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Volume 7, Issue 4



Check Please!

By Pamela Robin Brandt

Photos by Silvia Ros

New Biscayne Corridor restaurants are defying the recession and energizing neighborhoods

Over the past couple of years, restaurant-going Miami residents and visitors alike have learned an astonishing thing: The causeways across Biscayne Bay, previously thought

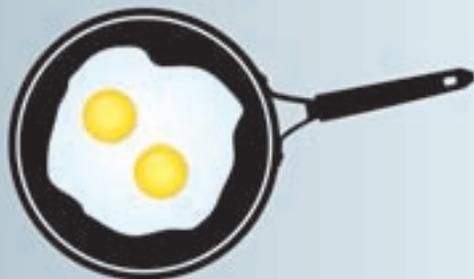
to be one-way at night — east, from the Biscayne Corridor to the Beach only — actually run both ways. This epiphany can be attributed to a couple of things that occurred almost simultaneously.

One was the unprecedented number of fine-dining restaurants that went belly-up. Some were merely expensive, but many were truly fine. And most were in South Beach: David Bouley

Evolution, Fifty, Mark's South Beach, 8 1/2, Afterglo, and many more.

The other thing was the equally unprecedented number of casual, creative,

.....
Continued on page 14



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Brand New Townhouse – Bay Harbor Islands, enormous tri-level w/ interior elevator & roof top terrace, corner with tons of light & yard



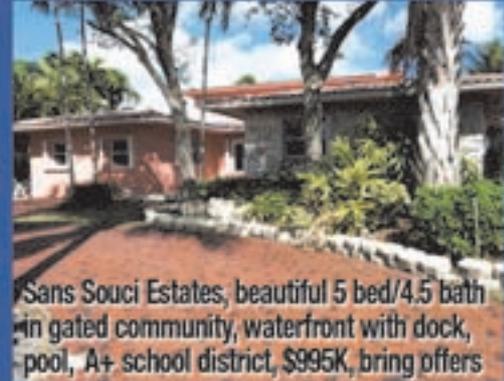
Miami Beach Waterfront in gated Biscayne Point, no bridges to bay and totally redone, 5 bed/3.5 bath, reduced \$1.195M



Just Listed – Magnificent Wide Water Golden Shores, everything new, just completed, 5,200sf, 6bd/5.5ba, not one detail overlooked, too much to mention, 2 car gar, \$3.25M



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
 <h3>CELIA</h3> <p>THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF CELIA CRUZ</p> <p>Begins June 2</p>		2 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K <i>She's back!</i> Following a sold-out international tour, the hot musical that had all Miami singing and dancing last summer returns to the Adrienne Arsht Center!	3 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K <i>¡Azucar!</i> Cuban legend and global icon Celia Cruz is back in an explosive musical, featuring a hit parade of her greatest songs.	4 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Signature Shorts 8PM C <i>"Summer Shorts... the art still rocks!" -The Miami Herald</i>	5 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30 PM K undershorts 10PM C <i>A late-night series of provocative short plays!</i>	6 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 5 & 9PM K Signature Shorts 7PM C undershorts 10PM C		
7 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 3 & 7PM K Signature Shorts 3PM C	 <h3>FUERZA BRUTA</h3> <p>Look Up!</p> <p>Begins June 9</p>		9 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30 PM K <i>"The Salsa Queen still rules!" -Daily News</i> Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"Has to be seen to be believed!" -Variety</i>	10 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"Unexpected magnificence. Be in the mood for an unusually beguiling time." -The Star-Ledger</i>	11 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z Signature Shorts 8PM C	12 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z undershorts 10PM C	13 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 5 & 9PM K Signature Shorts 7PM C Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z undershorts 10PM C	
14 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Signature Shorts 3PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 3 & 7PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z	<p>Begins June 9</p> <p><i>"A dazzling blend of erotic, hypnotic, aquatic!" -New York Post</i></p> <p>Come early or stay late for a drink at the Fuerza Bruta Lounge!</p>		16 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K <i>"Salsa fans will eat-up this pulsing, song-filled tribute!" -Daily News</i> Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z	17 Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30 PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"A sexy, heart-pounding fantasy!" -New York Daily News</i>	18 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z Signature Shorts 8PM C	19 Shorts 4 Kids 11AM & 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 7:30PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z undershorts 10PM C	20 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 5 & 9PM K Signature Shorts 7PM C Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z undershorts 10PM C	
21 Shorts 4 Kids 1PM C Signature Shorts 3PM C Celia: The Life & Music of Celia Cruz 3 & 7PM K Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z	<p><i>"A gravity-defying spectacular from the makers of De La Guarda." -Variety</i></p>		23 Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"A wordless fusion of physical and visual feats, performed at close range to the audience!" -The New York Times</i>	24 Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"A gravity-defying spectacular from the makers of De La Guarda." -Variety</i>	25 Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z The visuals are spectacular! The effects are stunning!	26 Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z <i>"Madness! A truly one-of-a-kind diversion!" -The Star-Ledger</i>	27 Fuerza Bruta 7:30 & 10PM Z Come early or stay late and enjoy a drink at the Fuerza Bruta Lounge!	
28 Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"Ferociously stimulating! An evening of jaw-dropping sensation and an eye-popping adventure!" -Variety</i>			30 Fuerza Bruta 7:30PM Z <i>"Not many shows can boast that they deliver something you've never seen before. THIS ONE DOES." -New York Daily News</i>	 <h3>SUMMER SHORTS</h3> <h4>AMERICA'S SHORT PLAY FESTIVAL</h4> <p>featuring Shorts 4 Kids, Signature Shorts, and undershorts! June 4-21</p>				

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BISCAYNE Times



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The Biscayne Times welcomes proposals for articles and press releases. Submitted material may be edited for length, clarity, and content. All submitted material becomes the property of The Biscayne Times. Please be sure to include your name, address and telephone number in all correspondence.

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COMMENTARY: *FEEDBACK*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gravy Train: Why Bother with College?

Thanks to reporter Erik Bojnansky for some outstanding investigative reporting with "Gravy Train" (May 2009). And thanks to *Biscayne Times* for being the public eyes on our unaccountable government that thinks money is not something to be frugal with — while the general public tightens its belt to barely pay property taxes and insurance.

A quote from city commissioner and mayoral candidate Tomas Regalado, referring to the nearly 100 Miami employees (overwhelmingly firefighters) who made more than \$200,000 last year: "It's good to work for the government, I guess."

At a time when local companies are laying off employees with four-year degrees and professional licenses within their discipline, why would I tell my sons to go to college when they can become a policeman or fireman with no degree, make more than \$100,000 after working just five years, get lots of overtime, and have no stress over *ever* losing their jobs thanks to the socialist union mentality?

One request: Can you do the same for Miami-Dade County? I believe you'll find the results similar.

*Jorge Rodriguez
Kendall*

Gravy Train: Next Stop, Miami-Dade County

"Gravy Train" was a great article, but you've only scratched the surface. Miami-Dade County employees are grossly overpaid, and all you have to do is go into the system and see how taxpayers are financing individuals who only work two of the eight hours required, especially the General Services Administration, where laborers make just as much as craftsmen and where construction managers have nothing to do but make coffee and loaf around the office since there is no work.

You should check how many projects are current and how many managers are in charge of those. Also check the purchase of equipment that's not being used. Or the evaluation system manipulated by management, where every employee is rated "outstanding" when 50 percent or more could not pass the carpenter's test used by the Miami-Dade County Schools maintenance department.

These are only a few things to mention, but I suggest you look into this gross abuse to the taxpayers' money.

*Rudy Barrientos
Biscayne Park*

Gravy Train: How I Lost Faith in Our Government

Thanks for "Gravy Train," the exposé on pumped-up Miami civil-servant salaries. To start with, since my HMO will now lapse at \$765 per month (an increase of a lot more than the usual annual 20 percent), I envy all the government employees — not just for all the paid days off, the pensions for life, and the all-inclusive health care for life, but for the nearly infallible job security. *That* is what really makes these jobs so much more valuable than anything in the private sector.

For me, after observing the way the government here disdains and exploits its citizens, I have to admit I've lost respect for and faith in local government. Ask around. People who have lived here for a while will tell you the system is about generating money for the government and its employees, not about providing services. Why else do the police routinely jack up lies about traffic offenses? Why else do the courts run people around for months and even years, extracting court costs, fees, and police overtime for court appearances?

Or think back on the fiasco over pet licenses, when the county was found by (Help Me) Howard Finkelstein to have

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Letters

Continued from page 4

intentionally stopped sending out notification of renewals so they could send out fines instead.

And why do city inspectors, who can't seem to call if they're not going to show up and can't be reached on their taxpayer-provided cell phones and slap fines on homeowners for hundreds of dollars for things like pruning trees — why do they strut around until 3:00 p.m. then somehow routinely forget to put closed permits into the computer at the end of the day?

What's been most telling are the attitudes. These people don't see themselves as providing service, but rather as exerting power. And they're so often hostile. What is *that* about?

And God help you if some government employee has made a mistake. You have to exercise diplomacy worthy of Henry Kissinger to get things straightened out. How *dare* you suggest that one of these people may have made a mistake? But they do it all the time. And if you try to point out a mistake made by a policeman, you're likely to wind up in jail, accused of assaulting a police officer.

More and more I see government employees as unaccountable and incompetent. The U.S. Postal Service is a typical example. Service gets worse and worse, more and more hostile, but they just raise the price of mail and diminish service. In the meantime, you have to wait in line to pick up a package or try to buy stamps from a machine that won't take your money unless it was printed yesterday.

It seems as if the kids turned out by our collapsed but expensive education system are unemployable in the private sector (but we're going to pretend otherwise), so government becomes the employer of

last resort. It was hard for me to admit to myself that *government of, by, and for the people* had become *government of, by, and for the government*, but my experience suggests this is what has happened.

And my dismay at having to deal with government employees is only eclipsed by my horror at the thought of having an encounter with a police officer, or of dealing with a health-care worker at one of our super-expensive hospitals. Anything can happen.

I'm not sure how all these people came to believe they are so incredibly *entitled*, but I do know that I am nearing the end of the time when I will be paying for it. And I'm at least glad about that.

Yeah, my living standard is lower, my expectations for safety, justice, and equality diminished, but I don't feel I can do anything about any of this, and I think many people are still in a state of denial about how bad it really is.

How much longer can this continue? As "Gravy Train" suggests, we may be on the verge of finding out.

David Rohn
Upper Eastside

Gravy Train: I Am a Firefighter's Wife, So Listen Up

Once again the media gets it *wrong*! Did your reporter research the fact that many of the firefighters named in "Gravy Train" were owed back pay from the city in the amount of \$10,000 to \$20,000?

How about getting *all* the facts first? How about how these firefighters had not gotten a pay raise in over six years? Did your reporter have these facts and fail to report it?

How about going after the mismanagement of city officials who have not hired enough firefighters, which would have cut down on overtime? Yes, they might have made good money, but the citizens of the city

Calling All Writers! Well, Maybe Not All Writers

We here at Biscayne Times World Headquarters are looking for some new correspondents to supplement our stellar cast. If you live in a condo in downtown Miami (between the river and I-395), and you'd like to chronicle life in that particular frontier, we want to hear from you. Ditto for these areas: Edgewater, North Bay Village, Bay Harbor Islands, and North Miami. Warning: This is *not* a path to riches.

Please send contact information and writing samples (if you have them) to editor Jim Mullin: jim.mullin@biscaynetimes.com.

got the services they needed without delay.

Our husbands and wives are sacrificing everything, from time with their families to running into situations they might not make it out of. How about putting a positive spin on the people who serve the citizens of Miami? They are true heroes, Mr. Mullin, and I should know: I am a firefighter's wife.

Name Withheld by Request
Miami

Donald Shockey Sez: Bike Racks Are Coming to the Shores!

Thank you for Mark Sell's excellent and informative article on the recent Miami Shores Village Council election ("Low Turnout but High Hopes," May 2009). The story allowed many village residents to see a more progressive voice on the council rather than unhappiness with any particular candidate. We enjoy a great quality of life in Miami Shores, thanks in large part to the efforts of past administrations and council members.

I hope to help further improve that quality of life by working toward the goals and objectives I discussed in my campaign. One of those goals was to have the village initiate an environmental-sustainability program. In May the village administration announced the Village Green program, which identifies green practices that have been adopted to date, and creates a platform for identifying and adopting additional practices for both the village government and residents. I urge *BT* readers who live in the village to learn about the program on the village Website, and to support and participate in this important effort.

In the same May issue, Jen Karetnick's column on the lack of bike racks along NE 2nd Avenue was also timely ("Rackless in the Village"). Bicycle use saves energy, provides exercise, and helps build community, and I believe that bicycling for fun or as a means of transportation should be strongly encouraged. To that end, the village will soon be installing bike racks at the library, the Starbucks development, and at a point in between. As an avid biker myself, I will make it a point to look at other locations in the village where racks or other bicycling accommodations may be appropriate.

I also share the concerns of letter-writer and Miami Shores resident Dennis Tinsman, who complained about conditions along Biscayne Boulevard from the southern boundary of Miami Shores at 87th Street down to 79th Street ("Letters," May 2009). The appearance of this area is seriously compromised by the lack of trees, by the presence of graffiti, and by numerous signage and property-maintenance issues. In this regard, I have learned that the FDOT tree-planting project from 62nd Street to 87th Street was delayed, but is now slated to begin in June and be completed in December. The village is also working with the City of Miami to address some of the

Continued on page 13

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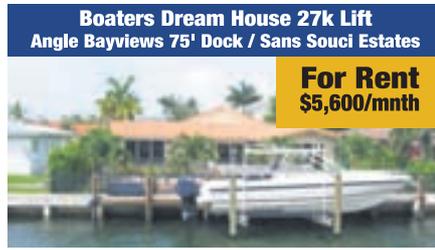
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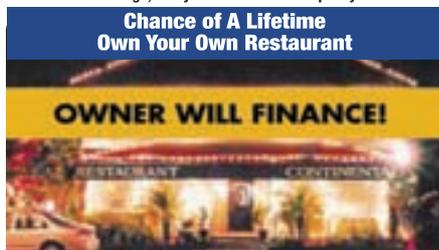
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BizBuzz: June 2009

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

How does an important restaurant like **Soyka** (5556 NE 4th Ct.; 305-759-3117), a place that may credit with sparking the revival of the whole Upper Eastside commercial strip, celebrate the start of its second decade? Why, with the most important meal of the day, of course: breakfast. Mark Soyka and co-owner Steve Haas now open the restaurant at 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, serving breakfast to the neighborhood, as well as to Biscayne Boulevard commuters just wanting a tastier-than-usual quick bite on their way downtown. Also this month Soyka will begin offering free shuttle service from his 55th Street Station complex of restaurants and boutiques to Soyka operations on South Beach, from the News Café on Ocean Drive to the Van Dyke and Segafredo on Lincoln Road. Imagine: Heading to SoBe with no worries about parking. What a concept.

Last month, say the folks at **Miami Beach Pebbles** (3214 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-438-1775), hordes of Miamians responded to their designer pebbles deal (a free 40-pound bag of smooth stones), and discovered that these natural, decorative pebbles can transform plants into objets d'art. Hence this month's offer: Fill one of their eco-friendly jute bags with your choice of stones for just \$9.

This month **Karma** (7010 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-759-1392), where drivers can restore themselves with a superlative ahi tuna sandwich at the multi-tasking car wash's Metro Organic Bistro — offers a 25-percent discount on detailing for hybrid or electric cars.

The *BT* extends a harmonic and vocal welcome to the acclaimed choral ensemble and new advertiser **Seraphic Fire** (866-739-0010). They'll be kicking

off their three-part summer concert series with a spirited and soulful gospel program in Miami Shores.

Chef/owner Kris Wessel of **Red Light** (7700 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-757-7773) originally planned to name his eatery Red Light, Green Light, but we're happy he stuck with the simpler moniker, saving the other half for "Green Light Sale" specials, like that on June 7: coconut conch chowder \$4, BBQ shrimp \$6, watermelon-lime bars \$3, and similar summer deals. And on June 21, Wessel takes advantage of the restaurant's riverside setting with a "Father's Day Fishing Rodeo & BBQ." Bring your own fishing pole and cook your own catch — or your steak.

At **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-892-2435), David Cohen will continue May's spectacularly successful trio of coupon promos. With the ad in this issue, readers will on Fridays, get an eight-ounce deli sandwich for \$5, while eat-in customers buying an entrée and drink on Tuesdays get a second entrée of equal or lesser value for free. And every day in June, bagel mavens buying a dozen get one of three bonuses: an extra dozen; a coupon for a free dozen anytime within 30 days; or a pound of cream cheese.

On last year's national Take Your Dog to Work Days (June 22-23), there wasn't a single place in town for Bowser and Fifi to do lunch. Fortunately, starting June 8, the Doggie Bag Café at **Smiling Pets** (7310 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-710-7266) will be extending its hours from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Laly Albalate explains the concept: "You know how at regular outdoor cafés people get the great meals and dogs get water in a Styrofoam cup under the table? Well, at our café it's just the opposite." Humans actually get to lie in comfy lounge chairs and sip coffee,

tea, or Perrier while their dogs socialize over Muttloaf, German Shepherds Pie, and other treats from a changing menu. More news: The Smiling Pets clinic is now open for walk-in appointments in addition to their mobile services.

Côté Gourmet (9999 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-754-9012), the authentic French café that ballooned (by popular demand) from a breakfast/lunch nook into full indoor/outdoor restaurant since our first crusty baguette sandwich there, continues its expansion with a new three-course prix fixe dinner: appetizer, dessert, and choice of four entrées (including their justly famed salmon in lemon cream sauce). Sit down between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. and get a free glass of quality wine.

When is a "World's Greatest Dad" tie not a tie, but something the big guy will actually use? Find the answer at **Imagine Gifts** (Shops at Midtown Miami, 3252 NE 1st Ave.; 305-704-8246), where this month's featured Father's Day items are wallets (starting at \$13) made from recycled ties — quite possibly the one you gave dad last year.

Wondering what to do with the kids this summer? **MeteGoal**, the new indoor, air-conditioned soccer field conveniently located in the Upper Eastside at 7616 NE 4th Ct., has the answer. Starting June 15 the facility will offer a summer camp run by Brazilian coach Joao Moraes. The ten Saturday sessions are divided by age, and yes, it's possible to take just an occasional class, but MeteGoal's Katie Rhodes (305-756-1700 or katie@metegoal.com) offers a 10-percent discount to *BT* readers who sign up and pay for four weeks in advance.

For arts-oriented kids, **Live! School of Music** offers three summer camp terms starting June 15 that take the offspring off your hands every weekday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Each two-week program includes an astonishing

amount of concentrated learning: lessons in music theory and songwriting, ear training, individual instrument instruction, band practice, recording, clinics, even a field trip. Register online at www.liveschoolofmusic.com or call 305-893-0191 for more info.

Just in time for the start of the bathing suit season, the *BT* welcomes new advertiser **One Sumo**, where the specialty is healthy shakes designed to give drinkers the strength of a sumo wrestler without the sumo super flab. Shakes comes in all categories, from weight-loss drinks to kid-pleasers like the PB&J. But those wanting to supplement their shakes with solids will also find, along with low-carb salads, some surprises not found at your average smoothie bar: healthy, value-priced combo meals (marinated and sauced beef, chicken, or seafood, plus veggies and rice) cooked fresh — and fast — upon order, over an open-flame grill.

