportation. A 2007 letter from FDOT, provided by Sean-Paul Melito, a member of the city's parks and recreation advisory board, states that the land was an FDOT-owned drainage ditch that would "no longer be available for use by the public." Melito claims that a city building permit requires Blue, not FDOT, to maintain the park as public open space.

Melito and other dog-walkers protested the park's impending closure and garnered the support of city Commissioner MarC Sarnoff. Melito says Sarnoff helped make the park signs and other improvements appear in the summer of 2008. Official documents from the City of Miami indicate that the park is fulfilling its destiny. The May 2007 "Miami Parks and Public Spaces Master Plan" designates Martell Park as a future dog park. (The city's Website has an outdated link to the plan, but it can be found at [www.miamigov.com/Planning/pages/master\\_plans/Parks\\_PublicSpaces.asp](http://www.miamigov.com/Planning/pages/master_plans/Parks_PublicSpaces.asp)) Today

BT photos by Jim W. Harper

dogs have taken over the ditch. Martell Park is a hardly a blip on the sidewalk, but it makes for Miami's sole dog park on the water. Only a slice of bay water is visible owing to bridges on either side that converge into a single highway island just east of the park. But from the seawall, dogs can see themselves in the water and watch their reflection reverberate as needlefish sprint away. The height of the seawall, however, means that they can't get in the water.

Missing from the dog park is a fresh-water source and other doggie amenities. In one corner is a strange, permanent hutch marked as a chlorine station, which appears to treat storm water draining into the bay. Melito says existing fresh-water spigots were removed in 2007. He also complains that the new benches in the park are "anti-social" because of their placement, and visitors can be seen sitting on the ground near the



Martell Park: It's doggie heaven, and though small, it's facing big problems.

entrance. But he also praises the park as a "great social place." Everyone and their dog seem to know each other.

The main issue confronting Martell Park and the other two adjacent parks are the homeless. A well-publicized group of sex offenders have been mandated to

Continued on page 41

### MARTELL, MAGNOLIA, AND STEARNS PARKS

**Park Rating**

**Biscayne Bay at I-195 Miami**  
**Hours:** Sunrise to sunset  
**Picnic tables:** Yes  
**Barbecues:** No  
**Picnic pavilions:** Yes (Magnolia)  
**Tennis courts:** No  
**Athletic fields:** Yes (Magnolia)  
**Night lighting:** No  
**Playground:** No  
**Special features:** Dog park (Martell)

**Magnolia Park**

**Stearns Park**

**Martell Park**

## PARK PATROL

### Green

Continued from page 40

live underneath the bridges of the Julia Tuttle Causeway (Miami's version of *Bridges of Madison County?*), within easy walking distance of the parks. The low bridges alongside these parks are littered with sleeping bags and unsanitary implements. Residents say that vagrants often sleep here.

The largest park, Magnolia Park, is three open acres with gorgeous views of the bay. Officially known as E. Albert Pallot Park, its main afternoon users are soccer teams. Adults congregate around 7:00 p.m., and an informal group of five- to ten-year-olds practices at 6:00 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday, according to Francisco Vela, coach of the team he calls "Miami Central." He says a group of older children play on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"The kids love to play here," says Vela. "It's an excellent location. Beautiful." On this afternoon he has set up bright orange and green boundaries and goals

for his diminutive soccer players. A few adults have set up camp nearby to watch. Vela's only complaint is that some dog owners do not clean up after their pets, and his kids have to play on the same grass.

The shoreline of Magnolia Park is one of the few in Miami that is not blocked by rocks or a seawall, and during one of my visits, a father and daughter were busy studying snails and other objects along the shore. The tide

**Martell Park is a hardly a blip on the sidewalk, but it makes for Miami's sole dog park on the water, and everyone and their dog seem to know each other.**

has also brought in copious amounts of litter. Stuck in the mounds of seaweed was a large, dead gull.

The trashiness of this shore has prompted activists to urge approval of the \$1.2 million Albert Pallot Park Shoreline Stabilization Project listed

on StimulusWatch.org. "Stabilization" probably means an extension of the seawall on either side of the park. At a minimum, a net needs to be installed to capture and remove trash from the water. Something must be done before this park earns a "New Jersey Toxic Beach" award.

The other waterfront park among the trio, Stearns Park, is a leftover piece of land useful only to residents along NE 37th Street. Everyone else must risk their lives by running across the Julia Tuttle, and it's not worth it. I have heard that this park is popular with street walkers — and no, I did not even try to confirm that.

Although these three parks are located along a very busy highway, when you're here, you don't feel the road rage.



**Stearns Park: Unless you live next door, you'll need to dodge traffic to enter.**

Maybe it's the bay breeze that cancels out the roaring engines and the water that calms the spirit. To the passing motorist, nothing is here, but to the neighborhood soccer player or dog walker, these small

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# Love Is All There Is

*It may sound corny but it's not, especially for families*

By Jenni Person  
BT Contributor

For those of us parenting with a partner, there is always that nucleus to tend to, the heart beating at the center that keeps it all flowing smoothly and cooperatively. And there are all kinds of variations on those partnerships — the old-fashioned nuclear model of a partnered mom and dad, or the more contemporary dad and dad, mom and mom, mom and dad living separately, mom and grandma, or mom and her husband and dad and his girlfriend — but they all need to be nurtured as we and our families grow and evolve and mark milestones.

I like to be really honest when I talk about my relationship. As of today, I am one of those disgustingly lucky people who soberly experienced love at first sight and has so far lived happily ever after. But make no mistake, my life pretty much sucks in every other way. My partner and I have worked very hard for what we've had the past 14 years. We can be screaming ugly words at each other in the morning, and by evening we're *both* apologizing. Everything is not always smooth; there are always going to be long-term issues. But acceptance is the key to living with another human being.

