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Times

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www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 7, Issue 11



He didn't like drugs or gangs or violence — he liked pretty girls, and that may have killed him

By Terence Cantarella

Photo illustration by Silvia Ros and Marcy Mock

The days when Miami was awash in cocaine, cash, and bullet-riddled bodies are over. Today art gallery owners likely outnumber drug lords, and

running gun battles are far less common than book fairs, art festivals, music conferences, and fashion shows. What was once the nation's murder capital is now a

well-branded cultural Mecca.

So just over a year ago, when the body of 18-year-old high school senior Alex Tillman was found beside the FEC railway

tracks in Wynwood, the killing seemed reminiscent of an earlier decade, when

Continued on page 14



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Z ZIFF BALLETT OPERA HOUSE

P PLAZA FOR THE ARTS

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

THE 101 DALMATIANS MUSICAL

THE BEST BROADWAY MUSICAL SINCE "ANNIE"!
Audiences can't help but fall in love with "101 Dalmatians"! -NBC Nightly News

January 1-3

1 Independence Day Concert: A Night to Remember
Featuring Farah Juste
7:30PM **K**

The 101 Dalmatians Musical
8PM **Z**

2 The 101 Dalmatians Musical
2 & 8PM **Z**

Salute to Vienna
8PM **K**

Inspired by Vienna's world-famous New Year's Concert-A fantastic way to celebrate the New Year!

3 **The 101 Dalmatians Musical**
2 & 7:30PM **Z**

Broadways newest family hit! Featuring music by STYX's Dennis De Young.

"Chalk full of Broadway pageantry!"
-NBC News

ITZHAK PERLMAN

JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT
MASTERWORKS SEASON
SANFORD AND DOLORES ZIFF
CLASSICAL MUSIC

January 12

Cabaret & Cocktails
Karen Akers

Featuring Cole Porter's greatest hits!

January 21-24

8 **Tony Bennett**
8PM

Miami City Ballet: Program II
8PM

Divertimento No. 15
Valse Fantaisie (1953)
The Golden Section
Slaughter on Tenth Avenue

9 **FREE Family Fest**
11:30AM **P**

Miami City Ballet School presents: Cinderella
2PM **P** **FREE**

Miami City Ballet: Program II
8PM **Z**

Celebrity Chef Series: Emeril Lagasse
8PM **K**

10 **Miami City Ballet: Program II**
8PM **Z**

Divertimento No. 15
Valse Fantaisie (1953)
The Golden Section
Slaughter on Tenth Avenue

12 **Itzhak Perlman**
8PM **Z**

"Itzhak Perlman wows the crowd!"
-The Toronto Star

15 **Jazz Roots: Vocalese**
8PM **K**

Featuring Manhattan Transfer, New York Voices, and special guest John Hendricks!

JAZZ ROOTS

15 **Jazz Roots: Vocalese**
8PM **K**

Featuring Manhattan Transfer, New York Voices, and special guest John Hendricks!

JAZZ ROOTS
Vocalese
with special guest John Hendricks!
January 15

17 **Miami Symphony Orchestra: An Evening In Vienna**
8PM **K**

Great overtures, waltzes and dances. Music by Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, Brahms and Johann Strauss, Jr.

FLORIDA GRAND opera

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

January 23-31

19 **Cavalia**
8PM at Bicentennial Park

An exquisite, fast paced, unforgettable 120-minute performance featuring harmony between horse and man!

Jan. 19-31

21 **Cabaret & Cocktails: Karen Akers**
7:30PM **K**

Cavalia
8PM at Bicentennial Park

Under the White Big Top!

22 **The Cleveland Orchestra**
8PM **K**

Cavalia
8PM at Bicentennial Park

Cabaret & Cocktails: Karen Akers
8PM **K**

Delicious Music, Swanky Setting!

23 **Cavalia**
3 & 8PM; Bicentennial Park

Cabaret & Cocktails: Karen Akers
5:30 & 8:30PM **K**

Florida Grand Opera: Lucia di Lammermoor
7PM **Z**

The Cleveland Orchestra
8PM **K**

24 **Cavalia**
2PM at Bicentennial Park

Cabaret & Cocktails: Karen Akers
4PM **K**

"Whether singing or speaking, every word from her lips is elegantly turned!"
-New York Times

26 **Cavalia**
8PM at Bicentennial Park

From the creators of Cirque du Soleil!

Florida Grand Opera: Lucia di Lammermoor
8PM **Z**

27 **Cavalia**
8PM at Bicentennial Park

More than 60 4-legged artist in this eclectic cast!

Florida Grand Opera: Lucia di Lammermoor
8PM **Z**

28 **The Cleveland Orchestra**
7:30PM **K**

Cavalia
8PM at Bicentennial Park

The Cleveland Orchestra: Beethoven with a Twist
8:30PM **K**

29 **The Cleveland Orchestra**
8PM **K**

Cavalia
8PM at Bicentennial Park

Florida Grand Opera: Lucia di Lammermoor
8PM **Z**

30 **Cavalia**
3 & 8PM; Bicentennial Park

The Cleveland Orchestra
8PM **K**

Florida Grand Opera: Lucia di Lammermoor
8PM **Z**

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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

BISCAYNE Times

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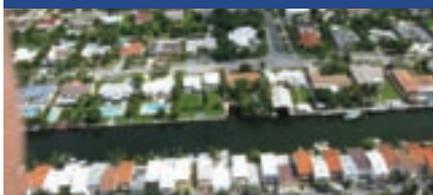
3BDR 2BTH, POOL, Hi-vaulted ceilings. Italian custom gas Kitchen, 24" Saturnia marble thruout, Turnkey! New, Full Power, 75' dock. \$999 or lease option, \$4,000/mnth

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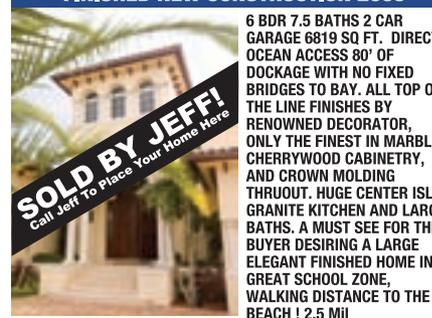
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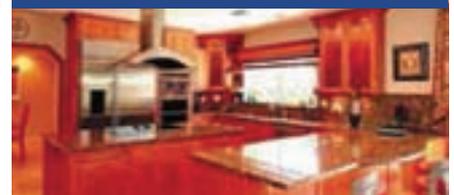
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Letters to the Editor

Shorecrest, We Implore You: Don't Get Historic on Us

After reading Erik Bojnansky's story about efforts to expand the MiMo/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District ("They Want to Grow MiMo," December 2009) and Richard Laird's enthusiasm about having his Shorecrest neighborhood designated an historic district, I feel compelled to offer a few words of caution.

Why would you want to surrender your right to do as you please with your own home regarding the yard, hedges, paint jobs, remodeling, window updates, or any other privileges that come with being a homeowner?

If Shorecrest were to be designated an historic district, residents would receive nothing but rude impositions from a group of Miami bureaucrats who will act as if *they* own your property.

Mr. Laird, as president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association, this is not something you should desire.

Take a look at the homes within your neighborhood. My own tour through Shorecrest was a pleasure as it

includes creative landscaping and wonderfully updated homes.

That is not the case in my historic district, which suffers from exactly that which you desire. We are prevented from doing any of the creative wonders I see in Shorecrest, so unfortunately we opt for neglect instead.

I suggest you retain your independence and your wonderful neighborhood.

Peter Otto

MiMo Historic District

Florida's Growth Machine: They'll Stop at Nothing to Prevent People Power

In his attempt to rebut Frank Rollason's column about Amendment 4 ("Revolutionary Concept: Put Urban Sprawl to a Vote," November 2009), former St. Pete Beach Mayor Ward Friszolowski is simply repeating a version of the "Big Lie" being spread across Florida by the state's powerful development industry, a.k.a. the Growth Machine.

Opponents of Amendment 4, a proposed amendment to the state

constitution that will be on the statewide ballot this November, yell about St. Pete Beach to assert that Florida Hometown Democracy's Amendment 4 will just cause lawsuits.

Fact check: The lawsuits are flying because the Hometown Democracy process was *not* followed in St. Pete Beach. Under Amendment 4, there will be a referendum only *after* a growth plan change is reviewed and voted on by the city commission. In St. Pete Beach, they had the referendum *before* the proposed plan change went through review and public hearing. That violates state law.

Amendment 4 provides specific safeguards against a confused situation like St. Pete Beach's by requiring that a comprehensive plan change must *first* go through the entire state-required growth-management process: citizen hearings, review by the local professional planning staff, and approval by the local elected government. Only then, *after* council/commission approval, does Amendment 4 require that the proposed land-use change go to the voters at the next election for final approval — or rejection.

What's clear is that the lawsuits in St. Pete Beach have nothing whatsoever to do with Amendment 4. They are about completely different topics. The developers and their politicians will stop at nothing to prevent the voters from taking control over the out-of-control development that has wrecked our economy and quality of life.

Their big lie about St. Pete Beach proves it. For the straight story, visit www.FloridaHometownDemocracy.com and get ready to "Give Yourself a Vote on Growth!"

A postscript: Mr. Rollason wisely urges citizens to Google the authors of letters or blogs opposing Amendment 4: "Chances are that he or she makes a living from sprawl."

Opponent Friszolowski turns out to be the executive vice president of an architectural and planning firm. Surprised?

*John Hedrick, statewide organizer
Florida Hometown Democracy
Tallahassee*

Continued on page 19

An evening of Jewish music from around the world

Performers

Sharon Alcalay-Leibovici
Cesar Beleniski
Don Bennett
Luis U. Cattán
Michelle Auslander Cohen
Alejandra Czarny
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Sagee Goldenholz
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Michael Krisk
Mark Kula
William Lieberman
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George Mordecai
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Rachelle Nelson
Paul Offenkrantz
Mark Opatow
Jodi Rozental
Ronit C. Rubin
Lisa Segal
Lori Shapiro
Neuba Silva
Ellen Stettner
Alicia Stillman
Natalie Young

Alan Mason,
Program Director and
Accompanist



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BizBuzz: January 2010

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Made your New Year's resolutions yet? We thought not. So let's get right down to basics — looking good. Stylist-to-the-stars Hannah Lasky at **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St.; 305-772-8426) has a special deal for readers: Mention the *BT* and get an extra 10% off with this month's ad coupon plus a free sample of her Hannapoo hair products.

For shaping up below the hairline, **Suichi Take Fitness Club** (3250 NE 1st Ave., 305-856-4588) is offering 10% off select personal training and Pilates packages for new clients. The sleek Midtown Miami facility has also added numerous new classes. Check their website for an updated schedule.

Even the best bod is unfabulous if you're coughing and sniffing. And disease prevention is especially vital for seasonal travelers, reminds Kathy Sanchez of **Medi-Station Urgent Care Center** (9600 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-603-7650). "Airplanes, cruise ships — talk about exposure!" Fortunately Medi-Station, which has already vaccinated more than 125 people at \$15 a pop against the H1N1 (swine flu) virus, still has plenty of dosages left.

Don't know about you, but just reading about all that worthwhile self-improvement has us craving chocolate. Like the new chocolate bread at **La Provence French Bakery** — five Miami locations, the two in our territory being 1064 Brickell Ave. and 2200 Biscayne Blvd. The latter is our own neighborhood *boulangerie*, where you'll find us stocking up on the chocolate bread or new cheddar chunk loaves or Levain baguettes — the real thing, like you'd find in Paris.

Have you heard about David Cohen's patriotic new "Bail-Out Special" at **Bagels and Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-892-2435)? From now through February 28, every Wednesday or Thursday (excluding holidays) from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., eat-in diners, with a beverage purchase, get an entrée from the Bail-Out menu at half price. Now, there's a stimulus package that works!

Back to the serious stuff — like losing your home. Not a good way to start the year. **Attorney Jake Miller** has helped



La Provence



Mandolin Aegean Bistro



Yogen Früz



numerous Miamians prevent foreclosures over the past year with his free "What's Best for You" seminars. For an expert overview, Miller's next seminar is January 15 (12550 Biscayne Blvd., 8th floor; www.helpmemodifynow.com for reservations).

Discovering Miami's revitalized downtown is one resolution that'll be relatively easy to keep, thanks to new discount parking deals offered by the **Miami Parking Authority**. We know about the Quick-Park program — totally free parking in any MPA garage for errand-runners in and out in 30 minutes or less. Here are four brand-new offers: a \$1 Park & Shop program for patrons of downtown restaurants, shops, and clubs; a Nights & Weekends program; free parking on Flagler Street in the evenings, every night; and, for City of Miami residents, a flat 20% discount when you use Pay by Phone. Consult the MPA's website for full details.

Parking has never been a problem for patrons of new advertiser the **Urbanite Bistro** (62 NE 14th St.; 305-374-0662).

Valet service has been free since the restaurant/lounge opened this past fall. Its location two blocks from the Performing Arts Center makes it handy before or after shows. This month brings two special events: January 7's Dine Magazine/Urbanite Wine Dinner (five courses paired with five global wines: \$60) and on January 15 the monthly beer dinner (just \$40 for six courses paired with six craft brews).

It was 20 years ago today, Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play — and John Martin opened the original **Trader**

John's Records & Books up in Hollywood. January marks the start of his newer shop's second year in *BT* territory (484 NE 125th St.; 305-899-7172), and to celebrate you'll get 10% off purchase — books on a vast range of subjects, DVDs, CDs, and six-buck records, maybe even vintage Beatles vinyl.

If growing your business is this year's goal, see our new advertiser, the **Neighbors and Neighbors Association** (180 NW 62nd St.; 305-756-0605, www.nanafi.org). Founded in 1995 to establish cooperative relationships among small grocery stores, NANA is now a countywide group that provides help obtaining funding (they're the folks behind the Mom and Pop Small Business Grant Program), plus technical assistance, advocacy, and way more.

One neighborhood trend that heartens us is the rapidly increasing roster of "green" businesses, including new advertiser **Metro 1 Properties** (120 NE 27th St.; 305-571-9991), a leader in the green-construction movement. The boutique commercial real estate firm is also unique in its combination of full-service brokerage plus marketing agency.

You can also "put a little green in your dog's routine," say the fun folks from **Smiling Pets Animal Clinic's Doggie Bag Café** (7310 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-710-7266). Learn about organic gourmet dog meals, eco-friendly shampoos, and other natural pet products on Green Dog Day, January 30, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Every year we resolve to get more involved in local government affairs,

but somehow when it comes to hours of politics vs. hours of, say, ouzo, we opt for the latter. But state **Rep. Ronald Brisé** (Dem., District 108) is making it easy with two town hall meetings this month (January 27 at Griffing Community Center in North Miami, and January 28 at Legion Park Community Center). Both start at 6:00 p.m.

Which gives you plenty of time afterward to grab that ouzo — plus some tasty mezes, traditional Greek and Turkish small plates — at **Mandolin Aegean Bistro** (4512 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-576-6066). The charming, flower-filled garden restaurant is, after all, open till 11:00 p.m. Future plans include weekday breakfast and Sunday brunch service.

After a much-celebrated grand opening just a month before, the storefront of locally based tableware/bathware firm **Real Life Basic's** new bargain-priced outlet shop (11091 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-891-0888) was nearly destroyed when a tow truck crashed into the building on December 18. But the news isn't all bad. Behind its boarded-up front wall, the store is intact and open for business, says owner Simone Mayer. An entrance and parking are in back.

After last month's holidays, your main improvement needs may involve getting your home or office back in shape. Call new advertiser **A.W.O.N. Janitorial Services** (7551 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-759-4055). The friendly husband-and-wife team of Ricardo and Madelen Realin have extensive knowledge of floor-care methods, equipment, and supplies. Even repairs, if the party was *that* good.

Finally, Angel Saad, patriarch of family-owned **Saad Homes** (305-829-8992), reports that work is nearing completion on a major project — remodeling and expanding the grand Miami Shores residence of attorney Wes Holston (UBS Financial Services) and wife Mercedes (an assistant county attorney). Great way to start the new year: more than 4000 square feet of sparkling new home and a fond farewell to the Saad craftsmen who've practically become members of the family.

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

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The Absolute Worst Ever

— What a decade to forget — if only we could —

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Happy New Year! Let's give a warm welcome to 2010, which will bring us to the end of the worst decade I've ever lived through. The attacks of 9/11. Two wars we can't seem to win — whatever "win" means. Becoming the most disliked and disrespected nation in the world. Warping our economy into the worst recession since the 1930s. The greatest assemblage of corrupt and incompetent city, county, state, and national leaders in the history of this country.

You think I'm kidding? Just keep reading. It started in 2000 with a presidential election that gave the world "hanging chad" and a new commander-in-chief picked by the U.S. Supreme Court. George W. Bush was soon revealed to be incompetent, most notably when he and his equally incompetent national security team fell asleep at the wheel as terrorists were training for their deadly missions right here in Miami.

When the United States is hit, we must attack someone, something, anything. So off we went to Afghanistan, where we were very successful turning big rocks into little rocks at incredible expense.

We won, sort of. Or at least we thought we won. I think our hallowed leaders would have benefited from reading Alexander the Great's journals before heading off to a war in a chaotic place most Americans couldn't locate on a map. Of course, we quickly learned that no one in the Bush Administration could actually read.

Then the Bush boys went about fixing our own country in the best way they knew: theft, corruption, and greed.

Now, there was something they were really good at — running the nation into the ground and leaving us with a cratered economy and huge debt.

Meanwhile, George's brother Jeb was busy showing he could ruin an economy as well as anyone. He cut taxes and expenses in Florida, funneling the money to business interests, who were supposed to reinvest it in more and better businesses. They didn't. They just pocketed it. And when the economy collapsed, it left Florida nearly bankrupt. The trickle-down revenues that went from the state to the counties and cities were reduced to nearly zero.

You would think the state would have set aside money in the good times so we could get through the bad ones that inevitably follow. Instead your tax dollars went to the private sector, leaving us with no cushion. Thanks, Jeb.

But it's not all Jeb. He was followed in 2006 by Charlie Crist, who diligently maintained Bush's programs. After all, that's why he was elected.

Speaking of gubernatorial elections, we have one coming up this November. With the state in such a mess, I wonder if anyone even modestly competent will run for the job. Current candidates Alex Sink and Bill McCollum will probably be joined by a few unemployed political hacks, but how about someone who could actually run the state? Or even a hot-dog stand? Not likely.

What we do know is that three Floridians are now running for the U.S. Senate: Crist, Marco Rubio, and Kendrick Meek. This is certainly not an intellectually stellar group. Meek, a



Democrat, is hardly known outside of Miami and is proving to be a political lightweight who hasn't always made the best decisions.

Rubio and Crist are both Republicans and will square off in a primary election. Rubio is the darling of the far right wing (the Sarah Palin wing), and would more than likely support an initiative to change the federal government to a theocracy.

Crist, ever the airhead, just wants to scamper away from Tallahassee before everyone realizes he is part of the problem. More concerned with the quality of his tan than the quality of government, his greatest claim to fame might be pushing a bill through the legislature that ensures you'll be fined if you don't wear a seatbelt while driving. Wow! Almost as memorable as that guy Crist appointed to fill the Senate seat he's running for. What's his name?

Crist once had a large lead in the polls, but now Rubio has pulled even. I don't think it's because the electorate likes Rubio more than Crist. They don't like either one of them.

Closer to home we have the Miami-Dade County Commission. On second thought, I'll take a pass on them as there's no chance in the foreseeable

future they'll become a fully functioning governmental entity. These commissioners have forged fiefdoms in their districts, where they keep things running smoothly by handing out taxpayer dollars like candy. And lobbyists continue to fill their campaign coffers, guaranteeing their re-election time after time.

The City of Miami found a way to finish the decade in fine fashion by electing a new mayor and having two commissioners removed from office after they were charged with crimes. One other commissioner was turned out when his bid for mayor failed by a 3-1 margin. That's one way to get new blood on the dais.

Unexpectedly, all this insanity has resulted in us having the best chance in many years to turn the city around. That will depend on how well commission chairman Marc Sarnoff works with Mayor Tomas Regalado and the three (soon to be four) new commissioners. They'll have their work cut out for them.

One last observation before I kiss off the year and the decade. A few months ago I poked fun at *Miami Magazine's* Elena Carpenter for asking readers to contribute money to keep her enterprise going. Then last month the *Miami Herald* did the same thing, asking website users to donate money to keep the paper afloat.