Those who figure that luxury waterfront real estate may not be a hot seller in this economy haven't dealt with new advertiser Jeff Tomlinson of **Tomlinson Realty Group** (305-895-5333; jeffrebr@bellsouth.net). Selling homes in record time is a specialty for Tomlinson, who reports that in a dozen years no listing has ever expired unsold. The key to his success: personal service, including vital niceties like operating a title company. The resulting convenience and savings in closing costs enable excited new owners to concentrate on the fun stuff. Tomlinson is famed for throwing elaborate closing dinners, at which he prepares gourmet meals and vocal entertainment, resulting in his two nicknames. So welcome to the *BT* family, "Jeff ze Chef." Or should we say "JELvis"?

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Miami's Media Muddle

You know things are shaky when the BT scoops everyone in town

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Last month *Biscayne Times* did something that should have never been done: It scooped Miami's big-city daily, four big-city television stations, and one big-city alternative weekly with a story that was right under their collective noses. The story, of course, was about the truly excessive salaries and benefits the City of Miami pays to many of its employees ("Gravy Train," May 2009).

The first question that comes to my mind is this: Are we that good here, or are they that bad there. Alas, I am afraid it is the latter — no offense to "Gravy Train" author Erik Bojnansky. And to punctuate that point, you have to understand that we had the story for several weeks and were absolutely fearful that someone else would discover it and break it before we could go to press. That's no small fear when you only publish monthly in a news environment in which the Internet breaks news every *minute*.

And that may just be the crux of the problem. It is very easy to break news, but it is not so easy to gather news, especially quality investigative reporting. After all, this is the town that invented the instant news cycle for television. Some 20 years ago, the so-called reporters at WSVN-TV (Channel 7) sat by their police scanners, ready to leap at a moment's notice to cover Miami's latest auto accident or police shooting.

It was easy, took no brains, filled hours of mostly dead time on television, and gave rise to the catchy phrase, "If It Bleeds, It Leads." After years of this crap, the public began to think this

was actually news.

Miami's two giants in the print news business, the *Miami Herald* and the weekly *New Times*, are quietly, slowly falling on hard times. Ten years ago they were considered among the best in their respective areas. Now both of them are reeling under huge debt and doing everything they can to cut costs, mostly by eliminating writers and editors.

The *Herald* and 31 other Knight Ridder daily newspapers were purchased in June 2006 by the McClatchy Company for a hell of a lot more than the *Herald* and the rest of them were worth. (Total price: \$4.5 billion.) Even worse, the *Herald* is worth much less now than when purchased. Not a good business model. So what is a good business model? How about firing or buying out most everyone in the editorial department and replacing them with recent journalism school grads who will work for 50-percent less pay and few benefits. That's a business model that works, but not for long. And who gets the short end of the stick? How about the paper's readers, who think, at least for the time being, they're still getting a quality product. Fat chance.

Miami New Times is a sad case. Once a beacon of journalistic light in the darkness that is Miami, today it is, as they say, a mere shadow of its former self. For years, while the *Herald* was chasing Pulitzer Prizes, *New Times* was chasing local news and doing it well. Now their staff is down to about nothing, the value of the editorial content is even less, and their only hope is to find a way to make money off their blog, Riptide 2.0. It is good and it's timely, but it's not very effective at generating revenue.

I had thought *New Times* could survive on its classified section and adult ads. That doesn't seem to be so. Even the hookers are affected by the economic downturn. Who would have thought? I always believed that sin was recession-proof.

Even the ego media is suffering. *Ocean Drive* magazine, whose founder, Jerry Powers, sold out last year, is dropping its sister publications like hot stones. It won't be long before *Ocean Drive* will be alone and considerably smaller than it is now.

Staying with the ego-publication business (and there have been many over the years in Miami), Elena Carpenter's *Miami Monthly* looks like it might be going down also. (In the interest of full disclosure, I must tell you that Ms. Carpenter and I were partners in a now-defunct publication for a short period. She and I may have had our differences, but I don't like to see any publication fail.) *Miami Monthly* is a classic Miami publication — fantastic art direction and vaporous editorial content. How do I know *Miami Monthly* is in trouble? They were running in-house ads begging people to subscribe in order to keep the publication going. Gutsy, but not especially effective.

So we have the mainstream media in the crapper, the electronic media in the crapper, the alternative media in the crapper, and the ego media in the crapper. That leaves us with online media, which get millions of hits on every major and minor site every day. Unfortunately no



one has been able to make any money off of it. And if you consider the fact that Internet media steal most of their information from the mainstream media, where does that leave us when the mainstream media stops giving away news for free? Frankly, I don't know. And that's one of the reasons I don't write as much as I used to.

I still have high hopes for the journalism business, and that includes *Biscayne Times*, which publisher Jim Mullin blithely describes as "a clean-cut, hyper-local niche newspaper-magazine hybrid."

Journalism is the lifeblood of the knowledge business, and knowledge is power. That cliché "what you don't know won't hurt you" is completely wrong. What you don't know will adversely affect your life in many ways.

The *New York Times* has a project in conjunction with Google called Times-Reader 2.0. It is as close to an online newspaper as I have seen. It is still in the experimental stage, and it is free, at least for now. They might be on to something. It's been a long time coming.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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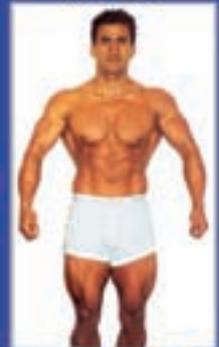
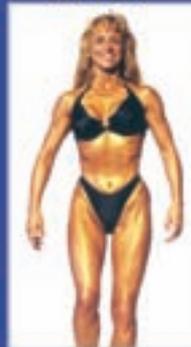
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What do you do to relax?

Compiled by Victor Barrenechea — BT Contributor



Gregg Lasky
Business Owner
Midtown

I think balance is the key, and sort of going back to the simplest things in life — namely, enjoying friends and home, and devoting equal time to exercise and totally free time. Time devoid of schedule or responsibility. It's really important to just get away from responsibility, otherwise small problems become big problems, and stress becomes anger.



Guillermo Pumar
Photo Retouch Artist
Design District

I don't know, I do so many things. It depends on the way I'm feeling. It could be just going for a walk, drinking green tea, or probably going to the beach at 5:30 in the afternoon. I prefer that hour because there's not as many people. The breeze is calm. The sky is not too bright and not too dark. It's peaceful.



Migdorian Morejon
Fashion Designer
Omni

I like to spend time at home. I spend the week-ends with the people I love the most. My husband, my parents. It's that time to catch up and share common interests. I try to be very calm and take every minute as it comes. Massages and facials help, too. They give you time to reflect and dream. I get at least two or three a month.



Patrick Walsh
Floor Manager
Downtown

I don't have time to relax. I love working, and I love to keep myself busy. You could say I relax by not relaxing. If I'm not active, I get anxious. I think that I'm missing out if I don't see new places and meet new people and do new things.



Kevin DeBroux
Unemployed
Buena Vista

I read a book or listen to music quietly alone. It doesn't have to be any specific kind of music. I usually do one or the other, not both. It takes my mind off whatever's bothering me. This doesn't work all the time, though. I get stressed out fairly often. In fact, it rarely works. But I do it because drugs are illegal.



José-Luis Sosa
Business Owner
Midtown

Lately I've been trying to take my time and keep a balance between work, time off, exercising, and school. As long as I have my balance, I'm relaxed. When I don't do those things, I get stressed. When I'm not at work, I'm at home exercising. I take time to do my school work and then go back to work. I think exercise is vital to relaxation.

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Letters

Continued from page 6

other issues in that area, which serves as a gateway to both communities.

Thanks to *Biscayne Times* for your ongoing coverage of issues of importance to Miami Shores. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you or your readers may have related to the Miami Shores community.

*Donald Shockey, vice mayor
Miami Shores Village*

Mark Sell Is No Jim DeFede Wannabe

Wow! No matter where you stood in the Miami Shores election, you had to appreciate the article written by Mark Sell, "Low Turnout but High Hopes." A special thanks to Sell for his insightful coverage of our recent community election. I can't think of a time when I read an article covering Miami Shores that was conveyed with such factual accuracy, proper historical perspective, and humanistic insight.

I've been a Shores resident for the past 30 years, involved in its issues and

initiatives for a little less than half that time, and have been through the village's campaign and election process, all of which gave me a special appreciation for Sell's intimate knowledge of the territory and his ability to communicate it crisply.

It was the type of piece that could only have come from a writer with an understanding of the nuances of our village — arrived at, I imagine, by his long and active history within our community. What a refreshing and welcome change from the rash of articles short on accuracy and balance, and long on fabricated controversy (read: antagonistic DeFede-wannabes).

You get so used to reading local fluff pieces rooted in rumors and backyard gossip attempting to pass for community news that you lose hope that discerning journalism can exist while covering our village issues. What a pleasant surprise.

Please consider keeping guys like Sell around for further Miami Shores assignments. I think it would bode well for the *Biscayne Times* and the local relevance it is striving to achieve.

*Jim McCoy
Miami Shores*

Editor's note: Jim McCoy is a former Miami Shores councilman and mayor.

Big, Bad Democratic Party Messing Around in the Shores? Not Quite...

I generally applaud Mark Sell's story about Miami Shores Vice Mayor Donald Shockey's recent victory in the recent council elections. However, there was one minor point that needs clarification. The article gave the impression that some monolithic, faceless entity, "the Democratic Party," was active behind the scenes, pushing for a candidate based on narrow party lines.

That was far from the case. Donald Shockey had a wide base of support from all the residents of Miami Shores Village, including the Three Villages Democratic Club of Miami-Dade County.

We, the Three Villages Democratic Club of Miami-Dade, are the Democratic Party in Miami Shores. We are friends, neighbors, community activists, and people concerned with issues right in our own backyards, covering the traditionally linked villages of Miami Shores, El Portal, and Biscayne Park. We meet the second Thursday of every month in one of the three villages. Information on our activities can be found at our blog:

threevillagesdemocrats.blogspot.com.

We gathered around Donald's candidacy early in his bid for the seat, and actively worked to help him spread his message in this nonpartisan race throughout Miami Shores. We are not some far-away political entity. We are your friends and neighbors. We are the grass in the grassroots movement.

*William Pena Wells, president
Three Villages Democratic Club of
Miami-Dade*

Or Was It Robert Frost Tiptoeing Down That Road Not Taken?

Regarding Mark Sell's "Low Turnout but High Hopes," about Miami Shores politics, it's *fog*, not *frost*, that comes on little cat feet.

*Arthur Bleich
Aqua Vista*

Editor's note: That would be Carl Sandburg, 1878-1967. "The fog comes / on little cat feet. / It sits looking / over harbor and city / on silent haunches / and then moves on."

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Michael Schwartz: “In lots of the great food towns, there are neighborhood places that emphasize fresh, regional, seasonal, and organic ingredients.”

Check, Please!

Continued from page 1

affordable, and largely chef-owned neighborhood restaurants that opened in the Biscayne Corridor, most notably (so far) in the Design District. For a good decade after developer/art collector Craig Robins bought much of the “square mile of style” (a nickname from its heyday), the District had been hyped as being on the brink of becoming a bustling, 24/7 urban center. Sadly, though, it remained a swell place to buy a \$2000 toilet seat by day but creepily empty at night. In fact, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, chef/real estate player Jonathan Eismann of Pacific Time, who once owned the District’s only nighttime amenity — Grass restolounge — sold it and a full block he owned in Wynwood. Says Eismann: “I thought it was the right time — *then.*”

That was then. Now the Design District contains a concentration of restaurants that has been packed nightly with people who, just a couple of years ago, wouldn’t have dreamed of driving to our side of Biscayne Bay for dinner. Evidently what art couldn’t do, artichokes could.

Interestingly, many of the new restaurants in the Design District and those scattered throughout even less gentrified areas of the Biscayne Corridor (defined broadly as the area on both sides of the Boulevard from the bay to I-95) are helmed by well-known chefs who’d built their reputations as head honchos of fancy dining spots in South Beach and other established tourist areas. Even Allen Susser, whose Chef Allen’s has been a famed fine-dining spot since 1986, last year completely changed his concept to casual modern seafood bistro.

It may seem odd to deliberately demote yourself from high-end to informal, but in truth it gives Miami something all serious food towns have: innovative neighborhood restaurants. Since the South Beach renaissance in the late 1980s, Miami has had plenty of derivative, celeb-chef restaurants where the name over the door was seldom the cook in the kitchen. What we’ve been missing are the very personal, chef-owned, indie eateries, oriented toward local ingredients and local diners, and which encourage the development of a unique culinary identity.

“When I opened Michael’s Genuine Food & Drink in the spring of 2007, there was nothing like it in Miami,” says Michael Schwartz (formerly of Nemo and Afterglo in South Beach), who is often credited as the catalyst for the Design District’s foodie fascination. “But really, in lots of the great food towns, there are places like Michael’s — neighborhood places that emphasize fresh, regional, seasonal, and organic ingredients. Now all of us in the District are doing the same alternative thing.”

The Biscayne Corridor’s generally lower restaurant rents, even in the now relatively expensive Design District, have lured other chefs from South Beach, as well as Coral Gables and elsewhere. In turn, that has enabled them to attract diners with lowered prices. “Rents would be double or more on the Beach,” says Schwartz.

At 11:00 on a recent Friday night in the District, Schwartz’s restaurant was still full of diners, as were Fratelli Lyon, a stylish Italian café from Ken Lyons, whose French café/market Lyon Frères pioneered Lincoln Road in the early 1990s, and Brosia, whose chef Arthur Artiles was Norman Van



Jonathan Eismann: “In 12 to 18 months, the Design District will be Miami’s most important dining destination. Just wait. You’ll see it coming.”



Michelle Bernstein: “When you’re perceived as an exciting dining destination, it encourages a variety of other exciting new businesses.”

Aken’s sous chef at Norman’s. And outside six-month-old Sra. Martinez, there was even a late-night line waiting to savor the casual/elegant tapas crafted by Michelle Bernstein, who several years ago left the ultra-upscale Azul to open the affordable Michy’s in the Biscayne Corridor neighborhood where she grew up.

“Looking at my books for the past seven weeks, we’ve had two slow Friday nights,” says Jonathan Eismann, who closed his original Pacific Time owing to prohibitive rents on Lincoln Road, and reopened last year in the Design District. “We did 121 and 147 covers [meals served]. I’m pretty happy with 147. Our highs on weekends are over 300, the highest 321.”

The District’s culinary boundaries seem to be spreading fast, too, judging

from the crowds still devouring rillettes — an authentic French peasant specialty of Claude Postel, who formerly operated several Montreal fine-dining venues — at his chef-owned Buena Vista Bistro, four blocks north of the Design District.

“I don’t know anyone who goes to South Beach to eat out anymore,” says Bernstein, who lives within walking distance of her homey, namesake restaurant. “You have to spend 25 bucks on valet parking before you even go inside. It’s infuriating. I always feel like, ‘You took my appetizer away!’”



This dramatic rise in the number of Biscayne Corridor restaurants, as

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Check, Please!

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evidenced by this magazine's own increasingly voluminous "Dining Guide," still seems surprising, especially at a time when the economy overall has taken a nosedive. So a reality check would be in order — to make sure the perception isn't really an hallucination. Which brings us to David Talty, a Florida International University instructor specializing in restaurant management and trends, and Eddie Lim, a restaurant real estate broker who specializes in the Biscayne Corridor.

Judging from what Lim says about his restaurant sales and leases over the past five years or so, restaurant real estate has taken a far less drastic dip than the area's residential market. "Things have slowed down a little bit," he concedes, "but they're still moving and will turn around very quickly, I believe."

There has not been, he says, any fire-sale downturn in prices that correspond to residential real estate's foreclosure sales. "And restaurant spaces *will* get sold," he insists. "Café Glacier [now Le Café] sold within days. Despite the economy, people still want restaurants along the Biscayne Corridor."

Adds David Talty: "A restaurant is fairly recession-proof. Some say that people aren't going out to eat now, but in fact 48 cents of every dollar spent on food is spent in restaurants. People have gotten used to eating out, and switching habits from eating out to home isn't an option."

Still, isn't it unlikely in these hard times that Biscayne Corridor restaurants could be significantly increasing? Not really, says Talty. "Statistically the restaurant industry in general is doing surprisingly well in this economy. So far this year, in 2009, the restaurant industry is up one and a half to two percent, despite the economy. The restaurants that are hurting most are fine-dining. A lot of restaurants in New York are repositioning regarding price, as Chef Allen's recently did."

One of our area's own ventures is producing numbers that leave Talty's national average in the dust. "Some of our locations are increasing food sales by 30 to 35 percent a month," says Antonio Ellek, CEO and concept guy behind Pasha's, a Miami mini chain that serves eastern Mediterranean healthy fast-food. Four of the chain's seven locations are in *Biscayne Times* territory, including the original takeout-only Pasha's in the Design District. "It was



Kris Wessel: "We were open for dinner only, three days a week, and the menu was just eight items. But people poured in immediately."

intended just as a temporary test kitchen for the Lincoln Road Pasha's that opened in 2002," explains Ellek. "But business there has been growing so much, especially after Michael's and the other high-profile places started drawing attention to the whole area, that we'll be opening a full-service Pasha's nearby, on Biscayne, by fall. We're currently serving over 50,000 people per month, and are planning to double that number by the end of the year."

Sounding equally confident is Steve Lieber, director of operations for Racks Italian Bistro and Market, a recently launched authentic Italian enoteca/salumeria/hangout, from the folks behind Boca Raton's wildly popular Coal Mine Pizza. Not only did Racks open in a tanking economy, it did so in an off-the-tourist-track location in North Miami Beach's Intracoastal Mall, notorious as a restaurant jinx spot. "Okay, I was a little worried at first," admits Lieber. "The mall has a reputation as dead. I couldn't help wondering — when places like Ruth's Chris fail here, why?"

Lieber and owner Gary Rack concluded that mega-size, formal restaurants like Ruth's Chris Steakhouse were just the wrong idea for the location. So they proceeded to invent a concept they feel is a sure thing. Key factors are a casual chic, intimately sized room with an expansive, uniquely South Florida outdoor deck on the waterway; a picturesque market up front featuring hanging cheeses and other artisan products; and a menu of authentic Italian dishes, including the famous coal-oven pizzas, 75 percent of them priced under \$20.

There will also be deliberate coordination, rather than competition, with the

Water Club, Paella Seafood Grill, and Flamma (a Brazilian steakhouse), the three other restaurants filling Racks' side of the mall. "We were the last holdout to sign the lease because we wanted to be sure that all four places were likely to succeed. If a restaurant folds and there's an empty space, your restaurant looks creepy. If all four restaurants succeed, you've got a hot restaurant row."



