

BISCAYNE

Times

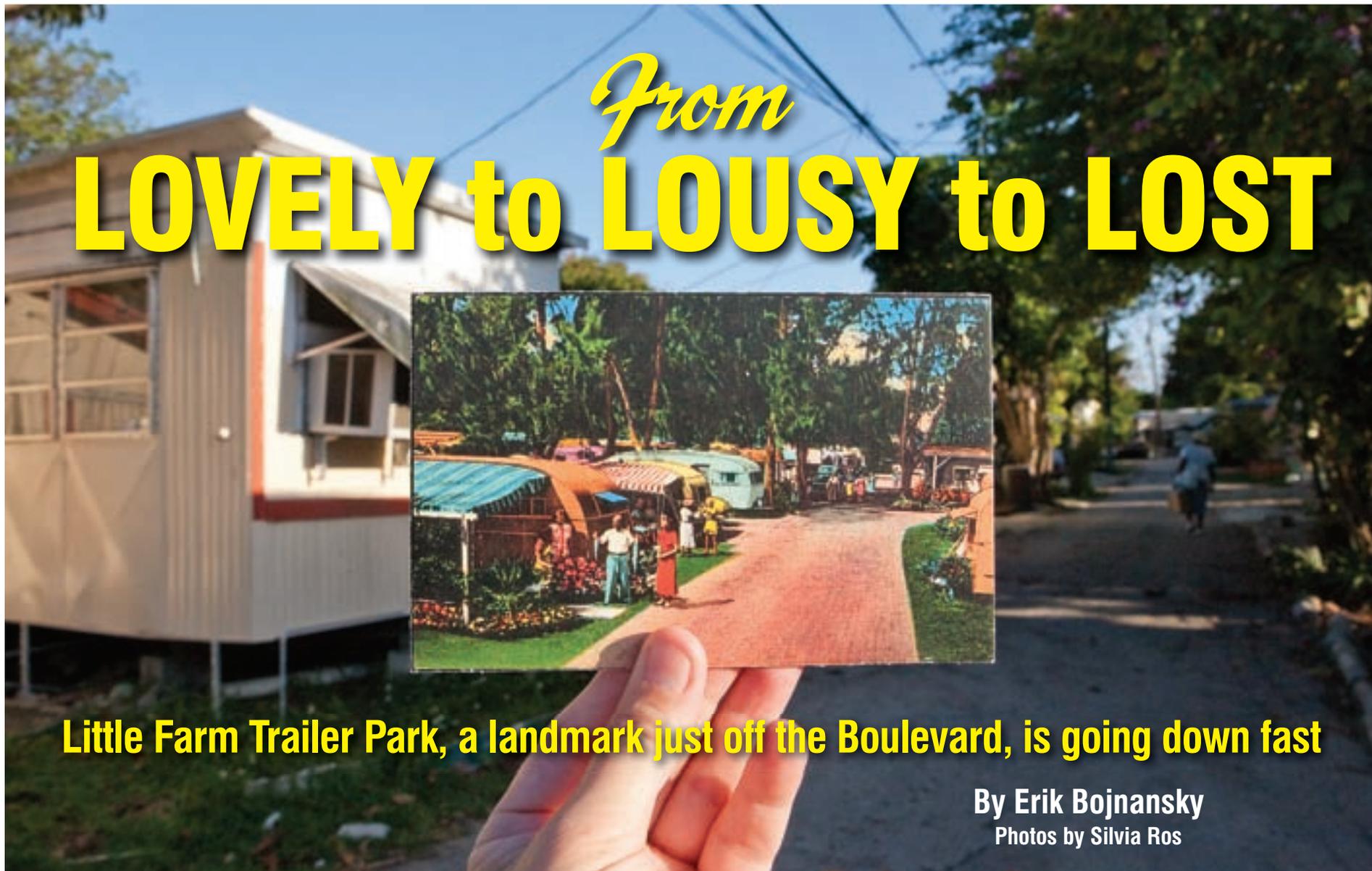
NEW THIS ISSUE
Gaspar González p. 22
Bill Citara's "Vino" p. 50
7 New Restaurants p. 54

Serving communities along the Biscayne Corridor: Arch Creek East, Aventura, Bay Point, Bayside, Biscayne Park, Belle Meade, Buena Vista, Design District, Downtown, Eastern Shores, Edgewater, El Portal, Hibiscus Island, Keystone Point, Miami Shores, Morningside, North Bay Island, North Miami, North Miami Beach, Oakland Grove, Palm Grove, Palm Island, Sans Souci, Shorecrest, Star Island, Wynwood, and Venetian Islands

www.BiscayneTimes.com

April 2010

Volume 8, Issue 2



From **LOVELY** to **LOUSY** to **LOST**

Little Farm Trailer Park, a landmark just off the Boulevard, is going down fast

By Erik Bojnansky
Photos by Silvia Ros

The official address is 8500 Biscayne Blvd., but you won't easily see this 15-acre community from your car. To reach it from the Boulevard, drive west between the shuttered Price Supermarket and the abandoned Laundry

Partners building (with its distinctive steeple) to a small roadway that leads to a metal gate.

Beyond the open gate lies a mobile-home community with a 66-year history known to few, where people of all ages

and backgrounds uneasily co-exist in cramped quarters, and where police say criminal activity is rampant.

Because some unknown number of residents are undocumented immigrants, an accurate census does not exist,

according to Jason Walker, manager of El Portal, within whose borders the mobile-home community exists. Walker's best estimate: Between 600 and 1000

Continued on page 14



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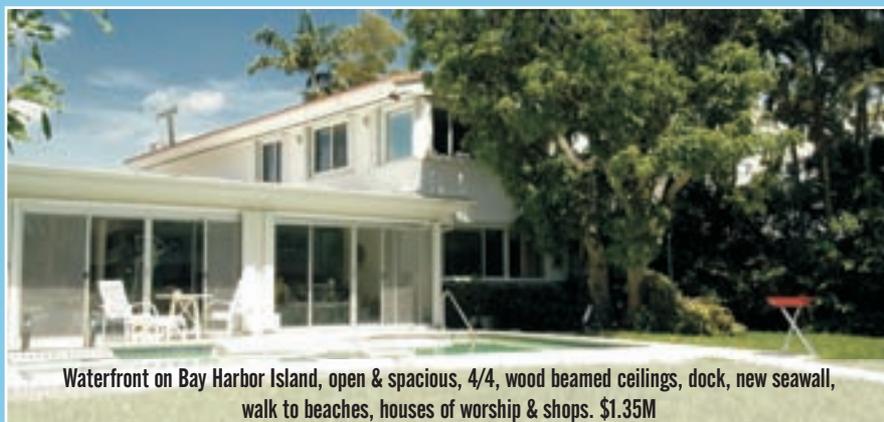
Intracoastal Elegance in Golden Beach, 7/7, media room like your own theater, gourmet kitchen w/ professional Thermador & Subzero appl., 2 boat lifts, pool, Jacuzzi, 4 car gar.



Bay Harbor Island Contemporary style 4/3 in pristine condition, Brazilian cherry wood flrs, huge Master ste, exquisite open kitchen. \$995K



Keystone Point Waterfront 3/2, 1 car garage, new marble floors, big yard, dock. \$699K



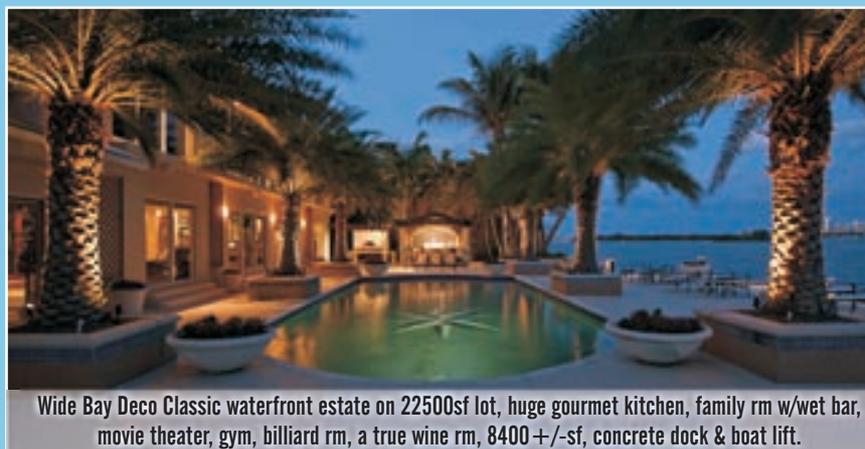
Waterfront on Bay Harbor Island, open & spacious, 4/4, wood beamed ceilings, dock, new seawall, walk to beaches, houses of worship & shops. \$1.35M



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SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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APRIL 4

4 Mamma Mia!
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-New York Post

11 Miami City Ballet:
Program IV **Z**
2:00PM
New World
Symphony:
The Mahler Legacy
2:00PM **K**

18 Free Gospel Sundays
4:00PM **K**
Featuring Vanessa Bell
Armstrong

BROADSWORD

BY MARCO RAMIREZ

"BroadSword
is must-see
theater!"
The Miami Herald



APRIL 29-
MAY 9



the
**BUTTERFLY
GARDEN**
APRIL 16-17

29 BroadSword
8:00PM **C**
For one last gig, they'll
go through Hell...
"BroadSword is
must-see theater!"
-The Miami Herald

9 Miami City Ballet
Program IV
8:00PM **Z**
Dances at a Gathering
(Choreographer: Robbins
Composer: Chopin)
Who Cares?
(Choreographer: Balanchine
Composer: Gerstwin)

16 The Butterfly Garden
7:30PM **C**
JAZZ ROOTS:
Piano Latino
8:00PM **K**
Featuring Eddie Palmieri,
Michel Camilo, and
Alfredo Rodriguez

24 Florida Grand Opera:
Carmen
7:00PM **Z**
You know the story.
You adore the music.
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EDDIE PALMIERI
MICHEL CAMILO

AND INTRODUCING ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ

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28 Florida Grand Opera:
Carmen **Z**
8:00PM
A seductive and
tempestuous gypsy
captures the heart of a
young soldier.

30 BroadSword
8:00PM **C**
Florida Grand Opera:
Carmen
8:00PM **Z**

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BISCAYNE Times

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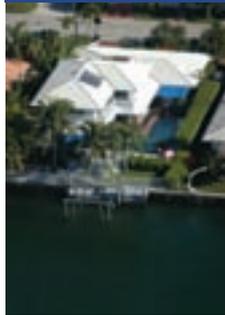
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6 BDR 4 BTH 1 Car Garage 3931 Sq Ft ONLY 789K
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Friday, April 23 at 7:30 PM
Saturday, April 24 at 8:00 PM
Sunday, April 25 at 4:00 PM

St. Christopher's by-the-Sea, Key Biscayne, FL
First United Methodist Church, Coral Gables, FL
All Saints Episcopal Church, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Miami Beach Community Church, Miami Beach, FL



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COMMENTARY: FEEDBACK

Letters to the Editor

Question: Are There "Dues" a White Guy Is Supposed To Pay?

This is in response to Kathy Glasgow's article on Haitian activist Lucie Tondreau ("Hurricane Lucie," March 2010). What I learned from reading this is that there are the American-born blacks and there are Haitian-born blacks. And that there are county commission seats reserved for American blacks, because being born an American black, you have paid your dues. Meaning that if you are of Haitian decent, you haven't paid your dues — at least not in America.

I also learned that Haitian-American citizens should vote for Haitians because only they know what it's like to be a Haitian.

Now that we have those two markers by which to judge, how will we know if political candidates are competent or honest? Or does that even matter?

Is there a definition of American black "dues"? Maybe a rating system to determine what percentage of those "dues" have been paid?

But what if the Haitian has an American mother, or the African American is bi-racial? And what happens if the Haitian is a "blinged-up fat one" and the bulk of his donations come from Brickell Avenue law firms?

What should a white boy do to do? Should I call *Help Me Howard*? Or just stay home because I haven't paid my dues and I don't know what it is to be Haitian or African American?

I've got it! I think I'll ask that nice lady Ms. Spence-Jones. She'll give me an honest answer.

Ralph Camerlengo
Miami Shores

Whooooooooooooo Wouldn't Love That Wonderful Story?

I really enjoyed Karen-Janine Cohen's delightful article about owl houses being hammered together by residents in Biscayne Park ("What a Hoot!" March 2010). It makes me feel like I want to know more about these kinds of owls.

It makes me feel that I want to go to Biscayne Park and try to look for these beautiful creatures and take some pictures.

It makes me feel that good people are still around doing great things for animals and nature.

I loved the part where she described the house-building as "a kind of *Extreme Makeover: Owl Home Edition*".

Thank you, Ms. Cohen. Well done!
Please write more and more!

Ingrid Barreneche
Brickell

Upper Eastside Townhall Meeting

On Wednesday, April 21, Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, city manager Carlos Migoya, and the directors of Miami's code enforcement and Neighborhood Enhancement Team departments will take your questions at the first Upper Eastside Quarterly Townhall Meeting.