My apologies, Elena. I didn't realize you were on the cutting edge of media marketing. Obviously the *Herald* stole your idea, so I think you should demand that they send you a percentage of their donations — or risk legal action. Hey, this is 21st-century media in action!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Have you ever seen a ghost?

Compiled by Cathi Marro – BT Contributor



Brooke Connor
Receptionist
North Miami Beach
No, I have not seen a ghost. I probably would not want to. I believe in spirits, not necessarily “ghosts.” Spirits are people who just cannot move on. I don’t think they are evil the way most people think “ghosts” are. Perhaps others look to see ghosts more. Maybe if I looked to see one, I might!



Nubia Rivero
Travel Agent
North Miami
No, I have not. People sometimes are home alone and hear noises and jump because they’re afraid and they think it’s a ghost. Some have even told me they hear or feel a ghost in my house. I hear noises, but I think that’s all it is. Even though I have lost several loved ones, I’ve never felt like they’re visiting me. You have to have it already in your mind that it’s a ghost.



Tommy Edwards
Landscape
Carol City
No, I’ve only seen a ghost on TV. I don’t think people can come back as ghosts or spirits after they die. People who claim to have seen a ghost probably dreamed it or just thought they saw a ghost because it was nighttime and their vision was bad. I don’t believe in ghosts or spirits — period!



Jennifer Bienstock
Realtor/Store Owner
Miami Shores
No, but I wouldn’t mind seeing a ghost if it was my dad. If it was someone else, I’d probably be stunned or scared. I believe when you die your spirit goes to another place. Ghosts are those spirits trying to send us a message — something they weren’t able to tell us when they were alive. It’s a good quality to be able to see a ghost, but I don’t need that quality right now.



Drago Bonacich
Music Critic
Downtown
Yes, I believe I have seen a ghost. When I was a kid, I woke up screaming. My parents ran into the bedroom and I told them I saw a dark black form moving from one side of the room to the other. My sister seemed to see it too, though she never said that she did. I was a kid, so I could have been dreaming, but I think sometimes when we don’t know for sure, we just don’t want to believe.



Miriam Dios
Medical Secretary
(Disabled)
Bayside
No, but I wouldn’t mind seeing one. It’s a grace to see a ghost, the same way some people are able to see saints. Ghosts are lost souls who don’t necessarily have to be scary. If a person chooses to live life being nice and not making bad choices, then in the afterlife, if you want to call them a ghost, chances are they are not going to be scary or bad.



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Lady's Man

Continued from page 1

violent criminals and cartel hit men committed scores of equally brutal slayings.

At the time of Tillman's death, local news outlets made a point to mention that he had no criminal record and no involvement with drugs or gangs — declarations made necessary, apparently, because he was from Overtown, where most murders are still drug-related.

Indeed Tillman didn't fit the profile of someone whose life was likely to end in criminal violence. His murder, friends

“He was a pretty boy,” says his mother. “The girls loved him and he loved them. Girls were his only vice. He especially liked Hispanic girls.”

and family suspect, was likely motivated by something else altogether — jealousy.

“He was a pretty boy,” says Tawana Fairell, his mother, who is still clearly distraught. “The girls loved him and he loved them. Girls were his only vice. He especially liked Hispanic girls.” She wonders whether a frustrated female admirer, of which there were many, had someone take revenge on her son. Or perhaps an enraged boyfriend caught Alex with his girlfriend. “Maybe a girl's father caught them together and did something to him out of prejudice. I don't know,” she sighs. “I'm thinking all kinds of things.”

“He was definitely a lady's man,” says Isaiah Bennet, Alex's closest friend and fellow senior at Booker T. Washington High School. “He had mood swings sometimes, but he didn't argue or fight. That wasn't his style. Both me and Alex preferred Hispanic girls. They treat you better. Black girls would hate on us sometimes and ask why we like Spanish girls, but I don't know anything about someone being jealous or upset with him.”

“By all accounts, he had no enemies. This surprised many people,”



One of Alex Tillman's high school graduation pictures.

Miami Police Sgt. Armando Aguilar, Jr. told CBS4 News last year.

Yet the viciousness of the crime suggests otherwise. Alex's body had been burned. Police say that was likely an attempt to conceal his identity, and is not what killed him. They will not, however, reveal the cause of death.

Veteran Miami PD detective Nelson Andreu, who spent more than 20 years working homicide cases, explains that police often withhold the cause of death in murder cases so they can test a suspect's knowledge of a killing and determine the extent of their involvement. It also helps them to eliminate bogus tips. (Andreu, author of the crime novel *Dead*

Red, retired from the Miami PD and is now a captain with the West Miami Police Department.)

Suffice to say, then, that Alex Tillman suffered a punishing end, inflicted by someone, or several people, with fury in their hearts.

“I believe someone hated him,” his mother says. “I just don't know why.”

Although more than a year has passed since her son's death, Tawana Fairell still can't sleep at night. She can't concentrate, can't shed her feelings of guilt, and trusts no one. She's not the same person she used to be. She can't even look at Alex's picture anymore. She had to turn it around to face the wall.

Not knowing why her child was killed is torture. Knowing that the killer, or killers, freely roam the same city streets where she and her family live haunts her like nothing else.

Seated at a picnic table at Charles Hadley Park in the Model City neighborhood west of Little Haiti, the soft-spoken single mother of three boys speaks eloquently about her late son with a mixture of heartache and exhaustion: “Sometimes I think God sees how much I love my sons and is jealous and is looking for ways to get my attention away. Everyone tells me God doesn't work like that, but I just can't understand why my son isn't here right now. I picture the worst. I imagine him screaming and calling out for me and I wasn't there for him. I sleep with every light on in the house. I'm afraid he might come to me in the night with the burned side of his face. I get headaches every night on my left side and my left eye gets blurry. I feel like I'm going crazy.”

The relationship she had with her son, she says, was wonderful. They'd go to the gym together. As a surgical assistant, she'd often have to work late, but she never worried about what was going on at home. And if Alex was the one to come home late, she'd call him on the phone and they'd talk until he reached the front door. If he made new friends and began spending time with them, she'd become envious.

Alex would help get his two younger brothers dressed in the morning and drive them to school. His mother hated driving, so if she needed to go somewhere, he'd drive her, too. Just a week before he died, he told Tawana he wanted to be a pediatrician.

At Booker T. Washington, where he spent his junior and senior years, he joined the 5000 Role Models of Excellence project, a mentoring program for minority boys at risk of dropping out of school. For a while, he worked as a dishwasher at Casablanca Seafood Bar & Grill, the popular restaurant on the Miami River not far from his home, and later at the Taco Bell on Biscayne Boulevard and 36th Street. If he had time, he'd tag along with his grandfather to weddings and funerals to assist him with his photography business.

“He was very respectful, very well-groomed, would never be caught with his jeans hanging off his butt,” Tawana insists.

Continued on page 15



BT photos by Terence Cantarella

Tawana Fairell, Alex's mother, is haunted by the thought that her son's killer is still at large.

Lady's Man

Continued from page 14

"I had people tell me: 'Your kids are Oreos. You're trying to make them white' — because Alex sometimes corrected people's speech if they used too much slang or really bad English. He didn't want his friends to know, but he loved movies about couples breaking up and getting back together. There were times he would come into my room, lay his head on my lap, and talk to me about girls. There were things he didn't tell me, though."

There were things, it seems, Alex didn't tell anyone. Or at the least, things none of his friends wish to divulge now. Of six acquaintances contacted for this story, only two returned calls and e-mails seeking comment. And whether it's a reluctance to snitch, a fear of reprisal, or an indication of something more sinister, only a very vague picture of Alex's final days has emerged.

On Sunday, November 2, 2008, two days before his body was found by a homeless man, Alex called his best friend Isaiah ("Zayy") around 1:30 a.m., after finishing the late shift at Taco Bell on the Boulevard. He said he'd met a girl. She had come to the restaurant earlier that night. He was heading home and planned to meet up with her later.

"He liked to brag," Zayy chuckles during a phone interview. "I was asleep

A young lady had called the Taco Bell. She was crying and said that Alex had been killed and badly burned. She called more than once.

on the couch when he called. He told me her name, but I was so sleepy I couldn't remember it the next day."

It's unclear whether Alex actually met with the mystery girl, but at 9:11 that morning security cameras at his Over-town apartment building recorded him strutting out the front door, dressed in dark designer jeans and a black T-shirt, a red cap tilted fashionably to one side. He was supposed to be heading to Opa-locka to meet his mother and place flowers on the grave of his recently deceased grandmother. But he made a detour, and when Tawana called around 11:00 a.m. to find out where he was, he said he was "at a

Continued on page 16

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Lady's Man

Continued from page 15

friend's house" and would be late.

Which friend Alex was visiting is also unclear. "It couldn't have been a guy's house," Zayla asserts. "I would've known about it because we had the same friends."

Alex's steady girlfriend of a year and a half, Kayla, texted and called him several times later that Sunday, but he didn't answer his phone or return the messages.

When he didn't come home that night, Tawana began to worry. But Alex was eighteen, a legal adult, and she figured he had stayed at a relative's or friend's house. She tried to call him several times, but his phone kept going straight to voicemail and she assumed his cell battery had died or he'd forgotten to pay his phone bill.

When he didn't turn up at home or at school the next morning, though, she got scared. And then one of Alex's co-workers at Taco Bell called with news that would send her racing through the streets in a panic.

A young lady had called the Taco Bell. She was crying and said that Alex

had been killed and badly burned. She called more than once, said her name was Crystal, and spoke to more than one person, telling the same story each time. When Taco Bell employees asked why she didn't call the police, she said her parents would kill her if she did.

In the City of Miami, where the number of murders has plummeted over the past 25 years, the clearance rate has dropped from 75 percent to 48 percent.



A friend and co-worker at Taco Bell displays his memorial T-shirt.

"When they told me about that call," Tawana says, "I left my job and went straight to the police station. I didn't even wait for my ride. I just started running."

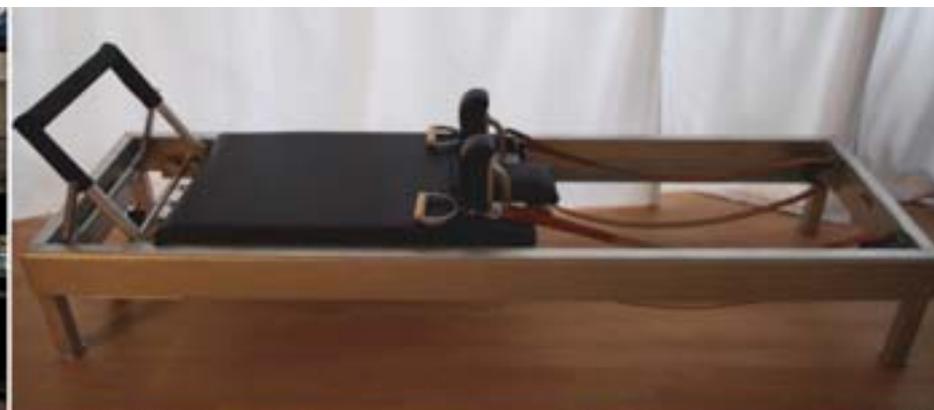
Miami police issued a countywide BOLO (Be on the Lookout) via radio dispatch and distributed a missing-person flyer. Tawana, meanwhile, went home and prayed, hoping that Alex would come strutting through the door at any minute. But another 24 hours would creep by with no news.

Police called the next day, around 2:30 p.m., and asked her to come back to the station to look at Alex's phone records to see if she could identify any of the numbers. But once she was there, they disclosed the real reason for calling her in.

They had found Alex.

"I lost it," Tawana recalls. "I never felt anything like that in my life." She begged to see her son's body, but the medical examiner wouldn't allow it. They told her they don't let family members view or identify bodies anymore. Eventually homicide detectives on the case admitted they instructed the medical examiner's

Continued on page 17



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Lady's Man

Continued from page 16

office not to let her see Alex. "I'm glad they did that," she says, "because I probably would've thrown up right there in the office or pulled all of my hair out."

Everyone among Alex's circle of friends immediately fell under police suspicion, and rumors about who had committed the murder began to circulate. Some said a girl who was obsessed with Alex had him killed because he spurned her. Others blamed a gang. One friend told a bizarre tale about a violent drag queen, later killed in a gunfight with police, who would admire Alex through Taco Bell's windows while he was working. That story, however, could not be verified.

"There was a girl calling Alex's cell phone in the weeks before his murder," Tawana says. "She'd call and say, 'I'm watching you. I know what you got on.' And he'd be looking around like: 'Who is this? How do you know where I am?'"

Tawana thinks about that, and a hundred other details of Alex's last weeks alive, struggling to remember things and trying to come up with useful

information. More than anything, she wants to know the identity of the girl who called the Taco Bell, and she wonders why police apparently have not been able to trace those calls.

But Alex's cell phone and wallet were missing when his body was discovered, so the girl's calls could have been placed from his stolen cell — which would account for detectives' inability to identify the caller. As for Alex's phone records, it's unknown whether police have been able to establish a link between the Taco Bell caller, the mystery text messenger, and the unidentified girl Alex planned to meet the night before he disappeared.

Miami Det. Orlando Benitez, who leads the Alex Tillman homicide investigation, did not respond to repeated requests for comment. But during a recent interview with the *BT*, former Miami detective Nelson Andreu cited a lack of witness cooperation as the number-one hurdle in solving these kinds of cases: "People are afraid of retaliation. They don't want to get involved."

The "no-snitching" culture is also a major factor, especially in the small Overtown community, where many

people know each other. Consequently, less than half of all Miami homicides typically result in an arrest.

Nationally, in fact, more people get away with murder now than in decades past. This despite advances in DNA technology and other crime-fighting tools. Last year the Associated Press reported that the national homicide "clearance rate" (the percentage of murders for which someone is arrested and charged) dropped from 91 percent in 1963 to 61 percent in 2007.

In the City of Miami, where the number of murders has plummeted over the past 25 years, the clearance rate has dropped from 75 percent to 48 percent. Those figures defy the logical expectation that fewer murders should mean higher clearance rates. But in addition to a lack of witness cooperation, experts point to today's larger urban populations; understaffed police departments; and drug, robbery, and gang-related crimes among strangers, which are harder to solve than "acquaintance homicides."

Regarding Miami's homicide clearance rate of 48 percent, Andreu says the problem often boils down to excessive

workloads. "You want to solve a case before the next homicide comes in," he explains. "At that point, you've got to put one down to pick up the next. So sometimes cases get put on the back burner through no fault of the detective. The problem is the sheer volume of cases."

Crime statistics and staffing shortages, however, are mute in describing Tawana Fairell's incurable grief over her son's death. She dwells endlessly on Alex's final moments, tormented by her imagination, drowning in fear, paranoia, nightmares, and depression. She peers nervously over her shoulder in public, expecting a faceless killer to appear at any moment, and she wonders, to the point of delirium, who is to blame and why her son was taken.

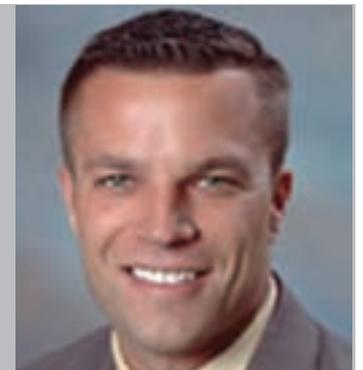
After Alex's murder, police told her not to go back to her Overtown apartment for the safety of her and her sons — in case the killer decided to target them as well. She moved around from friend to relative to co-worker. When she finally did return to her apartment a few months later, she discovered that building management had removed and

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Lady's Man

Continued from page 17

disposed of all her belongings for non-payment of rent.

"I was seeing a psychiatrist," she recounts. "I wasn't in my right mind. I wasn't even able to remember that I had a place where I needed to pay rent. It took me about three months just to start eating properly again. I had suicidal thoughts — because I wanted to be with Alex. The only thing that kept me here were my other sons."

She has since found a new apartment, far from Overtown, but relocating has taken a financial toll, and she still has no furniture and shares an inflatable bed with her 11-year-old son, whom she refuses to let out of her sight.

Every evening after work she sits at the city park where he has football practice and waits for him to finish. His friends make fun of him, calling him a mama's boy because Tawana is always at his side. And if he doesn't have school, she takes him to work with her.

Her chronic paranoia is stifling. "I can't even take my boys to the movies

at night because I'm scared someone is following me," she says. "That's how petrified I am until these people are caught. I told the cops, if you don't have leads, just tell me. But please don't keep me in the dark. I call and leave them information that

"I can't even take my boys to the movies at night because I'm scared someone is following me. That's how petrified I am until these people are caught."



The FEC railway tracks where Tillman's body was found.

I come up with about the case, but I always get voicemail. I know I'm not the only case they're working on, but I just want them to call me and tell me something — anything. I want to do everything I can to find

whoever did this. I want to sit across from them and ask them: 'Why? What could he have done to you?'"

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Letters

Continued from page 6

Primary Flight Takes Off — on the BT

I am writing to point out blatant falsehoods in the story “Winners and Losers” by Anne Tschida (December 2009). Not only was information incorrect, but you did not even bother to mention the names of the artists whose work adorned the cover of *Biscayne Times*.

The cover depicts one of the walls from our 2008 mural installation called Primary Flight. The piece was created by El Mac and Retna. These two artists have been involved in our exhibition since its inception in 2007.

You inaccurately called it “The Walls of Wynwood,” which, with capitalized words, is not a generalization but the name of a brand-new show copying what we have done since 2007. In addition you went on to discuss the show wholly inaccurately in the body of the story. And you printed *another* picture of one of our pieces from our 2007 show, again by El Mac and Retna. You seem to credit Deitch Projects and

Tony Goldman for its inception. This is incorrect.

As one of the founding organizers and curators, as well as a main sponsor of Primary Flight, it is my job to make sure you are properly reporting and representing the artists who participate in Primary Flight by crediting them for their amazing transformation of Wynwood and their selfless contributions to the art world by providing art for everyone on a shoe-string budget.

You have not done so whatsoever. *Biscayne Times* made sure to credit the photographer and the inaccurate “Walls of Wynwood” name when the same photo angle of the same wall is plastered all over the web and has been taken by everyone under the sun in 2008. But you made no mention of the very people who produced it or the correct show or the organizers associated with it, Primary Flight. As a representative of these two and many more artists, I cannot allow this misinformation to be disseminated without a clear objection.

The people you mentioned, Deitch Projects and Tony Goldman, have nothing to do with the art murals you printed, though we know Goldman interests purchase ads in your publication. Primary Flight was our

brainchild and began in December of 2007. We had 25 of the most influential street artists transform Wynwood to provide the world’s largest street-level installation.

In 2008 we greatly expanded to upward of 50 artists and even included a “Wall of Fame.” This year we have more than 80 artists and an accompanying indoor gallery installation called “Blue Print for Space.” You can find more detailed information at our website: www.primaryflight.com.

Everyone in the graff-writing and street-art world is well aware of all of these pieces/walls and where they came from, so your credibility is highly in question regarding this matter. Primary Flight has been hailed the largest and most critically acclaimed street-level mural art installation in the world. We have worked hard on its evolution and it is greatly disturbing to have those individuals who have sacrificed so much for so long to be robbed of the modicum of credit they deserve.

Lynn Yohana Howard
Miami

Editor’s note: We agree that Retna and El Mac should have been identified

as the artists who created the outdoor mural that appeared on the cover of our December issue. But we disagree that the “winner’s award” we bestowed, “The Walls of Wynwood,” was misleading. Nor was it intended to make reference to a separate exhibition of mural art organized and sponsored by New York gallery Deitch Projects and Wynwood developer Tony Goldman. Their show was called “Wynwood Walls.” Lynn Yohana Howard’s concerns are explored in more detail in this issue. See Anne Tschida’s story “Street Art Has Arrived” on page 36.

Drunken Irishmen? How About Dumb Blondes?

Thank you for publishing Jack King’s column “Sailing with Sarnoff” (November, 2009), which included ethnic stereotypes such as “drinking like an unemployed Irishman.” It’s a pity that King only mentioned one ethnic group.

I look forward to his next installment. Perhaps this time he’ll include racial stereotypes as well. They’re just as much fun, don’t you think?

