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Times

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www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 7, Issue 9



By Karen-Janine Cohen
Photos by Silvia Ros

On the last Friday in September, in the early evening, crowds of people flocked to the plaza of North Miami's Museum of Contemporary Art. Across 125th Street

from MOCA, Rucht D'Oleo — fashion designer, shop owner, and now merchant organizer — had a panoramic view of the plaza from her store, Rucht D'Oleo Designs. This was Jazz at MOCA night, the monthly event pairing free museum access with a jazz smorgasbord.

Listeners filled every chair as Mitch Frohman and the Bronx Horns blew Latin rhythms into the night. Children danced, dogs sniffed about, families picnicked, and some visitors eventually crossed the street to browse D'Oleo's fashions and the nearby galleries and

furniture stores that now dominate 125th Street between 7th and 8th avenues.

For D'Oleo, a petite, high-energy entrepreneur from the Dominican Republic, the sight of all those people

.....
Continued on page 14



Grand Opening!

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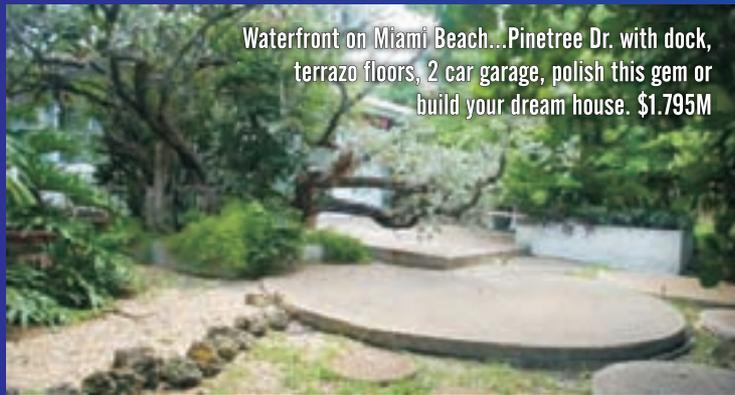
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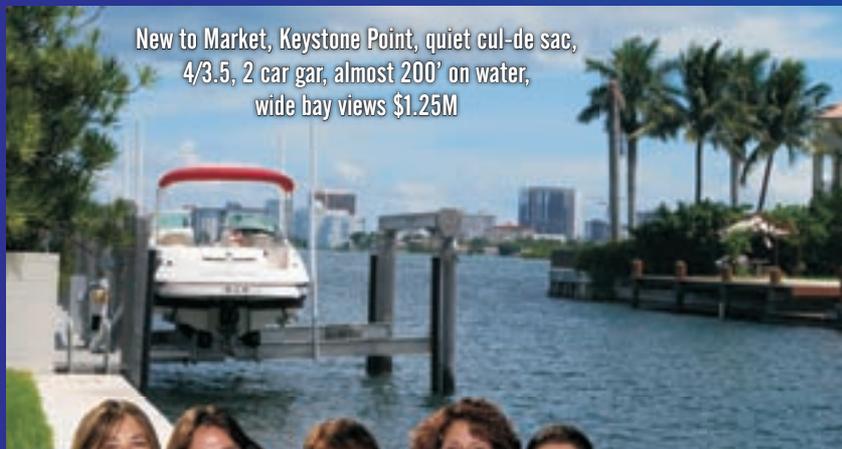
Sans Souci Estates one of a kind residence designed by renowned architect. Outdoor courtyard gardens, 5000+ sf, 5/4.5, great floor plan, pool, dock. \$1.299M



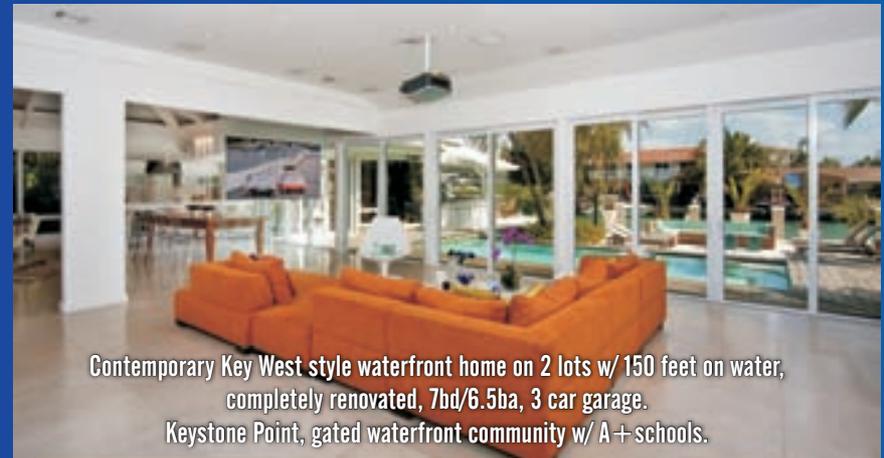
1950's Wide Bay Charmer in Bay Harbor Islands. A combo of unique architecture & wide water frontage make this home fantastic. 5900+ sf, 4bd+ ofc/3.5ba, 19688 sf lot. \$3.9M



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NOVEMBER

Adrienne Arsht Center
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

K KNIGHT CONCERT HALL **C** CARNIVAL STUDIO THEATER **Z** ZIFF BALLETT OPERA HOUSE **P** PEACOCK FOUNDATION STUDIO

SUNDAY

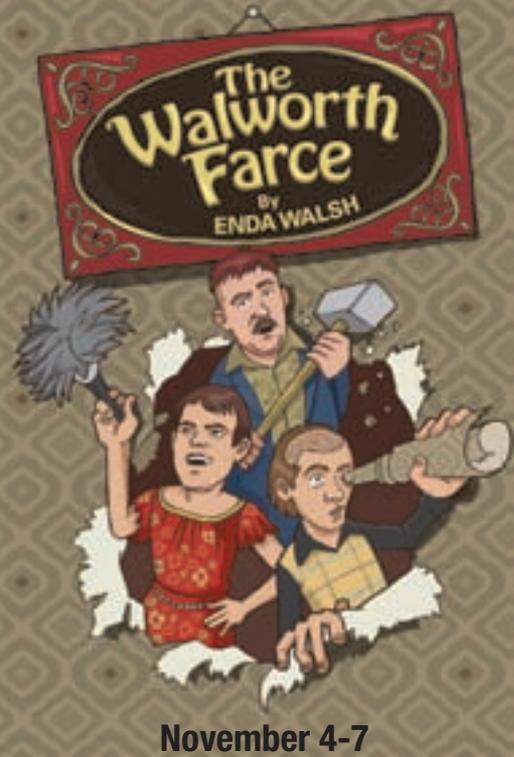
1 **The Color Purple**
2 & 7:30PM **Z**
"An inspirationally
entertaining experience!"
-Oakland Post

A Lincoln Town Hall:
Lincoln, Miami and
The American Dream
4PM **K**

JULIAN MARLEY & THE UPRISING
Special guests Stephen Marley & Damian "Jr Gong" Marley
November 22



MURDER WITH A SMILE – QUENTIN TARANTINO STYLE!



The Walworth Farce
By ENDA WALSH
November 4-7

WEDNESDAY

4 **The Walworth Farce**
8PM **C**

Outrageously funny
moments combine with
shocking violence in
this award winning
off-Broadway hit!

11 **Joan Rivers**
8PM **K**

"Can we talk?" The
sharp-tongued Emmy
Award-winning
comedian delivers the
laughs straight off her
"Celebrity Apprentice"
win and Comedy Central
Roast!

18 **Florida Grand Opera:**
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
8PM **Z**

Johnson & Wales University and Adrienne Arsht Center
Celebrity CHEF
Series
SEASON 2 LIVE ON STAGE!
Anthony Bourdain
hosts
Jacques Pepin and
Eric Ripert
NOVEMBER 13



THURSDAY

5 **The Walworth Farce**
8PM **C**

It's murder with a smile,
Quentin Tarantino style!

FRIDAY

6 **The Walworth Farce**
8PM **C**

"Ferociously Entertaining!"
-New York Times

Jazz Roots: The Blues
8PM **K**
Featuring Buddy Guy
and Dr. John and the
Lower 911. Without the
blues, there is no jazz!

13 **Celebrity Chef Series:**
Anthony Bourdain
hosts **Jacques Pépin**
& **Eric Ripert**
8PM **K**

Anthony Bourdain hosts
two celebrated master
chefs in a "Cook Off"!

20 **Florida Grand Opera:**
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
8PM **Z**

The Brazilian
Classical Series:
Amazon Inspirations-
A Tribute to
Villa-Lobos
8PM **K**

SATURDAY

7 **Paws on the Plaza**
10AM **P**

FREE Family Fest
11:30AM **P**
Performance by Miami
Music Project "Around
the World through
Music." at 2PM **K**

The Walworth Farce
2 & 8PM **C**

14 **Florida Grand Opera:**
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
7PM **Z**

Pagliacci, a clown's
vengeful act!
Suor Angelica,
a nun with a past!

21 **The Idan Raichel**
Project
8PM **K**

With their multicultural
blend of African beats,
Latin American
rhythms, and Middle
Eastern soul, The Idan
Raichel Project
instantly changed
Israel's popular music.

22 **Hot Peas 'n Butter**
11AM, 2PM & 5PM **C**

Florida Grand Opera:
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
2PM **Z**

Julian Marley featuring
Stephen and Damian
"Jr. Gong" Marley
8PM **K**

23 **FREE Arsht Center Tour**
12-1PM **Z**

24 **Florida Grand Opera:**
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
8PM **Z**

Two masterpieces of
Italian opera by
Leoncavallo and Puccini.

25

27

28 **Florida Grand Opera:**
Pagliacci &
Suor Angelica
8PM **Z**

Featuring projected
titles in English and
Spanish.

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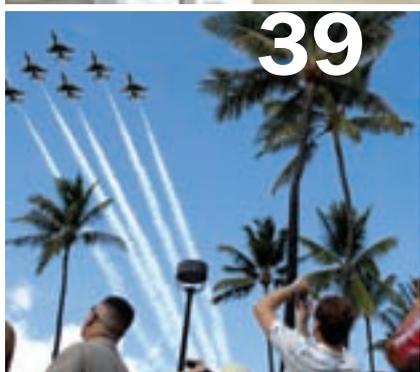
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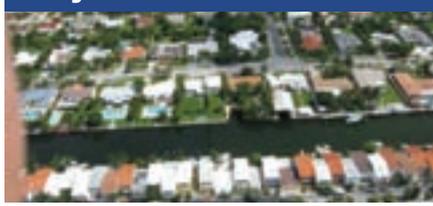
SANS SOUCI ESTATES NON WATER 2009 CONSTRUCTION



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4 BR/ 3.5 BA, POOL , 2-CAR GARAGE
The finest in upgrades thruout this gorgeous home; Center Island Gourmet gas kitchen, 30' Soaring High Cielings, Double fireplaces (Up & Down), The Most Incredible Walk-in Mstr Closet & Huge Hi-Tech Bath. "TO DIE FOR" \$899K, OR LEASE OPTION \$4000/MNTH.

Keystone Point Vacant Lot



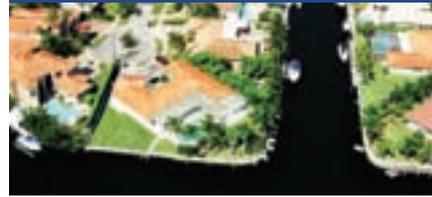
Oversized 80 X 150!! NonWaterfrnt Parcel Located in a 24 Hr GuardGated Comm at the end of a Desirable "Cul De Sac" Street!! Beautiful perimeter landscaping already in place. Come build your dream home or one for spec. 399K

"ESTATE SALE" Keystone Point Waterfront



**SOLD BY JEFF!
Call Jeff To Place Your Home Here**
3bd/2ba, Pool, 2-Car Garage, Remodeled, New Kitchen, New Hurricane Impact Windows and New 35KW Generator
TRY \$625K!!!

KEYSTONE POINT FORECLOSURE



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Remodel, or Tear Down and Rebuild... Only 859K!

Sans Souci NonWater "Divorce Sale"



4 Bdr 3 Bth 1 Car Garage NonWater 2700 Sq Ft Clean and Bright with New Barrel Tile Roof
This is a Divorce "Short Sale" \$449K

Sans Souci Waterfront "Estate Sale"



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Call Jeff To Place Your Home Here**
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Vacant Bay Front Build Your Dream Home Prestigious Sans Souci Estates



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3BDR 2BTH, POOL,
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Turnkey Waterfront Keystone Point



3Bdr 3Bth Pool All New 2006 W/Finest Upgrades, Custom Waterfall Entry, 24' Marble Floors, Oversized Wraparound Island Maple & Granite Kit, All Marble Baths, New Roof, 75' of Dockage W/2 Boat Davits. New Schools, \$799K

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wendy, We Love Your Misery

After reading Wendy Doscher-Smith's lament about winter's crippling effect on her libido ("Eros Interrupted," October 2009), I just had to write her this note:

Wendy, you cannot go back to Miami. How could you leave the Upper New York State triage of oddities and mysteries?

You will not find troll women with slippers big enough to hide a ferret, vegetable stands with a barn full of formally dressed mannequins, and the other assorted offbeat people and places that have made your life miserable while entertaining the daylights out of us.

Well, yeah, go. Be happy.

We will survive. But once in awhile we will think of you writing happy columns somewhere down South, about sipping rum drinks in the sunshine, how the light dapples the surface of your swimming pool, and about the latest mambo kings swirling you across some SoBe dance floor. And there will be bitterness.

Just go. No goodbyes.

But if you could give us just *one* more winter, just a few more stories of your fingers desperately scrabbling for purchase as you drag yourself along the frozen pathways, yearning for Cuban coffee but knowing that the only cup of joe in town is at the mini-mart at the Gas N Go.

Just one more winter, kid, and then we can go our separate ways in peace. Whadda ya say?

*Lynne Merrill
Los Angeles*

Wendy, We'd Love It If You'd Stop Complaining!

Wendy Doscher-Smith shouldn't be writing *anything*. Her story in September's issue, "The Grass Is Greener, the Mowers Are Louder," was one of the worst things I have ever read in my life! Then comes "Eros Interrupted"!

She should go out and get a life instead of complaining about everything around her. I bet she can't maintain a healthy relationship, because I can't imagine anyone who would put up with all the complaining.

*José Delgado
Miami*

This Dog Good, That Dog Bad, My Dog Gone

When Lisa Hartman says that pit bulls with a normal temperament are "highly affectionate with people, even strangers and children," I know what she means ("The Sweetness of Pit Bulls," September 2009).

This past January a stray dog wandered into my Miami Shores backyard. I initially thought he was a Great Dane/Lab mix. Then I was told by various experts that the dog was a pit bull. He had all of the great traits that the breed is known for: goofy lovability, loyalty, devotion, high energy, and the sweetest disposition in the world.

A neighbor obtained a dog from Miami-Dade Animal Services that could have been the twin of my dog, and they certified her as a Terrier/Lab mix. When I tried to get my dog certified as "nonconforming" by Animal Services, in order to receive rabies shots and a license, they said, "No, he conforms to pit bull standards." (Pit bulls are banned throughout the county.)

The officer admitted that by the *old* checklist, he would have been fine, but with the new checklist, his residency in Miami-Dade County was doomed. Why are they allowed to keep changing the standards?

As my dog romped, kissed, wiggled, and generally endeared himself to the crowd at Animal Services, I was crying like a baby. The officer apologized, as she said he was a great and wonderful dog, but ultimately her hands were tied by the law. I had to send him to a foster home run by pit bull saviors in Tampa.

My 90-year-old mother cried as well, saying she had never loved a dog the way she loved him. She is the daughter of a dog show expert, and as a teen had shown dogs at Madison Square Garden. She has known hundreds of dogs over the years.

We are still mourning the loss of Mr. Wiggles, the sweetest dog ever.

If anyone finds themselves in the same situation, contact Dahlia Canes via the Miami Coalition Against Breed-Specific Legislation as she may be able to help you. Visit www.mcabsl.wildapricot.org for more information.

The county's law is ridiculous. Owners make a dog bad, not the breed.

*Anya McCoy
Miami Shores*

Continued on page 31

A clown's vengeful act. A nun with a secret past.

A DOUBLE BILL OF LEONCAVALLO *&* PUCCINI
PAGLIACCI *&*
SUOR ANGELICA



Jay Hunter Morris is a "bold tenor with impressive power."
— *Opera News*



Soprano Kelly Kaduce is "one of the finest actresses one will find on an opera stage today."
— *New York Times*

November 14 - 28

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BizBuzz: November 2009

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Could there be any better way to start the holiday season than to do something wonderful for others while having a wonderful time yourself? On November 13 at 7:30 p.m., **Unity on the Bay's** first annual fundraising gala offers a semi-formal evening at the Doubletree Grand Hotel, featuring dinner, live musical entertainment by neo-soul singer/songwriter **Karen Iglesias** and the jazzy Starlight Trio, a silent auction, and the chance to benefit Community Partnership for the Homeless, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Miami, and a number of other worthy local groups. For tickets (only \$75) drop by Unity's book/gift shop at 411 NE 21st St. or call 305-573-9191, ext. 215; or e-mail gala

Speaking of spirituality, do guitar gods count? Thanks to the **Miami Parking Authority**, which manages downtown's Gusman Theater (174 E. Flagler St.; 305-374-2444), you'll have a chance to worship blues/rock hero **Joe Bonamassa** on November 7 at a show supporting his top *Billboard* album *The Ballad of John Henry*. Bonamassa, who was *Guitar Player* magazine's 2007 blues player of the year, started his awe-inspiring career as a 12-year-old prodigy opening for B.B. King. Tickets are \$37 and \$47, available from Ticketmaster.

To spruce up for this season's special events and parties, hit **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St.; 305-772-8426). Which is actually sort of one-stop shopping for those seeking beautiful/beautifying holiday presents. This month, proprietor Hannah Lasky is offering **gift certificates for 20% off**. Mention *Biscayne Times* and the offer is good till January 2010.

For further fashion-savvy augmentation, **New York jewelry designer Alanna Bess** will be showing and selling her new collection at **Midtown Consignment** (2328 N. Miami Ave.; 305-573-5307) during this month's Wynwood Gallery Walk on November 14, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. "At her September Gallery Walk show at the store, she completely sold out all her pieces," reports manager Lauren Turchin.



Anise Taverna



Joe Bonamassa



Alanna Bess

Crave more Xtreme enhancement? Welcome to new advertiser **Hellbound City Tattoo** (254 NW 36th

St.; 305-573-1602), whose skin artists will decorate your bod with traditional, Oriental, and tribal designs, or any other idea you have. They also touch up (or cover up) your inferior tattoos from lesser joints. **Bring in their ad for 10% off**. Come on, you know you want a tat. And your kids *really* want one.

You'll want your home looking good, too, so head on over to **Beau Living** (8101 Biscayne Blvd., suite 102; 305-751-1511), where **a new collection of contemporary furniture has arrived** just in time for high-season entertainment. And to complement the unique dining sets, sofas, and lighting ("items no other showroom in Miami has," promises design coordinator Pamela Coronel), a new collection of wall art is scheduled to arrive next week.

Don't have a home to spruce up, yet? New advertiser **Sandra Edelman**, a broker associate at Turnberry International Realty (305-785-6055; sandy@turnberryrealty.com) can help find clients the perfect home or second home. Edelman is also a certified REO specialist (lender-owned property taken by foreclosure or a deed in lieu of same) and, in her off-work hours, is a baker. Hmmm. **Does this mean homemade cookies at the closing?**

To forestall foreclosures, attorney **Jake Miller** will be conducting another **free seminar on loan-modification solutions** on Wednesday, November 4,



Yogen Früz



Unity on the Bay



Doggie Bag Café



Miss Jane's Music Studio

For human holiday parties, **Miss Jane's Music Studio** (155 NE 96th St., Miami Shores) has a unique addition:

Santa's Singers. Though the studio specializes in childhood music education (newborn to senior high), the singers are an adult group, offering traditional carols and popular holiday tunes to liven up your office party or other functions. For rates/availability: 305-757-6500 or singers@missjanesmusic.com.

Meanwhile, here's a gift for you, courtesy of new advertiser **Anise Taverna** (620 NE 78th St.; 305-758-2929). To honor the festive riverfront Greek/Mediterranean restaurant's first anniversary, owners Liza and Gennaro "Gigi" Meoli offer *Biscayne Times* readers a **\$20 gift certificate this month**. The Meolis are also celebrating a new addition to the dining area (which longtime fans think of as the third and best incarnation of the proprietors' former hotspot Ouzo's): Meoli's Food & Wine Bar, where Monday-Thursday happy hour (6:00-7:00 p.m.) features complimentary hors d'oeuvres. And don't forget the monthly outdoor lamb roast, on November 28.