All city residents are welcome to the gathering, which will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Legion Park meeting hall, 6447 NE 7th Ave. (entrance from NE 64th Street).

The event is being sponsored by the Shorecrest Homeowners Association. For more information contact association president Jack Spirk at 305-756-0620.

Yes, a Nicely Restored Motel, but Not the *First* Nicely Restored Motel

I am writing in regards to Karen-Janine Cohen's article "Once a Beauty, Always a Beauty: Introducing the First Completely Restored MiMo Motel" (March 2010).

I don't want to take away anything from the New Yorker Motel renovation. The owners should be recognized for being true pioneers in the revitalization of the Biscayne Boulevard. But the New Yorker is not the first motel to be renovated. The Motel Bianco (formerly the Biscayne Inn) at 5255 Biscayne Blvd. has been rehabilitated and was reopened on January 1 of this year.

The Bianco's owners renovated the motel rooms and the public spaces. They're currently waiting for their new signage and landscaping to be completed. And they have scheduled a professional photo shoot so they can promote the property to the mainstream lodging media. They hired Miami designers DADA Interior Design studio and DEN Architecture to oversee the design.

Ms. Cohen's New Yorker article forgot to mention that the property owners also hired DADA, an award-winning hotel design firm and with expertise in the MiMo period. DADA consulted with the New Yorker's owners on all design

Continued on page 51

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NORTH MIAMI

KEYSTONE ISLAND 4BR 3BTH

Totally renovated waterfront pool home with 2 car garage & great South views. 24HR Guard-Gated community. Located approx 500FT from the bay. Ocean Access. Rebuilt in 2007. Private Dock.



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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.



\$430,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 3BR 2 1/2 BTH

Lovely renovated Multi-Level townhouse with new kitchen. Tile floors and bamboo floors in bedrooms. High ceilings in bedrooms. Master BR has loft/office and 2 W-I C. Large patio area and 22ft boat dock space behind unit



\$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. 1800SQ 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.

BizBuzz: April 2010

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Since **Seraphic Fire** formed in 2002, the musically daring chamber choir (first classical ensemble since 1994 to hit *Billboard's* Top 10 charts) has become South Florida's hottest classical music ticket. And that ticket is \$5 off for four April concerts of Gregorian chants: 4/22 (St. Christopher's by-the-Sea, Key Biscayne), 4/23 (First United Methodist Church, Coral Gables), 4/24 (All Saints Episcopal Church, Fort Lauderdale), 4/25 (Miami Beach Community Church). For tix: www.SeraphicFire.org or 888-544-FIRE; use code BT10 for the *Biscayne Times* discount.

Speaking of discounts, the **Miami Parking Authority** has something sweet for all City of Miami residents: 20% off all Pay by Phone parking purchases. Call 305-373-6789 to either sign up for the discount with your existing Pay by Phone account, or to set up a new account. By the way, using your phone to pay for parking (even from the restaurant), is itself pretty sweet.

Arts fans on starving-artist budgets are in luck this month. On April 17, the **North Miami Arts Collective** (845 NE 125th St., 786-238-1264) has designed an evening of dance, theater, music, and spoken-word performances by artists-in-residence Ana Miranda, Rosie Herrera, Ana Bolt, and Marie Whitman. For *Biscayne Times* readers, tickets are only \$5. To reserve seats, call or visit in person, mentioning the *BT*.

Spring is the season for starting anew. And if you'd like to do that in a



Ascot Furniture



Hiro's Yakko-san



North Miami Arts Collective



Seraphic Fire



Moti Horenstein

Keystone Point or Sans Souci Estates waterfront home, buy now, says Realtor **Jeff Tomlinson**. "Our inventory has been nearly cut in half in the last 12 months," he notes. To nab one of Tomlinson Realty Group's last inexpensive (below 700K) waterfront properties in these prime locations, call 305-895-5333.

If refurbishing your current residence seems more like it, full-service upholstery firm **Designs 2000** (305-765-8003, www.upholsterydesigns2000.com) has recently relocated to 355 NE 59th St. and opened a vintage furniture shop called Off the Wall (241 NE 58th Terr.). The synergy is a win-win: Furniture

buyers who love a retro piece that doesn't match their décor can change fabrics affordably.

Looks like the cold weather is finally over — knock on wood. And you'll want to make that wood *teak*, since **Ascot Furniture** (12951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2131) is offering *BT* readers 20% off on its large selection of maintenance-free outdoor benches.

It's not too soon to prepare for summer's hurricane season, according to new advertiser **Coastline Windows & Doors** (305-373-6181). Impact-resistant windows and doors can be installed in three

or four weeks now, but take six to eight weeks once we're into the season. So the company has a generous offer for *BT* readers: 25% off all orders placed in April. That could add up to some serious coin.

Not a new restaurant but another new *BT* advertiser: **Hiro's Yakko-san** (17040-48 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-947-0064). When you walk into an eatery at 2:00 a.m. and find sushi chefs from all over town feasting on authentic izakaya-style Japanese home cooking (basically everything *but* sushi), you know

you're in the right place.

Sometimes aerobics isn't just about getting your heart healthy; it's also about having a heart. **M Power Project** gym (9301 NE 6th Ave., 305-758-8600) reports it's currently planning a three-hour "Aerobathon" in May, to help raise funds for Kids United Foundation's 2010 Kids Get Fit summer program — where activities encompass psychological survival skills as well as physical fitness.

Continued on page 52

1060 NE 95 Street



\$379,500

Large Deco style 3/3 one block from the bay. Wood floors. Granite kitchen. Garage. Central A/C.

1099 NE 96 Street



\$749,500

Huge Marble clad 4/3 on big corner lot. 3,500+ sq. feet. Walk to the bay. Resort style pool/patio

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Sailors, Senators, and Slaves

As regattas bring on the tourists, politicians bring on the yawns

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Just a few random thoughts from our fair hometown. Everyone has been talking about how much tourism is down in South Florida over the past few years and how slowly it is coming back. But there is one area where it has been growing steadily, though few people ever see or even know about it: sailing.

Starting around December and running through mid-April, some 10,000 sailors come here to participate in numerous regattas. They arrive in groups of 20 to 30 for small events, and they surge in for large events like the Orange Bowl Regatta, during which 700 kids and 1000 parents invade Miami between the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Over the course of the year, it adds up to about 15,000 people coming here to sail and staying an average of one full week. That's quite an economic impact. And unlike the Super Bowl, in which lots of visitors are in town for one specific week, it's spread out over time, which helps to sustain local businesses.

Most of this takes place in the Coconut Grove-Brickell corridor, and some of it on South Beach. For years nobody noticed, but not long ago Coconut Grove marketing maven Daisy Lewis put together a promotional package called "Sail the Grove," and it has become a huge success, both in terms of marketing and in educating merchants and restaurateurs about sailing and sailors — and the fact that they spend real money.

Now a group of sailors and marketers, led by David Pina, has secured a stopover for the 2011-2012 Volvo Around

the World race. It will be here in April 2012, a fitting close to Miami's racing season. Six Miamians worked a year to bring us the event, which will be managed by a nonprofit corporation. You'll be hearing a lot more about it in the coming months.

Speaking of efforts to sustain tourism here in South Florida, you have to hand it to the Super Bowl Host Committee. According to *New Times*, they persuaded the Miami-Dade Police Department to put off their crackdown on hookers and massage parlors until after the Super Bowl crowds had left town. God knows we didn't need any adverse publicity while they were here, so we sent them home with smiles on their faces and empty wallets.

Five months from now we'll have primary elections for Florida's new governor and U.S. Senator. It appears that no one really wants either job. In the senate race on the Republican side we have our illustrious and well-tanned governor, Charlie Crist, whose claim to fame is that he has held nearly every elective office in Florida and has never made a mistake. That's because he has never actually done anything.

Also on the Republican side we have Marco Rubio, who hasn't done much either. Despite that, he's become the darling of right-wing tea partiers. (I liked it better when they called



themselves "tea baggers.") With Crist now trailing Rubio in the polls, the candidates have moved into the bash-the-other-guy and take-no-prisoners mode. We'll see who survives politically. With any luck, neither one will.

On the Democratic side, we have U.S. Rep. Kendrick Meek, who has yet to show us much, certainly not as much as his mother did. And running against him is Maurice Ferre, who had a long stint as mayor of Miami as well spending time on the Miami-Dade County Commission. Recently Ferre has been in a pitched battle with the *Miami Herald* over who remembers what about city finances when Ferre left the mayor's office a quarter-century ago. Really a compelling discussion.

Isn't there anyone around here who is competent and *wants* to be our junior senator? We sure want *you*.

Then we have Republican Bill McCollum running against Democrat Alex Sink for governor. McCollum

(a.k.a. Howdy Doody) has the distinction of being second only to Crist in the number of state jobs he's held. He's currently the state's attorney general and has vowed to sue the federal government to stop the implementation of the new health care plan. Of course, that was right after the Republican National Committee promised a generous donation to his campaign.

Sink is another story. She comes from the private sector as a banker, and is the current chief financial officer in Florida. She made some terrible decisions concerning the state's investments, to the point that the we lost some \$61 billion. Sink & Co. have since recovered about half that, so we're only down \$30 billion now. Judging from her lackluster campaigning, it seems she doesn't really want the governor's job.

Isn't there anyone around here who is competent and *wants* to be our governor? We sure want *you*.

And finally, for all of you who think the new health plan is a governmental intrusion into your life, think about this: For many years the U.S. Congress has mandated that anyone who needs medical assistance can go to any emergency room at any hospital anywhere in America and be cared for — money or no money, U.S. citizen or illegal alien.

And this: If there had been no governmental "intrusion" 150 years ago, all the white guys in the South would still own slaves.

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What is the most memorable meal you've ever had?

Compiled by Cathi Marro – BT Contributor



Jackie Rodriguez
Receptionist
MiMo

It was one I made when I was 23 or 24 years old. It was my first Thanksgiving as a married woman and I was cooking the turkey. I seasoned it and put it in the oven and thought I was doing a great job, having seen my mom cook turkey for years. Unfortunately, I accidentally left the plastic bag of giblets inside! Every woman must have done that once in her life. It was so funny!



Alejandro Solorzano
Retail
Edgewater

Tuna and crackers. After a six-day hike in the mountains of Venezuela, we had finally reached the summit. Sitting on the edge by Angel Falls we looked down and saw the tops of the clouds. The mountain is more than a kilometer high and has some of the oldest and most unique vegetation. I had built up quite an appetite. The view and the moment made the meal memorable.



Sherry Louis
Sales Associate
North Miami

The best meal I've ever had was at an Italian restaurant on Miami Beach. It was a couple of years ago. I had a grilled Chilean seabass. It was *really* good. It melted in my mouth. I like seafood and I like Italian restaurants. This was one of the best fish I've ever had. It was kind of expensive, though, so I haven't been back there in a while.



Marilyn Arkin
Office Manager
Miami Shores

It was on the first date my husband and I had together — years ago. We had a lobster dinner in Orlando somewhere outside of Disney. We were staring at each other and doing romantic things when I bit down on a lobster shell and cracked my tooth. That I will never forget! I still have a gold inlay to remind me of the torture.



Jack Hays
CEO
Sunny Isles

My most memorable meal was a Thanksgiving dinner after having to cut weight for wrestling in high school. During football season I weighed over 200 pounds, but for wrestling season I always had to slim down to 138 pounds. For four years in high school I never got to enjoy Thanksgiving because of wrestling, so every Thanksgiving since then has been a favorite meal for me!



Brittany Pollack
Tanning Consultant
Aventura

My most memorable meal is probably Brownie Obsession. They have it at a few different places. I order it to go about once a month at TGI Fridays. It's a hot fudge brownie with a pile of vanilla ice cream. Chocolate is my favorite! I just love the brownies and I could eat chocolate any time!

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Little Farm

Continued from page 1

people live there.

A mixture of quaint and ramshackle trailers share the property with an assortment of dogs, cats, ducks, and the occasional shrieking peacock roaming across the FEC railroad tracks from El Portal. Now and then a trailer will catch fire — and they burn *fast*. County officials say portions of the land are contaminated and pose a health hazard serious enough to have caused Wal-Mart executives to back out of a recent deal to purchase and develop the property.

Welcome to Little Farm Trailer Park.

“The economy has forced us to make some adjustments,” says Magidel “Mac” Fernandez, a partner in Biscayne Park LLC, the company that owns the property. “What we are going to do there — we have no idea yet.” Translation: It’s in foreclosure.

Portions of the trailer park are so contaminated that Wal-Mart executives had to back out of a recent deal to purchase and develop the property.

Fernandez and his partners bought Little Farm Trailer Park and some adjacent commercially zoned land for \$8 million in November 2006. By March 2007, retail behemoth Wal-Mart had its sights on the property and made a purchase offer, but withdrew a few months later, after preliminary tests uncovered high levels of arsenic in the soil and groundwater.