Michael O’Kane
Brickell



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A Community Betrayed from Within and Without

The Michelle Spence-Jones spectacle came across as a parody of the old civil rights struggles

By Kathy Glasgow
BT Contributor

In the space of a few weeks in November, Michelle Spence-Jones was decisively re-elected to the Miami City Commission, sworn in, arrested, released on bond, and removed from office by the governor. She promptly declared herself a candidate to replace herself in the January 12 special election.

Along the way, Spence-Jones, as have many at-risk politicians before her, played the race card, referring to her arrest as a “public lynching.” She included in her lynching analogy a string of black leaders jailed or persecuted in recent years, concluding with President Barack Obama.

“But they don’t know this nappy-headed child of God has her armor on,” Spence-Jones declared. Her supporters sang “We Shall Overcome” as she surrendered to law enforcement officials.

The whole Spence-Jones spectacle came across as almost a parody of the old

civil rights struggles, back when lynching couldn’t be avoided with the help of a lawyer. And equating a year of racist attacks on Obama with criminal charges against corrupt officials?

The worst part, though, is the déjà vu. Spence-Jones is one more example of Miami-Dade’s traditional African-American power elite failing their community. No way I could impugn all local African-American leaders. But from my perspective during almost 18 years as a Miami-Dade resident, very few individuals have provided leadership with integrity to a community that has most needed it. A community repeatedly betrayed — politically, economically, morally — from within at least as much as without.

I know that prominent blacks are often persecuted for transgressions for which important whites are forgiven. There are still travesties of justice. Racial



Gepsie Metellus: “Given our diversity, we shouldn’t have to frame things in that [black-and-white] way.”

profiling, subtle slights, and outright derogation have not ceased in any way to exist in the lives of people of color.

But by viewing her legal problems as white-vs.-black, Spence Jones is not only insulting her forebears, she’s out of sync

with the deep and unique demographic changes going on all over South Florida, notably within its increasingly heterogeneous black community.

“Given our diversity, given the way Miami-Dade County is growing, we shouldn’t have to frame things in that [black-and-white] way,” says Gepsie Metellus.

Metellus was the first person I thought of when Spence-Jones got into trouble, mainly because their stories converge in some interesting places. If Spence-Jones represents the old-school cronyism that has produced a long line of self-serving public officials, then Metellus is among those trying to color outside that line.

The political seasoning of both women started in similar style, during the 1990s, under the wings of influential mentors. Then came 2005, an eventful political year even by Miami standards.

I spoke with Metellus the other day at Sant La, the always crowded community

Continued on page 21

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Betrayed

Continued from page 20

service center at 5000 Biscayne Boulevard she founded and runs. She is a woman who lives and works at the crossroads; like most highly educated, "assimilated" Haitian Americans in South Florida, she must balance a perceived identity somewhere between African-American and non-American. Metellus has more to complain about than Spence-Jones does, because she has to overcome bias against both her color and her ethnicity.

But it's hard to imagine Metellus, elegant and considered, as a complainer. Nor is she willing to criticize Spence-Jones's behavior either pre- or post-arrest. "There are so many layers, so many shades of gray," Metellus goes on, speaking of Miami's racial politics. "We all look at things with different eyes. There's a perception on the part of most black people that this is selective [prosecution], because there's such a history of double standards and hidden agendas where blacks are concerned."

There's no question, though, that Metellus's own story would be evolving

differently if it weren't for the not-so-hidden agendas within the black community.

Once, both Metellus and Spence-Jones enjoyed close and beneficial ties to Barbara Carey-Shuler, the venerable and now-retired Miami-Dade County Commissioner. Carey-Shuler was the first black woman to serve as chair of the commission, and has over the course of her 20-year political career helped along many younger aspirants. Metellus was a top aide to the commissioner for several years during the 1990s, and it was generally assumed she would eventually enter the political arena with her mentor's blessing.

Carey-Shuler abruptly retired from the county commission in December 2005. That same month, Spence-Jones won a special election to fill the District 5 seat on the Miami City Commission. (Five months earlier, the man elected to that spot before Spence-Jones, Art Teele, had committed suicide. Everyone knows that awful story.)

Metellus was not alone in thinking she was the logical choice to fill Carey-Shuler's commission seat, with her years of experience at county hall and service to the Haitian community. But Metellus was not a "professional Haitian," unlike

some of her peers. Sant La assists indigent refugees and immigrants, but they don't have to be Haitian.

Metellus's outlook encompasses the whole of Miami's roiling ethnic mix. She is multilingual, widely traveled, and the recipient of awards and recognition from organizations ranging from the Rockefeller Foundation to the NAACP. She has been involved in organized dialogues aimed at improving cooperation between African Americans and Haitian Americans; in conflicts that arise regularly between Miami-Dade school officials and Haitian parents or students (inevitable cultural or language misunderstandings), Metellus has often been one of the principal mediators.

Thus in 2005, she was stunned to learn that her philosophy of inclusiveness had brought her flat exclusion. She was shut out of the running to succeed Carey-Shuler. "That seat is carved out for an African American," Carey-Shuler asserted in an interview. As if a Haitian American weren't black.

Carey-Shuler pushed for another protégé, El Portal Mayor Audrey Edmonson, to fill the District 3 spot, which Edmonson still holds. The rift between Metellus

and her former teacher and friend has been irrevocable.

Metellus instead ran for the Miami-Dade County School Board in 2006. She didn't stand much chance against legendary incumbent Solomon Stinson, or even the well-known third candidate, former state legislator Darryl Reaves. She worked hard, campaigning door to door, but finished third anyway. "That was all about political experience," she says. "I learned a lot."

One lesson: Haitian Americans need to rethink their approach to politics if they want better representation. It took a federal lawsuit to establish voting districts in the City of Miami in 1997; today District 5 is the commission's "black" seat. Unfortunately, as Metellus now knows, black doesn't always mean just black.

"But we are in a new reality," she says, not discounting the possibility of another Voting Rights Act lawsuit on behalf of Haitian Americans. "We are looking at very diverse communities, very diverse minority communities, and now it's time to look at how to achieve appropriate representation. This is doable."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Take a Good Look in the Mirror, Village Beautiful

If you're honest, you'll have to admit we're not as rich, white, and snooty as you may think

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

Miami Shores, I have been lectured recently by too many people, is a wealthy community. Too wealthy for *this* to happen, and for *that* to happen, or for Village Council members not to take care of certain matters of business that should be easily overseen — again, given the population's apparent riches.

And because Miami Shores has so much money, it is clear that whenever something doesn't get fixed, it's because we simply don't care enough. Or at all. In the way that rich people don't care enough or at all about anybody but themselves.

If this is true, then why are the stores of Village Place still largely vacant? Don't you think retailers would be eager to sell their goods and services to millionaires? And speaking of which, where are the millionaires? Because I'm pretty sure they're not the ones counting



coupons next to me in the Miami Shores Publix while talking to their neighbors about the benefits of the Florida Prepaid College Plan.

Frankly, I never cease to be amazed by the way Miami Shores is perceived. Sure, we have a country club — which, thanks to the economy and other factors

I'll be gracious enough not to mention here, has gone public. And yes, we have a private day school that is not run by any churches or synagogues — though it actually sits on the border of our little enclave and unincorporated Miami-Dade, making it mostly not Miami Shores property.

For these and other reasons, we are known as a white, rich, snooty, and above all *older* town where the residents' kids have grown and fled the nest, leaving it overflowing with gobs of expendable income.

I can tell you from experience that, of course, some inhabitants of Miami Shores have more money than others. As far as population goes, we have the gamut that runs from childless gay couples to single folks living together, while the majority these days seem to be young- to middle-age parents with kids to clothe, feed, and school. However, regardless of who you are, just about everyone living here has a mortgage, car payments, and very likely loans from school to pay back. I don't know anyone living in Miami Shores who isn't struggling right now.

But I don't have to rely on my own perceptions, friends, and neighbors to back

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Mirror

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me up. I have statistics in my corner. The 2000 U.S. Census should tell anyone who cares to look that Miami Shores's residents are not a collection of happily retired CEOs living the glory days. The median household income — and that's before we've all been laid off, thank you very much — was \$56,306 at the time of the census. Obviously we're not living in the slums, considering the national median household income was \$41,994.

But let's be real. Kendall, which nobody sneers at for being elitist, had a median household income of \$51,330, according to the 2000 census. I'd ask you to do the math but I have now spent too much time in the school system and know how — er — effective it is, so I will point out for you that only \$5000 per household separates Kendall from Miami Shores. And that distance might be shortened come March 2010, when the next U.S. Census will begin.

So how about Coral Gables, to which we are often compared, and understandably given that we were both developed

by the Shoreland Company. (They're The City Beautiful, we're The Village Beautiful.) The average median household income in the Gables was \$66,839.

The Village of Pinecrest is a community somewhat more in line with our size — only twice as many residents, instead of four times more in the Gables. According to the 2000 census, Pinecrest's median household income was \$107,507.

In these terms, Miami Shores is a poor relation.

Want more myth-busters? Here are several others that I predict will be confirmed by the upcoming census: A third of all the households in Miami Shores will be composed of families with children under the age of 18. We'll discover that we're only two-thirds Caucasian, with Hispanics and Haitians quickly on the rise. We'll have one of the highest populations of gay couples in the U.S. — and that will beat out South Beach.

Something even more dramatic to consider, which I cribbed from a real estate blog called MiamiAngel-Properties.com. The title of the post? "Beached in Miami Shores." The article follows the selling life of a renovated,

1658-square-foot corner property with three bedrooms, two renovated bathrooms, a renovated kitchen, a new roof, and a pool. In 1999 it sold for \$128,000; in 2004 for \$260,000; in 2005 for \$499,900; and in 2007 was back on the market for \$633,000. As of June, 2009, the asking price was \$199,000.

When housing prices fall this dramatically, but our property taxes are still high enough to make my mother choke on her own chicken soup — well, there's that arithmetic to be done again. Simply put, ain't no flush folk around these parts.

The time has come for Miami Shores's city fathers (and mothers, natch) to launch a public-relations campaign that showcases Miami Shores as it really is. Not moneyed, but middle income. Not exclusive, but all-encompassing. Not crotchety, but youthful and fresh. Miami Shores: The Village Welcoming. Especially if you can pay the mortgage.

Why is it so important to shape our image according to our true nature? Because it will determine our future, which is as much about attracting homebuyers as it is about getting retailers to lease our downtown square footage. Perhaps

if the business community knew our true demographics and our real worth, we'd have a place where we could pick up last-minute birthday sweaters for our neighbor's beloved Chihuahua, or a place where our kids could paint pottery for an afternoon, instead of a failed boutique hawking \$300 vases.

Indeed, holiday shopping this past December was more than the usual nightmare — staring at all those empty storefronts that could've made my life easier just had me cranky as hell instead. Even the shops we do have were closed by 6:00 p.m.

Then again, I suspect that some of our city traditionalists enjoy the way Miami Shores is reputed to be: white, wealthy, and all that very sedate and proper jazz. Who knows — if I fit neatly into those currency-lined pigeonholes, I might change the tone of my cluck. But I don't. Which is why you'll hear me squawking until people start commenting that Miami Shores sounds like an awfully neat and maybe even a little fun — in addition to affluent — place to live.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Two-Legged Creatures in a Four-Wheeled World

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

You can add *pedestrian-friendly* to the list of buzzwords being tossed around these days when the subject is revitalizing our nation's cities. Others include *sustainability*, *smart growth*, and *building green*. Like most buzzwords, *pedestrian-friendly* is a subjective term that evokes different ideas from different individuals. I asked a few people what it means to them.

Dean Lewis, architect and Upper Eastside resident.

1. Protection and separation distance: "A zone of separation including barriers, both physical and perceived, between vehicular traffic and pedestrians is crucial for the pedestrian's safe co-habitation along a public right-of-way."

2. Zoning and mixed-use development: "This component incorporates the 'Eyes on the Street' principal on a 24-hour

Can Miami be made safe for people who walk instead of drive?

basis to avoid the 'blacked-out downtown after 5:00' factor, when businesses close and there is no street presence." This would increase the feeling of safety from crimes of opportunity.

3. Citywide public transportation: "A pedestrian should not have to rely only on his personal vehicle to circulate in an urban environment. In fact, the more user-friendly the local mass-transit facilities are, the more popular and successful the urban growth of the area will be." Perhaps a free trolley that travels up and down the Boulevard, as now exists along Ponce de Leon in the Gables, would help provide this element.

Bob Powers, president of the Palm Grove Homeowners Association.

"The first thing is that the streets are safe to cross. Pedestrian



suggests an innovative idea: Vehicles in traffic lanes bordering sidewalks should be required to travel at a slower speed than those traveling the inside lanes.

Margaret Tynan, president of the Belle Meade Homeowners Association and consummate dog-walker. Margaret puts it bluntly: "It means that I can cross the street or walk

along a sidewalk without being run down by a car or a bicycle!"

There is an obvious common thread running through these responses: Safety for pedestrians.

It makes no sense to develop a business corridor along Biscayne Boulevard that caters exclusively to vehicular traffic, especially when the businesses back up against residential communities. People are drawn to such business corridors

crosswalks should be provided at regular intervals." Bob also points out that the speed of the traffic has greater impact than the amount of traffic. "It's actually easier to cross the street during rush-hour traffic than off hours." Traffic congestion during rush hour periods reduces speed.

Tom Hider, MiMo Historic District business owner and Boulevard resident.

"It requires the fundamental ability to safely cross Biscayne Boulevard." Tom also

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Two-Legged

Continued from page 24

not just for their products and services, but also because masses of people on the sidewalks attract other people. This especially applies to the MiMo Historic District, which could become a popular place to hang out — to people-watch and to be seen by others.

Without basic safety, however, the people will not come — at least not by foot. And here is where the notion of *pedestrian-friendly* expands to include safety from crime. One example: Most people who now patronize restaurants in the MiMo Historic District drive their vehicle directly to the restaurant. They don't park elsewhere and stroll. Even local residents aren't inclined to walk — and I should know.

My wife and I live just a block and a half east of the Boulevard in Belle Meade, but seldom do we venture out on pedestrian excursions. Why? Mainly because of the danger in traversing a no-man's land between NE 6th Court and the Boulevard itself. These dark streets are a haven for those who prey on the weak or unsuspecting.

Since it seems we cannot successfully control the criminal element, the only smart thing to do is not put yourself in harm's way. So it's into the car, drive to the restaurant, park very close or valet, enter the restaurant, eat the meal, get back in the car, and drive directly home.

Alternatively, if you felt truly safe, you could enjoy the cool evenings and a nice walk, checking out the people and the shops. (Storefront businesses should keep their lights on so people can window-shop even when the stores are closed.) Based on the experience of the past couple of Cinco de MiMo events, sponsored by the MiMo Biscayne Association, we know the Boulevard can be a fun and happening place — especially after dark.

When there is activity and when there is a police presence, people will come out and participate. Why? Well, they're looking for a good time at the right price. But also, importantly, because they feel safe.

The key to the MiMo District's success is conveying a feeling of complete safety on a daily basis, and to do that we need the active participation of the Florida Department of Transportation

(FDOT), which controls modifications to the Boulevard itself, and of our police department, which provides that critical element of safety while people stroll the sidewalks, taking in the scenery.

Last month I attended an FDOT public meeting at Legion Park on the topic of pedestrian safety. This forum, led by FDOT Boulevard project manager David Korros, was called to present proposals designed to make the MiMo District more pedestrian-friendly. The proposals included several strategically placed "feedback speed signs" that display the standard 35 mph speed limit but also utilize a digital readout of the actual speed of the car approaching the sign. This idea was well received by those in attendance.

FDOT also proposed the installation of a so-called Pedestrian Refuge Island at 72nd Terrace. These islands are like medians separating traffic lanes. They allow pedestrians to cross one-half of a busy roadway, find refuge on the island, then navigate the other half. The 72nd Terrace island would feature flashing beacons instead of a full-fledged crosswalk stoplight. FDOT additionally proposed a plethora of new signage advising people to use common sense

when crossing the street. This was *not* very well received as most everyone ignores such signs, and they just add to the visual pollution that already exists.

All in all, not a very promising set of long-term solutions, but nonetheless they should be implemented (except the extra signage, please) because they're better than nothing.

As for added police protection, we have a new police chief, Miguel Exposito, who says one of his top priorities is to put more police on neighborhood streets — something I've been advocating for years. I've never bought into the police mantra that "if we put a cop on every corner, we still couldn't stop crime." While that may be true regarding white-collar crimes or impulsive crimes of passion, it would certainly put a damper on the opportunistic criminals who plague our neighborhoods and businesses all along the Biscayne Corridor.

Let's hope the new chief is successful in this endeavor and that he places some priority on the Upper Eastside — both on the Boulevard and on our residential streets.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Time to Thaw

It takes a special kind of person to thrive when it's 12 degrees — a person not from Miami

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

By the time you read this, I will have rung in 2010 aboard a jet bound for Miami International Airport. Hopefully. (Had to say that, seeing as how I prepare to die every time I get on a plane, and I don't assume anything in this life. Plus I'm superstitious.) By the time you read this, I will be back in my homeland for an undetermined amount of time.

My first thought this morning when I glanced at the thermometer: "12 is a shoe size for basketball players, *not* a temperature." Alas, my sunnified, subtropical friends, indeed it *is* a temperature and you can bet one thing: It will keep dropping. In fact last winter I saw *minus* 12. And they say it was a mild one.

The weather report called for a "Windy and Wintry Mix." Wintry Mix. Sounds like a seasonal appetizer plate. "Waiter! Yes, I'll have the Wintry Mix!"



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Chunks of thawed and then fried road kill. A slice of roadway with glacial garnish, topped with a sprinkle of coarse salt? De-icer fluid dip with a side of brittle twigs?

And so it begins. Last winter I thought it a viable option to plunge my

Subaru into the Susquehanna River. The Subaru is king up here in the Merciless Frozen Tundra because it works in snow and ice. The vehicle might keep you alive. I am aware that in the MIA, Porsches, Escalades, Audis, Mercedes convertibles are the preferred wheels.

Here people are less picky. They want to survive. And none of those fancy cars are going to help you get traction when the road is a slick runway of death.

So when considering daily MFT runway o' death or the airport's runway o' death, I chose to fly south.

Not that Miami doesn't have its runways o' death. Pick any road — I-95, the Palmetto, Biscayne Boulevard, Calle Ocho. As I drive on these wintry Danger Mouse roads here, I often find myself wondering WWMD? What Would Miamians Do? Seriously. I can't even imagine the carnage and mayhem if the 305 had to deal with snow/icy roads.

Look, I can say it because I'm a native. (Sort of like it's okay to call your sister horrible names and beat her into submission because she's your sibling.) Miami is wonderful for many reasons. But common sense and intelligence are not among them.

Continued on page 27

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Thaw

Continued from page 26

Back when my father taught at the University of Miami, everyone called it “Suntan U,” and not just because the sun was shining. No, there seemed to be a lack of...what? Work ethic? Drive? Whatever it was, it still prevails. The sun. It makes you soft. And you can’t fight it any more than you can fight the MFT winter.

This marshmallowing of the brain, it’s the fate of all who spend too much time in sunny places. Face it, Miamians: You’re a bunch of pussies. I know. I’m one too. Which is why I am heading back to the warm womb.

To be fair, as I’m an equal-opportunity call-it-like-I-see-it type of woman, the MFTers are also pussies. You see, it all boils down (during Miami summers, you can take that literally) to the environment in which you grew up. While Miamians shake out the moth balls and dust off their fur or faux fur coats when the thermometer dips below 70, people in the MFT start sweating at exactly same temperature. It’s just the way we’re made.

I’ll tell you who is not a pussy, though: Irish Helen. My neighbor Irish Helen is one MFTer I like. Irish Helen possesses what one might call “vim and vigor.” She has a great knack for saying “Bah!” while dismissively waving her hand.

This is a woman in her mid-60s (I’m guessing here) who keeps her house at 65 degrees — when she’s in it. Always. I’ll bet it’s at 65 right now, while my thermo still (!!!) reads 12. Her husband does not like it, she says. But he’d just better bundle up! (To give you an idea what this housing temperature means to me: When Jeremy and I went on vacation recently, we set the temperature to 68. Well, there *are* furry children to consider.)

Irish Helen also does not believe in hats. Hats are for sissies!