Personally, with all the new eateries that have recently opened along the Biscayne Corridor, including **Yogen Früz** (100 S. Biscayne Blvd.; 305-371-5117, www.yogenfruz.com), we're finding fewer and fewer reasons to travel elsewhere. But those trekking to South Miami will be relieved to hear, according to Alex Leonard (a.k.a. "Frozen Guy"), that the froyo chain will be opening its second location there this month. He promises to announce two more new locations in December's issue — for those planning expeditions outside our increasingly cool neighborhood. Are you? Nah....

Something special coming up at your business? Send info to bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com. For BT advertisers only.

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shopping
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cocktails



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[7-10 PM]



Mujeres 06
Mila Vidallach. 32.28" x 57.48", Oil on Canvas.
Courtesy of Art Chamarel Miami

ART CHAMAREL MIAMI /
Buick Building_3841 N.E. 2nd Avenue_Suite 103

RICKEE MAHONEY / Opening Reception of "Finn & Piper"
Buena Vista Building_180 N.E. 39th Street_Suite 120

ADAMAR FINE ARTS /
4141 N.E. 2nd Avenue_Suite 107

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Sailing With Sarnoff

A sunny day, a city commissioner, a story deadline

By Jack King
BT Contributor

A couple of years ago I was stuck in Minneapolis. Maybe “stuck” isn’t the right word. I was actually staying with a friend whose father had just died and she asked me to hang around and watch the house. It was a beautiful summer in the northern Midwest and I was relegated to jogging in the park every morning and then heading out to Lake Minnetonka to sail all day.

It wasn’t long before BT publisher and editor Jim Mullin called and wanted to know about my column. I advised him that I was out of town, which meant nothing to him. He was promised a column and he wanted a column.

I couldn’t see him taking something on my summer sailing exploits, a revival of the elementary school “what I did on my summer vacation” paper. “How about I do an interview with newly elected Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff?” Sounded good to me, but at that moment anything would have sounded good to me.

“Great,” Mullin said. “Have it to me by tomorrow afternoon.” (Mullin may be an old-time editor with an amazing ability to look way ahead, but he has none of the endearing old-editor traits — swearing like a sailor, smoking like a chimney, drinking like an unemployed Irishman.)

Fortunately Sarnoff was around and was answering his phone. He’d not been in office very long and was still finding his way. Sarnoff is a very smart guy, but the attorney in him was having difficulty trying to figure out why issues that were

crystal clear to him were confusing to his colleagues on the commission dais. He spent a lot of time on the short end of 4-1 votes.

I stayed away from those issues, primarily because there would be no clear answers. Instead we went for his vision for the city. It worked out very well — so well I thought it was time to do it again.

To say that Sarnoff has changed in the meantime would be an understatement. He still loses battles, but he’s getting closer to winning the wars. He’s aligned himself with mayoral candidate Tomas Regalado, who was leading as this was being written, and with some commission candidates who were also

Sarnoff could end up with at least two new allies — and three votes is all it takes to run the City of Miami. If that happens, it’ll be time for a third interview.

ahead at this writing. It’s possible Sarnoff could end up with at least two new allies — and three votes is all it takes to run the City of Miami. If that happens, it’ll be time for a third interview. For now I wanted to know — briefly — what the heck has happened to city finances.

JK: Let’s start with the budget shortfall. What is it and what can we do about it?

MS: For 2010 it is \$118.5 million. The total value of the police giveback is \$9 million. Fire is giving back \$10 million. Unclassified employees are giving back quite a bit in pay reductions and

cell-phone allowances. We’re selling cars and other surplus items. We have bond money of \$15 million to upgrade the computer system and that is being put off and the money is going to the general revenue fund.

\$118.5 million is more than 20 percent of the total budget. That’s a lot of cell phones and cars.

In the City of Miami, 80 percent of the budget is employee costs, and we have reduced both workforce and salaries considerably.

Okay, let’s say this works for 2010. What about the budget for 2011? It looks like many of these cuts are temporary and won’t be there in 2011.

That’s a much bigger problem. My guess is that we’ll have the ad valorem [property] tax revenue drop along with other revenues. I’m guessing that budget will be about \$480 million — ten percent less than 2010. The biggest problem will be fire and police, and the pension fund. The pension fund is the big problem because the payment could be between \$101 million and \$151 million, depending on what the stock market does. Let’s say we have the worst case scenario, where we have to pay \$151 million out of \$470 million in revenues to the pension plan. That doesn’t leave us much to operate with. [Note: That’s down from \$520 million in 2009.]

That’s going to be quite a reduction in personnel. Will there be any disruption of services?

There will be some disruption of services, but you don’t want disruption

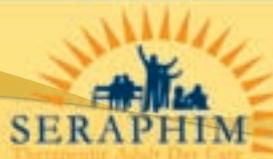
of police and fire-rescue. And you don’t want a significant disruption in public works. The next place that will have a significant resource problem will be the parks.

In my discussions with other commissioners, I get the feeling that city manager Pete Hernandez was just lying to everybody about budget issues. Do you feel that way?

It’s true that we have gone into the reserves three of the last four years. I think there is a way of spinning things. No doubt we were deficit-spending, but it didn’t seem that way when the budgets were presented. We found out about it at the mid-year reports. This year we will have overspent the budget in the neighborhood of \$17 million to \$21 million. The spin games have been played in many areas, including the Marlins stadium. This has all shown me that this administration was not well equipped to handle this type of economic meltdown. A lot of the bureaucrats here have no understanding what the guy in the street in going through. There is a huge disconnect.

Speaking of the Marlins, are we going to be able to pay for the stadium?

The parking garage has already gone from \$94 million to \$118 million. The Marlins are supposed to pay us \$10.14 per parking space per game, but the rate on the bonds will determine whether this is enough. The last bonds sold for the stadium were at a rate of 8.1 percent, but they’d been capped by the county at 7.75 percent. [The county manager] had to get the commissioners to go to the higher rate.



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What are you doing to save the planet?

Compiled by Cathi Marro – BT Contributor



Randy Blakely
Stylist
Sans Souci

I'm becoming more conscientious for environmental and financial reasons. When it comes to natural resources, I try not to be piggish or wasteful. I've even installed a tankless water heater at home. I'm more careful about how much lighting is going on and I'm switching to energy-saving light bulbs. I keep my car in better running order so it doesn't effect the environment in a negative way — and I don't frivolously drive around.



George Cvejanovich
University Professor
Miami Shores

Even though research is showing that climate change might be a natural rather than manmade phenomenon, I believe we should all be stewards of the earth. I recycle, drive less, keep the A/C low, and am switching to CFL bulbs. Because we believe in zero population growth, my wife and I have raised only two responsible children. Also in my profession, I teach about political and social issues so that we have a better-informed next generation with a reduced carbon footprint.



Patricia Castillo
Designer
Design District

Personally, I recycle, I try not to waste water, and I use CFL light bulbs. I have been ecologically minded since high school. We all need to take care of each other, and this is a nice way to do that. If I see others wasting water or leaving lights on, I give them a little nudge. I want to see Miami be more like San Francisco, where they have recycling bins everywhere. In California their consciousness is geared toward the ecology.



Scott Baumann
Showroom Manager
North Miami Beach

Any old fabrics or samples from the showroom are donated to [the students at] MIU or DASH. When no one is here in the showroom, I turn down the lights to conserve energy. Also I reuse computer paper by writing on the other side. With this economy, things are kind of slow, so we try to conserve energy and save money by keeping the air conditioning a little warmer. We're looking into possibly using solar or wind power in the future.



Zachary Beer
Teacher
North Miami

I'm a liberal Democrat who has an ecological conscience. As a public-school teacher, any time I don't have to make a photocopy, I don't. I use my Promethean board in the classroom. It only takes the students a few minutes to copy down the information and it saves 180 sheets of paper each time! Also I drive a lot and with the cost of gas and the impact on the environment, I've decided that my next car will be a Prius hybrid.



Kenneth Mills
Sales/Design
Miami

I plan and schedule where I need to drive and make several stops on the way so that I don't have to keep going back and forth. It's also better for my mental health to not be out on the road so much. I'm not buying so many cleaning products either. One product can do many things. And all the fumes from some of those products make me wonder if I'll have cancer some day. Americans have become product whores!

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Clothing designer Rucht D'Oleo has been the driving force behind a new business group.

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was a sign that things were going in the right direction. It was, she noted with satisfaction, a far more robust scene than the Friday six months earlier when she and Maria Cecilia Vega, owner of the Flower Boutique, watched a much smaller crowd and wondered if, by banding together, they and other merchants might trampoline off the MOCA event, create more customers for themselves, and in general raise the area's profile.

That was the genesis of the NoMi Art and Business Association. By October it had had two meetings and a brand-new logo — which the city agreed to print as a banner and hang along the street. Most members agreed to stay open on MOCA's jazz nights. It seemed to be paying off.

"I was very excited and happy," D'Oleo says of the September evening, noting that store traffic was up about 30 percent. "You see, we just need to put in a little more effort, and we're going to get a better neighborhood for everyone."

Just under the radar, a few art galleries, high-end antique stores, and other sophisticated businesses quietly have begun moving in along 125th Street.

Her group plans a brochure, possibly with a map, and it has a Facebook page. They'd like to attract more galleries, boutiques, and restaurants while encouraging a pedestrian-friendly environment. At the very least, the association wants to awaken South Florida to the recent changes on 125th Street.

Susan Cutler, an association activist and owner of Gallery Vermillion, specializing in American and European Modernist furniture, lighting, and accessories, moved to her 125th Street storefront five years ago. The draw: MOCA. "I looked at many other areas," she says, "but I

wanted to be here because it was across from a cultural institution."

While Cutler doesn't rely on walk-ins for business, more browsers and amenities could only help. "We're trying to create a synergy," she explains. "We need a fabulous restaurant on the street. My clientele is not going anywhere, but this needs to be brought up to a higher level."

Today there is a groundswell of optimism about 125th Street, a sharp turnaround in attitude following the July 2008 announcement that Starbucks would be shuttering its open-air coffee shop on MOCA's plaza (despite assiduous lobbying by city officials), and the fact that Dogma Grill, the hip hot-dog joint, lasted just a short time at its 125th Street location. It seemed like the commercial strip was falling back into a slumber of tax offices, cell phone stores, and marginal businesses that would wink in and out among chronically empty storefronts.

Yet just under the radar, a few art galleries, high-end antique stores, and other sophisticated businesses quietly began moving in. *ArtNexus*, the respected international art magazine, bought the old hardware store building at 125th Street and 8th Avenue. Editorial offices fill the second floor, while the storefront is leased to Stripe, another gallery

Continued on page 15



North side of 125: The storefront spaces were too small for some art galleries but just right for other merchants.

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of Modernist furnishings. Gustavo Olivieri Antiques, also a purveyor of 20th Century decorative arts and design, opened across the street. In October 2008, Amy Alonso, owner of Fache Arts & Amy Alonso Gallery and designer of the NoMi Art and Business Association logo, moved from Wynwood to a prime spot on the MOCA plaza.

The nascent renaissance, however, has been struggling to gain traction during the worst economic downturn in generations, and it's unclear whether the city, MOCA (owned and operated by the city), and the merchants themselves can muster the commitment and resources necessary to maintain the momentum. Financial challenges abound, most notably the collapse of Biscayne Landing, the monumental development project at Biscayne Boulevard and 154th Street. Ambitiously designed as a city within the city (see the *BT*'s "Suspended Habitation," October 2009), Biscayne Landing was supposed to become North Miami's economic engine. It has run out of gas.

With tax revenues down, city officials, who serve one of the most diverse populations in Miami-Dade County, find themselves squeezed between the future of 125th Street and other pressing needs. For example, they must find a way to fund a long-planned MOCA expansion, which supporters believe would do more than anything else to boost the area, while also providing services that some say more

directly benefit the city's neediest citizens. Moreover, a recent study by the Urban Land Institute warned that MOCA's expansion, while necessary, may not, on its own, be enough to attract the 20 or more galleries and antique stores needed to cement the area as a destination.

This is not the first time 125th Street has shown promise. The first blossoming can be pegged to the 1926 opening of the Pueblo Feliz, says local historian Seth Bramson, who has written a number of

film center didn't pan out either, though Greenwich Studios, founded by legendary producer Ivan Tors, is still a busy facility. And earlier this decade, a cluster of art galleries weren't able to gel into a district.

"What happened is that [the area] simply did not achieve the expectations people had at the time," notes Bramson, who allows that today could be different. "There seems to be a renaissance going on. Very nice antique shops are moving in." A cultural beacon like MOCA, he believes, will be crucial. "That is your key in any developing area — that's what is going to help bring North Miami to the point it should have been in the past."

Scott Galvin, a veteran North Miami City Councilman, argues that today's growth is different for another reason: Stores and galleries are coming to the area on their own, not in response to government incentives. "It



Ernie's Photo Shop captured this 1954 view of 125th Street looking west.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida



Maria Cecilia Vega helped create the business group, even though her flower shop is near Biscayne Boulevard.

Photo courtesy of MOCA



The monthly Jazz at MOCA nights have been a boon to nearby shops and restaurants.

books about the area including *Boulevard of Dreams: A Pictorial History of El Portal, Biscayne Park, Miami Shores, and North Miami* (The History Press, 2007). "It was a fabulous entertainment center with a Spanish theme," says Bramson, adding that it was a victim of the 1926 hurricane. "People early on had faith in northeast Dade County."

One high point came in the 1950s, when many of today's 125th Street structures were built. But the opening of the 163rd Street Mall in 1956 siphoned off much of the strip's clientele. Expectations that North Miami would become a

is driven by them," he says. "That's why it's going to succeed. Obviously, I've seen other encouraging moments that didn't last."

And the ducks do seem to be queuing in a row. Rents remain substantially lower than in other commercial areas — in the range of \$12 per square foot compared to \$45 per square foot in the Design District and a whopping \$150 per square foot in South Beach. Also the city earlier this year passed a rezoning plan allowing for increased height and density

Continued on page 16

in some areas of the downtown corridor, which could make it much more attractive to developers.

Perhaps the most promising development is this: North Miami seems to have moved beyond an era characterized by an east-west divide that bore unattractive overtones of racial and class conflict, with the more affluent Sans Souci and Keystone Point residents vying with poorer Haitian Americans for control of city hall.

North Miami is arguably the most diverse municipality in the most diverse county in the United States. Haitian Americans and African Americans make up half the population of some 60,000, with the other half composed of roughly equal parts Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites. Friction arising from this diversity peaked during the tenure of Joe Celestin, the nation's first Haitian-American mayor, who was elected in 2001. The city's council chambers became a stage for unprecedented civic melodrama and upheaval. To call it disruptive would be an understatement. "The divide absolutely existed six or eight years ago under an administration that was much more bombastic," says Galvin. "It was a *very* unsettled time at city hall."

In 2005 Kevin Burns became mayor and ushered in an era of growth and pragmatism, a legacy residents hope will now be carried on by newly elected Mayor Andre Pierre, a well-respected Haitian-American attorney. He symbolically bridges any perceived divide as he lives in Sans Souci while maintaining close ties with the Haitian-American community. Says Galvin: "Mayor Pierre will play a huge role in making that [divide] disappear."

No doubt Pierre is going to need every ounce of his reservoir of good will as he and the city council grapple with an array of seemingly intractable financial problems. First among them is the city's commitment to expand MOCA. The project, estimated to cost \$18 million, would nearly double the museum's size by adding 24,000 square feet.

Pierre recognizes MOCA's importance to the city's overall economic health, and the 125th Street corridor in particular. "As you know, the City of North Miami has been struggling to establish a downtown presence," he says. "MOCA is the grand marquee, the destination for our downtown. MOCA has been a dream for us to achieve."

At the moment, however, its expansion costs and the city's reduced revenues are looking more like a nightmare. Already the city plans to divert about \$2.8 million from its Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to the general fund in hopes of retaining workers and popular programs. The CRA, meanwhile, is suffering directly from the failure of Biscayne Landing, which was supposed to funnel millions to the agency for affordable housing and other revitalization efforts.

The CRA has al-



Mayor Andre Pierre is facing some very difficult financial decisions.



MOCA director Bonnie Clearwater: "What wasn't here in the past was a critical mass. We can now define a district."

ready earmarked \$1.7 million for museum expansion, and Credit Suisse, which foreclosed on Biscayne Landing's developers, says it intends to honor earlier commitments to give the museum \$8 million over eight years. The city council (sitting as the CRA board) this month is expected to debate a \$28 million bond issue, some portion of which could be directed to

MOCA. A design and construction contract is now being reviewed by architects Gwathmey Siegel & Associates, original designers of the museum.

Mayor Pierre, however, expresses misgivings about moving ahead with such an expensive undertaking before all the funding is either in hand or, at the very least, identified. "That's where [museum director] Bonnie Clearwater and I differ," Pierre says. Before we go out to engineering and architects I want to know where the money is coming from."

Still, he says, he and Clearwater are working closely together to procure funding, though public support for the effort is not a sure thing. "I just got an e-mail from a constituent who is against this bond," Pierre relates, "and is not in favor of putting much money in MOCA."

How a highbrow enterprise like the Museum of Contemporary Art came to exist in North Miami, always a decidedly middle-brow town, is a tale in itself. But suffice to say that Clearwater, the museum's vivacious and visionary director since its opening in 1996, has carefully shepherded MOCA to its current enviable position as a universally respected showcase for

contemporary art from around the globe.

Through it all, she has never lost sight of the fact that the museum is a public asset. As she puts it: "The community grows from here." In addition to placing a high value on numerous programs for North Miami residents young and old, Clearwater sees the expansion project as vital to the city's commercial growth. "The new building will triple exhibition space," she says. "Every night people will be looking for restaurants and cafés." As they do, they'll also discover the growing presence of art and design businesses, which is creating an identity. "What wasn't here in the past was a critical mass," Clearwater adds. "We can now define a district."

A huge boost to that emerging identity was the arrival of *ArtNexus*. Founder, editor, and publisher Celia Sredni de Birbragher says it was her daughter Francine, long associated with MOCA, who encouraged

her to buy the building. "Why not buy near the museum?" she says. "I know the city is determined to boost this area. It has all the potential to become important, and the association can really help make that happen."

North Miami seems to have moved beyond an era characterized by an east-west divide that bore unattractive overtones of racial and class conflict.

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Continued from page 16

Genaro Ambrosino knows all about potential. His celebrated art gallery across the street from MOCA was in the vanguard

“The new building will triple exhibition space,” says MOCA director Bonnie Clearwater. “Every night people will be looking for restaurants and cafés.”

gallery to pursue other interests.

He says the city, while supportive in spirit, didn't take the decisive moves and spend the money that would have helped the area bloom. Ambrosino's list of missed opportunities includes a protected crosswalk

of 125th Street's last revival.

In 2003 he purchased the building where Gallery Vermillion, D'Oleo Designs, and others are located. For three years he tried to make a go of it in North Miami, but in 2006 packed up and moved to Wynwood. He's since closed that



Gallery owner Amy Alonso moved into a prime spot next to the MOCA plaza.

linking the MOCA plaza with the north side of 125th Street, lower speed limits, a landscaped median, and shade trees. But there were other problems outside the city's control. For example, many gallery owners needed bigger spaces than those provided by the storefronts along the commercial strip.

Also some landlords were not inclined to hold out for just the right tenants. Ambrosino says he would leave

his storefronts vacant rather than rent to what he considered an incompatible business. “One was empty for 11 months,” he recalls. “But how do you convince someone who depends on that income to hold onto an empty space for months?”

Finally Susan Cutler of Gallery Vermillion came along: “Susan, by having a high-quality store with a really nice look and high-quality stuff, helped turn the area

into what it is now — a modern-antiques destination.”

Ambrosino thinks long-term, and he believes that North Miami's leaders, if they want the 125th Street revival to succeed, must also think long-term. “Good plans,” he says, “look years ahead. You have to create a big plan and then follow that plan.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

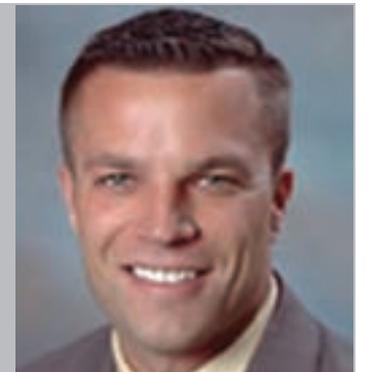


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Florida Avocados: Show Some Respect!

We have 60 varieties here, at least one of which you'll love

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

The large green avocado flew past my windshield just as I turned south onto 10th Avenue from NE 96th Street. The suddenness of the verdant orb spinning through my peripheral fields caused me to slam on my brakes for a second — and it was at that moment that I also registered the presence of two young boys, laughing and launching the heavy fruits at each other over the hoods of moving vehicles.

Luckily, my daughter, son, and I weren't rear-ended by the car behind us, and we didn't smash into the one in front; both must have also braked in response to the unexpected missiles. Unfortunately for the boys, and to the profound embarrassment of my daughter, I wasn't going to let their behavior slide just because we were all safe. I lectured them in my sternest teacher voice about what criminal acts they might be held



responsible for were they to cause an accident, with or without injury, during their avocado toss.