El Portal’s Jason Walker says he knows of four potential buyers who walked away after learning about the environmental issues. An attempt to sell the trailer park for \$17 million during a June 2009 auction at Miami Shores

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BT photo by Erik Bojnansky



Little Farm

Continued from page 14

Country Club also failed.

Says Walker: "It would cost \$10 million to clean up that place."

Yolanda Dorce has lived in her own trailer at Little Farm for the past 20 years. When she moved in, the park was neat and well maintained, and the rent she paid to the park's owners for her space was within her budget. "I only paid \$180 a month in rent," she says. "Now I pay \$500 a month." Dependent on her meager disability checks, Dorce has had to make some tough financial decisions lately — either paying the rent, buying food, or doing laundry, but often

not all three. "My home is ugly. I can't afford to fix it up or make *myself* look pretty," she says with a wan smile. "I can't even buy flowers."

Security guard Jean Reuben's monthly rent was \$320 when he first bought his trailer in 2002. "Now it is expensive," says Reuben, who today is paying close to \$550 per month. "They want too much. And the new management, when you *want* to find them, it is excuses, excuses." Still, he notes that those who pack up and leave often come back. "Because outside,"

Reuben says, "is too expensive."

New York native Michael Baragana fears he may soon be homeless. An installer of emergency doors in more prosperous times, Baragana now works whatever jobs he can find — landscaping, moving furniture — anything that will allow him to pay \$500 a month for a one-bedroom, moldy trailer owned by Fernandez and his business partners. "He keeps trying to raise my rent," Baragana grumbles. "He now wants \$550 a month. I'm trying to negotiate him down to \$450."

Fernandez denies raising rents at Little Farm, countering that "some people go months and months without paying rent."

Such disputes aside, one thing is clear: Conditions at the park are deteriorating rapidly. In fact so many trailers are in such poor condition that El Portal officials now refuse to issue permits for any type of construction on the property. Since last August, four

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Little Farm

Continued from page 15

trailers have burned to the ground. Investigators determined that three of the fires were sparked by substandard electrical wiring. One trailer was burned so badly that the cause of the fire remains unknown.

Virtually all of El Portal's police calls come from Little Farm Trailer Park. Last year alone there were 287, and they

Virtually all of El Portal's police calls come from Little Farm. Last year alone there were 287, from petty annoyances to serious felonies.

ran the gamut from petty annoyances to serious felonies: loud music, suspicious persons, attempted suicide, domestic violence, drug activity, armed assault. In one four-week period last year, there were 14 hang-up calls to emergency 911 from the same address. The perpetual crime wave persists. Just last month there was gunplay. Someone was shot, but the incident is still under investigation and no other details were available at press time, including the condition of the victim.

Sgt. Ronnie Hufnagel, a 12-year veteran of the El Portal Police Department, says she and her colleagues arrest the same people over and over: "They drink, they do drugs, they break into each other's places."

Residents say Little Farm is unpleasant at night — thanks in part to the park's nonfunctioning street lights — but they are grateful for increased police patrols, which they believe have frightened off many of the young hooligans. Says Yolanda Dorce with a smile: "Police come, come, come. It's something for the residents."

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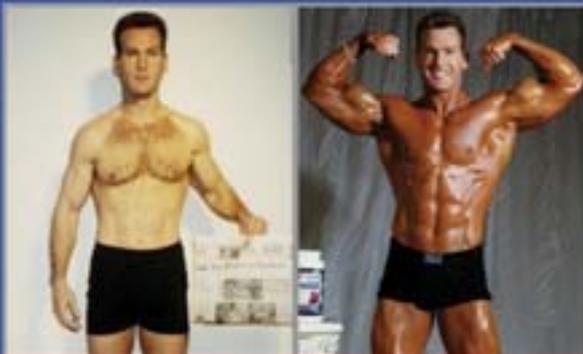
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Little Farm

Continued from page 16

Michael Baragana isn't so sanguine. Even in the daytime, he says, some residents think nothing of panhandling or even stealing. He recounts chasing down someone who tried to make off with his laundry detergent. Now his garbage can is chained to his rented trailer. "To be precise," he declares, "this is a little jungle."

As you might expect in a jungle, sanitation can be an issue. The trailer park is not hooked up to the county sewer system. Instead human waste from more than 200 trailers is pumped into a septic tank designed for just 65. Sewage backups were not uncommon, so four years ago the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) demanded that Little Farm link to the system. After negotiating several extensions, and paying a \$36,500 penalty, Biscayne Park LLC now has until June to comply with DERM's demands. No overflows have been reported to DERM since 2007, but some residents say they keep their windows sealed against a wafting stench.

DERM and Miami-Dade Health Department officials are more worried about high concentrations of arsenic in the park's soil. Their testing found nearly five times the level considered to be dangerous to humans. Ingesting or inhaling such high levels of arsenic over a long period can cause a wide range of problems, such as headaches, convulsions,

diarrhea, hair loss, kidney failure, liver failure, cancer, and lung disease.

Because Little Farm's drinking water comes from the county, DERM says there's no danger of arsenic or other soil contaminants infiltrating the supply. And the trailer park's grassy areas reduce the risk of residents breathing in arsenic-laced dust, says Juan Suarez, an epidemiologist with the county health department. However, Suarez warns that there is danger if people "eat the dirt — and with kids, that's possible." So far, Suarez says, the health department is not aware of any cases of arsenic poisoning, but that hasn't stopped the county attorney's office from filing a lawsuit against Biscayne Park LLC to force a cleanup.

Madison Realty Capital, a private lender, is also running out of patience with Biscayne Park LLC. Last June Madison filed a foreclosure action to protect its \$8.15 million mortgage and take control of the trailer park and various other properties Little Farm's investors had offered as collateral, including a house in neighboring Miami Shores owned by Fernandez and his wife. The foreclosure action also lists Carlos and Dora Cardenas, Martha Fernandez, and seven "John Does" as defendants.

According to public records, Biscayne Park LLC additionally has been stiffing the county to the tune of \$820,000 in unpaid property taxes. And two years ago El Portal slapped a \$991,000 lien on the property for a

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Little Farm

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multitude of code violations. Today the lien has grown to \$2.5 million. Village manager Walker says Biscayne Park LLC has done nothing about the lien and hasn't contacted him in the past few months.

Mac Fernandez insists he's "working with everyone" to address Little Farm's many problems. He also claims that he and his mother, Teresa Cardenas, are not solely responsible: "We're just managing partners, and there are several owners." Fernandez is also registered as a managing partner for a bus and truck driving school, as well as many other Florida businesses, ranging from hair extensions to insurance. "We can't disclose who the actual owners are," he says, though he's quick to blame them for turning down a recent offer. "We've had someone who wanted to purchase the property but they [the other owners] were not able to let it go."

Only a patchy history of the Little Farm property seems to be accessible, and the BT's efforts to locate archival photographs have been unsuccessful. A county DERM official says in the 1930s a poultry farm existed on part of the land where

Mary Ramos has more recent memories. She bought a trailer at Little Farm 16 years ago. "Oh, it was beautiful," she recalls. "It was cheap, and a nice, nice place. It was only Canadian people here. Most of the time the place was empty."

The park was attractive, longtime residents say, because its owners at the time cared about it. Jack Schaufele, a sergeant with the El Portal Police Department, and his wife Nancy, bought Little Farm in 1988 for \$2.73 million. "They were beautiful people. Nice, sweet," Ramos says.

In 1996 the Schaufeles sold the park for \$4 million to a real estate investor named Sarika Olah. A few years later, Ramos says, Little Farm began accepting trailers from Nelson's Trailer Park. That mobile-home community shut down in 1999 to make way for the Home Depot at 12055 Biscayne Blvd. As the number of homes at Little Farm increased, sewage began oozing from the ground, sometimes backing up into trailers' bathrooms.

"I used to have a picture of the park from 12 years ago," says El Portal's Sergeant Hufnagel. "It looked like an elderly community from Palm Beach. But then it just went to hell."

By 2002 Olah had a contract to sell

The park is not hooked up to the county sewer system. Instead human waste from more than 200 trailers is pumped into a septic tank designed for just 65.

the trailer park now sits. In those days, according to the official, arsenic was a commonly used herbicide and pesticide.

It's also possible the name "Little Farm" came from the Little Farm Grocery Store, which opened at 8360 Biscayne Blvd. in 1933, according to news reports. The now-defunct Price Supermarket replaced it many decades later and closed a few years ago.

By the 1940s, Miami was a popular tourist destination, with Biscayne Boulevard serving as the area's main artery — at least until the end of the 1960s. The 1944 Miami City Directory lists 8500 Biscayne Blvd. as the home of Farm Side Trailer Park. Mobile-home dealerships operated at 8400 and 8570 Biscayne Blvd.

the land for \$4.8 million to Miami-based Pinnacle Housing Group, one of the nation's largest developers of affordable housing. But Michael Wohl, one of Pinnacle's top executives, says there were a "host of issues" attached to the land, not least of which was zoning. Biscayne Park LLC's parcels along Biscayne Boulevard — the vacant supermarket and laundry, as well as 76,000 square feet of land — are in the City of Miami and zoned commercial. Another parcel of some 27,000 square feet lies behind the trailer park in unincorporated Miami-Dade, and is zoned for hotel/motel use. The 13.2 acres occupied by the trailers is in El Portal's jurisdiction. If the mobile homes were

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Little Farm

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removed, its current zoning would only allow banks, office buildings, or studios, according to Walker.

In 2005, before Wohl could resolve these issues, Olah's company filed for bankruptcy. Her lender, Colonial Bank, demanded payment of its \$2.3 million mortgage. To raise cash, Olah sought permission to solicit more lucrative offers. Wohl sued to defend his sales contract but later settled with Olah, clearing the way for Biscayne Park LLC to purchase the property out of bankruptcy.

Should Little Farm close, the mobile-home owners living there will find themselves in a bind. Because their homes are often no longer actually mobile, they're usually demolished when a park is sold and redeveloped. According to a recently released study conducted by Florida International University's Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy, mobile homes, also called manufactured homes, sell

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Little Farm

Continued from page 20

for an average of \$14,000. But state law doesn't require owners of trailer parks to provide compensation to homeowners who are forced to leave, according to Alyce Gowdy Wright, executive director of South Florida Jobs With Justice and an advocate for trailer-park residents.

A \$19 million public fund meant to help trailer-park residents relocate was raided by the Florida Legislature two years ago, says Gowdy Wright: "What they did with [the money] once it went into the state's general fund is anyone's guess."

During the most recent real estate boom, many trailer parks were purchased by a new generation of owners intent on collecting as much rent as they could before selling the land to a developer. But the economic crash put a quick end to many of those speculative endeavors, Gowdy Wright says.

Miami-Dade County's remaining 90 trailer parks, housing close to 60,000 people, are still tantalizing for speculators, she explains, because they offer the

prospect of a cheap price for distressed property. Real estate investors, she says, call mobile homes "low-hanging fruit."

Patrick Duffy of Duffy Realty in Miami Shores, believes that keeping Little Farm as a trailer park is not "the highest and best use of the land." But even without the liens and environmental contamination, selling it will be a chal-

lenge. "We need more condominiums like a hole in the head," says the veteran Realtor. "You are not going to get financing to build anything on that property for five or ten years."

With the land's "myriad problems," developer Wohl says he no longer would

touch the property, though he adds that for "somebody with patient money" it could be a good long-term investment.

But even if a deep-pocketed company like Wal-Mart were willing to invest millions in cleanup, another obstacle looms: the El Portal Village Council passed a law last year limiting future retail development to 50,000

square feet. Anything larger would require a special vote of the council, says village manager Walker.

According to the FIU study, which was commissioned by Jobs With Justice, the average annual income of a trailer-park resident is under \$12,000.

When FIU researchers asked 269 residents from several Miami-Dade trailer parks (not including Little Farm) what would happen if their communities were shut down, half replied they would become homeless.

Some Little Farm homeowners say they want to get out while they still can. "For Sale" signs dot windows throughout the park. Jean Reuben, who has heard rumors since 2003 that the park would be sold, is holding out for \$6000. Neighbor Yolanda Dorce says she'd sell her trailer for a mere \$400 if she could.

Alyce Gowdy Wright says it's fairly common for trailer-park residents to become somewhat apathetic about their future. "There comes a point when the park changes hands so many times, people get beleaguered," she observes. "It's difficult to have a constant sense of uncertainty about being able to stay in your home. It's difficult to live in that emotional state. It doesn't mean they don't care. It just means they're tired."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

"For Sale" signs dot windows throughout the park. Jean Reuben, who has heard rumors since 2003 that the park would be sold, is holding out for \$6000

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By Gaspar González
BT Contributor

Talk about an introduction to village politics. As a new resident of Biscayne Park — my wife and I just moved into our house in December — I thought I'd attend a commission meeting. You know, get to know the folks who represent the inhabitants of our little burg, maybe hear them debate the need for a new water fountain at the rec center. Instead I walked smack into what may be one of the most important votes the commission takes as long as I live here, on an ordinance to renew Biscayne Park's franchise agreement with Florida Power & Light.