Despite the recent upsurge, in most of the Biscayne Corridor, the arrival of chef-driven independent restaurants has been an evolution, not a revolution. Eddie Lim's first Boulevard restaurant deal was Casa Toscana, a cozy Italian eatery opened in the Upper Eastside by Tuscan-born chef/owner Sandra Stefani early in 2004. "Sandra took a risk," says Lim. Though a few notable chef-owned spots, such as Dewey and Dale LoSasso's North One 10, had attracted notice, there had been, says Lim, "little interest in restaurant properties generally along Biscayne Boulevard."

Stefani says she wasn't worried about being a pioneer. "In the first place, I didn't open as a real restaurant. I was mostly a wine and gourmet shop that had prepared food of mine to go. With the density of people living in this neighborhood who have a certain income level and sophistication, I knew I was going to make it because there was a need. There was Dogma with the hot dogs and me with the wine."

What concerns her most these days isn't the recession but the competition. "To have so many more new restaurants is not bad," she says. "With more choices, people see this



Thea Goldman: "The whole idea of Joey's was to service the community, to have a meeting place for people who live and work in this community."

area as more inviting. What is bad is that you now have a restaurant row, from 67th to 77th Street, with the same density of people living here as when I opened. If we had Kubik [a condo project at 57th Street now in limbo following protests over its height], it would be fine to have so many restaurants."

The area got a huge boost in 2006, says Lim, when Michelle Bernstein moved in. "That raised a lot of confidence in the area," he notes. "Many more restaurant people definitely became interested in the Boulevard. Everyone was trying to get into the Upper Eastside because they thought it was booming. They thought, 'If a famous chef like Michelle thinks she can make it here, it must be hot.'"

Bernstein remembers it a little differently: "Everyone thought I was nuts to open in a developing area. I still have old regular customers from Azul come in and say it's a mistake. Well, it's *my* mistake. I want to be involved in my own neighborhood."

Part of her commitment to improving the area is direct, like a recent commitment to a program called Common Threads. "I teach kids to cook. Johnson & Wales gave me a classroom, and we bus in kids from William Jennings Bryan Elementary School in North Miami every Monday."

But much of Bernstein's continued excitement about the Biscayne Corridor derives from the indirect beneficial effect

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she believes her restaurant and others nearby are having on the neighborhood. "Something about the area around Michy's is starting to remind me of a city in miniature," she says. "When you're perceived as an exciting dining destination, it encourages a variety of other exciting new businesses. I can walk up Biscayne Boulevard from my home and find almost anything I need."

Bernstein believes the Boulevard is slowly getting more pedestrian-friendly, too, as hot restaurants replace the hot pants. "My mother, when I was growing up in this neighborhood, would have never let me walk on Biscayne Boulevard because of all the hookers," she recalls. "Now I see people walking dogs, even baby carriages on the Boulevard! That's a sure sign people feel more comfortable."

Some, however, see obstacles to the MiMo Historic District (from 50th to 77th Street) developing into a busy, walkable restaurant neighborhood. Down at his 55th Street Station complex, owner Mark Soyka, whom most credit with sparking the Upper Eastside's

revitalization by opening his namesake restaurant in 1998, confesses, "To be honest, I don't consider the MiMo Historic District like the Design District. There will be little pockets of restaurants, but I never saw the reality of thousands of people walking up and down the sidewalks of Biscayne Boulevard."

Or walking *across* Biscayne Boulevard. "It's a vehicular thoroughfare that starts in Key West and goes to Canada," Soyka observes. "Cars zoom up and down. You'll probably stand there 20 minutes until the cars go away."

MiMo Biscayne Association president Fran Rollason agrees, but thinks there's a solution: more traffic lights. "For people to want to hang around before or after eating, and walk around to see what other businesses the neighborhood have to offer, they have to be able to get from one side of the street to the other safely and conveniently. No one's going to walk four long blocks to the nearest light and then four blocks back to get to even a very interesting-looking place on the other side of the street."

Unfortunately, she says, "We've met with FDOT [the Florida Department of

Transportation] about having crosswalks on every block, and they say they have no money for more crosswalks. This was after a five-year-old boy got killed last year trying to cross Biscayne. Do you know what FDOT told us? That he should never have been in the street."

The MiMo Association hasn't given up. "Even properly timing the lights would help," Rollason sighs. "But you know, everything needs a study. We talked with FDOT in January and February, and they set up another meeting for June."

She does feel, though, that restaurants have benefited the Boulevard: "We now have 22 restaurants in the MiMo District's 27 blocks, and they have attracted many new people here." Restaurant owners also seem to be more involved in neighborhood development than other businesses, she reports. "About one-half of the MiMo Association's 80 to 90 members are restaurants."



One of those members is Kris Wessel. And if you're looking for dramatic, living proof of how restaurants can spur the improvement of a neighborhood,

you need look no further than the chef/owner of Red Light.

The name is a wry reference to the organic/sustainable/regional ingredient-driven new restaurant's location in the heart of Biscayne Boulevard's former red light district — which is now, a year after Wessel opened, more a yellow light district. The unfinished but very cool transformation includes the adjacent Motel Blu, which houses the restaurant. "When I signed the lease three years ago, the motel's tenants were largely hookers and drug dealers," recounts Wessel, a longtime neighborhood resident. "Now the new owner has renovated 50 of the 65 rooms. There's an immaculate pool my daughters love to swim in. There's wireless. And the guests are conventioners and other middle-America-type people from Idaho, Iowa, even Canada and Europe. They read about the great rates for a motel just a mile and a half from the beach, that even has a kinda cutting-edge restaurant, and they have no idea how dilapidated it used to be."

The dilapidation included the Little River, which runs along Red Light's

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north side. "See that oak?" Wessel asks, pointing to a massive tree on the bank opposite his restaurant. "There used to be a row of them that were so bent over that their tops were in the water, almost entirely stopping the flow of the river. So there was this still water full of garbage. I can't even tell you how many shopping carts I pulled out of the water."

Wessel took responsibility for getting the river cleaned up, becoming, as he describes it, "the biggest bitch in the MiMo Association. It took me about ten months of bitching to every city and state authority I could find to get the obstructing trees cut. But finally one day I heard chain saws."

Today the river view from Red Light's interior picture windows and long outdoor deck looks alluringly Deep South/tropical idyllic. Certainly the local diners relaxing over Wessel's luscious BBQ shrimp (sautéed New Orleans-style) seem to think so. And the local wildlife seem happy with their renovated home, too. Many manatees, including a large

herd, cruised by Red Light during the course of a two-hour interview.

"CBS came by a few weeks ago and did a documentary segment about the manatees, and the river, and the restaurant," Wessel says proudly. "They called me a 'super-star eco-chef.'"

It's an apt moniker for New Orleans-raised Wessel, an FIU Hospitality School grad who garnered raves at fine-dining spots Liaison, an inventive New Orleans eatery in South Beach, and Elia, a Mediterranean restaurant in Bal Harbour. You might think that, with his reputation, financing for his new Biscayne Corridor restaurant wouldn't be hard to find. But you'd have to rethink. "Back when I was looking for investors, the restaurant space — well, see that window? Crackheads used to crawl through it to sleep. Investors I approached, all of them, looked at the location and my space, and they laughed," Wessel grimaces.

"I kept saying to all them: 'You can't tell me that a restaurant with an outdoor deck on a river with 800-pound mammals swimming past isn't someplace people are going to go to!' But they couldn't see it. Motel Blu's former owners finally

partnered with me for about 70 grand, but even they were skeptical."

With no major money to restore and renovate the space, Wessel took an alternative approach: "When I see something missing, I try to do it myself." The DIY renovation took two years. Wessel did it largely with his own two hands and a little help from friends, including Biscayne Corridor artist and resident Jeff Vaughn, who, says Wessel, "did the really hip design for food credit."

It was hard work. "The last tenants, a Chinese restaurant, had a fire when they left," Wessel recalls. "The whole place was a mess. The ceiling had gaping holes. The plumbing was old cast-iron pipes that all had to be replaced. At one point I had to put a 30-foot ladder in the water to paint this red side of the building by the river. My plans for developing my main thing, which is my food concept, are still behind at least six months because I was doing everything myself."

All the work paid off when Wessel opened last spring with renovations not fully completed: "We were open for dinner only, three days a week, and the menu was just eight items. But people

poured in immediately."

By this past September, Red Light was open daily for dinner. It's now open for lunch several weekdays, too. And the menu, which changes weekly, is greatly expanded, often featuring not just regional produce and seafood (the latter Wessel's specialty), but ingredients like local goat, bought from a nearby supermarket. Wessel likes to support his neighbors.

Locals have been Red Light's base so far, he says. "I did not have a single tourist in my first nine months." But the CBS news clip seems to have helped spread the word to visitors staying in South Beach, too. "The past week," he says, "I saw all these taxi cabs and town cars drive up, so I know they're from hotels."

The one somewhat jarring note amid the neighborhood ambiance is that Red Light has valet parking, necessary because of the motel's small lot. But it's only five bucks. And here's an insider secret: You can self-park at the auto-parts store across the street without fear of being towed. "Don't worry,"

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Wessel laughs. "I keep them supplied with cheeseburgers."



You know how it always seems to go in undeveloped neighborhoods with potential. First the starving artists and others attracted by the low rents move in and create a unique scene. Then, once the buzz makes the area commercially viable, real estate prices rise, the starving artists are forced out, and before you know it the place has been homogenized by (in the immortal words of Frank Zappa) "a vast army of Plastic People."

The Design District is already grown-up and high-rent, but Pacific Times's Eismann is optimistic that the neighborhood, one of two Biscayne Corridor areas where a significant percentage of the limited real estate is controlled by one arts-loving visionary, will be protected from "big box" boredom. "That'll never happen here," he says. "What's happening in the Design District is

something unique for Miami. Look at the new retail stores. It's not the Gap. You've got quality, individualistic stuff like Tomas Maier. Hats off to Craig Robins. He wouldn't sell out to the generics."

Just to southwest of the Design District, in Wynwood, historically a neighborhood of warehouses and working-class homes, artists began transforming rundown commercial spaces into studios and galleries more than ten years ago. Despite that, the area remained largely seedy and unappealing until it got its own visionary real estate developer — Tony Goldman.

Goldman, who has acquired about 100 Wynwood properties, more than 20 within a newly created "Wynwood Café District," plans to supplement the art spaces with restaurants, bars, and other entertainment amenities. He thinks Wynwood has the potential to be more successful as a draw than its uptown competition. "Wynwood is *the* emerging urban community here," Goldman asserts. "It's got grit and the arts. It's got mystique. The Design District doesn't set people up for surprise. It's too neat. And it never generated street activity — a necessity."

Over the past three decades, Goldman has gained a reputation — in New York City's SoHo district and later in South Beach — for painlessly redeveloping deteriorating neighborhoods that have what architects call "good bones." He applies a formula that he says enhances a neighborhood's character instead of obliterating it.

"We call it 'gentlefyng,'" says Goldman. "We don't say 'gentrifying.' You need to understand what makes the neighborhood unique, and convince neighbors and local officials you're going to preserve the neighborhood's character. You need to understand the target market you're trying to draw to the neighborhood. You need to decide what you see being there in ten years. Being in the vision business, you see the picture you've taken of the future."

When the New York-based Goldman first saw Ocean Drive, during Miami Beach's mid-1980s days as a drug capital and "God's Waiting Room" for seniors, his vision was of something unique: "A real tropical community that brought a distinctive SoHo culture to SoBe."

For Wynwood the picture is of "something that's a cross between SoHo,

a more downscale Tribeca, and an even grittier, cutting-edge Williamsburg in Brooklyn." Definitely included in the picture is a starving artist eating pizza.

That would be at the Wynwood Café District's first new restaurant, Joey's Italian Café. Run by Goldman's son Joey and Joey's wife Thea, the casually artsy indoor/outdoor hangout serves bona fide Italian food at recession-level price. Pastas start at \$5, salads at \$3, pizzas at \$7.

"Joey's is really Joey and Thea's concept," says the elder Goldman, "but it follows the formula of gentlefyng. When you do something neighborhood-driven, the price points are where they should be for the restaurant to succeed."

After acquiring properties, opening restaurants is always an initial part of his "gentlefication," says Goldman, whose current plans call for three additional eateries among his Wynwood properties. "The idea is to draw new people to a developing neighborhood, and nothing draws like a restaurant. People will go to a new area for food when they will not go for a frock or a painting."

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“Restaurants are igniters,” Thea adds. “A lot of people don’t understand art, but they do understand a plate of pasta.”

So far the formula seems to be working. Joey’s has been attracting about 150 people per day, says Thea, some from a surprising distance. “People drive down regularly from Palm Beach. I wouldn’t have expected that.”

But she’s most excited about the restaurant’s local draw. “It’s not just artists and gallerists who come,” she says. “We get the Koreans from NW 5th Avenue. And there’s a substantial Puerto Rican population; they may ask for a cortadito, but they’re making do with our espresso. Which is thrilling, because the whole idea of Joey’s was to service the community, to have a meeting place for people who live and work in this community.”

In fact Tony Goldman’s formula demonstrates that a restaurant’s beneficial economic effect can go beyond the restaurant itself. In both SoBe and SoHo, he formed neighborhood associations to “gentlefy” surrounding blocks. And so it

goes at Joey’s, which in January hosted the first meeting of the new Wynwood Arts District Association. “What we’re working on now is cleaning the streets, lighting the streets, and securing the streets,” Thea explains. “Right now, in partnership with Constance Margulies and her Lotus House shelter for women, we’re raising money so we can hire the homeless women to clean the streets.”

“It’s a bootstrapping approach,” says her father-in-law. “Instead of hiring a street-cleaning company, we engage with the neighborhood by hiring street people. They need jobs. Neighborhoods need clean streets to be appealing to pedestrians. We’re working on getting the streets lit, too. If a neighborhood has light and clean streets, you’re well on your way. Next we’re planning to have the street people carry walkie-talkies and keep an eye on the neighborhood, sort of serve as security. We may do some roving cars, too.”

All this may take ten years to fully develop, but Goldman isn’t worried that, in the meantime, the area’s somewhat forbidding ambiance will prove detrimental to Joey’s business. “A visiting New Yorker

won’t be concerned about the neighborhood,” he laughs. “And for people who live here, it gives dinner a little touch of adventure.” Just a touch, though. There’s free valet parking at night.

“We’ve succeeded for over 30 years with our formula, and I’ve never failed,” Goldman says confidently. “You just need patience, vision, and balls — and you have to be willing to hang in for as long as it takes. We’re neighborhood-builders. We don’t give up on *anything*.”



So how will our Biscayne Corridor restaurant boom fare in the long run? FIU’s David Talty is cautious, noting that in the past he’s been a restaurateur himself. “If you’re going to start a new restaurant, statistics show the mortality rate is 80 percent,” he says. “You have to realize that the target market you’re going after when opening a restaurant isn’t hundreds of people. It’s *thousands*.”

And not just *any* thousands. “For restaurants that are not quick-service chains, you need for success a high density of residents with a relatively high disposable income, living between one and five

miles from the restaurant. Personally,” he adds, “I wouldn’t open a restaurant in the Biscayne Corridor.”

Where instead? “Kendall or the Gables. Those areas have a heck of a lot higher potential customer base,” he says. “And the Biscayne Corridor being a hot restaurant locale is a relatively new phenomenon. There’s speculation that the Design District is already approaching the oversaturation point. It’ll be interesting to see how many restaurants in the Design District survive. I say wait two years and see.”

“Talty is right in a very conservative model of a restaurant, but he’s shooting from a point of real safety,” counters Jonathan Eismann, who opened the first Pacific Time (which lasted 14 years), as well as the second, in emerging but far from fully developed areas. “If you want a restaurant that’s forward-thinking, the conservative model isn’t looking at the big picture. In 12 to 18 months, the Design District will be Miami’s most important dining destination. Just wait. You’ll see it coming.”

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Twisting History for Shameless Pride

How we went from Dade to Miami-Dade

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

Let's go back in time to 1835. The Second Seminole War began in December of that year, when U.S. soldiers were ambushed by Seminole warriors, who were resisting removal to a reservations, at what has become known as the Dade Battle in Sumter County, near Bushnell, Florida. Below is an excerpt from www.dadebattlefield.com describing the bloody event.

"Have a good heart; our difficulties and dangers are over now, and as soon as we arrive at Fort King you'll have three days to rest and keep Christmas gaily." Maj. Francis L. Dade spoke these words of encouragement to 107 cold, tired soldiers in a pine forest on the morning of December 28, 1835. Within eight hours, only three soldiers would survive the battle that marked the beginning of the Second Seminole War.



Photo courtesy of Myrna Efler-Bradshaw © 2009

The bloody Dade Battle is re-enacted every year.

"Halpatter Tustenuggee (Alligator, as the white man called him): 'We had been preparing for this more than a year. Just as the day was breaking, we moved out of the swamp into the pine-barren. I counted, by direction of Jumper, 180 warriors. Upon approaching the road, each man chose his position on the west side. About nine o'clock in the morning the command approached. So soon as all the soldiers

were opposite, Jumper gave the whoop. Micanopy fired the first rifle, the signal agreed upon, when every indian arose and fired, which laid upon the ground, dead, more than half the white men. The cannon was discharged several times, but the men who loaded it were shot down as soon as the smoke cleared away.'

"As we were returning to the swamp, supposing all were dead, an

indian came up and said the white men were building a fort of logs. Jumper and myself, with ten warriors, returned. As we approached, we saw six men behind two logs placed one above another, with the cannon a short distance off. We soon came near, as the balls went over us. They had guns, but no powder. We looked in the boxes afterwards and found they were empty."

Two survivors made it to Fort King. One later died from his wounds. It wasn't until the following February that a military unit would return to the scene, finding the men surprisingly well-preserved. They buried the dead at the site of the battle. At the end of the war, this group of soldiers, along with others who died fighting or from disease during the Seminole conflict, were reinterred at the post cemetery at St. Augustine, now the St. Augustine National Cemetery. In terms of lives lost, the battle was second

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Pride

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only to Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn. Today the site is preserved as the Dade Battlefield Historic State Park.

The commander of this column of 107 soldiers was a young major by the name of Francis Langhorne Dade, born in 1793 in King George County, Virginia. Major Dade was assigned to the U.S. 4th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army, and like many soldiers upon whom command falls, in carrying out his duties, he made the ultimate sacrifice. In fact it was Dade himself who fell first from the initial rifle fire of Chief Micanopy on that fateful day.

Dade County, Missouri; Dade County, Georgia; Dade City, Florida; and Dade County, Florida were all named in honor of Francis L. Dade. Dade County, Florida, was created on January 18, 1836, under the Territorial Act of the United States. At the time of its creation, Dade County included the land that now encompasses Palm Beach and Broward counties, together with the Florida Keys from Bahia Honda north, and the land of

present-day Miami-Dade County. The county seat was originally at Indian Key. Then in 1844, the county seat was moved to Miami. The Florida Keys from Key Largo to Bahia Honda became part of Monroe County in 1866.

In 1888 the Dade County seat was moved to Juno, near present-day Juno Beach, returning to Miami in 1899. Palm Beach County was formed in 1909 from the northern portion of what was then Dade County. And in 1915, Palm Beach and Dade counties contributed nearly equal portions of land to create what today is Broward County.