Our years together have helped to short-hand the communication process, which is why I'm grateful we had the luxury of waiting eight years before having a baby. During that time, we developed our mutual household culture, coping mechanisms, problem-solving tools, nonverbal communications signals, and vocabulary. Those were also years

during which we luxuriated in each other and our togetherness. All this strengthens our co-parenting experience and informs the love we share with our kids today. It's so important that they see us as human, imperfect, but loving — of them and of each other — so someday they can buoy the lives of their own relationships and families with love — which, in the end, is all any mortal has.

Because I am such a goofy fan of love, I was inspired recently when my friend David, a Morningside dad and owner of a Biscayne Corridor business producing promotional items and embroidered and screen-printed wearables ([www.igotagoodcatch.com](http://www.igotagoodcatch.com)), posted on Facebook the celebration of his 20-year partnership with the love of his life, Damian. David called it a “virtual anniversary party.”

I was also struck by the length of time David and Damian had been together before becoming parents. I spoke to David about this recently, and in addition to agreeing with me that living so much life with your partner enhances parenting, he also talked about how expanding into a family really solidifies the relationship.

It's much easier to walk away — and later regret splitting up over something that seems completely stupid in hindsight — when there isn't the life of a family involved. Luckily, David and Damian apply the hard work it takes to



support a relationship and kids, because through all these years, all this love, and this solid commitment to family, David and Damian in fact *cannot* legally split up. They aren't extended the same rights as hetero couples and families in Florida, so they can't legally be a family, and they can't legally get out of it either. Same-gender couples and families can build legal bond to an extent, but in the end, the State of Florida still does not recognize their legal rights as parents or partners.

But obviously sometimes split up we must, and thus I'm equally inspired by the co-parenting efforts of my friend Li-Mor, who works hard and with humility to raise her daughter in partnership with her ex-husband. I turned into a puddle of sentimentality when she described making a Passover seder for herself, her daughter, her ex, and *his* father. “We're a lot of people,” she said in response to my question why she didn't take up an invitation to a colleague's house at Passover. I realize she's one of the fortunate divorced, single moms who is able to maintain a

relationship with her ex and together be present for every important moment in her daughter's life. I wish everyone were so fortunate. She is an amazing woman I'm proud to call my friend.

## Attention Young Filmmakers

Miami Light Project has partnered with Nike to give 20 high school students the opportunity to create films about sports, social change, and their community in the Third Annual Filmmakers Bootcamp. This summer South Florida teens between the ages of 14 and 18 are eligible for the four-week camp.

Students will learn production, screenwriting, script development, editing, and post-production aspects of film from South Florida-based filmmakers Gina Cunningham, John Huynh, and Rhonda Mitrani. At the conclusion of the camp, the students will create short films that will be screened for the public.

The focus of this year's Filmmakers Bootcamp is to give kids the opportunity to tell stories about how sports can inspire social change and ignite a community.

The camp will run from June 15 to July 10. Miami Light Project is currently accepting applications for up to 20 students. Full scholarships are available, and lunch will be provided for each camper. Transportation vouchers will also be available based on need. Applications are due Friday, May 15. For more information, please call Miami Light Project at 305-576-4350. To download an application, visit [www.miamilightproject.com](http://www.miamilightproject.com) and click on “downloads.”

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# Falling Leaves? Must Be Springtime

*It's not about autumn — it's about drought*

By Jeff Shimonski  
BT Contributor

Lately I've been surprised to overhear people remarking that they have never seen so many trees without foliage, and perhaps the trees were actually dying. A couple of times I stopped to explain that many species of tropical trees are deciduous, just like temperate trees in the winter, and if you look closer, the trees are all in various stages of flowering.

Tropical and subtropical deciduous trees drop their leaves not in response to changes in seasonal temperatures or climate but to seasonal rainfall patterns. The foliage is dropped to conserve water and prevent death of the tree from drought. It can occur any time of year. This past winter was very dry, and trees without supplemental irrigation dropped most or all of their foliage.

Even in the wild you can see differences in the timing and duration of leaflessness caused by variations in the height of the water table or the soil conditions. You can also notice differences in how property owners irrigate (or irrigate too much) by the amounts of foliage on the same species of tree in the same neighborhood.

But spring is a wonderful time of year to look for color in our trees! Even the most plant-challenged person can't help but notice the brilliant yellow-flowered *Tabebuia*s along our roadways. There are trees in flower everywhere, and with our notorious traffic jams, we have plenty of time to look out our car windows to enjoy them. I've been noticing wonderful flowering specimens of *Bauhinia* with the two lobed leaves and purple fragrant flowers, the spiny trunked *Ceiba*, the waxy flowers of *Bombax*, the many species and colors of



The attractive flower of *Bombax ceiba*.

*Tabebuia* and the orange *Geiger*, to name but a few.

So drought is sometimes a good thing. During rainy winters here in South Florida, deciduous flowering trees can produce foliage and flowers at the same time. This can also occur in highly irrigated landscapes. Sometimes the flowers get lost amid the foliage and cannot be visually appreciated — or pollinated, as the pollinators can't find them. Give these plants a chance to dry out and they will give you a nice show at the end of the dry season.

Speaking of the orange-flowered *Geiger*, I saw at Jungle Island that the newly emerged canopy of foliage on these small trees was under attack by *Geiger* tortoise beetles, as it is most years. It's a shame, because the new foliage is a light-green color that really shows off the bright orange of the flowers. The beetle is usually

light green and looks like an oversize lady beetle with a translucent shell. This species only lays its eggs on the orange *Geiger* in clusters on a single leaf.

When the eggs hatch, the larvae, which look like lady beetle larvae only larger and slimy, begin to eat the leaf, leaving only the veins. As the larvae grow they quickly spread to other leaves and can eventually defoliate the tree.

I have learned to recognize the damage when the larvae first hatch (a cluster of small tiny holes in a new leaf) and I just pull off the entire leaf with all of the newly hatched larvae and drop it onto the ground. The larvae then die without spreading back onto the tree. No spraying and no expense. I've never seen *Geiger* tortoise beetles on any of the other *Geiger* tree species, although I'm sure they occasionally dine on them as well.

BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

At Jungle Island I've recently begun planting a tropical tree group that I had very little experience with, and is not deciduous. These are the tropical conifers. We're accustomed to temperate conifers like cypress, pine, and the Douglas fir, but this is a very diverse group of trees, and even though they look very temperate (at least to me), some are quite tropical. They are closely related to the cycads, having cones instead of flowers. The bald cypress trees at the original Parrot Jungle are conifers, and we did grow some *Podocarpus*, but I had no previous experience with these other species from tropical areas like Malaysia or New Caledonia.

Within the past few months, I planted a very attractive *Araucaria* species (like the Norfolk Island pine) with bluish foliage, an *Agathis* species from New Zealand, and a *Nageia* species from Southeast Asia. The *Agathis* and the *Nageia* are both trees that can grow quite large in their native habitats, although much more slowly than the Norfolk Island pine. The foliage is attractive, with succulent-like leaves. The new growth comes out in "spurts" with a lighter color that contrasts attractively with the older foliage. For those who would like a more "temperate" looking landscape, tropical conifers like *Podocarpus* and those previously mentioned will give the desired look. These particular conifers also grow well in alkaline soil conditions, meaning little or no fertilizer will be needed.

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

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# A Primer on Puppies, Part 2

Choosing a puppy — and raising one you can live with

By Lisa Hartman  
BT Contributor

Call it the Obama Effect. Or more accurately, the Malia-and-Sasha Effect. The White House arrival of the nation's First Puppy has sparked intense interest in Portuguese water dogs specifically, and in puppies more generally. Let's imagine that you've caught the fever, and now you have your new puppy. Wonderful! But what next? This month we'll discuss some pointers on what to do and definitely what *not* to do with your new family member, that four-legged little bundle of joy.

First, however, I would like to address something I left out of last month's column ("A Primer on Puppies," April 2009). That is *papers*. Those magical papers. Every week someone will tell me that their puppy "has papers." That they sought out a dog with "papers." That the puppy store must have good stock because the puppy came with "papers."

"He has his papers, Lisa."

To this day, not one person who bought a dog "with papers" can tell me what they mean or signify when I ask them. Yet they are very happy and impressed they have them. Well, frankly, papers do not add up to much, and certainly do not mean your puppy will be a genius or housebreak faster, no matter what the cost.

Technically, real papers signify that the parents of the puppy were purebreds and are registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC). That's it. But many people do not know that. They get a certificate from their local pet shop, and they believe they now have official papers. Or maybe the puppy store simply makes up phony AKC papers. Many pet shops



also go to breeder Websites to copy family trees. You can also get a limited registration on dogs if they look enough like a purebred. For example, Jay-J, my boldly spotted Dalmatian, is clearly a Dalmatian and can thus receive a "limited registration," meaning he could do AKC sports like agility.

Bottom line for the average pet owner: The only thing papers are good for is to lay them on the floor to help house-train the dog. Papers won't help you if you're not a breeder or don't know

the other dogs in the lineage anyway. And importantly, they don't guarantee health or temperament. Health is something the breeder screens for separately, and a quality breeder only breeds her healthiest

and nicest dogs, which also conform physically to the breed standard. She will have available for you copies of the dog parents'

health tests — hip dysplasia, eye tests, and so on.

But now that your puppy is here, we need to make him a good canine citizen.

The first rule is to start small. Do not give him the whole house in which to eliminate (and possibly to wreck). Start small, using crate- or area-training first. Let the puppy earn freedom gradually. The same should be said for your own expectations in general. Start small. Think small. Do not expect too much and you will not be disappointed. You have to work with what you have, and what you are capable of. He is just a baby dog acting like a baby dog, trying to make a way for himself.

The same can be said for socializing. Yes, we want a highly social dog that we can, say, travel anywhere with at anytime. But you don't have to overwhelm the puppy with people and strange objects all the time. Invite some friendly people over, take simple walks around the block and meet the neighbors. Watch the local children play on their skateboards from your window, to start. Same with the vacuum cleaner and other household appliances. Let the puppy hear them turned on from a distance first so as not to startle him.

Over the next two weeks, gradually take your dog to explore new areas on walks, to see new appliances and get a little closer to them, to meet new people, especially friendly men and children, who will seem more friendly if they are tossing or handing treats to the dog.

From the beginning of your dog ownership, you should establish yourself as important to the puppy. You should be the reason for all things good in his life: walks, play, and of course food. Be there to feed your dog at scheduled meal times. Do not leave him to free feed at his leisure. As with people, food is a big

Continued on page 45

**Bottom line for the average pet owner: The only thing "official papers" are good for is to lay them on the floor to help house-train the dog.**

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## COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

### Puppies

Continued from page 44

resource to a dog, and a shiny bowl on the floor should not receive the credit for giving it to him. *You* should.

Prepare his food for him, and if he has learned a cue such as "sit," ask him to perform the behavior before you feed him. Many dogs benefit from a "Nothing in life is free" approach to all things. They will learn to look to you and make you happy first — before they get what they want.

One of the funniest parts of training is when I tell people what I went through

**As with people, food is a big resource to a dog, and a shiny bowl on the floor should not receive the credit for giving it to him. *You* should.**

with my puppy Saffy. As if I am going to do something with my dog that is wildly

different from what I tell them to do with their new pups! No, I'm a big advocate of practicing what I preach. And my puppy is still a baby herself, and will do puppy things, and she came with her own set of problems after living in a bad situation. So it may go faster for me to resolve things, but I still have to do the work!

In the end, puppies are in fact a lot of work, but they are worth it if you can retain your wits and your sense

of humor. Remember to start small and to have limited expectations. Then you can build little successes one day at a time. Eventually you'll think as much of your new puppy as you do the adult dog you had before him. Maybe even more!