I know two people this season alone whose windshields have been cracked by falling avocados (a good reason not to park under a laden tree). The fruit, which can grow up to five pounds and be bigger than your head, certainly don't need any extra propulsion to cause some serious demolition.

In truth, though, I was less upset about potential damage these kids could have caused than I was about the disrespect they were showing — to the avocados, that is. As hard as they are, our avos also bruise easily, both externally when dropped and internally from their rattling pits, and then they mold or rot instead of ripening. And let's face it, the Florida avo has enough problems,

beginning with image. The local fruit, some 60 thin-skinned varieties that are still listed in a few culinary texts as "alligator pears," have been slow to gain not only acceptance but their deserved esteem in the marketplace. Our avos, whose exteriors come in an array of colors ranging from bright green to dull red to glossy black, are dismissed as soggy in texture (the term should really be juicy, as these are *fruit*, after all) and dilute in flavor.

Even plenty of South Florida home cooks, constantly presented with a sad lack of choice in our own Publix backyard, believe the petite Hass avo, a creamy descendant of Mexican species, is superior to the ones grown here, whose origins are the West Indies and Guatemala. Given the national dominance of the Hass, it might be astonishing to realize that Florida was actually the first U.S. state to grow an avocado tree.

Continued on page 19

LUXURY FASHION FOR KIDS

Exclusive Boutiques To Unite Under One Roof

Coming soon to South Florida: Luxurious and elegant fashion for babies, children, and teenagers. An ambitious new development project will bring together an exclusive group of sophisticated clothing boutiques for young people, all conveniently located at a Biscayne Corridor shopping plaza in the heart of Miami. The boutiques will be minutes from Miami Beach, downtown Miami, and Aventura.

Following a European trend led by Prada and Gucci, the new boutiques will strive to impart an improved sense of fashion among youngsters.

The new Biscayne Corridor boutiques will introduce upscale European fashion that includes the best-known Italian brands in the industry. Several famous manufacturers and fashion designers currently providing women's apparel will be among those introducing their kids product line in the retail plaza. Pricing will reflect the high

quality of such designer creations.

Currently there are more than 200 children's clothing stores in Miami, but fewer than a dozen specialize in truly stylish apparel. This upcoming collection of boutiques will instantly eclipse all other retailers. In fact, nothing like this exists anywhere in the United States. It will be unique. The stores themselves will be designed with an eye toward elegance and an opportunity to relax and browse through inviting displays.

Because of the unique inventory that will be offered, this project is expected to attract local families who want to provide their sons and daughters with a chance to experience haute couture at a young age. It will also appeal to consumers and tourists from North and South America alike.

Check the December issue of *Biscayne Times* for an announcement regarding the participating designers and boutiques, as well as a date for the grand opening.



NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI SHORES

Avocados

Continued from page 18

That planting took place in 1833. California caught on more than two decades later, recording its first planting in 1856. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, “about 60,000 Floridians have at least one avocado tree growing in their yards. Florida’s avocado industry brings in about \$30 million annually.” That is second only to California. And it is a *lot* of fruit: Florida avos, which have early-, mid-, and late-blooming seasons just like mangos, are available seasonally from July to March.

Yet when you do find West Indian and Guatemalan avos, both here and in countrywide supermarkets, they’re frequently stickered with the brand name “SlimCado,” which also says “Lite” on it. This ploy works because, with an average 80 percent water content, Florida avos pack fewer calories than the denser Mexican varieties — and there’s no better way to sell a product to an American than to tout it as a diet food.

Despite public perceptions that they are fattening, avocados are undeniably

good for you. Nutrient-dense, they contain more potassium than bananas and are one of the few plentiful fruit sources of folic acid. They’re high in fiber and contain a cholesterol-fighting substance called beta-sitosterol. Florida avos provide all this plus vitamins B6, C, and E — for half the fat of a Hass.

Most of us only eat avos as guacamole, the consistency of which calls for a velvety Mexican variety like the Hass. But because our avos hold their form and don’t collapse into purée as quickly as the Hass, these more firmly fleshed varieties are better suited to marinated salads with tomatoes, hearts of palm, and onions; dishes like soups, crêpes, pastas, and omelets (yes, you can cook avos, but only lightly or they will turn bitter); and chunky muffins and quick breads where you want more moisture and less pronounced flavor.

Denisse and Peter Schnebly, owners of Schnebly Redland’s Winery, also believe in guacamole — so much so that they recently sponsored the “Holy Moly Redlands Guacamole” event in order to break the world record for the largest serving of the stuff, which was

previously set at 4011 pounds, 12 ounces, back in 2007 by the Mexican Avocado Industry in California. Drawing on four high schools from the South Dade area, along with various mentors such as super chefs Allen Susser and Michael Schwartz, the event’s mission statement was as multi-pronged as a fork, and included raising money for the schools’ culinary-arts programs as well as creating new and interesting recipes for avos.

But mostly the attempt — pictured here and which succeeded with 4114 pounds of edible guacamole made from 12,000 pounds of Loretta and Beta varieties (that’s approximately 5000 to 6000 avos!) — was to raise awareness, Denisse Schnebly says, of the local growers’ needs.

What exactly are those needs? At the moment, the most important one to address is survival. The Florida Green Skin Avocado industry is experiencing a lethal threat: Laurel Wilt. This deadly disease was brought south by the Redbay Ambrosia beetle in stacks of firewood. Local communities, especially those like Miami Shores, where backyard avo trees are very prevalent, must be

educated about the signs and symptoms, or we are likely to face another citrus-canker affair. If we don’t want to lose healthy 80-year-old trees to Laurel Wilt paranoia, we need to know what sick trees look like and treat or destroy them ourselves as soon as possible.

To spot Laurel Wilt, look for discoloration of the leaves, particularly near the crown, and wilting or drooping foliage. (Google “Laurel Wilt Disease” for helpful Websites.) To avoid accidentally transporting the beetle, which makes its home in the bark even after destruction, don’t use anything but locally cut firewood, and don’t bring firewood from your home to a state park or other campsite. Always purchase your firewood near where you are planning to burn it.

That way you won’t just be showing Florida avocados some much-needed respect, you’ll be saving them too. If that means future mischief-makers will have plenty of ammunition for avocado wars, so be it. I can multi-task. In addition to cooking with avos, I’ve recently become pretty good at scolding kids.

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The Return of Autumn's Nocturne

Let's see, what's there to be thankful for — definitely not November up north

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

Ah, November. Great! In truth, November never won any “Best of” awards in my book. Unlike most Americans, I am not consumed with edible consumption. Quite the contrary. Staring down a plateful of any food, let alone an overflowing table full of the stuff, is a daunting, even frightening experience. Thus cramming my gaping maw until I want to puke up turkey, potatoes, beans, marshmallowed yams, cranberry purée, and pumpkin pie never held appeal.

As a child growing up in Miami, Thanksgiving consisted of the dreaded “child of divorce” shuffle from one side of my family to the other, a version of the usual custodial battles with some festive spirit sprinkled on top. The fights over which relatives spent the most time with me just added to the jovial Thanksgiving moment. I



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

suppose if I could have split myself in two, familial get-togethers might have flowed better. Alas, I don't splinter.

As I grew older, I got smart and tried to spend holidays with friends. Everyone else's dysfunctional relatives seemed much more palatable. Given all this, it's odd that the first Thanksgiving I truly

enjoyed was actually a brunch, and a ridiculously over-the-top one at that. Hell, it only took 30 years' worth of staring grimly at stuffed carcasses and candied root vegetables to achieve it.

The brunch, held at a luxury Coconut Grove hotel, consisted of more than the standard fare. I can still see the spread.

Oversized stone crab claws perched daintily on ice, neighboring a full raw bar, cheeses from every country worthy of producing quality hardened dairy products. There were “carving” stations, of course. But it wasn't just turkey and roast beef, along with all the gourmet trimmings, that impressed. The brunch, set up in the sunny courtyard, had additional stations, the most important of which were dessert stations, ranging from every type of chocolate creamy fluff to tangy key lime tartlets. No pumpkin pie in sight. Instead we had some sort of spiced pumpkin soufflé.

And for once no Thanksgiving drama ensued. Well, unless you count the fact that my husband, Jeremy, stuffed himself so full he had to walk around the property to distract himself from the seemingly probable hurl. The lack of familial fuss, so often associated with the holidays (there's a reason the end

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BISCAYNE PARK

Nocturne

Continued from page 20

of the year boasts the highest suicide rate) stands out as the best part of that Thanksgiving. Beyond the absurdly lavish spread, the lack of people awkwardly forced in front of my face across a table added to my enjoyment.

After we ate, my father and Jeremy and I (just the three of us at this meal) walked over to the docks at Monty's on S. Bayshore Drive. The sun felt good on my bare arms (unlike most other places in the country, including my current home, the MFT, or Merciless Frozen Tundra of Binghamton, New York, you can bare your arms without frostbite warnings in Miami in November) and a slight breeze swept over us and through the trees before settling on the otherwise slightly choppy, Biscayne Bay water lapping at the bobbing sailboat hulls.

Now that I live in the MFT, November and its companion, Thanksgiving, have assumed a new pallor of horror. This is because, for one, it gets dark here by 3:30 p.m. (By dark I mean *no light*, not to be confused with no sun. There is

rarely any sun in the MFT in November.)

This year there will be a void of stone crab legs and light breezes on Thanksgiving. This is my choice. The thought of flying down to a sunny, green place only to return to a frigid, grim icebox is, frankly, more depressing than my early years of pushing mashed potatoes around my plate.

As I write this it is 80 degrees in Miami, complete with, I can only imagine, subtle bay breezes. But here snow is falling outside my window, the central heat is cranked up and a space heater is whirring at my feet. The sky, as usual, is a palette of varying shades of stoic grays, not unlike the zombie skin tones I recently mixed for a photography class shoot.

And there is something else: I am eating oatmeal. This is cause for concern. I never ate oatmeal until I moved to the MFT. Grits, yes. But oatmeal, in any flavor, remained the perennial enemy. One reason I now partake in the oatmeal-eating is that I need to stay warm. It is that time of year again in the MFT. The Cold Time, which precedes the You Are Totally Screwed

Because It's So Cold time.

In other words, it is fall. Only this year, CT arrived early, and not even the die-hard MFTers are happy about it. Snow before Halloween (now *there's* a holiday I cherish) is just, well, not cool. It is a portent of a harsh winter — one of many portents this year, including a steady rush of rain that indicates this winter will indeed be a darker shade of miserable. If that is possible.

While we are on Halloween: Miami-ians take for granted that they can just wear whichever Halloween costume they want — Biscayne Boulevard Buxom Buddy, Little Miss Miami Muffet, whatever. Bring it on. But in the MFT, unless you plan on dressing up as a snow leopard (after you've slaughtered it for the fur) you are going to be very, very cold.

And after Halloween, it's all over. What's left is the great seven-month-long, white void. However, there is, of course, Thanksgiving.

Last year, once again, I participated in a family Thanksgiving. This time it consisted of my husband's family around the table. And really, although nobody was screaming at anyone else,

formal Thanksgivings these days aren't much different from those when I was a kid. But now that I'm a vegetarian, the holiday takes on yet another macabre affectation. It really is pretty gruesome, the turkey prep. Filling the turkey's beheaded, cold, hollowed-out carcass with flavored "stuffing." Ewww. The "carving of the bird"? Barbaric.

This year we really should head down south to Miami for Thanksgiving, but the return to the MFT's particular brand of ugly is blinding and the cold is biting. So Jeremy and I arrived at a compromise. We are going to go to Hershey, Pennsylvania, for Thanksgiving. Alone.

Instead of soaking up other people's problems like so many yeast rolls dipped in gravy, I am going to soak myself in a tub of chocolate foam in the Hershey Hotel spa. Rather than pretending to like people whom I can't stand, I will luxuriate in licking chocolate fondue residue from my fingers. For all of this I will give my heartfelt thanks, and I won't have to break some poor bird's wishbone in the process.

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Revolutionary Concept: Put Urban Sprawl to a Vote

Amendment 4 would do just that, which is why developers hate it

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

As residents in the City of Miami, as well as throughout Miami-Dade County, have been struggling to control unbridled growth and development on the local level, an opportunity to control it from the state level is coming our way in November of 2010 — just 12 short months away. I'm speaking of the proposed Amendment 4 to the Florida State Constitution, as promoted by the grass-roots group known as Florida Hometown Democracy.

Simply stated, Amendment 4 mandates that changes to a local growth plan, known as a "comprehensive development master plan," approved by a city or county's elected representatives must then go to voters for final approval or rejection. A local comprehensive plan, usually referred to as a "comp plan," is the road map for a community's future development, and theoretically is to be followed by elected officials to assure that development is



compatible with the plan and with the community's resources and desires.

Millions of taxpayer dollars are spent crafting these plans in order to provide for orderly, affordable growth, and to ensure that our communities aren't swamped by tidal waves of out-of-control development. But in much of Florida, it hasn't worked out that way. Too many city and county commissions

are too willing to blindly approve developer-backed changes to comp plans. After all, in Florida the business of land development is politics. Over the years, developers in this state have virtually taken control of the political process through the use of generous campaign contributions.

Amendment 4 will give the people a vote on growth, and that, in turn, should

permanently alter the existing dynamic between developer and politician. Our local situation provides a classic case study: Condo project after condo project going belly up and sitting empty in the center of downtown Miami, which was supposed to become a pedestrian-friendly mecca. Take a drive around downtown on an evening with no events at the Arsht Center or the American Airlines Arena and you will find a ghost town.

Another example, this time at the county level: The constant fight over moving the Urban Development Boundary, which was created in 1989 as a kind of western wall beyond which developers were not allowed to build anything. Today some of our county commissioners don't see it as a firm law, or even as a real boundary, but merely as a "guideline."

Here we are, still under water restrictions, and we have elected officials supporting proposals to move

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

Amendment 4

Continued from page 22

the development boundary farther west into the Everglades, the very area that supports and protects our drinking-water aquifer. It is the hydraulic pressure of the fresh water in the Everglades that keeps salty sea water in the ocean and not encroaching into our fresh-water reserves. Marjory Stoneman Douglas must be doing back flips in her grave!

Not surprisingly, Amendment 4 drives the entrenched development machine crazy. It's easy to understand why. The endless changes, overlays, exceptions, and variances pushed by developers have made them rich, but they've also led to the overdevelopment that has heavily contributed to the economic crash affecting us all. Under Amendment 4, these plan changes would ultimately have to come before voters, and we would know best, after all, what is in our own "public interest."

Here's a real-world case-in-point: The Marlins baseball stadium that businessman Norman Braman so doggedly fought against would have automatically come before voters for approval or

rejection. From the outset of his battle, Mr. Braman said: "Take it to the voters and I will live by their decision. If they approve it, I will end my lawsuit."

Those opposed to Amendment 4 say it will just encourage more lawsuits like Braman's, or that we'll constantly be at the voting booth making decisions on hundreds and thousands of little things.

The truth of the matter is that lawsuits opposing commission land-use actions — after they've been approved by voters — will probably become a thing of the past. Arguments contending that we'll constantly be voting on minutiae also don't hold water. Once our elected officials grasp that the objective of Amendment 4 is to ensure adherence to our comp plan, the number of ill-conceived proposals to change it will plummet. Truly worthy changes deemed to be in the best interests of the community will be strengthened by support from voters.

Here's another argument in opposition to Amendment 4: "This is what we elect these people to do. Commissioners are supposed to make the tough decisions and look out for our best interest." Well, we can see how well that concept has worked. I rest my case!

Keep in mind that politicians think short-term — literally what is left in their term of office and perhaps a re-election bid until they are termed out. (Some communities have imposed term limits on elected officials and others have not, which is another can of worms, especially in Miami-Dade County, where commissioners can be re-elected indefinitely, and where an incumbent commissioner has not lost an election in 15 years.)

Unfortunately, many times elected officials make decisions in their own narrow self-interest rather than in the long-term interests of the community as a whole, leaving residents and business owners holding the proverbial bag when they leave office — usually a heavy bag loaded with financial obligations. And often it's not just current residents who end up on the hook, but also future generations.

Take a good look at our elected officials. Too many have not done a good job representing us. On the other hand, they have done a splendid job representing the interests of the sprawl machine. They are directly responsible for much of Florida's economic disaster. Do we really want to continue with a broken, corrupt status quo?

The U.S. Supreme Court says voters can take back the power when their elected representatives have screwed up. (I'm paraphrasing, of course!) We already get to vote on charter issues and some bond and tax issues. Now it's time we step up and reclaim power over the growth of our communities.

In the coming months, when you spot a letter to the editor, a column, or a blog in opposition to Amendment 4, Google the author. Chances are that he or she makes a living from sprawl — lately known by the buzz words "smart growth" or "green growth." The "say anything" campaign against Amendment 4 will soon be spreading like a virus. Immunize yourself now!

Amendment 4 should be brought before local commissions for debate on its merits, with the objective of having our local elected officials approve resolutions supporting it as a necessary addition to our state constitution and in the best interest of all citizens of the Great State of Florida.

Any takers among our local politicians? No? What does that tell us?

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Guns Can Change Everything

A Miami Shores family's terrifying ordeal has rekindled debate about guarding neighborhoods

By Christian Cipriani
Special to BT

Five years ago attorney Jeffrey Davis, his wife Yasmin, and their young family moved from Coral Gables to Miami Shores and into a sprawling 1958 home overlooking Biscayne Bay at 9275 N. Bayshore Dr., two doors down from Arquitectonica's legendary Pink House. Despite seven years enjoying the exclusive comforts of Coral Gables, Davis found the city too anonymous and transient, and grew tired of having neighbors whose names he didn't know.

In his view, Miami Shores offered the prospect of genuine community — a throwback to his native Long Island, where families walked their dogs and mingled in the street after dinner, and where you could bump into your kids' teachers at the grocery store.

Davis has a warm intensity about him, and early on a recent morning he's already busying about his sunny, double-height living room, suited up for a day at the office. He gets animated talking about the house. They took it down to the studs to create their dream home, finishing it

with white marble floors, sleek stainless-steel staircases, furniture from the likes of Mies van der Rohe and Isamu Noguchi, and colorful South American landscape paintings.

But now floodlights, sirens, motion detectors, panic buttons, gate locks, and a flat-screen TV constantly broadcasting views from security cameras have become part of their designer interior. Sitting before a stack of crime statistics, neighborhood maps, and notes, Davis recounts how he was forced to turn his castle into a fortress after three armed assailants targeted him and his wife.

This past September 26, a Saturday, the couple met friends for dinner in Fort Lauderdale. Around 12:30 a.m. they arrived home in their rented minivan (one of their cars was being repaired), and Yasmin



BT photos by Christian Cipriani

Scene of the crime: Jeff Davis (insert) and his wife had just pulled into their driveway when they were assaulted.



stepped out to open the garage door.

Seconds later, two young black men stormed up the driveway, shouting at her. With the car windows up, Davis says he didn't notice the commotion at first, and when he did, he admits wondering if they needed help. But in a split second everything became clear. The two intruders had guns. They cocked their pistols sideways and one man started yelling: "Gimme the bag, ho! F—ing bitch! Gimme the bag!"

Fearing their house keys were in her purse, Yasmin hesitated and froze. Davis began making as much noise as possible — yelling and blaring his horn to distract them and alert neighbors.

The irony is that, while you would never guess it from looking at him, Jeff Davis is a gun-owner with a conceal-and-carry permit. He's strictly a range shooter, not a hunter, and owns his weapon for home protection. At that very moment he could have been legally armed and in a position to apply lethal force, but he was not carrying his gun.

The scene carried on for what seemed like a full minute — an eon in a crisis — while Davis helplessly watched a man point a gun in his wife's face and shower her with profanity. The gunman then tore the purse from Yasmin's arm and, along with his accomplice and a third man who'd been watching from the street, the trio ran around the corner and fled in a getaway car parked in front of an abandoned house across from the Davis residence.