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Thus the Village of Biscayne Park gives FPL a virtual monopoly on providing electricity to its residents for the next three decades, as well as free use of its rights-of-way, in exchange for, uh, getting our own money handed back to us.

It's the kind of deal that makes you think the only reason anybody in South Florida does business with FPL is because the Mafia hasn't gotten into the utilities racket — not yet.

Biscayne Park, in particular, has special reason to be wary of climbing back into the sack for another 30-year roll with the power giant. It was only four years ago, after all, that FPL proposed erecting 80-foot-tall transmission lines through "The Village of Homes." Only a community petition effort — and the fact that there was an acceptable alternate route through the heart of North Miami — kept us from being surrounded by a forest of concrete redwoods. (You'll forgive the residents of 135th Street if they don't applaud our victory. They wake up to those towers every morning.) FPL isn't done planting power poles around the county, either. Currently they're looking to line U.S. 1 in south Miami-Dade with

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Amped Up

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miles of 105-foot monsters.

Heading into the March 2 commission meeting, there was reason to believe the commission would vote against the franchise agreement (a move which, incidentally, would have no impact on electrical service to the village). The village had been woefully unsuccessful in negotiating better terms with FPL.

It had asked FPL to include language in the new agreement expressly stating that no transmission lines would be installed in Biscayne Park. FPL refused. It asked that the length of the contract be shortened from 30 years to something more reasonable. FPL refused. It asked for the right to have a contingent audit of FPL's books to make sure Biscayne Park was actually getting the money to which it was entitled under the agreement. FPL again refused.

The message from FPL is clear: They don't negotiate. You do things their way, and in exchange they'll pay you your own money. It's the reason other municipalities in Miami-Dade are

considering not renewing their franchise agreements when they expire, and the reason Parkland, in Broward, declined to sign one almost ten years ago.

All in all, it sounds like an easy "no" vote, right? I thought so, too — until the commission voted 3-2 to pass the ordinance on first reading. Commissioners Steve Bernard and Bryan Cooper voted against it. Commissioners Bob Anderson and Al Childress and Mayor Roxana Ross voted for it. This despite the fact that no one in the room — not commissioners, not the mayor, not residents — could find one good thing to say about the contract.

One resident got up and called it "crap," before saying, basically, that we had no choice but to sign it. The reason? Money.

Under the franchise agreement, FPL would pay the village an estimated \$120,000 per year. Again, it's *our* money, but the franchise agreement allows the village to collect what is essentially a tax without having to label it as such. And right now a majority of the commission doesn't think Biscayne Park can do without it. The village has no commercial property, and residential property values

have decreased considerably. Property taxes, based on assessed value, are going to be down this year and, very likely, the next few years.

That's a legitimate concern, but committing residents and the village to a one-sided, 30-year agreement to solve what might well be a three- or four-year budget crunch doesn't seem very smart, especially when the amount in question — \$120,000 — constitutes less than five percent of the village's total annual budget. As Commissioner Bernard pointed out, increasing the millage rate from 9 to 9.75 percent would replace the "income" we lose by not signing the franchise agreement. (The increase in the property tax would be offset partially by the six percent annual savings each resident would realize on his or her electric bill.) And unlike the FPL surcharge, the millage rate can be adjusted down in a couple of years, when property values begin to rise.

Commissioners Bernard and Cooper also pointed out — rightly, I think — that committing to do business with FPL for the next 30 years at precisely the moment alternative energy technologies

are becoming viable is incredibly shortsighted. And then there's the question of those transmission lines sprouting up on our tree-lined streets.

The arguments for signing the agreement, frankly, don't make a lot of sense: A tax imposed by FPL (the six-percent surcharge) is somehow preferable to one the village might impose; we can rely on FPL to do the right thing by Biscayne Park despite what we've seen them do in other communities; and my favorite — the real threat to property values comes not from a multibillion-dollar utility company that has already demonstrated it is more than willing to plant 80-foot power poles in people's front yards, but from kooky neighbors who may someday want to install their own clean-energy devices. (I'm not kidding.)

The only good news is that the ordinance requires a second vote — at this month's commission meeting on April 6. So our representatives get another chance to turn down a bad deal. Judging from what I saw, though, they may need help seeing the light.

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If It's Spring, There Must Be Ice Cream

How a smashed fire hydrant led me to Mooie's

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

Around four months ago, I had my first serious car accident. As with many motor vehicle mishaps, this one happened within a couple of miles of my house, on 79th Street, just a few blocks west of Biscayne Boulevard. It was 11:00 p.m. I had been hosting a school holiday event at the Deli Gallery in Coral Gables all evening and, exhausted from working multiple jobs, I fell asleep at the wheel, crossed several traffic lanes, and plowed into a fire hydrant.

Despite the fact that the airbag in my Volkswagen Eos, a hard-top convertible, didn't deploy — and if you'd seen the damage to the car's front end, you'd wonder why — I escaped serious injury.

I can't say the same for the fire hydrant, however, which my car knocked about 30 or 40 feet. You may have seen it lying there for a couple of weeks back in



December, wondering what lunatic had displaced it. Now you know.

Why bring this up now? Because the insurance company, in its wisdom, thought my car shouldn't be totaled, but rather fixed. Four months later, it's still in the shop. And now that the weather has finally changed from an unusually cold winter to our regular 80-something-degree spring, I long for my convertible.

Vestiges of the cold, miserable Jersey girl I once was, I crave this time of year. The change of light, the change in temperature — it all brings me out of my desire to hibernate, the temptation to sink into bed at any given moment and sleep away the day. I didn't realize I had Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) symptoms until I moved first to Southern California and then to Miami, where I

was largely much happier because I was warm, but still hated the diminished natural sunlight during fall and winter.

In colder climates, the onset of spring used to launch me into near mania — what I referred to as “spring fever.” Here, where it's gentler, I just feel a general sense of well-being, put my top down, and cruise the broad main streets of Miami Shores, admiring the palm trees in the median and the well-maintained front lawns of my neighbors as I drive my son to baseball practice and games at the village recreation center.

Once there, I can hang with the other parents, absorbing even more sunshine on the wide-open fields, because a) no one can do any serious work, given that we have no municipal free Wi-Fi à la Miami Beach, and b) no one expects me to coach, ump, or handle batting practice. (Thankfully for all concerned, I stink at baseball.)

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI SHORES

Ice Cream

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Then it's a car full of sweaty little boys — who I can't smell, of course, because the top is once again down and the breeze is drying them off like mango pollen from the trees as we head to Mario's for pizza.

But closed up in my husband's SUV? I am a very SAD little turtle right now. It's also pretty clear my "boys of summer" are getting older, and I should stock the SUV with some air freshener.

Fortunately I have a time-tested way to treat my anxiety. In fact, I have a few: Mint Chocolate Chip. Banana Pudding. Birthday Cake.

That's right. I may be lactose intolerant but I still combat negative emotions with ice cream. In this case, it's Blue Bell ice cream, because I no longer have to go to Publix when the mood strikes. Thanks to Mooie's, our first real ice cream parlor, which carries Blue Bell brand exclusively, Miami Shores finally has every spring requirement: sunshine, baseball, and triple-decker cones.

Mooie's, at the corner of NE 2nd Avenue and 96th Street, began a

complicated life as the perpetually under-construction Miss Moo's, then finally opened under its current name a couple of months after Village Place debuted. It's run by Sean Saladino, former South Beach restaurateur and nightlife impresario (the now-shuttered Rumi, most notably), and his family, now Shores residents.

For Saladino, who wears a signature khaki cap over his longish, salt-and-pepper hair and who, at press time, was about to become a first-time dad, the change isn't so startling. "We all have to grow up sometime," he shrugs.

I'm grateful that he, like so many of us relocated South Beach veterans, has chosen the Shores to begin a new stage of his life. For one thing, he finally has given me a way to carry on a tradition in my own family: the reward of an ice cream cone for every home run. He also brings a very welcome, contemporary business model that helps when I don't have time to gossip

for two hours at practice and really need to get some work done.

To wit: Mooie's has free Wi-Fi all day, every day. Daily hours are 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. (11:00 p.m. on weekends), and in addition to ice cream, Mooie's offers bagels and croissants for breakfast and array of sophisticated baguette and panini sandwiches with

Fortunately I have a time-tested way to treat my anxiety. In fact, I have a few: Mint Chocolate Chip. Banana Pudding. Birthday Cake.

tossed green salads for lunch and dinner. And while there is no beer-and-wine license, it's certainly legal to bring

in your own.

Boding well for his personal future as well as his profits, Saladino also seems to intuitively understand the needs of both children and parents. Take the idea of the "house account," in which parents deposit money. Kids on their own can walk to Mooie's and eat on credit until it runs out, just as they would at their camp canteens. Terrific for summer, no? For littler kids, indoor game tables offer diversions, and

recent additions to Mooie's include outdoor tables with buckets of sidewalk chalk. Thus the art beneath your feet changes hourly.

In back of the shop, where a large grassy patch offers cool succor for little feet that resist the confines of shoes, Saladino has placed comfy beanbag chairs. I've seen everything from pillow fights to photo shoots, and have also attended a birthday party back there, with bounce house, clown, and even a visit from Mooie herself (yes, the costume has an udder, so she is a girl cow). Saladino says he can host whatever type of party you like, and can even set up a grilling station as well.

This all involves ice cream, of course. And as for that ice cream, customers should know that Blue Bell supplies its flavors seasonally. So while Banana Pudding, with chunks of Nilla Wafers in it, may be getting me through my days presently, it might not be available in, say, July. One more thing to be potentially SAD about, I guess. But perhaps it'll be replaced by something like Southern Blackberry Cobbler. And unless another fire hydrant gets in my way, by then I should be tooling around in my convertible again.



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Who Will Lead in a Time of Crisis?

A modest proposal to prepare for the worst in an uncertain world

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

After the shoe bomber and the underwear bomber, could the rectum bomber be far behind? Or should I say the body-cavity bomber, to be politically correct? While musing over the possibilities, I was watching a city commission meeting online the other day, and the thought occurred that our local governments have not taken seriously the possibility of a terrorist strike at City Hall.

Think about it. What better way to strike terror into the heart of our land than to target local governments—the very cornerstones of our constitutional form of government, the basic building blocks of democracy? In Miami we have locally elected bodies meeting on a biweekly basis to conduct the public's business. And within the same walls in a fairly confined space, we put all of our elected officials, administrative



managers, the city attorney, the city clerk, the police and fire chiefs, our financial brain trusts, as well as the directors of every department responsible for delivering the day-to-day services necessary to keep things operational.

Now envision a terrorist attack within these same walls, and consider the potential consequences of such an

act. We could lose all of our elected officials and administrative heads in one fell swoop! (No laughing. Be serious!)

The federal government has long recognized the possibility of such an occurrence, which is why when the president addresses Congress (think State of the Union), there is invariably a cabinet-level official and some congressional

delegates elsewhere to preserve continuity of government in the event of a catastrophe. Perhaps it's time we start to consider similar strategies and codify them into the local charters.

Do we have a real order of succession in the event of the unthinkable? Sure, we outline who takes over when the mayor falls ill, resigns, or is ousted from office, and the same with commissioners. But look what we just went through when two commissioners were removed by the governor as a result of criminal charges during an election cycle—Murphy's Law at its optimum! We were left with two sitting commissioners, no quorum, and thus, no way for them act. Local government became paralyzed, even though no one really took much notice. Oh, there was lamenting that a special election costing thousands of dollars had to be called and that Miami was again the butt of

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

Crisis

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the corruption jokes. But little notice was taken of the serious ramifications if such a situation were to be amplified or continued for a longer period.

The risk is not too far-fetched. Look at Homestead after Hurricane Andrew. Homestead had a policy requiring all city employees to live within the city limits. Well, what happened? Andrew decimated Homestead, and most of the finance and police department employees lost their homes. Rather than rebuild, many of them moved away. The county and the City of Miami supplied financial personnel on loan and police support for almost a year until Homestead could get back on its feet.

Disasters, natural and manmade, are not only possible, but are likely to recur. So how do we address the danger?

Several ideas occur to me. First, we should consider amending the charter to include a position for a vice mayor. All mayoral candidates would select a running mate, with the victors taking office as a pair. The vice mayor would have day-to-day responsibilities interfacing

with the administration and would have the primary responsibility of taking over should the mayor become incapacitated. Miami's vice mayor would not attend commission meetings and would leave city hall when such meetings take place. At the commission level, it may make sense to rotate one commissioner out of the chambers on meeting days to participate via computer link or remote television hookup. Certainly, the police chief and fire chief should attend commission meetings, but their seconds-in-command should not — same with the deputy city attorney and deputy or assistant department directors.