My school friend Tim is nothing like Irish Helen, yet they do share one thing in common: Tim is another MFTer who doesn’t believe in hats, even at minus 12.

I love Tim, too. He’s barely 20-years-old, born in Vestal, a suburb of Binghamton, NY, which rather unfortunately makes him not just a MFTer but also a

Vestilian. However, I am convinced this is all a mistake, a switching at birth, if you will. Tim does not exhibit typically annoying Vestilian MFT traits such as shuffling his feet or dropping his consonants, and he still has all his teeth.

But Tim still cannot completely escape his roots. Last night was a good example.

There we are, standing outside the building where we’d just concluded the semester of DPI, or Digital Photographic Imaging. (DPI is really an acronym for YAGSTS, or You Are Going to Suffer This Semester.) So anyway, I am in a three-quarter, “mulberry pink,” down-filled coat, under which there are two layers — one shirt and one sweater — jeans, high boots, two pairs of socks (first cotton, then wool; it must be done that way), and mittens.

Tim is wearing what has come to be his class uniform: a thin pair of sweat pants, a tissue-weight white T-shirt, a barely-there hoodie, possibly underwear, and running shoes. I do not know if there were socks.

Tim and I are trying to get through a congratulatory cigarette, but damn! It is

cold. And I stupidly opted to wear a bopping reindeer headband, so I am hatless. I don’t know the temperature but I know it is ominous. (I now can tell the difference between cold and ominous, and we had already passed the “o” mark).

It had been snowing at 5:00 p.m. when I crunched my car wheels into a snowy, illegal parking spot, and now it is 9:00 p.m. We’ve been outside for four minutes and I can no longer feel my ears. Then the wind comes. I start howling. But Tim just stands there.

Me: Oh my gawwwwd! Ahhh! What the???? Tim! How can you just stand there like that? Eeeeeeeeeeeee!

Tim (calmly): I am clenching my ass cheeks together so I don’t scream.

And there you have it. The heart of the MFT spirit. Ass-clenching will power. Hat disdain. Bah! I see it in Irish Helen. I see it in Tim. And I respect it in both. But I do not want to see myself in it the rest of this winter.

They can eat the Wintry Mix platter. I’m ordering the subtropical special.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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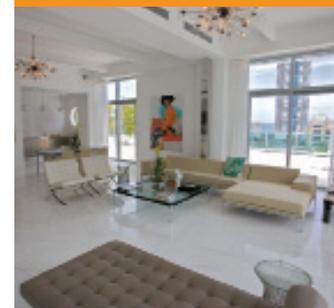


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Follow That Story!

Updates on a few subjects of interest from the year past

The constraints of limited editorial space often mean our crack *BT* news team is not able to follow up on stories of continuing interest. It can be frustrating for readers and writers alike. With that in mind, we've taken this opportunity to update a few stories from 2009. Not as many as we would have liked, of course, but just as many as this issue's limited editorial space would allow.

Among the many intriguing stories *not* included here, we're still keeping an eye on the Vagabond Motel, fundraising at the Miami Art Museum, Biscayne Landing and other shaky condominium projects, Village Place in Miami Shores, and landscaping along Biscayne Boulevard.

— Jim Mullin
BT Editor

Waiting for the Train

Bumper-to-bumper commute driving you crazy? Ride the rails!

By Terence Cantarella

BT Contributor

January 2009

Dreams of speedy and convenient train travel have not faded from the minds of Biscayne Corridor residents. The Florida Department of Transportation's multi-year study, which aims to lay the groundwork for commuter trains on the Florida East Coast railway (FEC) between downtown Miami and West Palm Beach, is still rolling along — slowly.

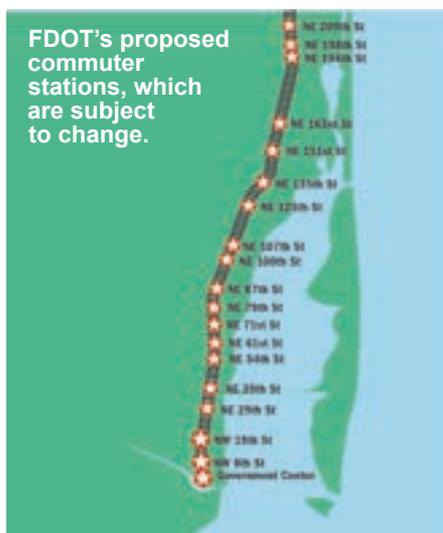
Residents will have to wait another three years to see a finalized plan detailing rail technologies and station locations. Federal funding, essential for any



BT photo by Silvia Ros

These FEC railroad tracks could be carrying commuter trains between Miami and West Palm Beach.

commuter rail project, will be sought shortly thereafter and construction could begin in 2014.



FDOT's proposed commuter stations, which are subject to change.

In the meantime, Florida is seeking almost \$3 billion in stimulus funds for a high-speed Orlando-Tampa-Miami train, a new Jacksonville-Miami Amtrak line, and an Orlando-area commuter train.

The development of those lines, plus the Florida legislature's recently approved bill to fund Tri-Rail and create a "rail oversight" department within FDOT, bodes well for the FEC project. It proves to the feds that Florida is finally getting serious about rail transit and is just as deserving of competitive federal funds as other pro-rail states like California and Illinois.

Since the FEC tracks pass through the downtowns of 28 cities and towns in the tri-county region, a commuter system on that line would be far more accessible

than the more westerly Tri-Rail system. Ultimately, though, the goal is to build a network of interconnected commuter trains (Metrorail, Tri-Rail, FEC) and regional lines (Amtrak, Tampa-Orlando-Miami bullet train) to create a truly 21st-century transportation system.

Citizens on Patrol Are Volunteers in Need

They extend the reach of police, but don't have much reach themselves

By Mandy Baca

BT Intern

February 2009

The City of Miami's Citizens on Patrol program (COP) is more substantial than local Crime Watch groups. Volunteers for COP are screened and trained by the Miami Police Department to patrol residential neighborhoods and report suspicious activity. They must be at least 18 years old, live or work in the city, and commit to a significant number of volunteer hours. They do not make arrests and cannot patrol after 11:00 p.m., but their vigilance is beneficial and appreciated by the residents they serve.

Miami's biggest COP chapter by far is the one based in Little Haiti, with more than 70 active members, some who have been volunteering for years. And *volunteer* is the operative word. The City of Miami supplies COP with polo shirts or windbreakers — and that's it. Volunteers provide their own transportation,

Continued on page 30

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The Last Meal

Why did some of the Biscayne Corridor's best restaurants close their doors in 2009?

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Up and down our Biscayne Corridor, the most surprising restaurant story of these recession-plagued times isn't how many places have folded. It's how many *new* restaurants have opened. Still, when the restaurant death list from 2009 includes places with food so notable and chefs so high-profile you would have thought them recession-proof — well, you have to wonder why. So we selected a few of our most mourned losses and hounded the proprietors for answers.

Dewey LoSasso and Alan Hughes summed up their situations by invoking an old real-estate adage: The three most important things are location, location, and location. LoSasso was chef/owner of the renowned contemporary culinary oasis North One 10, while Hughes was chef/owner of the quirky One Ninety, the second incarnation of his very popular Design District original and the first restaurant on our list to fold in 2009.

"We took a chance with the restaurant's location at Biscayne and 110th Street," explains LoSasso. "There's a sort of dead area between 125th Street down to about 80th Street. When we opened in 2004, we thought the area was going to get better. A lot of our clientele did come from Jockey Club, Sans Souci, Cricket Club, and other affluent uptown communities. But when there are short sales at Cricket Club, it doesn't make

sense to stay. In the last year, business at the restaurant was down almost 50 percent."

One Ninety had a more problematic setting on a block in Little Haiti that is particularly charmless — NE 54th Street just east of N. Miami Avenue. Between the street's broken-bottle décor, intrusively loud music from neighbors, and frequent Friday-night Haitian political demonstrations, Hughes says diners didn't feel safe. "The area was supposed to be emerging... I'm not very cautious about locations. For a while after opening enough people did come, even celebrities like Ricky Martin. Bobby Flay came. But eventually — well, I can't tell you how many times a customer would say, 'Where the hell am I?' There were people who told me they had driven to One



Alan Hughes of One Ninety: "I can't tell you how many times a customer would say, 'Where the hell am I?'"

Ninety, sometimes from long distances, and then had not gotten out of the car."



North One 10's Dewey LoSasso: "It's not a high-profile area — unless you're a transvestite hooker, and they weren't great customers."



There were other problems, too. "At the first One Ninety, I had a partner, Donna, my ex-wife, who did an amazing job in the front of the house, and had a huge following herself. I did great food, and she had a great personality. At the

new place, I was running everything myself — and going crazy. I'm not good with numbers, either."

As for North One 10, LoSasso can't recall a year in the six he was open in which there weren't serious problems, starting with prolonged Boulevard road construction that blocked access and ended up putting him in substantial debt. "You open to four-star reviews but they put yellow tape around the building!" he groans. "Then

the next year — three hurricanes. Then the bad economy in the last two years."

It didn't help that, despite affordable deals like a year-round Miami Spice-style menu, there seemed to be a perception that the high-profile place had prohibitively high prices as well. "I think some of it was the look," says LoSasso. "Maybe we should have gone casual instead of keeping

the former restaurant tenant's marble floors. NE 110th Street is not a high-profile area — unless you're a transvestite hooker, and they weren't great customers."

LoSasso has, however, landed on his feet most spectacularly as the new executive chef at Miami Beach's landmark The Forge. When word of his appointment leaked out last fall, the restaurant, which was undergoing renovations, began booking reservations well into February. "North One 10 established me as a brand," says LoSasso. "I'd never be where I am without it."

Alan Hughes, in addition to his catering (www.chefalanhughes.com), also has a new restaurant of sorts, back in a cool Design District-area location. "At my house!" he laughs. "I call it Guerilla Restaurant. There's just one table, and you call up when you want to book a dinner.

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flashlights, batteries, cell phones, and everything else. The Little Haiti chapter did win a grant to purchase walkie-talkies so members can communicate with each other while on patrol — often in the Buena Vista East neighborhood just north of the Design District.

Supporters of the program, including the Buena Vista East Historic Neighborhood Association, want the city to do more. Pradel Denis, who is involved with the COP program as well as the Buena Vista East homeowners group, told the *BT* last January: “If this program were properly structured, we could make a big dent in crime.” At the top of Denis’s wish list: radios linked directly to police.

Another Buena Vista East resident and COP advocate is Schiller Jerome, who lobbied local politicians and police commanders. “There’s money available to assist them,” he told the *BT*, “but it’s not being used.”



BT photo by Silvia Ros

Pradel Denis (rear) and Schiller Jerome (right) with members of Little Haiti’s Citizens on Patrol.

Unfortunately, one year later, not much has changed. “The end of 2009 brings the same results as the end of 2008,” reports Denis, who notes that the volunteers received zero financial support

last year and don’t expect to this year either.

Jerome is more optimistic. Miami has a new mayor and a new police chief. Fresh faces could mean a fresh look at Citizens on Patrol. Jerome says he’ll continue lobbying Miami officials, despite the city’s precarious financial situation.

Sober but Strained Relations

An Alcoholics Anonymous chapter takes fire from its Shorecrest neighbors

By Erik Bojnansky

BT Contributor

June 2009

This past June the *BT* chronicled a feud between Shorecrest homeowners and an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter — fueled by road rage, city zoning mishaps, and a looming billboard. Seven months later the conflict continues, though it may come to a head in March.

That’s when the AA chapter known as the Little River Club, located at 753 NE 79th St., may lose the right to use the rear of its property as a parking lot.

City spokeswoman Cristina Fernandez says the fate of the rear parking lot, which was originally zoned for residential use only, will be determined at a hearing sometime in March. The city could enforce the residential zoning or grant the club a variance for up to 20 years.

Shorecrest residents vow to fight the parking lot — unless the club agrees to one change: Close the rear entrance to the lot, located on NE 80th Street, which is otherwise completely residential. They want the club to utilize a narrow

front entrance facing commercial 79th Street. That proposed entry to the parking lot is now blocked by a fence, the club building’s back patio, and a new 45-foot-tall billboard. (CBS Outdoor owns the billboard and pays the club \$12,000 yearly for the use of its property.)

Besides contending with vehicles entering and leaving the club’s parking lot,



The Little River AA club with billboard looming overhead.

sometimes at a high rate of speed, residents say they also endure unwelcome club members wandering around the neighborhood on foot. Neighbors claim to have seen club members toss liquor bottles and trespass on private property prior to entering the club’s rear entrance. Chris Masciatti, a former Surfside code enforcement officer, says he pursued one trespasser with a video camera and a gun. “The guy was reeking with beer,” Masciatti asserts. “He turns around and starts to run west to 80th Street. Right when he got to the Little River Club, he jumped the fence.”

Richard Laird, president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association, believes much of the trouble can be

attributed to individuals who don’t want to be at the club in the first place. They must attend AA meetings by court order, commonly the result of alcohol-related offenses. Still, Laird says, the situation is becoming intolerable: “Two families have moved out because of the foot traffic going in and out of the neighborhood.”

Little River Club attorney Gary

Glasser says there is no proof that the speeders or trespassers are club members. He also insists that such troublemakers are thrown out of the club. “We are trying to work with the neighbors,” says Glasser, “but they are not doing the same.” As for the proposed 79th Street entrance, Glasser says that even without the obstructions, it would be too narrow to accommodate vehicles.

Last year city officials told the *BT* that the

club’s rear entrance was no longer legal as the variance that allowed its creation expired in 1966. Miami officials also claimed the back patio was built without a permit and needed to be torn down. The billboard, they determined, was legal.

According to Glasser, the patio did have a permit. He also says he presented evidence to city officials that the “variance” allowing the parking lot was really a “certificate of use” with no expiration date.

Miami’s zoning director, Lourdes Slazyk, says Glasser is both right and wrong. Yes, the club’s “certificate of use” was once legal, but no longer. It is, she says, about to expire.

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School Dazed in El Portal

Church wants to sell, charter wants to build, neighbors want none of it

By Brandon Dane
Special to BT
July 2009

In April of last year, a Broward-based developer and one of the nation's biggest operators of charter schools began seeking special permission to expand and convert the former Rader United Methodist Church (NE 2nd Avenue and 87th Street) into a public charter school in El Portal, population 2500. Residents, however, were worried about a range of issues, including litter, possible crime, and traffic

congestion created by 900 students. Some concluded that the project was "just another way to make a buck."

During the summer, attorneys for the developer, MG3 Developer Group, pleaded with community members to



The former Methodist church in El Portal is once again up for sale.

accept the proposed charter school, offering reassurances that it would be operated by the nonprofit Imagine Schools, which claims to be the largest and fastest-growing charter-school

organization in the United States.

El Portal's planning and zoning board, advised by their traffic consultants, balked at the potential problems, and the fact that MG3 Developer Group had not yet purchased the property from the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami, which bought the 58-year-old church for \$3.6 million in 2007.

The hammer fell on September 15, when the board unanimously denied approval to develop the property. According to El Portal village manager Jason Walker: "The project is over unless they want to appeal to the Miami-Dade County Circuit Court."

Imagine School's South Florida office says the company instead intends to open a charter school this year in Doral.

Spokeswoman for the archdiocese, Mary Ross Agosta, says that while the sale to MG3 ultimately fell through, the Rader property is still on the market, and she expects the archdiocese to make its money back.



BT photos by Terence Cantarella

Solid as an Oak Tree, Dead as a Door Nail

They're in the Design District, they're old and majestic, and they're about to be destroyed

By Terence Cantarella
BT Contributor
September 2009

The 41st Street Oaks, two stately, 100-year-old Southern Live Oak trees in Miami's Design District, narrowly escaped the chain

Continued on page 33



ATTENTION SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Dorrin D. Rolle
Miami-Dade County Commissioner
District 2



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MANDATORY WORKSHOP MEETING

Monday, January 18, 6:00 p.m., Arcola Lakes Park, 1301 NW 83 St.
Businesses must attend to be considered for funding. Please be on time!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

- Bernice Fidelia, Commissioner Rolle's District Office, 305-694-2779
- Lawanza Finney, NANA, 305-756-0605

ALL APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO SELECTION COMMITTEE REVIEW



ATTENTION SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Audrey M. Edmonson
Miami-Dade County Commissioner
District 3



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- District Office: 5400 NW 22 Ave., Suite 701, Miami
- Neighbors And Neighbors Association (NANA) 180 NW 62 St., Miami
 - Download applications at www.miamidade.gov/district03
 - Return 1 original and 1 copy of completed application to District Office or NANA between January 20 and 22, by 5:00 pm (Keep a copy for your records)

MANDATORY WORKSHOP MEETING

Tuesday, January 19, 6:00 p.m., Joseph Caleb Community Center
5400 NW 22 Ave., Miami, Meeting Room 110
Businesses must attend to be considered for funding. Please be on time!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Lawanza Finney, NANA, 305-756-0605

ALL APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO SELECTION COMMITTEE REVIEW

Last Meal

Continued from page 29

And if I don't want to open some days, I don't have to."

The most recent restaurant death on our list was the creative Cuban/Spanish tapas bar Canela, which operated from a strip mall in the 5100 block of Biscayne Boulevard. The Food Network's *Hungry Detective* show judged Canela "one of the five best off-the-beaten-path restaurants in Miami." Opened in 2004, it closed this past November, and chef/owner/in-charge-of-everything person Margarita Vasallo seems a bit shell-shocked.

"I thought I would have a little more time," she says, "but every month this year, when it came time to pay my rent, I was lacking \$1000, \$2000. My landlord finally said it would be better for me to stop now and cut my losses."

Vasallo believes that recession hardships dramatically decreased her business. "Definitely," she says. "In the same mall, people were going more to the sushi express because these days they'd rather spend \$6 than \$10 at



Jan Jorgensen on the demise of Two Chefs Too: "Not so much the economy, not being fine dining. It was a lot of small, stupid things."

Canela." At lunchtime Canela served up a lettuce/tomato/grilled onion/aioli-enhanced *pan con lechon* on crusty rustic bread — arguably the finest Nuevo Latino sandwich in Miami. Nonetheless, Vasallo adds, "You could see people standing on line at the Dunkin' Donuts

next door for a cheaper panini."

Vasallo also blames her financial woes on unchecked ambitions, such as an expansion that doubled the size of the restaurant after its very successful first year. "My lease started at \$926 per month," she notes. "By the end it was \$5500. I shouldn't have expanded. I was working all day and all night without a partner I could count on, and I was working financially from month to month. I've learned you can't do that. It's like with baking: There's a recipe for a successful restaurant, and you have to follow it."

Currently Vasallo is catering ("basically anything on Canela's menu"), including a commission deal with Touch Catering. And she's enjoying the chance to spend time with her six year-old child. Still, when talking about Canela, it almost seems like she's referring to a second child. "I miss her," she sighs.

Jan Jorgensen politely but firmly refuses to talk about the demise of Two Chefs Too. "I just don't want to associate myself with anything negative," he says.

Indeed Jorgensen's journey through the South Florida food world has been overwhelmingly positive, culminating in

his original South Miami hot spot, Two Chefs. The business began as a small cooking school in 1994 and evolved into an award-winning restaurant that has proved consistently popular for 15 years.

Yet North Miami's Two Chefs Too, which got excellent reviews for its high-quality but reasonably priced fine-dining cuisine when it opened in late 2007, lasted little more than a year. What happened? "Not so much the economy, not being fine dining. It was a lot of small, stupid things," Jorgensen says evasively.

What about our own "jinx spot" theory? The restaurant's low-visibility space — at the end of a strip mall where 123rd Street becomes the Broad Causeway — has proved fatal to every eatery that has tried to repeat the early 1990s success of Mark Militello's legendary Mark's Place. Mark's was packed every night, but Militello was famous, and those were the days when devoted foodies thought nothing of driving vast distances for a superior dining experience.

Continued on page 33

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Follow

Continued from page 31

saw last September. The question now: Can they survive bulldozers, backhoes, trenchers, and steamrollers?

The *BT* began covering the plight of the 80-foot-tall twin oaks after learning that two concerned citizens — George Perez and Miryam Rojas — had filed expensive appeals with the city to prevent property owners Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz from cutting down the towering trees.

The de la Cruzes had planned to remove the historic oaks to make room for a parking lot across the street from their new art museum.

