

BISCAYNE

Times

DINING GUIDE
215 restaurants!
10 new!
Page 51

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www.BiscayneTimes.com

March 2010

Volume 8, Issue 1

DWNTN UPTRN

There's only one good way to see the new downtown Miami: On foot

PART 2



By Pamela Robin Brandt
Photos by Silvia Ros

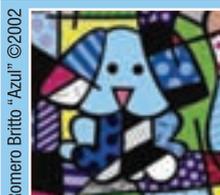
By day it was strictly a 9-to-5 business area with mostly low-rent support amenities — fast-food joints for office workers, discount electronics and luggage stores for tourists. At night it was, in a word, dead.

But that was downtown Miami then. Suddenly, almost overnight, downtown seems to have transformed into an exciting, vibrant, night-and-day live, work, and play zone. In 2009 alone, according to statistics from Miami's Downtown

Development Authority, 60 new businesses opened, and not one of them was a discount electronics and luggage emporium. The majority were independently owned, individualistic restaurants and lounges with only-in-Miami personality to spare.

According to Alex Gonzalez, founder of the social-networking website Miami Urban Life and downtown Miami resident since late 2007: "Downtown

Continued on page 14



Romero Britto "Azul" ©2002

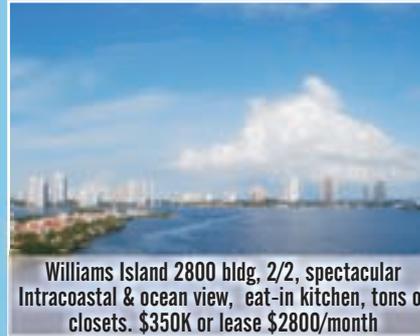
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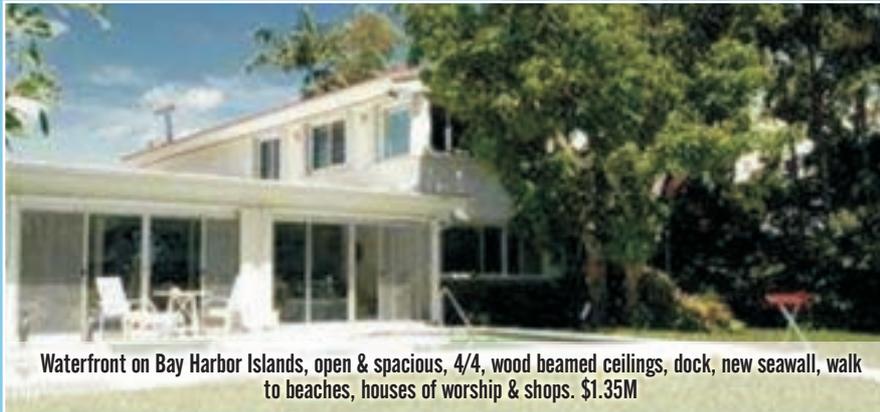
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by BONNIE AND ILENE



Williams Island 2800 bldg, 2/2, spectacular Intracoastal & ocean view, eat-in kitchen, tons of closets. \$350K or lease \$2800/month



Surfside Waterfront on 21,000+ sf lot, wide water & Indian Crk Isl. views, 5/5, 2 car gar., dock. \$9500/mo.



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Surfside Waterfront, 3/2+ garage, 3 homes from bay, A+ schools. \$789K



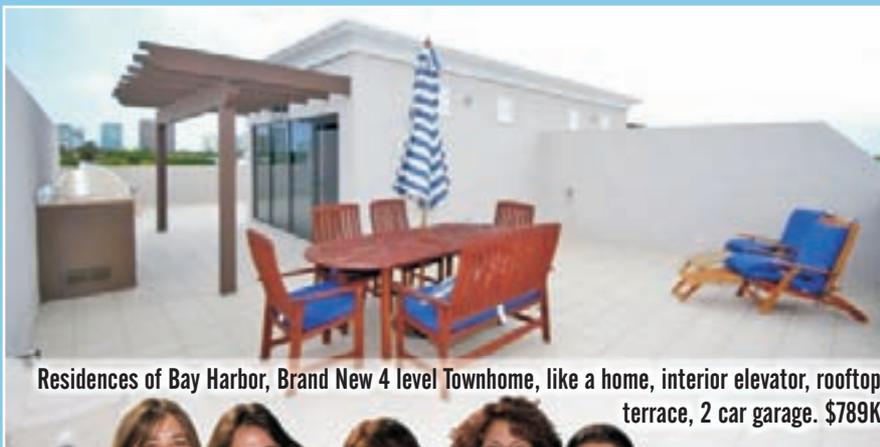
Island Pointe Bay Harbor, water water everywhere, 2/2, 1330 sf, completely renovated, full service building, 2 parking spaces. \$329,800



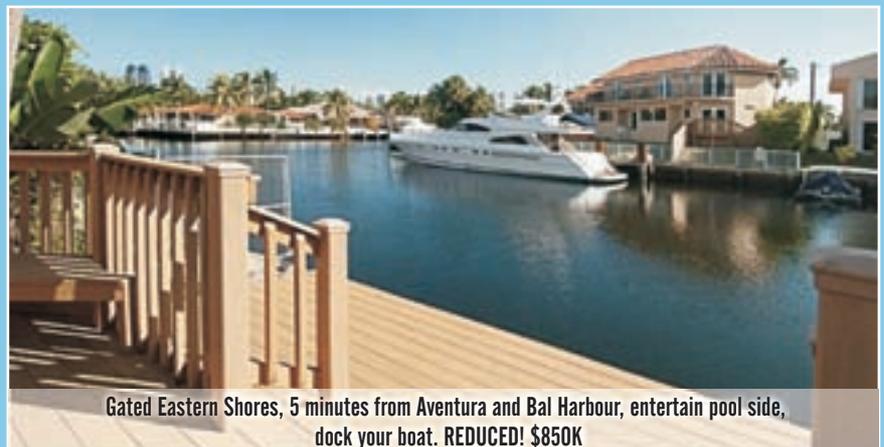
Bay Harbor Island-New to Market! Contemporary style home, 4/3 in pristine condition, Brazilian cherry wood floors, huge Master Suite, exquisite open kitchen. \$995K



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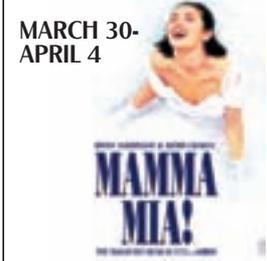
TURNBERRY
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MARCH

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FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

K KNIGHT CONCERT HALL **C** CARNIVAL STUDIO THEATER **Z** ZIFF BALLETT OPERA HOUSE **P** PARKER AND VANN THOMSON PLAZA

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
 <p>So Much Happened Before Doctor Doom Died.</p> <p>A New Musical WICKED The untold story of the Witch of the West</p> <p>MARCH 3-21</p>			<p>3 Wicked 8:00PM Z "Wicked has cast quite a spell!" -The Washington Post</p>	<p>4 Wicked 2:00 & 8:00PM Z "Wicked has every piece of the Great American Musical, and even defines the genre in its current evolution. It is altogether thrilling." -The Philadelphia Inquirer</p>	<p>5 Wicked 8:00PM Z Angelique Kidjo 8:00PM K Here & Now 7:00 & 9:00PM C</p>	<p>6 Free Family Fest Outdoor Activities 11:30AM P Step Afrika! 2:00PM K Wicked 2:00 & 8:00PM Z Here & Now 7:00 & 9:00PM C</p>	
<p>7 Wicked 2:00 & 7:30PM Z Back by "Popular" Demand! <i>The New York Times</i> calls <i>Wicked</i> "Broadway's biggest blockbuster!" Here & Now 2:00 & 4:00PM C</p>	 <p><i>The Second City</i> LOCO EL SHOW MAS FUNNY! MARCH 11-28</p>		<p>9 Wicked 8:00PM Z Long before that girl from Kansas arrives in Munchkinland, two girls meet in the land of Oz.</p>	<p>10 Wicked 8:00PM Z "The most complete and completely satisfying new musical in a long time!" -USA Today</p>	<p>11 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C For 50 years, Second City superstars like Tina Fey, Bill Murray, and Steve Carell have been burning up sketch comedy for audiences! Wicked 8:00PM Z</p>	<p>12 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30 & 10:00PM C Open Wings - Broken Strings 8:00PM K Wicked 8:00PM Z</p>	<p>13 Wicked 2:00 & 8:00PM Z Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30 & 10:00PM C Second City mines comedic gold from the clash of cultures at the heart of Miami!</p>
<p>14 Wicked 2:00 & 7:30PM Z Defy Gravity! Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C</p>			<p>16 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C From people and politics, to fads and food - it's all fair game for the Loco gang from Second City! Wicked 8:00PM Z</p>	<p>17 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C Wicked 8:00PM Z "Wicked has all that a thrill-seeking theatergoer could want in a musical!" -The Miami Herald</p>	<p>18 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C Come laugh your pants off! Wicked 8:00PM Z</p>	<p>19 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30 & 10:00PM C Wicked 8:00PM Z JAZZ ROOTS: Tribute to Frank Sinatra 8:00PM K</p>	<p>20 Sing, Miami! 11:30AM P Wicked 2:00 & 8:00PM Z Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30 & 10:00PM C Funny and fast-paced, completely unique!</p>
<p>21 Wicked 2:00 & 7:30PM Z "Get Popular!" Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C</p>	 <p>MARCH 30- APRIL 4 MAMMA MIA!</p>		<p>23 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C A revue that lampoons Miami's fabulousity with sketches, songs and improvisation.</p>	<p>24 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C Funny never felt so good! New World School for the Arts Rising Stars 7:30PM P</p>	<p>25 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C So funny your abuela will pee herself!</p>	<p>26 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30 & 10:00PM C The Cleveland Orchestra "Romeo and Juliet" 8:00PM K The Joffrey Ballet 8:00PM Z</p>	<p>27 Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery 2:00PM K Second City Loco 7:30 & 10:00PM C The Joffrey Ballet 8:00PM Z The Cleveland Orchestra 8:00PM K</p>
<p>28 Second City Loco in El Show Mas Funny 7:30PM C Laugh. Laugh. Cry. Laugh.</p>	<p>29 Lang Lang 8:00PM K "Hottest artist on the classical music planet!" -The New York Times</p>	<p>30 Mamma Mia! 8:00PM Z "This high-energy musical brings HAPPINESS WHEREVER IT GOES!" -Time Magazine</p>	<p>31 Mamma Mia! 8:00PM Z "The best night out you'll ever have!" -"The Today Show"</p>	 <p>MIAMI MADE WEEKEND A Celebration of New Work FEATURING HERE & NOW 2010 March 5 - 7</p>			

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BISCAYNE Times

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BISCAYNE *Times*

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PRINTING

Stuart Web, Inc.
www.stuartweb.com

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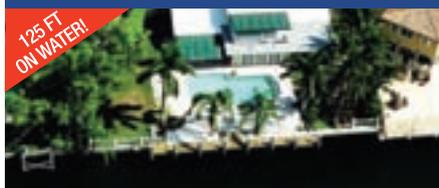
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Letters to the Editor

From Urban Chic to Third World Grit: Five Short Blocks

Pamela Robin Brandt's article on downtown Miami ("DWNTN UPTRN," February 2010) read like it was copied off a press release from the people at the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), patting themselves on the back for how well they're doing their job.

While the DDA has made tremendous strides in improving the quality of life in the Brickell area and the Central Business District (CBD) over the past few years, it has ignored the areas north of NE 5th Street and west of NE 2nd Avenue. In fact all of the DDA initiatives mentioned in the article are *by definition* not available to residents and business owners north of NE 5th Street. Yet property owners living up to NE 17th Street are required to contribute annually to the DDA special-taxing district. This is one of the reasons that heading north from NE 5th Street is like being transported from a First World country to a Third World country.

While Brickell and CBD residents get sidewalk pressure cleaning, landscaping, and decorative paver crosswalks, residents north of 5th Street are crying out for basic sidewalk maintenance and street repairs for overgrown weeds and potholes that make the neighborhood look worse than Haiti. Furthermore it is hypocritical that certain properties owned by a DDA board member in Park West are contributing to the dilapidated nature of the neighborhood. These properties feature dozens of code violations and are strewn with trash and collapsing barbed-wire fences.

Even though the DDA's stated mission is "make downtown Miami the most livable urban center in the nation," the thousands of new residents (and taxpayers) of Park West and Omni don't dare venture more than a block from their homes into what Ms. Brandt calls the "isolated and tough neighborhood west of the Arsht Center."

Ignoring this area affects the image of the *entire* city. Imagine the impression left on the thousands of visitors to the American Airlines Arena and the Arsht Center, who, upon seeing the run-down state of the area, may never return to downtown Miami.

In order for redevelopment to be successful, it needs to be approached holistically. All our downtown neighborhoods are linked and interdependent, as is the case in other cities around the world.

The DDA is shooting its long term goals of a livable, 24/7 downtown in the

foot by throwing millions of dollars at the already beautiful CBD and Brickell areas, and pennies at areas that need it most. Let's continue to improve downtown Miami, but ensure that *all* residents benefit equally and equitably from city initiatives, not just a chosen few.

*Brad Knoefler
Miami*

If Leroy Griffith's Boulevard Theater Throws Off So Much Cash, Why Keep Changing It?

Thank you, Erik Bojnansky, for continuing to write about Leroy Griffith's Boulevard Theater ("Boulevard Theater: The New Incarnation," February 2010) and for keeping the heat up.

But come on, Erik! Just because Griffith *says* that it is so, does not *make* it so. If his theater were producing excessive revenue, why is it that in the past three years he has changed the name and the services of the club more than half a dozen times? What gives?

I wish someone would ask tougher questions, including how much he has contributed to local political campaigns and who are his investors. In years past, this is a story the *Miami Herald* would have done. Now it's up to you guys.

Here's hoping you take a whack at it.

*Laura Wides-Muñoz
Belle Meade*

I'll Cook Your Iguana If You'll Buy My Book

Regarding Jen Karetick's meditation on frozen iguanas dropping from trees ("Frozen Objects Falling from the Skies," February 2010), I believe it's time for iguana meat to be baked, fried, barbecued, boiled, stewed, or ground for consumption.

Like all large reptiles, their flesh is edible. This delicacy can even be coined "treetop gator tail" in South Florida to entice consumers. There is no reason to let the meat of an animal that can weigh as much as ten pounds go to waste, especially when there are 50,000,000 hungry people in the U.S. and unemployment in certain areas is above 25 percent.

For more details, talk to your friends from Central America. The only reason I did not include iguanas among edible wild game in my most recent

Continued on page 35

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BizBuzz: March 2010

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

At **Bagels and Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), March brings coupon specials for starvation budgets. Take a friend to lunch, free, with the 2-for-1 entrée “Two for Tuesday” menu. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, entrées from the “Bail-Out Special” menu are half price. And start any weekday with a \$2.99 breakfast: two eggs, homefries, and toast or hand-rolled bagel.

To encourage more people to dine and shop downtown, Miami’s **Downtown Development Authority**, a new BT advertiser, is promoting the DWNT-WNR, a credit card that offers up to 50% off purchases at more than 200 South Florida merchants, many of them downtown. For an application form, go to www.idoitdowntwn.com.

Spring cleaning time is here already? Okay then, how about a thorough spring cleaning for your face? At **Hannah and Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426), famed facialist Debbie Little has joined the team, and during March your first facial is 15% off (or buy five facials and the sixth is free). Amplify the makeover with a make-up job by Jameson and get another 15% off.

Then stuff yer face, courtesy of **Gaucha Ranch**, purveyors of 100% grass-fed Uruguayan beef. At Friday Night Tastings throughout March, grillmaster Don Julio will be serving wood-fire-cooked samples of all cuts at their Biscayne Corridor warehouse. RSVP at 305-751-0775 or info@gauchoranch.com and mention the BT. The magic words *Biscayne Times* will score warehouse customers three skirt steaks for the price of two, or a \$100 whole tenderloin for \$84.

Welcome to new advertiser **Magic Grooming**, which has been operating the one-stop shop for pets in North Bay Village for nearly 20 years (7904 West Dr., 305-758-1392), offering full grooming, day care, a pet hotel, even dental services. BT readers who are first-time customers will enjoy a 25% discount on all services.

For those not up on all foods Asian: Dim sum are Chinese small



Cash for Gold



Smiling Pets

plates (dumplings of all sorts, plus many other dishes), and ssam in Korea means “wrapped,” like thin-sliced beef bulgogi in lettuce leaves. So now it’ll be clear that the new “Dim Ssam Sundays” at **Sakaya Kitchen**, a pan-Asian eatery in the Shops at Midtown Miami (Buena Vista Avenue #125, 305-576-8096), will feature fun snacks inspired by numerous Asian nations. Brunch starts Sunday, March 14. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

There’s writing, and there’s *good* writing. For those who want the latter, Miami Dade College’s **Florida Center for the Literary Arts**, a new advertiser, offers courses by experienced published writers in virtually any field imaginable. Upcoming big event at the Center: the Writers Institute, May 5-8, four days of intensive workshopping. Call 305-237-3940 or visit www.flcenterlitarts.com.

Every Wednesday in March, **La Provence French Bakery** is offering BT readers sweet solace for the midweek blues at its Midtown location (2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002). From 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. buy a croissant (or any other Viennoiserie pastry) and get one free; from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., buy one sandwich and get a second one free. Yes, *free!*

For the Doggie Bag Café at *Smiling Pets* clinic (7310 Biscayne Blvd., 305-710-7266), it’s March Madness. March 6: “When Irish Dogs Are Smiling” costume contest. March 13: Fourth annual St. Patrick’s Day “Yappy Hour.” March 20: MiMo Festival with free Cosmo-PAW-litans. March 27: “Doggie Madness” sports day.

Two upcoming shows will spotlight artistic stars of tomorrow — high school and college students from the **New World School of the Arts**. The extravaganza begins March 13 with a juried “Rising

Stars Visual Arts Exhibition” from 7:00 p.m. at the school’s gallery (2215 NW 2nd Ave.), and culminates with a spectacular “Rising Stars Performing Arts Showcase” on March 24 at the Adrienne Arsht Center. More info: 305-237-3852 or nwsa.mdc.edu.

With gold fetching more than \$1000 an ounce, it’s time to take a closer look at that jewelry drawer, especially the lonely earrings without mates and the bracelets and necklaces you never wear. New BT advertiser *Cash for Gold* will give you a detailed, precise, and confidential appraisal — and cash on the spot. Proprietor Alex Lichtman, an expert in precious metals, wristwatches, and rare coins, has been in business at the same location (14390 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-1220) for the past 26 years, solid proof of his integrity.

Did you know that **Bank of America** began in San Francisco in 1904? And that it catered to immigrants other banks were too snooty to serve? Or that after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, founder Amadeo Giannini loaned money to disaster victims from a “desk” of wood planks over two barrels? Otherwise B of A needs no introduction, so we’ll just say welcome to this new advertiser — in particular their Aventura branch (19495 Biscayne Blvd., 305-933-5275).

Two creative visions under one roof, the **North Miami Arts Collective and Dancewear Gallery** (845 NE 125th St., 305-892-9961) are offering dual savings to readers mentioning the BT: Take \$5 off any adult or kid’s class and/or take 10% off any purchase at Dancewear. Class schedules: www.northmiamiarts.com.

From March 13-31, an “Art of Fashion” contest at the **Shops at Midtown**

Miami (3401 N. Miami Ave.) will give shoppers a chance to vote for their favorite of 12 mannequins draped in clothing designed by local artists. The winner gets a month-long display at the Shops, says general manager Lenor Ryan.

After nearly a decade of litigation and bankruptcy, the Wynwood Foreign Trade Zone (8.5 acres) has finally been sold. According to Metro 1 Properties president Tony Cho, who

represented buyer Mannigan Holdings/GRM Information Management Services, it is the year’s largest industrial sale in Miami-Dade County. GRM’s plans to develop the site could mean equally big things for the Wynwood Arts District.

Last year’s **Miami Beach Gay Pride Parade** drew more than 24,000 people. Wow! Now it’s time to start planning for this year’s parade (April 17 along Ocean Drive). To register a fabulous float for your group or business, e-mail cindy@miamibeachgaypride.com. For general info: www.miamibeachgaypride.com.

High-end appliances acting up? Is that Subzero fridge wheezing? Your Viking range not hot enough? New advertiser **Appliance MD** (954-921-2306, www.appliancemdinc.com) works on all top brands, plus air conditioners and heating units. This is one doc who *always* makes house calls.

With more than 20% of Florida’s population lacking health insurance (not to mention jobs), the *free* community resource fair on March 13 at **Unity on the Bay** (411 NE 21st St.; 305-573-9191) could be a life-changing event, possibly even life-saving. Available without charge are all manner of medical and dental screenings, as well as help with unemployment, food stamps, bankruptcy/debt consolidation, immigration, hospice care, and more. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call 305-573-9191 or see www.unityonthebay.org.

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KEYSTONE ISLAND 4BR 3BTH**

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LOCH LOMOND 5BR 4BTH**

Owner will hold first mortgage - terms are negotiable. One story completely renovated lakefront and pool home. Water ski, wake board, jet ski and fish behind your home. 24hr guard-gated community



\$995,000

**NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES 3BR 2 1/2 BTH**

Updated waterfront home with 2 car garage. Dock your boat, direct ocean access, wood floors, split floor plan. Nice pool and patio area with view of Maule lake. 24HR Guard-Gated Community.



\$1,399,000

**NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES 3BR 3 BTH**

Beautiful totally updated & remodeled Pool home with ocean access and no fixed bridges. 80 FT on the water with large dock for yacht and 13,000 pound lift included. High ceilings. Built 1992.



\$1,495,000

**NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES 5BR 3BTH**

Beautiful completely updated one story home with 100ft on the waterfront. 2 car garage. Dock large yacht with direct ocean access and no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. Minutes to Sunny Isles Beach.



\$399,000

**NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES TH 3BR 2 1/2 BTH**

Gorgeous waterfront with 35 Ft dock space behind unit. All renovated with beautiful hardwood floors downstairs. Walk to shopping, dining and movies. Owner will hold first mortgage. 1800 SQ FT. Pool



\$699,000

**AVENTURA
3 STORY PENTHOUSE 4BR 3 1/2 BTH**

Rare opportunity 3 story PH townhome w/private garage. Approx 4,000 SQ FT with semi private rooftop pool. Super panoramic views of Turnberry Golf course, Sunny Isles Beach, S,SE,SW views.



\$799,900

**SUNNY ISLES BEACH
POINCIANA ISLAND TH 4BR 3BTH**

Renovated unit with garage located on private island across from the beach. 24HR Guard-Gated community. Walk to the beach. Large Pets OK. Boat dock included behind unit.

Financial Meltdowns, Political Martyrs, and *Herald* Wordplay

Just another month in Miami, where theater of the absurd reigns supreme

By Jack King
BT Contributor
Special to BT

To say that the City of Miami is in deep financial trouble would certainly be an understatement. The budget shortfall for the upcoming fiscal year may be in the \$200 million range if you include payments the city must make to various union pension plans. The city commission has taken steps to slash the budget and initiate heavy personnel layoffs.