Some may say this is taking things to extreme. After all, the county, state, or federal government could step up in a crisis. Keep in mind, however, that it is the local jurisdiction that first responds to a crisis. Look at 9/11. Who showed up? Not the neighboring communities,

not the state, not the federal government. It was the local police and firefighters who responded — as they always have and always will. Do not underestimate the importance of the critical level of service these individuals and governments provide during emergencies. To respond appropriately, we need the local legislative power and leadership in place to keep emergency operations uninterrupted and connected to state or federal assistance.

Some may also contend that this is paranoia. But I say that it will be considered a great vision or exceptional forethought to have a plan in place and active prior to such an incident. I guess it's the fireman in me that looks at this type of preparedness; it's what the fire service instilled deep in my soul. Firefighters plan and drill for the worst scenarios, and every once in a while the planning pays off. The city has only about ten

major fires a year, but that doesn't stop the training for the big one.

The Roman poet Horace noted that "a wise man in times of peace prepares for war." There should be no doubt that this country is at war. Our elected officials should take a hard look at the potential havoc of a terrorist act and plan accordingly. It certainly would not be too difficult for a suicide bomber with a small amount of plastic explosives or a canister of nerve gas to gain access to city hall on commission day.

Although highly unlikely to occur, we can no longer say the chances are nil, not with the current state of the world. We keep touting Miami as an international city, and it is. Where better for some extremist or otherwise certifiable nut to make a statement?

Local government has the responsibility to ensure stability and continuity of services and leadership during a crisis. After all, it was not the President of the United States who guided us through the immediate aftermath of 9/11. It was the mayor of New York City.

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We should consider amending the charter to add a position of vice mayor. And we could rotate one commissioner out of chambers on meeting days to participate via remote hookup.

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Spider-Man Chopper in the Hood

Aerial acrobatics next to your balcony? Just another Saturday morning in Miami

WBy Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

If there is a certain something that doesn't happen every day, or ever, you can bank on it happening in Miami — things like finding Elvis or meeting Jesus or running into that ex, the one who blew up your car and put scissors to your cashmere sweaters because he or she loved you *that much*, or discovering that, after all these years, you *do* embrace cats.

Example: Last Saturday morning, as I padded around my Cotel apartment in my Sock Monkey slippers, brewing coffee and wondering why I was up before 9:00 a.m., I heard a very loud *whirrrwhirrrwhirrrrrrr*. I considered the “whirr” and decided it was a low-flying plane. But then the *whirrrwhirrrwhirrrrrrr* became louder and more forceful. Boastful, even.

“Oh, fantastic,” I thought. See, for years I've assumed that one day a plane



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

would fall on my head. And for years I've said this is not an irrational fear. People smile and think that is cute. Or they usher their young ones away. Or they nod in a serious manner and scribble it down on a pad. But I *knew* the day

would come. And apparently it arrived! In Miami. Of course.

Full disclosure time. Okay. No, it didn't. And whether you like it or not, I'm still here in one piece. But no matter — because what did transpire was pretty

good. Figuring it was too nice a day for planes to fly low, and that this area is not even really on a direct flight path, I calmly shuffled over to the sliding-glass door of my 28th-floor “bird's nest” abode to get a peek.

What I saw did not disappoint. A large orange helicopter in all its propeller-beheading-potential splendor was hovering within a few hundred feet of my balcony.

Oddly, I did not panic. I did not see the sum of my life's experiences run through my head (thank God). Nor did I think, “The dog and I are going to die!” The most common thought that crosses the minds of pilots before they crash (does anyone want to take a guess?) is: “Oh shit!” I had no time for that nonsense.

I merely spun around in the Sock Monkeys and fetched my camera. In my underwear (Oh, shut up! There

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI AT LARGE

Chopper

Continued from page 28

was no time to get dressed!) I watched and snapped away as the copter's pilot maneuvered between my building and the condo located to the immediate right of me, practically scaling the wall with Spider Man efficiency (I sincerely hope the occupants of those units do not suffer from 9/11 post-traumatic stress disorder), going down, down, down.

Then three men on the ground hooked a ginormous metal box (generator? air-conditioning unit? Michael Jackson's *real* coffin?) to the copter's underbelly. And then up it went, again scaling the side of the occupied residence with superhero control and stealth before the pilot flew over to the tippy-top of the Conrad Hotel, hovered above the roof, and then lowered the object.

This up-and-down scenario continued for about an hour. One of the many amazing features was how onlookers reacted. Or shall I say did *not* react? Some residents came out onto their balconies, then promptly returned inside. The Conrad Hotel guests at poolside, who

are in full view ten floors down from my balcony, shielded their eyes from the sun, glanced upward, then turned back to their reading material. It seemed they were more concerned with the pesky copter blocking their rays than, say, a 20,000-pound steel box hovering over their bodies, swaying in the breeze, held up only by a cable that, for all they knew, was constructed from dental floss.

Now, seeing as I am a recent tundra defector myself, I appreciate the strong appeal of the sun on your skin. Boy, do I. However, being a Miami native and knowing how corrupt this place is, I can tell you with certainty that had I been the squishy body splayed out some 35 floors below the hotel's roof and that dangling piece of equipment of unknown origin, I would quickly abandon the paperback and, as they say, run for the hills! These folks? Not so much.

Did I mention that this helicopter was very, very loud? All this made me think, in this order: (1) Damn! These people are stupid. (2) Damn! These people are the types of folks who think, "Eh, it'll never happen to me!" (3) Damn! These people are trusting. (4) Damn! These people are

not who I want on my side if a zombie outbreak occurs. (And incidentally, you know the first outbreak would be in Miami. It just makes sense.)

This lifting up and transporting of heavy objects continued. But unlike the disinterested masses, I simply could not remove myself from my balcony. And when the pilot balanced the helicopter on the edge of the Conrad, with massive cargo swaying yet somehow not smashing through an (apparently unsuspecting or perhaps deaf) guest's window, I was dumbfounded. And I really wanted to high-five the pilot. But I was many stories down, down, down, and in my underwear. And, mind you, they weren't even an interesting pair.

When the show was over, I called the *Miami Herald's* "breaking news" phone number. I did this even though I knew it was going to be a waste of time. I did this out of knee-jerk journalistic training and years of knowing that if you don't act fast on a story, someone else will beat you to it.

I explained what just happened to the woman who answered the phone. I said I had some great, timely feature

shots. "What kind of helicopter was it?" she asked. I said I didn't know, as it was just orange with a number stenciled on it — and no, it didn't appear to be Coast Guard.

The woman didn't sound impressed. She put me on hold and then returned to the line and told me that although she was sure it was all quite exciting, the photo desk wouldn't be needing anything from me.

As this is Miami (and that is the *Herald*), I expected this answer. After all, the helicopter did not actually *crash into* the Conrad Hotel. The heavy stuff did not actually rip loose from the cable and create an impact crater that swallowed up innocent bystanders, cars, palm trees, and perhaps an unlucky family pet or two.

So it's just another one of many bizarre incidents happening on just another Saturday in Miami. Yawn.

Now, if Elvis or Jesus had been piloting the chopper, then maybe it would have been news.

Maybe.

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How Does Your Garden Grow?

Why, with marigolds and kale, and not in a row

By Karen-Janine Cohen
BT Contributor

In a quiet Biscayne Park yard, a pigeon pea plant is keeping unusual company. Right out in the open. The leafy shrub cozies close to a fragrant Valencia orange tree, a tangelo tree, and a pretty pomelo grapefruit tree — all planted in a raised circle. Below, pine-apples ring the quartet.

While lovely, looks don't explain the grouping. It's a chemical thing.

The pigeon pea pulls nitrogen from the air, while its companions must seek that essential element in soil. But the pea is willing to share, especially when supercharged with a bacteria that boosts its abilities, says Marcus Thomson, co-composer of this botanical symphony.

"When you cut back the pigeon pea, its root system degrades and the nitrogen nodule is available for these other guys," says Thomson, who with the home's owner, David Tunnell, designed and planted the riot of fruits, vegetables, and flowers that is overtaking the front yard.

And it's no coincidence that Tunnell is part owner of Metro Organic Bistro on Biscayne Boulevard at 70th Street. While

The front lawn is now pea plants, guava, citrus, banana trees, raspberry bushes, passion fruit, and Muscatine grapes — all planted in whorls.

Tunnell aims first to provide for his own family, anything extra will supplement the organic foods already offered at Metro.



David Tunnell and Marcus Thomson in the permaculture garden taking shape in Biscayne Park.

"It was always my intention to grow food to support the restaurant," says Tunnell, best known as the founder of Dogma Grill. After selling his interest in the hip hotdog joint in 2005, Tunnell opened Karma Car Wash & Café right next door to Dogma. Later he traveled, searching for a healthy environment where he and his wife could raise their young son. They returned to Miami after considering Peru, Brazil, and California. In early

2009, Karma Café was reborn as Metro.

"There are places with cleaner air, land, and water, but we missed

community," Tunnell says. He bought a home in Biscayne Park late last year.

"This is an idea I've had for many years," he says of his garden, "but I wanted more than containers — I wanted a food forest."

He's halfway there.

Over the past two months, Tunnell and Thomson, who met through the restaurant, stripped away the front lawn, that iconic grassy bastion of Americana, and replaced it with the pea plants, guava, citrus, four kinds of banana trees, raspberry bushes, blackberry bushes, passion fruit, and Muscatine grapes — all planted in whorls, or curves, which allows for

more plants in a small area than traditional rows.

"We're all about abundance," Thomson explains. "You can live right off your front yard."

And that's just the beginning. On raised berms composed of layered seaweed, manure, and mulch, grow kale, collards, lettuce, and sweet potatoes. You can dance around the mulberry bush and serenade the parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme. Delightful marigolds are everywhere.

"Marigolds are the flowers of organic gardening," notes Thomson. "The vibrancy of the colors confuses the pests, while the chemicals in the root system deters them as well."

The yard has attracted plenty of attention — and some complaints — from neighbors who don't know what to make of a garden that stands out like a peacock among starlings. One nearby resident who didn't want to be named says she doesn't think it looks at all normal.

Biscayne Park code enforcement Ofcr. Sira Ramos says several callers have asked if it's legal to turn a front lawn into produce paradise. It is. "I think it's going to be really fun to watch," says Ramos.

And this is not your garden-variety organic garden. The plants are grouped to create a flowering, fruiting, leafy web, designed to mimic what mother nature does so casually, linking plants, insects, and animals in a constantly renewing cycle. It's called permaculture, and is gaining popularity all over the country, if not all over the world. Indeed, aid groups expect to teach it in Haiti as part of earthquake reconstruction efforts.

Continued on page 34

BT photo by Karen-Janine Cohen

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They're Off and Running!

The crowded race to win Congressional District 17 could end in a fluke

By Mark Sell
Special to BT

It is barely April, but already we have a free-for-all in the Democratic primary battle for the 17th Congressional District. The race is shaping up to be one of the most compelling in America — and not for the usual reasons. (Election day is August 24.)

The district's 18 years as an exclusive family franchise are about to expire. Kendrick Meek, who inherited the seat after his mother Carrie Meek retired, is stepping down to wage an uphill campaign for the U.S. Senate. He will face either archconservative Republican (and Tea Party darling) Marco Rubio or Gov. Charlie Crist. At the moment, Rubio is favored over Crist, and both are widely favored over Meek.

In a wide-open race defined by a depressed economy, foreclosures, and rising joblessness, a remarkable lineup of 11 striving Democrats are fighting to succeed the House of Meek. Some have been running for more than a year. Four are Haitian Americans (the winner would be the first Haitian-American

member of Congress), and six are African American. If the race stays this crowded, the one Anglo who cannonballed into the contest last month, popular North Miami Councilman (and six-year Carrie Meek congressional aide) Scott Galvin, stands a sporting chance of squeaking by

with a plurality of votes to become the white, gay representative of Florida's "blackest" congressional district.

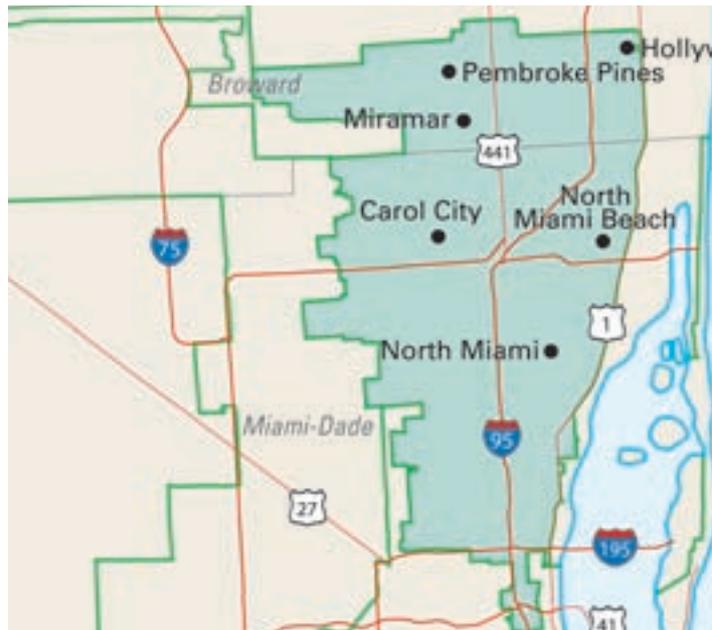
The primary winner (there is no runoff) will likely face Republican Corey Poirier, an African-American school-teacher from North Miami whose prospects are dismal in a district that went 87-12 for Barack Obama in 2008. Even after redistricting in 2011-2012, Florida's 17th will remain among the nation's most Democratic, meaning the Democratic primary winner will almost certainly go to Washington.