Now let's leap ahead to November 13, 1997, on which day our county commission caused a special election to be held, an election that included a charter amendment to change the name of Dade County to Miami-Dade County. With little fanfare, the electorate, lemmings that we are, went to the polls and accepted the proposal for this historic change. Why? Well, as I recall, the overwhelming push was from county elected officials, primarily Mayor Alex Penelas, who were supposedly sick and tired of having to explain as they traveled just

where in the hell was Dade County.

They were embarrassed to answer, "Miami," which everyone around the world new was in Florida and well on its way to recognition as a truly international city. No, it was too complicated to explain, "I am mayor of the county that includes one of the true treasures of this great country — the City of Miami." Not no, but, *hell* no! We cannot have people asking who we are and where we come from, so let's change the name to Miami-Dade County. Then all will know how important we really are!

When you research the county ordinance (No. 97-212) to adopt the name change approved by voters, you will find no mention of Major Dade or the sacrifice of his troops. What you will find is the concern of Commissioner Barbara Carey, who "received numerous calls regarding what the cost to taxpayers would be to change the name." County manager Armando Vidal responded that the change would happen gradually to ensure it would be of "no additional cost to the county." Well, there is a huge additional cost to the county and it comes in the form of destroying the history of

this community — all for the purpose of soothing a few deflated egos, which were not being viewed with sufficient importance to match their own view of themselves.

I didn't like the change then and I like it less now. We need to take back our original name. Shortly after the death of President Kennedy, there was a rush to express patriotism by naming roads, buildings, schools, even cities after the fallen leader. As time goes by, however, we as a people begin to sort out what is proper and what is not. Cape Canaveral became Cape Kennedy, and has now become Cape Canaveral again.

I look forward to being Dade County once again, because we *are* Dade County, not Miami-Dade County.

As a footnote, in 2002 the county commission passed a resolution renaming the county courthouse the Maj. Francis Langhorne Dade County Courthouse, noting that "Maj. Francis Langhorne Dade is a person who made a significant contribution to Miami-Dade County." You have to wonder if they had any clue.

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Mango Mania

The harvest is on, so don't let these golden gifts go to waste

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

May 4. That's the date I picked the first ripe mango of the season, which is one day sooner than last year, and is in fact the earliest to date that I've had a fully tree-ready piece of fruit.

Yes, I'm obsessed enough that I keep track of these kinds of things. But given that I have 14 mango trees, it's hard not to be a little fanatical about the season. It's doubly difficult not to share my compulsions. Which is why I go everywhere — my kids' softball games, on interviews, even to the grocery store — with a carload of fruit. I never know who I might run into who could want some of the luscious stuff.

Even more to the point, I force it on chefs all over town, and this year, I've also been trying really hard to have them pick up the cases as opposed to me delivering them. So who do I have



regularly trekking to my house? No one, really. Chefs are as dependable as the weather. But if you're wondering where you might be able to try a preparation of my mangoes, here's a short list: Michael's Genuine, Michy's, Red Light, and Talula. I give them to chef Allen Susser, too, but I can't guarantee you'll be eating my mangoes and my mangoes only at his

seafood bistro; his kitchen door is always open during season, and he told me the other day he's already seeing a kaleidoscope of colorful fruit from a large number of diners.

If you're not on this list and want to be, e-mail me (letters@biscayne-times.com). I want to place my fruit and make sure it doesn't go to waste.

And speaking of waste, I'm aware that a lot of residents in the Shores have their own trees. Most adore the fruit that comes from them — and for you, I have some ideas and recipes below that I've developed for various articles and books. If you'd like to send me yours in return, I'd be delighted to try them.

But some people, I've noticed over the years I've jogged around the neighborhoods, don't enjoy mangoes at all, and let the fruit rot where it falls. If you have one or more trees you don't or can't harvest, please do something proactive. Call your favorite restaurant and see if they'll send someone over to pick them up. Ask a neighbor's teen to set up a fruit stand and let him or her keep the money.

Or remember, there are plenty of hungry people who would be thrilled to munch on a mango (or a guava, or a coconut). Call organizations like the Daily Bread (www.dailybread.org) or various

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI SHORES

Mango

Continued from page 22

shelters like Camillus House (www.camillushouse.org) to see if you can donate. Even if you just put the fruit in a bin in front of your house, believe me, it will be taken to a better place.

If you like the charity aspect of collecting mangoes from a tree that stands in front of a foreclosed house, or just want something to do with your time, consider forming a Fruit Rescue Squad, which a friend of mine suggested. We should be ashamed by the amount of fruit that goes unharvested in our village, particularly when the avocados come in, or the star fruit starts to overwhelm us, or the citrus is just too much to handle. But it's never too late to do something about it — in addition to savoring it ourselves.

INSTANT MANGO JAM

Layer thin, juicy mango slices on an English muffin, dot with Plugrá butter, and sprinkle with just a touch of freshly ground sea salt and unrefined sugar or honey. Toast.

MANGO-PASTO

Cross-hatch the cheeks of a firm but ripe mango and drizzle with tupelo honey. Briefly broil and serve with hard and/or pungent cheeses such as sharp cheddar and aged Gouda and composite meats like salami.

MANGO VINAIGRETTE

Whir ripe mango in a blender with the juice of a Meyer lemon, a few sprigs of fresh dill, a clove of garlic, a tablespoon of mustard, a dash of apple cider vinegar, and a couple of tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Drizzle over watercress and thinly sliced English cucumber.

ASIAN MANGO SLAW

Shred green (adult, unripe) mango. Toss with a double handful of honey-roasted peanuts, julienned green and red bell peppers, torn cilantro, fresh-squeezed lime juice, and a teaspoon of Vietnamese fish sauce.

CHICKEN MANGO SALAD

Toss cooked, cubed chicken with mango, chopped red onion, and diced water

chestnuts. Mix with a couple of tablespoons of low-fat mayonnaise, sea salt, and freshly cracked pepper.

MANGO MONTE CRISTO

Layer smoked ham, Gruyère, and mango slices between whole-grain bread spread with Cherchies Banana Hot Pepper Mustard (which just took the gold medal at the Napa Valley Wine Festival Worldwide Mustard Competition). Dip in beaten egg and pan-fry until crisp.

WHITE WINE-STEAMED MUSSELS WITH MANGOES AND SAUSAGE

My friend Tabitha and I threw this together the other weekend at her house when the mangoes first started to fall in droves. We purchased the mussels at Captain Jim's on W. Dixie Highway just north of 135th Street, where the little black Mediterranean mussels sell for \$5 a pound and are always fresh. If you buy a bottle of ultra-reasonably priced Anakena (Chile) Sauvignon Blanc at Total Wine, and a pack of Aidell's sausages at Publix for about four dollars, and throw in a baguette and a tossed salad, you've got a high-quality, quick-to-make meal

that can feed six people for around \$20.

2 mangoes, peeled and cubed
4 Aidell's sausages, sliced

1 bottle white wine

1 stick butter

2 bay leaves

Salt and pepper to taste

2 pounds black Mediterranean mussels, washed

1. Combine mango, sausage, white wine, butter, bay leaves and salt and pepper in a large pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer; cook uncovered for 20 minutes.

2. Add mussels, cover and cook until mussels have opened, about 8-10 minutes.

3. Serve mussels in soup bowls with mango chunks, sausage, and generous amounts of broth for dipping, discarding any mussels that remain closed.

Serves 6

For more mango recipes from Jen, go to www.biscaynetimes.com and click on "Miami Shores." The recipes will be added to the bottom of this column.

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Changing Seasons — It's a Killer

Miami has two, here there are four: Animals beware

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

Miami is one of the nation's most volatile cities. But give the place a year of your life and you'll see that one of its distinguishing characteristics is, oddly, continuity. Climate-wise, anyway.

There are two seasons: Summer and Not Summer. It's always sunny, it's always hot, and your biggest decisions are which strength of deodorant to switch to when your current level fails you, and which kind of defrizzing serum to purchase when your hair makes you look like a Mr. Wizard experiment gone horribly wrong. Sports options remain unchanged. The ocean and bay don't freeze and the bike paths are not icy.

Give upstate New York (currently the MUFT — Merciless Un-Frozen Tundra) one year of your life and you'll see four seasons and all the particulars.

Now, a true MUFTEr embraces each season for all its hideous glory,



Springtime means lovely lilacs, dainty but dangerous.

blinders affixed with super glue. A true MUFTEr is a season junkie.

I'm no MUFTEr, nor am I an objective cultural anthropologist. And I haven't even been here long enough to experience the summertime. But that

won't stop me from announcing my research findings on the seasons:

- Winter = Cook/Crafts
- Autumn = Kill
- Spring = Cultivate/Cough
- Summer = Don't know yet

In winter, people have few options. If they leave the house they will die. It will take a few minutes or a few hours, depending on clothing quality and survival skills, but it is inevitable. So like a wise bear, the smart ones hibernate. They cook and bake and craft. They drink hard liquor. Lots of it. They get really, really fat. They get scarily splotchy red cheeks. Some of the heartier types engage in sledding — a sport, incidentally, whose appeal escapes me: layering up like the Michelin Man and hurtling down an icy hill while trying to avoid smashing your face into a tree.

I am partial to autumn. Yeah, it's cold. But you still get some sun and the leaves turn at the end of October, which is the one time since moving here, while sitting in an apple orchard, I cried out of joy. But autumn is also hunting season, and deer are the targets of choice. Too bad it isn't the other way around.

Continued on page 25

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BISCAYNE PARK

Seasons

Continued from page 24

Killing, in fact, is a year-round sport here. Spring brings the thrill of the turkey hunt. And fishing. Just the other solidly spring morning, as I debated between a waffle and an omelet, my 98-pound, 17-year-old waitress gazed longingly at the river outside the over-size restaurant windows. Her eyes glazed over like the faux maple in the syrup bottles. I followed her loving stare and saw people fishing. I looked back at her, and as our eyes met she said with a sigh: "It's day-one of walleye season, and I want to be out there!"

Just then I caught another look, this one from Jeremy across the table. I've seen it before, usually when I'm about to launch into animated conversation with space aliens. When he is overtaken by The Look, Jeremy's eyes get wide and he stutters, "No-no-no-no-no...." It's a mixture of apprehension and warning. This time I ignored it.

"Ah, so you fish?" I asked.

"Oh, yeah! I love it!"

"I see. Do you also hunt?"

(The Look persisted and intensified.) "Yup!" And then our waitress dropped her order pad down (thunk!) on the table, whipped out a phone, and started scrolling for pictures.

(The Look became a homicidal stare aimed directly at my forehead.)

"You see?" she said cheerfully, displaying one very dead deer. A young one. It's called a "button buck" and is a male deer usually one year old. Or less.

"Oh. Did you dress it, too?"

"Yup! My dad doesn't fuck around! If you kill it, you clean it!"

"You must be *so* proud," I said as I sipped my coffee and decided to leave without ordering.

Now it's springtime: cultivating and coughing. While the MUFTERS may wax nostalgic ad nauseum about winter, their next favorite season is spring. Again I am stumped. I guess it is because the sun comes out more, it is 60 degrees instead of 12, and the flowers and trees bloom. That is fine aesthetically. But this area is also known as "Sinus Valley." Allergy and asthma specialists make more money per visit than shrinks. That's great for them. The rest of us can suffer.

It is also, apparently, Death Valley. At least at my house. Example: The other day I walked onto my back patio and focused on what appeared to be a leaf with protruding small twigs.

"How odd," I thought, stepping closer. Uh oh. The leaf-twig hybrid was actually a baby bird that was either pushed out of the nest or abandoned. There it was, spring in all its glory — a dead, gelatinous creature with a tiny beak and eyes.

The next day the same thing happened. Avian corpses dropping from the sky. This time Halo, our terripoo, got hold of the baby and would not let go. I watched Jeremy try to reason with her. He wagged his finger at her, stood with his hands on his hips, and spoke in a stern voice. Finally he had to pry it out of her jaws and drop it into a garbage bag. Nice. Then once again on the third day. I consulted my Bible and saw nothing about the Rain of Bird Fetus Plague. But the MUFT is, after all the Land of the Damned.

I now refuse to go out in the yard, for fear of getting my shoe stuck on a gooey, infant mass.

Not like the yard or the outside world in general are my friends. As an asthmatic,

I knew I'd be in for it here in Sinus Valley. Sure enough, mid-May rolled around and after walking the dogs, I had to hit up my inhaler. A few days later I drove myself to a hospital emergency room in the midst of an asthma attack.

"Here is your TV, your nurse call button, and your gown," I was told.

As I took stock of the room, I heard a call over the intercom: "Code blue in ER, code blue in ER." I started wheezing again. I tried to lie down and looked to my left, only to be greeted by a crucifix in need of some serious polishing. Was this a sign? And if so, where was the Pledge?

By the time the doctor got to me 50 minutes later, my inhaler and anti-anxiety meds had worked. I was stoned and breathing normally.

The nurse who discharged me said that there was a marked increase in ER visitors with "breathing problems" this time of year. As I signed my name on the form, she added, "You know, when I jog by lilac bushes, even I have trouble."

Uh oh. There are ten of those on my property.

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Sober but Strained Relations

An Alcoholics Anonymous chapter takes fire from its Shorecrest neighbors

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Contributor

Troy Howard had been living in Shorecrest, that slice of Miami north of NE 79th Street and east of Biscayne Boulevard, for barely two months when he decided to offer a reckless driver some advice. Howard, who'd moved here from Washington, D.C., where he worked on Capitol Hill, was in front of his home one day this past December when a Ford Mustang screeched through a nearby residential intersection. It wasn't the first time he had seen the Mustang zoom by. It also wouldn't be the last. But on this day, he decided to speak up.

"I asked him, 'Hey, you! Could you slow down?'" Howard recalls.

According to Howard, the Mustang went into reverse and pulled up in front of him. "What did you say?" asked the driver, a plump white guy.

"Could you slow down?" Howard says he repeated.

"F--- you, nigger! What are you going to do about it?" the driver reportedly shouted.

"Wait right there," replied Howard, who is African-American. "I'll show you." He went back to his house to get a baseball bat, but the Mustang peeled away.

Howard followed the Mustang to the parking lot of the Little River Club, a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), located a few blocks from his home on NE Seventh Avenue and 80th Street. He found someone who identified himself as the manager. "I said, 'Look, I just moved here. Could you just ask [the Mustang driver] to chill out?'"

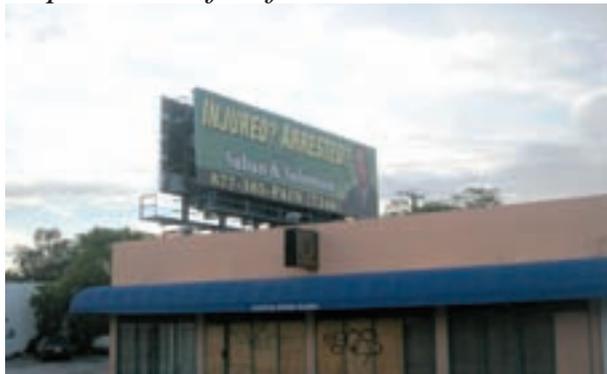
The manager apologized, Howard says, but told him he had no control over what members do outside the club.

While the Little River Club fronts busy NE 79th Street, the entrance to its parking lot is in the rear, off 80th Street, which is residential. According to Howard and other Shorecrest residents, people attending AA meetings routinely speed through their neighborhood. "You tell them to stop and they flip you the bird," says one of Howard's neighbors, who asked not to be identified for fear of retribution.

By all accounts, however, the Mustang driver has been the most troublesome. Howard's fearful neighbor recalls an incident in which his vocal admonition prompted this response: "Shut up! I'll fucking kill you!"

Complaints to club officials have been met with expressions of sympathy and powerlessness. Richard Laird, president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association, says residents grew tired of hearing that line. "We're not the backdoor for AA," he says. "We are a neighborhood first, and we will not live in fear."

So Laird and his neighbors did something about it. They bent the ear of their city commissioner, Marc Sarnoff, during a homeowners meeting. A little more than a month later, they got some surprising news: The 80th Street entrance to the club's parking lot, in use since the 1950s, was illegal and would have to be permanently closed. In fact the parking lot itself may be illegal.



The Little River AA club, with billboard looming overhead, recently had all its windows smashed.

The property behind the club was originally zoned residential, but a variance granted decades ago allowed the lot and rear entrance. That variance, city sleuths learned, expired in 1966. City officials also discovered that the club's covered patio facing the parking lot was constructed without a permit.

The patio would have to be removed and rear entrance closed. The club's only option would be an appeal before the city's code enforcement board, and their attorney says they intend to do just that.

Troy Howard, Richard Laird, and other Shorecresters say they're pleased that the code infractions will be addressed, but they were sorely disappointed to learn that another contentious issue involving the Little River Club will not be resolved in their favor. That would be the towering new, double-sided billboard recently erected by CBS Outdoor on club property. The billboard reaches 45 feet in height and each sign is 50 feet across. It's taller than all other billboards along that stretch of 79th Street, tall enough that most Shorecrest homeowners can see it. Research by both the city administration and

the BT indicates the structure is legal — if not welcome.

Bob H., secretary-treasurer of the Little River Club, says the billboard project, years in the making, was not the club's idea. (In keeping with AA's promise of anonymity, Bob H. does not disclose his full name.) "CBS approached us five years ago — it took them that long to get all the permits," he says. "They give us a small amount. It helps a lot towards paying the bills. We are a not-for-profit." The agreement calls for \$12,000 per year for ten years.

According to Bob H., the Little River Club just celebrated its 45th anniversary. The AA chapter has moved around a lot but has always stayed in Miami's Upper Eastside. In 1991 the club decided to purchase the one-story building and lot at 753 NE 79th St. When they bought it, the back lot on 80th Street, which was already being used as a parking lot, was a "mud flats," says Bob H. Club members paved it, put in landscaping, and installed a gate (along with a sign that says the gate is closed after 10:00 p.m.). "We fixed it up real nice," Bob H. notes.

In 1994 Shorecrest homeowners decided to make improvements of their own, and with the city and county's blessing they put up traffic barriers along the borders of their neighborhood in an effort to reduce crime and increase property values. One of those barricades was at NE Seventh Avenue and 80th Street, which blocked easy access to the club from the direction of Biscayne Boulevard. Club officers were not pleased, and filed a lawsuit to have the barricade removed. "They wanted to cut us off from our property," Bob H. asserts. "We fought

Continued on page 29

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The Pleasure and Pain of Historic Homes

Minor problems are major setbacks, simple is complex, cheap is expensive

By Andrew Moore
Special to BT

Homeowners in the Buena Vista East Historic District proudly maintain a variety of residences from the 1920s, when the original development (then known as Shadowlawn and Biltmore) was fashioned out of the surrounding palmetto and pine forest. Mature oak trees and gumbo limbos now shade the streets of this quiet district over an area of less than a square mile.

Buying into a historic district can be a mixed blessing, though. The prestige of owning a piece of Miami's storied past can be overshadowed by some unexpected side effects. Homeowners on the western edge of Buena Vista East (which is bounded by NE 2nd Avenue, N. Miami Avenue, NE 41st Street and NE 49th Street) have had to endure arson fires, vandals, and some troublesome constraints imposed by a board of watchdogs entrusted to protect the neighborhood's historic character.