Up until now, city manager Pete Hernandez has not followed any of those directives from the commission. This is nothing new as Hernandez and his former boss, ex-mayor Manny Diaz, have pretty well ignored every directive from the commission. So much for government by, for, and of the people. For eight years it was government by Manny.

But now Hernandez has found a new and unique way to avoid following city commission orders: He resigned. More accurately, he was fired by new Mayor Tomás Regalado. That's one way to avoid being the bad guy. Better yet, Hernandez can now blame it on somebody else.

Pete Hernandez is one of those people who never belonged in government because he did exactly what his bosses told him to do, no matter how damaging or stupid it was. He worked for Miami-Dade County for years and left them in a mess. Of course, he had lots of help there. Now he has left the City of Miami in a mess. Thanks, Pete. Hope your golden parachute has

a few holes in it.

Regalado has selected 59-year-old Miami banker Carlos Migoya to be the new city manager. Migoya has an extensive business background, and the mayor has persuaded him to work for free. Certainly sounds like a good deal compared to the \$300,000 Hernandez was pulling in. But bear in mind that two city managers ago, we had a guy named Joe Arriola, another successful businessman who worked for a dollar a year. He also made a mess of city business, and that doesn't count his strutting about city hall like an arrogant dictator, ordering people around and generally making an ass of himself and the city.

Be careful what we wish for.

* * *

As if the city's financial meltdown weren't bad enough, we also have a world-class goofball in Michelle Spence-Jones, the multi-time elected and suspended District 5 commissioner. Spence-Jones, whose district includes Overtown and Liberty City, was suspended from office by Gov. Charlie Crist after she was arrested for using county grant funds as a piggy bank for herself and her family. She was re-elected and Crist suspended her again. The case has not gone to trial yet.

Spence-Jones is getting a good public-relations boost by employing a tried-and-true tactic: Change the subject when your butt is in the wringer. Rather than discuss whether she actually stole the money, she has turned her arrest into a fight over whether she should be suspended from office when some white guy on Florida's west coast who stole

money was not suspended. That guy has since been removed from office, so soon we should expect another red herring from Spence-Jones.

The District 5 commission seat has been held by a bizarre cast of characters over the years. We've had Miller Dawkins (sent to prison for taking bribes), Art Teele (charged with corruption but never proven before he committed suicide), Jeffery Allen (a nice guy who did nothing right or wrong but who actually lived in Lake Worth, 65 miles up I-95), and Richard Dunn, who is back for his second turn on the commission (completely harmless, which is why he got the appointment).

District 5 loves to elect martyrs so they can complain about how badly they're being treated. Voters would be much better served if they elected someone who could do a good job for both their district and the city. Until that happens, we'll always get what we have always gotten.

* * *

I generally don't think of the *Miami Herald* as a humor publication, but occasionally they step into Dave Barry's world. Last month the *Herald* launched a promotion about how they were expanding the coverage of their "Neighbors" sections. "Neighbors" is the *Herald's* weak attempt to cover very local news throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties. My initial thought was: This a good idea, as the *Herald* was and still is very weak on the local scene.

But then I watched a promotional video on the paper's website. Turns out

the *Herald's* idea of expanding their coverage was to *reduce* the number of "Neighbors" sections from 11 to 6. Wow, I thought. I need to call *BT* publisher Jim Mullin right now and tell him that if we cut our circulation in half, we can tell everyone we're expanding!

The "Neighbors" experience over the past 40 years has been an unmitigated disaster for the *Herald*. It started out when the *Herald* bought the *Coral Gables Times and Guide* and the *North Dade Journal*. The purchases were actually made by *Herald* employees in the business department so there would be no specter of monopoly. Then they got suckered into buying the *Broward Times* for three times what it was worth.

Not long after that, Community Newspapers publisher Ron Miller complained to the Justice Department about the *Herald's* monopolistic hold on the local news business. Under pressure, the *Herald* "bought" the papers from their own people and rolled all of it into what we now know as "Neighbors."

Community Newspapers is still with us, but is now owned by Ron's sons, Grant and Michael Miller, who have no journalistic relationship to their father.

For the life of me I cannot figure out why the *Herald* does this stuff. If they would stop trying to BS everyone and just do a good job journalistically — like become the newspaper of Miami instead of the newspaper of the world — people would read it and the *Herald* would have no problems.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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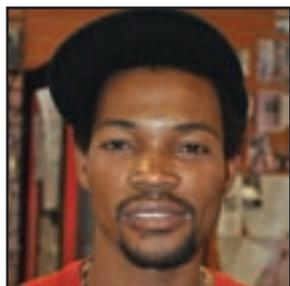
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What impact has the earthquake in Haiti had on your life?

Compiled by Cathi Marro – BT Contributor



Jean Rickersond
Retail Sales
Little Haiti

I lost one uncle in the earthquake. The rest of my family is okay because they are not in Port au Prince. They live in the northwest of Haiti. Other countries should help Haiti but especially America because we have so many Haitians living here. We should not give money to the Haitian government, but direct support instead for the people so that they will recover and be okay in the future.



Sr. Mary Frances Fleischaker
Campus Ministry
Miami Shores

It has focused my attention on that part of the world and the plight of the people in Haiti. I'm surprised and encouraged by the response not only here in Florida, where we have many Haitians, but of the world community. Barry University and Amor en Acción have sponsored a lot of activities to raise awareness and collect donations. Also many of my religious sisters and I have been helping the religious sisters in Haiti.



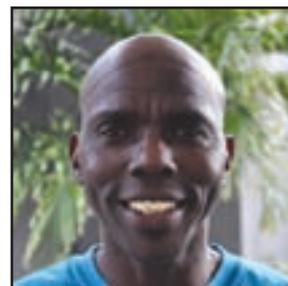
Jim Spinney
Sales Associate
North Miami

It has had a tremendous impact on me as many of my co-workers lost family members. We've been pulling together by getting corporate to send supplies over there. I also have high-school friends arranging free flights for medical personnel to go to Haiti. I hear their stories of working on the victims with no ER available. It's frightening! I pray for the people who lost loved ones. Eventually they will rebuild, but it will be a long process.



Cynthia Graffeo
Salon Manager
MiMo

Obviously it is a terrible tragedy. I have lots of friends who have family in Haiti. Our salon has had fundraisers and I have donated clothing and food for them. We raised a good amount of money doing before and after photographs of customers at our salon opening. America was there for the tsunami victims and fighting wars elsewhere, so it seems like a good reason to get involved with this island in need of our help.



Marvin Lee Johnson
Car Wash Manager
Downtown

My heart goes out to the people but it doesn't really effect how I live my life. I go on with my daily chores. I have a friend in Haiti who got hit with the aftermath. Luckily he didn't get hit too badly. I think America should definitely help Haiti since it is such a poor country and we do help other countries. I feel badly for those who lost loved ones and family, and I hope God helps them.



Heathermarie Griffith
Business Owner
Bayside

It has been very depressing. I have many friends who have lost family members. A lot of people in my neighborhood have gotten together to donate clothing and money. The United States should absolutely help Haiti, but they have a habit of being there when the tragedy happens then forgetting. I hope we stay involved because this will take a long time to heal.



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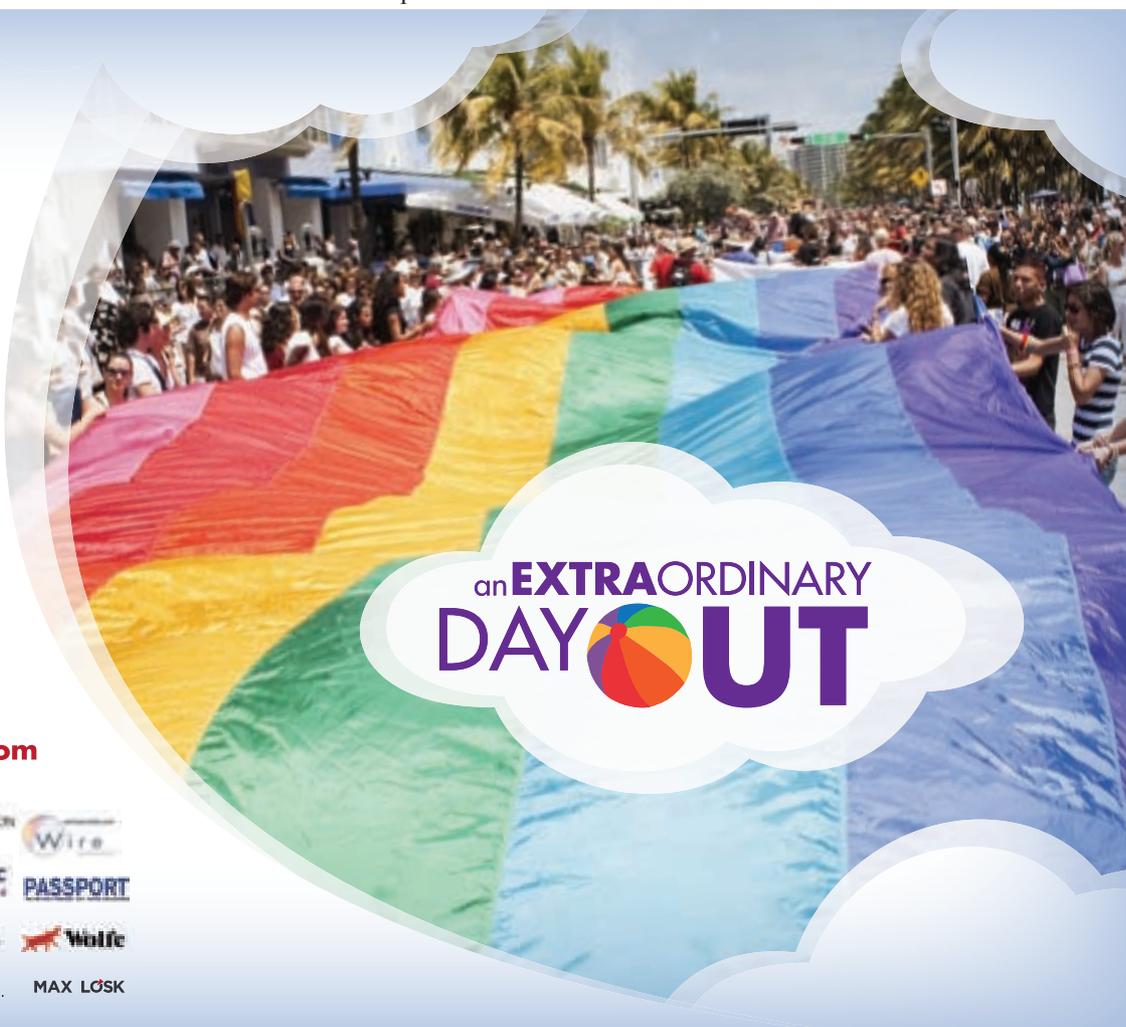
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DWNTN UPTRN

Continued from page 1

took a major upturn in 2009. It's like night and day."

Actually a closer look at the DDA's figures shows that not *all* of downtown's upturn has been quite so sudden. Of the 60 new businesses, 28 set up shop in relatively affluent Brickell, which the DDA considers part of "downtown" Miami. Brickell's restaurant numbers have been on the rise for several years. In contrast, only eight new businesses opened last year in the northernmost sector of the DDA's territory, an area called the Media and Entertainment District.

It's really the formerly blighted Central Business District (CBD) where revival reached warp speed last year: 23 new businesses, 18 of them restaurants — and all those are doing well enough to still be open in 2010. In comparison, ten CBD restaurants opened in 2008, four of which had closed by 2009.

"Quality restaurants are traditionally the first retail to open in emerging areas," says Alyce Robertson, director of the DDA, a quasi-independent City of Miami agency charged with improving the quality of life for downtown businesses, residents, and visitors. "It's especially hard for shops like boutiques to open during a recession. But I'd say there'll be a noticeable difference within two years."

Indeed intriguing shops are already catching up to the CBD's explosion of eateries, including the celebrity-studded opening of Igal Haimov's opulent jewelry store — supplier of \$62,000, diamond-blinged designer watches to the likes of Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan, and a host of rappers and NFL players.

Downtown's upturn has already progressed to the point that the DDA feels it's ready for prime time as a tourism magnet. Most of the agency's initiatives, Robertson admits, have been oriented toward new downtown residents. After a couple of years of stalled luxury condo sales, newcomers have filled the high-rises to 62 percent occupancy, thanks to plunging rental rates and sale prices. Robertson adds: "But we've also been heavily promoting downtown in partnership with other entities: the Beacon Council, the Downtown Miami Partnership, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, American Airlines Arena, the Port of Miami, and others, reaching out locally but also internationally. There are campaigns locals wouldn't have seen unless they'd been in target countries, consisting



Area 31 chef John Critchley invents things, just like the new downtown itself.



From his new downtown jewelry store, Igal Haimov sells very expensive watches to very wealthy clients.

of visuals that convey the new urban experience downtown.

"The perception of downtown is one thing. The reality," she says with confidence, "is another."

Still skeptical that downtown's upturn isn't mostly hype? See for yourself on a stroll in the part of downtown that resident and restaurateur José Goyanes, of La Loggia and the cool new Tre Italian Bistro, calls "the closest thing, structurewise, that downtown currently has to a mini New York."

This is the southeastern section of the Central Business District, which contains the largest concentration of occupied new condo buildings as well as, not coincidentally, other amenities,

including, in Bayfront Park, a flying-traffic school. Consequently it's currently the most pedestrian-friendly part of downtown, night and day.

A recent ramble began alongside the Miami River, with lunch at Area 31, downtown's most nationally recognized new restaurant. Chef John Critchley's swoonworthy sustainable seafood specialties (imagine seared Key West yellowtail snapper with salsa verde and cloud-light chestnut purée) are definitely chef-driven — a perfect fit for an urban area also inventing itself.

"The neighborhood spirit here seems to be: Let's do it together," agrees Area 31 general manager (and new downtown resident) Carlos Bohlen, who

says that even though Area 31 is located in the Epic Hotel, 80 percent of diners, surprisingly, have been locals. "When I ask if they need their valet ticket stamped," Bohlen reports, "they say, 'No, we walked tonight.' Many sound amazed when they say it. It's like, 'Wow! Maybe we *do* live in a real downtown after all!'"

Certainly the glittering views from the 19th-floor restaurant's best tables — on an outdoor dining balcony — make Miami look impressively urban-glam.

Walking north on SE 3rd Avenue, the still-under-construction Met complex makes the point that the emerging urban area is still not fully emerged. Signs on construction walls trumpet the imminent opening of the much-anticipated Daniel Boulud restaurant DB Bistro Moderne, a golf school, and several similarly upscale ventures. Mi-amians who know that such signs mean the venues may open anytime from later to never will not be impressed.

Never mind. Looking to the right after reaching SE 2nd Street, you'll see contemporary Italian hot spot Puntino (packed at lunch since a restaurateur from Naples opened it in June of last year), where a half-dozen suits are still power-lunching al fresco at 3:00 p.m. Luckily the place is open Monday through Saturday until 11:00 p.m.

On the same block, in the sprawling Wachovia Financial Center complex, is the chic Roy Teeluck Salon, which opened last fall. The Big Apple original won *Vogue's* "Best Haircut in NYC" accolade. Also in the Wachovia is the Downtown Athletic Club, a venerable Miami establishment that has added many new facilities designed with new residents in mind — including a rock-climbing wall, boxing studio, and double-size cardio theater. "We've been seeing a very different demographic than even a year ago," notes marketing director Rob Aylward.

The Wachovia complex's 35,000-square-foot outdoor plaza, already arguably downtown's most popular urban park, is currently being renovated to attract new restaurant and retail tenants to its ground-floor level.

Continuing north on SE 3rd Avenue, there is the stylish, fast-casual pasta/salad place Spoon (other branches in Beverly Hills, New York, and Paris), which opened early in 2009. Motto: "Create What You Crave."

Continued on page 15

DWNTN UPTRN

Continued from page 14

Across the street is Smokeshop, much more elegant than Lincoln Road's tobacconists. Aside from cigars and imported cigarettes, the shop also sells snazzy pens like Mont Blanc and Cartier.

Look to the right at SE 1st Street and you'll see the House of Wine & Liquors. Admittedly the name doesn't scream "yuppie safe," but the floor-to-ceiling wooden bins of quality classic and boutique wines, plus chichi packaged snacks, make it clear there's nary a bottle of Ripple in this house.

Wine shopper and new downtown condo resident Andres del Corral is enthusiastic. "If I want to stay home," he says, "they'll deliver locally until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m."

Turning left in front of a Starbucks and walking west on SE 1st Street, you'll find yourself in La Petit Paris: Café Bastille, serving tapas but looking like an authentic French sidewalk café, then La Paris café, then Croissant d'Or. Okay, probably only one is interesting enough to review, but it's fun to stroll by what's almost a "restaurant row," downtown French-style.

Across the street is the Downtown Book Center, whose proprietor, Raquel Roque, is one of the founders of the Miami Book Fair. The eclectic shop, which has been there since her Cuban-immigrant father, José Rabide, opened it in the mid-1960s, boasts exactly the large, varied stock of books that readers are always complaining Miami doesn't have. Who knew?

"That's a great thing about downtown becoming more pedestrian-friendly," says the DDA's Alyce Robertson. "There's plenty of great old stuff there that people never discover when they just drive in to work and then out."

In the last building before reaching SE 2nd Avenue is Fratelli Milano, which opened several years ago with lunch-only hours, but expanded operations last year to include dinner, joining some 17 other restaurants north of the Miami River that are now open at night.



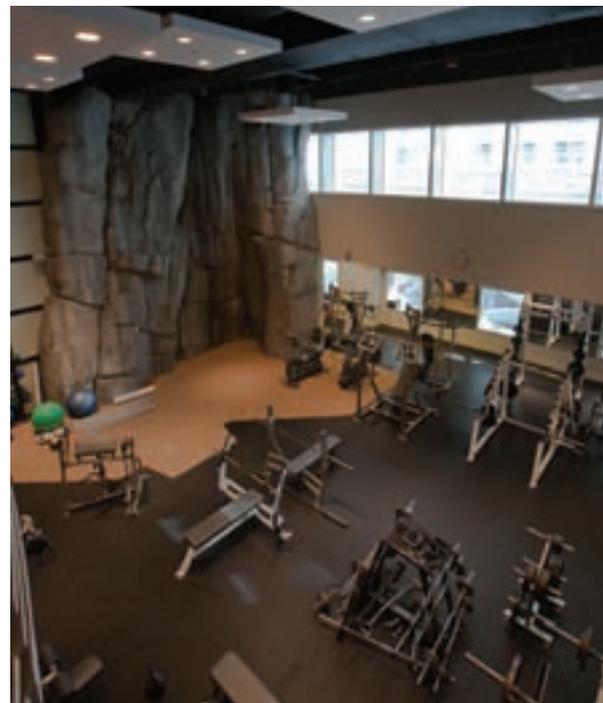
This hidden courtyard is home to an array of restaurants.



Flossie's on SE 1st Avenue will bring out your inner hippie.

Fratelli offers an interesting example of the new downtown rubbing up against the old. The restaurant, with its outdoor tables and colorful umbrellas, is next door to Las Palmas cafeteria and North Rio, a discount electronics store. But a new awning over all three establishments allows them to co-exist with visual charm. Throughout your walk, you'll notice many such spruced-up storefronts, most courtesy of beautification grants from the Downtown Development Authority.

Across SE 2nd Avenue on the corner is Ecco Pizzateca, opened in 2009 by emerging-area veterans Brian Basti and Aramis Lorie, the duo formerly responsible for the legendary Poplife nights at PS14 in the still-iffy western Arts and Entertainment District of downtown. Basti, who is taste-testing a new truffle oil pizza (highly recommended), takes



The Downtown Athletic Club has added new facilities for new residents.

time off from work to play tour guide, eager to share a few of his favorite "neat old places people never knew about," places he believes fit perfectly into the new downtown.

First stop is Flossie's (111 SE 1st Ave.), a candle/crystal jewelry/African mask/spiritual book/Haitian art/scented oil/potpourri/incense shop. One whiff and you're back in 1968. Far out.

Next, catty-corner from I.M. Pei's Bank of America tower on SE 1st Street, sits a low-rise building whose hidden inner courtyard houses a tropically landscaped warren of international restaurants. At least a couple of them serve dinner as well as lunch: attractive,

contemporary Martini 28, opened last fall by a Peruvian husband-and-wife team who change the menu every few days; Giovana, where the "only authentic Italian food in downtown" has evidently been secreted away since 1996; and Thai Angel, which Basti asserts is "best Thai food in Miami."

From 2003 to 2006, the warren also housed a charming, budget-priced bistro called Lila's, run by three dynamic young Peruvian sisters who tried repeatedly to nudge downtown tastes into this century with evening hours, chef-driven creative dishes, housemade sauces, and more. When they finally folded, one sister explained they'd held out for a year after they'd gone broke, "hoping down-

town would turn into a *real* downtown, like New York or Chicago." Too bad it didn't happen for them. Today's downtowners would love Lila's.

Basti slows at the landmark 1926 Olympia Theater at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts. This fantastical, Moorish-turreted jewel, once the cultural center of Miami, has suffered horrendous setbacks for decades — fiscal disaster, artistic decline (the theater has been run strictly as a rental hall since 1992, with no original programming), serious structural decay, and a series of "improvements," like a 1970s

effort that replaced the theater's brass-and-wood-trimmed seats with bright red plastic ones.

There was a slow fade to near black in terms of community visibility, according to Margaret Lake, who moved to downtown Miami two and a half years ago to become the Gusman's new director. Lake has since overseen a complete structural rebuild and restoration of the theater's gloriously ornate décor. Still, she sighs, "You wouldn't believe how many times I've taken people inside to see it, and they say, 'I didn't know it was *beautiful*. I didn't know it was *there*.'"

Continued on page 16

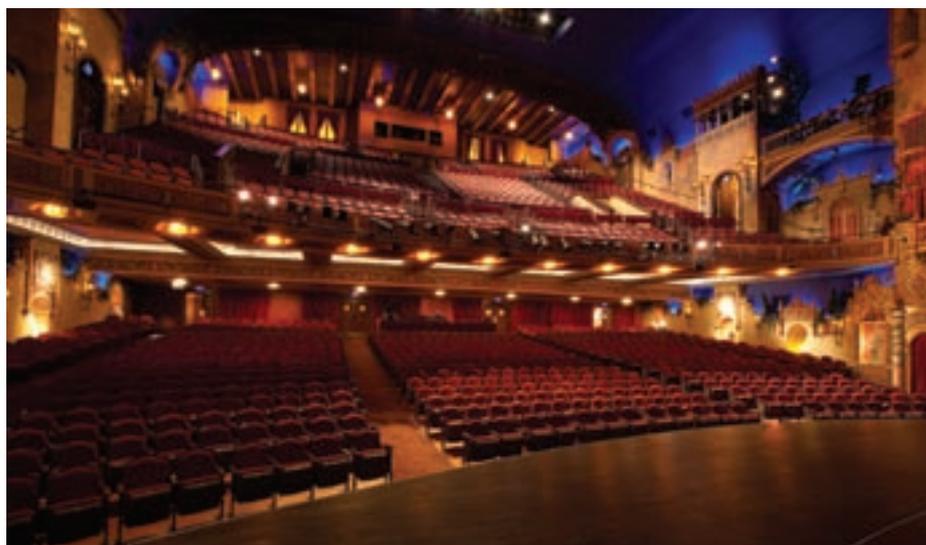
DWNTN UPTRN

Continued from page 15

Now Lake has some good news: The Gusman will present a season of its own programs, possibly as early as this fall (depending on funding), but definitely by 2011-2012. "Presenting will restore our credibility," she says. "When you're just a rental hall, all you can do is hope the quality is up to par. And there's no financial stability because it's hard to get people to buy into a sporadic calendar." (Currently the Gusman operates only 75 nights a year.)