This year economic pain trumps partisanship and ethnic identity in this often-gritty district, which runs along the west side of U.S. 1 from downtown Miami to Hollywood.

Voters will be seeking solutions while candidates wish to be known more by what they do rather than

by where they come from.

"The problems are first, jobs; second, the rate of foreclosures; third, economic development; and fourth, health care," says candidate Phillip Brutus, a former Florida state representative, in a typical response.



combination of the above.

The leading fundraiser is Haitian-born Rudy Moise, a successful health-care entrepreneur and osteopath with 500 employees. Moise has never held elective office but boasts an MBA and law degree from the University of Miami. He also holds the rank of colonel as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Air Force reserve. As of December 31, Moise had raised \$213,000, much of it from health-care enterprises. His fundraising goal is \$1.5 million, and he has retained Cornell Belcher, who was one of President Obama's four pollsters. He appears set on a savvy, relentless campaign.

Says Moise's campaign manager Anastasia Apa: "With this electorate and at this time, if a green Martian could bring better jobs and health care, the Martian would be elected. There aren't any huge issue disparities. The issue is how to differentiate ourselves. Rudy Moise is a businessman, physician, father and husband, and military man. He has a strong internal compass and wants to serve. Crossover appeal will be key. This will be a very expensive campaign and ground game. You have well-known candidates who are liked. But that does not translate into votes. People are hungry for ideas."

State Sen. Frederica Wilson — she of the trademark 300 cowboy hats, matching colorful outfits, and reliably liberal votes — is the No. 2 fundraiser. She's collected \$160,692, with notable contributions from powerful plaintiffs' law firms

Continued on page 35

While the 17th includes the densest Haitian-American concentration in the nation, it would be an oversimplification to call it a "Haitian" district.

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Living With Crime – Eternally

A scary armed robbery in Belle Meade raises fears and troubling questions

By Brandon Dane
Special to BT

Normally the Upper Eastside neighborhood of Belle Meade smells like jasmine in the spring. Recently, however, the smell of fear has permeated the gated community like a dead rat in the basement. The dead rat, both real and perceived, in this case: robbery, burglary, and lack of police presence.

Miami Police Ofcr. Darrell Nichols contends the reality is that crime is no worse in the Upper Eastside generally, or Belle Meade specifically, than it has been in recent years. According police department statistics, crime has been declining since 2003.

Nichols argues, “The police are only a tool. People cannot just sit behind their barricades and think nothing can happen to them.” Vigilance is his mantra, and has been for the 20 years he has worked



Miami Police Ofcr. Darrell Nichols: “People are so busy on their cell phones that they don’t pay attention.”

in the neighborhood, including Belle Meade, serving most of that time as the

Neighborhood Resource Officer for the Upper Eastside. He says the area is one

BT photo by Cathi Marro

of the most heavily policed in Miami. Furthermore he blames the viral effect of social media as well as blogs and e-mail chains for distorting the facts of crimes that have actually occurred. An armed robbery in Belle Meade this past January, Nichols says, is “the biggest thing that has happened and has everybody saying that the sky is falling.” Yet rumors of unreported crimes persist, and the perception is that Belle Meade is becoming increasingly dangerous. (The same Upper Eastside phenomenon was explored in “Perception vs. Reality,” a BT cover story from May 2008.)

Belle Meade is bordered on the east by Biscayne Bay, on the north by NE 77th Street and NE 77th Terrace, on the south by NE 72nd Terrace, and to the west by NE 6th Court — a short block east of Biscayne Boulevard. The January robbery occurred at NE 77th Street and NE 7th Avenue.

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Crime

Continued from page 32

Around midnight on January 26, just inside Belle Meade's barricaded streets, a neighborhood couple was walking their dog. The police report indicates they were approached by two men on bicycles, who then robbed them at gunpoint, threatening, "Give me [any valuables] or I will shoot both of you *and* the dog." The victims complied, giving up a wedding ring.

Nichols continues his argument, which seems less a defense of the Miami Police Department than an admonishment to residents in every neighborhood in the Upper Eastside, especially to those in Belle Meade. "It's really frustrating," he says, "when people complain, but then don't even bother to watch out for suspicious activity. Purses and laptops are left in unlocked cars. People are so busy on their cell phones that they don't pay attention. It puts the police department on the defensive."

Margaret Tynan, president of the Belle Meade Homeowners Association, agrees with Nichols. "I know the police have limited resources," Tynan says, "so we try

to do things like Citizens Crime Watch. But for most people it's in one ear and out the other — until a crime happens to them. People are so egocentric that they aren't aware of their surroundings. They should understand that they are being watched [by thieves]." She contends that the Belle Meade streets closest to Biscayne Boulevard are the most dangerous, especially NE 7th Avenue and NE 6th Court, which lies outside the guard gate and street barricades. Tynan observes that most incidents, like the couple walking their dog, seem to be "people in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Belle Meade is accessible by car only at NE 76th Street, which has a guard gate, but several other "barricaded" streets, from NE 72nd Terrace to 77th Street, are easily crossed on foot or by bicycle. (The barricades consist of curbs and landscaping.)

Anyone familiar with the area knows that west of Biscayne Boulevard, the

neighborhoods begin to deteriorate, especially along 79th Street, just northwest of Belle Meade. These neighborhoods are, incidentally, mostly African American and Haitian American. Officer Nichols says that a lot of the criminal element is coming in from that direction, but "these criminals are often really good" at watching, waiting, and often simply "walking down a street checking for unlocked cars and doors."

"We try to do things like Citizens Crime Watch. But for most people it's in one ear and out the other — until a crime happens to them."

Belle Meade resident and BT columnist Frank Rollason sees the crime issue from

both perspectives — law enforcement and frightened residents. But he does not believe recent reported crimes are one-off, isolated incidents. "This is a systemic problem that needs increased police presence," he says. "But still, you hardly ever see [residents] out in the neighborhood unless they are walking their dogs. Nobody really knows each other. People are concerned and scared,

but not vigilant enough."

Rollason says the real wrench in the works is this: Because Belle Meade is a predominantly white and Latino neighborhood, when a resident calls to report a group of African-American teenagers riding their bicycles through the streets, it suddenly becomes a racial issue. "I've called to report suspicious activity a few times and never got a warm feeling," he says.

This puts Rollason, who lives along NE 7th Avenue, on the defensive. "When I work in my yard," he says. "I tell my wife to lock the doors and call 911 if anything happens. And I carry my gun with me. I figure I am as good a target as anybody."

Rollason's assertion that "nobody really knows each other" in Belle Meade seems to be borne out by both Margaret Tynan and Carmen Caldwell, executive director of Citizens Crime Watch of Miami-Dade County. Tynan says that at the March homeowners association meeting, which addressed the controversial issue of building walls or installing fences on every street barricade along NE

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SINCE 1984

Garden

Continued from page 30

The discipline combines lessons gleaned from ecology, organic gardening, landscape design, and sustainability. Over time, plant groups become almost independent, requiring far fewer resources and effort than do traditional gardens.

For example, Tunnell's layered berms will decompose into a rich soil base. The pea plants and others that pull in nitrogen replace commercial fertilizer. Some plants will attract bees and other pollinators. A nearby rock garden beckons small lizards, whose insect diets will keep bugs in check. Leftovers from Metro Organic Bistro go to the worm-filled compost bin.

Tunnell and Thomson both came to permaculture from an interest in health — and a curiosity about how food grows.

Thomson, who practices organic gardening and permaculture techniques at Little Haiti's Earth-N-Us Farm (see the *BT*'s "Inner-City Shangri-la," April 2009), moved from an interest in fitness to teaching health and wellness. He

became a vegetarian, then a vegan. "I got more and more connected to what I was consuming, then more and more connected to what I was growing," he says.

Tunnell took a similar path: "If you're eating raw produce and it doesn't feel alive, you find yourself asking, 'What's wrong here?'" He hopes his garden will demonstrate that people can master methods to grow foods that are healthy for people and the planet while controlling one bit of an increasingly centralized food-supply chain. "Our

society and the powers-that-be want to own everything down to the seed," Tunnell complains.

"But you need not have a seismic shift in consciousness. It's as easy as popping a seed into the ground and giving it water."

He's spent about \$10,000 creating the garden — far less than many Floridians

lavish on landscaping. His costs would have been even lower had he not opted to buy more mature trees.

Even in South Florida, where "permaculture" conjures up B-list celebrities and professional athletes misbehaving on South Beach, the practice is gaining adherents. In January, Cory Brennan, a Los Angeles-based permaculture expert, taught a class at Earth-N-Us, where participants received permaculture design certificates. It included a handful of Florida International University environmental studies students who

earned college credit.

Thomson plans another class this fall. Meanwhile FIU environmental studies graduate

program director Krishnaswamy Jayachandran, who sponsored the first class for the university students, says FIU may participate in the next Earth-N-Us offering while preparing a campus course.

"Our society wants to own everything down to the seed. But you don't need a seismic shift in consciousness. It's as easy as popping a seed into the ground."

Permaculture is getting a boost as people increasingly look for ways to take more control of their food, says Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture* and a biologist who teaches at Portland State University. Hemenway adds that concerns about food-borne bacterial outbreaks, factory farming horrors, the obesity epidemic, and global warming have all contributed to the attention. "People have been thinking for years: How do we mainstream this," he says. "Now the mainstream is coming to us."

Hemenway's advice is to start at home: "The place where my actions can have the most effect is my own yard."

Could South Florida soon be a major permaculture center? A stretch, perhaps, but Tunnell and Thomson have planted the seed. "It's basically about creating this utopia we want to run away and find," Tunnell says. "But running away to the mountains is not necessarily what the world needs right now."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Crime

Continued from page 33

6th Court, only the association's board of directors and three residents showed up.

With regard to the Citizens Crime Watch, Caldwell says that while a group has been formed on Belle Meade Island, an island enclave within Belle Meade, with a stellar turnout, no substantive group had yet been formed in Belle Meade proper. "The groups form block by block in any neighborhood," Caldwell explains. "It all depends on the 'block captain.' We had a good meeting in Belle Meade Island, but we haven't had as much success in Belle Meade."

If a case needed to be made for both increased police presence and citizen involvement, Wade Hallock would be in a position to do so. Hallock is an interior designer and three-year resident of Belle Meade whose driveway entrance is on NE 6th Court. For the past several months he has been renovating his house.

He says that during the renovation, his construction crew was held up at

gunpoint. No long after that, construction equipment was stolen. Following the equipment theft, one of his car windows was smashed, an expensive outdoor grill was stolen, and most recently — last month — burglars attempted several times to use crowbars to break into his house at night while he slept.

Hallock did not report most of these incidents to the police out of frustration. He recounts an incident in which his house alarm

was activated and he arrived home from his office in the Design District some 15 minutes before the police responded. "I've called the police at least three times to report the attempted break-ins. It's just a waste of time," he says. "I have a marble patio and have come out several mornings to see footprints all around. The police just say that there is nothing they can do unless something happens. I've never even seen a police car patrolling this street. The thing that scares me is that these criminals are so aggressive. I hate the fact I even bought a house in this area."

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"I've called police at least three times to report attempted break-ins. It's a waste of time. The thing that scares me is that these criminals are so aggressive."

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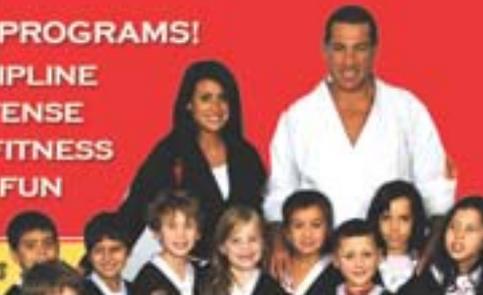
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District 17

Continued from page 31

allied with the Florida Justice Association (\$7000 from the Haggard law firm of Coral Gables; \$4800 from the Hialeah firm of Alexis Izquierdo, P.A.), followed closely by Dosal Tobacco, a family-owned Opa-locka cigarette manufacturer, Flo-Sun (the Fanjul family sugar enterprise), and Blue Cross-Blue Shield.