There are nine such districts in Miami. Any neighborhood with distinctive architecture and history can apply for the designation, which is supposed to help maintain the character of the neighborhood and improve its image, as well as promote a gung-ho attitude on the part of residents. In Buena Vista East, created during Miami's original boom years to accommodate new arrivals from Georgia and the Carolinas but now home to mostly Haitians and Latinos, the results have been mixed.

Five coral rock bungalows in varying conditions, ranging from ruins to restoration, line N. Miami Avenue just north of the Design District. Although part of the original 16-square-block historic district designated



Photo courtesy City of Miami

The home at 4719 N. Miami Ave. long before Scott Short bought it.

by the city, only one — a blue cottage with a white coral bottom — is currently occupied.

Coral rock homes like these are unique to South Florida, where the oolitic limestone from which they are made is mined right from the ground. The carved stones create an organic foundation and a sense of place that reflect local resources. Home designs range from stone coverings on all sides to a simple coral rock chimney and fireplace. This “vernacular” architecture was a significant factor in what earned the neighborhood its historic designation in 1988, and their concentration here is part of what continues to make Buena Vista East special.

The City of Miami's historic designation report says the neighborhood's houses “reflect the eclecticism that dominated American residential architecture in the early Twentieth Century and include fine examples of Mediterranean Revival, Mission, Pueblo, bungalow, Art Deco, and vernacular style buildings.”

In the past decade, though, two of these coral rock bungalows have on separate occasions caught fire. The damage

was severe in both cases, and only one home could be repaired, while a second suffered a total loss.

Scott Short and his partner (who wishes to remain unnamed) bought the bungalow at 4719 N. Miami Ave. with a zeal for historic preservation. The home, built in 1923, had been a mix of wood and coral, with a large front porch. Short speaks about the coral rock architecture with the same passion an environmentalist lobbies for endangered animals — he doesn't want to see them disappear. “They are a national treasure,” Short says, “and certainly a treasure to Miami — because they don't exist anywhere else.”

In 2005 Scott's home was near complete restoration in accordance with historic guidelines. “A second-story addition had been added to the back,” Short explains. “Windows and doors had just been installed.” And then one evening a fire destroyed everything. According to Short, the cause was ruled “undetermined” by the fire department, although there was some evidence of drug use from a squatter (specifically a pipe) inside the home.



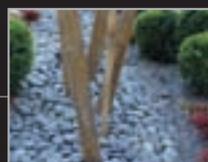
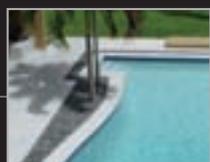
After a devastating fire, the owners decided against starting over.

After years of hard work researching, designing, and rebuilding, the owners were heartbroken by the disaster. Hearings before the planning department and the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board would follow. They would draft new plans and go through an extensive review process to rebuild — but they would not recover personally, and finally decided not to start the project anew. Today nothing remains but the original coral rock. Like the burned stump of a tree, the carefully laid rocks show the foundation of a house that was. Limestone-framed steps lead to a door that is no longer there.

Short says the city would be willing to accept a new building, with a design that could perhaps include the remaining coral base. Any new construction, though, would need to fit the historic nature of the neighborhood. The property is currently for sale.

Eddie Delahoz, who, with his cousin Carlos Lopez, owns the bungalow at 4615 N. Miami Ave., grew up

Continued on page 29



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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Cher, Madonna, Duane?

100 Block of NE 82nd Street

Awakened from a deep sleep, a man saw a perpetrator reaching through the iron bars of his front door, attempting to break in. The crook was successful. He threatened to kill the victim while taking \$150 left on top of a piece of furniture. The victim told police the perpetrator was either a neighbor or a friend of a neighbor. Attempts to reach the landlady were rebuked as she refused to let police in her dwelling without a warrant. The suspect may be living with her as she said her roommate's name was Duane, but she incredibly did not know his last name. In this economy, renters are in such demand that references are no longer required.

Neighborly Thievery

Design District

Victim's wallet was stolen by an upstairs neighbor. The same neighbor was later recorded on video buying merchandise with the pilfered credit card. Cashier ran the card and found it belonged to someone else. Police were called and the thief claimed she "borrowed it from a neighbor." Would you lend your credit card to a neighbor to buy pants at Target? Police didn't think so. Suspect was arrested.

Brazen Crook Works His Way In

700 Block NE 70th Street

Determined criminals will break in by any means required. This hard-working burglar could not pick the lock or break open the front door to his victim's home, so he removed the entire door from its frame using a crowbar. Then he ransacked the place. Amazingly there were no witnesses or no one has come forward with information.

Time to Dump the Loser Boyfriend

300 Block NE 82nd Street

A woman who lives in a boarding house briefly left her room to use a neighbor's phone. Her boyfriend, who stayed behind in the apartment, broke into the locked bedroom of the woman's



roommate. This was not the first time he had done this. This time, however, the only thing he found worthy of his efforts was a jar of change. Total take: five dollars. The roommate told police she was, understandably, very upset.

Welcome to Miami

401 Biscayne Blvd.

This victim was a tourist visiting from Virginia. While shopping at Bayside Marketplace, someone apparently reached into her purse and took her wallet. The victim was completely unaware this had happened — until she fished around for the wallet and discovered it was gone. Unfortunately there are no suspects and no video of the incident. At least we have good weather.

Slipped a Mickey at the Marina

1600 Block N. Bayshore Drive

Victim met suspect at the beach and invited him to spend the night on his boat. The skipper poured a drink then went to the head (bathroom). When he returned, he noticed his drink had been moved. After he started drinking, he became very tired and eventually passed out. He woke up several hours later and the new beau was gone — along with his watch. At least he didn't try stealing the boat.

But Why Rubbing Alcohol?

4870 Biscayne Blvd.

A man strolled up and down the aisles of Publix, grabbed a bottle of rubbing alcohol, and placed it in his pants. He then

walked over to the sunglasses section, removed the price tag from a nice pair of shades, and placed them on his face. He made no attempt to pay as he passed all the registers. Police stopped him after alert managers sounded the alarm. The suspect, who could not produce a receipt for the items, was arrested. And Publix, where shopping is not always a pleasure for everyone, recovered the sunglasses and rubbing alcohol.

South Beach Diet for Criminals?

6000 Block NE 2nd Avenue

Iron bars protected the windows of this restaurant, but somehow a thief managed to get in. He stole a jar of coins, valued at \$25, from the front of the restaurant. An attempt to steal the cash register failed as the suspect had problems, according to police, lifting it. Police theorized that the suspect was either a child or a very skinny adult.

The Ultimate Private Party: Stretch Limo and Free Liquor

100 Block NE 11th Street

Employees failed to secure the doors of a downtown nightclub. About an hour after the business had closed, a black stretch limousine pulled up in front of the establishment and eight people entered the club. They proceeded to enjoy themselves. They drank liquor and partied through the night. A golf cart belonging to the business was driven around the large club, and several tables were knocked over in the process. All this was captured on video, including

clear shots of two of the suspects. Save for the liquor, nothing was stolen.

A Thief's Contrition

70 NE 45th St.

A man saw a suspicious vehicle in his girlfriend's front yard. He also couldn't help but notice a man carrying a flat-screen television to the car while a woman stood by the front door of his girlfriend's home furtively looking in both directions. The boyfriend had a keen grasp of the obvious: Burglary in progress. He approached the suspects, who shrugged and offered up the Boulevard motto: "We're just borrowing the television." In turn, the boyfriend managed to "borrow" their car keys, killing their ride. They fled on foot and he attempted to follow, but lost them. However, one of the suspects, understanding the errors of his ways, surrendered to authorities a month later.

Assaulted by a Drag Queen? Try a Machete

Palm Grove

The victim heard a knock at his door, but when he went to answer, he saw no one. He returned to watching television. Suddenly a man dressed in a woman's black skirt and blonde wig entered the home. The victim got up but was yanked back on the couch by his neck. The quick-thinking victim then grabbed his trusty machete and lunged toward the intrusive drag queen, who fled the home and ran southbound. No arrests have been made and there was no way to ID the suspect as the wig covered much of his face.

In the Lap of Larceny

Downtown

As a stripper named "Cookie" was giving a male patron an engrossing lap dance, she apparently reached into his pocket and removed a wad of bills valued at \$1000. She finished with her customer and left the strip club. When the man realized what had happened, he asked the club's other dancers about "Cookie." They told him they didn't know her real name but offered him her cell number. Police were summoned, but since there were no witnesses and no way to verify the man's story, the case could not be prosecuted.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Historic

Continued from page 27

near Coral Gables, where limestone architecture is ubiquitous. “I love the coral, the limestone houses,” Delahoz says, explaining what initially interested him in the property.

Delahoz and Lopez bought the home in 2004. According to Delahoz, under the previous owners, a fire caused by an old fuse damaged much of the structure. It was not ruled a total loss, but major restoration would be required of any future owners. When they bought the home, Delahoz says, they were not aware of how extensive and potentially restrictive were the guidelines for restoration in this neighborhood. “If it hadn’t been historic,” Delahoz says, “we could have finished the work in a month.”

Adding to the new owners’ problems, the first contractor they hired had done repairs that were not acceptable to the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board; he had essentially ignored the specifications. “The contractor walked away with \$27,000,” Delahoz says. “We had to redo all of his work.”

Although restoration — including a new roof, electrical wiring, and plumbing — is now nearly complete, it has taken almost five years and nine different contractors at a cost of more than \$400,000.

Working under the historic district’s guidelines, Delahoz says, has been a matter of give and take. “The city was at first incredibly strict,” he recalls, “but they were willing to work with us in doing anything to make it look historic.”

The biggest obstacle, Delahoz says, has been trying to maintain the authentic

75-year-old design but under modern codes. “We had to build columns every eight feet inside,” he explains, an example of how modern safety standards affect the way historic homes will look. Working with what Delahoz calls an extremely fragile structure, he says, “It feels like I did something that was impossible.”

But thanks to the repairs done by the two cousins, the home is stronger than ever — a small fortress that can withstand anything Mother Nature throws its way, they say. “Whenever we get someone to rent, buy, or lease,” cousin Carlos Lopez jokes, “we will have a clause that says if ever there is a hurricane, we get to stay at the house too.” The tie beams throughout the house — a yellow, one-story home jutting from a coral-rock base that has kept the place standing for the past seven decades — are poured

concrete, and the roof is thicker than codes require. No building is completely hurricane-proof, but Lopez contends this structure is about as secure as they get.

Still, Lopez, who has 22 years’ experience doing historic restoration work throughout Florida and elsewhere, says he doesn’t feel that Miami does enough to support such efforts. He’d like to see the city offer more grants and incentives for homeowners to invest in historic properties.

The bungalow awaits a few more inspections before it can be deemed complete and restored, but looking back on the experience, Delahoz says, “I love what we went through. I wouldn’t change it for a million dollars. But I would *not* do it again.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Relations

Continued from page 26

for seven or eight years.”

Eventually the case was dismissed, but homeowner association president Richard Laird is still resentful. “Suing people under

fake pretenses and getting away with it,” he says, “can no longer be tolerated.”

The tensions between the club and its neighbors are a distraction from what Bob H. believes is most important — AA’s mission. “We are doing something here that the city, county, and state can’t

do,” he says. “We’re saving people’s lives through Alcoholics Anonymous.”

While acknowledging that the Little River Club has a good reputation for helping people, Laird remains critical. “It is a good organization,” he says, “but they have been a passive-aggressive

neighbor for a long time.” He’d like to see the club become a more positive force in the community. A great way to start, he suggests, would be to throw out the problem members.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Somewhere Between Hysteria and Humor

— Or maybe both at once, if you're artist Jay Hines —

By Victor Barrenechea
BT Contributor

It's an unassuming warehouse space in the Design District, across the street from the NE 1st Court palm grove, where a huge sculptural tent housed the Design Miami showcase this past December during Art Basel week. Here you'll find a brotherhood of artists like Nicolas Lobo, Bhakti Baxter, and Jason Hedges, who create uncompromising and sometimes noncommercial works, often collaborating with each other and participating in the same exhibitions. They do this with varying degrees of success and notoriety.

Among them is Jay Hines, whose obscurity perhaps surpasses his peers. Within the depths of the dingy, hot studio (no air conditioning), the young artist toils and sweats, a modern-day alchemist trying to turn trash into treasure — literally.

Hines is a hard one to pin down, and he likes it that way. He's an art chameleon, working in range of visual media, from performance to sculpture to installation to sound to drawings — and combinations of them all. "I don't want to pigeonhole my work," Hines explains. "What's more enjoyable to me is to just make work and see it change."

"He's an explorer, definitely," says artist Daniel Newman, who splits his time between Miami and Los Angeles and occasionally collaborates with Hines. "He's not a careerist. He's doing this because he *has* to do this, because he *wants* to do this."

The very nature of Hines's work would seem to be at odds with commercial aspirations. A typical piece (if such a thing exists) can resemble a pile of trash in the corner of a room. It's often as anonymous and unassuming as the artist himself. Says Newman: "Sometimes you'll come across his work and not even know it's art."

"Shelf-Life," a 2008 group exhibition in a vacant Design District space, included Hines's contribution of a found object installation that consisted of a deflated kids' bounce house, strewn on the floor and hooked to a fan that made it pulsate slightly. Rising from the bounce house was a high-hat cymbal from a drum set, with a toy pig dressed as Santa



From the 2008 "Shelf Life" show: *We're not just kids to say the least...*



Auguries triptych: Slight contortions and sinister faces.

Claus perched atop it. A Smurf doll, partially covered by what appeared to be a bed sheet, lay flat on its back, an erection clearly visible in its pants.

Those who didn't trip over the objects, which seemed to be carelessly arranged, might have picked up on the expression of fractured childhood imagery. Its title: *We're not just kids to say the*

least, we got ideas, to us that's dear, like capitalist, like communist, like lots of things you've heard about. As Newman puts it: "He's not putting everything out for the viewer on a silver platter, so it requires some patience and investigation. Good work takes time."

Hines was born in Minneapolis in 1977, but his family moved to Miami

when he was four. In the late 1990s, he was part of a burgeoning scene of young artists who formed and participated in the now-defunct, artist-run alternative space known as The House, an old two-story home in the Edgewater neighborhood.

Some of Hines's early work involved him heading outdoors and painting objects in the public landscape that people don't commonly notice. Usually without permission, he'd paint Dumpsters or piles of trash all one color, altering our perception of them. Sometimes he'd place such objects in exhibition settings and do the same. Echoes of those clandestine forays can be found in his current work, the majority of which employs found objects. "There's just an economy to the work," says Newman. "Whatever is around him at the time is sort of influencing his work. Whatever he stumbles upon becomes part of the work. It's an honest response to what's around him."

Hines only participated in the vibrant activity at The House for its first year, before leaving for Boston to attend the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. When he returned in 2004, Miami's contemporary art scene had exploded with the arrival of Art Basel. Hines's own work had changed as well; he'd developed an interest in extreme contrasts and unlikely juxtapositions.

Today his work mixes the absurd with the serious, the whimsical with the disturbing, not unlike the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, which feature horrific scenarios cloaked in innocence, or odd characters like Tiny Tim, the novelty ukulele player whose idiotic persona belied his accomplishments as a respected music archivist. Hines, says studio mate Nicolas Lobo, is "not interested in clear conceptual connections. He's more interested in manifestations of the disjointed."

Hines himself says he presents his subject matter in a way that produces "an experience that mixes hysteria and humor. I guess it's what you'd think of as madness." While much time and thought are put into the specific arrangement of his materials, the finished works often elicit immediate, visceral, gut-reaction responses, and not always pleasant ones.

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Hines

Continued from page 30

Imagine witnessing a gory, primitive religious ritual, or being exposed to high-decibel, screeching noise music.

The dense, expressionistic scratches and scribbles in his drawing *Auguries*, a triptych in which Hines traced lines from two overhead projector slides, moving the slides slightly with each consecutive drawing, produces an effect that contorts the image until grotesque faces seem to appear, a visual Gestalt similar to staring at clouds and watching images emerge. In the case of *Auguries*, however, the evocation is almost mystical, with an aura of foreboding.

For the 2007 group exhibition "Vault," Hines took 180 feet of hurricane tarp and wrapped it around poles to create a kind of open-air room with four walls — on the roof of the Design District's Collins Building. Inside this enclosure, he and his collaborators loudly beat drums and unleashed shrieking noises with electronic instruments. From the streets below, it was impossible to know how many people were up there creating such a racket. This was not an



Interior of the noisy enclosure atop the Collins Building, part of "Vault," 2007.

audience-participation piece. No one else was allowed on the roof.

The primal nature of the three-hour "Vault" performance had been preceded by a ritualistic process to prepare and build the rooftop structure. Hines climbed a ladder to the roof, alone, and

spent hours lugging up heavy musical equipment and other materials, such as buckets of concrete used to support the enclosure's poles.

Hines's performances, like that for "Vault," can be physically demanding. In another performance from 2007,

this one with his noise band Condo-leezza Rice, Hines played drums as he chugged an entire six-pack of beer. He was not to stop drumming until he'd finished off the six-pack — or became sick while trying. The set ended once the beer was gone. Hines went from sober to drunk in mere minutes.

"I think he's one of the better 'underground' artists in Miami," says Lobo. "I think he's onto what Miami is becoming, instead of what is was. I think Miami is becoming a place where that kind of work can be accepted." Lobo, however, won't venture a guess as to when that acceptance will arrive.

In the meantime, Hines's work frequently exists only in his Design District studio. No gallery represents him, but he's content with that. "There's a level you can operate on that isn't in the typical gallery system," he observes. "I should be able to function the way that I want to. I'm not in a rush to get as many shows as possible and sell a lot of work."

For more information visit www.jayhines.info

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
Through June 20:
"Metal" by Curtis LaFollette

ABBA FINE ART

233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
June 13 through July 31:
"Cuba" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2134 NW Miami Ct., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
June 13 through July 31:
"Luna Park" with Daniel Arsham, Luis Gispert, Gean Moreno, Martin Oppel, Ernesto Oroza, and Gavin Perry
Reception June 13, 7 to 11 p.m.

AMAYA GALLERY

2033 NW 1st Pl., Miami
917-743-2925
www.amayagallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

ARNO VALERE ART GALLERY BY RICART

3900 NE 1st Ave., Miami
305-576-5000
www.valerericartgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
Through June 24:
"Illumination of the Soul" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ART GALLERY AT GOVERNMENT CENTER

111 NW 1st St., Suite 625, Miami
305-375-4634
www.miamidadearts.org
Call gallery for exhibition information.

ARTFORMZ

171 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-572-0040
www.artformz.net
Through June 6:
"WELCOME" with Rai Escala, Sibel Kocabasi, Gisela Savdie, and Guillermo Portieles; a solo show by Alette Simmons-Jimenez, and a solo show by Donna Haynes

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami
305-576-2828
www.bacfl.org
Call gallery for exhibition information.