Lake hired a consulting firm, the North Group, to assess the Gusman's potential. The results of creating its own programming were projected to be stunning. Increasing to 125 operating nights annually would have "a major impact on the economic vitality" of all downtown; 225 nights, and the effect would be "transformative" in revitalizing the area.

So Lake is now scrambling for money in order to develop original programming. "I've been able to write grants myself," she says. "Thank God I was raised by an English teacher." In the meantime, another summertime mini



The Gusman's ornate interior: Many more shows are planned.

season is certain. Last summer's "Flickin' Summer Series" featured several classic film musicals, each screening followed by an on-stage dance party with three-dollar beers and five-dollar cocktails.

Across SE 2nd Avenue at La Época, an expansive department store inside a striking 1936 Art Deco building, Basti points out three stacked logos on each floor of the Alonso family's store. The

top sign is a replica of the original La Época in Havana, a massive, five-floor structure that was the third-largest department store in Cuba.

The middle sign is from the original, smaller Miami store that family patriarch Diego Alonso and his two sons opened down the block, after the family fled Cuba in 1965. At bottom is the sign that's been there since La Época

relocated in 2005.

Inside the store, son Tony Alonso, a genial gentleman and DDA board member, tells the story of downtown's fall and rise, from the mid-1960s to the present. After opening as a small corner shop in the Alfred I. DuPont building, La Época rapidly expanded to 7000 square feet.

At the time, Alonso says, downtown was the healthy city center of a much less populated Miami. "There were a few suburban malls, but they weren't big. In fact, you know what Dadeland was nicknamed? *Deadland!*"

Then in the 1970s, urban sprawl virtually emptied downtown Miami. "It was happening everywhere in the country," Alonso recounts. "In the 1970s and 1980s, nobody wanted to live in downtowns except New York and San Francisco. Miami was a lot of little low-rise cities with no personalities, a little Los Angeles. Congestion got to the point where nobody wanted to live downtown."

La Época nevertheless remained profitable, thanks largely to its women's boutique and electronics department,

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DWNTN UPRN

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because, Alonso points out, “25 years ago, it was the boom of the Latin tourist.”

Meanwhile the New Urbanism theories espoused by Miami’s own Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk were gaining adherents across the nation. (New Urbanism advocates compact, densely populated city centers as the solution to ecologically and aesthetically atrocious suburban sprawl.) “In the early 1990s, almost every center city around started renovating and bringing back residents,” says Alonso. “Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale with Las Olas. Every city *except* Miami.”

Why not?

“The City of Miami went broke!” he exclaims. “It was like, ‘We don’t have time to renovate our downtown. We’re too busy going bankrupt!’”

Despite the civic neglect, Alonso anticipated a need for more inventory and space, so he purchased the present building in 1992, but didn’t move in right away. In fact he didn’t move in for more than a dozen years.



Brothers Pepe and Tony Alonso in front of their family-owned store.

Instead he cut the old store’s space and stock in half. “The store was low price, bargain tables. Levis were my top-of-the-line jeans.”

These days, inside La Época’s three-story, 24,000-square-foot space, Alonso says, “Levis are my *lowest*-end

jeans. The \$90 Diesels outsell \$35 Levis five-to-one! The stock is high-end, similar to a Neiman-Marcus. And my sales are going up every year.”

Seems like a reason to celebrate. And in fact La Época has been doing

just that every week since last year, on “Mojito Tuesdays,” a happy hour with live bands and complimentary mojitos handed out just inside the front door. Try finding that in a New York department store.

Outside on Flagler Street, epicenter of the DDA’s beautification efforts (75 percent of retailers have partnered with the agency to improve their storefronts’ aesthetics, says Robertson), downtown Miami looks dramatically revived.

Yet as night falls, it’s clear that downtown’s upswing is still a work in progress. Even within José Goyanes’ “mini New York,” pedestrians are sparse. And Goyanes admits, “north of Flagler has to grow yet” in terms of nighttime restaurants and other inviting businesses. Perhaps not surprising, given that many new high-rise condo buildings north of Flagler, finished more recently than those to the south, are still largely devoid of the residents who would create a demand for such nightlife.

There are scattered bright lights, like the restaurant CVLICHE 105, nearly always packed with diners craving

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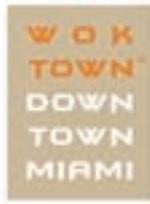
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COVER STORY

DWNTN UPTRN

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creative, “new style” ceviches and tiraditos. But try venturing just a bit farther northwest in the Central Business District, over near the federal courthouse, to the Wallflower Gallery. This eclectic, all-ages, mixed-media space — with its cutting-edge art shows plus five-buck live band performances and large collection of Miami indie-music CDs — *should* fit perfectly into this energetic young downtown. But the owner, Flash, is currently seeking new digs. “I don’t think these new residents even know we exist,” he laments.

Nevertheless, strolling downtown’s southeastern streets after dark no longer feels like creeping through a ghost town. You’ll see joggers, some couples walking to restaurants, even a few lone women. From his bustling Tre Italian Bistro on Flagler, Goyanes observes, “I see women walking their dogs at night



Officer Jeffrey Glasko: “Downtown is really a very safe place.”



Restaurant owner José Goyanes (with Jennifer Porciello) sees a mini New York emerging downtown.

from Macy’s to Bayfront. Just a short while ago, a woman who did that? You’d say: ‘You’re crazy!’”

At Chandí, a wine and liquor shop across Flagler Street from La Época, manager José Huaman says, “Four years ago, when this store opened, I went home when the business people went home, because the area was empty. But one and a half years ago there were enough people that we began staying open, and making local deliveries, until midnight. Now the area feels safe.”

Jeffrey Glasko, the Miami police department’s downtown Neighborhood Resource Officer, confirms that the streets don’t just feel safer — they *are* safer. From 2008 through 2009,

according to department statistics, robberies (including purse-snatching) dropped 13.1 percent, auto theft decreased 39.5 percent, and assaults decreased 7.8 percent. Comparable crime figures in nearby areas like Wynwood, Edgewater, and the Upper Eastside are significantly higher, he says. “Downtown,” he says, “is really a very safe place.”

At a January meeting with the DDA, newly appointed Miami Police Chief Miguel Exposito made a

commitment to beef up the police presence downtown. Says Glasko: “That is already being implemented.”

Obviously Miami’s central business district is nowhere close to New York in terms of an energetic, 24/7 urban life. But it is being rapidly transformed by intrepid entrepreneurs and pioneering residents. Now just might be a good time to explore and enjoy downtown before it gets *too* trendy.

“The area has already changed dramatically in a very short time,” Tony Alonso says with a smile. “Everything has a beginning, and this is the beginning of downtown.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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My So-Called Cotel Life

It's Miami in microcosm — maddening and hilarious at the same time

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

The cure for my frosty MFT (Mer-
ciless Frozen Tundra) hangover
has turned out to be a hair-of-the-
dog panacea: the colorful, Brickell-based
cotel (condo-hotel) I currently occupy.
Cotels like this are peppered all over
Brickell and downtown. If you want a
true Miami experience, you can't beat it.

The cotel offers outstanding people-
watching opportunities, both in the form
of the residents (I think there are ten of
them) and the visitors. Plus there is that
bonus of the Miami brand of incompe-
tence, which never disappoints, especially
when unassuming Midwesterners or super
uptight New Yorkers expect something to
actually...get...done. *Now!* Ha, ha!

And there is the occasional odd
request that is Miami all over. Like the
other day, when a disgruntled guest
demanded that he and his wife be moved
to a different room. The wife was not



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

leaving the room for the entire month
because she was having "surgery." I
glanced at the future shut-in, a woman
with a perpetual, entitled pout, impa-
tiently tapping her foot at the end of the
concierge desk.

"The bed is too hard and the TV is
too small," the man complained to the

unmoved employee. Ah, well, if I were
getting my breasts pumped up a few
sizes and my face stretched back a few
yards, I suppose these basic comforts
would be a top priority.

Why does a city that thrives on tour-
ism have the worst service in the nation?
Because it *can*. People will always come

back because the sun is steady and the
landscape does not resemble the sur-
roundings of a buried coffin.

The cotel, perfectly in step with Miami,
nullifies its guests by lying. For example,
wireless Internet is advertised to be in
every room. Except it doesn't exist. By the
time guests figure it out — oh well!

So far this season the cotel visi-
tors are mostly South Americans, who
always want *servicio*. That's what the
housekeeping staff says while coast-
ing up and down 28 floors in the dog
'vator. (More on this later.) I've also
seen a smattering of Europeans and one
Asian tour group. The American guide
cautioned those tourists against eating
anything "sold from the street," because
"it *will* make you sick!" before simulating
a retching fit. That accompanied my café
con leche quite well.

Living in the cotel guarantees the
opportunity to survey the kind of people

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Cotel

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who travel to Miami for popular events, as well as their accompanying habits.

First there was the Super Bowl. That event drew rowdy people in tacky polo shirts. One particularly raucous group on my floor arrived from New Orleans. They held a loud party the night before the game. I'm not sure what happened in there, but the next morning there was, literally, a trail of fairy dust (okay, it was confetti) leading from the room to the elevators (all four of them.) The clean-up crew looked annoyed. I spied multiple mops.

Then the boat show came to town. The cotel saw lots of middle-age, pot-bellied, Docker-wearing white guys who discussed propellers and fish finders over heaping plates of bacon and eggs at the restaurant. Lots of bacon.

Then there's the pool, where, sadly, the American Abroad reputation is earned every day. "I hope you didn't forget the cigarettes!" yelled one enthusiastic man as he bee-lined for the hot tub, where a few woman sat, toes dangling. Another one screeched as she

was pushed into the pool, the ensuing tsunami drenching the palm fronds in her path.

The residents in this cotel are an eclectic bunch. There is the Self-Important Ex-Hippie. He is a long, dirty-blond-haired, leathery-face burnout who air kisses while insisting he owns "one-third of the building." This fraction changes according to his sobriety level. He also says he has a son at Julliard, and one recent evening resorted to asking the waitress in the cotel restaurant to help him figure out which number to dial to reach his son.

Then there is the Smoking Blonde Woman who has taken a particular liking to my rent-a-dog, a bichon named Sasha (my friend is letting me "borrow" her). Smoking Blonde Woman, who is forever trying to cadge free drinks, never hesitates to tell Sasha: "God loves you!" Leaving me to wonder: "Does God love me, too?"

Sasha doesn't like her. SBW always has a cigarette hanging out of her hand or mouth, or both. At first I thought Sasha snubbed her because of the smoke. Now I think there is something Sasha knows about SBW that I don't.

Oh, and let's not forget Mr. Models. Reportedly there is a guy with a penthouse suite who caters to models. How? I'm not sure yet. All I know is he provides "a well-stocked fridge with every type of champagne and phone chargers for every type of phone." And he has a terrier who wears a green striped polo shirt and who is walked by different people each day.

The other beauty of the cotel is that, as a "hotel guest," you get to experience all the inconveniences of living in a condo without battling the condo board. (I am a "monthly," which makes me feel all special-like, in the same way as renting a room by the hour in an establishment where quarter-fed vibrating beds and heart-shaped tubs are highlights.)

Naturally in the cotel, Sasha is popular, often being mistaken for a gourmet vanilla cupcake. She is also, by virtue of being a dog living in a condo, Public Enemy No. 1. So what this means is that when I am with Sasha, I am relegated to the "dog elevator."

There are four elevators in the cotel. The dog 'vator is by far the slowest. It

is also the elevator used by the cotel's service workers. They include the house-keeping staffers, who push very large carts filled with clean and dirty towels, M&M packets, and copious rolls of toilet paper. While I've never been a klepto, I must fight the urge to pocket a Snickers. It is there, looking uncomfortable among the packets of Oreos and bags of jalapeno chips.

I live on the 28th floor, or as I call it, the "bird's nest." I almost feel at one with the vultures.

While the view is nice, my main fear is fire. So imagine my elation the other night when I returned to the cotel and encountered fire alarms ringing and smoke in the hall. My first thought was: Dog in Room. My second went roughly like this: "Oh, wow — 28 floors in these platform shoes?"

Turns out it was not even a real fire, but a prank. Seems some cotel inhabitant thought it would be funny to toss the fire extinguisher down the stairwell. My guess? Self-Important Ex-Hippie's Julliard genius paid a visit.

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SINCE 1984

Hurricane Lucie

Haitian activist, political dynamo, law student, single mom — that would be Ms. Tondreau

By Kathy Glasgow
BT Contributor

Lucie Tondreau was unequivocal. “I will never run again,” she said, more than once, when the subject of her 2002 political campaign came up during a recent conversation at her immigration-consultation office in North Miami.

In her first bid for political office, Tondreau came close to unseating the powerful Miami-Dade County Commissioner Dorrin Rolle. She certainly unsettled him. Working on a fraction of the incumbent’s funds, Tondreau, then 42 years old, ran her grassroots campaign with unexpected élan, even impressing the *Miami Herald* editorial board with her “depth of understanding of how county government works...that is unusual in first-time candidates,” and garnering the *Herald’s* endorsement.

“Until the endorsement, Rolle didn’t even notice us,” Tondreau remarked in between questioning and advising a

nonstop stream of undocumented Haitians seeking help filing for temporary work visas, which most are now able to secure after the January 12 earthquake in Haiti.

“But then it got very ugly.”

“[His allies] tried to have a war between Haitians and African-Americans,” put in Charles Nacivre, Tondreau’s assistant. There were confrontations and alleged assaults at Kreyol-language radio stations, always epicenters of political passion, and Tondreau’s campaign complained that her yard signs were disappearing en masse.

Rolle avoided a runoff with Tondreau only after a recount, the results of which remain suspect to her and to others who



BT photo by Cathi Marro

tend to doubt the integrity of our county political machinery.

But none of that is why Tondreau has vowed not to seek political office again. Just the opposite. “It was one of the best experiences of my life,” she said, raising her eyebrows in appreciation. “I want

to leave it like that. Why mess it up by trying to do it all over again? As far as I’m concerned, I won.”

That’s not to say Tondreau is finished with politics. Last year she worked on behalf of attorney Frank Wolland in his unsuccessful bid to serve again as mayor of North Miami. This year, with an array of Haitian-American hopefuls vying for local, state, and federal elected offices, she is likely to put her political talents and energy to work after the primaries. For the moment, however, the single mother of three has more than enough to concentrate on, including law school at Nova University.

“I’m not supporting anyone; I’m not going to any fundraisers,” said Tondreau, dressed in a brown pinstriped pants suit, a spot of white-out smudged on a front pocket, as she reached for a beeping cell phone on her desk. “But I will always be involved in politics. As long as there are

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: LIBERTY CITY

Hurricane Lucie

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politicians who ignore my people, who don't serve the interests of their voters, I will be doing everything I can to show Haitians they can change that."

I first met Tondreau in 1999, when she and her then-husband, Eddy Delmont, were pulling an all-nighter at a tiny AM radio studio situated hard by the train tracks running through Liberty City. Two Haitian Americans were first-time candidates in North Miami, for mayor and city councilman, and Tondreau and Delmont were getting the word out in Kreyol. Tondreau was seven or eight months pregnant at the time, but she and Delmont tirelessly took calls and urged on voters until the sun rose. (The baby, Ludie, would be born on the day Tondreau's mother died.)

Joe Celestin, the mayoral candidate, didn't win that one, though Ossman Desir did become North Miami's first Haitian-American city councilman. But Celestin tried again in 2001, and served two terms as the first Haitian-American mayor of a large U.S. municipality. At

intervals during several years of historic unity within South Florida's Haitian communities, both the North Miami and El Portal city councils boasted Haitian majorities. In 2000, Phillip Brutus was the first Haitian-American elected to the Florida State Legislature, and in 2002 Yolly Roberson became the second.

In retrospect, I think Tondreau's commission campaign that same year was even more of a gutsy groundbreaker than it appeared at the time, because penetrating the Miami-Dade County Commission is among the most formidable of challenges for any politician, far more so for an ethnic outsider. Miami-Dade voting districts are tough neighborhoods controlled by deeply territorial turf lords. Being a Haitian candidate for a county seat, even in a so-called "black" district with lots of Haitian residents, isn't really an advantage.

Tondreau jumped in anyway. Back then her surprising defiance of Miami's African-American political establishment made only a fleeting impression before the "blinged-up fat one" (as Rolle has been described on the Miami political blog "Eye on Miami") resumed

his lucrative reign. But Tondreau fared better than state Representative Brutus, whose bid to unseat Rolle four years later, in 2006, received little support and less attention.

That same year Gepsie Metellus (subject of my previous column) was planning to run for the county commission in a different "black" district, from which her former employer and mentor, Barbara Carey-Shuler, was retiring. Even Metellus's decade of experience working at county hall and clear competence were of no help, because she was born in Haiti and therefore could not be a real African-American. She had no business seeking a "seat...carved out for an African-American," in Carey-Shuler's blunt words of warning. So Metellus, who is temperamentally more contemplative than the feisty Tondreau, chose not to enter a race that she might have won.

Tondreau told Metellus it was a "mistake" not to run. "An African-American seat?" Tondreau scoffed. "What does that mean? This is the USA. We are free! There's no such thing!"

This year the increasingly vulnerable Dorrin Rolle has attracted another

Haitian-American opponent, Joe Celestin. "We've got 'bad' Joe and then we've got 'worse' Dorrin," muses "Eye on Miami" commentator Geniusofdespair.

But who can know just how Haitian-American politics will be affected by Haiti's earthquake? The diaspora, especially in South Florida, is only beginning to sort itself out in light of that most transformative disaster. The latest, plentiful Haitian-American lineup of political candidates could presage a rebirth of unity and teamwork in a community that has been perennially at odds and habitually passed over by the powers that be.

Still, Tondreau, ever the activist and bullshit-detector, is leery of the golden opportunities for posturing and pandering that the earthquake has provided. "In a way we are not as divided now," she acknowledges. "But there is still not that sense of unity. More people are trying to do their own little thing. Now there is a war of leadership. Everyone wants to look like a leader, but nothing changes."

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One for the Road

Forcing bars to close early will not stop drunk drivers from killing people

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

One of the problems with writing a monthly column is that by the time it gets to print, the subject matter may be old or overshadowed by interest in other topics. Within the City of Miami, there is now a laser focus on the impending financial crisis, and it rightly overshadows everything else.

My subject this month — drunk drivers and the bar owners who are serving them — was under discussion at the city commission several weeks ago. Like all other topics, however, it has taken a back seat to the monetary maelstrom at city hall. But it is not old. On the contrary, it is timeless, and it will forever stir intense interest.

First let me state the obvious: No one should operate a motor vehicle when they are under the influence of substances that impair their ability to drive safely. Period.



Less obvious is the futility of casting bar owners in the role of evildoers who tacitly support drunk-driving. If you've lost a loved one to a drunk driver, your determination to prevent that from happening to other families is genuine and valid. But it can be counterproductive

to reduce the issue to a personal level, targeting the owners of businesses that sell alcoholic beverages. In the recent discussions at city hall, which centered on Coconut Grove's late-night bars but had implications for the entire city, including the Upper Eastside, emotions ran

high. Those emotions can and must be channeled in productive ways.

However, passing laws that restrict the hours during which alcohol can be sold is not among those productive ways.

I remember one of the first calls I responded to as a rookie fireman back in 1966. A drunk driver slammed into a '55 Chevy on SR836, killing three young men from Virginia who were trying to change a flat tire.

And the driver? As so often happens in such tragedies, he escaped serious injury, though he was pissed off that he'd been arrested. He probably served no more than 60 days in jail, because back then there was no vehicular homicide statute specifically aimed at drunk driving. MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) did not exist, nor did any of the other advocacy groups that today would have taken up the banner for those boys who lay lifeless at my feet.

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

Road

Continued from page 26

Unfortunately for everyone who has a horror story to tell about the misery inflicted by drunk drivers, restricting the operating hours of bars is not an easy fix to the problem. Too many other factors play into scenarios that can lead to death and destruction. But there may be some alternatives worth considering, such as:

- Recognizing that the drinking individual is the first to be held responsible for his or her actions. Those who are lucky enough to be stopped by police before taking an innocent life should be handed an extremely stiff sentence — at least 60 days in the slammer and suspension of his or her license for one year. Second offenders should have their license revoked for life in the State of Florida. End of story. No getting it back, no get-out-of-jail-free card, and no having daddy pull a few strings. You are done driving in Florida!

- Consider starting a city-sponsored program that provides for a taxi to pick up anyone requesting a ride home from any bar in Miami, anyone who believes

he's not able to drive safely. Now, before you say this may not be an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars, consider that we are already footing the bill for some seniors who need a ride to the doctor or hospital through various community organizations that apply to the city every year for funding. One such organization was recently grilled by city commissioners over problems caused by insufficient resources. Well, why not give them a few more bucks and also have them pick up individuals too drunk to drive in the nighttime hours, when their vehicles are sitting idle?

- The bars and lounges themselves could be required to have an in-house program designed to get patrons home safely when they say they're too inebriated to drive. I cannot conceive of a bar operator who'd turn his back on such a request for help.

- I am aware of an out-of-state program that offers not only a free ride home but provides another driver who takes your car home too! This program answers the argument: "I can't take a cab home or ride with someone else because I won't have my car in the morning." I

listened to the guy who came up with this program as a result of losing his brother to a drunk driver. Funding was provided by grants and local governments, and surprisingly among the biggest contributors to the program were the local taxi companies. Drivers were volunteers as well as individuals sentenced to community service by the court system. Perhaps a local chapter of MADD could sponsor such a program countywide, funded by the county as well as participating municipalities and cab companies.

- Taxi operators might be required to provide a certain number of free rides home as part of their licensing agreements with the county. Let's say each cab was required to provide one such ride per month. With all the cabs throughout the county, this could go a long way toward providing options for the tipsy.

Restricting serving hours may be *the* answer for those who are desperate to solve this deadly social problem. But the truth is that you cannot address a social issue with an economic model. It has never worked and never will. Bar owners should not be made to suffer financially

for running a business within the established laws and possessing valid licenses from the state and the city to do so.