*Lisa Hartman is head dog trainer for Pawsitively Pets. You can reach her at [pawsitivelypetsonline@yahoo.com](mailto:pawsitivelypetsonline@yahoo.com) or [www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com](http://www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com).*

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# The Ocean's Most Fearsome Predators

*No, it's not sharks — it's homo sapiens*

By Jim W. Harper  
BT Contributor

What's the one word you don't want to hear at the beach? No, it's not what you think. "Police!" In 2003 a police SUV ran over and killed a French tourist sunbathing on Miami Beach. If you were thinking "shark," you should know that no tourist in Miami has ever died from a shark attack. In fact there has never been a confirmed death by shark in Miami.

Peter Benchley, the creator of *Jaws*, spent his later years fighting to save sharks. I saw him speak about shark conservation at the University of Miami shortly before he died in 2006. Sharks had become the victim, he realized, and man had become the jaws of death.

Every year some 100 million wild sharks are killed by man. How many men are killed annually by sharks? About ten. The real difference, however, is that the human population and its capacity to harvest the sea is rising, whereas the shark and other fish populations are shrinking. It's the same sad story in the sea as on land: Man is taking too much and caring too little.

Global studies on sharks estimate that their populations have shriveled in the past century by 90 percent. Moreover, those that remain are being pursued more relentlessly than ever.

But why care about such a dangerous animal? The answer is essentially the same as the answer about insects and snakes and bears. People may find them terrifying and inconvenient, but their existence is linked to everything that humans depend on. Balanced watersheds,



including their inhabitants from the microscopic to the intimidating, provide clean drinking water. Insects pollinate our crops; animals are our main source of protein. It's the simple circle of life that makes each species valuable.

Sharks are valued for their fins. Shark-fin soup is a delicacy in Chinese culture, and demand for shark fins has skyrocketed as East Asian countries have gained wealth. Check out the 2007 documentary *Sharkwater* to gain insight on this international market and inhumane fishery. The most barbaric fishers will slice the fins off of live sharks and dump the living bodies back into the water to die a slow death. They don't want to carry the extra weight of the shark's body, which is much less valuable than the fins.

Shark-finning is illegal in the U.S. and many other countries, but the practice is nearly impossible to regulate on the high seas. It requires a correction from the marketplace.

One guy in Miami could care less about the fate of sharks. "Mark the Shark"

runs a popular charter-fishing operation and claims to be the world's leading shark fisherman. Sportfishing is not the main enemy of sharks (industrial fishing is), but killing sharks for sport gives the impression that there are many to spare.

At the other end of the spectrum are shark conservationists, and South Florida is home to many of the world's best. The granddaddy of shark conservation is Sonny Gruber, a Miami Beach native who founded the Bimini Shark Lab and retired not long ago from the University of Miami. Following in his flippers is current doctoral candidate at UM and great-white-shark fanatic Neil Hammerschlag, who has led several groups of South Florida high school students on shark expeditions to Africa. Check out his conservation Website and awesome shark photos at [neil4sharks.org](http://neil4sharks.org).

At the University of Florida is the International Shark Attack File. It runs one of my favorite Websites, which attempts to answer the question on every beachgoer's mind: How long will it be before I'm attacked and killed by a rogue shark?

The data tells us that Florida leads the world in shark attacks. The good news is that the vast majority of attacks are not deadly, and they are concentrated in the state's northeastern quadrant (be careful in Daytona Beach).

According to the International Shark Attack File, the Florida Keys has not had a fatal shark attack since 1952 and Miami-Dade since 1961, although Broward registered a fatality in 2001. Both of these fatalities involved scuba divers, as did a fatality last year in the Bahamas, where diving expeditions feed sharks. Shark-feeding is banned in Florida.

What's the total number of shark attacks in Miami-Dade during the past century? Ten. Fatalities? One. What's the number of attacks in Florida from the great white, the shark portrayed in *Jaws*? Zero. More facts: Most attacks occur on surfers. Alligator attacks in Florida are less common but more deadly. More people are killed annually by dogs, but those attacks don't make the news.

Simply put, sharks are not out to get us, but they do bite. If they taste a surfer, they usually spit it out. They much prefer turtles and seals.

Humans, on the other hand, are definitely out to eliminate the shark, although most people remain ignorant of the pillage. Instead of adding ignorance to fear, be aware of this situation and study it. You will find that sharks deserve more than just respect. They need protection — like the wolf and the polar bear and the sea turtle.

Add this bumper sticker to your collection: Man Attacks Shark. Save the Shark.

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

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# Dining Guide

## RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 205.

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

##### 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. \$\$\$\$\$

##### Area 31

270 Biscayne Boulevard Way  
305-524-5234

www.area31restaurant.com

Not that the sleek interior of this seafood restaurant (named for fishing area 31, stretching from the Carolinas to South America) isn't a glamorous dining setting. But we'd eat outside. From the expansive terrace on the 16th floor of the Epic condo and hotel on the Miami River, the views of Brickell's high-rises actually make Miami look like a real city. As for ingestibles, it's hard to decide whether the eats or drinks are the most impressive. The food is impeccably fresh regional fish, prepared in a clean Mediterranean-influenced style, like Royal Red shrimp with salmoriglio sauce. The cocktails are, for a change, genuinely creative. They pack a wallop, but are refreshing rather than overwrought. Luckily you don't have to choose one or the other. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

##### Bazil

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

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 (veggies 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 scalion 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 weekday 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. \$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$

##### Il Gabbiano

335 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-373-0063

www.ilgabbianomiami.com

Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the chic outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative for those wanting something beyond steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. (Free starters: A generous hunk of parmigiano-reggiano with aged balsamico dip, assertively garlicky fried zucchini coins, and tomato-topped bruschetta.) The rest of the food? Pricy, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$\$\$

##### 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 48

# Red, White, and You

Agreeable wine for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara  
BT Contributor

When is cheap not enough? Uh, when the global economy is melting down faster than an ice cream cone on I-95 on a mid-July Miami afternoon? Yes.