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami
By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com
www.basfisherinvitational.com
June 13 through July 11:
Solo show by Kathleen Hudspeth
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-2700
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com
Through September 5:
"Nine Lives: Dog Days of Summer" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores

**Susan Lee-Chun, *Suz-ercise...(and lift)*, Lambda print, 2008, at David Castillo Gallery.**

305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com
Through June 8:
"New Abstraction" with Eve Aschheim, Chris Fennell, Lynne Golob Gelfman, Christian Haub, Rory MacArthur, Cordy Ryman, and Leslie Wayne

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541 NW 27th St., Miami
305-571-1415
www.visual.org
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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
June 13 through August 1:
"Cosmos" by Tonel
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

CS GALLERY

787 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-308-6561
www.chirinosanchez.com
Through June 22:
"ARSENALS + AGENDAS" with Bane, George Rios, Mar5, Tussi Maldita, Mario Martinez, SR27, Esteban Corbo, Rodrigo, Mark!, Fabian De La Flor, Jon Clazo, Beastmode, Juan Navarro, and iSOY!

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Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

DELUXE ART GALLERY

2051 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-200-4971
June 13 through June 27:

"The Ringling School of Art and Design Student and Faculty Show" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com
Through June 6:
"Lost Horizon" by Felice Grodin
"Painted" by Katrin Moller
"2 Girls and a Boy" with Katherine Ordenez, Chottip Nimla, and Michael Okey
June 13 through July 31:
"Summer Exhibition" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046
www.diasporavibe.net
June 11 through July 23:
"Mr. Meyers, My Sweet Jane" by Danny Ramirez
Reception June 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com
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
June 13 through July 18:
"F(r)acture: divisions in painting" curated by Brook Dorsch, with Alicia Gibson, David Marsh, Jordan Massangale, Patrick McElnea, Brandon Opalka, Jane Parshall, Carlos Rigau, Karen Seapker, and Kevin Van Gorp
Reception June 13, 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 June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

EDGAR ACE GALLERY

7520 NE 4th Ct., Miami
305-877-2401
Call gallery for exhibition information.

EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART

47 NE 25th St., Miami
305-303-8852
www.edgezones.org

Through June 9:
Solo show by Magdiel Aspilaga
June 13 through July 4:
"SCHIZO' BOLO" by Carla Forte and Alexey Taran
Reception June 13, 8 to 11 p.m.
Performance June 13 at 9:30 p.m.

ELITE ART EDITIONS GALLERY

151 NW 36th St., Miami
305-403-5856
www.elitearteditions.com
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305-438-4383
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FACHE ARTS

750 NE 124th St., North Miami #2
305-975-6933
www.fachearts.com
June 26 through July 20:
"Color Exposure" by Carla Fache
Reception June 26, 8 to 11 p.m.

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through June 20:
"SMALL" with various artists
Reception June 13, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through June 6:
"Citygarden and Microscope" with Kristopher Benedict and Peter LaBier
June 13 through August 1:
"Oh Nancy" curated by Brian Burkhardt with various artists
Reception June 13, 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
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Through June 5:
"That 70's Show" with Netherland, Ken Bernstein, and Jason Snyder

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KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29 St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through June 30:
"Handmade Horizons and Songs" by Sebastian Spreng
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-2000
www.kevinbrukgallery.com

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Art Listings

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Through June 11:
Solo show by Richard Butler
June 13 through July 31:
Summer show with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
June 13 through August 10:
Group show with Armando de la Garza, Ivan Puig, and Leonardo Ramirez
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

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6900 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-389-2616
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LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Through June 28:
"By Any Means" Kate Gilmore

LUIS ADELANTADO GALLERY

98 NW 29th St., Miami
305-438-0069
www.luisadelantadomiami.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

LURIE - KAVACHNINA GALLERY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-2060
www.lurie-kavachnina.com
Through June 12:



Michael Loveland, *Fork in the Road*, glass, metal, concrete, 2009, at Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts.

"Big Small-Size Sculpture Show" with various artists
June 13 through July 11:
Group show with various artists
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
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305-576-2633
www.miamiartgroup.com
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305-438-9002
www.miamiartspace.com
June 13:
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June 18 through June 24:
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Reception June 13, 8 to 11 p.m.

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305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
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Through June 6:
"Visions of Eternity" with Etsuko Ichikawa, Laura

Continued on page 34

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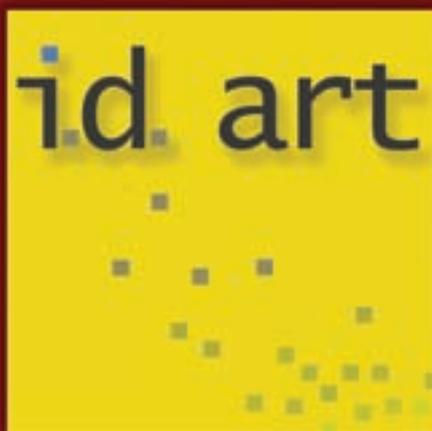
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Art Listings

Continued from page 33

DiNello, and Adela Holmes
June 13 through July 4:
"Madrigal" by Katherine Mann
Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

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June 13 through July 1:

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Reception June 13, 6 to 10 p.m.

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305-576-2112
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www.wrpfineart.com
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Reception June 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

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305-455-3380; www.cifo.org
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305-348-0496



Tonel, Cosmos (detail), graphite and India ink on paper, 16-minute loop, 2009, at Chelsea Galleria.

<http://thefrost.fiu.edu/>
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
June 27 through October 4:
"Through the Lens: Photography from the Permanent Collection" with various artists

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 September 13:
"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 for operating hours and exhibit information.

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95 NW 29th St., Miami
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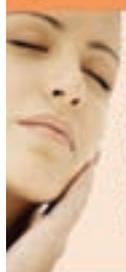
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Culture Briefs

Junkanoo — Even the Word Itself Is Fun

The 33rd annual Goombay Festival returns this first week of June. It's a lively celebration of the Bahamas and the cultural imprint its people have made on Coconut Grove, where they first settled in the late 1800s. A variety of events unfolds over several days, but the big one is on Saturday, **June 6**. That's the all-day street fair along Grand Avenue, with junkanoo bands, parades up and down the avenue, lots of food treats from the Bahamas and elsewhere, musical acts in many genres, and an overall party atmosphere with that sweet island vibe. For the kids, there is a children's corner where they'll have a chance to create their own colorful junkanoo costumes. For a full schedule of events visit www.goombayfestivalcoconutgrove.com or call 305-448-9501.

An Elevated View of Overtown History

The old folks remember Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, and many other greats playing Overtown's buzzing nightclubs after their gigs in Miami Beach. It was a different era. Like to learn more? Take in a lecture at downtown's historical museum, then a comfortable ride on the nearby Metromover. At platform stops, historian Paul George will bring to life Overtown's history and its significance to the black experience on the "Bird's Eye Black History Metromover Tour and Lecture" **June 6**. Sponsored by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (101 W. Flagler St.). Museum members \$20, nonmembers \$25. From 9:00 a.m. to noon. Call 305-375-1492 or go to www.hmsf.org.

Visit the Kampong, Fairchild's Personal Paradise

David Fairchild (1869-1954) was perhaps the greatest botanical explorer in American history. His worldwide travels for the U.S. Department of Agriculture allowed him to collect hundreds of thousands of exotic specimens, many of which he brought back to his bayfront estate in Coconut Grove. He and wife Marian (daughter of Alexander Graham Bell) built the place in 1926 and called it the Kampong, a Malay word for hamlet. Over time its garden became one of the most spectacular anywhere. As part of

the 72nd Annual Royal Poinciana Fiesta, the Kampong (4013 Douglas Rd.) will open to the public at 11:30 a.m. on **June 6**. Bring your own picnic lunch for this rare opportunity (free) and stay for a guided trolley tour at 2:00 p.m. (\$20). Tour reservations: 305-258-1086. The Kampong: 305-442-7169.

Georgia O'Keefe Got Her Start at Summer Camp

This summer kids 6 to 12 years old can gain art skills to last a lifetime at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Creative Arts Summer Camp **June 8-August 14**. Experienced art teachers aided by teen counselors develop each child's abilities in painting, drawing, print-making, and sculpture. Projects are also available for advanced art students should you have a little Rembrandt in the house. Cost is \$130 per week for MOCA members, \$150 non-members for up to ten weeks. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the museum (770 NE 125th St., North Miami). Free after-care until 5:00 p.m. Call 305-893-6211 or go to www.mocanomi.org.



Multi-Media, Over-the-Top, Standing Room Only

This sexy theatrical extravaganza is less a story and more an adrenaline rush. A man runs for his life on a platform stage surrounded by the audience. Seductive lovelies writhe against a see-through pool above your head. Acrobatic artists perform aerial tricks as the music's pounding beat builds to crescendo. Rave reviews worldwide have preceded the spectacle known as *Fuerza Bruta* to its extended run at the Arsht Center **June 9-July 5**. Yes, pretty strange, and

audiences stand throughout, so first visit www.fuerzabrutamiami.com, then call 305-949-6722 or go to www.arshtcenter.org for show times and tickets.

Seraphic Fire Sings a Joyous Song

Seraphic Fire, Miami's acclaimed chamber choir, kicks off its summer concert series with an upbeat program they're calling "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," an eclectic mix of African-American spirituals, bluegrass, and Southern gospel. They promise you'll be singing and clapping along with them on **June 11**, 8:00 p.m., at St. Martha's Church (9301 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores). Seraphic Fire will perform additional gospel concerts at other venues, and two more programs later this summer: the music of Handel, then Gershwin. Tickets are \$25. Past summer gospel programs have sold out. Tickets at seraphicfiretickets.com or 305-285-9060.



Return of the Thunder Boats

The second annual Sunny Isles Beach Offshore Challenge roars back to Haulover Beach Park (10800 Collins Ave.) **June 12-14**. Over three days, some of the fastest boats in the world will compete in a series of races — to Bimini in back (in one hour!) on Friday, a "Thunder Boat Poker Run" and pro-am racing on Saturday, and the big event on Sunday at noon: the Offshore Super Series for boats of all classes. The screaming behemoths, some 50 of them, will be docked at Haulover Marina so everyone can get a close look. Good race viewing Sunday all along the beach at Haulover. Free. Call 305-792-1706 or go to www.offshoresuperseries.com.

Haitian Harmonies

Singer/songwriter TiCorn makes a rare South Florida appearance with surprise guests on Saturday, **June 20**, 7:00 p.m., at North Miami Beach's performing arts theater (17011 NE 19th Ave.). Haitian-American teens may not know her, but

in Haiti she was huge in the 1980s with traditional Kreyol and folk songs, and her interpretation of popular ballads. Splitting her time between Haiti and Europe since childhood, Cornelia Shutt (aka TiCorn) sings of grief, hope, and happiness. Tickets are \$25; \$5 for children under ten. Visit www.alyscommunicationsinc.com or call 786-541-3899 or 305-787-6005.



Photo by George Schiavone

Summer's Here, So Put Your Shorts On

The Arsht Center (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) brings back another award-winning edition of "Summer Shorts," **through June 21**. For 14 years City Theatre has produced this series of one-act plays, each of which runs between 5 and 20 minutes. The series includes three programs: Signature Shorts (comedies and dramas), Shorts 4 Kids! (family fare), and Undershorts (risqué, laugh-out-loud comedies). Tickets are \$17 for Shorts 4 Kids! Everything else is \$42. For dates and show times, including matinees, go to www.arshtcenter.org or www.citytheatre.com or call 305-949-6722.

Carambola Wine in the Bordeaux Style? Why Not!

There's a reason why local wines are featured at the Redland Summer Fruit Festival **June 20-21**. Instead of using grapes, South Florida vintners are making surprisingly good wines by fermenting tropical fruits like longans, carambolas, litchis, even mangos and guavas. Those wines, plus many more unusual fruits and prepared food will be for sale during this annual festival at the county's Fruit and Spice Park (24801 SW 187th Ave., Homestead). Admission is \$6. Children under 11 get in free. Call 305-247-5727 or visit www.fruitandspicepark.org.

Compiled by BT intern Brian Horowitz

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Day of the Dad

It's time to get creative and upgrade Father's Day

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

I cringe inside every time my mother-in-law remarks about how “lucky” I am to have a “husband who helps out.” The idea that her son is as responsible for the kids and house as his spouse is so foreign to her that she sees it this way, as a matter of luck. With a marriage informed for the past 50 years solely by the June Cleaver model of homemaking, it's no wonder she still holds her daughters-in-law to these ideals.

She relishes reminding me that she did not teach her son how to do laundry, prepare a meal, or write a thank-you note. Unfortunately she also didn't teach her son to buy gifts for the people he loves, but that's another story. The point here is that her son is far from alone in his co-parenting, co-homemaking, and perhaps most important, co-careering.

In 2009 dads are almost interchangeable with moms — well, not in the reproductive sense, and they still earn more money than we do, and there's nothing like being able to just put a baby on a boob. But the tag-team style of today's parenting is certainly smoother thanks to the evaporation of roles being strictly defined by gender. And sometimes there's only dad, or maybe two dads — adding more force to the disappearance of gender-based family-role definitions.

So it's about time we upgraded Father's Day. Move over, outdoor-cooking and auto-repair gifts. Let's pull out the swag our dads really want to see this year. I don't know about you and yours, but my partner really would prefer something more relevant to his life than

a power tool, which most definitely should be kept as far away as possible from this person of the book — books like *The Expectant Father* when we were first pregnant, *Blessings of a Skinned Knee* shortly after the arrival of our firstborn, and *The Daddy Book* by Todd Parr from toddlerhood.

For all the dads out there who know their way around a diaper bag (and possibly even have their own), who regularly schedule playdates, and who can switch hit in the carpool lane if your meeting runs late, here is a wish list of Father's Day gift ideas for our age.

- The evolution of the phrase “Mommy & Me” to “Baby & Me” or “Parent & Me.”
- A day at the spa, or just a quick mani-pedi and some nice men's grooming products at the beautiful new Brownes & Co. location in the Design District at 87 NE 40th St.
- Don't force dad to sweat over the grill on his own day. Instead head out for a picnic in Morningside Park featuring takeout from his favorite Biscayne Corridor eatery, like maybe burgers from Charcuterie, 3612 NE 2nd Ave.
- Quality family-bonding time at the theater. Check out City Theatre's 14th annual “Summer Shorts” series of plays (each just 5 to 20 minutes long), including the family-friendly “Shorts 4 Kids.” At the Arsht Center through June 21, www.citytheatre.com or www.arshtcenter.org.
- LGBT marriage equality and abolishment of the gay-adoption ban



- Art projects like a tie-dyed shirt or beach towel made by the kids.

- A very cool-looking Daddy Bag in which to keep changes of kids' clothes and extra band-aids and sunscreen, stashed in the back of the car. Check out Genius Jones in the Design District.

I want to also give a nod to those of us for whom Father's Day is bittersweet as we help our children celebrate their fathers and the men we deeply love. As you may know if you've been reading this column for a while, my dad died when Goldi, my firstborn, was only six months old. My youngest, Izzi Dov, was named in his memory, leaving me forever saddened that my dad never even knew him or of him. So this Father's Day, I honor the memory of my father and wish all dads everywhere a happy Father's Day. May your parenthood transcend your every moment in ways you never imagined.

Want your kids to be art hipsters? Consider Summer EZ Art Camp at Edge Zones Contemporary Art in Wynwood. EZ Art Camp, for kids ages 7-14, is a series of two-week programs beginning June 8, full day or half day. Professional artists and arts educators emphasize self-expression and allow young artists to create and explore in a lively artistic environment. Visit www.ezartcamp.org or call 305-576-4001.

Keep up with “Kids and the City” between issues by following me on Twitter: @BiscayneKids.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Things You Can Do with Palms

Eat them if you're a bug, mulch them if you're not

Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

The other day I did a survey of all the coconut palms at Jungle Island, where I work. I was looking for the red palm mite, which had first been found in Palm Beach in December 2007. The mite attacks not only palms (and sucks the juices out of the leaves) but bananas, Heliconia, and some other plants, often with fatal results. I know it has been at the park for at least a year, perhaps longer, but it has never been more than an occasional visitor to our palms and never caused any visible damage. I've not yet found it on any bananas or other species.

I undertook the survey because I saw a single coconut palm, out of the dozens we grow, that had yellowed-up quite a bit. It was very chlorotic. Normally I would ascribe this kind of yellowing to the fatal palm disease known as lethal yellowing, but the first symptom, dropping of immature coconuts, had not occurred. Plenty of fruit was still on the tree.

Upon closer inspection of the underside of the leaves with a hand lens, I found the palm to be infested with red palm mite. You can see this mite with the naked eye, but certain identification is best made with a magnifier. Another method of tentative identification is to rub a finger against the underside of a leaf. If your finger is stained red, you might have found the red palm mite.

After inspection of all palms, I found them to have very small numbers of red palm mites, or I found none at all. This was quite interesting. The infested coconut palm was definitely a tree that

had been under stress. It had been planted in poor soil (the structural fill that was used for the building foundations) that was very compacted with no organic matter. It was also in an area that got very little irrigation or rain water.

Many years ago I found that chewing insects (caterpillars) or sucking insects (thrips, scale, and aphids) often appeared first on stressed plant foliage because the nitrogen within the foliage was more soluble and therefore more digestible and nutritious. Plants can be stressed by one or more of the following: drought, severe cold, mechanical injuries from lightning strikes to car collisions to weed-eater damage, and too much fertilizer. Spider mites are not insects but they respond the same way. When the food is nutritious and available, they find it, move in, and begin rapid reproductive cycles.

I'm not sure yet what we'll do with this coconut in the long term but for now it will be an opportunity to see if predators of the red palm mite show up and start controlling the population, as happened with the fig whitefly.

On a residential property, I recently recommended removing a number of large coconut palms because they were leaning outside the property line and had become a hazard owing to potential falling coconuts. It was a shame because



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

This female inflorescence of *Aechmea mariaereginae* is found on a large bromeliad that grows well in palm mulch, both epiphytically and terrestrially.

these were beautiful trees, but they were not in a situation where they could be relocated. The tree company that came to do the removals was also contracted to chip everything from the fronds and fruit to the trunks. When I asked them to leave the mulch onsite, they protested. The mulch from palm trees, they maintained, was not "good" mulch.

I feel strongly that yard waste should always be composted or mulched and left onsite. This keeps a tremendous amount

of waste out of the landfills. It also is a great horticultural resource. Moreover, my experience with palm mulch has been very positive. Coconut peat is a great planting medium for many species of plants, including bromeliads. The mulch produced from chipping palm trunks is perfect for bromeliad beds in the landscape and as a container mix. Just make sure it is a few weeks old and is no longer hot from decomposing organisms.

Since bromeliads grown in containers can get very top-heavy and fall over on windy days, make a heavier potting mix by adding coarse sand like concrete screening sand to the palm mulch. As the mulch decomposes, the sand will also help maintain aeration and drainage.

Bromeliads we propagate in containers at the park's nursery develop great root systems when grown in palm mulch. These bromeliads are the types that typically grow as epiphytes, on the trunks of trees (and palms). The bromeliads that grow terrestrially, like the pineapples and Pitcairnia, need a soil mixture that is more decomposed, like the soil in your landscape, but with excellent drainage.

If you ever have old, dried-out coconuts, cut them in half and plant orchids on the inside. They can be easily hung and will last for years.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Summer + Fido = Hot Dog

Even when the heat is on, pets need exercise

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

Rain, rain, go away, come again... Well, strike that. We really need the rain and are lucky to get it. The summer rainy season may be beneficial for our plants and grass, but it's not fun for people with dogs or indoor/outdoor cats or rabbits. Many dogs are afraid to get wet, or refuse to pee outside in the rain. Cats will take to hiding under the bed. Even worse, many are really sensitive (to put it mildly) to thunder and lightning.