The objective should be to get all the "cows" safely back to the barn — those who have been drinking as well as those who have not, regardless of the time of day. In fact you could argue that having drunks on the road at the traditional 2:00 a.m. closing time exposes more people to danger than a 5:00 a.m. closing time. There are simply more people on the roads at 2:00 a.m.

Would some tragic accidents be averted if every bar in Miami had to close at 2:00 a.m.? Probably. But by that logic, it would be even better to force them to stop serving alcohol at midnight. So how about right after happy hour?

By the way, will someone tell me how that one works to keep drunks off the road? Come to happy hour after work from 5:00 to 7:00! Half price!

Pound them down and then get behind the wheel and rush home to dinner with the family.

Or maybe not.

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Lust for Lice

If you have a soft spot for cute little creatures, you're in luck

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

As I cleaned up yet another accident on what was once a fairly handsome Dade County Pine wood floor — courtesy of the most stubborn (or dumbest) Dachshund I've ever met — it occurred to me that I've never lived in a house without at least one domestic animal. For virtually my entire life I've been accompanied by multiple mammals. Lately, though, I've reached capacity — or what my husband likes to call my quota: five cats, three dogs.

Until recently we were also caretakers for a colony of hermit crabs (until I donated them to my school's science department), and we've owned many fish that rather quickly went to that big aquarium in the sky. And of course we've rescued various creatures, from the baby blue jay with the injured neck to clearly ungrateful lizards.

So I consider myself something of an expert in the matter of pets, which is why



Photo by Eran Finkle © 2009

I'm eager to share my latest discovery, thanks to my kids, who owe their thanks to some other kids, who owe their thanks to still other kids: It's not cats and dogs that make the best companions. It is lice.

Consider the basics. For starters, you don't have to buy your pet lice. You can just pick them up on the street, or at school, or in movie theaters or on

airplane seats. And sure, they might bite like stray dogs, but that's their job. Besides, it tickles. Or maybe just itches a little. Though sometimes a lot.

That brings us to the manner of feeding them. No more lugging 20-pound bags of dry feed home from Pet Supermarket, where you just remortgaged your home. No more opening smelly cans of

wet food or, if you're really dedicated, cooking up concoctions yourself.

To feed lice, all you have to do is eat. Whether your diet is all organic or Cheetos and Diet Coke or Jim Beam and cigarettes, your lice won't complain. They're not picky that way. Lice are far easier to feed than children or spouses.

They're low-maintenance in other ways, too. You bathe them when you bathe yourself. You groom them when you brush your own hair. No extra effort is required to keep them clean, and you even save on water. They don't shed or spit up hairballs. They don't whine or beg for food. Lice don't lick your face when you're not expecting it, or jump up on your new white shirt with muddy paws. In sum, lice are all-natural, eco-friendly creatures who are content to live and let live.

They are also, like the most gracious of canines, incredibly loyal. Say your

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI SHORES

Lice

Continued from page 28

daughter has lice and her BFF doesn't. She can lend her lice to her friend and they'll come right back to her. And some of the devoted little things will opt to stay with her BFF. How sweet is that?

You know how, when you have a dog and he or she wants to go everywhere with you? Well, lice are also like that. But unlike dogs, the great thing about lice is you aren't forced to sit at an outdoor table when you take them with you to a restaurant. You and your lice can step inside any restaurant and sit right down. No one will be the least bit suspicious, and the health department will be none the wiser.

It's like having a hundred thousand tiny little teacup Yorkies in teeny-weeny Gucci purses hiding behind your ears and on the nape of your neck. Only it's much quieter. For that matter, they're the only pets your son can bring to school without his teachers yelling at you, or making him take them to the science department, or even knowing about them.

Plus lice are so super easy to accessorize. For example, you can wear a

pinstriped fedora, which, when cocked over your brow just so, will cover a lot of them up but let a few peek out. Or if you want to really show them to advantage, you can just put a boho-style knit black beret on your crown and they'll stand out like salt over pepper. But whatever you want to wear in your hair — a barrette, a bow, a band — it will definitely make your lice feel special, like you're paying attention to them and making them pretty.

You don't have to walk lice or clean out their litter box. You don't even really need to know about their elimination process at all. You can't see it, and as you know, out of sight is out of mind.

Best of all, lice are extremely kid-friendly. They don't discriminate, plus they won't fight with other pets you already have. In most cases, they'll ignore the canines and felines around the house, if only because they can't survive on any animals but humans.

One of the best things about lice is that you never seem to run out of room

for them. No matter how many offspring they produce — and they do seem to multiply rather quickly, even more than rabbits and guinea pigs — you can always take in more lice. And more lice. And then more lice.

Of course, it can be difficult to distinguish lice, so naming them is not always an option. Call them all Bill or Freddy. It won't matter to your kids. Their short life spans also mean you

One of the best things about lice: You never run out of room for them. No matter how many offspring they produce, you can always take in more.

won't have to worry about your kids forming unhealthy emotional attachments. It's the same way most people feel about carnival goldfish. The upside is that, when they do pass on to their eternal reward, there won't be tears in the family.

It's that eternal reward that's the problem when you have lice for pets.

The only real fault lice have? They are stubborn beyond any toddler you've ever met. So when you decide they've taken advantage of your hospitality long enough, they tend to disagree. And just to make sure you can't arbitrarily bump them off, over the years they've developed tolerances to the top three brands of lice-be-gone products on the market: Nix, Pronto, and Rid.

That's when you know it's time to do what you do with any other unwanted pet: Advertise. "Lice free to a good home" usually doesn't work too well, but when you do declare that you have a few million more lice than you really need, you get a lot of good advice. Most of it comes in the form of professional services that, for a price or for free, will help you get rid of them with natural products, including tea tree oil and rosemary, flavors that lice apparently don't much care for.

But here's the real deal: Unlike other pets, lice cost a whole lot more to get rid of than they do to acquire.

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Once a Beauty, Always a Beauty

Introducing the first completely restored MiMo motel

By Karen-Janine Cohen
Special to BT

The neon “New Yorker” sign is up, the guest-room walls are painted robin’s egg blue, and the motel’s office is nearly ready to greet customers with restored terrazzo floors and gleaming tile work. “Trying to find this tile, it’s a nightmare,” laughs Shirley Diaz, who, with husband Walter Figueroa, has spent eight months and more than \$60,000 meticulously restoring the motel at 6500 Biscayne Blvd., doing much of the work themselves, with family members pitching in.

On March 20 the former Davis Motel will open as the Motel New Yorker, the first of the Boulevard’s midcentury motels restored to its original appearance and atmosphere, a classic example of the architectural style known as Miami Modern, or MiMo. (Also part of the property is the Audubon Motel. Separately constructed, it too is undergoing an upgrade. Together the two buildings have 53 guest rooms.)

Cheering on Diaz and Figueroa are the area’s preservation devotees, along with many businesses and residents who believe the renovation is an important step in pushing forward the



The New Yorker circa 1955.

transformation of Biscayne Boulevard’s MiMo Historic District. They hope the New Yorker will blaze a path other local motels will follow.

Working from old pictures and documents, Diaz and Figueroa are painstakingly recreating the heyday of the New Yorker, built in 1953 and designed by vaunted MiMo architect Norman Giller. The original pink-and-green or gray-and-yellow bathroom tiles look like new. A variety of chairs, mirrors, and other reproduction period furniture is sprinkled



The New Yorker today.

throughout the rooms, which also boast flat-screen TVs and other contemporary amenities. Plans are under way to reopen a bricked-over office window and entrance door.

Courtesy of Scott Timm

Boulevard boosters also hope the restored New Yorker will draw more people to the area and begin to change the stubborn perception that Biscayne Boulevard remains a haven for drugs, crime, and prostitution. “I hope people will come and see it — people who still think the Boulevard is riddled with crime,” says Fran Rollason, president of the MiMo Biscayne Association, whose members include businesses, historical preservationists, and local residents.

In 2006 the City of Miami designated the stretch of Biscayne Boulevard between 50th and 77th streets as the MiMo Biscayne Historic District. The city also ponied up \$100,000 to fund a business improvement committee with the hope that commercial property owners will agree to subsidize a business improvement district, which could help them upgrade their buildings.

Restoration of the Boulevard’s 1950s-era motels is widely believed to be a key to fueling regeneration. Many

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Skateboards and Synagogues Are Like Oil and Water

Miami’s plan for a new skate park encounters an immovable object: Mr. Stanley Tate

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Contributor

Bureaucratic red tape may be among the reasons the Biscayne Skatepark project has progressed so slowly, but should the ambitious plan finally gain traction, it will face another obstacle. An influential business leader vows he’ll fight the skateboard park tooth and nail if City of Miami officials try to build it at the selected site: adjacent to Temple Israel.

“We don’t want it to be built there,” says Stanley Tate, a successful South Florida developer, veteran political player, and past president of Temple Israel, which is located on NE 19th Street in Miami’s Midtown neighborhood. “If we have to, we will bring a large number of people. We have some of the oldest



Miami’s new skateboard park could resemble this one in Winter Springs, designed by Team Pain.

membership in Dade County. We are well respected. I don’t think the city commission wants to get involved in that kind of controversy.”

Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, a supporter of the skate park, insists that Tate’s views are not shared by Temple Israel’s board of directors. “He said some

Photo by Ben Warren

stupid things,” Sarnoff says. “We had two meetings with the temple — one meeting that Stanley Tate attended and a second meeting where they apologized for Mr. Tate’s comments.”

What exactly Tate said during that first meeting, held in December, Sarnoff declines to repeat those comments, but Tate himself tells the BT he has two fears: drugs and noise. “Kids go there to smoke grass,” he says. “The main thing is the noise. They play these boom boxes that you can’t possibly believe at all hours of the night. We have a large membership of elderly people in their 70s and 80s. It just does not belong there.”

Douglas Jacobs, current president of Temple Israel, says the congregation’s membership is divided over the proposed

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What a Hoot!

Whoooooose behind that surge of home-building in Biscayne Park?

By Karen-Janine Cohen
Special to BT

On a recent mild Saturday, Amy Refeca steadied a rectangle of cedar while Linda Dillon hammered nails into it. The Biscayne Park neighbors were constructing a birdhouse at the village recreation center. And not just any birdhouse, but one scaled and tailored for the nesting preferences of the Eastern screech owl.

Nearby lounged Amy's husband, Roberto Refeca. "I'm *supporting* — I wouldn't even say assisting," he deadpanned, though he was actually keeping an eye on the couple's two children playing nearby.

The three were part of a group of a dozen or so Biscayne Park residents — plus a few Miami Shores folks — who met under the rec center pavilion at the end of January to assemble ten birdhouses.

The houses were carefully prefabbed by Erwin Stadler and Gary Kuhl, who said, "I don't want to tell you how long," when asked about time spent cutting the



BT photo by Karen-Janine Cohen

Putting all those bird homes on the market at once was bad for prices, but great for owls.

wood, creating the round entrance holes, and assembling the kits.

But it was probably worth it. Armed with hammers and enthusiasm, gleeful children and adults pounded together the sizable nest boxes. Friends and family gave

cheerful critiques and advice to the builders.

"You've got the glue part stuck. Why don't you just nail it?" suggested nine-year-old Abby Carlisle to her dad, Matthew Carlisle, who was trying to get a side wall plumb with the back wall.

"I'm trying to square it off," he explained. Abby took charge of the hammer.

"About six months ago we came outside and saw an owl on our awning," he said, with an aside to Abby suggesting she take note of his fingers as she began to tap. "We have a big pine tree in the front and our house is very wooded. It will add to our menagerie."

Like most of the Saturday carpenters, the Carlisle family signed up for the project in December at the Biscayne Park Winterfest. The idea came from the village Parks and Parkways Advisory Board, which was considering programs residents would enjoy. Board member Lynn Fischer broached creating a welcome for screech owls. Other members helped conceptualize, plan, and run the event.

Over the sound of uneven hammering, Fischer described why she suggested the owl project. "In the early 1980s, there were lots of Eastern screech owls," she said, taking a minute away from demonstrating how to score the inside front

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One Neighborhood, Two Personalities

In Shorecrest, hot tempers lead to a rift and a rivalry

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

In the next few weeks, residents of Miami's Shorecrest neighborhood may find themselves a little confused as they realize they now have two homeowner associations in their little community, which lies east of Biscayne Boulevard and north of NE 79th Street. There is the long-standing Shorecrest Homeowners Association (SHOA) and now the upstart Shorecrest United.

This sort of thing is not uncommon in small towns filled with passionate residents: Strongly held beliefs lead to friction, then fracture.

Troy Howard and Chris Masciatti grew frustrated with the slow pace of change that has left Shorecrest, in his opinion, lagging behind other Biscayne Corridor neighborhoods that have seen dramatic improvements in their quality of life. Rather than try working within SHOA, they recently joined forces and struck out on their own, each bringing



Photo by Maggie Steber

Mayor Tomás Regalado meets and greets at the Shorecrest party.

special skills to the endeavor.

Masciatti is a former code-enforcement officer and now a private code consultant. He can easily detect abuses that

are already governed by various codes and laws. Not only that, he can quickly do the research required to present a credible argument before city officials.

Howard's background is in public relations, and he has worked in Washington, D.C., as a press secretary for Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas. What he brings to the mix is his knowledge of political dealings and a fiery desire to get projects moving. However, that aggressive, Beltway attitude has perhaps strained his relations with some neighbors, who may prefer or have simply resigned themselves to the often lackadaisical, when not exasperatingly slow, local political culture.

Even as Howard and Masciatti were trying to recruit new members to Shorecrest United, the fledgling group scored its first victory. On February 22, a City of Miami special master agreed with Howard and Masciatti that the owners of a property at 810 NE 80th St. had committed several code violations and ordered it brought into compliance. For more than two years, American Earth Movers, a marine dredging company

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Beauty

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in the area see opportunities for an appealing alternative to pricey South Beach hotels, while also supplying rooms for visitors to Wynwood's art galleries, the Adrienne Arsht Center, and other mainland attractions.

The New Yorker unveiling is also a salve for the collective disappointment at the failure of the Vagabond Motel's purchasers to make good on its potential as the Boulevard's crown jewel. Today the Vagabond, designed by B. Robert Swartburg, who also conceived Miami Beach's Delano Hotel, sits vacant and abandoned, its future a mystery.

Shirley Diaz has a long view of the Boulevard's ups and downs. Her parents, Victor and Elisa, bought the New Yorker in 1987. Diaz grew up working at the front desk. "I was 15 when I got here," she says. "The place was a nightmare." And while the neighborhood has improved,



Courtesy Diaz and Figueroa

The New Yorker's guest rooms put you in a time warp.

she says there are still drugs and incidents.

But progress is evident, adds her husband. For one thing, Palm Grove,

the neighborhood just west of the Boulevard, is steadily attracting more professionals and middle-class families. "We've seen this place change," he says. "You see a lot of people walking with their dogs, taking kids to the park. We see a lot of things we didn't see before."

If the New Yorker does succeed, it will reprise a time when Miami tourists drove, rather than flew, from the north. Vacationers with their cars stayed in Boulevard motels, whose architecture reflected postwar prosperity and optimism, says Nancy Liebman, a well-known preservationist who was deeply involved in saving Miami Beach's Art Deco structures and is now working on MiMo historic preservation.

"It doesn't look modern now," Liebman says, "but it was *the* modern design. The beauty of what architect Norman Giller and others did at that time was to create a feeling of openness, the exciting time of the 1950s."

Revamping buildings is only part of the equation, Liebman believes, noting that revitalization also depends on the city cracking down on crime and code violations. She also believes that motel owners could make common cause by marketing themselves as one. Which is exactly what Walter Figueroa has in mind. "We shouldn't think like we have 50 rooms," he says, "but like we have 500 rooms."

The Motel New Yorker's March 20 grand opening will get a boost as part of the "MiMo Madness" festival that same day. The annual event brings food, music, and entertainment to the Boulevard. Diaz and Figueroa are even considering synchronized swimmers in their motel pool, a bit of fun to mark the end of a long and arduous process. Diaz puts it this way: "We want to say: Look what a difference we've made in the neighborhood!"

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Hoot

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plank of the box so baby owls could more easily climb up and out.

Three years ago Fischer put up an owl house in her backyard oak tree. Occupancy was almost immediate. The next year a different pair settled in. "They were a lot more shy. And last year we didn't have any owls."

It's hard to know why the owls didn't return. Still, Biscayne Park residents would have a good chance of attracting nesting pairs — though it was a bit late in the season — if they quickly affixed the boxes to trees, said Brian Mealey, executive director of the Institute of Wildlife Sciences, a nonprofit based in Palmetto Bay.

An owl expert, Mealey explained that the village likely has an owl population if the eating is good: "Usually how much food is out there will determine how many owls you will have in an area." Many residents, however, may be not be aware of the quiet, nighttime creatures. Despite their intimidating name, screech owls are petite members of the owl family, only about eight inches long, and emit a hooting "Brrr" rather than a scary shriek.

The Eastern screech owl is one species that has adapted well to human habitats. They dine on large insects — like palmetto bugs — lizards, mice, and frogs. They will snatch an



Photo by Brian Mealey

Screech owls are petite members of the owl family, only about eight inches long, and emit a hooting "Brrr" rather than a scary shriek.

occasional songbird, but as the owls are nocturnal and most songbirds are active during the day, their paths don't much overlap. Their toughest task is finding

suitable nesting sites.

Screech owls are often associated with the red-bellied woodpecker, which pecks open tree cavities as they hunt insects. Owls then move in, though starlings, and the woodpeckers themselves, also often use the cavities to nest. "When you put up a screech owl box, you might not always get a screech owl," Mealey said. "Sometimes there is a lot of competition for these boxes."

In Florida, homeowners are quick to clear dead and dying trees, a preferred owl habitat, especially as hurricane season approaches. That is just when owl chicks are being raised in unobtrusive hollows and corners where nests are not noticed. When the tree or branch comes

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Skateboards

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skateboard park. "There are people who don't mind it and people who do," he says.

Jacobs' own feelings? "I think it could be a very valuable asset to the neighborhood," he says. In a written statement, Jacobs did outline some concerns: "We recognize the value this type of park offers its users: exercise, friendship, and a safe place to develop skills. Our only concern is its placement in front of our preschool. [Other] issues of concern include increased traffic and noise. We look forward to working with the city to ensure all interested parties benefit equally from this development."

As for Tate's opposition, Jacobs says, "He's very passionate about the temple.... He is a valuable congregant for many years. He only wants to see the good of the neighborhood and the synagogue." Founded in 1926, Temple Israel is said to be the oldest Reform congregation south of Baltimore. Tate himself has been attending and contributing to the synagogue ever since he was married there 61 years ago.

In December 2008, Miami's Community Redevelopment Agency earmarked \$1 million for the construction of a 54,000-square-foot skateboard facility on land the city owns at 150 NE 19th St. Part of the motivation was to provide a safe alternative for young skateboarders in the area, who've been using street furniture,



BT photo by Karen-Janine Cohen

Stanley Tate at Temple Israel's preschool: "We will bring a large number of people. I don't think the city commission wants that kind of controversy."

staircases, and parking garages to hone their skills. Originally the city had hoped to open the park by April of this year.

However, the city has yet to select a contractor to design and build the park. Lara De Souza, spokeswoman for Miami's parks department, says it's a complicated process and it simply takes time. She does admit that work was slowed somewhat in order to address Temple Israel's worries: "There was a delay due to the concerns of Temple Israel. However..., the project is no longer being delayed for this reason."

Tate complains that the city never notified Temple Israel of the plans. He says he found out by accident. "We were out one day and there were guys measuring [the city property], a surveying crew," Tate recounts. "I asked, 'What are you doing here?' and they said it was for a skate park. No one informed us."

Of particular concern to Tate is the proposed park's proximity to the temple's preschool, which, incidentally, is named after him and his wife — the Joni and Stanley Tate Early Childhood Center. But Tate also believes the park's users could

interfere with services at Temple Israel and its expansion plans, including a possible charter school. "We are going to make the whole temple into a major cultural area for the Jewish community," he vows.

During a recent visit to skate park facilities in South Miami and Coconut Grove, Tate says he saw cars transporting 12 teenagers at a time from locations as far away as North Miami. Tate claims he also saw skateboarders "smoking grass" and carrying radios.

The only skateboard facility in Coconut Grove is at Peacock Park. Says Sarnoff: "Stanley must be going to a different place than I've gone to. We've never had any issues there."

Sarnoff says Biscayne Skatepark is more likely to be killed by the city's financial woes than opposition from Temple Israel: "We might not have the money for it."

Delio Nuñez-Menocal, a 36-year-old skateboard enthusiast who also owns a mobile marketing firm, hopes Miami moves forward with the skate park. "I think it's about time we begin to look at building a skate park," he says. "All the major metropolises have one." If the city can't build near Temple Israel, Nuñez-Menocal has an alternate location in mind: the downtown Miami waterfront park where \$275 million in taxpayer money is allocated to build two museums. "I think Museum Park would be a *perfect* place," he says. "But that's just me."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Hoot

Continued from page 32

down, "baby screech owls come rolling out," Mealey said.

Last year, in fact, Miami-Dade homeowners brought scores of baby screech owls to the Falcon Batchelor Bird of Prey Center at the Miami Science Museum,

where raptors are rehabilitated. "We received more than 50 orphaned screech owl babies last year," notes Greta Parks-Mealey, the center's director, who describes them as looking like "ping-pong balls with fuzz."

They are the lucky ones. Lucille, a human-raised screech owl at the museum, has taken on a foster-mom role. Unable to be released into the wild, Lucille likes

to feed and protect the wee owls, says Parks-Mealey. After learning to hunt live prey, chicks are provisionally released, usually at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. "That," Parks-Mealey adds, "is the best scenario we can give to a very unnatural raising of chicks."

Quick action can restore owl chicks to their natural surroundings. If

homeowners find baby owls or a downed nest, center staffers will respond and undertake a search for the adults. "If a baby is missing, there is generally a lot of fretful activity going on because the parents are looking for the baby," Parks-Mealey says.

Continued on page 34



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Shorecrest

Continued from page 31

with offices on NE 79th Street, had been using a residential lot behind those offices to store heavy construction vehicles and parked cars. Residents were suffering from the ugly appearance and noise pollution produced by the illegal parking lot.

Shorecrest United's founders believe this win underscores how their organization can shine — in what Howard and Masciatti call the “technical angle.” Some SHOA members, however, call that “technical angle” something else, especially as it applies to Howard: unnecessarily combative.

Not long ago, Howard was SHOA's vice president, but tempers eventually flared at meetings (and outside of them) as the clashing personalities bogged down the group's work — just as it had recovered from a previous schism.

In late July 2007, SHOA president Allyson Warren was ousted during a boisterous and vitriolic meeting in which members challenged her leadership (“The Shorecrest Insurgency,” *BT*, September 2007). Earlier Warren had angered many Shorecrest residents when she endorsed a waterfront condominium



BT photo by Margaret Griffis

Shorecrest Homeowners Association president Jack Spirk: “I believe the confusion of having two groups will impede progress.”

project called Oasis. Then, as president of an umbrella group called the Upper Eastside Miami Council, she had orchestrated the expulsion of Belle Meade representative (and *BT* columnist) Frank Rollason. Several homeowner associations quit in protest. The Shorecrest Home Owners Association eventually overcame the debacle, seated an interim board, and resumed work on community

issues together.