Shaken, Jeff and Yasmin got back in the car, locked the doors, and dialed 911. The operator transferred them not to Miami Shores police but to the Miami

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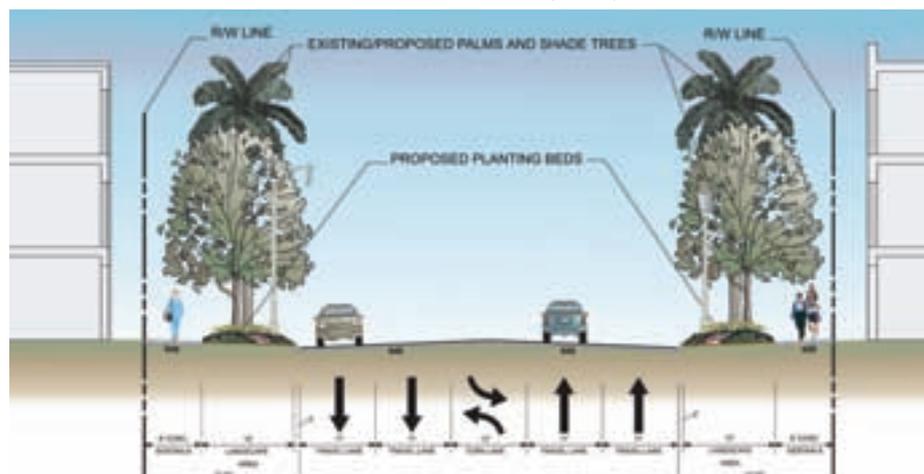
Welcome To Your Traffic Nightmare

When FDOT is done with the Boulevard, they say it'll be sweet, but until then...

By Anne Tschida
Special to BT

It's back! Just when Miamians thought it was safe to come back to Biscayne Boulevard after those dark years of intense road construction, the barriers, dust, and bulldozers have returned, this time farther south, on the hectic stretch below 36th Street.

As every commuter knows by now, we're not talking lane closures in the middle of the night. This is a massive reconstruction project from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), estimated to last two years, costing \$16 million, and resulting in one-lane travel in each direction on one of Miami's major arteries. It begins at the intersection where I-195 traffic pours onto (and out of) the Boulevard, and will extend down to just north of the Adrienne Arsht Center.



Courtesy, FDOT

Looks good on paper, but on the street right now, it's not good at all.

In a sad twist of fate, this is also the area that developers targeted not so long ago to create the engine for a new urban environment — where gleaming condos and art centers would help populate

the decrepit streets with eager crowds, whose needs would be fulfilled by a pedestrian-friendly influx of businesses. Then the real estate boom went bust, the economy went south, and the view of the

Boulevard went from shiny and bright to cloudy and bleak. And then in August, the barricades went up.

"Oh, we really can't believe how bad business has become," says Carmen Caamano, a manager of Pronto Supermarket, which expanded into bigger digs just last year. Pronto is located on that part of the Boulevard where the first segment of reconstruction is under way (between 35th and 28th streets), complete with a concrete barrier in the middle of the thoroughfare that makes crossing the road impossible for people, cars, and chickens alike. "I think we are losing half our business."

But let's stand back. Contrary to what locals may believe, the FDOT project was not intended as an evil plot to destroy the Edgewater neighborhood. It is an attempt

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Tarnished Jewel of the Boulevard

Abandoned by its owner, the iconic Vagabond Motel faces an uncertain future

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Contributor

When Eric Silverman bought the Vagabond Motel at 7301 Biscayne Blvd. for \$4 million and announced his intention to restore the 1950s complex to its former glory, he generated publicity not just in Miami but across the nation. After all, Silverman often repeated, Frank Sinatra had stayed there. More significantly, he said he hoped his renovation would spark a South Beach-like renaissance along Biscayne Boulevard's somewhat seedy motel row.

"Keeping some of the treasures that are really Miami is important to us," the silver-haired investor told the *Miami Herald* in January 2006, not long after purchasing the property. "We think the beauty is to blend the old with the new."

But that promise was never realized. Instead the 22,154-square-foot historic landmark became home to a small clothing store run by Silverman's wife, and a sparsely attended weekend farmers market. Those operations ended more than three months ago, and today



August 2008: Silverman strikes a pose for the *BT*'s cover story "Big Man on the Boulevard."

Silverman, once a ubiquitous figure on the motel grounds, is nowhere to be seen. Weeds have overtaken the landscaping. Code enforcement notices announce a variety of violations. City workers recently cleaned up some of the garbage and graffiti littering the property.

Where did Silverman go? Vagabond neighbors who used to see him regularly don't have a clue. After agreeing to speak with the *BT*, Silverman, a Davie resident who once headed Hugo Boss USA and Dolce & Gabbana's Western Hemisphere operations, did not return several

subsequent phone calls seeking comment. His business partner and cousin, Octavio Hidalgo, could not be reached. The number for Eric Silverman and Associates, a realty firm, has been disconnected. The company Silverman and Hidalgo used to purchase the Vagabond, Milano at Ocean Drive LLC, officially became inactive as on September 25.

Fran Rollason, president of the MiMo Biscayne Association, doesn't know his whereabouts but does know that he struggled to succeed. "He just had a hard time making his vision happen," she says.

Teri D'Amico, co-founder of a movement to preserve examples of Miami Modern ("MiMo") architecture, somewhat quirky buildings constructed between the 1940s and 1960s, says Silverman's effort to revive the Vagabond was doomed. She feels she should know: D'Amico briefly worked for Silverman as the Vagabond's interior designer. "This guy doesn't take care of his property," she says flatly. "He made it worse than before he bought it."

The Vagabond's previous owners, David and Wen-Yang Lin of Vagabond

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New Look, New Name, Big Party

Village Place makes its Miami Shores debut, and now comes the hard part

By Mark Sell
Special to *BT*

Like Cinderella at the ball, downtown Miami Shores blossomed for one evening in the form of a street fair on Friday, October 2. It was downtown's debut as "Village Place at Miami Shores." Also like Cinderella, the area's empty storefronts are seeking princes with magic slippers in the form of paying customers and clients who create happy tenants and landlords.

The fair was a roaring success, with an estimated 4000 to 5000 people attending — double projections. More than 64 concessions and attractions representing nearly every neighborhood institution or business of consequence offered throbbing reggae, mellow jazz, face-painting, ice cream. Popcorn, and just about anything in between.

Village Café gave away 300 meals and served 269 inside before running out of food. The tiny Côte Gourmet took 120 seatings for its French cuisine and served 100 bottles of wine. A WSVN-Channel 7 mobile crew cranked out DVDs of kids doing mock weather reports.

"I have headed up a lot of initiatives, and I have never seen such wide support and participation," says organizer Jim McCoy, a commercial real estate broker with Holly Realty in Coral Gables, ex-mayor of Miami Shores, and former president of the Greater Miami Shores Chamber of Commerce, which has driven efforts for a downtown revival since the middle 1990s. "We started three months



A good time was had by all: Nice crowd, but will they come back and shop?

ago and figured we'd do a little ribbon-cutting with our tails between our legs. But we were blown away by the support."

This time the support didn't come just from the usual suspects. Trump International, Citibank (and not coincidentally,

Holly Realty) threw their corporate weight behind it, as did Barry University, the Playground Theatre, the Miami Shores Fine Arts Commission, WPBT-Channel 2, Miami Shores Village Hall, and the Chamber, among others. All the area's schools participated.

The reason for the party: Celebrating the \$4.5 million, two-year gussying-up of NE Second Avenue, complete with road work, broadened sidewalks, fresh oak trees, outdoor seating, and freshened storefronts with new awnings, sprinkled with the occasional pioneering boutique and salon.

However, the more serious agenda was to introduce potential landlords and investors to Miami Shores with a bus tour and cocktail reception preceding the street fair. The "Village Place" name and notion caps an effort of the last dozen

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Gun

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Beach Police Department. It took yet another transfer to reach the Shores police.

Davis is still disgusted by the ineptitude of the 911 operator, but credits Shores police for showing up within three minutes, and with several squad cars. At that point, however, little could be done, so they took a report and advised the Davises to drive around in the morning and look for the stolen purse.

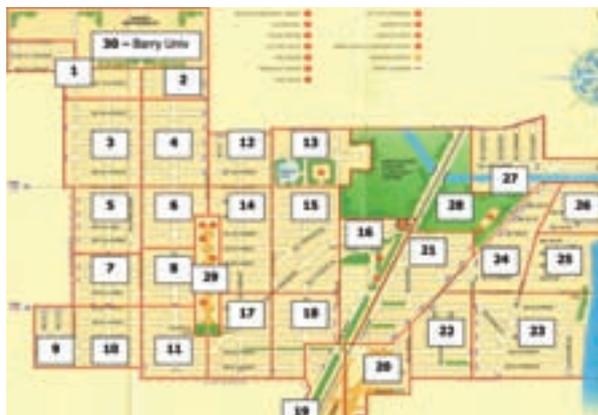
The next morning they did just that, and to their astonishment they found the purse near the intersection of NE 96th Street and NE 10th Avenue — the only point of access to their neighborhood. However, an important date book filled with sensitive information was lost, as was her wallet.

After watching someone threaten his wife's life and verbally degrade her, Davis vowed he will never again allow anyone to put him in that position. Today Yasmin is fearful. She won't go to Publix alone at night, as she often used to. She won't even take out a garbage bag. They both find themselves looking over their shoulders.

Beyond outfitting his home with an array of high-tech security devices, Davis has been aggressively lobbying his neighbors, drumming up support for a contentious crime-prevention idea: a guardhouse, paid for by the neighbors through a voluntary tax.

Any discussion of neighborhood security measures in Miami Shores must begin with the village's cultural and generational evolution, and the many heated debates over community, security, and identity that have accompanied decades of sometimes-painful growth. As idyllic as the Shores appears, it has experienced its share of criminal activity, which has exacerbated the fear and insularity that sparked community tensions throughout the 1980s.

By the late 1980s, those tensions had come to a head, and citizens voted to close off 65 streets, severely limiting points of entry to its eastern enclaves (more closures were approved in 1991). Jeff Davis's house, for instance, is accessible



Miami Shores police have divided the village into NCOP areas, based on the Neighborhood Contact Officer Program.

by vehicle *only* from NE 96th Street, as are all residences east of NE 10th Avenue. Barricades block every single street that once intersected with the avenue and with Shorecrest streets to the south. This maze of dead-ends was one of first times, if not *the* first time in America that such barricades were employed at the level of town planning. In an odd twist, the only other place this had been done on such a large scale is the very city the Davises left — Coral Gables.

The 1980s barricade debate caused friction within the village. Dividing east and west was seen as symbolically provocative, as the east was mostly older, wealthy non-Hispanic whites, and the west was increasingly populated by West Indian and Latin American immigrants. The view from inside the barricades was simple: People just wanted to avoid being robbed of their possessions and having their lives threatened. But the perspective from outside barricades was starkly different: They represented a physical declaration of privilege. Today, with non-Hispanic whites comprising less than half the village, efforts to isolate neighborhoods can look more and more like desperate self-preservation.

And while the barricades certainly did not eradicate crime, they slowed the *rate* of crime growth as compared with surrounding municipalities, especially for crimes like home and vehicle burglaries. They forced traffic patterns onto main roads, making it harder for criminals to case the neighborhood, and

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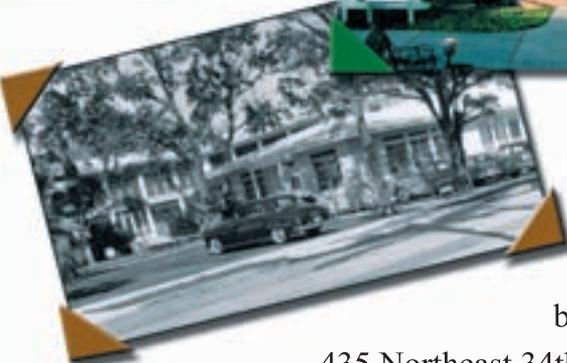


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Traffic Nightmare

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to improve it. Like so much of the nation's transportation infrastructure, Biscayne Boulevard was long overdue for an overhaul. So in 2003, a two-part redesign was conceived: a reconstruction project from NE 15th Street to NE 35th Terrace (which began August 24, to be completed in two years); and a smaller resurfacing project from NE 36th Street to NE 38th Street (which began October 26, to be completed by February 2010).

The bulk of the work for the reconstruction project includes:

- Reconstructing the roadway.
- Replacing drainage and water-main systems.
- Reconstructing sidewalks, driveways, and curb ramps to meet Americans with Disability Act standards.
- Replacing curbs and gutters.
- Upgrading lighting, traffic, and pedestrian signs and signalization.
- Installing new landscaping and irrigation.

The contractor, American Engineering and Development, is limited to

working about five or six blocks at a time, according to Maria Palacios, FDOT's public information officer. Work began on the west side of the roadway, from north to south, and will continue on the east side of the roadway from south to north, dividing the project into six different work zones. Palacio says each zone will take about four months to complete.

During the section closures, some side streets will be open, others not. Various sidewalks and driveways will be closed. Heavy equipment and hard-hatted people will be moving around. Dust and noise will be ubiquitous. And drivers just might want to use NE 2nd Avenue to avoid the whole thing.

This is not, to put it mildly, what many business owners had envisioned for their Boulevard at this stage of the game.

Orange Grooming opened up two months ago in the 2900 block of the Boulevard, according to Mylenn Suero, just a week after she found out about the imminent construction. Had she known earlier, she would have chosen a location for her pet-grooming business in the Upper Eastside, "where they already went through this, and it is at least all over for them." (As the *BT* reported in

numerous stories, that four-year construction project devastated small businesses.) For Suero it's too soon to know what toll this traffic nightmare will take, but customers have been complaining.

Farther south, where traffic is still flowing (though not for long), Alfredo Patino, chef/owner of the restaurant Bin No. 18, says he's looking at options. He may open a back entrance, facing the rear parking lot, or put up foliage to screen the construction in the front. If the customers disappear, he might just leave, a grim scenario everyone in Edgewater wants to avoid. "I hope the city can work with us small businesses," says Patino, who would welcome some type of financial assistance. But in a deep recession and in a city that is virtually broke, that may be wishful thinking.

Caamano of Pronto Market says she has called the city a number of times already but has received no response. She remembers that on one windy day, the dust and debris from the construction literally invaded the market. When the two lanes that are now open on Pronto's east side of the Boulevard are eventually closed, she says, "I just don't know what we'll do."

Interestingly, Biscayne Boulevard's very origins can be traced to efforts to bolster northside development during troubling times. "The abrupt fall of the Miami boom was cushioned in the first part of 1926 by the conception of Biscayne Boulevard. Like the anesthesia which prepares our nerves for the shock of the surgeon's knife, the creation of Biscayne Boulevard kept Miami going during the summer of 1926, despite the discovery that \$50,000 lots no longer could be sold for one-tenth of that amount, or that the 'summer tourist season' of 1925 was nothing but a delusion," wrote Kenneth Ballinger in his 1936 book *Miami Millions*.

For some the deconstructed Boulevard is not a complete debacle. Those drivers who by choice or mistake get stuck in one-lane traffic behind a car turning left might discover a gem of a business that was otherwise overlooked. Says the cashier at Boulevard Liquors, who didn't want to give his name: "They are sitting out there in traffic and see for the first time that we are here, and they go, 'Hey, let's get some beer!'"

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Vagabond

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Motel Inc., are suing to foreclose on the property, claiming they are owed \$2.7 million on a mortgage. Several other lenders are on the hook for as much as \$1.7 million. Gary Anstey placed a lien on the property in September 2007 after Silverman and Hidalgo allegedly failed to pay him \$26,000 for improvements made to the motel property. Unpaid property taxes run to nearly \$200,000.

According to the city's code enforcement director, Mariano Loret de Mola, the Vagabond has been slapped with at least \$5000 in fines for violations that include operating an outdoor market without a license, not having a valid business tax receipt, improper outdoor storage of materials, and failure to register a vacant building.

It's been a long fall from the Vagabond's heyday.

Built in 1953 by Sidney Goldberg and designed by B. Robert Swartburg (architect of Miami Beach's Delano Hotel and Bass Museum), the Vagabond quickly became a popular post-war destination



Where once there was landscaping, now there are weeds.

for vacationing families thrilled to drive down U.S. 1 to Miami's warm weather. The Vagabond's popularity was such, in fact, that it supposedly hosted stars like Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, and Dean Martin, though such accounts may be mixed up with the Vagabond Club, which also operated during the 1950s and 1960s in downtown Miami.

Silverman's original plan was to create a moderately priced boutique resort and spa, with a restored pool area and lobby, a clothing store, and a restaurant. But his plans changed repeatedly. Months after taking ownership, he decided to turn it into a condo hotel. In December 2007, he announced plans to



City officials say the motel has been slapped with at least \$5000 in fines for code enforcement violations.

transform it into an office and retail complex. Affordable studios for artists was another idea. The next year it was going to become a farmers market — and he even helped persuade the city commission to pass a special law allowing it.

Silverman was perpetually dogged by zoning conflicts and permits he needed but didn't acquire for this or that activity. He ran afoul of some nearby residents who complained that allegedly lax security was attracting petty criminals. His fellow property owners along the Boulevard were divided in their sympathies. The city, however, tried to help keep the

Vagabond dream alive by granting him temporary permits for new signage and finding ways for him to legalize his farmers market. But by that time, it's likely Silverman was distracted by the foreclosure action launched by the Lins.

In a response to the foreclosure this past March, Silverman and Hidalgo's attorney, Brandy Gonzalez-Abreu, claimed the Lins had essentially led her clients to believe they were willing to negotiate new terms. Instead Silverman and Hidalgo were served papers that "unfairly surprised and harmed [them] by making refinancing efforts...difficult, if not impossible."

Gonzalez-Abreu, who did not return calls from the *BT*, also claimed the Lins sold her clients the Vagabond under false pretenses, failing to mention that half of the motel property was zoned C-1 commercial and the other half R-3 residential, halting the renovation project and costing Silverman and Hidalgo revenue they had anticipated and needed. (At Silverman's request, the Miami City Commission rezoned the entire 56,165-square-foot lot

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Village Place

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years to revive a once-vibrant downtown that for more than a generation has been noted largely for its somnolence.

The elemental riddle of NE Second Avenue persists: Will they come? If so, will they spend? Which comes first: the tenants or the sewers? Unlike nearly any other downtown in South Florida, Miami Shores is on septic tanks.

“The reality is you cannot be a pedestrian-friendly downtown without restaurants and cafés, and you cannot have more cafés without sewers,” says Ruben Matz, who with his wife Gladys owns much of the southeast and northwest corner of the avenue at NE 96th Street. Matz is

promoting a special assessment district and says the county is showing some interest in helping confirm 2009 costs for a sewer system. He says 70 percent of downtown property owners have signed a petition of willingness to tax themselves in order to install a sewer system.

For more than a generation, downtown Miami Shores has been fallow as a retail center, its postwar bustle an ever-fleeting memory. The current revival effort is an outgrowth of a late-1990s design charette involving 100 interested citizens. During that event and ever since, residents have returned with similar ideas: cafés and restaurants (ethnic preferred but not necessary); a good bookstore or two; children’s stores; perhaps even an alehouse or two. The



Some say the hoopla is fine, but without sewers, all the talk is just hot air.

village council has responded by loosening restrictions, relaxing outdoor seating rules, and easing the path to a wine and beer license.

Most important, during the mid-2000s, ownership of downtown real estate changed, with a new generation of visionary owner-investors. Ruben Matz bought up blocks near 96th Street and NE Second Avenue. Ari Sklar bought the old Howard Johnson’s site on the southwest corner of 95th Street and built the Starbucks building. Investor James Quinlan purchased the 9999 Building and sold it to Alex Edelman. At the same time, Miami Shores was growing younger and slightly more affluent as

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Gun

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making residents more cognizant of unknown vehicles. But even that has been criticized for creating an overly suspicious citizenry.

Today crime in Miami Shores far from rampant, but in Jeff Davis’s

relatively small police sector (known as an NCOP area after the Neighborhood Contact Officer Program) there have already been 17 burglary and theft-related crimes this year. This in just a six-square-block radius.

Which is why Davis is pushing neighbors to consider a guardhouse at the NE 96th Street and 10th Avenue entrance

— the same one his wife’s attackers used — that would photograph the license plate of any unregistered vehicle. (Because the streets are public, access cannot be denied to any driver seeking to enter the area, though information can be recorded for every vehicle.)

Currently he is gathering cost estimates, data, and support from

neighbors, though he hasn’t approached officials. And given the village’s history with such efforts to isolate the eastern wing of Miami Shores, he may meet with hostility — though nothing to match what happened in his driveway.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Vagabond

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C-1 in December 2007.)

By 2009 much of the goodwill extended to Silverman by the city and many of his neighbors had evaporated. This past March D'Amico collected signatures from more than 20 property owners, including some who once supported Silverman's market concept, claiming the dilapidated condition of the Vagabond attracted drug dealers and prostitutes and

demanding that the city stop granting Silverman "special exceptions."

On May 13, Silverman was found guilty of five code citations related to his unpermitted market and given two weeks to correct them. "Instead of fixing everything," D'Amico says, "he closed up everything."

If Silverman has indeed given up on the Vagabond, D'Amico believes the motel will be the better for it. She says it's looking better already, thanks to the city. "Someone will buy it," she

predicts. "It is a unique property. It has so much potential."

Michael Cannon, a respected real estate analyst and managing director of Integra Realty Resources—AREEA/South Florida, examined Silverman's project several years ago on behalf of a client who considered extending a mortgage. Cannon agrees with D'Amico that the Vagabond is special and has a "tremendous history." But he cautions that the Boulevard's motel row is still in transition. "It took 25 years for Ocean Drive

to become what it is today," he observes, adding that it may take another 20 years before the MiMo District is no longer considered a risky investment.