The No. 3 fundraiser is Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson, a minister, former police officer, and community activist who led an eight-year fight to incorporate the city and became its charter mayor in 2003. Her \$103,368 in contributors, centered around Miami Gardens, include car dealer Warren Henry (\$3400), Southern Wine & Spirits (\$2500), and for the gentlemen in the audience, Tootsie's Cabaret (\$2400). In a gesture of mirrored sisterhood, attorney Evelyn Greer, who led her own fight to create Pinecrest in 1995 and became its charter mayor, also donated \$2400.

Gibson's occasional Miami Gardens sparring partner, André Williams, follows at No. 4 with \$88,315 in contributions, much of it from his fellow professionals, followed by state Rep. Yolly Roberson, activist Marleine Bastien, attorney Roderick Vereen, and Phillip Brutus, who also happens to be Roberson's ex-husband.

This district at the historical center of black Miami defies conventional stereotypes. Its densely textured population is officially 56.9 percent black, 32.9 percent white, and 22.1 percent Hispanic, with a 2000 median income just above \$30,000. Roughly 39 percent of its 639,000 residents are foreign-born.

The 17th District starts in the northwest at Pines Boulevard and Flamingo Road in Broward, jogs east to U.S. 1 in Hollywood, funnels all the way down to the hard-bitten blocks of Overtown



Some of the candidates (left to right from top row): Marleine Bastien, Phillip Brutus, James Bush, Scott Galvin, Shirley Gibson, Rudy Moise, Yolly Roberson, Frederica Wilson.

on either side of NW 2nd Avenue, and reaches its narrow southern border in west Brickell.

In between it encompasses the West Indian neighborhoods of east Miramar; Jewish enclaves in Highland Oaks and Aventura; the middle-class reaches of Miami Gardens (population 108,000), the minarets of Opa-locka, unincorporated areas east of NW 27th Avenue, which are sprinkled with African Americans, West Indians, Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and the occasional stray Anglo; Liberty City, where 18 died in the 1980 McDuffie riots; and the ascending Haitian diaspora spreading from Little Haiti through North Miami and into Broward; not to mention the mixed professional enclaves of Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, and El Portal. (The district's boundary strays east of Biscayne Boulevard in just three places: down NE

10th Avenue in Miami Shores and Shorecrest, part of Belle Meade, and a sliver of Morningside.)

While the 17th includes the densest Haitian-American concentration in the nation, it would be an oversimplification to call it a "Haitian" district. Numbers are difficult to pin down, but estimates of the Haitian population range between 100,000 and 125,000, perhaps 20 percent of the population, and likely a far lower percentage of the 390,000 eligible voters.

Marleine Bastien, child of a Haitian village and divorced mother of three teenage boys who leads the organization Haitian Women of Miami, knows the limitations of being known as a "Haitian" candidate amid such an ethnic jumble. In the past two months, she has visited Haiti for earthquake relief and recently returned from the Organization of American States meeting in Washington, where

she was a delegate. "People associate me with Haiti," she says, "but for 28 years I've been intimately involved in every major struggle in this community: small class sizes, universal education for four-year olds, affordable housing, and universal health care. That's why we need someone like me for the people, because I believe we can make a difference. I have been there every step of the way."

The immigrant experience has rubbed off on Scott Galvin, born 41 years ago in a very different North Miami. He stayed home as the community underwent a demographic transformation. "North Miami is a wonderful melting pot and representative of the district," Galvin says. "I've been thrilled to be here my whole life, and I'd rather be here now than when I was a kid, because children exposed to different cultures and backgrounds are making new friends."

"I've been an elected official in North Miami for over a decade and have been elected and re-elected and re-elected in a community that is majority minority. I think the electorate doesn't want this to be about race. Voters want and expect a person who is going to work hard, and they want to select the best person for the job."

Yet even in a post-Obama age, race and ethnicity lurk as poorly buried subtexts in the discussion. Suppose, the chatter goes, that Galvin wins by default in a crowded field? Suppose the knives come out again in 2012 from the vanquished this year? Or suppose, for that matter, that a restless Kendrick Meek comes back to reclaim his seat if he loses his senate bid?

"I hope God blesses me with the re-election issue in 2012," Galvin responds. "For now, I'll focus on getting elected in 2010."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Couch Potato Nightmare

100 Block of NE 59th Street

After a short walk to the neighborhood store, our victim returned to a pilfered home. Mortified by the fact that he had left his window open and the screen lying on the floor, he surveyed his abode to see if any cherished items were missing. He called police, and by the time they arrived, he had assessed his losses. It seems that just one thing had been stolen: his television remote control. The television itself was left behind, suggesting that the burglar had a higher purpose in mind. By taking the remote, he would force the victim to get up from the couch — which thankfully was still there — every time he wanted to change channels. This was no crime. This was a selfless act of compassion.

Why Some Motels Should Have Bars

5200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

At one of the Boulevard's renovated motels, a prospective guest asked for

a room. The manager, excited that someone would actually consider such a thing, placed her purse behind counter and walked with the man to show her a room. Upon returning to the motel office, she discovered that her purse was missing. The victim told police she had a possible suspect in mind but couldn't place him at the moment. Perhaps just *too* many Boulevard suspects?

New Crime Magnet: Manhole Vulnerability

1100 Block of Venetian Way

A commercial truck stopped along the Venetian Causeway, where a couple of workers opened and entered a manhole. They toiled in an effort to make our town a better place for everyone — by tying up traffic, of course. However, while they were underground, they heard a strange noise above them. They climbed up the



ladder and saw a man driving off with most of their tools, which he had apparently taken from the back of their truck. The thief drove west toward Miami and was not identified. But wait. Didn't he have to go through the toll booth at the western end of the causeway?

The Hidden Benefits of Renting

500 Block of NE 83rd Street

For landlords there are advantages to advertising a furnished apartment for

rent. No worries about a tenant moving in with roach-infested sofas, mattresses crawling with bedbugs, or short-circuiting old appliances. However, this particular tenant took the lease to mean much more than that. He moved out one morning, and in the process took all the furniture with him. This was a Section 8 renter, and police are trying to track him down. In Miami, furnished and unfurnished have become interchangeable.

The Gas Wars Redux

6800 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Two years ago, with gasoline hovering around \$4 per gallon, gas theft was a common crime in Miami. Now our wonderful commodities speculators are predicting high petrol prices again. This seems to have mobilized Miami's criminal element. At this gas station, the manager secured a pump at midnight, but within two short hours an astounding

Continued on page 37

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Miami Scores with Marlins Art

— *Lowball meets highbrow at the new stadium* —

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

A couple of years from now you may find yourself in a seat at the new Marlins baseball stadium — its retractable roof open to the night sky, the enormous sliding-glass walls on the east side offering panoramas of downtown.

And when the Fish hit a home run, the midfield will explode with colorful laser lights, water spouts, visions of pelicans, seagulls, and at least one jumping marlin — an elaborate interactive pop-art installation courtesy of the pioneering artist Red Grooms. He's internationally known for his enormous outdoor spectacles, starting with his urban "happenings" back in the 1960s.

If all goes as planned, that will be the baseball reality in April 2012. Whether you'll be able to leave your car in a new parking garage, or eat and shop at a proposed restaurant and retail court is another story. But the unique stadium design that structurally incorporates major artwork has the potential to be a truly remarkable cultural asset.

With a whopping \$5.2 million budget from Miami-Dade's Art in Public Places program (thanks to an ordinance allocating 1.5 percent of construction costs of county buildings for the purchase or commission of artworks), the Marlins stadium will feature four site-specific projects that will make it stand out dramatically from other sports stadiums around the country.

Maybe because our Art in Public Places program is staffed by a pretty sophisticated group, and maybe because Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria is a well-known art collector, these projects are topnotch — not the garden variety Britto sculpture in the parking lot. In addition to Grooms and his dazzling multimedia

displays, artist Carlos Cruz-Diez, an originator of kinetic and color sculpture, will transform the stadium's main entrance, while local artist and architect Daniel Arsham will light up the



Overhead view of Daniel Arsham's tribute to the beloved Orange Bowl.

structure's towering pillars and also provide a tribute to the now-demolished Orange Bowl.

"We will have the finest artworks of any stadium in the nation," says a proud Michael Spring, director of Miami-Dade's Department of Cultural Affairs, which oversees Art in Public Places. "And our ballpark will be distinguished by how prominent and integrated the art is into the very architectural features of the facility."

Even from a distance — while driving to it or passing by it — the stadium will leave an indelible image, promises Arsham, who is working with his firm Snarkitecture. "It will be a magic trick," he says of the method by which he'll use LED lights to illuminate the 200-foot-tall support columns. "The light will move up and down the columns, and



Kinetic-art pioneer Carlos Cruz-Diez will create a vibrant paving system at the stadium's main plaza.

from a distance it will look like they're appearing and disappearing."

Upon arriving at the stadium, you'll experience Cruz-Diez's unique perspective on perception and color when walking through the main entrance. Cruz-Diez, an icon in his native Venezuela and famous since the 1960s for his work involving sensory manipulation, will use a paving system based on color, line, and viewer perception to create visual signage to the various stadium entrances.

At the east entrance, Arsham will erect his Orange Bowl tribute. Across this plaza, ten-foot-high reproductions of the letters that spelled out "Orange Bowl" on the old stadium will be scattered — some standing, some leaning,

some on their sides, "as though they had fallen from the old stadium and landed like that — in a state between deconstruction and rebuilding," Arsham says. Depending on the vantage point, the letters might spell out *Orange, Game*, or another word that sparks a sports memory. For Arsham, who fondly remembers the Orange Bowl outings of his youth, this project is personal: "Even the font [of the letters], if you were there, you would recognize them immediately."

So how were these artists — two stalwarts of contemporary art and a well-respected up-and-comer — chosen for this monumental undertaking? Through a process that was smooth, professional, and efficient — not exactly what some cynics would expect of county government. "A call to artists was issued internationally," says Brandi Reddick, communications and artists manager for Art in Public Places. "We received 432 applications, representing 19 countries. From these 432 applications, 18 artists were invited to develop site-specific project proposals."

An advisory panel of national arts experts was convened: Anabella Vogeler Smith, principal and director of interior design, Zyscovich Architects, Miami; Margarita Aguilar, Latin American art specialist for Christie's, New York; and Glenn Weiss, public art and design manager, Times Square, New York.

Marlins executives were intimately involved as well. "The entire public-art process was implemented in close collaboration with the Marlins," says Reddick. "During project-orientation meetings with the short-listed artists, the architects and project team continuously referred to the stadium as a 'white canvas for the integration of public art.'"

Repeated attempts to seek comment from Loria or other Marlins executives were unsuccessful. It's a strange silence, as this aspect of the stadium saga would seem to be the least controversial. Miami-Dade taxpayers will be responsible for an astronomical 80 percent of the construction costs, estimated at \$515 million. But that figure will be dwarfed by interest payments on the county bonds used to finance the stadium

"Miami-Dade County will have the most culturally conceived sports facility in the nation, both architecturally and artistically."

Continued on page 39



Daniel Arsham will perform an artistic “magic trick” in illuminating the stadium’s columns with LED lights.

Marlins Art

Continued from page 38

— projected at somewhere around \$2.4 billion. Miami’s new mayor was elected partially on his early and strong opposition to the stadium. Add a deep recession to all that and you’d think the Marlins would welcome a little positive PR.

From previous press releases, however, it’s clear that Loria, who still runs

his art dealership, was adamant about meshing high-quality art with his gleaming new ballpark. Art has often been used to legitimize and promote institutions.

Now sports franchises are jumping on the bandwagon. Jerry Jones, flamboyant owner of the Dallas Cowboys, whose



A sketch of Red Grooms’s multimedia home-run extravaganza.

state-of-the-art stadium opened last season, just unveiled the Art Collection of Cowboys Stadium, featuring 14 major contemporary installations. Big difference from Miami: Jones himself is footing the bill.

Another big difference: You must pay to see the artwork in Dallas. Not so in Miami, notes Michael Spring: “You don’t need to buy a ticket to experience the work.

You can be at home, watching the Marlins on TV, and cheering as Red Grooms’s sculpture ‘goes off,’ with marlins leaping

and lasers blazing, or driving on the expressway at night witnessing Daniel Arsham’s super columns.”

Unlike the Marlins’ front office, Spring has no problem commenting on the stadium’s ambitious public-arts projects: “Miami-Dade County will have the most culturally conceived sports facility in the nation, both architecturally and artistically.”