By contrast, the new rift — whether mostly professional or personal — between the association and Troy Howard became too great to continue. Instead of staging his own coup, Howard chose to advocate separately and found a perfect ally in his neighbor Masciatti. Together they formed Shorecrest United and registered with the state as a community action organization in this past January.

Howard downplays the split: “Shorecrest United came about as a complement to Shorecrest Home Owners Association, not in competition or anything. Shorecrest United is just going to take on issues on a more technical level than SHOA was prepared to do.”

Masciatti agrees: “We need each other. We can't do everything. We're dealing with the impossible stuff, the major zoning issues where you need a technical background. Shorecrest Home Owners is good for the community issues, the street cleanups, the Crime Watch, the speed bumps. They are focusing on the things that are easier for them to understand and to do, and they do a very good job.”

So why not combine forces?

Masciatti answers: “I like every single one of them (at SHOA), but being a part

of that would not achieve the goal of [getting] Shorecrest where it needs to be. On the day that Shorecrest is where it needs to be, I think the two groups will probably combine.”

Meanwhile the Shorecrest Home Owners Association is soldiering on with resident Jack Spirk as its new president. The recently elected board was presented to the public during a February 26 party at Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery. Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado, along with more than two dozen residents, attended the meet-and-greet, which showcased a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Spirk himself is no slouch in the world of community activism, having worked with various advocacy groups since moving to South Florida more than two decades ago. He tells the *BT* about various projects SHOA is pursuing, and he disagrees that the two Shorecrest organizations should work separately on them. “I believe the confusion of having two groups will impede progress,” he says. “Troy and Chris could have been a more positive force if they worked within the established structure of the SHOA and chaired committees, not created a splinter group.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Hoot

Continued from page 33

In a kind of *Extreme Makeover: Owl Home Edition*, staffers have been able to replace a lost nest with an owl box. With their babies tucked inside, the parents soon arrive, no doubt astonished by the turn of events. “So we encourage people to put the artificial boxes up,” says Parks-Mealey.

Box location makes a difference as well, says John Ogden, director of bird conservation at Audubon of Florida. Boxes should be at least 15 feet above the

ground. Quiet is better than a spot with lots of activity, and they need a clear flight path. “Almost everybody I know who has put them up has gotten owls,” says Ogden, adding that screech owls may scout nest sites as early as November or December and may roost for two or three months before laying eggs. The young are ready to take flight in April or May.

Meanwhile, back in Biscayne Park, everyone had successfully finished their owl boxes before noon. Plans to attach them to oaks, pines, and royal palms were discussed. “I'm very determined

this owl house is going to go up,” remarked Abby Carlisle.

“Yes,” agreed her father. “This house is going up!”

Take a walk around Biscayne Park's leafy streets and you'll spy some of the owl homes. Be sure to look up at trees in the grassy medians.

It didn't take long for the birdhouse belonging to John and Kathy Schaefer to get a tenant. First the Schaefers noted various bits of straw hanging from their box's round entrance hole. “Then we saw the little owl face,” Kathy Schaefer

recounts. “This morning I got up and sat outside with my coffee and opera glasses. She almost brought her whole body out.”

As with all real estate, it's location, location, location. Their box is pretty high up. It's positioned away from the street. And it is attached to a coconut palm that stands close to an oak tree. The Schaefers were delighted to discover that the nesting owl's partner likes to sit in the oak. Close to home. Keeping a big eye on things.

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Letters

Continued from page 6

book, *Backyard Deer Hunting: Converting Deer to Dinner for Pennies Per Pound*, is that I did not think of it.

Gator recipes can be found in two of my other books: *Practical Bowfishing* and *Crossbow Hunting*. Iguana meat can be substituted in many of the recipes, although the paws may be a tad small for Gator Paw Soup.

William Hovey Smith
Sandersville, Georgia

Iguanas Are Dreadful, Just Like a Certain BT Columnist

As a resident of Biscayne Park, I am writing to you in regard to Jen Karetnick's iguana column. As an Eagle Scout and avid outdoorsman, I am appreciative of the unique ecosystem that exists in Florida.

This article by Ms. Karetnick, like many of her other articles on the Village of Miami Shores, was not only factually incorrect but also misleading, perhaps intentionally so. In it she quoted an article published by the *Green Iguana Society*, conveniently leaving out

portions such as: "While some people find wild green iguanas to be a beautiful addition to the Florida ecosystem, the fact is that they do not belong there" and "It is illegal to relocate iguanas, because as a nonnative species, they cannot be released into the wild — even if they were caught there to begin with." The article also mentions that if iguanas are caught, they should be turned over to the proper authorities for humane euthanasia.

I would also like to point out that the releasing of the two iguanas Ms. Karetnick "saved" was in direct violation of the Florida Administrative Code 39-4.005 (which prohibits releasing nonnative species into the wild) and 68A-4.005 (which states that no person should release or introduce in the state any wildlife, freshwater fish, or any other organism that might transmit a disease). Iguanas are known carriers of salmonella.

Ms. Karetnick also mentioned that wildlife personnel "turned their backs" on this nonnative species to help endangered species that are native to Florida, such as manatees and sea turtles. It's simply laughable that she would put iguanas in the same category as any native threatened species. I think the qualified

personnel at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have more realistic priorities than she does.

The "Florida freeze" was Mother Nature's response to this epidemic, and those who actually care about the well-being of the delicate Florida ecosystem can only hope and pray for another one before the end of the season.

Iguanas have and will continue to cost many people big dollars, as they destroy large areas of local vegetation and their burrows rapidly increase sea wall erosion, for which repairs cost tens of thousands of dollars. One of South Florida's most popular attractions, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, is currently having a huge problem with these pests. They have completely destroyed their historic hibiscus garden.

Finally, if residents want to alleviate the problem, they should follow these steps: 1) Never buy an iguana from a pet shop, and 2) lobby the FFWC to ban the sale of invasive species.

Perhaps Ms. Karetnick could donate one of the rooms in her house to be turned into a giant iguana terrarium. That way she could house the entire population present in both Miami Shores and Biscayne Park,

as I do not wish to continue cleaning up their feces from my pool deck.

Chris Jonckheer
Biscayne Park

A "Question" for Jen Karetnick: Why Is "It" All About "You"?

I have a question about the "writer" who covers the Miami Shores beat, Jen Karetnick. Is her writing an inside joke? It reads like a stream-of-consciousness diary of her life, her kids, her home.

I don't live in Miami Shores. I live in the Upper Eastside. But my grandmother lived in Miami Shores for 30 years. It is a small and beautiful community, with interesting individuals and stories to tell. Does Jen go to any city government meetings? Has she interviewed people at the community center? Has she asked any Haitians about the earthquake and the community's response?

No, she writes about a frozen iguana she saved.

Her writing cheapens *Biscayne Times*. It's not all about you, Jen Karetnick!

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

One Large Hooker, Hold the Anchovies

5200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
Does this sound familiar? Two tourists wanted to explore the idiosyncrasies of our great city by renting a room in a fleabag motel and ordering in a prostitute. Here in Miami, it's just like ordering pizza. A hooker calling herself Karma came by and delivered the goods. The satisfied tourists soon fell asleep. Guess what happened when they woke up? Right. Their wallets were gone, along with other property. Hey, didn't this happen last month? The motel is equipped with security cameras, but the tourists didn't stick around for a screening. They left town in a hurry.

The Jailbird as Victim

200 Block of NE 25th Street
Even criminals get what's coming to them, but like all victims, they need to be respected and comforted (somewhat).



This victim was on his usual Boulevard vacation — in jail — and after his release, returned to a ransacked apartment. He believed one of his neighbors broke into his place and took his belongings. He even saw a neighbor wearing his clothing. Despite this, the victim did not want to press charges. We predict "street justice" will soon be administered and that our victim will be taking another vacation in the slammer.



Chico and the Watch Man

100 Block of NE 78th Street
Police responded to the theft of several watches from a home. The front-door lock was compromised, and a suspicious Ford Taurus had been seen casing the area several hours earlier. Fortunately one of the victim's neighbors had the temerity to write down the license plate. The car was traced to an address in the Biscayne Corridor and the owner of the

vehicle was questioned. He consented to a search of his premises, where the watches with matching serial numbers were discovered. The man claimed he bought the watches from a "crack consumer" for \$10 each. He admitted to being in the vicinity of the burglarized home after dropping off his friend "Chico" for a job interview at Burger King, but he was merely lost and circling the area. As his fingerprints were later found at the crime scene, he was arrested and charged with third-degree grand theft. No word if Chico got the job.

Internet Love

2200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
Our victim met the defendant in an Internet chat room and invited him over for some friendly company (G-rated explanation). After their business had ended, the invited guest left the premises. However, ten minutes later he banged on

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Crime Beat

Continued from page 36

the door and demanded to be let back in for another round. The victim refused, having already dispensed with him. The guest grew irate and kicked in the door. A neighbor called police, and when they arrived they found the victim on the floor and the spurned guest looming over him, smoking a cigarette. He was immediately arrested. Time to log off.

Enhanced Interrogation Techniques?

67th Street and N. Miami Avenue

A doctor had his car and diamond ring stolen. Together they were valued at \$107,000. Police lifted prints from the scene and came back with a match. The suspect was a gang member with the LHG (Little Haiti Goons), who reportedly hang out at Little Haiti Park. After the suspect was tracked down and questioned, he admitted to the crime but said he didn't have the ring, which now belonged to an individual named Stinky. The police officer who prepared a report wrote that he had not yet located Stinky,

but when he did, he was "confident that I will get a confession out of him."

The Case for Health-Care Reform

2800 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

A first-time patient went to see his new doctor but was refused treatment because he did not have the "proper paperwork." The patient became extremely upset and threatened the doctor and staff. He was asked to leave, which he did — but not before grabbing the doctor's prescription pad and running out the door. To make matters worse, he didn't even make his co-payment.

Some Things Are Just Too Valuable

NE 5th Street and Biscayne Boulevard

A man observed two suspects reaching into the back of his brother's parked car and removing an item. He called his brother and both gave chase as the suspects ran off, one holding a bag of pilfered loot. Ignoring the potential for violence, the brothers managed to corner the bag man and call police, who

arrested the scoundrel. After the great chase, the arrested defendant was forced to drop the bag, which contained the stolen items: WWE action figures.

Donuts and Coffee and Crime

5130 Biscayne Blvd.

A woman was eating an apple fritter at Dunkin' Donuts and admitted to having left her wallet unattended for nearly 15 minutes. Despite the upscale crowd Dunkin' Donuts is trying to lure away from Starbucks, this is still Miami. When the victim noticed that her wallet was gone, she surveyed the scene around her: Nothing but yuppies on laptops. Oh, well...back to Starbucks.

Stung at Starbucks

6815 Biscayne Blvd.

As a woman was savoring her Starbucks brew, she placed her purse under the table. After she finished, she walked to her car in the parking lot. That's when she realized she'd left her purse inside. She hurriedly ran back inside, but much to her chagrin the purse was gone. The laptop, horn-rimmed-glasses crowd was no help. Oh, well...time to make coffee at home.

Get Ready for Hurricane Season

1000 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

We don't like to talk about it, but hurricane season is just around the corner. Time to stock up on those generators! In this case, a dynamic duo of preppy criminals wearing striped shirts stole a generator from an area business and began pushing it down the street. As is the custom with most of our criminals, there was no end game. After about a block, they gave up and ran off — probably to Starbucks for some stolen purses. The generator was returned to its rightful owner.

The Big Sleep

NE 20th Street and Biscayne Boulevard

A man was waiting for the bus, but since Miami's transit system leaves much to be desired, he fell asleep from utter boredom. He awakened several hours later. Not only was there no bus, but his pockets had been turned inside out and three wallets had been taken. Police have no suspects, and the victim has no money for the bus that never arrived.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Artists in the House

LegalArt launches its live-and-work residency program

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

A stately, four-story, 1924 building just north of downtown Miami will soon become the new home for six Miami artists, several visiting artists and curators, offices for the nonprofit organization LegalArt Miami, and an exhibition space. It will also become the latest focal point for the increasingly prominent and important art scene in Miami.

Thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge, LegalArt, which provides legal services and educational programming to the art community, has just launched the Live/Work Residency, the first of its kind in Miami. The building on N. Miami Avenue (across from the CIFO exhibition hall) combines studio and living spaces, shared baths and kitchen, lecture rooms, and a library.



BT photos by Mandy Baca



Legal Art director
Kathleen Carignan.

Almost ready: This building will soon be bustling with art and artists.

and partnerships, including pro-bono work from the Dade County Bar Association and University of Miami's law school, LegalArt has been able to generate unique programs for local artists. But this Knight grant brings it to another level — or four levels, actually.

Construction workers in hardhats are still putting up drywall, and dust is everywhere, but the layout is already impressive. Each of the five, 900-square-foot live-in studios has large windows with expansive views, and in a nod to the realities of contemporary art, multiple power sources. There will be 13 studios in all, available for discounted rent, expected to be around \$400 per month.

"Each studio is a little different, in shape and layout, and there are shared showers — it's unique," says Carignan. The

whole purpose of the residency is to encourage collaboration and community development; all of the artists will be committed to working with LegalArt and educational programs. Carignan likes to think that the building itself is a piece

of art, as it has been designed by artist Daniel Arsham and his company, Snarkitecture. (Arsham is also on the board of directors of LegalArt.)

The fact that LegalArt was awarded the Knight grant in 2008 and is ready to open the Live/Work Residency this spring is also commendable. "Everyone was committed to getting it done, in the best way, as quickly as possible," says Carignan.

But in the end the building will only be as successful as the residents who work in it, and much time and effort has been put into that aspect as well, Carignan notes. "We looked at other residencies, including worldwide," to design up a top-notch selection process. And what they came up with is a little off-beat: an entire year-long residency for local artists, with two-month residencies for national and international artists and curators. The combination is meant to be a huge incentive to keep talent in Miami, and to attract others here.

According to Carignan, few restrictions were placed on applicants, except that realistically "they couldn't be welders, you know, the noise factor," or parents: "Kids won't work." The artists also had to propose a "Give Back Project," in which they would work with the

broader community.

This past February the first six residents were announced. Says Carignan: "We looked at diversity in the types of art, and who would work well together. We then did studio visits, and let them look at the space so they would know what they were getting into. And we let them know that this was supposed to be an incubator project for real collaboration, not just a studio space."

A commitment to a year of both working *and* living was also an underlying factor in who would work out best. But that process almost took care of itself. "If someone in town has a big studio and established housing situation, they most likely weren't applying for this in any case," says Carignan.

In the end Carlos Acurra, Pachi Giustinian, Jiae Hwang, Alvaro Ilizarbe, Manny Prieres, and Jen Stark were picked to set up shop and home for the inaugural year. In fact the residency program was initially to include only five artists, but Ilizarbe and Stark are a couple, and the spaces are big, and after all, it's all about intimate collaboration.

Each studio will include a table and a stool — all other furniture the artists must provide. They will also bring with them paint brushes, sound systems, light projectors, video equipment, fabrics, and other materials the artists, who work in a wide variety of media, will need to realize their visions.

And it is an interesting array of artists. Jiae Hwang is well known in Miami circles, mostly for her videos, such as the one that garnered the Museum of Contemporary Art's "Optic Nerve" top prize several years ago. But the South Korean native is versatile, with works on paper and graphite as well, shown internationally and at the Fredric Snitzer Gallery here.

Hwang says she's long been a supporter of LegalArt, and of the development of a solid, lasting community in the city she now calls home. As for sharing close quarters with five others for the next year, she says that's the point: "To

Continued on page 39

Courtesy of the artist



Plasmascopic by Jen Stark. whole purpose of the residency is to

Kathleen Carignan is a lawyer and the new director of LegalArt. She moved here from Philadelphia a year ago, and as she shows off the space, her excitement is palpable. Through grants

House

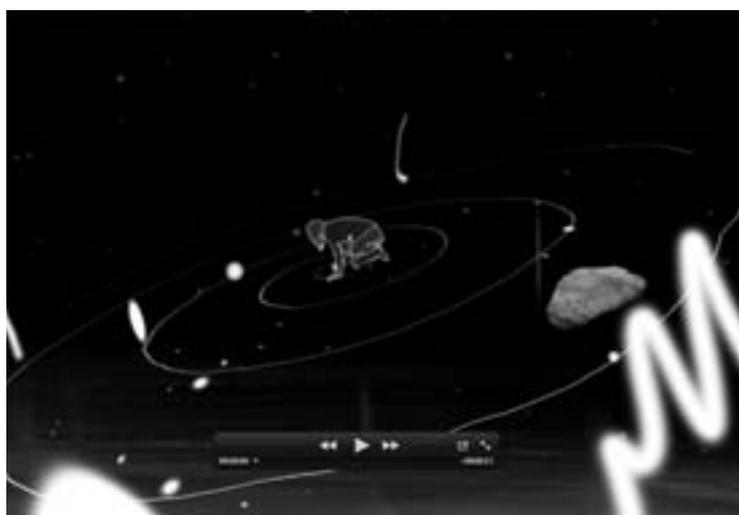
Continued from page 38

me, they are not strangers, but my peers, the majority of the people I have been close friends with over the course of my career.” As part of her “Give Back Project,” she will offer training sessions in video technology and graphics.

Carlos Ascurra works mostly with sound, while Argentine transplant Pachi Giustinian concentrates on light installations. For her “Give Back Project” she has developed a “To See Without Sight” program for the blind.

Manny Prieres has been active in the local scene for years, mixing up a punk sensibility and a Cuban heritage in his images. His sculpture, drawings, and watercolors were recently exhibited in a solo show at the Spinello Gallery.

As for Alvaro Ilizarbe, originally from Peru, his black-and-white drawings and scribbles currently cover the walls of the bar that was once known as PS-14, just a stone’s throw from the residency. He’s also the founder of the clothing label Freegums. Ilizarbe says he has no doubt that this set-up will create interaction “and encourage more work to be



Jiae Hwang’s *Infancy of the Universe*.

produced.” But he’s somewhat intrigued by how it will all pan out in terms of the close living quarters. “Yes, there will definitely be some issues that will arise,” he says. “It all depends on how parties handle it.”

Jen Stark is one of Miami’s most visible artists, her vibrantly colored, detailed work popping up all over. While some artists crave isolation, Stark’s interest in participating in this residency is all

communal: She’ll be sharing an individual studio with Ilizarbe, and showers and kitchen and ideas with five others. “I think it should be fine, as long as everyone respects each other’s space,” she says.

But mostly Stark thinks that this experiment “could really foster more collaborative projects within the community. Having a central area where artists live could be a good meeting place for projects to happen and for artists to meet others.”

That’s the plan, at least. The northern native Carignan says the uncharted nature of Miami is what makes it exciting. “In Philadelphia there are long-standing institutions and infrastructure,” she observes. “Here we are still making it. It’s young and we can be part of the incubator process.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Artist’s rendering of the Live/Work Residency spaces.

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Art Listings

WYNWOOD GALLERY WALK & DESIGN DISTRICT ART + DESIGN NIGHT SATURDAY, MARCH 13

101/EXHIBIT
101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
March 13 through April 6:
"Robert Fleisher: New Work" by Robert Fleisher
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ABBA FINE ART
233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
Through March 11:
"Recent Works" by David McConnell
March 13 through April 8: "Recent Works" by Pip Brant
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS
2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
Through April 3:
"Monstrous Moonshine" by Magdalena Atria

ART FUSION
1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
Through March 24: "INCANTATIONS IN MULTI-COLOR" with various artists
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ART GALLERY AT GOVERNMENT CENTER
111 NW 1st St., Suite 625, Miami
305-375-4634
Call gallery for exhibition information.

ART ROUGE
46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-3060
www.lurie-kavachnina.com
Through March 12: "Metamorphosis" by Laurie Recanati
March 13 through May 6:
"Blue Rose Journey" by Evelyn Valdirio
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ARTFORMZ
171 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-572-0040
www.artformz.net
Through March 8:
"Past-Present" with Anja Marais and Guillermo Portieles
March 11 through April 5:
"A Terrible Beauty" with Sibel Kocbas and Alette Simmons-Jimenez
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL
180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami
By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com
www.basfisherinvitational.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

BASHA GALLERY
795 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-891-4624
www.bashagallery.net
Through March 31:
"A Celebration of Women and Art" with Michael Ajerman, Beatrice Findlay, Allyson Kowitz, Arnaldo Rosello, Jorge Chirinos Sanchez, and Kari Snyder

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY
3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-2700
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com
Through March 5:
"In Search of a Sacred Place" by Willie Birch
March 13: "Auction to Benefit Haiti" with Women Quilters of Gee's Bend
Reception March 13, 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
Reception March 3, 6:30 to 10 p.m.

BUTTER GALLERY
2301-2303 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-303-6254
www.buttergallery.com
March 11 through March 27:
"7.625 FL OZ" by Ahol Sniffs Glue
Reception March 11, 7 to 11 p.m.

CALDWELL / LINFIELD GALLERY & STUDIO
8351 NE 8th Ct., Miami
305-754-2093
www.susannacaldwell.com
Ongoing: "Seductive Assemblages and Wood Sculpture" by Susanna Caldwell

CALIX GUSTAV GALLERY
98 NW 29 St., Miami
305-576-8116, calix-gustav.blogspot.com
Through April 1: "Basics" with Yvonne Cordoba, Eric Torriente, Max A. Kraushaar, and Agustín de Llanos
Reception March 13, 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
Through March 14: Lynne Golob Gelfman
March 27 through April 11: "Characters" by David Rohn
Reception March 27, 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.

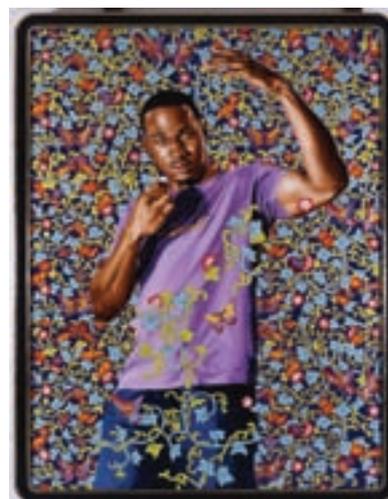
CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY
250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-292-0411, www.charest-weinberg.com
March 13 through May 15: "10 Years" by SunTeck Chung
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

CHELSEA GALLERIA
2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-2950
www.chelseagalleria.com
Through March 6: "Carnaval" by Daniel Kedar
March 13 through April 3:
"Latin American Photography" with various artists
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

CITY LOFT ART
61 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-9006
www.cityloftart.com
Through March 10:
"Light Meets Color" with Elmar Hund, Ekaterina Moré, and Ingrid Kaufman
March 13:
"SEA SHELLS - an ecologic approach of art" by Ingrid Kaufmann
Reception March 13, 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
Through March 6:
"Oh the tangled webs we weave" by Karelle Levy
March 13 through April 3:
"Chained to a Creature of a Different Kingdom" with Skip Arnold, Susan Lee-Chun, Angela Dufresne, aaron GM, Kate Gilmore, Ann Hamilton, Micol Hebron, Dawn Kasper, Kalup Linzy, Marilyn Minter, Shana Moulton, Ali Prosch, Yvonne Rainer, Pipilotti Rist, Jimmy Joe Roche, and Mark Verabioff
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.