So in this space's relentless interest in pinching pennies until they scream, wail, and beg for mercy, we've goosed our already skinflint ways a few notches flintier in preparation for the onslaught of another South Florida summer. Heat that will make your face melt, humidity that turns life-giving oxygen into lungfuls of wet clay, hurricanes ready to spin-dry your neighborhood and scatter its pieces from Hialeah to Guam — all reasons most of us use to get out of Dodge, if only for a few days or weeks.

Not this year, unless a suitcase full of newly minted Jacksons magically turns up in our closet. So it looks like we'll be sticking it out, and we need all the help we can get. More specifically, all the good, not just cheap but even cheaper, white wine we can get. More specifically than that, all the

good white wine we can pour down our gullets for \$9 a bottle or less.

Really, if we're all in this hot, humid, storm-threatened, recession-ravaged boat together, it's the least we could do.

Let's start with two terrific deals on wines that are equally at home sipping in your dining room with chilled stone crab and swilling on the beach with your posse. **Rene Barbier's Mediterranean White** (nonvintage) is a truly remarkable value at \$5.99. A blend of Spanish varietals, it's simple and light-bodied, with crisp, refreshing notes of grapefruit and green apple. Buy it by the case! You won't be sorry.

For a buck more there's the **2008 Nobilis Vinho Verde**, an even lighter wine with the slight carbonated fizz that's characteristic of this Portuguese product. It's only nine percent alcohol, perfect for drinking on a brutal SoFla summer day.

Also inhabiting the cheap seats are the **2007 Ruffino Orvieto** and **2008 Mendoza Station Torrontes**. One of the secrets to low-cost quaffing is to drink lesser-known varietals and blends — Torrontes, for example, Argentina's signature white wine grape. The Mendoza flaunts a fruity, almost

floral nose, with an unexpectedly creamy texture and faintly sweet, citrusy flavors. The Orvieto is a blend of Italian mutt grapes but delivers a fair amount of complexity — smoky, minerals, tasting of citrus and pear — for its \$6.49 price tag.

At the upper end of our cheapskate limit are the **2008 Chateau Montet White Bordeaux** and **2007 Villa San Giovanni Pinot Grigio**. Both reveal another secret of drinking below the radar: Watch what's on sale. At a reduced price of \$8.99, these two wines deliver even more value. The Montet is classic Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc — bracingly crisp, with intense lemon-lime and grapefruit flavors and a long, lemony finish. The San Giovanni drinks like the more expensive wine it normally is, with



richer, more mouth-filling lemon-lime and mineral flavors than the usual run of cut-rate Pinot Grigios.

Getting more than you pay for. Now, that's change you can believe in.

**The Mendoza Station Torrontes, Nobilis Vinho Verde, and Chateau Montet White Bordeaux are available at the North Miami Total Wine & More for \$5.99, \$6.99 and \$8.99 respectively (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270). The Ruffino Orvieto can be found at the Aventura ABC Fine Wine & Spirits for \$6.49 (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525), the Rene Barbier Mediterranean White at the Biscayne Commons Publix (and other Publix stores) for \$5.99 (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171), and the Villa San Giovanni Pinot Grigio at Lorenzo's Italian Market for \$8.99 (16385 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach, 305-945-6381).**

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

## Restaurant Listings

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### La Moon

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

At four in the morning, nothing quells 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. \$\$

### Le Boudoir Brickell

188 SE 12th Terr.  
305-372-2333

www.leboudoirmiami.com

At this French bakery/café, mornings start seriously, with choices ranging from quality cheese, charcuterie/pâté, or smoked salmon platters to chic Continental and complete American breakfasts — with baguettes, croissants, and other authentic housemade breads, natch. At lunch, generously salad-garnished, open-faced tartines are irresistible (artichoke/tapenade; foie gras; saucisson and French butter on an ultra-crusty imported sourdough slice). But sophisticated salads and homemade soups make the choice tough. And do not skip dessert. Superb sweets include rich almond/fresh raspberry or properly tangy lemon tarts, traditional Madeleines, airy layered mousses, and addictive mini-macaron sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$-\$\$

### Manny's Steakhouse

300 S. Biscayne Blvd.  
305-938-9000

www.mannyssteakhouse.com

M. Night Shyamalan couldn't have come up with more obvious irony: Located directly opposite Prime Blue Grille, Miami's most intentionally female-friendly steakhouse (light décor, lightened dishes), is Manny's, Miami's most intentionally masculine steakhouse. Here, ensconced in your black leather booth, everything is humongous: dry-aged choice-grade steaks like the Bludgeon of Beef (a boldly flavorful 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$\$

### Novocento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

www.bistrionovocento.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 Novocento: 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 flocchi 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

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## Restaurant Listings

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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 Grill

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

The cozy, terracotta-tiled dining room (and even more charming outdoor dining terrace) indeed evokes 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 peppercorn 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 Amando 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 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 / WYNWOOD / 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. \$

### Bengal

2010 Biscayne Blvd.

305-403-1976

At this Indian eatery the décor is date-worthy, with the typical garish brass/tapestry/elephants everywhere replaced by a cool, contemporary ambiance: muted gray and earth-tone walls, tasteful burgundy banquettes. And the menu touts "Modern Indian Cuisine" to match the look. Classicists, however, needn't worry. Some dishes' names are unfamiliar, but America's favorite familiar north Indian flavors are here, though dishes are generally more mildly spiced and presented with modern flair. Definitely don't miss starting with salad-garnished Deshi Samosas (which come with terrific cilantro/mint dip) or ending with mango kulfi, Indian ice

milk. All meats are certified halal, Islam's version of kosher – which doesn't mean that observant orthodox Jews can eat here, but Muslims can. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

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<b>Dinner</b>	Tues - Sun	6pm - til