For her part, Fran Rollason hopes something positive will happen with the Vagabond—and soon. Its current condition, she says, is "a disaster for the neighborhood."

BT contributor Terence Cantarella contributed to this story.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Village Place

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a popular destination for families and same-sex couples with buying power.

Two major surveys bore out this desire for change. More than 95 percent of respondents said they wanted more retail, 57 percent said they would patronize food establishments at least once a week, 81 percent wanted a bookstore, 85 percent a gourmet food store, nearly 97 percent more restaurants. More than two-thirds said they thought downtown Miami Shores looked worse than the rest of village.

At the Village Place street fair, Sean Saladino was digging his scooper hard into a vat of Blue Bell Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough ice cream to feed a snaking, growing line across 96th Street. He was in front of his promised sit-down ice cream-and-panini-and-WiFi hangout, Miss Moo's, where the cow on the sign promises "MOOING SOON!"

"So when are you opening?" he heard yet again.

"Three weeks," he barked, not looking up from the cone assembly line.

Opening day now looks closer to mid-November. The reason: delays getting a water permit from county agencies.

Saladino says he finally got the needed permits October 21, but neither he nor Matz, his landlord, expected such an ordeal.

Saladino's story within the successful street event represents the promise and peril of NE Second Avenue and downtown Miami Shores. The promise: a willing, organic community, great demographics, a central location, and plenty of enthusiasm and good will. The perils: still-unproven market support, a clattering local economy, problematic parking, and the eternal issue of septic tanks and water lines.

Saladino, a Miami Shores resident who has run nightclubs in South Beach,

still comes down firmly on the side of promise. "This was obviously a different crowd from South Beach," he notes. "In South Beach, an event like this would have bombed. South Beach is on marketing overload. They are jaded. People respond to a marketing concept in Miami Shores. There's real enthusiasm here."

If enough people buy a panini, grab an ice cream, and take a stroll, a thriving downtown Miami Shores could be more than a fairy tale.

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Letters

Continued from page 6

Memo to Media: Poodles Also Bite

I read Lisa Hartman's "The Sweetness of Pit Bulls" and there is at least one point I disagree with. To the best of my knowledge, Italy like Holland has also done away with breed-specific legislation, which I believe is illegal and reeks of neo-Nazism.

However, Lisa is correct regarding media reports. Overzealous reporters appear to have only one dog breed in their vocabulary: pit bulls. If a Maltese poodle bites someone, they will report it as "another pit bull attack." Some may call this media hype. I call it BS.

Selwyn Marock
Ontario

High Praise for a Low-Rise Boulevard

I disagree with my good friend Frank Rollason over the debate on a 35-foot height limit for the MiMo Historic District ("The Beast That Cannot Be

Tamed," September 2009). It should have come as no surprise that Commissioner Marc Sarnoff acted on a promise he made to a number of residents, neighborhoods, and homeowner associations who endorsed the height limit — not just Morningside activist Elvis Cruz.

Where does the gloom-and-doom scenario come from? Lincoln Road, Miracle Mile, and a host of other commercial districts around the nation seem to do very well without the 53-foot, 81-foot, and upward of 120-foot heights that had been proposed for Biscayne Boulevard under Miami 21, our new zoning code.

Building heights played no part in the renaissance that took place on Biscayne Boulevard. It was the establishment of the historic district, championed by the MiMo Coalition and the city's historic preservation officer that stimulated the change.

The claims that height limits will negatively affect existing businesses make no sense. It is the commercial property owners who are protesting. Those same property owners one day will most likely raise rents so high that the current businesses will be

forced out in favor of large corporate concerns, as seen in the Grove and South Beach.

Commissioner Sarnoff's action was made to protect homeowners and residents of the Upper Eastside, and to fulfill a campaign promise he made to them when he first ran for office.

Jack Spirk
Shorecrest

MiMo District: Kitsch Could Be the Key

I want to praise Commissioner Marc Sarnoff for standing by his campaign promise on a 35-foot height limit. More than a year ago, we in Shorecrest gathered over 350 names on a petition that supported the height limit, and presented it to the full city commission. I'm grateful that Sarnoff stuck to his guns.

At the same time, and to be fair, I understand why there is support for higher building limits in the MiMo area, as you need great numbers of residents to support local businesses. We cannot always count on people coming over from Miami Beach or other communities to support a burgeoning MiMo District.

The MiMo Biscayne Association works very hard to promote the area and its businesses, and let's not forget that this area is trying to clean up a darker period in its history when the Boulevard was overrun with "street activity."

Real estate investors want the biggest bang for their bucks, but maybe looking backward to something that was unique is the best way to go forward. Maybe we need to think about what MiMo could become if it played up its origins more effectively, flourishing through charming small hotels, lovely restaurants, and businesses that *will* create a draw, including foot traffic.

People in Miami are fickle. They are always looking for the next big thing. A row of wonderful 1950s-style motels — decked out with neon, vibrant colors, and swimming pools — might bring visitors in droves. If we can work *together* to re-create a marvelous and, yes, even kitschy gateway to Miami, the area might be more successful than anyone could have imagined.

Maggie Steber
Shorecrest

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Beautification Comes with a Price

500 Block NE 82nd Street

Miami residents live on the American Riviera, a place where aesthetic wonders rule the day. However, we attract subversive scum who also appreciate this beauty. This poor chap planted flowers all along his backyard and was proud of his accomplishments. A day or so later all the flowers were gone, ripped from the ground by some criminal flower-power reject. There are no leads, only weeds where once there had been beauty.

Just Following Police Orders

100 Block of NE 49th Street

Police were dispatched to the scene of a reported burglary. When they arrived, they saw a man struggling with a window-unit air conditioner. This happened before any change in our weather, so the



man's motive was understandable. The police told him to drop it, and he readily complied. Thud! He was arrested. The air conditioner was now broken. But the owner did get it back.

Jalousies Are Increasingly Dangerous

700 Block of NE 75th Street

A man came home to the unfortunate news that his living room had been ransacked. Many items were missing as the criminal seemed to have taken his time. Apparently the jalousie windows on the door had been removed, the metal screen behind them pried open. The burglar then simply reached in and unlocked the door. Jalousie windows are great for air circulation, but

Boulevard residents must remember that they're from a different era, a time when people (if you can believe this) actually left their doors *unlocked*.

No Peace for Crackheads

6500 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

In busy Miami, everyone is entitled to a little solitude — even crackheads, we imagine. This druggie was looking for a quiet place to smoke and stumbled upon a vacant HUD property. An oasis of tranquility amid the city's hustle and bustle. So he sauntered onto the property to take in some good old-fashioned Miami rock. But police on routine patrol spotted him and promptly arrested him. The man admitted to his need to smoke the crack. Perhaps in the future he'll see the wisdom of going to a respectable Boulevard crack house.

Continued on page 33

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Crime Beat

Continued from page 32

So This Is How You Start a Business

100 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Video cameras observed a man leaving a restaurant with a red tool box and a book of some sort. The man was an ex-employee who had worked in the pastry kitchen. He'd been fired just the night before. The book he stole was a pastry cookbook, something exclusive to the restaurant. When the manager called him at home, he admitted to taking the book, and that he was in the process of making photocopies. At press time, the book had not been returned. *BT* readers: Be on the lookout for new bakeries along the Boulevard.

Terror by Mail

600 Block of NE 80th Street

Victim went to hang his clothes in the back of his apartment, then left the premises. When he returned, he discovered that his apartment had been burglarized and that his clothes

were missing. A week earlier he, he told police, he'd received a mysterious letter in the mail, warning him that he was being watched. There are no suspects — yet.

Maybe He'll Pay for Bail?

401 Biscayne Blvd.

A man enjoyed a nice meal at a popular Bayside Marketplace eatery. Nothing wrong with that, except that he walked away without paying. This is common in Miami. What is not common is to walk past the same eatery several hours later, which is what this mooching fool did. Restaurant employees spotted him and pointed him out to police. As he was being cuffed, the man admitted to eating the meal, but offered: "Yes I eat, but I don't pay. I never pay for food." Well, he won't have to pay for the meals at county jail either.

Taken for a Ride in the Worst Way

NE 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard

Victim was waiting for a bus when a four-door, dark-colored vehicle pulled up.

He was asked if he wanted a ride, and he accepted, entering the vehicle, which did take him to his destination. Unfortunately for this passenger, \$135 was missing from his shirt pocket by the time he was dropped off. Somehow the driver managed to take it while he had his other hand on the steering wheel. The poor victim didn't even have money to get back home.

If You Can't Trust Your Broker, Who Can You Trust?

2000 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

In the cutthroat world of real estate, your average broker is looking for an edge in this downward economy. This victim went on vacation and left a key with his broker so she could show the apartment in his absence. No one else had a key to the apartment. According to a neighbor, a suspicious couple, one of them a broker, entered the apartment one morning without authorization. Several items were stolen. No word yet if the broker's client will be putting in an offer.

Hanging Out: Miami Style

200 Block of NE 29th Street

This victim went out of town for a couple of weeks and was sickened to return to a burglarized apartment. His gun was among the items stolen. The perpetrator had entered the apartment without any sign of forced entry, and ate his food, smoked cigarettes, and adjusted the air conditioner as he looted the residence. There may be witnesses, but neighbors have thus far refused to cooperate.

No Interest, Easy Withdrawal

1800 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

In yet another example of Miamians using special places in their homes as banks, this man, we gather, laundered nearly \$3000 behind his bathroom mirror. One day, needing to make a withdrawal, he found that the money was gone. He called police and admitted he had broken up with his girl friend that same day, but is not sure if she took the money! (The police report also used an exclamation point.) The money has not been located, and neither has the former girlfriend.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Space of Their Own

MAM's new show sets its sites on space

By Victor Barrenechea
BT Contributor

One of the most interesting things about the Miami art scene over the years has been its penchant for hosting exhibitions in unorthodox venues. Dorsch Gallery had its auspicious beginning in a Coral Way apartment. Few will forget the now defunct Edgewater artist-run art-space the House, which was in an actual house, as were the sprawling group shows that artist Eugenia Vargas periodically hung up, in her own home. Today you can find art in warehouses, studios, garages, farmlands in Homestead, and in unoccupied storefront real-estate.

"I think a lot of artists today have this attitude toward the white cube," theorizes Miami Art Museum curator Rene Morales, referring to the four white walls that make up the traditional gallery space. "One of the ways to chip away the dominance of the white cube is to go back...to collapse the boundaries between the white cube and domestic, every-day commercial environments." It's a progression that has its roots in the 1960s and 1970s, when artists began to subvert the relationship between artworks and the spaces in which they were shown. In essence, the art itself challenged the physical institutions it occupied.

This month the Miami Art Museum is unveiling a new exhibition entitled "Space as Medium," featuring a dozen works by local, national, and international artists, all of whom attempt to explore the ambivalent — and sometimes hostile — attitude artists developed in the 1960s toward the traditional gallery space that continues to this day, and has dictated much of the course of contemporary art.

It was largely during the 1960s, with the advent of conceptualism and minimalism, that artists began to reject the idea of the traditional white cube. They put works on the floor or drove them through walls, and began to experiment with the way artworks addressed the space in which they were shown. In the art heartland of New York, in order to accommodate the new realities of the contemporary aesthetic, art began to migrate from the predictable gallery spaces to the warehouse districts. On

one hand, the new warehouse spaces largely provided what the new works called for, but younger galleries looking to show contemporary work also found these more unorthodox spaces much more appealing as well.

The movement was a precursor to what happened locally in the earlier part of this decade, in places like Wynwood. Nicolas Lobo, a local artist who was involved in that burgeoning art scene, is fittingly represented in this current show with *Terrazzo Glide Slope*, an eight-foot-long, sloping, V-shaped sculpture that sits on the floor of the



Errata tossed back to the horizon by Ryan Gander.



Terrazzo Glide Slope by Nicolas Lobo.

museum. Although it is essentially a copy of a previous Lobo sculpture that stretched to 40 feet, the piece charts the V-shaped route along which aircraft departing from Miami International Airport travel eastward toward the Atlantic.

As such the work is placed in the gallery in physical alignment with the overhead air route. "It relates to the gallery in its orientation, but it also relates to what's happening outside in the world," explains Morales.

Another seismic change that originated in the 1960s was that people began to refer to art in terms of "works" rather than objects. Art would no longer be a mere source of visual pleasure, but would take on a whole new dynamic. The emphasis shifted to the process rather than the product. In "Space as Medium," English artist Simon Starling's *Nachbau* highlights this paradigm shift, as a work in which process plays a huge, even preeminent, role.

The story behind *Nachbau* goes back to the early 20th Century, when photographer Albert Renger-Patzsch took archival installation shots of pieces on display at the Folkwang Museum in Essen, Germany, where Renger-Patzsch was the museum's in-house photographer. Much of the artwork on display then — including works by Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne — was later banned by the Nazi government; some of it disappeared, and the museum itself was destroyed in 1944. It was rebuilt after the war, and is undergoing another renovation.

The Turner-prize winning Starling "documents" this process of destruction and rebirth — he's painstakingly recreated the displays in these Renger-Patzsch archival photographs, in some cases using original works. But other works, lost to time, have been meticulously recreated in order for Starling to shoot exact replicas of the photos. It's these photos by Starling that will be on display at MAM, says Morales, "The project is about repressed history, or history that gets erased. It's really about the erasure of memory on multiple levels: historical, social, and institutional."

German artist Katharina Grosse plays with space in way that is much more abrasive. Known for ambitiously large works that often involve huge piles of dirt arranged around found objects and then colored with broad streaks of rainbow-hued acrylic paint, she inundates the space with a blast of utter mass and vibrant colors. According to Morales, the work will be "a dirt installation toward the back of the gallery to sort of punctuate the show." The installation can be seen as a critique of the traditional space, in the way that it overwrites and overwhelms the institution with its

Continued on page 35

Space

Continued from page 34

sheer size and boldness. In fact the work seems to exist in spite of the space where it is presented.

For practical and aesthetic purposes, MAM is removing all of its carpeting in the exhibition. "I hope that sense of change will be jolting enough to make you start thinking of the space before even encountering the artwork," says Morales. One such work that relies on plain, white, uncarpeted floors is Ryan Gander's *Errata tossed back to the horizon*.

While walking through the Tate Museum in London, Gander noticed a photographic work by Canadian artist Tim Lee, in which the horizon line within the work aligned with the floor of the Tate when the viewer looked at it from a certain angle. Gander took a picture of the work from that angle, digitally removed the figure in the image, and blew it up to a size approximating that of a human body. As a result, there's a strange visual play between the two horizons in Gander's photograph, and the space in which it's being exhibited.



Dirty Yoga, a previous installation by Katharina Grosse, similar to what will go on view at MAM.

It forces the viewer to observe the work from different angles and engages them directly with the space.

By coincidence or not, this show about the limits of confines and space comes at a time when the museum itself

is breaking out of its current structure: There is a proposed remodeling of the Flagler Street location, and then the move to the 200,000-square-foot building, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, to be built in Bicentennial Park.

And by coincidence or not, director and architect Terence Riley recently announced his resignation, stating, "We are now ready to break ground on a building that is poised to be one of the greenest art museums ever built in the Americas. As such, this is the right moment for me to pursue other interests and for MAM to smoothly transition to a new leader." The man who came to build the building is now leaving it to others to fill the space — in traditional and nontraditional ways.

"Space as Medium" opens November 20 and runs through February 28 at the Miami Art Museum, 101 W. Flagler St., Miami. For hours and more information call 305-375-3000 or visit www.miam-artmuseum.org

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Rivera-Bond, PJ Mills, Ray Paul, Sibel Kocabasi,
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**Joan Miró, Oiseaux, 1968, cast
bronze, 1981, at the Margulies
Collection.**

November 14 through December 1:
"Everybody Suz-ercise!" by Susan Lee-Chun
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

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2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
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Through November 28:
"Fugitive Dreams" by Cecilia Paredes

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DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com
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"New Work" by Jenny Brillhart, "Venting" by Richard
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Art Listings

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250 NW 23rd St., Loft 206, Miami
305-573-1673
www.flightstudiogallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29 St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
November 14 through December 1:
"Summer in the City" by Fran Bobadilla
Reception November 14, 7 to 9 p.m.

KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-2000
www.kevinbrukgallery.com
November 14 through November 28:
Solo show by Su-en Wong
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
Through November 29:
"Departure and Return" by Luis Kerch

LEITER GALLERY

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

LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
November 14 through December 30:
"Decollage" by Francesca DiMattio
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

LURIE-KAVACHNINA GALLERY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-3060
www.lurie-kavachnina.com
November 14 through January 10:
"Apothecary Luxe" by Alonso Mateo
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
November 14 through November 30:
Solo show by Luciano Segundo Planes
Reception November 14, 7 to 11 p.m.

MARIO FLORES GALLERY

12502 NE 8th Ave., North Miami
561-201-2053
www.mariofloresgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAMI ART SPACE

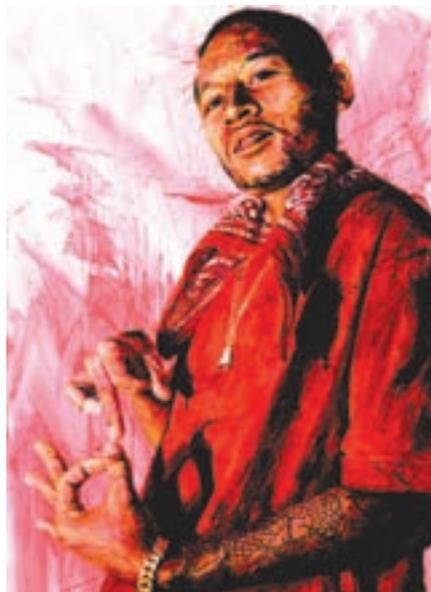
244 NW 35th St., Miami
305-438-9002
www.miamiartspace.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAM-DADE COLLEGE, CENTER GALLERY

300 NE 2nd Ave.,
Bldg. 1, Room 1365, Miami
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Through November 7:
Solo show by Cundo Bermudez
Through November 21:
Giambologna Exhibit

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

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



Michael Vasquez, *The Lay of the Land*, triptych (detail), acrylic on canvas, 2009, at Fredric Snitzer Gallery.

MUSEO VAULT

346 NW 29th St., Miami
305-571-1175
www.museovault.com
Through November 5:
"Dust to Life" by Shie Moreno

OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami
305-490-2976, www.oh-wow.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through November 7:
Paul Manes and Armando Mariño
November 14 through January 2:
"Denarrations" with Rodrigo Facundo, Cristina Lucas, Aernout Mik, Jorge Perianes, Tracey Snelling, Vibeke Tandberg, and Nina Yuen
Reception November 14, 6 to 9 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

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

PRESSITON ART GALLERY

4100 N. Miami Ave., Miami
786-925-2930, www.pressitonart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29 St., Miami
305-441-2005, artnet.com/sammertgallery.html
Through November 30:
"Masters on Paper" with Gris, Matta, Lam, Torres-Garcia, Gleizes, and Dominguez

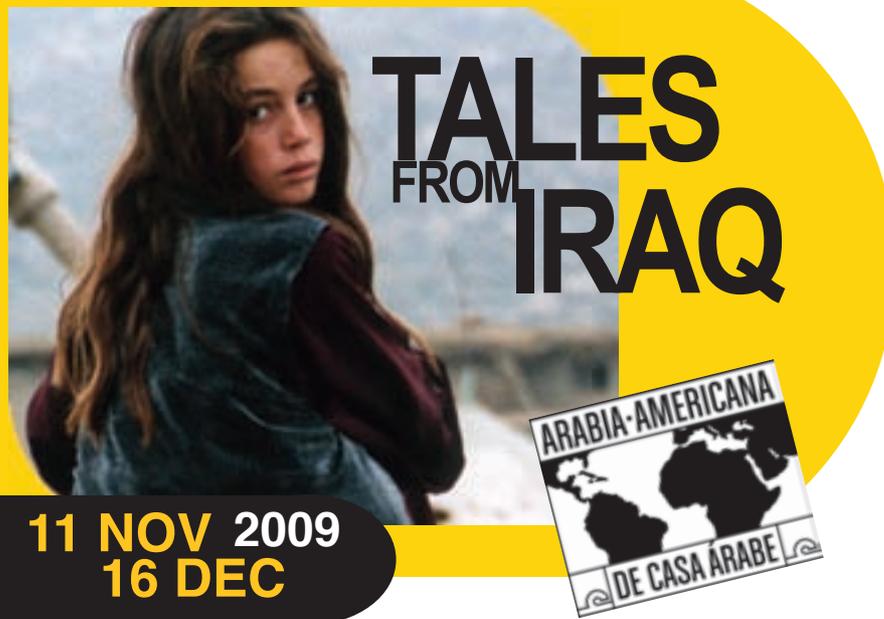
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305-438-0218, www.sethjason.com
November 14 through December 30:
"Recent Works" with John Henry and Carl Myers
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

SPINELLO GALLERY

155 NE 38th St., Miami
786-271-4223, www.spinellogallery.com
November 6 through December 10:
"LITTLEST SISTER 09" with Troy Abbott, Zach Balber,

Continued on page 38



November 11 7 pm ROUND TABLE "IRAQ: PRESENT AND FUTURE"

Participants: Gema Martín Muñoz, Director General of Casa Árabe, Mohamed Al Daradji, director of the film Ahlaam and Matias Zibell, BBC correspondent in Iraq in 2005.