Kehinde Wiley, *Regard the Class Struggle as a Main Link in the Chain*, oil and enamel on canvas, 2007, at Miami Art Museum.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS
2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com
Through March 6: "Pássaros geométricos e pelo menos um pássaro rectangular!" by José Bechara, "The Triumph of Patience" with Uisuk Byeon, Young Cho, Jessica Labatte, and Briana Schweizer, and "si no existe el mas allá, la injusticia del pobre se prolonga eternamente" with Colectivo MR
March 13 through April 3: "Blind Enough to See" by Ivelisse Jimenez, "Pimp Art History" by Daniel Gonzalez, and "Rich and Famous" by Andriy Halashyn
Reception March 13, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY
3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046
www.diasporavibe.net
Through March 25:
"Mirrors Messages and Manifestations" with Patrick de Castro, Jacquenette Arnette, and Hugo Moro

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

DINA MITRANI GALLERY
2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248
www.dinamitraniartgallery.com
March 13 through April 24:
"Recent Dreams" by Mario Algaze
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

DORSCH GALLERY
151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com
Through March 6:
"Pleasure Seekers" by Kyle Trowbridge, "Knock-Off" by Alex Golden, and "de-lux" by Keith Sklar
March 13 through April 3:
"Walkabout" by Elisabeth Condon and "Don't Forget to Crash" by Martin Murphy
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE
51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com
Through March 7:
"Fusion" by Leonel Matheu
March 13 through April 30:
"Goody Two Shoes" by Leslie Gabaldon
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

DPM GALLERY
2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-1777
www.dpmgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART
47 NE 25th St., Miami
305-303-8852
www.edgezones.org
Through March 6:
"Bound and Gathered" with Mora Barber, Pip Brant, Natasha Duwin, Annie Heckman, Laurie LeBreton, Abigail Lelis, Marcela Marcuzzi, Emmy Mathis, Jason Meyer, Isabel Moros-Rigau, Alex Trimino-K, Casey Ann Wasniewski, and Plamen Yordanov
March 13 through March 31:
"Prague for Haiti" with various artists
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

ETRA FINE ART
10 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-4383
www.etrafineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

FACHE ARTS
750 NE 124th St., North Miami #2
305-975-6933
www.fachearts.com
Through March 15:
"MADE IN CHILE" with Victor Mahana and Carla Fache

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY
2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through March 9:
"I'll Cross that Bridge When I Get to It" by Bert Rodriguez
March 13 through April 3:
"Pathological Liar" by Diego Singh
Reception March 13, 7 to 9 p.m.

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

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE
125 NW 23 St., Miami
305-576-6095
www.galeriehelenelamarque.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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

GALLERY 4100
4100 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-572-9606
www.gallery4100.com
Through April 1:
"Princess for One Fucking Day" by Wulf Treu

GALLERY DIET
174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through March 6:
"Rachel Is..." by Rachel Perry Welty
March 12 through April 3:
Sarah Conaway and Graham Hudson
Reception March 12, 6 to 9 p.m.
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

GALLERY I/D
2531 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-778-4568
www.galleryid.com
March 13 through April 24:
"Upstate Girls — What Became of Collar City" by Brenda Ann Kenneally
Reception March 13, 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Continued on page 41

Art Listings

Continued from page 40

GIOVANNI ROSSI FINE ART

2628 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-1645
www.giovannirossifineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com
Through April 3: "Love, Infatuation or Lust" with Natasha Duvin, Juan Griego, Kate Kretz, Catalina Jaramillo, Angelica Clyman, Magda Ortiz, Maria Lino, Julie L. Friel, Luisa Mesa, Aleli Egues, Gretchen Scharnagl, Hugo Moro, Monica Travis, Rochi Llanaeza, Jules Lusson, Aleli Egues, Monica Travis, Tamara Hervera, Orion Mansfield, Ingrid Eliasson and Jennifer Basile, Donna Torres, and more
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
Through March 5: "Way Out Hi-Fi Beats" by Derek Yaniger

IDEABOX ARTSPACE

2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878
Call gallery for exhibition information.

INTERFLIGHT STUDIO

250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-1673, www.interflightstudio.com
Through March 12: "Love is in the Air" with various artists

KABE CONTEMPORARY

123 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.



Cory Arcangel, *Self-playing Sony PS1 Bowling, video game system, hacked controller, 2009*, at Museum of Contemporary Art.

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through March 20: "Debris of Abstraction" by Mimi Bates
March 25 through May 1:
"Hairball Cosmology" with various artists

KEVIN BRUK GALLERY

2249 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-576-2000
www.kevinbrukgallery.com
Through March 31: Works by Matthew Weinstein
Reception March 13, 7 to 9 p.m.

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
March 13 through May 30:
"homo nymos" by Iván Puig
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

LILIENTHAL ART STUDIOS

96 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-2002
www.ilanlilienthal.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
March 13 through April 24:
"The World Is Yours" by Andrew Heitzler
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
Through March 30:
"Refreshing Recollection" with various artists

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.

MYPAC

3324 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-981-6199
Through March 28:
"Willow" with various artists and "A Light Above the Rest" with various artists

OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

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

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through March 11: "Operation Beefeater" with Magnus Sigurdarson and Paul Stoppi
March 13 through April 17:
Carolina Sardi and Ted Larsen
Reception March 13, 6 to 9 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

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

PRESSITON ART GALLERY

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

SAMMER GALLERY

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

SETH JASON BEITLEE FINE ARTS

250 NW 23rd St., #202, Miami
305-438-0218, www.sethjason.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

Continued on page 42

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Applications accepted through March 15th at www.KnightArts.org

Art Listings

Continued from page 41

SPINELLO GALLERY

155 NE 38th St., Miami
786-271-4223
www.spinellogallery.com
March 13 through March 31:
"My Americans" by Zack Balber and "Resurrection" by
Christina Pettersson
Reception March 13, 7 to 11 p.m.

STASH GALLERY

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

STRUCTURES

80 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
Through March 31:
"12" with John Henry, Albert Paley, Lin Emery, Henry
Lautz, Jae Hahn, and Catherine Billingsley

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.

WHITE VINYL SPACE

3322 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-776-1515
www.whitevinylspace.com
March 13 through March 31:
"The Cooking of Spam in Portugal" by Jeremy Kennedy
Performance March 13, 7 to 11 p.m.

WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART

201 NE 39th St., Miami
305-576-6960, www.wrpfineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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, Munteanu/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

10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-348-2890, http://thefrost.fiu.edu/
Through April 11:
"The Fantastic World of José Gurvich" by José Gurvich
Through April 25: "Women's Work / Men's Work: Labor
and Gender in America" with various artists
Through May 16: "Taiwan Discovered: In Place and
Time" with various artists

Through May 16: "In Body and Soul: The Performance
Art of María Teresa Hincapié" by María Teresa Hincapié
March 9 through April 18: "Aesthetics & Values 2010"
by Bhakti Baxter, Xavier Cortada, Guerra de la Paz,
Richard Haden, Bert Rodriguez, Gerry Stecca, TM
Sisters, Frances Trombly, Wendy Wischer, and Ricardo
E. Zulueta
March 24 through April 18: "Wanderlust" by FIU MFA
Students, Jason Galbut, Pati Laylle, and Kim Yantis

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535,
www.lowemuseum.org
Through April 4: "Cuba Avant-Garde: Contemporary
Cuban Art from the Farber Collection" with various
artists

MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami
305-375-3000
www.miamiartmuseum.org
ongoing:
"Selections from the Permanent Collection" with various
artists
March 20 through June 20:
"The Embodied Experience of Color" by Carlos Cruz
Diez

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
March 11 through May 9:
"The Sharper Image" by Cory Arcangel and "Auto
Focus" by Ceal Floyer
Reception March 11, 7 to 9 p.m.

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
Taafe, 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/
March 13 through May 28:
Anna Gaskell and Mariko Mori
Reception March 13, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

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Events Calendar

The Year: 1967.

The Album: *Days of Future Passed*

If you remember all the words to "Nights in White Satin," you're of a certain age and have a pretty darn good memory. But even if you just remember liking the song, then get yourself to downtown Miami's Bayfront Park Amphitheater for **The Moody Blues**. The Moodys are among the least embarrassing dinosaur bands. None of that Pete Townshend thrashing around. That was never their style. And in fact their style remains fresh, which is why they're still touring and have sold some 70 million albums worldwide. They take the stage on **Friday, March 5**. Tickets are \$12 for the lawn to \$71 for geezers who need actual seats. Visit livenation.com or call 877-598-8698.

Asian Culture Festival



World Premier Performances — Right Here and Now

Each year the Miami Light Project commissions new works from some of Miami's most talented young performing artists, often with spectacular results. For the past few years the **Here & Now festival**, as it's known, has been staged at the Adrienne Arsht Center, and the 2010 edition promises to be compelling. The featured artists



MiMo Explained

are Rudi Goblen, Juraj Kojs, and Jillian Mayer, whose performances range from dance to theater to multimedia performance. But these world premiers are just part of the weekend festival, which features a smorgasbord of related events, from works in progress by local artists to panel discussions with performing arts leaders from around the nation. Tickets (305-949-6722) are \$40 and include access to the entire weekend, **Friday, March 5 through Sunday, March 7**. See the

full schedule at www.arshtcenter.org.

A Most Unusual Art Tour

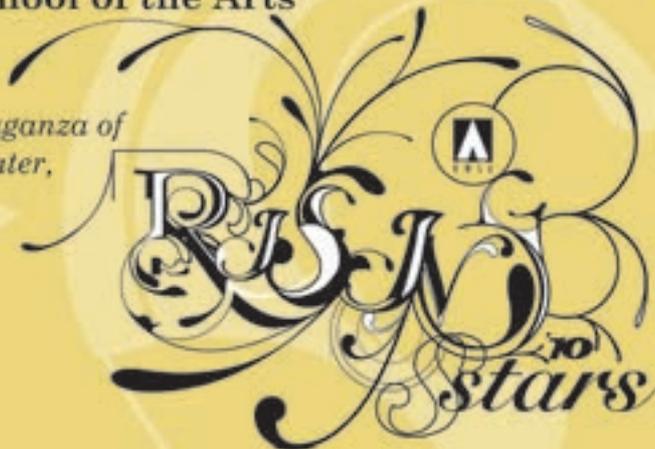
If you've been feeling guilty about that one-speed bike rusting away in the garage, absolve yourself during **March Bike Month**. One intriguing event is the pairing of healthy exercise and artistic appreciation with **Graffiti by Bike**, an exploration of the eye-popping wall murals decorating the Wynwood Arts District on **Saturday, March 6**. The free tour will follow a route that highlights the evolution of Miami's street artists and crews, ending at the recently commissioned "Wynwood Walls" collection. Art-loving bikers should meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Allapattah Metrorail Station (3501 NW 12th Ave.) for the

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New World School of the Arts

Rising Stars

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Visual Arts

Exhibition & Reception

Saturday 3.13



ARTSEEN Gallery 7:00 • 10pm
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Free admission

Performance

7:30pm

Wednesday 3.24

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Events Calendar

Continued from page 43

ride over to Wynwood. The tour will end around 1:00 p.m. — just in time for lunch at Joey's Italian Caffe. E-mail bike-miami-days@googlegroups.com or visit miamibikescene.blogspot.com for more information.

The Far East Is Closer Than You Think

The year of the tiger is here and with it comes the annual **Asian Culture Festival**, which celebrates its 20th year on **Saturday, March 6 and Sunday, March 7**. You'll enjoy a diverse mix of Asian crafts and activities, and an even more eclectic selection of cuisine. Starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Fruit and Spice Park (24801 SW 187th Ave.), visitors will be treated to Thai fruit carving and many performances, including fushu daiko (Japanese drumming), native dances, and even Muay Thai boxing. For more centered souls, tai chi and yoga will also be offered. Admission is \$10 and free for children 12 and younger. Call 954-431-7484 or visit asianculturefestival.org.

Blue Grass on the Green Grass at Greynolds — Free!

Attend a real bluegrass jam on **Sunday, March 7** at the county's lovely Greynolds Park (17530 W. Dixie Hwy.) and get in touch with your deep American roots. Presented in coordination with the **South Florida Bluegrass Association**, this is one in a series of Bluegrass Sundays at the park, on the first Sunday of each month. It kicks off with the New River Boys and then unleashes a torrent of picking,



Unusual Art Tour



strumming, and singing. The event begins at 12:30 p.m. and food and drinks will be available. Admission is *free*, but parking ranges from \$5 to \$10 depending on car size. Park office: 305-945-3425.

MiMo Explained and Experienced

If you've ever wondered where, why, when, and by whom the term "MiMo" was coined, head to Bay Harbor Islands on **Saturday, March 13**. A walking tour called **Bay Harbor Islands MiMo: Architecture of a Mid-Century Town** begins at 3:30 p.m. at 1019 Kane Concourse and is hosted by designer Teri D'Amico, who co-founded the Miami Modern architectural preservation

World Premier Performances



movement. The tour will explore the perimeter of the island and make stops at buildings designed by Morris Lapidus, Igor Polevitzky, and other noted MiMo pioneers. After the tour ends at 5:00 p.m., treat yourself to a photo exhibit and reception until 8:00 p.m. A \$10 donation is requested. Call 305-945-1770 for details.

There Is Style and There Is Fashion — Which Will It Be?

Fashionistas, clear your Crackberry calendars for one of the can't-miss events of the year. Rub Manolos with celebrities and designers at the 12th annual **Miami International Fashion Week**. The event hits the runway **Thursday, March 18 through Sunday, March 21** at the Shops at Midtown Miami, which will be transformed into Fashion Central. The week concludes with the Miami Moda & Music Awards. This year's event will

also feature a deliciously decked out Culinary Arts Pavilion. Tickets start at \$25. For a complete schedule and tickets go to www.miamifashionweek.com.

MiMo Madness: Have a Blast on the Boulevard

Portions of the MiMo Historic District (Biscayne Boulevard between 67th and 75th streets, to be exact) will get a little crazy on **Saturday, March 20**. That's when the third annual **MiMo Madness** street festival cuts loose. The free event begins at 10:00 a.m. and will line the Boulevard with craft vendors, street performers, historic tours, stilt walkers, comic characters, artists, custom cars, and a wide range of live music. Historical tours of the area begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Vagabond Motel. Plenty of free parking at 75th Street. Call 305-609-4288 or go to www.mimoboulevard.org.

Dazzling Performance Art from China

Two world-renowned Chinese choreographers and performers, Yin Mei and San Jijia, take the stage for two nights only to reveal the transformative powers of paper in a multimedia work that interlaces history, contemporary and traditional dance, music, sound, and visuals. The ancient Chinese city of Luoyang is the setting for **Yin Mei's City of Paper**, and the Byron Carlyle Theater (500 71st Street, Miami Beach) is where it'll come alive. Don't miss this exclusive event, presented by MDC's Cultura del Lobo Performance Series: **Friday, March 19 and Saturday, March 20**. For more information and tickets (prices vary), call 305-237-3010.

Compiled by BT interns Mandy Baca and Matt Ruckman

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The Art of Family Life

How a home address led to a unique and memorable creative experience

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

I used to hate the number on our house. Not the numerals themselves. It's not like I have an aversion to the numerology behind our address. As a matter of fact, I love the numerology as the digits added up equal nine, which is very powerfully three threes, which is my favorite number. What I couldn't stand were the standard hardware-store frilly flower tiles. They were ugly and no one could read them from the street. Visiting friends often had a hard time finding us.

Then I ran into my old buddy, mosaic artist Carlos Alves, who is pretty well known to those who have been around Miami for a while. His intricate mosaics utilize found objects, old tableware in china and stoneware, as well as his own sculpted and painted tiles.

His work can be seen in public-art projects and in private homes and collections here and around the world. South Beach crawlers from the early 1990s will fondly remember his fountain on Lincoln Road at Lenox Avenue, in front of where his studio used to be. Those former crawlers who now have tiny crawlers of their own will recognize Carlos as the artist behind the giant sandcastle slide at the Miami Children's Museum.

The Lincoln Road fountain was originally created in 1992, just before Hurricane Andrew, and had to be rebuilt after the storm damaged it. Funded through a neighborhood enhancement grant to what was then called the South Florida Art Center (now Art Center/South Florida), the project transformed the old fountain. Carlos sought help



BT photo by Jenni Person

from many neighborhood artists and other volunteers, which made it a true reflection of the neighborhood's life at that time. "Broken shards were brought by all kinds of people in the community," he recalls.

Ten years later the fountain mosaic was rebuilt a third time because the fountain itself was finally made functional after many dry years. This time Carlos did the work with a team of professionals and more handmade tiles — thanks to support from the City of Miami Beach's Art in Public Places program.

My kids, and probably yours too, are most familiar with Carlos's work on that awesome slide at the Children's Museum. Mine are also proud that the artist behind it is an old friend of mom and dad's. So they were completely thrilled when one day I told them I'd asked Carlos to make us a street address number for our house.

It made a lot of sense because much of Carlos's work features sea life, and

in our family, sea life also has a big presence. Shortly after Goldi was born, we started occasionally referring to her as Goldi-fish because she received so many gifts with cute little goldfish on them. Then, once pregnant with Izzi and searching for name that began with "S," we experimented briefly and jokingly with Starfish, which became his in-utero code name. (Jewish superstition kept us from ever uttering the name we had chosen before he was born.) Somewhere along the way, I began comparing my partner to a seahorse. In that species, the male takes on a significant childcare role.

As you can see, we almost had a whole virtual underwater life. My family then decided to bring me into the ocean too. They deemed me to be an octopus for all the multi-tasking tentacles I have reaching out into different projects. I didn't love it, but I love that it's their vision, so I accepted it.

It turned out the way Carlos wanted to create the house number was to invite us to his studio to create parts of it. He is very experienced at working with kids owing to his extensive projects with students all over the community. Currently he is guiding students from across Miami-Dade County in a commissioned project for a county courthouse.

Carlos was amazing with Goldi and Izzi. He not only taught them about working with clay, he empowered them as artists. He showed them different tools and how to use color, and he celebrated their creativity and vision by selecting their small creations to incorporate into the larger piece. As we made starfish and goldfish and octopi, Carlos loved the fact that Goldi also created lips to represent our family kisses. Then came the requisite cat as well as a peninsular shape to represent Florida. He was especially charmed that Izzi made a French fry. Carlos used it right at the top of the whole piece.

What we ended up with was an amazing day engaging our kids in art. They got their hands right on things in the studio of an accomplished working artist. It was a real bonding experience in which we articulated and celebrated our own family culture. And last but not least, we came away with a beautiful original artwork that is unique to our family and our home.

Oh, and now you can read our address from the street!

For more about Carlos Alves check out www.carlosalvesmosaics.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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May I See Your Passport, Please?

One thing about Aventura's main park: It's really, really safe

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

An adventure awaits any visitor to the parks of Aventura, much like the adventure of trying to enter Cuba. “No es fácil” is a common Cuban saying that would apply to both situations. It’s not easy.

To get to Aventura’s main park, Founders Park, you may end up circling the Aventura Mall a few times before realizing that you should have made that left turn at Condo Albuquerque. Once at the entrances, you must decide if you are a leftie or a rightie, as the park is divided by 190th Street into the larger northern section and the smaller southern part.

Go right, young man. The southern part promotes socialism by allowing visitors to park for free. Although small, it boasts a walking path, clean bathrooms, and a waterfront. Sometimes parents bring their children here for lessons in soccer, which seems to be a socialist sport.

Beware the left. Here capitalism shifts into high gear in order to protect the children (but only the children on the left, who are clearly rightists). Visitors must flash a residency card, which determines whether or not they are contributing to the Aventura economy.

If you live anywhere else, you’re not. Never mind the mall. Those not accompanied by a resident must pay \$5 to enter and an additional \$10 to use the splash pad. Fifteen bucks for a park without a Gap and a food court? No thank you.



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Aventura's main park has a split personality.

Then there are the rules for journalists, especially ones with cameras. Even if they offer to pay \$5, they are not allowed to enter. I know, because it happened to me. I had to turn on my heels, cross the street to where I had parked my car for free, and leave.

After obtaining the necessary paperwork from city hall, I was “permitted” to enter with camera and notepad in hand.

Look out! Here comes the scary journalist with his ballpoint of death!

Honestly, what did they think I was going to do? It feels strange to register in order to visit a park, and this level of hoop-jumping is unprecedented. Of the dozens of others parks in Greater Miami

I have visited, this was a first.

Now here’s my opinion of the park — drum roll please — I like it. It’s very clean and feels very safe. The restrooms are immaculate. They have two clay tennis courts. But other than that, it’s not worth the entry fee. Go to the mall instead.

Boo!

Did the park critic scare you?

Deep breath.

If you live in Aventura, no doubt you have taken advantage of Founders Park, which is named after the founding of the City of Aventura in 1995. In the center stands a podium celebrating the city’s tenth anniversary in 2005.

The park’s biggest weakness is its location next to the William H. Lehman Causeway (State Road 856), because that side of the park is noisy. The south side, on the other hand, has a tranquil canal that connects to aptly named but misspelled Dumbfoundling Bay. (It should be Dumbfounding.) Of course, this being Aventura, the water is secured behind a steel fence. Don’t even think about fishing here.

The main features of the larger north side are a high-quality baseball diamond,

a large grass field, a playground, tennis courts, and the no-depth water park, or “SplashPad,” as they call it. The splash area opens on weekends in March and also on weekdays during the summer. But don’t pay \$10 to visit it. Skip it, or find a friend in Aventura who can sneak you in for free.

Just don’t pretend to be a journalist!

The playground is very popular with the condo mothers and their nannies, and the children seem to like it, too. A large section is conveniently shaded in an exemplary way, and other Miami parks could learn something from this tarp.

Another outstanding and nearly unique feature of this park is recycling. I have been ranting and raving about how almost none of Miami’s parks recycle, and here in Aventura they offer it, along



The south part features tranquility, water, free parking, and all are welcome.

with very good trash cans. They even have an electric cart for shuttling staff between parks.

Founders Park really is quite nice, and clean, and apparently safe, but my experience of being denied entry makes me feel that it is overly sanitized. Much like the rest of Aventura, everything is enclosed behind a fence and reserved for VIPs only. (Residents of Aventura, you’re all VIPs to me). Perhaps they should change the name to Clorox™ Park. Then they could earn residuals!