According to City of Miami preservation officer Ellen Ugucioni, the *BT* article unleashed “a virtual flood of communications from city residents.” Between that public outcry and the persuasiveness of the appeals filed by Perez and Rojas, the de la Cruzes quickly agreed to design their new parking lot *around* the trees instead of removing them.



George Perez and Miryam Rojas led the charge to save the 41st Street Oaks.

Deep trenches were recently dug on the property to install sewer and storm

drain components in advance of the resurfacing and paving work. One concern: Those trenches were dug well within the spread of the trees’ root systems, which typically reach as far out from the trunk as the canopy.

The months ahead will reveal whether the twin oaks will continue to thrive or whether they were spared the chainsaw only to be condemned to a slow death from root damage.

Naturally, the *BT* will be watching.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Last Meal

Continued from page 32

“I thought there was a little left of that era,” Jorgensen concedes. After all, his demographic research looked promising. “The numbers seemed solid,” he recalls, “but the clientele turned out to be very seasonal.”

Despite his candor, Jorgensen still seems to be avoiding something. Relentless pestering finally gets it out of him. One fine day when renovations were nearly complete, a fellow Jorgensen knew, who worked for the City of North Miami, drove up “in a car with that little circle on the side. I happily invited this guy in and offered to show him what we’d done with the space.”

That included a bathroom where some drywall had been removed. Lo and behold, that turned Two Chefs Too’s “renovations” into “new construction,” which meant much more stringent requirements. “We had to change many things,” Jorgensen says. “Put in handicapped bathroom facilities, examine every last little screw.” One result:

The business was reassessed for tax purposes at double its previous value. “It just didn’t fly for me,” he adds. “I’m the small guy. I cook for a living.” Which he continues to do with great success at Two Chefs in South Miami, where the soufflés alone are worth the drive.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

If It Seems Too Good to Be True...

1600 Block of N. Bayshore Drive
Our hero of a victim came home with two women on his arms. (Score!) He left them in his living room as he went to shower. Gotta be nice and clean. As he was exiting the shower, he saw both women hurriedly exiting the front door — with his wallet and watch. (Score!) Nothing else was taken, save for his bruised ego.



The Gift of Giving

Omni
As the holiday season winds down, we've had an opportunity to divvy up all the cool stuff we got from our loved ones. This woman got her surprise early. In the spirit of the season, her ex-boyfriend called to let her know he'd left a little something for her at her apartment. How nice! When she arrived home, she found his gift: electrical wires cut, air-conditioning unit destroyed, and all her clothes stolen. Not sure if he is

a cross-dresser, but as for replacing her wardrobe, there are some great post-holiday sales around town.

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

1000 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
The woman couldn't help but notice that several high-ticket fashion items were missing from her condo: Louis Vuitton



bag, Breitling watch (reportedly valued at \$54,000), designer clothing, and jewelry. Turns out that the brand maven was most likely victimized by an acquaintance who'd also been victimized — by her pimp. The suspect hooker, who was temporarily staying at the condo, had been working at a local strip club. Our victim was reticent to press charges because she knew the woman was trying to escape from her loathsome pimp. The hooker has since

disappeared, along with the video-surveillance tape, and is rumored to have returned to the cold of Nova Scotia, where the Canadian pimps are nicer and used designer clothes fetch a good price.

The Ghost of Imelda Marcos

600 Block of NE 86th Street
This crime occurred at a house where the victim found that her door had been forced open by an unknown intruder. Her home was not ransacked. In fact there was no damage whatsoever, and no cash taken. However, eight pairs of shoes were stolen. This was second burglary in six months at the victim's home, but the first time shoes were targeted. At press time, the shoes themselves had not been identified.

Begging for Attention

Omni
Sometimes people *ask* to become victims. This woman was shopping and placed

Continued on page 35



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Crime Beat

Continued from page 34

her purse on the counter, then walked away. When she returned several minutes later, guess what? The purse was missing. There were about ten such incidents in this month's police reports. Ladies, hold onto your purses! Avoid appearing in the February installment of Crime Beat!

Man Loses Leg — We Think

NE 17th Street and Biscayne Boulevard
Police reports are sometimes difficult to decipher owing to an officer's uncertain grasp of written English. Crime Beat has struggled through some *really* bad grammar. In this report, if we understand it correctly, the victim was standing at a bus stop when a man on a bike came by and stole his "prosthesis." His left pants leg was ripped from the seams and also stolen. The victim was unable to identify the bicycle-riding fetishist, but his "extension" (according to the report) is sadly gone. Hold onto your arms and legs, people. Apparently there is a market for stolen limbs.

Peeper and His Peeps

Omni

In yet another example of the indecipherable police report, we have a man who was seen peeping into a bedroom, using a lighter to illuminate the room. He was confronted by the victim and, according to the report, he responded, "Okay, I will go, just let me get my peeps to come on by." The man was actually the victim's drug-addict cousin. The victim then noticed his girlfriend crouching outside the bedroom window. The cousin and his girlfriend then departed. Charges have yet to be filed — but for what?

A Passion for Cooking?

100 Block NE 76th Street

A man broke into a home and went straight for the stove. He removed it and began pushing it down the street. But it was apparently too heavy for him. He gave up and ran away after half a block. Police did not catch him. Meanwhile the stove's owner was unable to drag it back home because of its weight. At press time the stove was no longer on the street, but its whereabouts were unknown.

Rogue Painter Starves Kitties

1000 NE 78th Street Rd.

Woman arrived home to find the family cats shivering in fear under the bed. Someone had broken into the home and had taken all their food and water. (Seriously.) The human food in the refrigerator had also been tampered with. It doesn't stop there. The entire apartment had been painted yellow! The victim believes she knows the culprit and was upset that he had entered the home without her being there. She wanted to watch him as she did not completely trust him. (No wonder!) The painter is still at large, armed with other colors and plenty of Iams.

Need Stuff? Just Take It

4870 Biscayne Blvd.

Typically people steal deodorants and food from Publix. This time, however, two men casually started loading Publix pallets into their SUV. The pallets were clearly marked, but the twosome did not seem to care. Publix personnel caught sight of this and immediately notified the officer on duty, who promptly arrested them.

Some Guard Dogs

100 Block of NE 79th Street

Man came to work and noticed all the sodas were gone. Nothing else appeared to be missing, with one exception: the supposedly ferocious guard dogs. Dogs and sodas have yet to be located.

Justified Paranoia

2600 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

Sometimes it seems that imagining something could happen actually causes it to happen. Such was the case with the woman who was worried about her son's truck. It had been stolen only a week earlier. Happily, it was recovered. After that, they parked the truck in the backyard to avoid a repeat incident. One day a friend was visiting and the worried mother asked him to check the backyard to see if the truck was still there. It wasn't. The truck had been stolen again! At press time the truck had not been recovered, but if it is, you can bet they'll try parking it *inside* the house.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Street Art Has Arrived

— Wynwood is now famous for its outdoor murals — unlike many of the artists who created them —

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

What was happening out there on the streets of Wynwood, on a Wednesday afternoon in the middle of December? The Art Basel crowds had gone home, so why all these people milling about, taking photographs in front of murals throughout the neighborhood? Wynwood, the art center of Miami, may be filled with galleries, but it is rarely filled with visitors apart from one Saturday evening each month.

Here's what's happening: Wynwood has become one of the most vibrant street-art scenes in the nation, if not the world. Building walls here have been covered with an astonishing amount of illegal and legal graffiti, murals, and paintings, created by both local and internationally acclaimed artists.

So on this afternoon, art interlopers piled out of taxis and cars to see some of these spectacular murals. People posed in front of the 12 murals painted during Art Basel on a cluster of buildings along NW 2nd Avenue. The collection of murals is called "Wynwood Walls" and was sponsored by the New York gallery Deitch Projects and the developer Tony Goldman, whose company owns the properties. They posed in front of other walls too, like the massive one facing I-95 on the building housing the Margulies Collection, painted the artists known as Retna and El Mac.

Those two are part of a collective called Primary Flight, which has been responsible for much of the outdoor art in the area, and which is currently creating a sprawling mural and graffiti complex on NW 6th Avenue at 23rd Street, where more visitors were snapping photos of the explosion of color emanating from the walls of this warehouse property.

Wynwood's walls received intense scrutiny this past Art Basel, but this street-art extravaganza didn't happen overnight, and not without a lot of sweat and effort that some of the originators think have gone uncredited.

The artist who goes by the name BooksIII is a founder of Primary Flight, the group founded in 2007 to seriously cover those neighborhood walls. "We busted our asses securing those walls, getting the paint," he says of those early



BT photo by Silvia Ros

Over the past few years, Wynwood has become ground zero for inspired graffiti art.



Photo by Douglas Hoekzema

Shortly after Primary Flight's Douglas Hoekzema finished this vision of Celia Cruz, it was vandalized.



Primary Flight's Retna and El Mac at work.

days. Along with several other artists and curators, the group has a passion for bringing art outdoors, to a neighborhood the art elite ignored, aside from indoor shows. "Here was a place that was becoming an art hub," he says, "but for the most part it was one week a year [during Art Basel]. They appear and then disappear without looking at what was going on. We were like, 'Fuck you, more is going on here.'"

Making art available to everyone was part of the mission, says another founding member, New York-based curator Lynn Yohana Howard. "We wanted to highlight high-level art for the people, to help revitalize a blighted area that was neglected for so long," says Howard.



Photos by Logan Hicks and Jeremiah Garcia

Retna and El Mac's finished mural at the Margulies Collection, 591 NW 27th St.

So with very little money but lots of enthusiasm, Primary Flight took to the streets of Wynwood, and wall by wall began putting up a truly

amazing array of murals. Year by year the roster of people participating grew, and included local, national, and international artists. Primary Flight's paintings were giving Miami worldwide street cred. (Photo galleries and more can be found at the group's website: www.primaryflight.com.)

Fast forward to this past December, when "street art" was all the rage. An element of commercialism had clearly crept into the scene, from the beautiful but somewhat sterilized "Wynwood Walls" to yet another show that claimed to be exhibiting some of the world's biggest names in graffiti art, a two-story exhibit called "Graffiti Gone Global," sponsored by the restaurant chain SushiSamba. Both

shows had brought in acclaimed artists, from Shepard Fairey to Lady Pink and Ewok, artists who had also created murals in Wynwood courtesy of Primary Flight.

So back on the street, there was a feeling that all the effort of the past several years was being ignored by newcomers with more money and public relations fire power.

An artist and architect who works with Primary Flight, Douglas Hoekzema, a.k.a. HOX, was feeling more than slighted. He was feeling robbed by the "Graffiti Gone Global" show. He'd been hired to do the main sculptural installation and was highlighted in the show's catalogue as "The Architect." But at the last minute, he says, he was taken off the project with no recourse to fix what the curators thought was a problem.

"I swallowed my pride and began to change elements to their liking," he says. "Halfway through the day [they] decided to shut the project down. I pleaded for

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Photo by Logan Hicks and Jeremiah Garcia

Shepard Fairey mural at 3000 N. Miami Ave., sponsored by Primary Flight.

Street Art

Continued from page 36

two more hours to prove that I could complete the work as they wished, but this wasn't enough.... I feel this is more than just personalities clashing."

One of "Global's" curators, Karla Murray, who with her partner James produced the well-regarded *Miami Graffiti* book last year, says there were creative differences but that any official comment had to come from the SushiSamba managing partner, Shimon Bokovza.

However, Bokovza says he had nothing to do with the curating or the hiring or firing of individuals.

Hard feelings were clearly surfacing. Says Primary Flight's BooksIII: "That was just shit, what happened to HOX. No respect there."

The "Wynwood Walls" project also got little respect. "*Wynwood Walls?*



Collaborative mural by Nina, Os Gemeos, and Finok at "Wynwood Walls."

What a curiously titled project," says BooksIII. "*We made Wynwood's walls and we're getting no credit for that.*"

Says Lynne Yohana Howard: "No, we didn't put out water bottles with the tag 'Wynwood Walls,' we just *did it* over the years."

They felt the Goldman/Deitch mural park capitalized on what they'd already done, with no mention of their efforts and achievements in covering so many of Wynwood's walls.

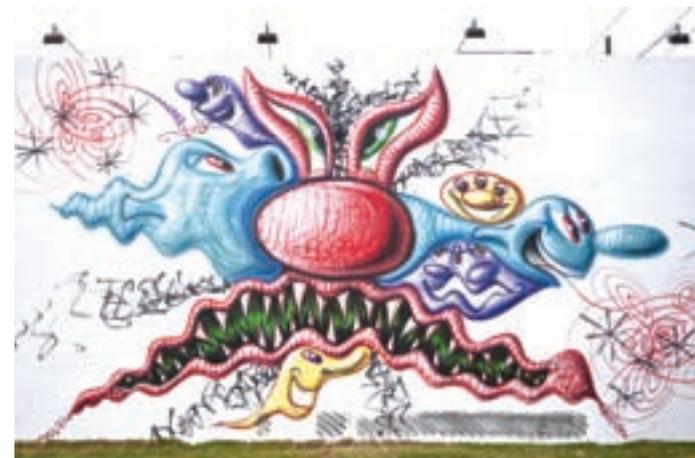
For his part, Tony Goldman hopes Primary Flight is rightfully credited for what they've done, but he is proud of what "Wynwood Walls" has become. "This is something else to add to the neighborhood and to the public's enjoyment of public art," he says. "It's good for everybody."

BooksIII agrees, in part. "Those walls are fantastic, I don't hate on that," he says of the "Wynwood Walls" murals.



Mural by Brazilian duo Nunca at "Wynwood Walls."

Photos courtesy of Wynwood Walls



Kenny Scharf at "Wynwood Walls."

"I just think some people might get the impression that all this happened in one day." (The "Wynwood Walls" project featured an international cast of artists, including Aiko from Japan, teams Os Gemeos and Nunca from Brazil, Stelios Faitakis from Greece, and Shepard Fairey, Kenny Scharf, Clare Rojas, Barry McGee, and Jim Drain from the United States. Go to

www.deitch.com for information and more images.)

In the end, it may come down to truly different

visions. The murals at "Wynwood Walls" are not graffiti. They are paintings, and Goldman has hired 24-hour security to make sure no one defaces them. As BooksIII points out: "Look, they've got tended grass and lighting and whatnot.

Our stuff is still unpoliced; It's just out there on the street."

Over at the huge graffiti project on NW 6th Avenue that Primary Flight's artists are creating, the lack of policing was evident recently when a mural by Hoekzema — of singer Celia Cruz — was defaced just days after being completed. "What a shitty thing to do," sighs the artist, who is going to retouch it.

In spite of the discord, everyone seems to agree that Wynwood has become a unique neighborhood because of the remarkable proliferation of outdoor art. "Miami is a true graffiti destination," says BooksIII.

Goldman agrees: "It is becoming an international street-art museum. It really is."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

"Wynwood Walls? What a curiously titled project. We made Wynwood's walls and we're getting no credit for that."

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Through January 20: Claudio Ethos and David Michael Bowers
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233 NW 36th St., Miami
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ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730; www.artfusiongallery.com
January 2 through March 24: "INCANTATIONS IN MULTI-COLOR" with various artists
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46 NW 36th St., Miami
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www.lurie-kavachnina.com
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Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

ARTFORMZ

171 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-572-0040
www.artformz.net
Through January 5: "Money Makes Art" with Natasha Duwin, Rai Escale, Donna Haynes, Alette Simmons-Jimenez, Rosario Rivera-Bond, PJ Mills, Ray Paul, Sibel Kocabasi, Anja Marais, Guillermo Portieles, Gisela Savdie, and Henning Haupt
January 9 through February 12:
Works by Rosario Rivera-Bond and Donna Haynes
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Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
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www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com
Through January 30: "Hope: Yes We Can" by Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

BREVARDS GALLERY

2320 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-5747; www.brevards.com
Through March 30:
"NonDuality" by John Brevard

BUTTER GALLERY

2301-2303 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-303-6254
www.buttergallery.com
Through January 7:
"Sacrificial Offering" by Rick Falcon and "Butter Gallery Artists Exhibit" with Jahmal Williams, Yuri Tuma, Ahol Sniffs Glue, Tawnie Silva, and Hubert Kretzschmar

CALDWELL / LINFIELD GALLERY & STUDIO

8351 NE 8th Ct., Miami
305-754-2093
www.susannacaldwell.com
Through June 30: "Seductive Assemblages and Wood Sculpture" by Susanna Caldwell

CALIX GUSTAV GALLERY

98 NW 29 St., Miami
305-576-8116
calix-gustav.blogspot.com
Through February 2: Yanelis Lopez, Charles Chace, Jonathan Stein, Carl Pascuzzi, Spunk and The Orange Kittens, and Klaus Guingang and "Monitoring Art" with Pipilotti Rist, Clifton Childree, Xavier Cortada, Dinorah de Jesus Rodriguez, JC Espinosa, Christina Petterson, Alette Simmons-Jimenez, Nikki Rollason, Russell Chartier, and Paul J. Botelho
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906; www.cjazzart.com
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com
January 15 through February 12:
"Cinematheque" by Jorge Pantoja
Reception January 15, 7 to 11 p.m.

CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION

541 NW 27th St., Miami
305-571-1415; www.visual.org
Call gallery for exhibition information.

CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-292-0411; www.charest-weinberg.com
Through February 28: "Herd Thinner" with Slater Bradley, Suntek Chung, Richard Dupont, Martha Friedman, Sheree Hovsepian, Rashid Johnson, Simone Leigh, Fernando Mastrangelo, Raha Raissnia, Seher Shah, Erin Shirreff, Jeff Sonhouse, and Outtara Watts
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

CHELSEA GALLERIA

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-2950
www.chelseagalleria.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

CITY LOFT ART

61 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-9006
www.cityloftart.com
January 4 through February 6:
Group show with Elmar Hund, Ekaterina Moré, Virginia Erdie, and Monique Wegmueller
Reception January 9, 7 to 10:30 p.m.

CS GALLERY

787 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-308-6561
www.chirinosanchez.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110
www.castilloart.com
January 9 through February 6:
Shelter Serra and "...yet nightly pitch my moving tent" by Gustavo Roman
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.



Jacin Giordano, *Cut Painting 3 (detail)*, acrylic on wood, 2009, at Fredric Snitzer Gallery.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dfinearts.com
Through February 6:
"Lapidus Infinitus" by Carlos Betancourt and "Geographic" with Luis Alonzo-Barkigia, John Bailly, Irene Clouthier, Felice Grodin, Jill Hotchkiss, Laura Kina, Alberto Latorre, Michael Loveland, Michael Scoggins, Carlos de Villasante, and Annie Wharton
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046
www.diasporavibe.net
January 7 through February 2:
"When Black is Clear, part I" by Alejandro Contreras
Reception January 7, 7 to 10 p.m.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

171 NE 38th St., Miami
dimensionsvariable.net
Call gallery for exhibition information.

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248; www.dinamitraniartgallery.com
January 9 through February 27:
"The Contract" by Marina Font
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278; www.dorschgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994; www.dotfiftyone.com
Through January 12: "Thaw" with Andres Ferrandis and "Purusha" with Andrea Chehebar

DPM GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-1777
www.dpmgallery.com
Through January 30:
"Change is around the corner" by Manuela Ribadeneria
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.
EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART
47 NE 25th St., Miami
305-303-8852
www.edgezones.org
January 9 through January 30: "Patterns" by Pati Laylle
Reception January 9, 7 to 11 p.m.

ETRA FINE ART

10 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-4383
www.etrFINEART.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

FACHE ARTS

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

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
January 8 through January 30:
"...Years Later" by Jacin Giordano
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

FIGHT CLUB

120 NE 20th St., Miami
Through March 31: "The Art of Boxing" by Silvia Ros

FREEDOM TOWER

600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
Through January 29: "Tetralogy" by Maria Martinez-Cafias

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE

125 NW 23 St., Miami
305-576-6095
www.galeriehelenelamarque.com
January 9 through January 31: "Beyond the Body II" with Bose Krishnamachari, Anish Kapoor, Shadi Ghadirian, Tejal Shah, Francesca Lalanne, and Alex Burke
Reception January 9, 6 to 9 p.m.

GALERIE SCHUSTER MIAMI

2085 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-266-2445
www.gallerieschuster.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
January 8 through February 6:
"Magical Powers" by Charley Friedman
Reception January 8, 6 to 9 p.m.
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

GALLERY I/D

2531 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-778-4568
Call gallery for exhibition information.