November 13 7 pm USA PREMIERE: AHLAAM
Mohamed Al Daradji, (Iraq, 2006, 105'. Fiction)
The film will be followed by a Q&A session with the director.

November 18 7 pm TURTLES CAN FLY
Lakposhtha Parvaz Mikonand.
Bahman Ghobadi, (Iran/Iraq, 2004, 95'. Fiction)

November 25 7 pm UNDEREXPOSURE
Oday Rasheed, (Iraq/Germany, 2005, 74'. Fiction)

December 2 7 pm IRAQ IN FRAGMENTS
James Longley, (USA, 2006, 94'. Documentary)

December 9 7 pm IRAQI SHORT FILMS (DOCUMENTARY)
From the Independent Film & Television College, Baghdad- IFTCV.
• A Candle for the Shabandar Café. Emad Ali, (Iraq, 2007, 23'.)
• A Stranger in his own country. Hassanain Al Hani, (Iraq, 2007, 10'.)
• Leaving. Bahram Al Zuhairi, (Iraq, 2007, 23'.)

December 16 7 pm LIFE AFTER THE FALL
Al Hayat Ma Baada Al Suqut.
Kasim Abid, (Iraq, 2008, 155'. Documentary)

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www.casaarabe.es

Art Listings

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Bhakti Baxter, Sandra Bermudez, Blackbooks, Pablo Cano, Alejandro Contreras, Julie Davidow, Reniel Diaz, José Felix Perez, Pachi Giustinian, Michael Glidden, Enrique Gomez De Molina, Felice Grodin, Alex Heria, Alvaro Ilizarbe, Kris Knight, David Leroi, Nick Lobo, Lee Materazzi, Franco Mondini Ruiz, Victor Muniz, Federico Nessi, Skot Olsen, Christina Pettersson, Kerry Phillips, Vickie Pierre, Job Piston, Manny Prieres, Retna, Santiago Rubino, Samantha Salzinger, Oliver Sanchez, George Sanchez-Calderon, Tawnie Silva, Jen Stark, Tatiana Suarez, TM Sisters, Vadis Turner, TYPOE, Tatiana Vahan, Michelle Weinberg, Agustina Woodgate, and more

Reception November 6, 7 to 10 p.m.

STASH GALLERY

162 NE 50 Terr., Miami
305-992-7652, www.myspace.com/stashgallery
Through November 14:
Solo show by Sue Zola

STEVE MARTIN STUDIO

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

SWAMPSPACE GALLERY

3821 NE 1st Ct., Miami
swampstyle@gmail.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE

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

UNTITLED 2144

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

WALLFLOWER GALLERY

10 NE 3rd St., Miami
305-579-0069
www.wallflowergallery.com
myspace.com/wallflowergallery
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WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART

201 NE 39th St., Miami
305-576-6960
www.wrpfineart.com
Through November 14:
"Women in Photography" with Helmut Newton, Bert Stern, Nobuyoshi Araki, and David LaChapelle

YELEN ART GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami
954-235-4758
www.yeelenart.com
Through November 22:
"Kanzo" by Jerome Soismaud

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-455-3380
www.cifo.org
Through November 8:
"Shifting Constructs: CIFO 2009 Grants and Commissions Exhibition" with Miguel Amat, Gabriel Antolinez, Suwon Lee, Juan Carlos Leon, Ricardo Rendon, José Ruiz, Dora Longo Bahia, and Oscar Muñoz

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

11200 SW 8th St., Miami
305-348-0496
http://thefrost.fiu.edu/
Through December 7:
"En Vista" with Eduardo del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Through January 10:



Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Prayer for Obama II*, Polaroids, 2008, at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery.

"The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama" with various artists and "I a c u n a i n t e s t i m o n y" by Navjot Altaf

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535
www.lowemuseum.org
Through January 24:
"Kitchen Dreams" by Ricky Bernstein and "Tree of Paradise: Jewish Mosaics from the Roman Empire"

MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami
305-375-3000
www.miamiartmuseum.org
Through January 17:
"Guillermo Kuitca: Everything, Paintings and Works on Paper, 1980 - 2008" by Guillermo Kuitca
November 20 through February 28:
"Space as Medium" with various artists and "Metamorphosis" by Carlos Bunga

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Through November 8:
"Pivot Points 3" with Magdalena Abakanowicz, Rita Ackermann, Cory Arcangel, Roni Horn, Hank Willis Thomas, Uta Barth, Lothar Baumgarten, Dawoud Bey, COOPER, Gregory Crewdson, Tracey Emin, Anna Gaskell, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Adler Guerrier, Dan Flavin, Mark Handforth, Nancy Hayes, Zoe Leonard, Allan McCollum, Yoko Ono, Catherine Opie, and Richard Pettibone.

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051, www.margulieswarehouse.com
November 18 through April 30:
"Masters of Surrealist Sculpture" with Joan Miró and Isamu Noguchi, "100 Years of Photography 1909-2009" with Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Helen Levitt, Danny Lyon, Cindy Sherman, Justine Kurland, Alec Soth, Jeff Brouws, Olafur Eliasson, and Anastasia Khoroshilova, and "Depression Bread Line" by George Segal

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami
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Call for operating hours and exhibit information.

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November 14 through January 29:
Sylvie Fleury and Raymond Pettibon
Reception November 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

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Culture Briefs

It's Fun and Free and You Don't Have To Be a Prodigy

The Adrienne Arsht Center presents its first **Family Fest** of the season on **November 7** at 11:30 a.m. Kids will learn about the arts in an engaging outdoor environment on the plaza at the Ziff Ballet Opera House. Hands-on demonstrations, puppet-making, workshops in dance and song, and a 2:00 p.m. performance by the **Miami Music Project**, playing favorites by Strauss, Grieg, and Copland. Arrive before noon to take advantage of free parking in lot C, across from the center. For more information call 305-949-6722.

Faster Than a Speeding Bullet — Really

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds have not roared overhead since Hurricane Andrew demolished the Homestead Air Reserve Base. But now they're back with their sensational aerobatics for the **free Wings Over Homestead** show on **November 7** from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the air base (29050 Coral Sea Blvd.). In addition to the Thunderbirds, there will be 15 other gravity-defying shows, including the Navy's F-18 Demo Team and the B-2 Spirit Bomber. Also on display: more than 30 aircraft, from a DC-3 to a hulking B-52, plus memorabilia and food vendors. Consider earplugs. Visit www.wingsoverhomestead.com or call 305-224-7330.

Best Reason to Pull an All-Nighter

Miami City Ballet performances, a pajama run on Ocean Drive, Art Deco walking tours, comedic performances, aerial acrobats, an oceanfront breakfast by Whole Foods, more than 130 events? **Sleepless Night** is back on **November 7**, part of an international movement that promotes *free* events. The night begins at 6:00 p.m. and spans 13 hours between Ocean Drive and 71st street in Miami Beach. Free shuttles close to parking garages will be available to transport patrons from adventure to adventure. A full itinerary can be found at www.sleeplessnight.org.



Intellectual Stimulus Package



Pull an All-Nighter



Speeding Bullet



Bad Boy

Our Very Own Intellectual Stimulus Package

The world may be reeling from the economic downturn but there's one thing bibliophiles will *always* attend: the **Miami Book Fair International**, which runs **November 8-15**. Readers from around the region will converge on Miami-Dade College's downtown Wolfson campus to see their favorite authors, like Miami's own Ana Menendez and Mia Leonin, along with other notables like Al Gore and Joyce Carol Oats. Admission is \$8 and complimentary tickets are required for many events. For more information call 305-237-3258. Visit www.miamibookfair.com for a complete schedule.

Return of the Bad Boy

What better way to spend a Friday night than with **Anthony Bourdain**, bad boy of the culinary world. Bourdain will be back in Miami **November 13**, and this time he's bringing along two of his best friends, famed chefs **Jacques Pépin** and **Eric Ripert**, among the best in the biz. As part of the Adrienne Arsht Center's Celebrity Chef Series, Pépin and Ripert will battle head-to-head, live on stage. The twist? Mystery ingredients. Tickets range from \$25 to \$200. The fun begins at 8:00 p.m. Call 305-949-6722 or visit www.arshtcenter.org for more information.

How To Achieve Scholastic Excellence: Eat, Drink, and Be Merry!

Doctors Charter School of Miami Shores will hold its fourth annual "**Evening in the Courtyard**" fundraiser on **November 13** from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Attendees will enjoy exquisite wines, delectable hors d'oeuvres, and first-rate entertainment under the stars. (Age check: Must be 21.) Tickets are \$50 per person, with proceeds supporting the successful "A" middle and high school, which can boast that 100 percent of last year's graduating class went on to college. For tickets call 305-762-5175 or visit www.doctorscharterschool.org.

Go South, Then Go Green

Plastic bags and high-fructose corn syrup are so last season. Spend a day or a weekend at the **Great Green Family Festival** at Miami-Dade County's Fruit & Spice Park outside Homestead to learn more about living a truly green lifestyle. Organizers promise everything from alternative energy and green vehicles and fuels to medicinal herbs and a local farmers market. Live music and entertainment for the whole family. Admission is \$8 and kids under 11 are free. Event dates and hours are **November 14-15**, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information call 305-247-5727 or visit www.fruitandspicepark.com.

A Short Riverwalk for a Short River

Unlike many cities with rivers running through them, Miami doesn't have much of a riverwalk — at least not yet. But that's not stopping the folks at Urban Tour Host from inviting us to their second annual **Downtown Miami Riverwalk Festival and Boat Parade, November 21**. What riverwalk we do have wraps around the InterContinental Hotel and One Miami Condo towers, where the river meets Biscayne Bay and where you'll see some terrific public art. Best access is from Bayfront Park, where there will be entertainers, food tastings, art displays, and activities for kids — all *free* from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call 305-416-6868.

A Circa 1980 Battery-Operated Dust Buster? Eureka!

Call it the Mother of All Garage Sales. On **November 21** the City of North Miami Beach once again gives you a chance to clear out your garage — or possibly pick up some *absolutely essential* doodads. The **annual garage sale** takes place at the Mishcon Park parking lot (16601 NE 15th Ave.) from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. To register as a seller call 305-948-2986 or visit city hall at 17011 NE 19th Ave., fourth floor. The city is offering 100 vendor tables *free* to early registrants, but they'll go fast.

Move Over, Snoopy

Before you sit down to turkey dinner with all the trimmings, kick off the holiday season with North Miami's 35th annual **Winternational Thanksgiving Day Parade** on (no surprise) Thanksgiving Day, **Thursday, November 26**. Don't forget the lawn chairs and come early to claim the best seats (in our opinion, the shaded ones). It has all the fun of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade but with a homespun flavor and much better weather. (Snoopy should consider moving to Miami.) The event runs along NE 125th Street between 5th and 12th avenues and begins at 10:00 a.m. Call 305-895-9840 for details.

Compiled by BT interns Mandy Baca and Matt Ruckman

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Lonely, Lost, and Doomed to Concrete

Miami's oldest park deserves better than the future it faces

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Is your park smarter than a fifth grader? That probably depends upon which city you call home. When it comes to Biscayne Park, which is located in the City of Miami, we may need to rephrase the question, to lower our expectations somewhat — say, down to preschool. Even a four-year-old can draw a square and color it green. Add a sun and a pretty rainbow and you've got Miami's oldest and loneliest park.

Not to be confused with the village of the same name, this Biscayne Park is stuck between its long past and potentially promising future. Its current reading on the park-odometer: pathetic.

As the oldest park in the City of Miami proper, and second in age in the county only to Lummus Park in South Beach, you would think that Biscayne Park would be a grande dame. But she doesn't even qualify as frumpy. She's invisible. She's the unwanted grandmother who was put away in a home, locked up, and forgotten. On the other side of the fence are all her friends, enjoying the lovely shade in the historic Miami City Cemetery. Both are managed by the City of Miami's Parks and Recreation Department.

From within the cemetery, visitors have no idea that another park exists on the other side of the northern fence, because it looks exactly the same as the southern view of an empty lot.

Biscayne Park is a large, monotonous rectangle of almost nothing but



Looking east toward Biscayne Bay: The towers could be reflected in the grass.

grass. Last year concrete benches and immature oak trees were added along the fence's perimeter, but these additions give it about as much character as a Walmart parking lot.

Parking lots! There are plenty nearby. Two oversize lots and an open field sit in between forlorn Biscayne Park and the nearest main thoroughfare of NE 2nd Avenue. What would a fifth grader do? He would connect the dots, blast away the parking lots, and create one of the largest green spaces near downtown. That is my expansive dream for Biscayne Park. Upgrade the dream by returning the park to one of its original uses as a

BT photos by Jim W. Harper

park offered shade to counteract the heat that will be generated by pouring more concrete over existing grass. Miami is paradise paved over. And no, this park offers no shade whatsoever. None.

The heat wave of October made visiting this Biscayne Park an insult added to the injury of its dull appearance. Perhaps I'm missing some depth of meaning created by grass in a large rectangle surrounded by a white metal fence. Is this a tribute to uber-minimalism and our post-apocalyptic future? Toss in a fire station at one end, dilapidated houses along one side, the cemetery on the other, the offices of the civil rights organization PULSE at the eastern border, and Biscayne Park starts to feel edgy.

The edginess (and ugliness) comes when approaching the park from the east on 19th Street, after passing the



Students from a nearby charter school get lots of sunshine — way too much sunshine.

nursery, and it could rival nearby Margaret Pace Park as an urban jewel.

So what is the City of Miami planning? A skateboard park.

In fact the skateboard park is a done deal for this neighborhood, as the proposal period ended October 23 and Miami's Community Redevelopment Agency has already set aside \$1 million for the project. The proposal states that the skateboard portion will consume a maximum of one and a half acres, or 65,340 square feet, which equates to roughly one-third of the current grassy field.

A skateboard park might be a good idea if: 1) Miami was not already overrun by concrete, and 2) this particular

beautiful Temple Israel. If approaching the park from the west, the open space offer surprisingly interesting vistas of the high-rises of downtown Miami and Edgewater. It almost feels as if the condos should be reflected in the grass.

But Biscayne Park remains invisible between its strange bedfellows and lack of access to a major street. The only reason I found the park at all was a chance visit to Temple Israel next door. Look over there! Is there a park on the other side of that fence? Or is it just another abandoned condo project? It's a — well, it has signs calling it a park, so it must be.

.....
Continued on page 41

BISCAYNE PARK

Park Rating

150 NE 19th St.
Miami
Hours: Sunrise to sunset
Picnic tables: No
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Tennis courts: No
Athletic fields: Yes
Night lighting: No
Swimming pool: No
Playground: No

Lonely

Continued from page 40

The park's main patrons are the middle-school students of the Aspira Eugenio Maria De Hostos Youth Leadership Charter School, located adjacent to the park's northwestern corner. During the week, they play volleyball and soccer on the sprawling fields, unless those fields have sprouted mud puddles that are clearly visible in the park's center after a rain storm.

While the students enjoy games, non-participating (lazy) kids huddle around the benches in the corner near one of the few shade trees (technically outside the park). Before the benches were installed last year, the kids used to sit in the dirt, according to their P.E. teacher.

The P.E. teacher said that his students don't need a skateboard park, but they could use courts of the basketball, tennis, or other variety. They could also use exercise bars and a basic playground for their younger siblings.

But alas, the fate of Biscayne "Skateboard" Park has already been decided. The redevelopment will undoubtedly bring new patrons to the park, and



Temple Israel's Moorish main sanctuary, built in 1926. Architect Kenneth Treister later added a jewel-box of a chapel.

skateboarders may join the area's busy street traffic. May God grant them the wisdom to wear helmets.

The most immediate upgrade needed in Biscayne Park is water fountains. Perhaps the fire station next door could extend



If you didn't see the sign, you'd have to wonder: Public park or failed condo project?

a hose through the fence and open the spigot. Some restrooms would be nice, too.

The second-biggest need at the park is landscaping — especially in the corners, where the look tends toward dirt, rocks, and litter. It's not a good look.

Perhaps the skateboard park, scheduled to open next year, will accomplish the Herculean feat of integrating this patch of green into a neighborhood struggling to define itself.

If you really want to dream about the

park's potential, look at Google Maps and imagine it as the center of a greenway stretching west on 18th Street from Margaret Pace Park to the cemetery and Biscayne Park, and then south along NE 1st Avenue, where there are numerous vacant lots.

This being Miami, it will never happen. But even a fifth-grader has a right to dream.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Mixing It Up in Miami

In a town this diverse, interracial couples are no big deal

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

I will never, ever forget the first time I read to my own child. That simple act was accompanied by a profound sense of crossing an important threshold into parenthood. It was our first night together, literally just a few hours after pushing her out into the world. I was in my postnatal bed with newborn Goldi on my chest and a copy of the Rosemary Wells version of *Mother Goose*.

A lifetime of imagining what it would mean to be a mommy flashed through my mind as my voice transmitted the same words spoken by generations of parents into my own baby's consciousness — at whatever level a four-hour-old experiences.

We all know how important it is to read to our kids from the moment they're born. I assume I'm preaching to the choir when I underscore that this early connection to literature feeds all kinds of intelligence, from verbal skills to critical thinking. Recent studies have quantified the tremendous intellectual advantages bestowed on infants whose parents speak and read to them frequently. By the time they enter school, the effects are obvious and substantial — these children are far better prepared for learning than kids whose early years were bereft of such verbal activities.

Reading is important because it exercises our imaginations. Flexing that muscle leads to sharpening skills across all aspects of life, and bolsters our children's success throughout their lives. It expands problem-solving skills — from the basics of decoding and



Courtesy Miami Book Fair International

comprehending to fostering the creativity it takes to innovate in any field. And it is essential in learning how to get along with people in relationships that span the spectrum from personal to professional. Reading keeps us busy, informed — and it keeps us company. Thus it's important to build a lifelong connection to reading.

While we supposedly live in a culture that values all these things, somehow we still seem to encounter a lot of blithering illiteracy and woeful lack of ability to articulate. Either I'm becoming less tolerant or this distressing situation is actually on the rise. Worse, it appears to be more and more acceptable.

But recently my heart was wrenched as I witnessed a grown man who was unable to read. He very cleverly, yet so sadly, attempted to cover his illiteracy. All I could think about was how every day must be so painful for that man. And how blessed my six-year-old reader is — even given the fact that she still has

some issues with reading confidence. We really must keep our kids growing as confident readers, and do our part to support an overall culture of literacy.

So how do I keep my kids engaged in reading amid a world of distractions, many of them digital? For me it's all about *tearing the words off the page*. I do it through the dynamic use of my voice, my body, and sometimes song. In addition, there is always dialogue with the kid, which can mean Goldi's or Izzi's running commentary about the book as I read from it, interspersed with questions from me.

As I read a Noah story recently, I asked Izzi how he imagined it might feel to be responsible for as many animals as Noah was in the Ark — compared to how Izzi has three cats to feed.

If we'd been reading *Caps for Sale*, Izzi would be asked what it must feel like to have that huge stack of caps on his head, and he'd be chiming in "Ca-aaaps, caps for sale 'ifty' cents a caaap!" in all

the right places, as well as "tss, tss, tss," just as the monkeys respond to the peddler. Books that rhyme or use repetition are great as they make it really easy for kids to join in the "reading" on their own level.

Another way to promote literacy and a deep relationship with books for our kids is to provide them with opportunities to see books come to life. Children's theater, like the Playground Theatre in Miami Shores, which imaginatively produces children's plays, is a good example. Another is the terrific programming at Miami Book Fair International's Children's Alley.

Anyone who has been reading this column for a while knows that I'm a major fan of the Miami Book Fair. Every year I'm completely awed by how extraordinary it is. That our entire diverse community comes together in downtown Miami thirsting for literary experience just sends me soaring to all kinds of heights.

In addition to simply exposing our kids to a bounty of books and active reading as we wander through crowds of book enthusiasts at the fair, Children's Alley each year includes stages where storytellers and local performing artists bring stories to life. It also doesn't hurt that kids get to cuddle up and be photographed with some of their favorite literary characters — talk about tearing stories off the page!

See you there!