Even more important: How will our pets get exercise and stimulation when the weather report calls for rain every day and temperatures that are almost always 90 degrees or more? They can't go to the gym, meet their friends at happy hour, or find a good book to read at the library. Thus we need to be creative.

The heat can be very hard on dogs, and many people do not realize how much their pets are suffering or how close they are to keeling over. In fact I've seen many dogs do just that at adoption events! Careful attention should be paid to keeping your dog well hydrated, shaded, and cool. Look for telltale signs such as heavy panting, pale pink gums, and lethargy.

Avoid going out during the hottest part of the day, except for a short walk so the animal can relieve himself. This is extremely important with Brachycephalic breeds, those with pushed-in faces like pugs or Boston terriers, whose respiration is constricted. Carry your own water and bowl with you to keep your dog hydrated. There are plenty of clip-on water bottles and "fold-a-bowls" on the



market to keep your hands free for holding a leash. Be aware that light-haired and hairless animals are also prone to sunburn, just as we are, and should wear sun block when necessary. (I use a hypoallergenic one made for babies on my hairless puppy.)

Swimming is great exercise for dogs, just as it is for us — aerobic and muscle conditioning at the same time. Swimming can also be beneficial for many older pets, as well as pets with ailments such as hip dysplasia or patellar luxation (slipping, or dislocated kneecaps). But check with your vet first.

If your pet naturally takes to the water and you have access to a pool or lake, consider yourself lucky. Many Floridians are also fortunate to have indoor pools where the weather outside does not affect their swimming. For novice canine swimmers, start slowly to entice your dog into the pool with you. They still can get overheated

Be aware that light-haired and hairless animals are also prone to sunburn, just as we are, and should wear sun block when necessary.

and dehydrated while swimming, so monitor them closely.

Naturally, the easiest way to keep your pet exercised

through the dog days of summer is to get up earlier and walk and run them in the wee morning hours (or if you are a night owl, after sundown). But if that is not an

option for you, then you need an alternative solution. You can hire a dog walker or runner to take your pet out for you. If your dog is friendly, perhaps he can spend a few hours per week at an air-conditioned doggy daycare center. With friends you can trust, take turns caring for each other's dogs on days you don't work so your pet can have an indoor play buddy.

Your small dog or cat may have no problem fetching in the living room, though it is a little harder to exhaust your lab or German shepherd this way. But training exercises are a great way to burn off energy. Coming when called is a great behavior to start with. Give all adults in your household some very yummy treats and disperse yourselves into different rooms. Take turns yelling, "Jay-Jay, come! Come on, boy! Clap your hands, whistle, or whatever you commonly do to accompany a command. Praise him profusely and give him a bunch of treats when he finds you.

Then it is Aunt Jenny's turn to call Jay-Jay into the kitchen with the same enthusiasm. Send the dog back and forth, back and forth, to different people and different rooms of the house. See? Exercise and some recall training to boot! In fact practicing all your dogs tricks and behaviors is a great energy burner. Sit, roll over, play dead, wave. Play training for 15 minutes can tire your dog as much as a 30- to 40-minute fast walk.

Interactive toys are great for the housebound pet as well, including cats. Food-stuffed toys your dog must lick out, roll, or figure out what it takes to get to the treats inside are great in keeping

Continued on page 39

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COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

Hot Dog

Continued from page 38

your pet stimulated on a hot summer day. You can freeze some chicken soup overnight in a Kong toy for a healthy frozen treat. Creating jungle gyms for cats, bookshelves at different heights, climb-

A human treadmill is never recommended for a dog. Only treadmills specifically made for dogs should be used, and very sparingly at best.

A word about treadmills. A human treadmill is never recommended for a dog. Only treadmills specifically made for dogs should be used, and very sparingly at best. They should not take the place of running on grass, sniffing the ground, and playing. You must always supervise a dog on a treadmill,

as many have gotten injured tripping, getting stuck to it with different body parts, or falling from exhaustion.

Your dogs may need fewer calories if they are less active in the summer, so watch their food intake as well.

With a little ingenuity and flexibility, our pets and their faithful owners can still enjoy life to the fullest — and stay cool and dry. Happy summer!

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

ing posts, and even climbing walls (using carpeting) can keep things interesting for the felines of the family.

Switch around house plants and hide catnip balls in different places to arouse kitty's curiosity. Make a pseudo-agility course and entice your pet with a treat or toy under the coffee table, over a pile of books, through a hula hoop, and onto their bed. Rabbits can be easily trained to do this as well, and may also enjoy rolling around on large basketballs or soccer balls.

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How to Kick the Concrete Habit

In downtown Miami, pocket parks provide relief

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

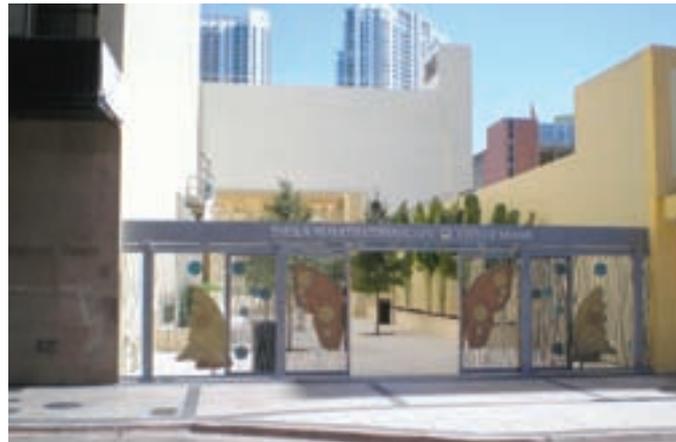
The newest public-space sensation sweeping the nation is the iPark. This tiny patch of green goes wherever you go, creating a quiet space just for you. The aromatherapy function simulates fresh-cut grass, and you can download songbirds from anywhere in the world. Why sweat and strain to get back to nature when your fingers can take you directly to iPark?

The iPark may be a fantasy, but some parks in Miami are so small they feel like they could fit in your pocket. Hence the term “pocket park,” which is what the City of Miami calls its diminutive parks sprinkled around downtown. A couple of them have popped up recently with a fresh new look.

The main attraction is a restored park with waterfall that’s across Flagler Street from the county courthouse. It involved tearing down a restaurant on the site to revive a pocket park that had been there 15 years ago. The Paul S. Walker Urbanscape (urban escape?), located at 46 W. Flagler St., was dedicated on April 28. There’s nothing else around quite like it.

The gate is an attraction in itself. Sporting huge metallic butterflies, the gate opens from the center by pulling apart the wings of the largest butterfly. People walking by the open gate twist their heads to figure out if it is some kind of giant dissection. At night the butterfly gets put back together again.

Stepping inside the gate does not reveal green space. Instead you get



The new Walker Urbanscape features a waterfall but not a blade of grass.

beige, with a few plants as accents. The pale palette includes a few pastel tiles at ground level, and the shape is a long, rectangular box. A huge blank canvas rises on the east side, as created by the windowless wall of the Courthouse Tower, running 30 stories high. Across from that canvas stands the two-story flank of Viaggio, an Italian café.

The waterfall, covering half of the back wall, invites reflection. This beige cascade sends its rapids bouncing down a series of obstacle-bricks, and the water lands in a thin, turquoise pool adorned with decorative water plants. The fountain’s high edge discourages but does not prevent anyone from trying to dive in and act out *La Dolce Vita*, or simply taking a free bath.

The main activity going on in the Paul S. Walker pocket park seems to be executives talking on cell phones. Certainly there is some posing, ogling,



Joan Lehman’s public art piece, *Rhythm of the Train*, anchors a fine example of the urban pocket park.

and daydreaming going on, but mostly it’s the iPhone in the iPark in the iCity. Some limited seating is available on ledges, but there are no tables or benches. The gates shut everyone out at 6:00 p.m.

Measuring about 4200 square feet, the resurrected park cost \$284,993, covered mostly by funds from the Downtown Development Authority and the so-called Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond passed by Miami voters in November 2001. Was it worth it? Considering that crappy condos downtown sell for more, I would say yes. An oddity? Yes, but that makes it a destination.

Downtown Miami lies within city Commissioner Marc Sarnoff’s District 2. “Restoring Paul Walker Park to its past glory was my very first initiative when I was elected commissioner,” Sarnoff stated in a press release. “I am extremely proud to see that it has now become a reality.”

Another \$65,000 was thrown at two other nearby pocket parks, formerly managed by the county, and these are disappointing in size. They are barely oversized medians.

You might recognize the monument in the Joan Lehman Sculpture Plaza, located adjacent to the transit lines and Government Center. The 1988 sculpture, *Rhythm of the Train* by Lehman, a Miami artist, is a series of tilted, brushed stainless-steel arches that

reach to 17 feet in the center. You can walk through them and feel like you’re in the belly of a whale.

This refurbished, more sizable of these two pocket parks is nicely landscaped, with convenient brick walkways that converge on the sculpture. A few black benches offer great views of the Metrorail.

The lamest of the three improved pocket parks sits in between the courthouses at the intersection of NW 1st Avenue and NW 1st Street. Officially known as Robert F. Clark Plaza, it consists of four trees, a couple of benches, and a winding brick path about 30 feet in length. There’s nothing wrong with it, but it is embarrassing to call it a park. It’s a traffic median, surrounded on all sides by a sidewalk. I even saw one guy walking in circles around the “plaza,” as if on a spiritual quest. Each loop took about 40 seconds.

Apparently these two pocket parks had been off limits to the public until they were restored, so perhaps the City of Miami deserves extra credit for making them pedestrian-friendly. It’s hard to imagine why or how they were blocked off before.

More pocket parks could be part of the solution to downtown’s addiction to concrete, but they cannot provide the amenities of a “real” American park. These are Tokyo parks, crammed into leftover, Hello Kitty-size spaces, trying to achieve Zen. Could there be another solution?

Hello, iPark!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

<p>PAUL S. WALKER URBANSCAPE</p> <p>Park Rating ★★★★★</p> <p>46 W. Flagler St. Miami Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Picnic tables: No Night lighting: Yes Special features: Waterfall</p>	<p>JOAN LEHMAN SCULPTURE PLAZA</p> <p>Park Rating ★★★★★</p> <p>W. Flagler Street at NW 1st Avenue Miami</p>	<p>ROBERT F. CLARK PLAZA</p> <p>Park Rating ★★★★★</p> <p>NW 1st Avenue at NW 1st Street Miami</p>
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BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 203.

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

\$= \$10 and under

\$\$= \$20

\$\$\$= \$30

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

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

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

Abokado

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-347-3700
www.abokadosushi.com

Hamachi chiles rellenos? Shiso leaf "nachos" topped with raw spicy tuna, kaiware sprouts, and other Asian ingredients? The Viva, a sushi roll that starts with standard Japanese (spicy tuna, cucumber, avocado), adds Latin sabor (jalapeño, cilantro), wraps it in a flour tortilla, and garnishes it with heat (spicy snow crab mix)? Miami hasn't tended to initiate too many food "firsts," but this Japanese/Pan-Latin fusion place is surely one. Prices are higher than at neighborhood sushi spots, but in keeping with Abokado's Mary Brickell Village neighbors. \$\$\$

Acqua

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

Originally an Italian/Mediterranean restaurant, this comfortably elegant, upscale spot switched chefs in 2006, 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, a tender pork shank glazed with spicy Szechuan citrus sauce, 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 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. 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. The cocktails are genuinely creative. Luckily you don't have to choose one or the other. \$\$\$

Azul

500 Brickell Key Dr., 305-913-8254

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

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 cruise-ship and construction workers. 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. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$\$\$

The Bar at Level 25 (Conrad Hotel)

1395 Brickell Ave., 305-503-6500

On the Conrad's 25th floor, The Bar's picture-windowed space 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 here there's nothing mere about the generously portioned small plates. They range from traditional items like cod fish equixada and saffron-sautéed Spanish artichokes to inventive inspirations like foie gras and goat cheese-stuffed empanadas. \$\$\$

Blu Pizzeria e Cucina

900 S. Miami Ave. (Mary Brickell Village)
305-381-8335; www.blurestaurantsgroup.com

If the super-sleek interior is too formal for you, opt for a casual patio table while studying the menu over an order of warm gnocchetti bread sticks, or creamy-centered suppli alla romana (porcini-studded tomato and mozzarella rice croquettes). The place looks upscale, but prices of even the fanciest entrées don't exceed \$20. The fare is wide-ranging, but 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. 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. \$

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. The best seats are on the rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

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

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 dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market. Best preparations 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. \$\$\$

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 dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market. Best preparations 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. \$\$\$

Grimpa Steakhouse

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

www.grimpa.com

This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery is sleekly contemporary, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish. 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. 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 outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to 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. The rest of the food? Pricey, 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 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. 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 Italian restaurant was unquestionably a pioneer in revitalizing downtown. With alternatives like amaretto-tinged pumpkin agnolotti in sage butter sauce and cilantro-spiced white bean/vegetable salad dressed with truffle oil, 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. \$\$\$

La Moon

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

At four in the morning, nothing quiets the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to 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 charming. This urban oasis is an artsy little white-tablecloth place, but with no-tablecloth prices. Much of the menu is Miami's generic Latin mix, but there is a separate Ecuadorian section that's a playlist of that country's culinary greatest hits. Standout: encebollado, a centuries-old fishermen's soup given national individuality by yuca and zingy hits of lime. No clue? Try a bandera, a mixed plate of Ecuador's most distinctive dishes. \$\$\$

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. At lunch, generously salad-garnished, open-faced tartines are irresistible. 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-macaroon sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$\$\$

Manny's Steakhouse

300 S. Biscayne Blvd.

305-938-9000; www.mannyssteakhouse.com

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

Continued on page 42

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 41

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. \$\$\$\$

Novecento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900
www.bistronovecento.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 the entrée salads. \$\$\$

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 menus vary significantly according to regional tastes and fish. Here in Miami, chef Sean Bernal 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 Lincoln Road was instantly popular, and the same healthy Middle Eastern fast food is served at several newer outlets. The prices are low enough that you might suspect Pasha's was a tax write-off rather than a Harvard Business School project, which it was by founders Antonio Ellek and Nicolas Cortes. Dishes range from falafel and gyros to more unusual items like muhammara (tangy walnut spread) and silky labneh yogurt cheese. 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. 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 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 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. 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 dining room (and even more charming outdoor terrace) evoke the south of France. But the menu of French bistro classics covers all regions: country-style pâté maison with onion jam, roasted peppers, and cornichons; steak/frites (grilled rib-eye with peppercorn cream sauce, fries, and salad); and four preparations of mussels. 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.thevermiami.com

This casually cool 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 find it difficult to resist stuffing themselves silly on the unusually large selection, especially since oysters are served both raw and cooked – fire-roasted with sofrito butter, chorizo, and manchego. There's also a thoughtful wine list and numerous artisan beers on tap. \$\$\$

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001
www.rosamexicano.com

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

Soya & Pomodoro

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

Life is complicated. Food should be simple. That's owner Armando Alfano's philosophy, which is stated above the entry to his atmospheric downtown eatery. And since it's also the formula for the truest traditional Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian entrées. There are salads and sandwiches, too. The most enjoyable place to dine is the secret, open-air courtyard. Alfano serves dinner on Thursdays only to accompany local musicians and artists. \$-\$

Taste of Bombay

111 NE 3rd Ave., 305-358-0144

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 week-ends till 4:00 a.m.). The kitchen is especially known for its chili, budget-priced steaks, and burgers. There's also surprisingly elegant fare, though, like a Norwegian salmon club with lemon aioli. A meat-smoker in back turns out tasty ribs. \$\$

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, this one sticks close to the source and places a crowd-pleaser. On weekends especially, the 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. \$

Bengal

2010 Biscayne Blvd.
305-403-1976

At this Indian eatery the décor is cool and contemporary: 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. America's favorite familiar north Indian flavors are here, though dishes are generally more mildly spiced and presented with modern flair. 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, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (tables made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's smart new 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, chef Alfredo Patino offers sophisticated snacks like the figgiutto: arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking 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 performing arts center. The eclectic menu is more Mediterranean than anything else, 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 lobster bisque, lump crab cake with fried capers, and a retro arugula salad. \$\$\$

Brosia

163 NE 39th St.
305-572-1400

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. 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 bistro food – were within walking distance of every Miami resident, we'd be a helluva hip food town. Like true Parisian bistros, it's open continuously, every day, with prices so low that you can drop in anytime for authentic rillettes (a rustic pâté) with a crusty baguette, steak with from-scratch frites, salmon atop ratatouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. \$\$

Captain Joe Seafood & Pasta Grill

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

This Shops at Midtown eatery begins at 8:00 a.m. with eggs, pancakes, French toast, and bagels. After that it's a seafood-oriented menu of fast-casual food. Best values are combo platters 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. \$

Charcuterie

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

This Design District old-timer has hung on for close to 20 years, 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, features typical French bistro specials like chicken Dijonaise or almond-crusted trout in creamy, lemony beurre blanc. And the salads, soups, and sandwiches are still, invariably, evocative. Though weekend nighttime hours were instituted several years ago, it's best to 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, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and

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Restaurant Listings

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salads can also 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 nearby original Delicias, run by members of the same family. 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. As for nonseafood stuff, Peru practically invented fusion cuisine (in the 1800s), such as two traditional noodle dishes: tallerin saltado and tallerin verde. \$\$

18th Street Café

210 NE 18th St.

305-381-8006; www.18thstreetcafe.com

Most of the seating in this cool little breakfast/lunch room is in a sort of giant bay window, backed with banquettes, that makes the space feel expansive. 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. Other culinary highlights 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

No green-leaf faux health food here. 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. Available in double or one-patty sizes, they're well-done but spurtingly juicy, and after loading with your choice of 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. \$

Fratelli Lyon

4141 NE 2nd Ave.

305-572-2901; www.fratellilyon.com

This Italian café has been packed since the moment it opened. No surprise to any who recall owner Ken Lyon's pioneering Lyon Frères gourmet store on 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 are so outstanding that you can't help wishing it also had a retail component. 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

Chef Michael Jacobs's menu travels beyond pan-Asian and Mediterranean influences into the Americas. Entrées range from 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. There's also a snack menu (pristine coldwater oysters, a crab salad timbale, parmesan-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. 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 pizza like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. 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

Operated by a brother/sister team (both originally from Ethiopia), 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 – home fries mixed with bacon, ham, peppers, onion, and cheese; accompanied by eggs, fresh fruit, and bread. Lunch's burgers, salads, and overstuffed sandwiches come with homemade soup or other sides, plus fruit. Dinner features an authentic Ethiopian menu, plus beer and wine selections. \$\$\$

Latin Café 2000

2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838

www.latincafe2000.com

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

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 freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

3201 N. Miami Ave. (Shops at Midtown)

305-576-5463

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip new Midtown hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. The concept is "fast casual" rather than fast food – meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients are always fresh. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas and many Mexican beers. \$

Lost & Found Saloon

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

www.thelostandfoundsaloon-miami.com

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crust 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-crust 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 you expect, including all-you-can-eat meats carved tableside and a lavish buffet. What sets Maino apart from typical rodizio palaces is its family-run feel, intimate rather than intimidating, plus its attention to every detail. While it's rare at most rodizio joints to get meat done less than medium, Maino will cook to order. One other welcome difference: 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

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz 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.