The park does fall short in some areas. No barbecues and no other heat sources of any kind are allowed, meaning your children won’t be eating hot dogs and baked beans at that birthday

FOUNDERS PARK

Park Rating

3105 NE 190th St., Aventura
305-466-8556
Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Picnic tables: Yes
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: Yes
Tennis courts: Yes
Athletic fields: Yes
Night lighting: Yes
Swimming pool: No
Playground: Yes
Special features: Water splash pad

Continued on page 47

PARK PATROL

Passport

Continued from page 46

party. *No es fácil.*

On the south side by the water fountain, a fire extinguisher case was mysteriously empty. Had someone used it recently on a flaming journalist? *No es fácil.*

The tennis courts are closed from noon until 2:00 p.m. to allow for watering of the clay. Um, isn't that the time of day when evaporation happens most quickly? Don't water-conservation rules tell us not to water during the daytime? I guess these rules don't apply to clay. *No es fácil.*

The ice-cream vending machine is not accepting bills! *¡No es fácil!*

Children of residents have many options here to join various sports clubs: Little League baseball/softball, soccer, fascism for beginners. In case you were wondering, I made up that last one.

A new baseball league for men is also getting started.

Founders Day takes place in November and this year will celebrate Aventura's *Quince*. I expect the city to do



A very nice baseball diamond amid the high-rises.

something very classy and very boring.

But the park is safe. It's safe. It's safer than the nearby mall, where anyone could enter. Practically any pedophile and mass murderer could follow you into The Gap and watch you buy jeans. That probably won't happen in Founders Park — at least in the northern section.

Can you blame the residents of Aventura for wanting to create some safe spaces? The world is a dangerous place, and everyone needs an escape where they can breathe some fresh air and stretch their legs on a quarter-mile pathway. The residents of Aventura have that for free on the north side of Founders Park.



Nonresident park visitors must pay \$10 for this?

For the rest of us? Well, let's party for free on the south side of Founders Park. But don't bring your camera, and leave your press pass in Havana. I wouldn't want you to miss the *aventura*.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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When Nature Barks

Sometimes it's not what you do, but where you do it

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

House-training is probably one of the top three reasons dog owners are ready to throw in the towel and adopt an animal-free lifestyle. Who can blame them? Not only is it incredibly frustrating when an animal has accidents, it is downright disgusting.

The family room, where everyone gathers to socialize and watch TV, the place where the baby crawls, has now become a doggy toilet. Even more distressing, it seems the dog at some point understands that she's not supposed to relieve herself indoors — only to have the owner stumble onto yet another accident.

But the house-training stage is no time to get anthropomorphic and project human emotions and characteristics on your dog. In fact you have to remember that, while we humans naturally steer clear of bodily waste, dogs find it downright fascinating and are drawn to the smells and information it provides. They learn who's who in the neighborhood, the gender of dogs or other animals who live nearby, and more. Just as we may be hooked on reading e-mail, dogs love to read "pee mail." Each blade of grass, every shrub and tree trunk serves as their local news source, their *Biscayne Times*.

It is important to set up your dog for bathroom success early, as each and every indoor accident can work against you. Add to that the fact that the smell of excrement and urine is extremely difficult if not impossible to eliminate from some porous surfaces (which will draw the dog to that area even more)



and the importance of effective training becomes clear.

Like humans, dogs are creatures of habit. They will grow accustomed to doing their business in a certain area. In this column, I'll focus more on theory than training specifics, beginning with your pet's homecoming.

Immediately when you get your new dog (puppy or adult), take her outdoors for a walk. You can choose a tree or bushes close to an entryway to your home or condominium to serve as a training area. Have some amazingly wonderful treats with you to reward your dog right after she goes. This is an extremely important point: You want to reward and praise the dog *immediately*

when she eliminates outdoors in order to make the association that that is the right place.

Do not bring the dog back indoors and then give her a treat long after the fact. Also do not chant phrases like "Go potty, go potty" *before* the dog begins to eliminate. Again, you want to build an association with the phrase you use and the dog's behavior.

It goes without saying that, in addition to bringing treats with you outdoors, you must *always* have poop-scoop bags.

Once you believe your dog is "empty," you will want to bring her inside and begin area-training or crate-training. Do not give her the whole house in which to make mistakes. Depending

on the size and age of your dog, initially you might need to take her out as often as every 15 minutes (this usually for tiny young dogs) so as not to miss an opportunity to reward her outside and avoid an accident inside.

Once inside, the dog must be supervised *at all times*. Do not even turn around to answer the telephone. This is usually when you will find an accident, especially if you have scolded or punished her in the past. She'll do it the second you're not looking.

So do *not* punish your young dog for house-training accidents as that can cause sneaky behavior. Take accidents as information: "I need to take my dog out more often and supervise better!"

Most important, you do not want your dog to be afraid to eliminate in front of you, or she may not even do her business outside with you present, and instead go in the house when you're not looking. If you punish the dog for going on the carpet in the living room, she may try the carpet in a bedroom. If you punish a specific spot, she may try a new spot a few feet away. Very confusing! My best advice: Reward everywhere outside and be vigilant to avoid accidents inside.

Generally "teacups" or tiny dogs with small bladders are the most difficult to house-train. But even large dogs can have issues with soiling indoors or even in their own indoor homes or crates. This is most prevalent with large dogs bought at pet stores or from puppy mills.

Dogs have a natural tendency to keep themselves and their homes clean, but

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COLUMNISTS: PAWSITIVELY PETS

Nature

Continued from page 48

they can lose that instinct. Puppy-mill dogs are never let out of a crate; they live in filth and squalor. Pet-store dogs never see grass or get out of their cages or pens either, and certainly when the store closes until the store opens the next morning, the dogs must eliminate on themselves and stay dirty until they're cleaned up.

If this is the case with your dog,

give her time to learn that things will be different and cleaner with you. Young or small dogs that seem to be doing well with house-training may "know" to go outside but not yet have the muscle control to hold it. Some dogs need to go immediately when their bladders are full.

Older dogs can become untrained after years of perfection. Sometimes this is a medical issue, in which case a visit to the vet is in order. Sometimes it's the result of a change in your lifestyle. Other times it's just a case of

"Hey, this carpet works perfectly well. Why was I waiting to go outside?" Whatever the case or age or the dog, go back to the beginning for a while and things should return to normal.

Once your dog is on the right track, she should have a signal to tell you she needs to relieve herself. Whether it's a bark at the door, a look, or a ringing of a bell, you should condition a behavior that is rewarded with you opening the door.

When house-training animals, it's

important to have patience, be consistent, and build a reward history outdoors. Soon your house will look (and smell) as good as new!

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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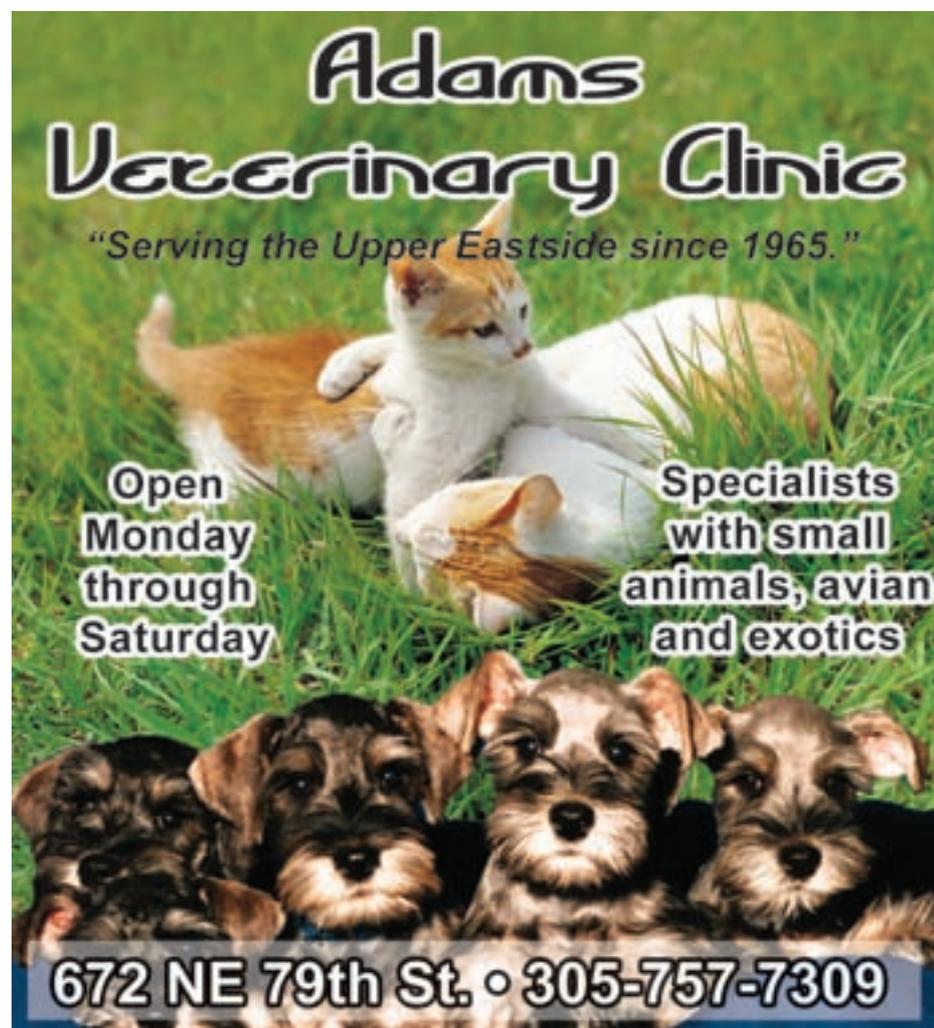


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Chilled Out to the Max

These cold snaps can be killers, but there are ways you can cheat death

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

When the freeze of January 1977 occurred, I was attending night school while working during the day at Parrot Jungle. One evening during my plant physiology class, I overheard two students exclaiming that Parrot Jungle would have to close because the garden had been wiped out by the freeze a week earlier.

I had been wondering about that myself because I had seen the damage firsthand. About 15 feet of the canopy of the giant banyan tree had been killed by frost. Giant Areca palms with trunks reaching 30 feet had been killed to the ground. I still remember that morning vividly, the owner and staff frantically running around with hoses and sprinklers trying to protect all of the tender plants by encasing them in ice. It was quite beautiful, long icicles were hanging off full-grown banana plants. The hibiscus and crotons were encased in ice. A lot of these plants did die.

Over the next two decades, I learned quite a bit about protecting plants from cold weather. During those years, we would experience temperatures briefly dropping into the high 20s before sunrise about two or three times a year — nothing more. By the 1990s I even stopped putting out sprinklers on the grass and just started painting the burned grass with green paint the day after a freeze. In a couple of weeks the guys would cut the grass and no one would notice the difference.

When we started a composting operation in the late 1980s, I noticed that

on cold days our pile of compost was quite warm compared to the ambient temperature. The same for the mulch piles. This I learned was the result of biological activity, all those tiny organisms produced quite a bit of heat as they went about their business of decomposing the organic material or eating each other. So we started to take advantage of that process.

In the winter, we began to mulch heavily around all of our more tender plant material like heliconias and bananas, so that the roots and the rhizomes would not be damaged by cold. We could lose the stems and foliage but the plants would grow right back because underground they had been protected by the heat from the biological activity.

Since heat flows from the object with the higher temperature to the object with the lower one, we took this process one step further. I had noticed that the same plant species planted in a container and in the ground would react differently to cold. Potted plants got cold much faster, resulting in greater damage. We started burying some potted plants in beds of mulch for the winter with good results. I also found that when irrigating



Our cycad collection was undamaged by the cold. This female cone of *Encephalartos ferox* just produced viable seeds.

the ground beneath plants the afternoon before a cold spell, the ground would remain much warmer and less plant damage would result.

So now it has been almost 20 years since we've experienced a severe cold spell. At Jungle Island I was growing lots of ultra-tropical plants. We had a beautiful breadfruit tree, *Artocarpus altilis*, that had been growing in the ground for the past three winters. It had reached 20 feet and had flowered for the first time the week we got temperatures in the high 30s.

I'm using the past tense because I had to cut the tree down to the ground a couple of weeks ago. It was dead from the cold. The red sealing wax palm, *Cyrtostachys renda*, growing in a large container in our jungle river, has

survived. We cover it with a burlap tent when temperatures get into the 50s. One night we left it uncovered and all the older foliage burned, but it is surviving. This is a stunning palm from Malaysia but very sensitive to the cold.

Now our cold-preparation practices are paying off. Except for some of the more cold-sensitive tropicals, our landscape has escaped major damage during recent chills. This I attribute to the judicious use of mulch and compost in the landscape over the past few years, irrigating well before the cold fronts, and not fertilizing so the plants do not have any tender new foliage to burn.

You can see a difference at the park. Compare the stands of the corn plant, *Dracaena fragrans*. Some stands are burned more than others. I believe this is the result of soil moisture. The corn plants grown on slopes or areas that received less irrigation have more burned foliage.

The palm *Carpentaria acuminata* is another excellent example. They look great at the park. Usually this time of year they look so burned and beat up from the wind that you want to cut them down.

I've also noticed something else of significance: no fig whitefly and no iguanas. Maybe the cold is sometimes a good thing.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 215.

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Giovana Caffè

154 SE 1st Ave., 305-374-1024
www.giovanacaffe.com

If the menu at this charming downtown hideaway contained only one item – pear and gorgonzola ravioli dressed, not drowned, in sage-spiced cream sauce – we'd be happy. But the café, formerly lunch-only but now serving weekday dinners, is also justly famed for meal-size salads like grilled skirt steak atop sweetly balsamic-dressed spinach (with spinach, tomatoes, bacon, hard-boiled eggs, blue cheese, and almonds), or an especially lavish chicken salad with pine nuts, golden raisins, apples, and basil, an Italian twist. \$\$

Martini 28

146 SE 1st Ave., 305-577-4414

This stylish little lunch-only spot, a labor of love from a husband-wife chef team, serves what might well be the most impressive meal deal in town. From an ambitious, daily-changing menu of fare that's geographically eclectic but prepared with solid classic technique, diners get a choice of about ten entrées (substantial stuff like steak au poivre with Madeira cream sauce and roasted potatoes, or pignolia-crusted salmon with Dijon mustard sauce, potatoes, and veggies), plus soup or salad and housemade dessert. For just \$9.99. Told ya. \$

Thai Angel

152 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9748

Inside a colorful courtyard that rather resembles Munchkinland, this downtown "insider's secret" serves serious Thai food till 9:00 p.m. daily. Tasty classics like the four curries (red, green, panang, and massaman)

come custom-spiced – mild to authentically brain-searing – and are so affordable there's no guilt in splurging on superb house specials like crisp-coated duck or fresh snapper (whole or filleted) in tamarind sauce. The young chef has a heavenly hand at tofu, too, so vegetarians are very well-served. \$\$

MIAMI

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

The Cheese Course

3451 NE 1st Ave., 786-220-6681

www.thecheesecourse.com

Not so much a restaurant as an artisanal cheese shop with complimentary prepared foods, this place's self-service café component nevertheless became an instant hit. Impeccable ingredients and inspired combinations make even the simplest salads and sandwiches unique – like bacon and egg, elevated by hand-crafted cream cheese, roasted red peppers, avocado, and chipotle mayo. Cheese platters are exceptional, and customized for flavor preference from mild to bold, and accompanied by appropriate fruits, veggies, nuts, olives, prepared spreads, and breads. \$\$

Mandolin Aegean Bistro

4312 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-6066

www.mandolinmiami.com

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room – or even more atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden – diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezze: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$\$

Sakaya Kitchen

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-8096

www.sakayakitchen.com

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$

Salsa Fiesta

2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

www.salsafiestagrill.com

The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this "urban Mexican grill" serves health-conscious, made-fresh-daily fare similar in concept to some fast-casual competitors. But there are indeed differences here, notably pan-Latin options: black beans as well as red; thin, delightfully crunchy tostones (available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos). Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers – and free parking. \$-\$\$

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

3250 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0353

www.sugarcanerawbargrill.com

This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens – normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill – make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-rich short ribs. At the

daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$-\$\$\$

MIAMI

UPPER EASTSIDE

Luna Corner Pizza

6815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-507-9209

www.lunacornerpizza.com

At this cheerful takeout/delivery place (masterminded by the Amatruda family, pizza-makers in Italy since 1968), the concept is fast but high-quality whole pies or single slices. Sauce is from flavorful San Marzano tomatoes, and toppings include imported salami picante, pleasantly spicier than American pepperoni. Proprietary electric ovens, designed to transform Luna's secret 24-flour formula into perfectly pliable/foldable crusts in under five minutes, ensure consistently street-neat eats despite the slices' massive size (big pies are 20-inchers). \$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Flamma Brazilian Steakhouse

3913 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall)

305-957-9900, www.flammasteakhouse.com

The rodizio formula is familiar: Pay one price (\$39.90 for dinner, \$29.90 at Sunday brunch), then eat till you drop from a groaning salad/appetizer bar and a massive selection of beef, pork, lamb, poultry, sausage, and fish (16 varieties at dinner; 5 at brunch) carved tableside by costumed waiters. What spectacularly differentiates Flamma: its setting on the Intracoastal Waterway. But also spectacular is a Monday-Thursday two-for-one dinner deal with a coupon available at Flamma. Unbelievable but true. \$\$\$\$

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-crusted tart filled with sinfully rich warm chocolate custard. \$\$\$\$

Area 31

270 Biscayne Boulevard Way

305-524-5234

www.area31restaurant.com

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

Azul

500 Brickell Key Dr.

305-913-8254

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

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

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Red, White, and You

Agreeable wine for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

The box is one of mankind's most useful inventions. It's strong and rugged and comes in a variety of sizes. It's inexpensive. It's perfect for shipping everything from books to refrigerators. It's essential for moving and is pretty much everyone's first choice when it comes to storing items no longer useful around the house.

To quote that great lifestyle maven, Martha "Convicted Felon" Stewart, the box "is a good thing."

Unless you're a wine lover.

To any real fan of the fruit of the vine, the box is as much a prison as any steel-barred jail cell in San Quentin, albeit a biodegradable one. (We will make an exception for the case box, which allows us to feed our addiction by the dozen.) The box, you see, is what we all too often drink inside of, thoughtlessly grabbing another bottle of Cabernet or Merlot or Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc off store shelves without stopping to consider the multitude of interesting, exciting, and perhaps unfamiliar wines that exist outside our (virtual) cardboard prison.

Which brings us to where we are today (and next month, for that matter):

to thinking and then drinking outside the viticultural box. Today we slurp some red wines. Come April we'll swirl, sniff, and snarf down a few whites. And the only boxes will be those we use to haul home our new-found booty.

Tops on this list of not the usual suspects reds is **d'Arenberg's 2007 The Stump Jump**. It's an Australian reference, mate, to a type of plow used way back when to clear vineyard land of the gnarly roots of eucalyptus trees. That said, there's nothing gnarly about this mélange of Grenache (50 percent), Shiraz (29 percent) and Mourvedre (21 percent), and at ten bucks a bottle it's a flat-out steal.

What makes it so impressive is you can actually taste each grape of the blend, starting off with the peppery spice of Shiraz, which gives way to the earthy, musky flavors of Mourvedre, in turn yielding to the bright red cherry character of Grenache. Buy it by the box.

One of the best "old reliable" wines on the market and my go-to Italian wine when nothing else on a wine list seems appealing is any vintage of **Antinori's Santa Cristina Sangiovese**. The 2007 wine contains ten percent Merlot to soften it up a bit, but that doesn't take away from its typical tangy, cherry-berry flavors with earthy-mushroomy undertones and a long citrusy

finish. If there ever was an inexpensive red wine made for pasta, this is it.

You might call Tempranillo the Sangiovese of Spain, and the **2007 Eguren** reprises many of Sangiovese's characteristics. It's got a very fresh, lively nose, with tart strawberry and raspberry fruit and hints of black olives. On the palate it loses some of that complexity, but its light to medium body and generous acidity make it a good companion to a variety of foods.

In that same light, crisp, and tangy vein is the **2006 Domaine Andre Brunel Grenache**. Think tart raspberries and a meal of roasted chicken, veal scallopine, or even meaty fish like salmon, swordfish, or tuna. If you're in the mood for a wine with a bit more heft, the **2006 Briccotondo**

Barbera delivers the kind of bold, brassy,



cassis-olive-pepper-toast flavors that can stand up to hearty beef stews, grilled sausages, and just about any kind of red-sauce pasta.

Your spaghetti may come in a box, but your wine will definitely be outside it.

The luscious Stump Jump blend can be found at the North Miami Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463) for \$9.95. Antinori's Santa Cristina costs \$10.99 and is available at many Publix, including the Biscayne Commons store (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171). The Eguren Tempranillo and Andre Brunel Grenache are both at the North Miami Beach Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) for \$7.99 and \$8.99 respectively. And get Briccotondo's Barbera at the Aventura Cellars Wine & Spirits for \$11.99 (21055 Biscayne Blvd., 305-936-9433).

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Restaurant Listings

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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.de

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 *méthode 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 croquetas, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. The best seats are on the glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Ecco Pizzateca & Lounge

168 SE 1st St.
305-960-1900
www.eccomiami.com

Masterminded by Aramis Lorie (of PS14) and partner Brian Basti, this hip hangout was designed to entice downtown workers to linger after office hours. And even without the expansive, casual-chic space as bait, internationally award-winning Italian pizza chef Massimo Fabio Bruni's exquisitely airy, burn-blistered pies, made from homemade dough, could do the trick. The rest of the organically oriented menu may also great, but with pizzas like the cream/mushroom-topped Bianca beckoning, we'll never know. \$\$\$

Eos

485 Brickell Ave. (Viceroy Hotel)
305-503-0373

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

Fratelli Milano

213 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-2300

Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night.

That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to resist panini, served on foccacia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

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

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

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

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

Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail

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Restaurant Listings

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fish market. Best preparations are the simplest. When stone crabs are in season, Garcia's claws are as good as Joe's but considerably cheaper. The local fish sandwich is most popular – grouper, yellowtail snapper, or mahi mahi. \$\$\$

Grimpa Steakhouse

901 Brickell Plaza
305-455-4757
www.grimpa.com

This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery is sleekly contemporary, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish. And included in the price (dinner \$47, lunch \$34) is the traditional belly-busting buffet of hot and cold prepared foods, salad, cold cuts, and cheeses. A pleasant, nontraditional surprise: unusual sauces like sweet/tart passion fruit or mint, tomato-based BBQ, and mango chutney, along with the ubiquitous chimichurri. \$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Il Gabbiano

335 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-373-0063, www.ilgabbianomiami.com

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

Indochine

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1525
www.indochinebistro.com

Indochine has succeeded by morphing from mere restaurant into hip hangout. Copious special events

draw everyone from downtown business types to the counterculture crowd. Not that there's anything "mere" about the range of food served from three Asian nations. Light eaters can snack on Vietnamese summer rolls or Japanese sushi rolls. For bigger appetites, there are Thai curries and Vietnamese specialties like pho, richly flavored beef soup with meatballs, steak slices, rice noodles, and add-in Asian herbs and sprouts. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

120 SE 3rd Ave.
305-373-2000
(See Miami Shores listing)

La Loggia Ristorante and Lounge

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

This luxuriantly neo-classical yet warm Italian restaurant was unquestionably a pioneer in revitalizing downtown. With alternatives like amaretto-tinged pumpkin agnolotti in sage butter sauce and cilantro-spiced white bean/vegetable salad dressed with truffle oil, proprietors Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira continue to draw a lunch crowd that returns for dinner, or perhaps just stays on through the afternoon, fueled by the Lawyer's Liquid Lunch, a vodka martini spiked with sweetened espresso. \$\$\$

La Moon

144 SW 8th St.
305-860-6209

At four in the morning, nothing quells the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to Colombian classics, there's a salad Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$\$

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 restolounge, the eclectic, mostly small-plate menu ranges from the expected (grilled skirt steak with chimichurri; new-style ceviches, and luxe sushi rolls) to a small but tantalizing selection of chef Gerdy Rodriguez's signature creations. Lunch fare includes modernized "Minuta" fish sandwiches (avocado/habanero vinaigrette-dressed hamachi on nori Kaiser rolls), while dinner offers edgier inventions like confit

pork belly with a panko-crusted egg yolk capsula, the yolk nitrogen-frozen before frying to achieve a crisp crust and delightfully improbable oozing interior. \$\$\$

Miami's Chophouse

300 S. Biscayne Blvd.
305-938-9000

www.mannyssteakhouse.com

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

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

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WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GAME?