For more information about Miami Book Fair International, including schedules for children's programming, visit www.miamibookfair.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Transforming Miami in Eight Easy Steps

If Copenhagen can do it, we can do it — with a tropical twist

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Dear Mayor Diaz: Heading to Copenhagen this year for the most important climate change summit ever? As the former head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, your participation is crucial. We Americans are primarily urban creatures, and our cities are where the battle over energy use will be won or lost.

Arriving in Denmark, you will see rows of white windmills on the water (clean energy, check). Stepping out of the train station from the airport, you'll be run over by bicycles (human-powered transport, check). Bicycles are everywhere. Taxis carry bike racks. Single women cycle at 3:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. It doesn't matter in Copenhagen — day or night — bicycles rule the road.

Take a look at the construction of streets there. The bike lane is slightly elevated, thereby separating cyclists from cars and buses. Traffic lights are timed for cyclists instead of cars. Walking is encouraged by huge pedestrian-only zones — imagine Lincoln Road times ten and you start to get the picture.

Could Miami ever be a Copenhagen or an Amsterdam? All three are flat cities with large waterfronts, where sustainable, healthy lifestyles are encouraged. Unless things change, all of them will be underwater by the next century, as result of global warming causing sea levels to rise.

Certainly the American way out of this crisis will be unique, but we can take cues from nations with a higher standard of living than ours, but lower levels of consumption. My recent excursion to Copenhagen has inspired me to propose



the following eight targets for a healthier Miami within 40 years. By 2050, Miami can achieve these goals:

1. **AN AWARE, EDUCATED PUBLIC** Nothing changes in a democracy without education. But schools alone cannot bear this burden, as Miami attracts immense numbers of visitors and immigrants who need constant educating. Do not let anyone trash our city, and give multiple opportunities to recycle on the street. Take actions that send the right messages to everyone.
2. **HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES** People who care for their personal health are more likely to care about nature's health, too. Human-powered transportation (walking, cycling) promotes health at both levels. Eating local produce is better for you and for the earth. Health is a global concept that we can experience locally.
3. **INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION** Human-powered transport must assume its rightful place in front of all others. Walkable communities. Bikeable streets. A user-friendly

train systems that repurposes existing tracks. We can do this.

4. **GREENER AND BLUER SPACES** The tree-canopy goals and master park plans are already in place. Do not allow unbridled development to crush our plans. With property values dropping, now is the time to acquire more greenways and park space.
5. **STREETS OF WHITE GOLD** The idea to paint all roofs and streets white (or at least light instead of dark) is being promoted by Steven Chu, the U.S. Energy Secretary. Blacktop becomes whitetop. It makes perfect sense in our climate and can be encouraged with a simple discount on white paint. And it adds a little more "magic" to our Magic City.
6. **RECYCLED WATER** Miami has decided that we must reuse our wastewater, and that change should come quickly. Clean water is always number-one. Then promote other reuse strategies. Compost more. Recycle more. Please make it easier for everyone to recycle. You can start by placing recycling bins in all city and county parks.

7. **BE PLEASED WITH 80 DEGREES** Come on, folks. We live in a warm, lovely climate, and we need to embrace it indoors and out. No school should set its air conditioning below 78 degrees. Open windows and turn off the A/C in the winter. Get more fresh air. Sweat a little. Wear lighter clothing. Heat is cool.

8. **WIND AND SOLAR ENERGY LEADERSHIP** Where is Miami going to find any sun and wind? Someone is going to become very rich if they can discover it. When they figure out how to harvest clean energy here, they can teach the entire hurricane-prone world how to do it. Miami can lead the way.

Northern European cities like Copenhagen may have thousands of years of history, but Miami has something else. It has the opportunity to stop the madness of "fast" cities and replace it with the languid, tropical sway of a palm tree in the breeze. In other words, Miami cannot become Copenhagen or any other city for that matter. We can and should borrow the best ideas from the entire world.

Sustainable living shares the common goal worldwide of living within the earth's means. But each place must follow the edict of thinking globally while acting locally, which will differ from place to place.

Mayor Diaz, please take our wishes and ideas along to the international community meeting in Copenhagen this December. Even though you'll no longer be mayor, keep bringing back the best ideas for our city. We need you. The world needs you. As you know, Miami's future is the world's future, and vice versa. Don't let us drown.

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How To Talk Like a Dog

Begin by understanding their language, which is more elaborate than you might imagine

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

We humans always look for ways to cope with stress or uncomfortable situations. We can become passive-aggressive, combative, excessively verbal, or completely nonverbal. Many of us have rituals we perform — lighting up a cigarette and pouring a drink, pretending to check our text messages when someone is staring at us, energetically cleaning our homes. Some of our stress-coping behaviors may even get to the point of obsessive compulsiveness unless we learn a different way of dealing with particular situations.

Animals aren't much different. We've all seen signs indicating that a dog may be in stress: drooling, heavy panting without exercise or heat, chewing, changed behavior, hiding and growling — to name a few. But as highly social animals, canines (wolves and domestic dogs) have developed elaborate nonverbal methods for calming themselves and those around them, be they humans or other dogs.

In fact dogs are excellent communicators and conflict-solvers and avoiders. When problems arise, they are usually the result of human interference. Sometimes the problem stems from dogs not being allowed to socialize enough with their own species, leading to the dog losing his canine social language and being uncomfortable and spastic with other dogs. Another problem results from humans not recognizing the subtle signals dogs are giving them. That can lead to people ignoring the signals or acting

mildly aggressive toward the animal owing to a lack of understanding.

Here is an example: You need to take your obedience-trained dog to the vet. He watches you get dressed, put on lipstick, and grab your purse — and also his leash. He knows this is not going to be a walk in the park because you're not in your normal shorts and running shoes. To him this scenario usually means something a bit unpleasant.

You are running late, and with some tension in your voice, you call him to come to you — which is not your usual "Let's go walkies!" Saturday voice, either. Your dog looks away from you. You think he plainly decided to ignore the command he knows so well, so you call him again, more assertively as the clock is ticking.

This time he sits down and scratches himself, looks at you and, seeing the daggers in your eyes, takes a small step toward you, then finds an imaginary scent on the floor and sniffs at it. Incensed now at his lack of obedience, you give a final command: "I said *come!* Get over here *now!*" This time he comes to you, taking a wide circular route and sneezing the entire way. He approaches



you sideways. You slap the leash on and finally go.

Here is another example: You want to take your dog's photograph for your annual holiday card. The second you're ready to snap the picture, your dog turns his head. You try again, coaxing him to look at the ominous device pointing straight at him. He turns his head again. And again. Now you try harder. You talk faster and louder, telling him: "Watch me, watch me!" He finally does, but licks his nose with his tongue. You are

enraged, having only a bunch of useless shots of profiles and tongues hanging out to show for all your work.

All this lip-licking, scratching, looking away, sneezing, and other easily misread behaviors is part of a complex canine language. These behaviors are known as "calming signals," a term coined by Turid Rugaas, a Norwegian dog trainer and behavior specialist. They are a dog's way of not only coping with stress and calming himself, but calming those around him.

You've probably seen a dog at a bark park who somehow seems to get along with the neighborhood bully dog. He knows just what to do and how to act to calm the more aggressive dog. For example, the bully dog approaches the park and immediately sees a large dog he would like to deal with right away (possibly his own way to cope with what he fears).

He doesn't know that cool-headed "Jackson" has wonderful dog signals and knows how to calm down the big guy. Jackson sees the rogue dog approaching him straight on, and with a nonstop stare. Jackson looks away to calm him and let him know he is no fighter. Now the bully (usually just a dog with less social grace) jumps in Jackson's face, but Jackson doesn't make eye contact and sniffs the ground. Maybe he yawns, another signal that he is no threat. Maybe Jackson freezes and doesn't move at all. Eventually the bully dog either befriends him or just moves on. I have seen this happen many, many times. One of my own dogs is quite good at it, when dealing with

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COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

Talk

Continued from page 44

“growly” dogs and when assisting me with their lessons.

The fascinating thing about this secret language of dogs is that we humans can use many of their signals to calm the dogs in our life. Say, for example, your dog is afraid of loud noise. Next time that annoying Harley-Davidson roars by, you could yawn repeatedly without eye contact to convey calmness.

Or when faced with a dog who is not confident around people (and perhaps is acting aggressively toward you), you can avert your gaze or blink repeatedly, letting him see that you are not focused on him and therefore not a threat. You can also turn sideways rather than facing him head on.

Looking to adopt a dog from a shelter? Try some calming signals yourself. While other people are in front of the cages, looming over the dogs, pointing and yelling at them to “Sit!” you

should crouch down (“sit” yourself), face turned to the side, and remain quiet. Avert your gaze. Yawn. Breathe slowly and deeply. Smile. Say hello to them in a soft, friendly manner. Keep looking away from them. Then just see who gets a better response from the dogs!

It is amazing how much we can “see” when we open our eyes to new ways of looking. One of my favorite quotes from Turid Rugaas is this: “When dealing with dogs, we always have a choice of how to behave: We can be calm, friendly,

reassuring, or we can be threatening. But why would we ever want to be threatening to a dog? For me, the choice is easy.” My sentiments exactly!

Lisa Hartman is head dog trainer for Pawsitively Pets. You can reach her at pawsitivelypetsonline@yahoo.com or www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com. You can also keep up with her and her dogs on Facebook at www.profile.to/dogtrainer.

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Miami's Chainsaw Massacre

There is a right way and a very, very wrong way to prune your tree

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Recently I had to clean up the debris from a large branch that had fallen out of a Royal Poinciana. From afar it seemed to be a very healthy tree; it had a nice straight trunk and a symmetrical canopy. However, a closer look revealed structural problems. It was at least 20 years old and had never been properly pruned. That meant branches were growing in all directions, including inward, and it had “bunches” of smaller branches growing from the same points.

Royal Poinciana is notorious for this kind of growth, especially when branches have been broken off in a storm or pruned improperly. Many new branches will grow out below an old limb cut or break. Poor connections develop between these new branches and the old ones.

This tree definitely went through several hurricanes that caused some damage. The unchecked new growth was similar to what happens when a tree's branches are cut down to stubs. This is commonly known as “topping” or “hat-racking.”

Topping may be one of the worst pruning practices that can be inflicted upon a tree. However, many of us in the past, myself included, cut trees in this manner as it was the accepted wisdom. We have since learned through experience and a lot of scientific evidence that this method is simply not acceptable. Now it is also *illegal* in many municipalities, including the City of Miami.

The most common rationale for topping is to reduce the size of a tree.

Homeowners often feel their trees have become too large, and they fear they'll pose a hazard, particularly during a hurricane. Topping, however, does *not* reduce the hazard. In fact, topping will not only make a tree more hazardous in the long term, it will cause very rapid new growth, quickly returning the tree to its previous overgrown state.

Topping removes 50 to 100 percent of a tree's foliage. Because a tree's leaves manufacture the food it needs to live, removing them can often lead to unforeseen problems, such as insect or mite infestations. The severity of the pruning also triggers a sort of survival mechanism. Since the tree needs to put out a new crop of leaves as fast as possible, dormant buds on the branches burst to life, growing in multiple shoots below each cut.

The survival mechanism that causes a tree to produce multiple shoots comes at great expense. Unlike normal branches that develop within a socket of overlapping wood tissues, these new shoots are anchored only on the outermost layers of the branches that have been cut. They grow quickly — too quickly.

Unfortunately, these shoots are prone to breaking when the foliage gets too



A recently “topped” Royal Poinciana: Not just ugly, but showing many potential structural problems.

heavy, and especially during windy conditions. The irony is that while the goal was to reduce the tree's height to make it safer, it has been made more dangerous because of the poor connections between the new branches and the old wood. Topping creates hazards!

The preferred location to make a pruning cut is just beyond the branch “collar” (swollen area), at the point of branch attachment. The tree is biologically equipped to close this wound, provided the tree is healthy enough and the wound is not too large. The exposed, recently cut wood tissue will begin to decay. Normally a tree will “wall off,” or compartmentalize, this decaying area. But few trees can defend the multiple severe wounds caused by topping.

BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

An acquaintance approached me recently because he heard I was an arborist. He asked me why the large tree in his front yard that needed some maintenance had received two bids with almost a \$2000 disparity between them. Why were the bids so different?

I asked him if the tree was valuable to him. Would he get the same price if he sold his house and property with or without the tree? He said that one of the reasons he bought the house was because of the tree. I then asked him if the two bids had come from certified arborists. Apparently only the high bid was from a certified arborist.

I explained that the tree was an investment, and that if he wanted it to be as healthy as possible for as long as possible, he would need to get the proper care for it. A bona fide arborist needs continuing education credits to maintain his or her arborist certification. Obviously some arborists are better than others, depending on their education, experience, and talent. But all certified arborists will provide better and more knowledgeable service than tree-trimmers who have no rigorous training. Be sure to check credentials before you contract for work.

Periodic pruning isn't done just to make a tree look good. It should also attempt to reduce the risk of structural failure.

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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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

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

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

\$= \$10 and under

\$\$= \$20

\$\$\$= \$30

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

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

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

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. \$\$\$

Andú

141 SW 7th St.
786-871-7005

www.andurestaurant.com

This space's futuristic fairyland décor, highlighted by hanging glass pendants, makes it popular as a stylish hangout as much as a restaurant -- and loungers are rewarded with a bar menu ranging from the traditional (zataar-spiked hummus) to the trendy (artichoke purée with feta); calamari with Meyer lemon brown butter is

especially recommended. Tip: While entrées and sides on the changing main menu are also mostly Mediterranean, some of the kitchen's best shots stretch the concept considerably. So don't miss the fries with chipotle/Key lime aioli. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

Balans

901 S. Miami Ave.
(Mary Brickell Village)
305-534-9191

www.balans.co.uk

Open until 4:00 a.m. on weekends, this London import (Miami's second Balans) offers a sleeker setting than its perennially popular Lincoln Road progenitor, but the same simple yet sophisticated global menu. The indoor space can get mighty loud, but lounging on the dog-friendly outdoor terrace, over a rich croque monsieur (which comes with an alluringly sweet/sour citrus-dressed side salad), a lobster club on onion toast, some surprisingly solid Asian fusion items, and a cocktail is one of Miami's more relaxing experiences. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bali Café

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

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Prelude

Adrienne Arsh Center
1300 Biscayne Blvd.
305-949-6722

Though the opening of Barton G.'s elegant performing arts center eatery did feature a live giraffe, the food's actually more grown-up than at his original SoBe spot. The concept is prix fixe: Any three courses on the menu (meaning three entrées if you want) for \$39. Highlights include silky, tarragon-inflected corn/bacon chowder, beautifully plated beef carpaccio with horseradish/mustard and shallot olive oil dipping sauces; and over-the-top playhouse desserts, one with a luscious crème fraiche ice cream pop. \$\$\$

Solyar

315 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-371-3421

Housed in the stunning space with great water views originally occupied by Prime Blue Grille, Solyar similarly pursues the power lunch crowd with steaks and seafood, but with a stronger Latin accent. There's more emphasis on snacks, too, making happy hour a great time to sample \$2.50 tapas like conch fritters with spicy Argentine pink sauce and palmito salad, sparkling-fresh Amarillo chili-spiked Peruvian shrimp ceviche, or festive fish/lump crab sliders, along with half-off drinks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Tre Italian Bistro

270 E. Flagler St.
305-373-3303

www.tremiami.com

"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistrolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with rigatoni for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$-\$\$\$

lunch it's an elegant sandwich bar; at night it's a raw bar (with pristine coldwater oysters) and (best) a tapas bar serving pintos. 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. \$\$\$

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

Waxy O'Connor's

690 SW 1st Ct.
786-871-7660

www.waxys.com

While the menu of this casually *craic* (Gaelic for "fun") Irish pub will be familiar to fans of the South Beach Waxy's, the location is far superior -- on the Miami River, with waterfront deck. And none of Miami's Irish eateries offers as much authentic traditional fare. Especially evocative: imported oak-smoked Irish salmon with housemade brown bread; puff-pastry-wrapped Irish sausage rolls; lunchtime's imported Irish bacon or banger "butty" sandwiches on crusty baguettes, served with hand-cut fries, the latter particularly terrific dipped in Waxy's curry sauce. \$\$

Wok Town

119 SE 1st Ave.
305-371-9993

www.woktown.com

Judging from the takeout window, the minimalist décor (with communal seating), and predominance of American veggies on the menu, this Asian fast-food eatery, owned by Shai Ben-Ami (a Miss Yip and Domo Japones veteran) may initially seem akin to those airport Oriental steam tables. Wrong. Custom-cooked by Chinese chefs, starters (like soy/garlic-coated edamame), salads, and have-it-your-way stir-fries, fried rice, or noodle bowls burst with bold, fresh flavor. The proof: a startlingly savory miso beef salad, with sesame/ginger/scallion dressing. Bubble tea, too! \$\$

MIAMI

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Maitardi

163 NE 39th St.
305-572-1400

maitardimiami.com

Though we admired the ambitious approach of Oak Plaza's original tenant, Brosia, this more informal, inexpensive, and straightforwardly Italian concept of veteran Lincoln Road restaurateur Graziano Sbroglio seems a more universal lure for the Design District's central "town square." The mostly outdoor space remains unaltered save a wood-burning oven producing flavorfully char-bubbled pizza creations, plus a vintage meat slicer dispensing wild boar salami, bresaola (cured beef), and other artisan salumi. Other irresistibles: fried artichokes with lemon aioli; seafood lasagna with heavenly dill-lobster sauce. \$\$\$

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

Miami's Finest Caribbean Restaurant

236 NE 1st Ave., 305-381-9254

Originally from Jamaica, proprietor Miss Pat has been serving her traditional homemade island specialties to

Continued on page 48

Red, White, and You

Agreeable wine for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

Everyone likes to say there's much we should be thankful for this time of year but, frankly, it's a lot more fun to tell *other* people what they should be thankful for. People like David Letterman, who should be thankful his wife isn't Lorena Bobbit.

Jon and Kate Gosselin should be thankful anyone gives a damn.

The Miami Dolphins should be thankful they had another Chad hanging around.

Republicans should be thankful Democrats have no spine.

Democrats should be thankful Republicans have no clue.

In truth, we all should be thankful things aren't even worse. You know they could be.

And I'm thankful I don't have to try to match a bunch of wines with the traditional Thanksgiving dinner more than once a year.

That, not to put too fine a point on it, is a bitch. Try finding one wine that goes well with turkey (white meat and dark), stuffing (which usually has sausage and/or some type of fruit), gravy, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie — it's enough to give even the most dedicated cork dork a mental hernia.

So this year I thought: Let's try to drink outside the box. Weeding through

all the usual vinous suspects — Cabernet, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc — in search of those with the elusively right balance to pair with everything on the Thanksgiving Day table requires more time and money than we have here. (Pinot Noir is the one exception because it's incredibly versatile and — dammit! — it's Pinot Noir.) If we look at other varietals, however, we just might find better wines for less money that go better with our annual turkey day pig-out.

Thankfully, we did. First the whites. We looked for white wines that were fruit-forward, even with a bit of residual sugar, to pair more gracefully with the sweet components of the typical Thanksgiving spread. (Drinking a dry wine with even a modestly sweet dish can make the wine taste bitter.)

How can you not love a wine that calls itself **Goats Do Roam**? This South African product takes after its humorous namesake



(think Côtes du Rhône) by blending three of that region's iconic grapes: Viognier, Grenache Blanc, and Roussanne. The 2009 vintage is great stuff — fragrant and full-bodied, tasting of ripe peaches and tropical fruit, floral but not sweet, with a tangy lemon-lime backbone. It's also a killer value at \$7.99.

Climbing the sweet-floral ladder, we come to the **2007 Domaine Toussaint Vouvray**. It's 100-percent Chenin Blanc in the classic floral, honeysuckle, ripe apricot Vouvray style, with a lush, almost creamy texture and a sweet lemonade finish. Up a notch from there is the **2007 Jekel Monterey Riesling**, an excellent choice for those who really don't like dry wines but with enough spicy acidity to balance its plush honey, peach, and mango flavors.

Of course we *must* have a Pinot Noir, and for that and affordable wines in general, it's tough to

beat the **Blackstone** line. This Monterey

winery's **2007 California Pinot** delivers a lot of varietal character for its \$9.99 price tag, with aromas of tart cherries and strawberries, toast, and black olives that carry through to the palate.

With its crisp, candy-ish raspberry flavors, mineral-spice undertones, and bracing acidity, the **2007 Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais-Villages** gives plenty of French love to an American celebration. The **2005 Santa Cristina Sangiovese** offers a very different flavor profile — blackberries, earth, and caramel in the nose; blue and blackberries, minerals, and sweet spices on the palate.

It's enough to make a guy feel downright thankful.

The Goats Do Roam, Vouvray, and Pinot Noir are available at North Miami's Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) for \$7.99, \$11.99 and \$9.99, respectively. The North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) carries the Riesling (\$10.99) and Beaujolais (\$8.49), while the Sangiovese can be found for \$9.49 at the Biscayne Commons Publix and other Publix stores with decent wine selections (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171).