**7700 Biscayne Blvd.** (Mimo historic district)  
Miami, FL 33138 p. 305.757.7773



## Restaurant Listings

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### Brosia

163 NE 39th St.  
305-572-1400

[www.brosiamiami.com](http://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 fries, salmon atop ratatouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. And it's well worth a drive. \$\$

### Captain Joe Seafood & Pasta Grill

3401 N. Miami Ave. (Shops at Midtown)  
305-573-6111

No matter if your splurge in the Shops at Midtown Miami begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m. This eatery will be there for you, with eggs, pancakes, French toast, and bagels till 11:00 a.m. After that it's a seafood-oriented menu of fast-casual food, like a more upscale and more regional version of Long John Silver's. Best values are combo platters (served with choice of two Latin or All-American sides) such as shrimp and a grilled kebab, a hefty fried or grilled fish sandwich, or a Caribbean paella. The last is more like a pilaf than Spain's saffron-rich creation, but is packed with enough mussels, fish, calamari, chicken, and small shrimp to feed two. There are also more than a half-dozen specials (chicken, shrimp, or veggie-topped pastas) served from 4:00-9:00 p.m. daily, all for under seven bucks. \$

### 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 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 (Ital-Latin noodles with pesto and steak). \$\$

### 18th Street Café

210 NE 18th St.

305-381-8006; [www.18thstreetcafe.com](http://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](http://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](http://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 homemade dipping sauces). There's also a snack menu (pristine coldwater oysters, a crab salad timbale, pamesan-truffle shoestring fries, mini-Kobe burgers) served till the wee hours, providing a welcome alternative to the Boulevard's fast food chains. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Joey's Italian Café

2506 NW 2nd Ave.

305-438-0488

The first new restaurant in the Wynwood Café District, this stylish indoor/outdoor Italian hangout is as casually cool as one would hope — and as affordable. The highest ticket items are \$24 lamb chops with balsamic reduction, and a few \$1000 wines. For starving artists, there's a five-buck half-serving of spaghetti al pomodoro and respectable vino for under \$30. And few can resist delicately thin, crunchy-crust pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante (with figs, gorgonzola, honey, and hot pepper) or orgasmic Carbonara (mozzarella, pancetta, asparagus, and eggs). There are also numerous surprise specials, as the energetic young chef from Italy's Veneto region changes the menu twice daily. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Kafa Café

3535 NE 2nd Ave.

305-438-0114

[www.kafamidtown.com](http://www.kafamidtown.com)

Opened in late 2007 by a brother/sister team (both originally from Ethiopia, via San Francisco), this casual spot is located in the stylish indoor/outdoor, multi-roomed Midtown space formerly housing Uva and Stop Miami. Nothing on the breakfast and lunch menus 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 has recently expanded to include night hours with an authentic Ethiopian dinner menu, plus beer and wine selections. \$\$\$

### Latin Café 2000

2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838

[www.latincafe2000.com](http://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/yucafied 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. \$\$\$

### 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. \$

### Lost & Found Saloon

185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

[www.thelostandfoundsaloon-miami.com](http://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

2201 Biscayne Blvd.

305-571-9044

This very upscale Brazilian steakhouse has all the features one expects at a rodizio-style restaurant, including

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## Restaurant Listings

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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. \$\$-\$\$\$

**Moriano**  
3221 NE 2nd Ave., 786-953-8003  
http://moriano.wordpress.com

Ultra-thin, crisp-crust pizzas as good as Piola's in South Beach. Made-from-scratch daily specials like green bean and parmesan soup, or prosciutto and mozzarella-stuffed gnocchi that you really have not seen on every other menu in town. A homemade white chocolate/raspberry cake, chocolate ganache cake, and other pastries to die for. High-quality ingredients, wine and beer, low prices, enthusiastic hands-on owners committed to arts-oriented creativity. A comfortable hang-out atmosphere. This tiny café, where "processed food" is a dirty word, has it all – except a high-visibility location or media hype. So discover it for yourselves. (There's ample free street parking, too.) \$\$-\$\$\$

**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 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 Pecky 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' hangout 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 restoulounge, 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,

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# DINING GUIDE

## Restaurant Listings

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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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### Sra. Martinez 4000 NE 2nd Ave. 305-374-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar, in the historic former Buena Vista Post Office, is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But know this: It's not one of her absentee celebrity-chef gigs. She is hands-on at both places on any given night. Bernstein's exuberant yet firmly controlled personal touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas that, except for a few conventional entrées for die-hards, make up the whole menu. Items are frequently reinvented, depending on seasonal ingredients and diner feedback. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas with fig jam (different from Michy's, but equally flawless); white bean stew (duck/foie gras sausage and favas in an intense port wine reduction); crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/coriander dip; simple but addictive Padron-style shishito peppers; and buttery bone marrow piqued with Middle Eastern spices and balanced by tiny pickled salads. \$\$\$

### Tony Chan's Water Club 1717 N. Bayshore Dr. 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, a huge bay-side 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 signature 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). \$\$\$

### Anise Taverna 620 NE 78th St. 305-758-2929 www.anisetaverna.com

In the past 15 years this river shack has housed at least five different restaurants. Now new owners Liza and Gigi are banking on Greek food and festivity being the concept that sticks – a good bet, judging from their wildly popular previous eatery, Ouzo. The mainly mezze menu ranges from traditional Greek small plates like the pikilia (combo dip plate of tzatziki, tarama, hummus, and smoky eggplant purée) or tender grilled octopus to creative Mediterranean-inspired dishes (like anise-scented fish croquettes with spicy aioli) that never stray too far from the fold to remain evocative. But don't neglect large plates like whole grilled Mediterranean fish (dorade or branzino), filleted tableside. The interior décor is charming, and the outdoor deck on the Little River is positively romantic. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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 pastéis (shrimp and hearts of palm-stuffed turnovers) to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$\$

### 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, 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, lomo 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. \$