GIOVANNI ROSSI FINE ART

2628 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
561-251-1375
www.giovannirossifineart.com
Through January 5: "War ~ Beau" by Angelbert Metoyer

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com
Through February 6: "Gravy" by Julie L. Friel, Gladys Triana, "Closer to me than myself" by Gabriela Morawetz, and "Todos Los Cuerpos Extraños" curated by Roc Laseca with various artists
Reception January 5, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
January 9 through February 6:
"New World Order" with Mark Ryden, Ron English, Skot Olsen, Mitch O'Connell, Scott Schiedly, Chris Dean, Pooch, Christie Strong, and N! Satterfield
Reception January 9, 7 to 11 p.m.

ICON ART IMAGES GALLERY / STUDIO

147 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4266
www.cashappeal.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

IDEABOX ARTSPACE

2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878
Through February 26:
"Archipelago" with Gean Moreno and Ernesto Oroza

Continued on page 39

Art Listings

Continued from page 38

INTERFLIGHT STUDIO

250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-1673, www.interflightstudio.com
January 4 through February 5: "Above the Clouds" with PilotO, Desiree Bordes, Mike Tesch, Jo-Ann Lizio, Herve Alexandre, and Bernardo Medina
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

KABE CONTEMPORARY

123 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Through January 15:
"Recent Work" by José Antonio Hernández Diez

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through January 15: "Elements x 10" with Sebastian Spreng, Robert Swedroe, Mike Tesch, Patricia Claro, Antonio Ugarte, Fran Bobadilla, Mimi Bates, Kevin Paulsen, Soile Yli-Mayry, John Henry, and Henry Lautz
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-2000
www.kevinbrukgallery.com
Through January 7: Richard Butler, Daniel Hesidence, Fabian Marcaccio, Enrique Martinez-Celaya, Jason Middlebrook, David Shaw, Matthew Weinstein, and Su-en Wong
January 9 through February 20: Matthew Weinstein
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
Through January 30: "Tales and Other Nightmares" by Tania Candiani
Reception January 9, 7 to 10:30 p.m.

LILIENTHAL ART STUDIOS

96 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-2002
www.ilanalilienthal.com
Through January 6:
"Show Of Hands" by Ilana Lilienthal

LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
January 9 through February 27: "An Uneven Floor, 2010" by Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
Through January 30: "Ritual of Passage"
by José Bedia
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

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., Miami
Bldg. 1, Room 1365
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

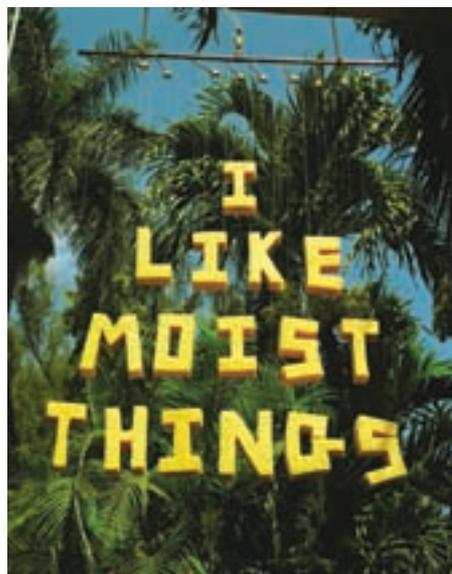
1501 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-428-5700; www.mymiu.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MUSEO VAULT

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

NEKTAR DE STAGNI SHOP

155 NE 38th St., Miami
786-556-3033, www.nektardestagni.com
Through March 1: "Jewelry Salon" with Hernan Bas,



Charley Friedman, *I Like Moist Things*, copper, sponges, inflatable pool, water, 2009, at Gallery Diet.

Scott Hug, Cristina Lei Rodrigez, Martin Oppel, Paola Pivi, Tom Sachs, Bless, Brokenfab, Emma Carroll, Confetti System, Femke De Vries, Lauren Manoogian, and Nektar De Stagni

OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami
305-490-2976
www.oh-wow.com
Through January 9: "Dark Night of the Soul" with David Lynch and Danger Mouse

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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
January 5 through February 6:
"From Across The Pond" with Mike Bernard, Jean Robinson, and Henrick Simonsen
Reception January 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami
305-441-2005
artnet.com/sammergallery.html
Call gallery for exhibition information.

SETH JASON BEITLEE FINE ARTS

250 NW 23rd St., #202, Miami
305-438-0218
www.sethjason.com
Through January 30:
"Recent Works" with John Henry and Carl Myers
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

SPINELLO GALLERY

155 NE 38th St., Miami
786-271-4223; www.spinellogallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

STASH GALLERY

162 NE 50th Terr., Miami
305-992-7652; www.myspace.com/stashgallery
Call gallery for exhibition information.

STEVE MARTIN STUDIO

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

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present

Mad Cat Theatre Company's SHEPHERD'S PIE

Directed by Paul Tei
Written by Ivonne Azurdia and Paul Tei
January 20, 2010 - 7:30 pm
Colony Theater, 1040 Lincoln Road
Miami Beach

In *Shepherd's Pie*, South Florida's best theatrical talent, including Todd Allen Durkin, Erik Fabregat, Ivonne Azurdia, Sofia Citarella, Amy McKenna and Betsy Graver, morph into a hilarious group of Irish hooligans who take it upon themselves to teach us why we really celebrate St. Patty's Day - and it's not just the green beer and underwear! Join us as Mad Cat Theatre Company's rollicking, rhyming storytellers retell the tale of Maewyn Succat (AKA St. Patrick) with cabaret style shenanigans like only Mad Cat can!!!

Tickets: \$25 in advance/ \$30 at the door
\$50 VIP (Includes post show after party with cast!)

For tickets and more info, visit www.miamilightproject.com
or www.southbeachcomedyfestival.com
or call Ticketmaster: 800.745.3000

Shepherd's Pie is co-presented with the South Beach Comedy Festival and Mad Cat Theatre Company.
All ticket proceeds from this performance benefit Miami Light Project and Mad Cat Theatre Company.
photo: steveanthonystudios.com

www.miamilightproject.com www.southbeachcomedyfestival.com

Art Listings

Continued from page 39

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.

WALLFLOWER GALLERY

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

WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART

201 NE 39th St., Miami
305-576-6960; www.wrpfineart.com
Through February 13:
"Cars and Money" by David LaChapelle

WYNWOOD CENTRAL GALLERY

2242 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-433-3441; www.wynwoodcentral.com
Ongoing: Kito Mbiango

YEELAN ART GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami
954-235-4758; www.yeelenart.com
Through January 20: "Around Jenin's 210" by Jerome Soimaud
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.
MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-455-3380; www.cifo.org
Through March 7: "Being in the World: Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection" curated by Berta Sichel with Chantal Akerman, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Muntean/Rosenblum, Shirin Neshat, Robin Rhode, Bill Viola, Francesca Woodman, and more

DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

23 NE 41st St., Miami
305-576-6112; www.delacruzcollection.org
Call for operating hours and exhibit information.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

11200 SW 8th St., Miami
305-348-0496; http://thefrost.fiu.edu/
Through January 10: "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
January 20 through April 11: "The Fantastic World of José Gurvich" by José Gurvich
January 20 through April 25: "Women's Work / Men's Work: Labor and Gender in America" with various artists

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
Through February 28: "Space as Medium" with various artists and "Metamorphosis" by Carlos Bunga

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami



Pati Laylle, *Yellow Garden Hose*, c-print, 2009, at Edge Zones Contemporary Art.

305-893-6211; www.mocanomi.org
Through February 14: "The Reach of Realism" with Uta Barth, Olaf Breuning, Tom Burr, Talia Chetrit, Anetta Mona Chisa & Lucia Tkacova, Phil Collins, Thomas Demand, Alex Hubbard, Matt Keegan, Ragnar Kjartansson, Elad Lassry, Lars Laumann, Adam McEwen, Wilhelm Sasnal, Xaviera Simmons, Martin Soto Climent, Wolfgang Tillmans, Sara VanDerBeek, Emily Wardill, Gillian Wearing, Judi Wertheim, and Artur Zmijewski

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051; www.margulieswarehouse.com
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
305-573-6090
www.rubellfamilycollection.com
Through May 29:
"Beg Borrow and Steal" with Ai Weiwei, John Baldessari, Frank Benson, Amy Bessone, Matthew Brannon, Maurizio Cattelan, Peter Coffin, George Condo, Aaron Curry, John Dogg, Marcel Duchamp, Gardar Eide Einarsson, Elmgreen and Dragset, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Urs Fischer, Dan Flavin, Robert Gober, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Wade Guyton, Guyton Walker, Karl Haendel, Peter Halley, David Hammons, Mark Handforth, Keith Haring, Rachel Harrison, Richard Hawkins, Damien Hirst, Jenny Holzer, Jonathan Horowitz, Thomas Houseago, Rashid Johnson, William E. Jones, Deborah Kass, Mike Kelley, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Jim Lambie, Elad Lassry, Louise Lawler, Mark Leckey, Sherrie Levine, Li Zhanyang, Glenn Ligon, Robert Longo, Nate Lowman, Nathan Mabry, Kris Martin, Paul McCarthy, Allan McCollum, Adam McEwen, Takashi Murakami, Cady Noland, David Noonan, Richard Prince, Charles Ray, Jason Rhoades, Stephen G. Rhodes, Bert Rodriguez, Sterling Ruby, Thomas Ruff, David Salle, Steven Shearer, Cindy Sherman, Haim Steinbach, John Stezaker, Philip Taaffe, Hank Willis Thomas, Piotr Uklanski, Meyer Vaisman, Kelley Walker, Wang Zhiwei, Andy Warhol, Christopher Wool, and Zhang Huan

WORLD CLASS BOXING

Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection
170 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-438-9908; www.worldclassboxing.org/
Through January 29:
Sylvie Fleury and Raymond Pettibon
Reception January 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

St. Martha-Yamaha
2009-2010 CONCERT SERIES
Paul Posnak, Founding Artistic Director

Alexander Markov

Gold Medalist of the Paganini International Violin Competition, Russian-born **ALEXANDER MARKOV** was acclaimed by Lord Yehudi Menuhin as one of the "most brilliant and musical of violinists. He has performed with many of the world's most celebrated orchestras, combining modern, youthful energy with the emotional intensity of traditional masters. Featured in the film "The Art of the Violin" about the world's greatest violinists, he performs at St. Martha with pianist Paul Posnak in their only joint South Florida appearance.

The program includes Tartini's *Sonata in G minor ("The Devil's Trill")*, Beethoven's *Sonata No. 9 ("Kreutzer")*, Tchaikovsky's *Meditation and Waltz Scherzo*, Selected *Caprices* by Paganini, Paganini's *Variations on One String from Rossini's Opera "Moses in Egypt"*, and Mr. Markov's own arrangement of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess Rhapsody*.

"An undoubted virtuoso of master quality. The audience was not only ready to acclaim him, it was prepared to idolize."
The Toronto Star

Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 7:30 pm

St. Martha Church
9301 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores

Meet the artists at our after-concert reception in The Atrium, included with your tickets.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS:
Visit www.saintmartha.tix.com or
Call 1-800-595-4849
or purchase at church office or at door
\$10 General Admission
\$20 Blue Circle

Representative Ronald Brise & Staff

Wish You

Happy New Year!

Peace, Joy, Health & Prosperity

PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR

PRE-SESSION TOWN HALL MEETINGS IN 2010

Wed. Jan. 27th, 2010
Griffing Community Ctr, North Miami
6:00 p.m.

Thurs. Jan. 28th, 2010
Legion Park Community Ctr.
6:00 p.m.

OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE RONALD BRISE | DISTRICT 108 | (305) 623-3600

ronald.brise@myfloridahouse.gov

Events Calendar

Fantasy Comes to Life

Follow the harrowing tale of a toy soldier in search of his paper ballerina in the *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*. Performed at the Playground Theatre (9806 NE 2nd Ave.), the 1838 children's tale lets us spy on a playroom after the lights are off. What follows is a trial by fire for the forlorn soldier who confronts trolls, rats, and carnivorous fish. *Tin Soldier* will be performed **January 6-31**. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$5 for children. Visit www.playgroundtheatre.com for show times.

The Master of MiMo

Architect Norman Giller pioneered the style we now know as **Miami Modern, or MiMo**. As expressions of America's post-war optimism, Giller's distinctive designs were visually exuberant. Among them are the Ocean Palm Hotel, the North Shore Band shell, and the Carillon Hotel. Giller and his granddaughter, architectural historian Sarah Giller Nelson, have collaborated on *Designing the Good Life*, a book that chronicles this important period in Miami's history. On **Thursday, January 7 at 7:00 p.m.**, Sarah will discuss the book and sign copies at KOEL Design, in the heart of the MiMo Historic District (6400 Biscayne Blvd.). Refreshments will be served. Call 786-382-0624 for more information.

Delta Blues Close to Home

Start the new year on a soulful note with good friends, good food, and above all, good music. Join veteran South Florida bluesman **Ernie Southern** as he wails on his National steel guitar at North Miami's musical oasis, the Luna Star Café (775 NE 125th St.) on **Thursday, January 7**. Southern has been belting out his signature Delta blues for years, and whether playing solo or with his

Jazz at the Center



Deltaholics, a rocking, stomping good time is guaranteed. The \$10 admission goes directly to the artist. Show starts at 8:00 p.m. and is 18+ unless accompanied by an adult. Visit www.lunastarcafe.com or call 305-799-7123.

Four Performances in One High-Energy Evening

Murder, twisted love stories, fireworks, gangsters, mystery, gold, and extraordinary dancing. The **Miami City Ballet returns with four hit performances** in one explosive and edgy show **Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 8-10** at the Arsht Center. The brilliant George Balanchine created three of the pieces — *Divertimento No. 15*, *Valse Fantaisie*, and *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* — while choreographer Twyla Tharp teamed with eclectic musician David Byrne for *The Golden Section*.



River of Grass



Fantasy Comes to Life

Friday and Saturday performances are at 8:00 p.m.; Sunday matinee at 2:00 p.m. Tickets from \$19 to \$169 at www.arshtcenter.org.

Jazz at the Center: A Night of Vocalese

The inaugural season of the **Arsht Center's "Jazz Roots" series** was a smashing success. This year's series is off to a great start, and now comes a unique program

that explores on of jazz's most inventive idioms: vocalese. Here's how it works: Take a recorded instrumental tune, including soloists' improvisations, and write lyrics to match every single note. Legends of the genre include Eddie Jefferson, King Pleasure, and the grand master, Jon Hendricks. Appearing at the Arsht Center on **Friday, January 15** at 8:00 p.m. will be two vocal groups that have elevated the form to new levels: Manhattan Transfer and the New York Voices. Hendricks himself will take a star turn. Ticket are \$45-\$125 at www.arshtcenter.org. Call 305-949-6722 for details.

See the River of Grass with Fresh Eyes

You've been to **Everglades National Park** many times, right? Did you really know what you were looking at? Here's a chance to sit back, relax, and let an expert provide insight into one of nature's true wonders — right in your own backyard. The Historical Museum of Southern Florida's eco-historian, Frank Schena, leads a bus tour **Friday, January 16**, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Stops include the Ernest F. Coe Visitor's Center, Pa-hay-okee Overlook, and the Florida Bay waterfront at Flamingo, among others. Members \$39, nonmembers \$44. Price includes box lunch and park admission. Call 305-375-1621 for more information.

Oh, How We Love a Parade!

The annual **Martin Luther King Day Parade**, featuring some of the area's top marching bands, flashy motorcycle clubs, festooned junkanoo musicians, and local celebrities, steps out on **Monday, January 18**. Beginning at NW 10th Avenue in Liberty

Continued on page 42



North Miami Arts Collective

www.northmiamiarts.com

Professional Performing Arts Studio
now offering dance classes!

free class with this ad!

845 NE 125th St., North Miami

786-238-1264

(studio located behind Dancewear Gallery boutique)



305-757-6500

Come for the fun
Stay for the Education

- early childhood music classes
- group keyboard & guitar
- private music instruction

www.missjanesmusic.com

155 NE 96th St., MIAMI SHORES, FL 33138



Events Calendar

Continued from page 41

City, the parade travels west along NW 54th Street to its destination at Martin Luther King Jr. Park (6101 NW 32nd Ct.), where food and fun will be available for all ages. The free event begins at 11:00 a.m. and formally ends at 6:00 p.m. Call 305-835-2464 for more information.

Equine Shrine

Cavalía, the equestrian sensation seen by 2.5 million people worldwide, comes to Bicentennial Park **January 19-31** to astound Miamians with the merging of man and horse in this poetic and acrobatic story. Created by Cirque du Soleil co-founder Normand Latourelle, Cavalía is a tribute to the historical bond between humans and animals. Tickets range from \$34 to \$189 for matinee and evening performances. Purchase tickets at www.cavalía.net.

Fairchild's Garden of Earthly Delights

Who knew being bad could feel so good? We did! Be all kinds of bad at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden's **4th Annual International Chocolate Festival**.

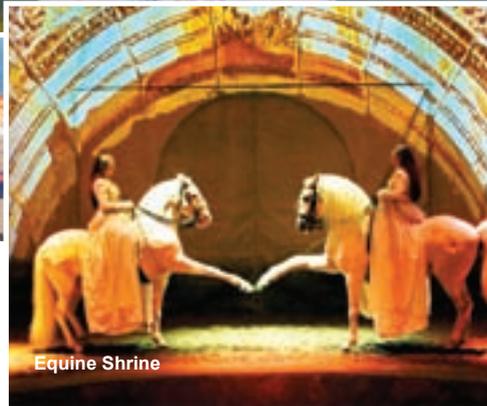


Miami Marathon

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Little River Big Effort



Equine Shrine

Little River, Big Effort

New Year's resolution: Do more volunteer work. Here's your chance. The **10th Annual Little River Cleanup** will take place on **Saturday, January 30** from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Gather at NE 82nd Street, between the river and the railroad tracks. Trash bags and rubber

gloves provided. Bring a canoe or kayak if you have one. Contact Deirdre Kirk Raeside at deirdre_kirk@yahoo.com for more information.

Personal Best: If You Haven't Been Training, It's Probably Too Late

The **Miami Marathon/Half Marathon** is back! For one day only, **January 31**, Miami turn into a truly pedestrian-friendly city as 15,000 runners from all 50 states and 52 nations take to the streets. The 26.2-mile and 13.1-mile races begin at 6:00 a.m. and will take the aerobically inclined over the causeways onto South Beach, then back over for a jaunt to Coconut Grove. There the runners promptly turn around and head for the finish line at downtown's Bayfront Park. Last year's overall winner was Slimani Benzouz of Italy (2:16:49). Entry fees before January 22 are \$100 for the marathon, \$75 for the half. Visit www.ingmiami-marathon.com for more information.

Compiled by BT interns Mandy Baca and Matt Ruckman

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Village of El Portal, Florida

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at 7 pm

PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF EL PORTAL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 26th day of January, 2010 at a meeting of the Council of the Village of El Portal, held at 7:00 o'clock P.M. in the Village City Hall, the Village Council will consider the adoption of the following Ordinance:

Council Discretionary Funds: Ordinance No: 2009-004 (2nd Reading)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND VILLAGE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF EL PORTAL, CREATING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE II, SECTION 2-17 OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF EL PORTAL, ENTITLED COUNCIL DISCRETIONARY FUNDS. PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, REPEALER, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The public may inspect the proposed Ordinances in the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of El Portal, said office being located in the Village Hall, 500 Northeast 87th St. Interested parties may appear at the meeting and be heard in respect to the proposed Ordinances.

In accordance with the provisions of F.S. Section 286.0105, should any person desire to appeal any decision of the Village Council with respect to any matter to be considered at this meeting, that person must insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made; which includes all testimony and evidence upon which any appeal may be based.

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All the Better To Eat You With

Amazing carnivores of the plant world

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Carnivorous plants have fascinated me since I was a kid. Imagine a plant that eats insects or even small animals. How cool is that? It's straight out of science fiction. Why would plants want to catch and eat things that crawl or fly? And how do they do it?

As a child I grew countless Venus Flytraps, fantastic little plants that have modified leaves that enclose and trap insects. After several days the leaves usually reopen, revealing dried-out insect parts. But the plants would always die back every fall. Years later I learned they were from the cold climates of North and South Carolina, and went dormant in the fall, awaiting favorable springtime conditions. Not all carnivorous plants are from the tropics.