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Restaurant Listings

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There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Mike's at Venetia

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

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, 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. 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. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$-\$\$

Moriano

3221 NE 2nd Ave., 786-953-8003
moriano.wordpress.com

Ultra-thin, crisp-crust pizzas. Made-from-scratch 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. 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, focchi 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. 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. \$

Pacific Time

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

Everyone knew Jonathan Eismann's original Pacific Time, for many years Lincoln Road's only serious restaurant. How different is its new incarnation? Very, and it's all good, starting with far superior acoustics, an admirably green ecological policy, and a neighborhood-friendly attitude. While the addition of Mediterranean influences to the Pacific Rim menu may sound confusing, 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

Dainty designer pizzas? At this New York-style pizzeria, 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

The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand 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 prosciutto/arugula — would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées 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 restorlounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotic or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though 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, the lobster tempura maki, 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 classic diner. Open since 1938, people still line up on Saturday mornings, waiting for a seat at the counter 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. 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.
305-573-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But it's no absentee celebrity-chef gig. Bernstein is hands-on at both places. Her exuberant yet firmly controlled personal touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas on the menu. Items are frequently reinvented. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas with fig jam; white bean stew;

crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/coriander dip; 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, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. 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. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scalion, 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, 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, and smoked duck salad with goat cheese croutons and a poached egg. At night there are tapas. \$\$\$

Zuperpollo Biztro Reztocafe

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

This bistro is a branch of the popular Uruguayan eatery Zuperpollo, on Coral Way since 1986. It's way in back, past a guard desk and an elevator bank, behind an unmarked door. Diners who find it 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, overstuffed chivito, sometimes called "a heart attack on a bun." And naturally, from the rotisserie, there's the zignature zuper chicken. \$\$\$

Upper Eastside

Andiamo

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

Sharing a building with a long-established Morningside car wash, Andiamo is also part of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station — which means ditching the car (in the complex's free lot across the road on NE 4th Court) is no problem even if you're not getting your vehicle cleaned while consuming the brick-oven pies (from a flaming open oven) that are this popular pizzeria's specialty, along with executive chef Frank Crupi's famed Philly cheese steak sandwiches. 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

The new owners of this river shack are banking on Greek food and festivity for success — a good bet, judging from their wildly popular previous eatery, Ouzo. The mainly mezze menu ranges from traditional Greek small plates to creative Mediterranean-inspired dishes like anise-scented fish croquettes with

spicy aioli. But don't neglect large plates like whole grilled Mediterranean fish (dorade or branzino), filleted tableside. The interior 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 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 pastetas 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 intimate dating 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 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 impressive, with an unusually large selection of seafood and vegetarian items such as spinach sautéed with pine nuts and raisins. Don't miss the ultra-creamy croquetas, 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. But there the resemblance 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. For fish haters, spicy or garlic chicken wings are an option. \$\$\$

Casa Toscana

7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-3353
www.casatoscanamiami.com

Tuscan-born chef/owner Sandra Stefani cooked at Norman's before opening this Upper Eastside jewel, 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 specials with honest, authentic flavors, such as grilled wild boar sausages with lentil croquettes. Menu favorites include pear and ricotta raviolini, grilled eggplant slices rolled around herbed goat cheese and sun-dried tomatoes, and a light ricotta tart with lemon and rosemary. \$\$\$

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Entrées include Mushroom ravioli

Chicken in garlic sauce

Salmon in creamy lemon sauce

Skirt steak in red wine shallot sauce

Choice of Desserts

\$26.95 per person

Free glass of wine 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Restaurant Listings

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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, lomito steak with Argentinean potato salad), and desserts (tiramisu or flan). \$

Chef Creole

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

Sparkling fresh Creole-style food is the star at chef/owner Wilkinson Sejour's two tiny but 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 – seafood is the specialty here: crevette en sauce (steamed shrimp with Creole butter sauce), lambi fri (perfectly tenderized fried conch), poisson gros sel (local snapper in a spicy butter sauce), garlic or Creole crabs. The Miami branch has outdoor tiki-hut dining. \$\$\$

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 for this stand's sauce-garnished, all-beef, soy veggie, turkey, and chicken hot dogs. The 22 varieties range from simple 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. New addition: thick, juicy burgers. \$

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, including 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. Recommended are moist tamales, tasty sandwiches (especially the dripping 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. \$\$\$

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. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot cappicola, 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 are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin'

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

Housed in a yellow building that's nearly invisible from the street, the Garden has the comfortable feel of a beach bar, and generous servings of inexpensive Afro-Caribbean vegan food. 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 popular 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. Food is available à la carte or grouped in multimeal 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; eggs any style, including omelets and open-face frittatas; 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 indoor/outdoor sports bar serves low-priced but high-quality steaks, plus more typical bar food that's actually far from the usual 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. 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 and crisp-skinned roast chickens. Otherwise the menu holds few surprises – except the prices, unusually 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 remains one of the Upper Eastside's best-kept secrets. But knowledgeable diners wander over from the Boulevard for simple but perfect pad Thai, chili grouper, 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, on the inside it's like a time-trip to a cabaret in pre-WWII Berlin: 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. \$\$\$

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, 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

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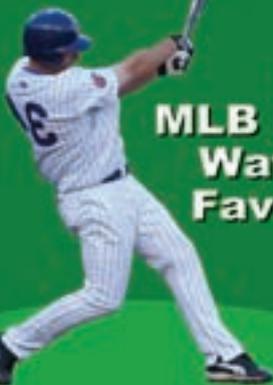


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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

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almost 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. 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, an 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. Dine 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 sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves 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 it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Moshi Moshi 7232 Biscayne Blvd. 786-220-9040

This offspring 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. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank; 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

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 menu of light bites is — along with other lures like an inviting outdoor patio and rest rooms that resemble eclectic art galleries — part of the reason visitors stay for hours. Especially recommended 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. \$

Red Light 7700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-7773

From the rustic al fresco deck of chef Kris Wessel's intentionally downwardly mobile retro-cool riverfront restaurant, you can enjoy regional wildlife like manatees 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). Not surprisingly, the chef-driven menu is limited, but several signature specialties, if 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. Soyka remains a solid neighborhood restaurant that 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 have come and gone. Take-out orders and breakfast are now available. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam 5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818

On the 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. 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 and operated by brothers Michael and Sinuhé Vega, this casual outdoor/indoor Euro-café and lounge has helped to transform the Boulevard into a hip place to hang out. Lunch includes a variety of salads and elegant sandwiches like La Minuta (beer-battered mahi-mahi with cilantro aioli and caramelized onions on housemade focaccia). 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 and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 "buiñuelos"). But taco fillings range from ground beef and shredded chicken to more unusual pork in chili verde 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

You might think this is just a wine shop, but it's actually about wine, food, and art, and how they work together. Wines are available retail (discounted 35-50 percent for in-house drinkers), with 40 sold by the glass. Food, designed for pairing, includes a \$25 three-course dinner. 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. The art involves revolving exhibits, plus an art lecture series featuring wines picked by owner Ben Neji. \$\$

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 lunch specials from chef Delsa Bernardo (who co-owns the place with attorney Abbie Cuellar) that are home-made right down to the herbs grown on the bakery's window sills. Bernardo's pan con lechon sandwiches and flaky-crust Cuban pastries are legend. But she also crafts treats not found at average Cuban bakeries, like pizzas using housemade Indian naan bread. Additionally Bernardo carries unique treats produced by a few friends: candies, cupcakes, and exotically flavored flans. \$

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Bocados Ricos 1880 79th St. Causeway; 305-864-4889

Tucked into a mall best known for its Happy Stork Lounge, this little luncheonette services big appetites. Along with the usual grilled churrascos, there's bandeja paisa, Colombia's sampler platter of grilled steak, sausage, chicharron, fried egg, avocado, plantains, rice, and beans. Don't miss marginally daintier dishes like sopa de costilla, if this rich shortrib bowl is among the daily 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. \$\$\$

Edy's Chicken & Steak 1624 79th St. Causeway 305-864-9958

What differentiates Edy's from other chicken joints is the signature Peruvian pollo a la brasa, char-broiled in a wood-fired rotisserie. The rotation makes the bird self-baste, keeping even the white meat juicy under its crispy, nearly fat-free skin. Spicing is also superior. Owner Edy Demovsek's dozen-ingredient marinade recipe came from a visit to Peru, but has been tweaked with spices from her hometown — Chiang Mai, Thailand. The result is subtly mouth-warming heat absent from average chain chickens. \$\$\$

Japanese Market and Sushi Deli 1412 79th St. Causeway; 305-861-0143

Inside a small market that is widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter. But chef Michio Kushi serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi — layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, 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. \$

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

Oggi Caffe 1666 79th St. Causeway 305-866-1238; www.oggicaffe.com

This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

NORTH BEACH

Ariston 940 71st St., 305-864-9848

Ariston's classical Greek cuisine is based on recipes of co-owner Thanasis Barlos's mom Noni and executed by CIA-trained chef Alexia Apostolidis. Concentrate on the menu's 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 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 raviolletti in lobster cream sauce, black squid ink linguini heaped with seafood. 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.

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Restaurant Listings

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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 are featured in the chef's latest tome, but with Tamarind's very affordable prices, 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. 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 only every Miami neighborhood could have a neighborhood restaurant like this low-priced little French jewel. The menu is mostly simple stuff: breakfast croissants, crêpe, soups, sandwiches, salads, sweets, and a few more substantial specials like a Tunisian-style brik (buttery phyllo pastry stuffed with tuna, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes) with a mesclun side salad. But everything is homemade, including all breads, and prepared with impeccable ingredients, classic French technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café's baguette sandwiches. \$\$-\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Los Antojos
11099 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-892-1411

If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be ajiao. Both are thick chicken soups, full meals in a bowl. 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. \$

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, 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, 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. Menu 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, and chicken to hot-smoked salmon and veggie plates. 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. The cost is comparatively high, 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 marinated pork loin; tacos al pastor, stuffed with subtly smoky steak, onion, cilantro, and pineapple; sinful deep-fried tacos dorados; 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. However, 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 top restaurants. Now there's a casual but pleasantly nautical side dining room with booths. Whether it's garlicky scampi, smoked-fish dip, grilled yellowtail or hog or mutton snapper, perfectly tenderized cracked conch or conch fritters, 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 a few minutes, thanks to the staff's Italian ebullience. Menu offerings are mostly classic comfort foods with some contemporary items as well. Housemade pastas are good enough that low-carb dieters should take a break, especially for the tender gnocchi with pesto or better yet, delicate fagottini – "beggar's purses" stuffed with pears and cheese. \$\$

Chéen-huyae
15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, 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? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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Restaurant Listings

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Chef Creole

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

Chipotle Mexican Grill

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

Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn tortillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). 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 cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing. For oysters Rockefeller/tuna-melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$\$-\$

Here Comes the Sun

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) 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. \$\$\$

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

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

Little Havana

12727 Biscayne Blvd.

305-899-9069

www.littlehavanarestaurant.com

In addition to white-tablecloth ambiance, 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 hand-written specials board on your way in. \$\$

Mama Jennie's

11720 NE 2nd Ave.

305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter

savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Mario the Baker

250 NE 25th St.

305-891-7641; www.mariothebakerpizza.com

At this North Miami institution (opened in 1969) food is Italian-American, not Italian-Italian: spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, and hot or cold subs. No imported buffalo, arugula, or other chichi stuff on the New York-style medium-thin-crust pizzas; the top topping here is the savory housemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smashed garlic. New branches are now open in Miami's Midtown neighborhood and in North Bay Village. \$

The Melting Pot

15700 Biscayne Blvd.

305-947-2228; www.meltingpot.com

For 1950s and 1960s college students, fondue pots were standard dorm accessories. These days, however, branches of this chain are generally the only places to go for this eating experience. Start with a wine-enriched four-cheese fondue; proceed to an entrée with meat or seafood, plus choice of cooking potion (herbed wine, bouillon, or oil); finish with fruits and cakes dipped in 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

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 and herb demiglace); a

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stone crab hot dog the chef invented for a Super Bowl party. The award-winning wine list inspires playfully themed pairing events. Prices are reasonable and parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Nuvo Kafe 13152 W. Dixie Hwy. 305-892-1441

The interior of this café is an oasis of cultivated Caribbean cool and subtly sophisticated global fare. Haitian-born, Montreal-schooled chef Ivan Dorval's 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 Thai/sushi spot, try the menu of specials, many of which clearly reflect the young chef's fanatical 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). The specials menu 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's plush décor and you'll be stepping back in time, circa 1957. The 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 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-crust Sicilian, topped with veggies and/or "meat buster" imitation meats), it's also offers a full range of breakfast/lunch/dinner vegetarian cuisine of all nations, with many dairy and seafood items too.

Admittedly the cutesie names of many items – baygels, berger-rbite, Cezarrrr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperrr – may cause queasiness. But the schmopperrr 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. \$\$\$

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: sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster

makis like 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. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are 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), carried 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

The 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 New Yorkers will 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. \$\$

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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 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. 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 chef Marc Ehrler, who says it's his favorite Miami eatery, while admitting the obvious: "Nobody knows it." \$-\$-\$-\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Bamboo Garden

1232 NE 163rd St.
305-945-1722

Big enough for a banquet (up to 300 guests), this veteran is many diners' favorite on the 163rd/167th Street "Chinatown" strip because of its superior décor. But the menu also offers well-prepared, authentic dishes like peppery black bean clams, sautéed mustard greens, and steamed whole fish with ginger and scallions, plus Chinese-American egg foo young. Default spicing is mild even in Szechuan dishes marked with red-chili icons, but don't worry; realizing some like it hot, the chefs will customize spiciness to heroic heat levels upon request. \$\$

Blue Marlin Fish House

2500 NE 163rd St.
305-957-8822

Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery is a rare surprise for nature lovers, especially since a young couple took over and upgraded the menu. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue began producing in 1938, available in three varieties: salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include weekend fish fries with live music. 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 (majority 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 Gouvella, 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 from which to choose. 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

Though diners at this upscale Peruvian eatery will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town, 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 after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami's Upper Eastside. \$

Hiro's Yakko-San

17040 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-947-0064

After sushi chefs close up their own restaurants for the night, many come here for a rare taste of Japanese home cooking, served in grazing portions. Try glistening-fresh strips of raw tuna can be had in maguro neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. 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 menu's mix-and-match option 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. \$-\$-\$-\$

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. 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 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: \$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. \$\$

Laurenzo's Market Café

16385 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-945-6381

www.laurenzomarket.com

It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style 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, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagiole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$-\$-\$

Lemon Fizz

16310 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-949-6599

www.lemon-fizz.com

Like wraps? Then you'll love this Middle Eastern café's version made with saj, a circular Syrian flatbread similar to pita but much thinner, moister, and all-around better. Upon order, diners can watch the chef custom-cook their saj (on a scorching-hot, flying-saucer metal dome of the same name), then roll the beautifully surface-blistered bread around one of 27 stuffings, including brined olives, falafel, steak, even dessert fillings like strawberries and Nutella. Also available: soups, salads, and substantial globally topped rice bowls, plus fresh fruit juices and smoothies. \$

Little Saigon

16752 N. Miami Ave.
305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad,

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flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$-\$\$

Mary Ann Bakery

1284 NE 163rd St., 305-945-0333

Don't be unduly alarmed by the American birthday cakes in the window. At this small Chinese bakery the real finds are the Chinatown-style baked buns and other savory pastries, filled with roast pork, bean sauce, and curried ground beef. Prices are under a buck, making them an exotic alternative to fast-food dollar meals. There's one table for eat-in snackers. \$

Matador Argentinean Steakhouse

3207 NE 163rd St., 305-944-6001

With Latin parilla places spreading here as fast as kudzu, it's hard to get excited about yet another all-you-can-eat meat spread. But Matador offers far more for the money than most. One dinner price (\$24.95, \$27.95 weekends) includes a salad bar of more than 30 items, unlimited grilled proteins (many cuts of beef, sausages, chicken, pork, assorted veggies, and even fish upon request), crunchy steak fries, a dessert (typically charged extra elsewhere), and even more fun, a bottle of quite quaffable wine per person. \$\$\$

Panya Thai

520 NE 167th St., 305-945-8566

Unlike authentic Chinese cuisine, there's no shortage of genuine Thai food in and around Miami. But Panya's chef/owner, a Bangkok native, offers numerous regional and/or rare dishes not found elsewhere. Plus he doesn't automatically curtail the heat or sweetness levels to please Americans. Among the most intriguing: moo khem phad wan (chewy deep-fried seasoned pork strips with fiery tamarind dip, accompanied by crisp green papaya salad); 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 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

Unlike other Asian markets on this strip between I-95 and Biscayne Boulevard, PK has a 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, 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 porn one of the Carnegie Deli's mile-high pastrami sandwiches? Well, Roasters will dwarf them. Consider the "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 perfectly sour pickles, 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

Sang's has 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/turkey 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 live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Isee & Tea House

237 NE 167th St.

305-654-4008; www.shingwangrestaurant.com

At this unique Taiwanese eatery, run by a trio of Taipei-trained female chefs, all seafood, poultry, and meats in the budget-priced entrées (\$6.95) are mock — imitations made from wheat gluten, tofu, and vegetables. But don't mock it till you try the quite beefy pepper steak, or smokin' duck, with slices that mimic the charcuterie item down to convincing faux fat. Other main dishes feature recognizable veggies or noodles. As for the rest of the name: icee 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, 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 is 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

The reincarnated Tuna's 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

Coal is 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 mere minutes, a pie with the classic thin, crisp-bottomed, beautifully char-bubbled crust that fans of the above legendary pizzerias crave. Expect neither bargain-chain prices, a huge selection of toppings, nor much else on the menu. 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 nearly 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 — 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 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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. But lobster-lovers will find that the 20th anniversary menus also offer new excitements like tandoori-spiced rock lobster, along with what might be the ultimate mac'n'cheese: lobster crab macaroni in a Fris vodka sauce with mushrooms, scallions, and parmesan. The famous dessert soufflé's flavor changes daily, but it always did. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Il Migliore

2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr.

305-792-2902

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 Mattono, marinated in herbs and cooked under a brick. And even low-carb dieters happily go to hell in a hand basket when faced with a mound of potatoes alla Toscana, herb-sprinkled French fries. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mahogany Grille

2190 NW 183rd St., 305-626-8100

Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves and an international clientele since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother transformed this place in 2007. Today it's white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The menu is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion of food 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd.

305-937-2777; www.pillarrestaurant.com

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Miliello. 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 proven. Floribbean-style seafood is the specialty: fresh hearts of palm slaw and Caribbean curry sauce, rock shrimp spring rolls with sweet soy glaze, yellowtail snapper with tomato-herb vinaigrette. Forget its strip-mall location. 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 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. 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. \$\$\$

Sushi Siam

19575 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

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