### El Q-Bano Palacio de los Jugos

8650 Biscayne Blvd.

305-758-2550

In case you were wondering if it's too good to be true – it isn't. El Q-Bano's owners are indeed related to the family that operates the original three Palacios de los Jugos – which means no more schlepping way out west for the chicharrones against which all others pale. Also recommended are moist tamales, tasty sandwiches (especially the drippingly wonderful pan con lechon), rich flan, and the fresh tropical juices that justify the aforementioned excesses. For even heartier eaters, there's a changing buffet of daily specials and sides. And those ordering

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the combo platter of, basically, Cuba's Greatest Hits had better take advantage of the free delivery, since waddling home will be difficult. \$\$\$

### Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd.  
305-754-2357

Giving new meaning to the food term "fusion," Europa serves up sandwiches, salads, car washes, coffee with croissants, and Chevron with Techron. Those who remember this former no-frills filling station only as one of the Boulevard's cheapest sources of brand-name gas will be astonished at the invitingly expanded interior. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot capicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings — done by hand, not finish-scratching machines — are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesday's "Ladies Day," when women are pampered with \$10 detail washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

### 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. \$\$\$

### 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. \$

### Magnum Lounge

709 NE 79th St., 305-757-3368

It's a restaurant. It's a lounge. But it's decidedly not a typical Miami restolounge, or like anything else in Miami. Forbidding from the outside, it is, inside, like a time-trip to Liza Minelli's cabaret in pre-WWII Berlin, or what one imagines a fancy 1930s Manhattan supper club must have been like: bordello red décor, romantically dim lighting, show-tune live piano bar entertainment, and to match the ambiance, elegantly updated retro food served with style and a smile. For those feeling flush, home-style fried chicken is just like mom used to make — in her wildest dreams. For bargain-seekers, rich French onion soup, with a varied bread basket, is a great value. The clientele is largely gay, but everyone is most welcome. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### Metro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-1392

Big changes have come to Karma the car wash, the first being a separate new name for the revamped restaurant: Metro Organic Bistro. The owners proudly proclaim Metro to be Miami's first all-organic fine-dining restaurant, where simple preparations reveal and enhance natural flavors. An entirely new menu places emphasis on grilled organic meat and fish dishes. Try the steak frites — organic, grass-fed skirt steak with organic chimichurri and fresh-cut fries. Vegetarians will love the organic portabella focaccia. Karma car wash is still in operation, and a great wash with meticulous detailing takes time. But killing an hour or so at Metro a pleasure, either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$\$\$

### 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,

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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

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### News Lounge

5582 NE 4th Ct.  
305-758-9932; www.the55thstation.com

Unlike South Beach's News Café, Mark Soyka's new News is, as its name suggests, more a friendly neighborhood hangout and watering hole than a full-fledged eatery. Nevertheless the limited menu of light bites is – along with other entertaining lures like an inviting outdoor patio, an intriguing music selection, a 5:00-9:00 p.m. half-price deal on well drinks and selected beers, and rest rooms that resemble eclectic art galleries – part of the reason that almost all who drop in stay for hours. Especially recommended snacks are fat mini-burgers with chipotle ketchup; a brie, turkey, and mango chutney sandwich on crusty baguette; and what many feel is the original café's Greatest Hit: creamy hummus with warm pita. A beer list that includes Tucher on tap, plus high-octane Belgian brews like Duvel and Delirium Tremens, reminds diners that beer is food too. \$

### 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 riverfront restaurant, located in a refurbished old motel, you 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. \$\$\$

### UVA 69

6900 Biscayne Blvd.

305-754-9022

www.uva-69.com

Owned by the Vega brothers (chef Michael and artist

Sinuhé) of Cane á Sucre – now defunct, but one of Midtown Miami's first cool, contemporary cafés – this more ambitious yet casual outdoor/indoor Euro-café and lounge serves the same purpose on the Upper Eastside, helping to transform a commuter strip into a hip place to hang out. The menu has grown more sophisticated along with the neighborhood. Lunch includes a variety of salads and elegant sandwiches like La Minuta (beer-battered mahi-mahi with cilantro aioli and caramelized onions on housemade foccacia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash, Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. Drink specials and live music on weekends. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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. \$\$

### Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery

646 NE 79th St., 305-754-3337

A true community jewel, this bakery is also a most welcoming café, serving daily-changing bargain lunch specials, from chef Delsa Bernardo (who co-owns the place with attorney Abbie Cuellar), that are homemade right down to the herbs grown on the bakery's window sills. Bernardo's pan con lechon sandwiches (slow-roasted pork, onions, and secret marinade stuffed into fresh-baked Cuban bread) and flaky-crust sweet or savory Cuban pastries are legend. But she also crafts treats not found at average Cuban bakeries, like inventive pizzas using housemade Indian naan bread. Additionally Bernardo carries unique treats produced by a few friends: candies, cupcakes, exotically flavored flans, and artful specialty cakes from Harry Bakes. \$

## 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 homemade 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. \$\$\$

### Edy's Chicken & Steak

1624 79th St. Causeway

305-864-9958

It might initially seem that the steaks (sirloin, filet, or a chewy "marucha" top round) are what differentiate Edy's from Miami's many other chicken joints. But what really makes the place stand out is the signature Peruvian pollo a la brasa, char-broiled in a wood-fired rotisserie rather than simply plonked on a grill. The rotation makes the bird self-baste, keeping even the delicate white meat juicy under its crispy, nearly fat-free skin. Spicing is also superior. The original recipe of owner Edy Dernovsek's secret dozen-ingredient marinade came from a visit to Peru, but has been tweaked with typical spices from her hometown – Chiang Mai, Thailand. The result is subtly mouth-warming heat absent from average chain chickens. Nothing leaps out at you, but there's just enough of a taste-bud tease to make the poultry's own flavors jump. For serious fire, green chili sauce comes with all orders. \$\$\$