Years after that, while visiting Professor Werner Rauh at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, my interest in carnivorous plants was once again piqued. Rauh was famous for his work and collections of succulents and bromeliads. At the university there was a large collection of plants, but I was in awe when I entered one of the greenhouses and was confronted with an amazing sight: *Nepenthes* (pitcher plants) of every shape and size hanging from the rafters, growing on top of the tables, and cascading onto the floor.

Nepenthes is an Old World genus with species ranging from Madagascar, throughout tropical Asia and the Pacific region, to northern Australia. They grow both epiphytically and terrestrially and are most numerous on

the island of Borneo.

Pitcher plants are so named because structures that resemble and function as pitchers are formed by the plants, commonly at the ends of modified leaves. Water will fill these pitchers and insects that are attracted to the tiny ecosystems fall inside and drown. The carcasses of these unfortunate insects are then digested by enzymes in the water. Any nutrients produced by this process are then absorbed by the plant.

There are a couple of other families of pitcher plants. *Sarracenia* and *Darlingtonia* are New World plants in the same family that grow terrestrially in bogs and make great terrarium plants. The other pitcher plants are quite rare and not commonly seen in cultivation.

What these and most other carnivorous plants have in common is that they are native to very nutrient-poor areas, hence the need to procure nutrients from decomposing insects and animals. Successfully growing these specialized plants requires creating a close approximation to the plant's natural habitat. (This is a basic principal that should be followed when growing any plant.) It is also a Plant Health Care tenet: Plants in their native habitats do not require fertilization or any other kind of human-produced chemical care; they do just fine in those specific conditions.

Venus Flytraps naturally grow in poor, acidic soils, high humidity, and in



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Rats are sometimes found drowned within the large pitchers of *Nepenthes rajah* in Malaysia.

full sun with wet roots. They grow best in a potting mix of sphagnum moss and sand. *Sarracenia* and *Darlingtonia* come from the same conditions so grow them the same way.

Nepenthes are also species from nutrient-stressed habitats. They typically begin life when their seeds germinate on the ground. As the plant grows, it usually attempts to climb onto and up a nearby object. This creates an interesting situation. The pitchers of a specific species of *Nepenthes* that are growing on the ground are usually very different in shape from the pitchers on the same plant when growing upon something else (epiphytically). This is likely due to the fact that pitchers hanging from the ends of leaves suspended in the air can

not be too heavy or hold too much water, otherwise they would rip off the leaf supporting them. Pitchers growing on the ground are typically squarer in shape and hold more water.

The water within the pitchers is a tiny microcosm. Although many insects and small animals will drown and be digested when they fall into the water, other insects live and thrive inside a pitcher's aquatic habitat. A well-known inhabitant of pitchers is mosquito larvae. I have been growing *Nepenthes* at work and home as hanging plants in baskets for several years (never needing to fertilize them) and have never seen mosquito larvae inside any pitchers produced by the plants. However, I'm certain that it will eventually happen, so I check the water on a regular basis. If you grow pitcher plants, you should check the water inside the pitchers frequently, otherwise you may be offering an extra breeding habitat for mosquitoes.

Grow your *Nepenthes* in a sturdy hanging basket in a soil medium of peat moss and coarse sand. Let the pitchers cascade out of the basket. Keep the plants out of direct sunlight and keep the soil moist, not wet. It's not necessary to fill the pitchers with water; they will fill up on their own.

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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One Real Park, Five Phony Parks

Is Miami committing green-space fraud or is it just incompetence?

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Miami's smallest green spaces are disappearing. Out of the six City of Miami mini parks I visited in December, only one was a functional park. The other five were in various states of closure or decay. What is going on here?

Miami notoriously has a minuscule percentage of green space, but it may be even less than we think. The five non-functional mini parks are listed on the city's website as actual parks. But when the park's gates are permanently locked, or the space is nothing more than a parking lot, it should not be counted as a park.

Is someone counting parking lots as parks? I want to make that cartoon-character sound of shaking my head in disbelief.

Here's the breakdown. East of I-95, from downtown to 85th Street, at least six mini parks, with specific addresses, are listed under the city's website. Here is what I found at each one, going from south to north, with addresses listed exactly as they appear online:

Range Park #1: Under I-95, between 10 & 11 Streets

A locked fence surrounds the area, and a sign near the former entrance reads, "Park closed due to construction 2/11/05." There are some cracked basketball posts and some grass, but no active construction here.



The deck and bench are covered in duck droppings, but it's just nature's way.

Town Park: NW 4 Avenue & 17 Street at 95

Unlike Range Park #1, construction is very active and clearly marked here, and the surrounding fence can be closed. While the park cannot be used, I saw a guy ride his bike right through the open fence and into the construction zone.

Wynwood Mini Park: 29 NW 30 Street
It's a parking lot.

Woodson Mini Park/M. Design: NW 2 Avenue at NE 36 Street

No open space here. Every corner is developed.

Range Park #2: Under I-95 between 73 & 75 Streets

A wasteland. It's hard to imagine that this spacious area could have been a park, as I-95 keeps it in a constant shadow and the expressway's numerous, imposing columns divide the space into bacon strips of rubble and weeds. There's evidence of homeless people and drug deals. A sign should be posted: "Illegal Activity Zone." Much uglier than the average underpass, this "park" is one of the saddest spaces I've ever seen. Next door is Little River Elementary School and the Victory Homes Head Start childcare center.



A winding path from the entrance lends the space some ambiance.

Next door is Little River Elementary School and the Victory Homes Head Start childcare center.

Oakland Grove Mini Park: NE 3rd Avenue at 84th Street

Finally, a real park! Trying to find this mini park is a major challenge unless you have a kayak. With paddles, head up the Little River Canal to El Portal and the park will be on the south side, meaning in City of Miami territory instead of the Village El Portal.

Never mind the park's obscurity, as

its small size designates it as a park for the neighborhood only and not a destination for outsiders. But the fact that it exists is instructive.

Hardly bigger than a peanut, Oakland Grove Mini Park sits on the waterfront and in between two houses. How did it avoid becoming part of a backyard? My guess is that someone made a mistake or infuriated its intended developers to the point that they gave the land back to the city. Too bad we don't have more of these mistakes.

Like Biscayne Bay, waterfront land on Little River is consumed almost entirely by private housing, meaning that the average citizen has no opportunity to access and enjoy it. By preserving this speck of land, everyone in the neighborhood has a chance to feed the ducks.

Unofficially this park is now dubbed Duck Duck Park. A large and inquisitive Mama Muscovy rules the roost, and a couple of Mallards linger in the background. They appear well-trained to come begging for food when a human approaches.

Ducks are messy by nature, and the fenced-in wooden deck and bench on the water are full of droppings. But that's the price you pay for getting a little closer to nature.

It's difficult to tell if anyone uses the park besides the ducks, although someone has spray-painted on the western wall the word "fantastic" (spelled

Continued on page 45

OAKLAND GROVE MINI PARK

Park Rating

NE 3rd Avenue at 84th Street
Miami, 305-416-1320
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Picnic tables: Yes
Barbecues: Yes
Picnic pavilions: No
Tennis courts: No
Athletic fields: No
Night lighting: No
Swimming pool: No
Playground: No

Phony Parks

Continued from page 44

correctly). The park has no playground, but it has enough amenities to make it fit for daily contemplation or for a raucous birthday party.

There are two picnic tables, a double grill, a water fountain, and four sitting benches. In between is a winding path made of sand and broken shells, and this rustic touch makes it feel much homier than would a standard concrete path.

The main draw, of course, is the still and quiet canal. The surface reflects towering palms and graceful houses, broken only by the occasional landing bird or leaping fish. On the days I visited, a plastic bag hung underwater near the shore, but the dark color of the brackish water makes it difficult to tell if the entire canal is highly polluted. The shoreline around the park is not.

Okay, so the Oakland Grove Mini Park is nice for its neighbors, but what about all the other neighborhoods, particularly those that could be using the defunct mini parks?

In my mind, every time I see an



River scene: Waterfront park views like this are rare in Miami.

empty lot, I see a mini park. Almost every neighborhood has one — you know, the strange, abandoned space that never found a buyer? Now is the time for you to claim it in the name of your hood!

Seriously, you need to pick up the phone right now and tell your city commissioner that your neighborhood



Truth in advertising: Unlike five other Miami “mini parks,” this one is for real.

deserves a mini park. Do it! Miami owes us five.

I also want to enlist the good citizens of Miami to canvas their neighborhoods for the other so-called mini parks listed on the city’s website. Do those parks exist, or are they also in various stages of disintegration? My guesstimate is that a good 50 percent are fake parks, just like Range Park #1 and #2, Wynwood Mini Park, and Woodson Mini Park.

For those who would argue that little

parks may be relatively unimportant, remember that details count. In Miami, with park space so scarce, every little bit really does count.

Mini parks are the babies of our park system. Once they have been slaughtered, the big guys will be next in line for the chopping block and the construction crane. Let’s not get to that point.

Help to save our mini parks.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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And Now for the Star of the Show!

Pet tricks don't have to be stupid, but they definitely should be fun

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, of which I am a member, has declared January 2010 as the first national Train Your Dog Month. January is the perfect time for this as it's a time for New Year's resolutions and a rest from the holiday madness. Notable as well, many people adopt new dogs during the festive season. In addition, people who already have dogs may have relegated their pets to the background as vacations, visiting relatives, entertaining, and other holiday preoccupations took precedence.

But now it's time to give our beloved companions their due. This month I invite you to dust off your dog's toy chest, don your worn-out treat bag, and have fun teaching your dog some fancy new tricks. You can also take this time to



Rising stars: Every dog can learn to perform — and enjoy it, too.



Take a Bow: Encore!



Boing!: Like a pogo stick.

The High Five: Good dog!



with your dog — in a dog-friendly way! Here my two dogs demonstrate some easy tricks, and pose for a candid shot of fun things we do to spend quality time together.

High Five Have your dog sit close to you and hold a small treat directly in front of his nose. Move your hand slightly

(an inch or so) to the left or right and wait. As the dog lifts a paw say, "Yes!" and give him the treat. After a few repetitions, wait for him to lift his paw higher to touch

work on behavior problems, or even just go out and enjoy the cooler weather with your four-legged pal.

The plan is to have fun and do more

your hand before rewarding and praising him. Then ask for the "High Five" with an open hand. Yes!

Boing! Only try this if your dog is a fully formed adult who does not have back problems. The goal is to have your dog jump straight up in the air — Boing! — like a pogo stick. Hold an object the dog is interested in over his head. When he jumps for it say, "Yes!" or "Good!" and give him the object or reward. Once he starts jumping reliably, ask him to Boing!

Weave Teach your dog to weave through your legs as you walk. Start by stepping forward and luring your dog through with food or a toy. Say, "Through" before the dog goes through and "Yes!" when he does and give him a

reward. As the dog comes to understand the command, reward only variably until few rewards are needed.

Take a Bow A bow is a fun trick you

Continued on page 47

Photos courtesy of Lisa Hartman

COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

Tricks

Continued from page 46

can use at the end of your dog's bravura performance for friends and family. The bow can essentially be taught as a modified "down" because you'll praise and reward your dog before his hindquarters hit the ground. Start by holding a treat in front of your dog's nose while he is standing, then slowly move it straight down to the ground. As his head lowers and his elbows near the ground, mark the behavior with a "Yes!" and immediately give him the treat. Repeat. If your dog is flopping all the way to a "down" position, only lure the dog halfway before praising and releasing the treat.

You can add depth to the bow in future repetitions. Ignore the responses when your dog performs a "down" and just start again. When he starts to catch on and keeps his rear up in the air, praise and reward big. Now say, "Take a bow" before you lure him down. You can add a visual signal too, such as performing a bow or curtsy yourself, or a hand gesture toward the floor. Then practice, practice, practice!

Daily Adventures From a car ride to

Weave: Stride with pride.



the bank to a week's vacation, your best friend thinks everywhere you go together is fascinating and fantastic. Cash in on this by turning a seemingly mundane day into something special. Have a campout in your own backyard. Take scenic walks on different routes in the parks and neighborhoods for different smells and sights.



Daily Adventures: Try a backyard campout.

Bring your dog on day and overnight trips to dog-friendly locations such as the Florida Keys. Look for critters to chase together. Nap on a hammock. Visit friends. You are only limited by your imagination.

Whether you're teaching your dog to walk by your side or training the next *Pet Star* champion, approach everything as if it's a fun trick. Be happy. Maintain your tireless enthusiasm! Really communicate with your dog. Encourage him by cheering him on and build each behavior gradually so he can be successful. Look him in the

eye and smile at him.

Spending quality time with your dog every day will build your relationship and their confidence and make them less likely to get into trouble.

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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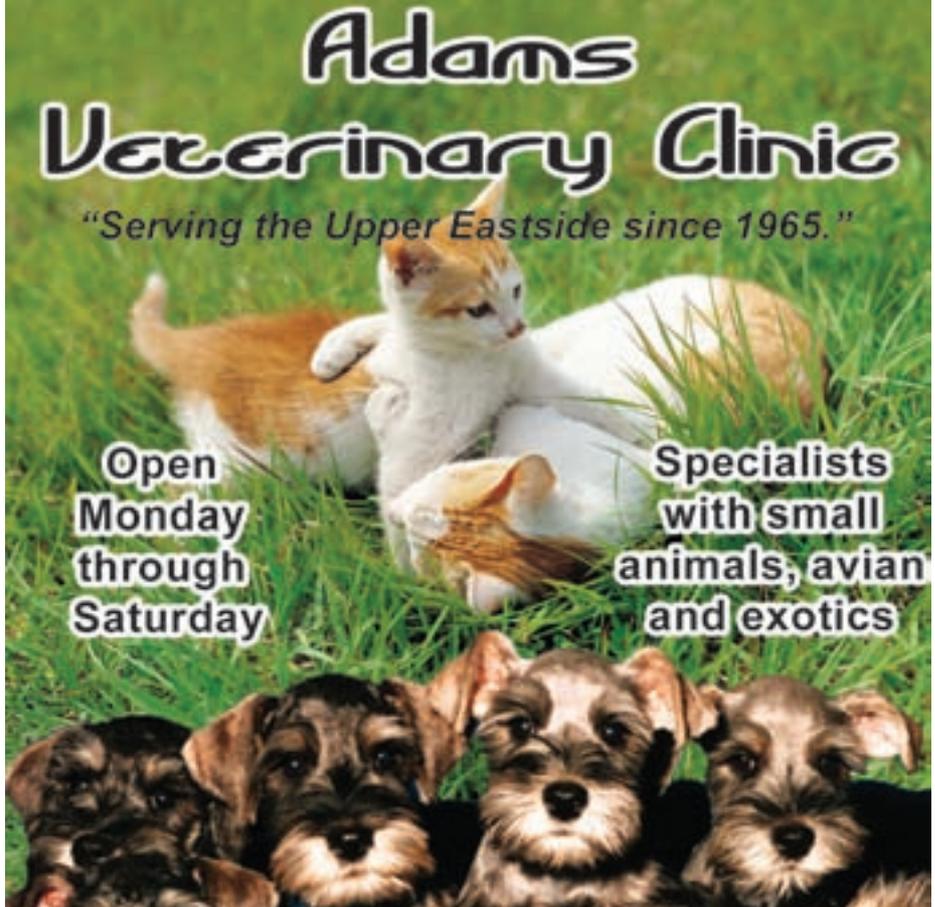
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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 206.

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-crustard 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 lunch it's an elegant sandwich bar; at night it's a raw bar (with pristine coldwater oysters) and (best) a tapas bar serving pintxos. That's just the Basque word for tapas, but here there's nothing mere about the generously portioned small plates. They range from traditional items like cod fish equixada and saffron-sautéed Spanish artichokes to inventive inspirations like foie gras and goat cheese-stuffed empanadas. \$\$\$

Botequim Carioca

900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-675-1876
www.botequim-carioca.com
If Brazil's cuisine were defined by the USA's Brazilian restaurants, the conclusion would be that Brazilian people

eat nothing but rodizio (all-you-can-eat meat), and weigh, on average, 400 pounds. This Brazilian pub broadens the picture, with a menu that offers entrées, especially at lunch, but highlights Brazilian tapas – mega-mini plates meant for sharing. Must-not-misses include pasteles filled with shrimp and creamy catupiry cheese, beautifully seasoned bolinho de bacalau (fried salt cod dumplings), and aipim frito (house-special yuca fries, the best in town). \$\$\$

Café Sambal

500 Brickell Key Dr.
305-913-8358, www.mandarinoriental.com/miami
Though the Mandarin Oriental Hotel describes this space as its "casual hotel restaurant," many consider it a more spectacular dining setting than the upscale Azul, upstairs, owing to the option of dining outdoors on a covered terrace directly on the waterfront. The food is Asian-inspired, with a few Latin and Mediterranean accents. For the health-conscious, the menu includes low-cal choices. For hedonists there's a big selection of artisan sakes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

The Democratic Republic of Beer

255 NE 14th St., 305-372-4161
www.drbbmiami.com
The food here? Beer is food! The DRB serves 400 beers from 55 countries, ranging from \$2 Pabst Blue Ribbon to \$40 DeuS (an 11.5% alcohol Belgian *methode Champenoise* brew). But for those favoring solid snacks, tasty global smallish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with homemade cilantro mayo; or steak tacos, served Mexican-style with onions, cilantro, and spicy salsa. Sadly for breakfast-brew enthusiasts, the DRB isn't open that early. But it is open late – till 5:00 a.m. \$\$

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 croquettes, 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 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 focaccia 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, non-traditional surprise: unusual sauces like sweet/tart passion fruit or mint, tomato-based BBQ, and mango chutney, along with the ubiquitous chimichurri. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Il Gabbiano

335 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-373-0063
www.ilgabbianomiami.com
Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricy, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$

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Restaurant Listings

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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. \$\$\$

La Provence

1064 Brickell Ave., 786-425-9003
www.laprovincemiami.com
 Great baguettes in the bread basket, many believe, indicate a great meal to come. But when Miamians encounter such bread – crackling crust outside; moist, aromatic, aerated interior – it's likely not from a restaurant's own kitchen, but from La Provence. Buttery croissants and party-perfect pastries are legend too. Not so familiar is the bakery's café component, whose sandwich/salad menu reflects local eclectic tastes. But French items like pan bagnats (essentially salade Niçoise on artisan bread) will truly transport diners to co-owner David Thau's Provençal homeland. \$\$\$

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 restoulounge, 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 pan-crusted egg yolk capsule, 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. \$\$\$\$

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 downtown office workers and college students since the early 1990s. Most popular item here might be the week-day lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry. \$

Novecento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900
www.bistronovecento.com
 For those who think "Argentine cuisine" is a synonym for "beef and more beef," this popular eatery's wide range of more cosmopolitan contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic Parrilla-grilled steaks are here for traditionalists, but the menu is dominated by creative Nuevo Latino items like a new-style ceviche de chernia (lightly lime-marinated grouper with jalapeños, basil, and the refreshing sweet counterpoint of watermelon), or crab ravioli with creamy saffron sauce. Especially notable are the entrée salads. \$\$\$\$

Oceanaire Seafood Room

900 S. Miami Ave.
305-372-8862, www.theoceanaire.com
 With a dozen branches nationwide, Oceanaire may seem more All-American seafood empire than Florida fish shack, but menus vary significantly according to regional

tastes and fish. Here in Miami, chef Sean Bernal supplements signature starters like lump crab cakes with his own lightly marinated, Peruvian-style grouper ceviche. The daily-changing, 15-20 specimen seafood selection includes local fish seldom seen on local menus: pompano, parrot fish, amberjack. But even flown-in fish (and the raw bar's cold-water oysters) are ultra-fresh. \$\$\$\$

Pasha's

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116
 The original branch on Lincoln Road was instantly popular, and the same healthy Middle Eastern fast food is served at several newer outlets. The prices are low enough that you might suspect Pasha's was a tax write-off rather than a Harvard Business School project, which it was by founders Antonio Ellek and Nicolas Cortes. Dishes range from falafel and gyros to more unusual items like muhammara (tangy walnut spread) and silky labneh yogurt cheese. Everything from pitas to lemonade is made fresh, from scratch, daily. \$\$\$

Peoples Bar-B-Que

360 NW 8th St.
305-373-8080, www.peoplesbarbque.com
 Oak-smoked, falling-off-the-bone tender barbecued ribs (enhanced with a secret sauce whose recipe goes back several generations) are the main draw at this Overtown institution. But the chicken is also a winner, plus there's a full menu of soul food entrées, including what many aficionados consider our town's tastiest souse. And it would be unthinkable to call it quits without homemade sweet potato pie or banana pudding, plus a bracing flop – half iced tea, half lemonade. \$\$\$

Perricone's

15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449, www.perricones.com
 Housed in a Revolutionary-era barn (moved from Vermont), this market/café was one of the Brickell area's first gentrified amenities. At lunch chicken salad is a favorite; dinner's strong suit is the pasta list, ranging from Grandma Jennie's old-fashioned lasagna to chichi flocchi purses filled with fresh pear and gorgonzola. And Sunday's \$15.95 brunch buffet (\$9.95 for kids) – featuring an omelet station, waffles, smoked salmon and bagels, salads, and more – remains one of our town's most civilized all-you-can-eat deals. \$\$\$

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WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GAME?