Urbanite Bistro's Got the Best Game In Town!

urbanite bistro

All Natural, Organic Hormone Free & Healthy

- Broad Selection of Wild Game
- Wild Caught Fish and Seafood
- Bison Burgers & Angus Burgers
- Vegan & Vegetarian Dishes

2 Full Bars - 30 Craft Beers & 30 Wines by the Glass

Adrienne Arsht Center Events

Pre-theater Dinner with Free
Parking Voucher \$15.00 Value

Daily Recession Lunch Specials

11AM - 3PM, from 15% to 50% Off

Lunch M-F Dinner M-Sat

Happy Hour 5-8pm & 11 till close

COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING

62 NE 14 Street, Miami, FL 33132
(3 blks West of Biscayne Blvd)



"Ambitious but neither pretentious nor pricey" Biscayne Times 2009
"New Urbanite Masters The Art of Dining" Herald 2009

MONDAY'S 5-11PM

2 for 1 Burgers &
\$4 Craft Beers

TUESDAY'S 5-11PM

2 for 1 Appetizers &
\$5 Premium Cocktails

WEDNESDAY'S 5-11PM

Date Night - 2 for 1 Desserts,
& Frank's choice of \$6 Wines

THURSDAY'S 5-Midnight

Wine-o Night, Wine Samplings
and 1/2 priced Tastings

BEER DINNER EVENT

6 Courses / 6 Craft Beers
Friday, March 12, 8:30PM
\$40 Per Person +tax & gratuity
Reserve by March 10th

Rsvn / Delv / Take Away

305-374-0662

full menu at www.urbanitebistro.com

Restaurant Listings

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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 fiocchi purses filled with fresh pear and gorgonzola. And Sunday's \$15.95 brunch buffet (\$9.95 for kids) – featuring an omelet station, waffles, smoked salmon and bagels, salads, and more – remains one of our town's most civilized all-you-can-eat deals. \$\$\$

Prelude

Adrienne Arsh Center

1300 Biscayne Blvd.

305-949-6722

Though the opening of Barton G.'s elegant performing arts center eatery did feature a live giraffe, the food's actually more grown-up than at his original SoBe spot. The concept is prix fixe: Any three courses on the menu (meaning three entrées if you want) for \$39. Highlights include silky, 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. \$\$\$

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.thevermiami.com

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

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave.

786-425-1001

www.rosamexicano.com

This expansive indoor/outdoor space offers a dining experience that's haute in everything but price. Few entrées top \$20. The décor is both date-worthy and family-friendly – festive but not kitschy. And nonsophisticates needn't fear; though nachos aren't available, there is nothing scary about zarape de pato (roast duck between freshly made, soft corn tortillas, topped with yellow-and-habane-ro-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 "bistolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with ri'gawt for Grandpa Winnie, 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 house-made brown bread; puff-pastry-wrapped Irish sausage rolls; lunchtime's imported Irish bacon or banger "butty" sandwiches on crusty baguettes, served with hand-cut fries, the latter particularly terrific dipped in Waxy's curry sauce. \$\$\$

Wok Town

119 SE 1st Ave.

305-371-9993, www.woktown.com

Judging from the takeout window, the minimalist décor (with communal seating), and predominance of American veggies on the menu, this Asian fast-food eatery, owned by Shai Ben-Ami (a Miss Yip and Domo Japanese 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 fries, 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

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-571-8341

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. \$\$\$

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DINING GUIDE

Restaurant Listings

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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 Grrrlz of Sandwich

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

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

Joey's Italian Café

2506 NW 2nd Ave., 305-438-0488

The first new restaurant in the Wynwood Café District, this stylish indoor/outdoor Italian hangout is as casually cool as one would hope — and as affordable. There's a five-buck half-serving of spaghetti al pomodoro and respectable vino for under \$30. And few can resist delicately thin, crunchy-crust-ed pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 ambience, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$\$

Lemoni Café

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

The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

www.limefreshmexicangrill.com

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

Maino Churrascaria

2201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-571-9044

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

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 Sbroggio 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, flocchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

Out of the Blue Café

2426 NE 2nd Ave.

305-573-3800, www.outofthebluecafe.net

Forget impersonal chain coffeehouses. This artist-friendly, independent neighborhood café serves a full selection of coffee drinks made with the award-winning beans of

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La Provence

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2200 Biscayne Location.
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Restaurant Listings

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

Pacific Time

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

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

Pasha's

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

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 guanciale (cured, unsmoked pork cheek bacon), pungent artisan pepperoni, grana padano, locally made mozzarella, and Italian tomatoes. For meatless pies, we recommend the Bianca, a thyme-seasoned pizza whose plentiful cheeses are beautifully balanced by bitter arugula. Bring a crowd and taste half-a-dozen different mozzarellas. \$\$

Primo's

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-371-9055

The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hangout vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$

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 restorolounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotic or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour mayo and a salad. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

S & S Diner

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

Some things never change, or so it seems at this classic diner. Open since 1938, people still line up on Saturday mornings, waiting for a seat at the counter and enormous breakfasts: corned beef hash or crab cakes and eggs with grits; fluffy pancakes; homemade biscuits with gravy and Georgia sausage – everything from oatmeal to eggs Benedict. The lunch menu is a roll call of the usual suspects, but most regulars ignore the menu and go for the daily blackboard specials. \$\$\$

Sra. Martinez

4000 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But it's no absentee celebrity-chef gig. Bernstein is hands-on at both places. Her exuberant yet firmly controlled personal touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas on the menu. Items are frequently reinvented. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas with fig jam; white bean stew; crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/coriander dip; and buttery bone marrow piqued with Middle Eastern spices and balanced by tiny pickled salads. \$\$\$

Tony Chan's Water Club

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

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

W Wine Bistro

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

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

Upper Eastside

Andiamo

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

Sharing a building with a long-established Morningside car wash, Andiamo is also part of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station – which means ditching the car (in the complex's free lot across the road on NE 4th Court) is no problem even if you're not getting your vehicle cleaned while consuming the brick-oven pies (from a flaming open oven) that are this popular pizzeria's specialty, along with executive chef Frank Crupi's famed Philly cheese steak sandwiches. Also available are salads and panini plus reasonably priced wines and beers, including a few unusually sophisticated selections like Belgium's Hoegaarden. \$\$

Anise Taverna

620 NE 78th St.
305-758-2929

www.anisetaverna.com

The new owners of this river shack are banking on Greek food and festivity for success – a good bet, judging from their wildly popular previous eatery, Ouzo. The mainly mezze menu ranges from traditional Greek small plates to creative Mediterranean-inspired dishes like anise-scented fish croquettes with spicy aioli. But don't neglect large plates like whole grilled Mediterranean fish (dorade or branzino), filleted tableside. The interior is charming, and the outdoor deck on the Little River is positively romantic. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Bistro 82

8201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-2995

As with Latin American food, much Middle Eastern restaurant fare blurs borders, making it hard to pinpoint individual countries' culinary characteristics. Here, though, national identity is strong. Virtually all dishes, from savory falafel to sweet k'nafah (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 pasteis 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: crevette en sauce (steamed shrimp with Creole butter sauce), lambi fri (perfectly tenderized fried conch), poison 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 Argentinean 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

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Restaurant Listings

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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 drippingly wonderful pan con lechon), rich flan, and the fresh tropical juices that justify the aforementioned excesses. For even heartier eaters, there's a changing buffet of daily specials and sides. \$-\$\$

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 Technon. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot cappicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate

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

Garden of Eatin'

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

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

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd.

305-762-7229

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

Go To Sushi

5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

www.gotosushimiami.com

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 restolounge, or like anything else in Miami.

Forbidding from the outside, on the inside it's like a time-trip to a cabaret in pre-WWII Berlin: bordello-red décor, romantically dim lighting, show-tune live piano bar entertainment, and to match the ambiance, elegantly updated retro food served with style and a smile. For those feeling flush, home-style fried chicken is just like mom used to make – in her wildest dreams. \$\$\$

Metro Organic Bistro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

Big changes have come to Karma the car wash, the first being a separate new name for the revamped restaurant: Metro Organic Bistro, an all-organic fine-dining restaurant where simple preparations reveal and enhance natural flavors. An entirely new menu places emphasis on grilled organic meat and fish dishes. Try the steak frites – organic, grass-fed skirt steak with organic chimichurri and fresh-cut fries. Vegetarians will love the organic portabella foccacia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$-\$\$\$

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquettes. 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,

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Restaurant Listings

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tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Moshi Moshi

7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404

This offspring of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an izakaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip décor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank; rarely found in restaurants even in Japan, they're popular Japanese home-cooking items. And rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer/sweeter than Indian types) satisfy even the biggest appetites. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

News Lounge

5582 NE 4th Ct.

305-758-9932, www.the55thstation.com

Mark Soyka's new News is, as its name suggests, more a friendly neighborhood hangout and watering hole than a full-fledged eatery. Nevertheless the menu of light bites is — along with other lures like an inviting outdoor patio and rest rooms that resemble eclectic art galleries — part of the reason visitors stay for hours. Especially recommended are fat mini-burgers with chipotle ketchup; a brie, turkey, and mango chutney sandwich on crusty baguette; and what many feel is the original café's Greatest Hit: creamy hummus with warm pita. \$

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 fume (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 meat-loaf with mashed potatoes, crab cakes with spicy-sweet

slaw, a wild mushroom/smoked mozzarella pizza, or a Cobb salad may not be revolutionary fare, but Soyka continues to thrive while more ambitious, nationally publicized restaurants have come and gone. Take-out orders and breakfast are now available. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam

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

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) roes, and special sauces. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$

UVA 69

6900 Biscayne Blvd.

305-754-9022; www.uva-69.com

Owned and operated by brothers Michael and Sinuhé Vega, this casual outdoor/indoor Euro-café and lounge has helped to transform the Boulevard into a hip place to hang out. Lunch includes a variety of salads and elegant sandwiches like La Minuta (beer-battered mahi-mahi with cilantro aioli and caramelized onions on housemade focaccia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Ver-Daddys Taco Shop

7501 Biscayne Blvd, 305-303-9755

At this soulful taco shop, the menu descriptions are in common English ("cinnamon puffs" drizzled with honey and lime, not "buñuelos"). But taco fillings range from ground beef and shredded chicken to more unusual pork in chili verde or Baja battered fish (authentically garnished with Mexican crema and cilantro-spiked cabbage). And all offerings can be loaded with other garnishes from the kitchen (refried beans, cheese, crema) or less

perishable offerings from a salsa bar. For the health-minded, oils are nonhydrogenated, and sauces/seasonings are all housemade and free of preservatives. \$

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 home-made soups. Arepas include our favorite corn cake: the hefty Aura, stuffed with chorizo, chicharron, carne desmechada (shredded flank steak), plantains, rice, beans, and cheese. \$\$\$

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

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Sakaya Kitchen



Photo by Simon Hare

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DINING GUIDE

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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.oggiccafe.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, shiitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$-\$\$\$

Shuckers Bar & Grill 1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570

"Cheap eats and a million-dollar view" is the sound bite manager Philip Conklin uses to describe this outdoor beach bar, hidden in back of a bayfront motel. The joint dates from South Beach's late 1980s revival, but the kick-off-your-shoes vibe couldn't be farther from SoBe glitz. The food ranges from classic bar favorites (char-grilled wings, conch fritters, raw or steamed shellfish) to full dinners featuring steak, homemade pasta, or fresh, not frozen, fish. \$\$-\$\$

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

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

NORTH BEACH

Café Prima Pasta 414 71st St., 305-867-0106, www.primapasta.com

Opened in 1993 with 28 seats, this family-run landmark has now taken over the block, with an outdoor terrace and multi-roomed indoor space whose walls are full of photos of their clientele, including national and local celebs. Particularly popular are homemade pastas, sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence rather than Italian simplicity: crabmeat raviolotti in lobster cream sauce, black squid ink linguini heaped with seafood. Though romantic enough for dates, the place is quite kid-friendly – and on the terrace, they'll even feed Fido. \$\$\$

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

When an eatery's executive chef is best-selling Thai cookbook author Vatcharin Bhumichitr, you'd expect major media hype, fancy South Beach prices, and a fancy SoBe address. Instead Bhumichitr joined forces with Day Longsomboon (an old Thai school pal who'd moved to Miami) at this unpretentious, authentic (no sushi) neighborhood place. Some standout dishes here are featured in the chef's latest tome, but with Tamarind's very affordable prices, you might as well let the man's impeccable 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 chorocho 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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Restaurant Listings

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Burritos Grill Café

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

Originally a friendly little 125th Street hole-in-the-wall that garnered raves for its limited menu of terrifically tasty treats, Mario and Karina Manzanero's café is now in more sizable and atmospheric quarters. But the friendly, family-run (and kid-friendly) ambiance remains, as do the authentic Yucatan-style specialties. Standouts include poc-chuc, a 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. \$\$\$

Mama Jennie's

11720 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Mario the Baker

13695 W. Dixie Highway

305-891-7641, www.mariothebakerpizza.com

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

Petit Rouge

12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and

bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

Sara's

2214 NE 123rd St.

305-891-3312, www.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, schmopperrr — may cause queasiness. But the schmopperrr itself is one helluva high-octane veggie burger. \$\$\$

Steve's Pizza

12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paper-thin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn't do the trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve's has, since 1974, been serving the kind of comforting, retro pizzas people crave at that hour. As in Brooklyn, tomato sauce is sweet, with strong oregano flavor. Mozzarella is applied with abandon. Toppings are stuff that give strength: pepperoni, sausage, meatballs, onions, and peppers. \$

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like teriyaki fish (fresh fish sautéed with vegetables), curried chicken and veggies, spicy shrimp, or gyoza dumplings in tangy sauce. There's also an all-you-can-eat deal — sushi (individual nigiri or maki rolls) plus tempura, teriyaki, and other cooked items for \$14; three bucks more for sashimi instead of sushi. \$\$\$

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

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

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

The menu reads like a textbook on how to please everyone, with food ranging from traditional Chinese to Chinese-American to just plain American. Appetizers include honey garlic chicken wings or Buffalo wings. A crab-claw starter comes with choice of pork fried rice or French fries. Seafood lovers can get shrimp chop suey, or salty pepper shrimp (authentically shell-on). And New Yorkers will find a number of dishes that are mainstays of Manhattan Szechuan menus but not common in Miami: cold sesame noodles, Hunan chicken, twice-cooked pork. \$\$

Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich

13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451

The griddle has been fired up since 1954 at this indie

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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 (majorly breaded boneless chunks, with comfortingly thick gravy). \$-\$\$

Chipotle Mexican Grill

14776 Biscayne Blvd.

305-947-2779, www.chipotle.com

Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn tortillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef 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) 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 Renaissa. 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.

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They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant

514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309
Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an unatmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and vindaloes are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$\$

King Palace

330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339
The specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style barbecue (whole ducks, roast pork strips, and more, displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better-than-average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. \$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800
(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

Laurenzo's Market Café

16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381, www.laurenzomarket.com
It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international

gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta 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 fougasse, or another of the signature artisan breads transports you right back to France. As authentic as the boulangerie breads are, the patisserie items like fian normande are just as evocative. For eat-in diners, quite continental soups, salads, and sandwiches are equally and dependably French. \$\$

Pizza Fusion

14815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-405-6700, www.pizzafusion.com
"Saving the earth one pizza at a time" is the motto at this franchise of the only pizza chain to require third-party organic restaurant certification at all locations. Their gluten-free crusts make it mighty friendly to pizza fanatics with food allergies. Starters, salads, desserts, and organic wines/beers are also served. And delivery is available – in hybrid cars, of course. Specials unique to this NMB franchise include Sunday-Thursday happy hours, a free Kids Organic Club class on Saturdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m., and varied Monday-Wednesday freebies. \$\$\$

PK Oriental Mart

255 NE 167th St., 305-654-9646
Unlike other Asian markets on this strip between I-95 and Biscayne Boulevard, PK has a prepared-food counter, serving authentic Chinatown barbecue, with appropriate dipping sauces included. Weekends bring the biggest selection, including barbecued ribs and pa pei duck (roasted, then deep-fried till extra crisp and nearly free of subcutaneous fat). Available every day are juicy, soy-marinated roast chickens, roast pork strips, crispy pork, and whole roast ducks – hanging, beaks and all. But no worries; a counterperson will chop your purchase into bite-size, beakless pieces. \$

Racks Italian Kitchen

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

Roasters & Toasters

18515 NE 18th Ave., 305-830-3354
Attention ex-New Yorkers: Is your idea of food porn one of the Carnegie Deli's mile-high pastrami sandwiches? Well, Roasters will dwarf them. Consider the "Carnegie-style" monster containing, according to the menu, a full pound of succulent meat (really 1.4 pounds; we weighed it, for a mere 15 bucks. All the other Jewish deli classics are here too, including perfectly sour pickles, silky hand-sliced nova or lox, truly red-rare roast beef, and the cutest two-bite mini-potato pancakes ever – eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$)

Sang's Chinese Restaurant

1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076
Sang's has three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esotérica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea House

237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008, www.shingwangrestaurant.com
At this unique Taiwanese eatery, run by a trio of Taipei-trained female chefs, all seafood, poultry, and meats in the budget-priced entrées (\$6.95) are mock – imitations made from wheat gluten, tofu, and vegetables. But don't mock it till you try the quite beefy pepper steak, or smokin' duck, with slices that mimic the charcuterie item down to convincing faux fat. Other main dishes feature recognizable veggies or noodles. As for the rest of the name: iced is shaved ice, an over-the-top dessert that's a sort of a slurpee sundae, with toppings that vary from the familiar (fresh fruits) to the weird (grass jelly, sweet corn,

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 62

kidney beans, rice balls, chocolate pudding). And the bubble tea is a must-not-miss. Using housemade syrup, the cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors (mango, taro, even actual tea), all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, slurped through large-diameter straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

Siam Square

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

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

Scorch Grillhouse and Wine Bar

13750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5588

www.scorchgrillhouse.com

Though some food folks were initially exasperated when yet another Latin-influenced grill replaced one of our area's few Vietnamese restaurants, it's hard to bear a grudge at a friendly, casual neighborhood place that offers monster ten-ounce char-grilled burgers, with potatoes or salad, for \$8.50; steaks, plus a side and a sauce or veg topper, for nine bucks at lunch, \$15 to \$18.75 (the menu's top price) at night; and three-dollar glasses of decent house wine. \$-\$

Sushi House

15911 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-6002

In terms of décor drama, this sushi spot seems to have taken its cue from Philippe Starck: sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster makis like the Cubbie Comfort: spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy mayo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green 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 portobellos, capers, parmesan slices, and lemon/tomato dressing) and linguine carbonara (in creamy sauce with pancetta and shallots) are a breath of fresh, albeit familiar, air. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Bourbon Steak

19999 W. Country Club Dr.

(Fairmont Hotel, Turnberry Resort) 786-279-0658, www.michaelmina.net

At Bourbon Steak, a venture in the exploding restaurant empire of chef Michael Mina, a multiple James Beard award winner, steakhouse fare is just where the fare starts. There are also Mina's ingenious signature dishes, like an elegant deconstructed lobster/baby vegetable pot pie, a raw bar, and enough delectable vegetable/seafood starters and sides for noncarnivores to assemble a happy meal. But don't neglect the steak — flavorful dry-aged Angus, 100-percent Wagyu American "Kobe," swoonworthy grade A5 Japanese Kobe, and butter-poached prime rib, all cooked to perfection. \$\$\$

Chef Allen's

19088 NE 29th Ave

305-935-2900, www.chefallens.com

After 20 years of success in the same location, many chefs would coast on their backlog of tried-and-true dishes. And it's doubtful that kindly Allen Susser would freak out his many regulars by eliminating from the menu the Bahamian lobster and crab cakes. But lobster-lovers

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

Il Migliore

2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 305-792-2902

Chef Neal Cooper's attractive trattoria gets the food right, as well as the ambiance. As in Italy, dishes rely on impeccable ingredients and straightforward recipes that don't overcomplicate, cover up, or otherwise muck about with that perfection. Fresh fettuccine with white truffle oil and mixed wild mushrooms needs nothing else. Neither does the signature Pollo Al Mattone, marinated in herbs and cooked under a brick. And even low-carb dieters happily go to hell in a hand basket when faced with a mound of potatoes alla Toscana, herb-sprinkled French fries. \$\$\$

Mahogany Grille

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

Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves and an international clientele since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother transformed this place in 2007. Today it's white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The menu is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion of food from several African diaspora regions: Carolina Low Country (buttery cheese grits with shrimp, sausage, and cream gravy), the Caribbean (conch-packed fritters or salad), and the Old South (lightly buttermilk-battered fried chicken). The chicken is perhaps Miami's best. \$\$\$

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.pilarrestaurant.com

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Militello. He has been executive chef at Rumi, and cooked at NYC's James Beard House. Armed with those impressive credentials, Fredel and his wife launched Pilar (named for Hemingway's boat) aiming to prove that top restaurants can be affordable. Consider it proven. Floribbean-style seafood is the specialty: fresh hearts of palm slaw and Caribbean curry sauce, rock shrimp spring rolls with sweet soy glaze, yellowtail snapper with tomato-herb vinaigrette. Forget its strip-mall location. The restaurant itself is elegant. \$\$\$

Pizza Roma

19090 NE 29th Ave., 305-937-4884

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

The Soup Man

20475 Biscayne Blvd. #G-8, 305-466-9033

The real soup man behind this franchise is Al Yeganeh, an antisocial Manhattan restaurant proprietor made notorious, on a Seinfeld episode, as "the soup Nazi." On the menu: ten different premium soups each day. The selection is carefully balanced among meat/poultry-based and vegetarian; clear and creamy (like the eatery's signature shellfish-packed lobster bisque); chilled and hot; familiar (chicken noodle) and exotic (mulligatawny). All soups come with gourmet bread, fruit, and imported chocolate. Also available are salads, sandwiches, and wraps. \$\$\$

Sushi Siam

19575 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)



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