### 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. \$

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# DINING GUIDE

## Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 54

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

**Oggi Caffè**  
1666 79th St. Causeway  
305-866-1238  
www.oggicaffè.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 exotica 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 shudders. \$\$-\$\$

**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. \$\$\$

**Tamarind Thai**  
946 Normandy Dr.  
305-861-6222; www.tamarindthai.us

When an eatery's executive chef is best-selling Thai cookbook 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? \$\$\$

**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 briki (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 ajicaco. 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**  
12599 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-3141

On Friday nights, 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." There are specials the other six days of the week as well,

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## Restaurant Listings

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from early-bird discounts to open-mike nights to kids-eat-free Tuesdays. But don't forget the biggest draw: the barbecue, honest stuff that has been low-temperature smoked for 12 to 14 hours till tender yet resilient. 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. \$\$

### **Bulldog Barbecue** 15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655 www.bulldog-bbq.com

The BBQ master at this small, rustic room is pugnacious *Top Chef* contender Howie Kleinberg, whose indoor electric smoker turns out mild-tasting 'cue that ranges from the expected (pulled pork, ribs, brisket, chicken) to oughta-be-expected stuff like hot-smoked salmon or smoked veggie plates for noncarnivores. There are also creative comfort food starters like BBQ chicken flatbread, salads, and sweets. Sides include refreshing slaw; beans studded with "burnt ends," (the most intensely flavored outer barbecue chunks); and sweet potato or chipotle-spiced fries (frozen, not fresh-made, but foolproof). The barbecue's cost is high compared to most places, but such is the price of fame. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### **Burritos Grill Café** 11717 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1041 www.burritosgrillcafe.com

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** 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 gnoc-chi 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### **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 barbacon, 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. \$

### **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 cheese-burger 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** 2188 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 tassot 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** 3201 N. Miami Ave. (Shops at Midtown) 305-576-5463 (See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

### **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 roadside 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. \$

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## Restaurant Listings

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### 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 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 massaman 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 à 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-cruste, 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. \$\$

### 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-cruste 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, bergerbite, Cezarr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperr – may cause queasiness. But the schmopperr itself is one helluva 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 crapes, 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 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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 scalions, plus Chinese-American egg foo young. Default

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## Restaurant Listings

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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 smoke-house now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include roasted red pepper hummus, crab cakes, a delightfully light homemade Key lime chiffon pie, daily specials, and on weekends, 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 Gouvêla, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe 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 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 veggie, 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. \$\$

### Kabobji 3055 NE 163rd St., 305-354-8484 www.EatKabobji.com

This place makes a very good tahini sauce. In fact that alone is reason enough to visit. We prefer ours with this bright, cheery eatery's delightfully oniony falafel or a veg-garnished wrap of thin-sliced marinated beef schwarma. They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

### 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 atmospheric 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 vindaloes 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 fagirole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. \$-\$\$

### Lemon Fizz 16310 W. Dixie Hwy. 305-949-6599

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 Saiwwgon 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 humorous. \$-\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$-\$

### Pizza Fusion 14815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-405-6700 www.pizzafusion.com

"Saving the earth one pizza at a time" is the motto at this franchise of the only pizza chain to require third-party organic restaurant certification at all locations. Their gluten-free crusts make it mighty friendly to pizza fanatics with food allergies. Starters, salads, desserts, and organic wines/beers are also served. And delivery is available – in hybrid cars, of course. Specials unique to this NMB franchise include Sunday-Thursday happy hours, a free

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**Côté Gourmet**  
Elegant French Cuisine

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8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
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Dinner  
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.  
Thursday - Saturday

Closed Sunday

305-754-9012  
9999 NE 2nd Ave.  
Miami Shores

## Restaurant Listings

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Kids Organic Club class on Saturdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m., and varied Monday-Wednesday freebies. \$-\$\$

### 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. \$

### Roasters & Toasters

18515 NE 18th Ave.  
305-830-3354

Attention ex-New Yorkers: Is your idea of food pornography one of the Carnegie Deli's mile-high pastrami sandwiches? Well, Roasters will dwarf them. Even a mouth like Angelina Jolie's couldn't fit around a "Carnegie-style" monster containing, according to the menu, a full pound of succulent meat (really 1.4 pounds; we weighed it), for a mere 15 bucks. All the other Jewish deli classics are here too, including just-sour-enough pickles, just-sweet-enough slaw, silky hand-sliced nova or lox, truly red-rare roast beef, and the cutest two-bite mini-potato pancakes ever – eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### 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 veggie or noodle, 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 Raw Bar and Grille

17850 W. Dixie Hwy.  
305-932-0630

www.tunasrawbarandgrille.com

When Tuna's moved in 2006 from the marina space it had occupied for more than 30 years, it lost its waterfront location, its old-fashioned fish-house ambiance, and its outdoor deck. But now it has gained new owners, a new name, a dazzling outdoor bar and dining area, and a newly impressive selection of raw-bar specialties: cold-water oysters from the Northeast, plus Blue Points, Malpecs, Island Creeks, and more. Traditional house favorites remain, and the emphasis is still on fresh fish from local waters. Open daily till 2:00 a.m., the place can get rather festive after midnight, but since the kitchen is open till closing, Tuna's 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 freak 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, scallops, and parmesan. The famous dessert soufflé's flavor changes daily, but it always did. \$\$\$\$

### 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 wife

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 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Pizza Roma

19090 NE 29th Ave.  
305-937-4462

Despite its name, this homey hidden eatery serves not Rome's wood-cooked, crunchy-crust pizzas but New York-style pies with medium-thick crusts pliable enough to fold in half for neat street eating. Unlike chains, though, this indie is accommodating, so if you want your crust thin and crisp, just ask. Also featured are Italian-American entrées like baked manicotti (that's "mani-goat", for those not from NJ) big enough to share, and sub sandwiches, here called "bullets," to put you in a Sopranos frame of mind. The neighborhood friendliness extends to kids, and there's a TV, plus coolers of beer and plunk, for sports fans. \$\$

### 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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