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 The Sun Post 2009

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Red, White, and You

Agreeable wine for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

Chardonnay may be more popular. Merlot may be more accessible. Pinot Noir may have more cachet. But when it comes to the fruit of the vine, Cabernet Sauvignon is still king.

It's first among almost-equals of the noble grapes of Bordeaux. It's the pre-eminent red wine grape of California and especially the Napa Valley. It's an integral part of many of the Super Tuscans from Italy. And whenever anyone talks about benchmark reds, you can bet that most of the time they're talking about Cabernet Sauvignon or wines in which it plays a dominant role.

It really is good to be king.

It can also be damn expensive. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the price of Cabernet grew like wild mustard in the vineyards, mainly the result of boutique Cabs that developed rapid cult followings that gladly paid \$100, \$150, and more per bottle for a limited supply of these brutally powerful, highly extracted wines. The price inflation at the top end of the market drew up everything below it too, which essentially meant that you could drop \$50 or \$60 for a mediocre Cabernet

better suited to spreading on your breakfast toast than serving with a meal.

Well, the Great Recession took care of that, as did a movement toward wines of grace and finesse rather than brute force. Cabernet Sauvignon is still expensive, though, and at our end of the market you won't find the complexity, potency, and aging potential that characterizes the best Cabernets.

You will, on the other hand, find some enjoyable wines. The wacky-ass named **2007 Running with Scissors**, for example. It will fill up your nose with the aromas of intensely ripe blueberries and blackberries, which carry through to the palate, piqued by some sweet spice. It's simple and soft, and for ten bucks you won't want to stab yourself for picking up a bottle or two.

For the same price you get a better taste of what upscale Cabernets can deliver with the **2006 Chalone Monterey County**. One of the most storied names in California winemaking, this wine is a fine value, though it might be challenging to anyone accustomed to the sweet, fruity, and simple style of Cabernet. The nose is a bit funky — earth, leather, and black olives as prominent as deep blackberry fruit. But it's a very well-made

wine, with a firm tannin-acid backbone balancing restrained fruit that leaves room for a hint of cloves and black pepper.

Fans of a fruitier style of Cabernet may prefer the **2006 Hayman Hill Napa Valley**. Aromatic hardly begins to describe it. Along with the expected blueberry and cassis is a brimming spice cabinet — cinnamon, cloves, and a distinct hit of peppermint. It's tamer in the mouth, but with a good fruit-acid-tannin balance that makes it quite food-friendly.

Another spicy puppy is the **2007 BrisAndes**. This Chilean product has a helluva pedigree — Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) — and is redolent of cloves and anise, with simple strawberry fruit flavors and a touch of bitterness on the finish (from new oak?).

A couple of wines didn't make the cut. The **2006 Red Diamond Cabernet**



Sauvignon was too tarry and cough syrupish for enjoyment, while an Argentine wine, the **2006 Nieto**, repelled with musty mushroom aromas and thin, harsh, underripe fruit.

Sometimes, I guess, it's not so good to be king.

Get the Chalone and Hayman Hill at the North Miami Crown Wine and Spirits for \$9.97 and \$11.99, respectively (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463).

BrisAndes and Running with Scissors are available at the North Miami Beach Total Wine & More, both for \$9.99 (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270). The Nieto costs \$8.49 and can be found (if you really want to) at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine

Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525), while the Red Diamond is sold at the Biscayne Commons Publix for \$9.99 (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171).

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Restaurant Listings

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Prelude

Adrienne Arsht 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, tarra-gon-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 fraîche ice cream pop. \$\$\$\$

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-habanero-pepper cream sauce), or Rosa's signature guacamole en molcajete, made tableside. A few pomegranate margaritas ensure no worries. \$\$\$

Solymar

315 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-371-3421

Housed in the stunning space with great water views originally occupied by Prime Blue Grille, Solymar 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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. \$\$

Tre Italian Bistro

270 E. Flagler St.
305-373-3303

www.tremiami.com
"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hang-out, 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-frog 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 ri'gawt for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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. \$\$

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DINING GUIDE

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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! \$\$

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 figciutto: 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 frites, salmon atop rata-touille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. \$\$

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 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 Grrrrlz 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. \$

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 51

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 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. \$\$-\$\$

La Provence

2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002
www.laprovincemiami.com
(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

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/ yucafied 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 salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crust wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

Maino Churrascaria

2201 Biscayne Blvd.
305-571-9044
This very upscale Brazilian steakhouse has all the features you expect, including all-you-can-eat meats carved tableside and a lavish buffet. What sets Maino apart from typical rodizio palaces is its family-run feel, intimate rather than intimidating, plus its attention to every detail. While it's rare at most rodizio joints to get meat done less than medium, Maino will cook to order. One other welcome difference: There are à la carte starters and pastas for lighter eaters and noncarnivores, and some lunch specials. Free parking, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 irresistible: fried artichokes with lemony aioli; seafood lasagna with heavenly dill-lobster sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 Intelligentsia, a roasting company that works directly with artisan growers to encourage sustainable agriculture. Also served: breakfast and lunch sandwiches, imaginative salads, soups, homemade pastries, and creamy fresh-fruit smoothies. With tables, sofas, and lounge chairs inside an old Midtown house, plus free wireless Internet access, the space is also just a pleasant place to hang out. \$

Pacific Time

35 NE 40th St., 305-722-7369
www.pacifictimemiami.com
Everyone knew Jonathan Eismann's original Pacific Time, for many years Lincoln Road's only serious restaurant. How different is its new incarnation? Very, and it's all good, starting with far superior acoustics, an admirably green ecological policy, and a neighborhood-friendly attitude. While the addition of Mediterranean influences to the Pacific Rim menu may sound confusing, trust us: A meal that includes a butter-grilled asparagus with prosciutto, soft-cooked egg Milanese, and preserved lemon; plus an Asian-accented creamy corn/leek soup with Pecky Toe crab dumplings, coriander, and mustard oil makes perfect sense on the tongue. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Pasha's

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

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 Cacciatorini, an ultra-thin and crispy crust with indescribably rich guancia (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
This 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. \$\$\$

Primo Pizza Miami

3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555
www.primopizzamiami.com
Just a few years ago, chain pizza joints were dominant most everywhere. Today many places now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the speciality of this indoor/outdoor pizzeria: big slices with chewy crusts (made from imported NY tap water) that aren't ultra-thin and crisp, but flexible enough to fold lengthwise, and medium-thick — sturdy enough to support toppings applied with generous all-American abandon. Take-out warning: Picking up a whole pie? Better bring the SUV, not the Morris Mini.

Sake Room

275 NE 18th St.
305-755-0122
www.sakeroom.com
Sake takes a back seat to sushi — and sophisticated décor — at this small but sleek restolounge. 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

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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. \$\$\$

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: crevettes 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. \$\$-\$\$

DeVita's

7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282

This 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 Argentine potato salad), and desserts (tiramisu or flan). \$

Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd.
305-759-3433, www.dogmagrill.com

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

East Side Pizza

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

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

El Q-Bano Palacio de los Jugos

8650 Biscayne Blvd.
305-758-2550

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

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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 capicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin'

136 NW 62nd St., 305-754-8050
Housed in a yellow building that's nearly invisible from the street, the Garden has the comfortable feel of a beach bar, and generous servings of inexpensive Afro-Caribbean vegan food. Large or small plates, with salad and fried sweet plantains (plus free soup for eat-in lunchers), are served for five or seven bucks. Also available are snacks like vegetarian blue corn tacos, desserts like sweet potato pie, and a breakfast menu featuring organic blueberry waffles with soy sausage patties. \$

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229
Home-meal replacement, geared to workaholics with no time to cook, has been popular for years. But the Gourmet Station has outlasted most of the competition. Main reason: deceptive healthiness. These are meals that are good for you, yet taste good enough to be bad for you. Favorite items include precision-grilled salmon with lemon-dill yogurt sauce, and lean turkey meatloaf with homemade BBQ sauce – sin-free comfort food. Food is available à la carte or grouped in multimeal plans customized for individual diner's nutritional needs. \$\$

Go To Sushi

5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914
www.gotosushimiami.com
Though similar in menu and budget prices to the Hiro's Sushi Express it replaced, this friendly, family-run Japanese

fast-food eatery offers original surprises like the Caribbean roll (a festively green parsley-coated maki stuffed with crispy fried shrimp, avocado, sweet plantain, and spicy mayo), or a wonderfully healthful sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can enjoy a guiltless pig-out on Fireballs: fried dumplings of chicken, cabbage, and egg, crusted with quills – really a delectable crunchy noodle mix. \$

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 restoulounge, 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 focaccia. 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.the5thststation.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. \$

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

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smoothies. Additionally there's solid sustenance that goes beyond standard gym snacks: Asian-inspired rice or low-carb salad plates, topped with freshly 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. \$-\$-\$-\$

Revaes 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 gamished 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. \$

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

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 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. \$-\$-\$

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Sushi Siam

1524 NE 79th St. Causeway
305-864-7638

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

NORTH BEACH

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 ravioletti 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.ironosushi.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 ajiaco. 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. \$

Bulldog Barbecue

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655
www.bulldog-bbq.com

The BBQ master at this small, rustic room is pugnacious Top Chef contender Howie Kleinberg, whose indoor electric smoker turns out mild-tasting 'cue that ranges from the expected pulled pork, ribs, brisket, and chicken to hot-smoked salmon and veggie plates. There are also creative comfort food starters like BBQ chicken flatbread, salads, and sweets. Sides include refreshing slaw; beans studded with "burnt ends" (the most intensely flavored outer barbecue chunks); and sweet potato or chipotle-spiced fries. The cost is comparatively high, but such is the price of fame. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Burritos Grill Café

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

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

Canton Café

12749 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2882

Easily overlooked, this strip-mall spot serves mostly Cantonese-based dishes. However, there are also about two dozen spicier, Szechuan-style standards like kung po shrimp, ma po tofu, and General Tso's chicken. And there are a few imaginative new items, like the intriguingly christened "Shrimp Lost in the Forest," Singapore curried rice noodles, crispy shrimp with honey-glazed walnuts, and Mongolian beef (with raw chilis and fresh Oriental basil). Delivery is available for both lunch and dinner. \$\$

Captain Jim's Seafood

12950 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-892-2812

This market/restaurant was garnering critical acclaim even when eat-in dining was confined to a few Formica tables in front of the fish counter, owing to the freshness of its seafood, much of it from Capt. Jim Hanson's own fishing boats, which supply many top restaurants. Now there's a casual but pleasantly nautical side dining room with booths. Whether it's garlicky scampi, smoked-fish dip, grilled yellowtail or hog or mutton snapper, perfectly tenderized cracked conch or conch fritters, everything is deftly prepared and bargain-priced. \$\$

Casa Mia Trattoria

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

Tucked away, off to the side on the approach to the Broad Causeway and the beaches, this charming indoor/outdoor trattoria seems to attract mostly neighborhood regulars. But even newcomers feel like regulars after a few minutes, thanks to the staff's Italian ebullience. Menu offerings are mostly classic comfort foods with some contemporary items as well. Housemade pastas are good enough that low-carb dieters should take a break, especially for the

tender gnocchi with pesto or better yet, delicate fagottini — "beggar's purses" stuffed with pears and cheese. \$\$

Chéen-huyae

15400 Biscayne Blvd.
305-956-2808

Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, if they must. But the specialty is Mayan-rooted Yucatan cuisine. So why blow bucks on burritos when one can sample Caribbean Mexico's most typical dish: cochinita pibil? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 tassot and an impressive poisson gros sel (a whole fish rubbed with salt before poaching with various veggies and spices). But the dish that still packs the place is the griot: marinated pork chunks simmered and then fried till they're moistly tender inside, crisp and intensely flavored outside. \$

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. \$\$\$

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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 (heartily 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 bistrot 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.saraskosherpizza.com

While this mainly vegetarian kosher place is best known for its pizza (New York-style medium crust or thick-crust Sicilian, topped with veggies and/or "meat buster" imitation meats), it's also offers a full range of breakfast/lunch/dinner vegetarian cuisine of all nations, with many dairy and seafood items too. Admittedly the cutesie names of many items – baygels, bergerrbite, Cezarr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperr – may cause queasiness. But the schmopperr 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., 305-891-1808

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 or 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: 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 (majority 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 barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). And the food, while not the authentic Mex street stuff dreams are made of, is darned tasty, too. \$

Christine's Roti Shop

16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

El Gran Inka

3155 NE 163rd St.

305-940-4910, 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 nikkei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 patee (cooked with onion, green pepper, and pickled mango)

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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 vindaloos are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$\$

King 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.laurenzosmarket.com

It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagiole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$\$\$

Little Saigon

16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

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

make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$\$\$

Mary Ann Bakery

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

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

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 foccage, 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 NIMB 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/tunip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esoterica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers

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dum 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, Icee & Tea House 237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008 www.shingwangrestaurant.com

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

Siam Square

54 NE 167th St., 305-944-9697

Open until 1:00 a.m. every day except Sunday (when 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 Stark: sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster makis like the Cubbie Comfort: spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy mayo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Tuna's Raw Bar and Grille

17850 W. Dixie Hwy.

305-932-0630, www.tunasrawbarandgrille.com

The reincarnated Tuna's has gained new owners, a new name, a dazzling outdoor bar and dining area, and a newly impressive selection of raw-bar specialties: cold-water oysters from the Northeast, plus Blue Points, Malpecs, Island Creeks, and more. Traditional house favorites remain, and

the emphasis is still on fresh fish from local waters. Open daily till 2:00 a.m., the place can get rather festive after midnight, but since the kitchen is open till closing, Tuna's draws a serious late-night dining crowd, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

AVENTURA / MIAMI GARDENS

Anthony's Coal-Fired Pizza

17901 Biscayne Blvd.

305-830-2625, www.anthonyscoalfiredpizza.com

Coal is what it's all about here – a coal-fired oven (like that at Lombardi's, Patsy's, John's, or Grimaldi's in New York) producing the intense 800-degree heat to turn out, in mere minutes, a pie with the classic thin, crisp-bottomed, beautifully char-bubbled crust that fans of the above legendary pizzerias crave. Expect neither bargain-chain prices, a huge selection of toppings, nor much else on the menu. Anthony's does just a few things, and does them right. \$\$

Bagel Cove Restaurant & Deli

19003 Biscayne Blvd., 305-935-4029

One word: flagels. And no, that's not a typo. Rather these crusty, flattened specimens (poppy seed or sesame seed) are the ultimate bagel/soft pretzel hybrid – and a specialty at this bustling Jewish bakery/deli, which, since 1988, opens at 6:30 a.m. – typically selling out of flagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful homemade corned beef hash and eggs. For the rest of the day, multitudes of mavens devour every other delectable deli specialty known to humankind. \$\$

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 portobello, 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 Sussner 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. \$\$\$

Mo's Bagels & Deli

2780 NE 187th St., 305-936-8555

While the term "old school" is used a lot to describe this spacious (160-seat) establishment, it actually opened in 1995. It just so evokes the classic NY delis we left behind that it seems to have been here forever. Example: Lox and nova aren't pallid, prepackaged fish, but custom-sliced from

whole slabs. And bagels are hand-rolled, chewy champions, not those machine-made puffy poseurs. As complimentary pastry bites suggest, and the massive size of the succulent, sufficiently fatty pastrami sandwiches confirm, generous Jewish Mo(m) spirit shines here. \$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd.

305-937-2777, www.pillarrestaurant.com

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Militello. He has been executive chef at Rumi, and cooked at NYC's James Beard House. Armed with those impressive credentials, Fredel and his wife launched Pilar (named for Hemingway's boat) aiming to prove that top restaurants can be affordable. Consider it 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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 MULTI-PURPOSE VENUE**
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 Reduced to \$5,999,000
 Seller financing available



16,392 SF night club, restaurant, gallery, performance space, photography studio, recording studio, video production facility & cinema all packed into one space!

Tony Cho



305.571.9991

tcho@metro1properties.com

**HIALEAH
 INDUSTRIAL/FLEX/OFFICE**
 651 W 20 Street
 For lease at \$1.99psf NNN
 For sale 3.29M



5,000-80,000sf avail. under a/c, parking, freight elevator, conference room, security system + more

Fabian Graff



305.710.0306

fgraff@metro1properties.com

SOUTH BEACH OFFICE
 235 Lincoln Road
 Offered for lease
 \$32 psf gross



Signature office space for lease in heart of Miami Beach. Various floor plans and sizes available.

Tony Arellano



305.571.9991

tarellano@metro1properties.com

**MIAMI SHORES
 OFFICE & RETAIL**
 9600-9700 NE 2 Avenue
 Starting at \$12 psf NNN



1000-11,000 sf of retail space avail. in beautiful downtown Miami Shores. 2,000-4,000 office also avail. in a walkable & easily accessible location. Offered for lease

Ruben Matz



786.290.8815

rmatz@metro1properties.com

**BUENA VISTA
 EAST SINGLE FAMILY HOME**
 78 NE 47 Street
 Offered at \$419,000



1,850 sf 3bed/2bath
 Updated bungalow villa w/income producing cottage in back

Tony Cho



305.571.9991

tcho@metro1properties.com

**MIAMI SHORES
 SINGLE FAMILY HOME**
 1020 NE 99 Street
 Offered at \$599,000



2,300+ sf lovely renovated 4bed/3bath home w/updated kitchen, bathrooms and new hurricane impact windows.

Irene Dakota



305.972.8860

idakota@metro1properties.com

**CENTRAL BIZ DISTRICT
 CAFE/BIZ OPPORTUNITY**
 192 SE 1 Avenue
 Offered at \$99,000



Great business opportunity in the heart of the Central Business District w/a long lease and inexpensive rent

Irene Dakota



305.972.8860

idakota@metro1properties.com

**BUENA VISTA
 SINGLE FAMILY HOME**
 255 NW 59 Street
 Offered for sale at \$169,000



Beautiful, secured and private Spanish style 2bed/1bath home

Kristine Flook + Janet Crucet



305.318.6366

kflook@metro1properties.com

METRO 1 GREEN BUILDING RESOURCE CENTER

Dedicated to educating the community on green building services, products, practices and principles



The M1 GBRC is complimentary and open to the public! Miami's first space designed to educate the community on green services, products, practices and principles.

THE M1 GBRC OFFERS:

- Green building samples library
- Resource Bar where visitors can reference resources and download information
- Educational seminars and training
- Networking events and business development opportunities
- LEED and green building workshops
- Energy & efficiency auditing
- Tours and educational field trips
- And so much more!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

01.23.10 | 9:00AM - 1:30PM **Technical Review of USGBC LEED® Green Associate Requirements**
 Refreshments provided \$210 Members | \$250 Non-Members

01.25.10 | 3:00PM - 6:00PM **Funding Green Buildings Forecast for 2010 Incentives and Alliances Seminar with Grantwriting Guru Jan McAdams** - \$45 Members | \$60 Non-Members

02.11.10 | 6:00PM - 8:00PM **Miami 21 "Town Hall" Information Series Part 1 with guest speaker Francisco Garcia Iglesias** Refreshments provided Free for Members | \$10 for Non-Members

Want to get involved? To become a member, sponsor or to attend a seminar visit metro1gbrc.org and advocate green building and sustainable growth! For more information contact Susie Glass LEED AP®, Project Manager sglass@metro1gbrc.com or 305.571.9991