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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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
From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées, which range from Nuevo Latino-style ginger/orange-glazed pork tenderloin to a platter of Kobe mini-burgers, all cost either \$18 or \$23. And the price 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 glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Ecco Pizzateca & Lounge

168 SE 1st St.
305-960-1900, www.eccomiami.com
Masterminded by Aramis Lorie (of PS14) and partner Brian Basti, this hip hangout was designed to entice

downtown workers to linger after office hours. And even without the expansive, casual-chic space as bait, internationally award-winning Italian pizza chef Massimo Fabio Bruni's exquisitely airy, burn-blistered pies, made from homemade dough, could do the trick. The rest of the organically oriented menu may also be great, but with pizzas like the cream/mushroom-topped Bianca beckoning, we'll never know. \$\$\$

Eos

485 Brickell Ave. (Viceroy Hotel)
305-503-0373
Unlike their Michelin-starred New Adriatic restaurant Anthos, in Manhattan, this venture of chef Michael Psilakis and restaurateur Donatella Arpaia has influences ranging way beyond Greece to the whole Mediterranean region, and even Latin America. Unchanged is Psilakis' solid creativity, and a beautiful sense of balance that makes even very unfamiliar combinations taste accessible. So skip the safe stuff and go for the luxuriantly custardy, egg yolk-enriched lobster and sea urchin risotto, or any raw seafood item, especially the unique marlin with pistachio, apricot, and house-cured speck. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fratelli Milano

213 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-2300
Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night. That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to

resist panini, served on foccacia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

1744 SW 3rd Ave.
305-858-0608
This festively decorated indoor/outdoor bistro packs a lot of party spirit into a small space, a large variety of food onto its menu. To the familiar Latin American/Italian equation, the owners add a touch of Cal-Mex (like Tex-Mex but more health conscious). Menu offerings range from designer pizzas and pastas to custardy tamales, but the bistro's especially known for imaginative meal-size salads, like one featuring mandarin oranges, avocado, apple, blue cheese, raisins, candied pecans, and chicken on a mesclun bed. \$\$

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

398 NW N. River Dr.
305-375-0765
Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the 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 Brickell Plaza
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

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flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricy, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$\$

Indochine

638 S. Miami Ave.
305-379-1525

www.indochinebistro.com

Indochine has succeeded by morphing from mere restaurant into hip hangout. Copious special events 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 quells 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. \$\$-\$\$

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-macaron sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$\$-\$\$

MIA at Biscayne

20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-642-0032

www.miaatbiscayne.com

At this expansive, ultra-glam restolounge, the eclectic, mostly small-plate menu ranges from the expected (grilled skirt steak with chimichurri; new-style ceviches, and luxe sushi rolls) to a small but tantalizing selection of chef Gerdy Rodriguez's signature creations. Lunch fare includes modernized "Minuta" fish sandwiches (avocado/habanero vinaigrette-dressed hamachi on nori Kaiser rolls), while dinner offers edgier inventions like confit pork belly with a panko-crust egg yolk capsula, the yolk nitrogen-frozen before frying to achieve a crisp crust and delightfully improbable oozing interior. \$\$\$

Miami's Chophouse

300 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-938-9000

www.mannyssteakhouse.com

Formerly Manny's Steakhouse, Miami's Chophouse retains basically everything but the famed name (from the original Manny's in Minneapolis), and remains Miami's most intentionally masculine steakhouse. Here, ensconced in your black leather booth, everything is humongous: dry-aged choice-grade steaks like the Bludgeon of Beef (a boldly flavorful 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$\$

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 focchi 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. \$\$

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

Puntino Downtown

353 SE 2nd Ave., 305-371-9661
www.puntinodowntown.com

The first U.S. venture of a hotelier from Naples, this stylish little place is open Monday through Saturday for dinner as well as lunch. Ambiance is fashionably cool Milanese rather than effusively warm Neapolitan. The food too is mostly contemporary rather than traditional. But in true Italian style, the best stuff stays simple: an antipasto platter of imported cold cuts with crostini and housemade marinated veggies; crisp-fried calamari and shrimp; airy gnocchi with sprightly tomato sauce, pools of melted bufala mozzarella, and fresh basil. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

The River Oyster Bar

650 S. Miami Ave.
305-530-1915

www.therivermiami.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-habane-ro-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. \$\$\$

Tobacco Road

626 S. Miami Ave.

305-374-1198, www.tobacco-road.com

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

Urbanite Bistro

62 NE 14th St., 305-374-0662

www.urbanitebistro.com

Ambitious but neither pretentious nor pricey, this multi-room, indoor/outdoor bistro is just the sort of friendly hangout the neighborhood needs. Chef Frank Imbarlina's menu features hip contemporary fare like natural boar chops with a savory-sweet soy/chopped pecan crust. Fish fans and vegetarians will find equally enjoyable large and small plates: potato-wrapped local pompano; beautifully seasoned veg siu mai; shrimp corn dogs with mustard and mango dips. Other pluses include an imaginative late-night menu and free valet parking. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 proves 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. \$

Bay View Grille

1633 N. Bayshore Dr. (Marriott Hotel)
305-536-6414

This expansive restaurant has no outdoor component, but floor-to-ceiling windows and a multi-level layout means every table has a Biscayne Bay view, which we find particularly enjoyable in the morning, over a fresh asparagus and Boursin cheese omelet or huevos à la cubana (fried eggs and cheese on black beans). Lunch and dinner menus are a "greatest hits" mix (steaks, pasta, Caesar salad), featuring appealing local accents like a hefty fried or blackened grouper sandwich on ciabatta roll, with remoulade sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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. \$\$

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 fries, 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 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. \$

Clive's Café

2818 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-0277

Some still come for the inexpensive, hearty American breakfasts and lunches that this homey hole-in-the-wall has served for more than 30 years. Since about 1990, though, when owner Pearlina Murray ("Ms. Pearl" to regulars) and cook Gloria Chin began emphasizing their native Jamaican specialties, the intensely spiced grilled jerk chicken has been the main item here. Other favorites: savory rice and pigeon peas; eye-opening onion/vinegar-flavored escovitch fish; sweet plantains; and cabbage that redefines the vegetable. \$

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 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

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

The Grrrlz of Sandwich

555 NE 15th St., 2nd floor (Venetia condo)
305-374-4305

Riot Grrrl DIY spirit shines in the homemade soups, sweets, salads, and exceptionally tasty warm baguette sandwiches (like prosciutto and fresh mozzarella, dressed with a unique sumac vinaigrette) at this concealed café, hidden on the Venetia condo's mezzanine. Owners Ana Oliva and Fadia Sarkis scour local markets daily for the freshest of ingredients, and their breads (plus light-crust-ed empanadas and sinful Ghirardelli chocolate cake) are all baked in-house. On Saturdays the grrrls'll even deliver you an elegant (yet inexpensive) breakfast in bed. \$

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-ed pizzas 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/yucafed ambiance, 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-ed 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-ed 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. 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. \$\$\$

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, fiocchi 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

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Restaurant Listings

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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 Peeky Toe crab dumplings, coriander, and mustard oil makes perfect sense on the tongue. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Pasha's

3801 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-0201

(See Brickell/Downtown listing)

Pizzafiore

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

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. \$\$\$

Pizzavolante

3918 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-5325

At this tiny pizza/mozzarella bar, Jonathan Eismann's inspired topping combos and astonishingly high-quality ingredients prove that star-chef skills are not wasted on humble fare. Carnivores must try the Cacciatore, an ultra-thin and crispy crust with indescribably rich guanciale (cured, unsmoked pork cheek bacon), pungent artisan pepperoni, grana padano, locally made mozzarella, and Italian tomatoes. For meatless pies, we recommend the Bianca, a thyme-seasoned pizza whose plentiful cheeses are beautifully balanced by bitter arugula. Bring a crowd and taste half-a-dozen different mozzarellas. \$\$

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 exotica 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 scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

W Wine Bistro

3622 NE 2nd Ave.

305-576-7775

Both bistro and retail wine shop, this Design District spot is run by Florent Blanchet, an energetic young Frenchman who was previously a wine distributor. His former gig led to connections that mean if wine lovers don't find the bottle they want, 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. \$\$\$

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

Bistro 82

8201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-2995

As with Latin American food, much Middle Eastern restaurant fare blurs borders, making it hard to pinpoint individual countries' culinary characteristics. Here, though, national identity is strong. Virtually all dishes, from savory falafel to sweet k'nafeh (a traditional cheese breakfast pastry that doubles as dessert), are crafted from the authentic Lebanese recipes of owner Mona Issa's mom. Casually exotic décor makes the spot dateworthy too, especially on Saturday nights when belly dancing is featured. \$\$

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 pastéis to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

Le Café

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-6551

For anyone who can't get over thinking of French food as intimidating or pretentious, this cute café with a warm welcome, and family-friendly French home cooking, is the antidote. No fancy food (or fancy prices) here, just classic comfort food like onion soup, escargot, daily fresh oysters, boeuf bourguignon (think Ultimate Pot Roast), Nicoise salad, quiche, and homemade crème brûlée. A

respectable beer and wine list is a welcome addition, as is the housemade sangria. Top price for entrées is about \$14. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

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

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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. \$

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 multi-meal plans customized for individual diner's nutritional needs. \$\$

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

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. \$\$\$

Metro Organic Bistro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

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 foccacia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$\$\$

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 almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquetas. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Moonchine

7100 Biscayne Blvd.

305-759-3999

Like its Brickell-area 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.

786-220-9404

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. \$

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One Sumo

7281 Biscayne Blvd.
305-758-7866

The concept here is fast-food Fitness – capital “F” intended. In fact, though some call this minimalist space a smoothie joint, its numerous drink blends (categorized by function – preworkout, low-glycemic, kid-pleasers, and more, all fruit-sweetened without added sugars) are deliberately termed shakes to differentiate them from not-necessarily healthy smoothies. Additionally there’s solid sustenance that goes beyond standard gym snacks: Asian-inspired rice or low-carb salad plates, topped with ferriy flash-griddled beef, chicken, seafood, or veggie teriyakis. \$\$-\$\$

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

Revalas Italian Ristorante

8601 Biscayne Blvd.
305-758-1010

Owned by two couples (including former Village Café chef Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie’s Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai

fiume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail française (egg-battered, with lemon-caper-wine sauce) are the must-haves here. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 “buñuelos”). 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 homemade 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. \$\$-\$\$

The Crab House

1551 79th St. Causeway
305-868-7085, www.crabhouseseafood.com

Established in 1975, this Miami fish house was acquired by Landry’s in 1996 and is now part of a chain. But the classic décor (knotty pine walls, tile floors, booths, outdoor waterfront deck) still evokes the good old days. Though the all-you-can-eat seafood/salad buffet (\$20 lunch, \$30 dinner) is a signature, freshness fanatics will be happiest sticking to à la carte favorites like the All-American fisherman’s platters, or global specials like Szechuan shrimp, that change seasonally. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 Dermovsek’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 Caffè

1666 79th St. Causeway
305-866-1238, www.oggicaffe.com

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

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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 raviolotti 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. 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. \$-\$\$

Village Café

9540 NE 2nd Ave.
305-759-2211

After closing for several months in early 2009, this café, spruced up to look like a bistro rather than a luncheonette (but with the same bargain prices), has been reopened. The kitchen has also been rejuvenated, with head honcho Adam Holm (Whitticar's original sous chef) serving up new, globally influenced dishes like mint/pistachio-crust lamb or tuna tartare with sriracha aioli, plus reviving old favorites like pork tenderloin with ginger-caramel sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 ajaco. 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. \$

The Bridge

2286 NE 123rd St., 305-891-8282

Since the original Mark's Place, eateries in this space have come and gone rapidly, but with 18 successful restaurants in Uruguay, The Bridge's owners have confidence in their winning formula. Prices are affordable; ambiance is warm; cocktails are formidable. And food is a crowd-pleasing mix of continental and Latin steakhouse fare: an entrana with fries for traditionalists; a pork chop with strawberry sauce, apple mash, and glazed carrots for more elegant tastes. Note: The chivito sandwich here (tenderloin steak, bacon, ham, melted cheese, and olives on a baguette) may be Miami's most satisfying sinful pleasure. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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/

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

Chef Creole

13105 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-893-4246

(See Miami listing)

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. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

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 tasso 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. \$

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. \$\$\$

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

13695 W. Dixie Highway

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. \$

Petit Rouge

12409 Biscayne Blvd.

305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

Sara's

2214 NE 123rd St., 305-891-3312

www.sarakosherpizza.com

While this mainly vegetarian kosher place is best known for its pizza (New York-style medium crust or thick-crust Sicilian, topped with veggies and/or "meat buster" imitation meats), it's also offers a full range of breakfast/lunch/dinner vegetarian cuisine of all nations, with many dairy and seafood items too. Admittedly the cutesie names of many items — baygels, bergerrbite, Cezarrrr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperrrr — may cause queasiness. But the schmopperrrr itself is one helluva high-octane veggie burger. \$\$\$

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. \$

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like

teriyaki fish (fresh fish sautéed with vegetables), curried chicken and veggies, spicy shrimp, or gyoza dumplings in tangy sauce. There's also an all-you-can-eat deal — sushi (individual nigiri or maki rolls) plus tempura, teriyaki, and other cooked items for \$14; three bucks more for sashimi instead of sushi. \$\$\$

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

No frozen pizza crusts or watery mozzarella here. No imported designer ingredients either. The pies are New York-style, but the dough is made fresh daily, and the cheese is Grande (from Wisconsin, considered America's finest pizza topper). Also on the menu are Italian-American pastas, a large selection of hot and cold subs, simple salads, and a few new protein adds — grilled chicken breast, fried fish, or a steak. \$\$\$

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

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. \$\$

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. \$\$\$

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. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue began producing in 1938, available in three varieties:

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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. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

China Restaurant

178 NE 167th St., 305-947-6549

When you have a yen for the Americanized Chinese fusion dishes you grew up with, all the purist regional Chinese cuisine in the world won't scratch the itch. So the menu here, containing every authentically inauthentic Chinese-American classic you could name, is just the ticket when nostalgia strikes – from simple egg rolls to pressed almond duck (majorly breaded boneless chunks, with comfortingly thick gravy). \$-\$\$

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 barbaoca, 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. \$

Christine's Roti Shop

16721 NE 6th Ave.

305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvêla, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean megacrepie made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and 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, www.graninka.com

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 nik-kei (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). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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 patey (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?)

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. \$-\$\$

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. \$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant

514 NE 167th St.

305-940-6309

Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an unatmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and 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 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. \$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

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 fagiolo, 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. \$-\$\$

Little Saigon

16752 N. Miami Ave.

305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad, flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$-\$\$

Continued on page 58

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Restaurant Listings

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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. \$

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. \$\$\$

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

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

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. \$\$

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. \$

Racks Italian Bistro and Market

3933 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall),
305-917-7225
The complexity of the Racks concept makes a sound-bite description impossible. It's part Italian market, with salumi, cheeses, and other artisan products plus take-out prepared foods; part enoteca (wine bar, featuring snacks like addictive Portobello fritti with truffle aioli, especially enjoyable on the waterfront deck); part ristorante (pastas and other Big Food); part pizzeria. What's important: All components feel and taste authentically Italian. Just don't miss the coal-oven pizza. Superior toppings (including unusually zesty tomato sauce) plus an astonishingly light yet chewy crust make Racks' pies a revelation. \$\$

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/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esoterica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A 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, Iced & Tea House

237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008
www.shingwangrestaurant.com
At this unique Taiwanese eatery, run by a trio of Taipei-trained female chefs, all seafood, poultry, and meats in the budget-priced entrées (\$6.95) are mock - imitations made from wheat gluten, tofu, and vegetables. But don't mock it till you try the quite beefy pepper steak, or smokin' duck, with slices that mimic the charcuterie item down to convincing faux fat. Other main dishes feature recognizable veggies or noodles. As for the rest of the name: iced is shaved ice, an over-the-top dessert that's a sort of a slurpee sundae, with toppings that vary from the familiar (fresh fruits) to the weird (grass jelly, sweet corn, kidney beans, rice balls, chocolate pudding). And the bubble tea is a must-not-miss. Using housemade syrup, the cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors (mango, taro, even actual tea), all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, slurped through large-diameter straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

Siam Square

54 NE 167th St., 305-944-9697
Open until 1:00 a.m. every day except Sunday (when it closes at midnight), this relatively new addition to North Miami Beach's "Chinatown" strip has become a popular late-night gathering spot for chefs from other Asian restaurants. And why not? The food is fresh, nicely presented, and reasonably priced. The kitchen staff is willing to customize dishes upon request, and the serving staff is reliably fast. Perhaps most important, karaoke equipment is in place when the mood strikes. \$\$\$

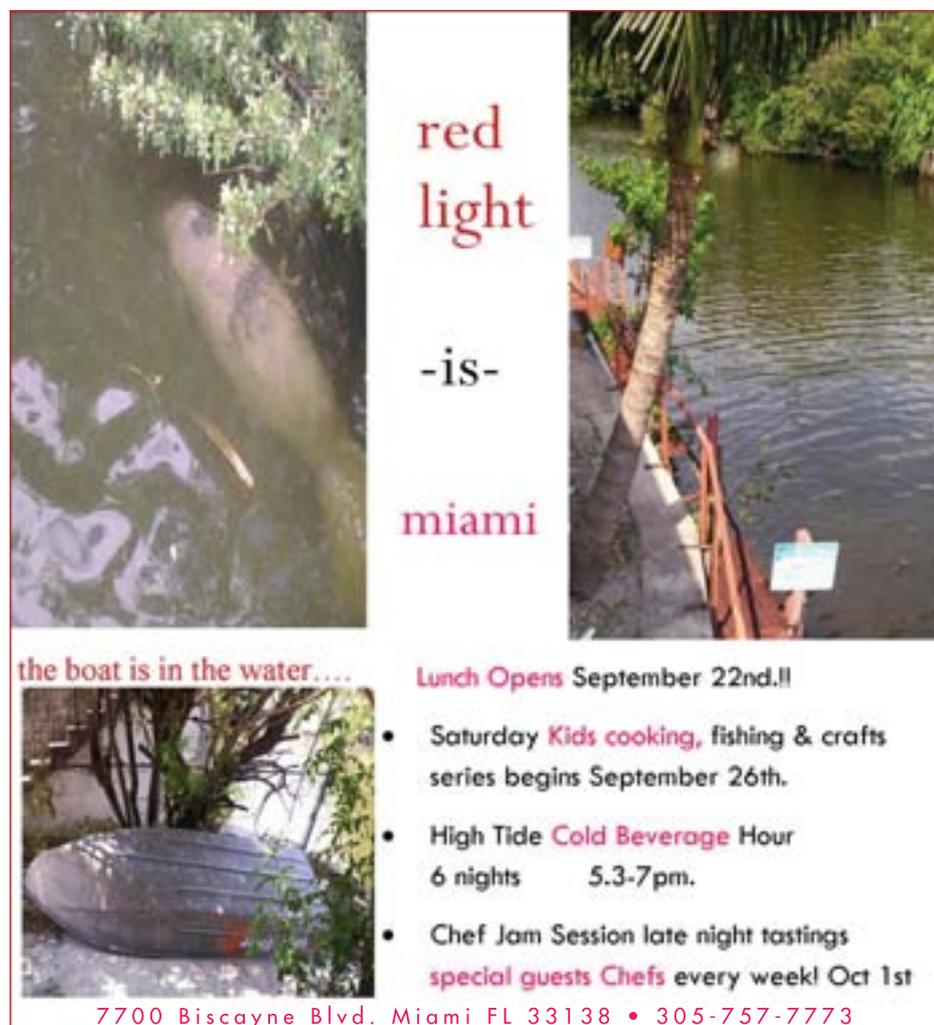
Scorch Grillhouse and Wine Bar

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. \$\$\$

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

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DINING GUIDE

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peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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.anthonyscoal-firedpizza.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. \$\$

Bar Rosso

19004 NE 29th Ave., 305-933-3418
www.barrosso.com

Bar Rosso calls itself a "vinoteca," and we'd agree the snappy, made-up word suits this casually stylish wine

bar and restaurant, where the fare is Italian, American, and Italian-American. There are plenty of pastas and wood-grilled meat and fish entrées, but artfully garnished cured meat or cheese selections and small plates are the best way to sample chef Josh Medina's creativity, from espresso-braised short ribs to salad specials like fresh golden beets with grilled radicchio, goat cheese, arugula, and a unique cumin-raisin vinaigrette. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 Mattone, 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.pilarrestaurant.com

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman

Van Aken and Mark Militello. He has been executive chef at Rumi, and cooked at NYC's James Beard House. Armed with those impressive credentials, Fredel and his wife launched Pilar (named for Hemingway's boat) aiming to prove that top restaurants can be affordable. Consider it 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.
305-937-4884

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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