On display through June 20 at Miami Art Museum, “Carlos Cruz-Diez: The Embodied Experience of Color” offers a taste of what may be coming to the Marlins stadium. It also examines the origins of color-and-light installations, of which Cruz-Diez was a pioneer. The centerpiece is a ground-breaking, site-specific piece, *Cromosaturación*. After putting on shoe coverings, visitors wander through three rooms, each bathed in brilliant blues, reds, greens, and the color schemes that emerge among them — a truly astounding work. MAM, 101 W. Flagler St., 305-375-3000.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Art Listings

WYNWOOD GALLERY WALK & DESIGN DISTRICT ART + DESIGN NIGHT SATURDAY, APRIL 10

101/EXHIBIT

101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com

Through April 6:

"Robert Fleisher: New Work" by Robert Fleisher
April 10 through May 4: Solo show by Michael Costello
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

12345 WEST DIXIE STUDIO AND GALLERY

12345 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami
305-895-2956

www.12345westdixie.com

April 30 through June 12: "Alternate Realities" with Randy Burman, Tom Weinkle, and Steve Radzi
Reception April 30, 6 to 10 p.m.

ABBA FINE ART

233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278

www.abbafineart.com

Through April 29:

"Back Yard Experiments" with Pip and Duane Brant
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220

www.alejandravonhartz.net

April 10 through June 5:

"El Jardín Encarnado" by Héctor Fuenmayor
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730

www.artfusiongallery.com

Through June 23: "Inner Visions" with various artists

Reception April 10, 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 May 6: "Blue Rose Journey" by Evelyn Valdirio

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

ARTFORMZ

171 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-572-0040

www.artformz.net

April 10 through May 3:

"Rapture" with Natasha Duwin and Henning Haupt
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami
305-576-2828

www.bacfl.org

April 9 through April 26: "en.twined" with Cesar Barroso,

Marthin Carbajal, Daniel Fila, and Regina Jestrow
Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami

By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com

www.basfisherinvitational.com

Contact gallery for exhibition information.

BASHA GALLERY

795 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-891-4624

www.bashagallery.net

April 20 through May 31:

"RECESSION ART" with Allyson Krowitz, Arnaldo Rosello, Jorge Chirinos Sanchez, Kari Snyder, and Pedro Wilson

Reception April 30, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-2700

www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

April 10 through May 1: "Guarded" by Luis Gonzalez Palma

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

BREVARDS GALLERY

2320 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-5747

www.brevards.com

Ongoing: "NonDuality" by John

Brevard

BUTTER GALLERY

2301-2303 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-303-6254

www.buttergallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition

information.

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

April 10 through May 29: "Sticky and Sweet" with Eurydice,

Carl Pascuzzi, Diane Arrieta, Jonathan Stein, Alexis

Rodríguez-Duarte, and Spunk and the Orange Kittens

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

CAROL JAZZART CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906

www.cjazzart.com

By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com

Through April 11: "Characters" by David Rohn

April 16 through May 9: Jen Stark and Rory MacArthur

Reception April 16, 7 to 11 p.m.

CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION

541 NW 27th St., Miami
305-571-1415

www.visual.org

Call gallery for exhibition information.

CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-292-0411

www.charest-weinberg.com

Through May 22: "10 Years" by SunTek Chung

CHELSEA GALLERIA

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-2950

www.chelseagalleria.com

Through May 1:

"Latin American Photography" with various artists

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

CITY LOFT ART

61 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-9006

www.cityloftart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

CS GALLERY

787 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-308-6561

www.chirinosssanchez.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110

www.castilloart.com

April 10 through May 1: "Illusions Lounge" with José

Alvarez, Fernando and Humberto Campana, Nicole

Cherubini, Andy Coolquitt, and Keltie Ferris

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.



Christy Gast, *Batty Cave*, (video still) three-channel video projection, 2009-2010, at Gallery Diet.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804

www.dfinearts.com

April 10 through May 1:

"Inside Out" by Michael Flomen, "Orthoptera" by Sterz,

and "Line of Action" by Kevin Hart

Reception April 10, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046

www.diasporavibe.net

April 8 through May 20:

"Objects of Desire" with Rodney Jackson and Caiphus

Moore

Reception April 8, 7 to 10 p.m.

Artist talk April 10, 2 to 4 p.m.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

171 NE 38th St., Miami
dv

dimensionsvariable.net

Through April 30:

"Ain't No Disputin' the Rasputin" by Jay Hines

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248

www.dinamitraniartgallery.com

Through April 24:

"Recent Dreams" by Mario Algaze

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278

www.dorschgallery.com

April 9 through May 1:

"11 Glimpses" by Mette Tommerup, "Fall of the

Pedestal Sentience — Last Stand of the Fabulous,

Terrific and Super" by Magnus Sigurdarson, and "no

end to" by Lisa Perez

Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994

www.dotfiftyone.com

Through April 30:

"Goody Two Shoes" by Leslie Gabaldon

Reception April 10, 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

April 10 through May 1:

"Activate Doomsday Device" by Brian Reedy and

"Scissor Kick" by Sara Stites

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

ETRA FINE ART

10 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-4383

www.etrartfineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

FACHE ARTS

750 NE 124th St., North Miami #2
305-975-6933

www.fachearts.com

Through April 20:

"Green Art Exhibition" by Carla Fache

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976

www.snitzer.com

Through April 17: "Pathological Liar" by Diego Singh

Reception April 10, 7 to 9 p.m.

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE

125 NW 23 St., Miami
305-576-6095

www.galeriehelenehelenelamarque.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 DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288

www.gallerydiet.com

April 9 through May 1: "Batty Cave" by Christy Gast

Reception April 9, 6 to 9 p.m.

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

GALLERY I/D

2531 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-778-4568

www.galleryid.com

Through April 24:

"Upstate Girls — What Became of Collar City" by

Brenda Ann Kenneally

Reception April 24, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

GIOVANNI ROSSI FINE ART

2628 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
561-251-1375

www.giovannirossifineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information.

GODONAMERICA

1 NE 40th St. #5, Miami
786-362-5546

www.godonamerica.com

April 8 through June 8:

"The World of Alain Godon" by Alain Godon

Reception April 8, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645

www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com

April 10 through May 1:

"Attraction" by Robert Mazerolle

Through May 1:

"Sheer Lithium" by Ena Marrero

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359

www.haroldgolengallery.com

April 10 through May 1:

"Second Coming" by Mitch O'Connell

Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

IDEABOX ARTSPACE

2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878

Call gallery for exhibition information.

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Art Listings

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INTERFLIGHT STUDIO

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

KABE CONTEMPORARY

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

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through May 1:
"Hairball Cosmology" with various artists

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
Through May 30:
"homo nymos" by Iván Puig
Reception April 10, 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
Through April 24:
"The World Is Yours" by Andrew Heitzler
April 17: "Spring Fling Fundraiser Gala and Silent



Frances Trombly, Mop, hand-spun silver wool and cotton, wooden mop handle, 2008, at the Frost Art Museum.

Auction" with Daniel Arsham, Hernan Bas, José Bedia, Berry von Boekel, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Francesca DiMattio, Dzine, Teresita Fernandez, Naomi Fisher, Mauro Giaconi, Liam Gillick, Valerie Hegarty, Marie Lorenz, Kori Newkirk, Angel Otero, Gavin Perry, Adam Putnam, Cristina Lei Rodriguez, Mette Tommerup, and Mike Vasquez

Auction April 17, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Sagamore Hotel, 1671 Collins Ave., Miami Beach

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MIAMI ART SPACE

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

MIAM-DADE COLLEGE, CENTER GALLERY

300 NE 2nd Ave., 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.

MIRIAM FERNANDES GALLERY

3618 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-9531
www.miriamfernandes.com
April 10 through April 30:
"Timeless Joy of Life" by Don McClain
Reception April 10, 6 to 9 p.m.

MUSEO VAULT

346 NW 29th St., Miami
305-571-1175
www.museovault.com
Through April 30:
"[harmony]" by Alex Yanes
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

MYPAC

3324 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-981-6199
April 10 through May 29:
"Yellow" with various artists
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami
305-490-2976
www.oh-wow.com
April 29 through May 29:
"If You Don't Belong, Don't Be Long" by Scott Campbell
Reception April 29, 6 to 8 p.m.

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through April 17:
Carolina Sardi and Ted Larsen
April 24 through June 3:
Gigi Leso and "Don't Call Me Pretty: Women in Arts" with Belkys Ayon, Tania Bruguera, C. Ryder Cooley, Nora Correias, Andrea Cote, Antonia Eiriz, Ana Fabry, Aimee Garcia, Cristina Lucas, Jane Martin, Elsa Mora, Marta Maria Perez Bravo, Sandra Ramos, Rosangela Renno, Graciela Sacco, Carolina Sardi, Vibeke Tandberg, Lucia Warck Meister, and Maysey Craddock
Reception April 24, 6 to 9 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2900
www.praxis-art.com
Through April 12:
"Transitions" by Joyce Ho
Reception April 10, 7 to 9 p.m.

PRESSITON ART GALLERY

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

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami
305-441-2005
artnet.com/sammerglassery.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.

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Continued from page 41

SPINELLO GALLERY

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

STASH GALLERY

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

STRUCTURES GALLERY

80 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
Call gallery for exhibition information.

SWAMPSPACE GALLERY

3821 NE 1st Ct., Miami
swampstyle@gmail.com
April 10 through April 30:
"Milk, Honey, Girls, Money" by Samantha Gozlan
Reception April 10, 6 to midnight

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
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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
Call gallery for exhibition information.

DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

23 NE 41st St., Miami
305-576-6112
www.delacruzcollection.org
April 15: Presentation by Nereida Garcia-Ferraz and Ana Mendieta: *Fuego de Tierra* movie screening
April 22: Mary Ceruti lecture
Screening April 15, 7:30 p.m.
Lecture April 22, 7 p.m.

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 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
Through April 18: "Wanderlust" by FIU MFA students Jason Galbut, Pati Laylle, and Kim Yantis
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 Maria Teresa Hincapié" by Maria Teresa Hincapié
April 23 through May 9: "Crome Yellow, Spring Bachelor of Fine Art Students' Exhibition" with various artists

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535
www.lowemuseum.org
Through April 25: "Trends and Techniques: A Short History of Printmaking" with various artists

MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami
305-375-3000
www.miamiartmuseum.org
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
Through May 9: "The Sharper Image" by Cory Arcangel and "Auto Focus" by Ceal Floyer

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051
www.margulieswarehouse.com
Through April 30: "Masters of Surrealist Sculpture" with Joan Miró and Isamu Noguchi, "100 Years of Photography 1909-2009" with Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Helen Levitt, Danny Lyon, Cindy Sherman,

Justine Kurland, Alec Soth, Jeff Brouws, Olafur Eliasson, and Anastasia Khoroshilova, and "Depression Bread Line" by George Segal

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

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

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305-438-9908
www.worldclassboxing.org/
Through May 28: Anna Gaskell and Mariko Mori
Reception April 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

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

Martina Filjak



MARTINA FILJAK, gold medalist of the prestigious 2009 CLEVELAND INT'L PIANO COMPETITION, made her debut at 12 with Croatia's renowned Zagreb Soloist's Chamber Orchestra. Acclaimed for her technical prowess and elegant artistry, she has appeared with orchestras in Cleveland, Zagreb, Strasbourg, Morocco, Moscow, Belgrade, Torino, Valles and Barcelona. This year's recitals include appearances in Spain, Argentina, and China, at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Salle Cortot in Paris, Konzerthaus Berlin, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa and Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona - and St. Martha in Miami Shores! Her program on April 17 will include two Sonatas by Antonio Soler, 12 Chopin Preludes, Chopin's Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Prokofiev's Sonata No. 4, and Balakirev's Islamey.

(This program replaces the one previously advertised.)

Saturday April 17 2010 at 7:30 pm

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Events Calendar

World Music Meets Miami

The Rhythm Foundation's eighth annual **Heineken TransAtlantic Festival** is always an ear-opener, a rare opportunity to hear contemporary World music. This year is no exception, though it's a slimmed-down program — four bands in two concerts, **Friday, April 9, and Saturday, April 24**, both at the North Beach Bandshell (7275 Collins Ave.). Bogotá's Bomba Estéreo, a frenetic mash-up of cumbia, electronica, and hip hop, opens on April 9 for Grammy-nominated Orquestra Contemporânea de Olinda, the brassy all-star fusion group from Brazil. On April 24, Miami's own Locos por Juana opens for Mali's guitar sensation Vieux Farka Touré. Tickets are \$20 in advance for each concert. Visit Transatlanticfestival.com or call 305-672-5202.

From Catalonia to the Colony

Warning: The next dance program presented by Tigertail Productions and the Cultural Center of Spain is not for the faint of heart. Straight from Barcelona, *Alta Realitat Ölelés* is the intensely gripping tale of two estranged friends. Jordi Cortés and Damian Muñoz, two of Spain's most innovative dancer/choreographers, bring their singular artistry to the Colony Theater (1040 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach) on **Friday, April 9, and Saturday, April 10** at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15-\$50 at www.tigertailproductions.org.

The Design District: It's Not Just For Designers

The Design District opens its doors to the entire family on **Saturday, April 10** from noon to 3:00 p.m. Merchants and restaurateurs welcome all ages to **Family Day in the Miami Design District** at various locations around NE 40th Street. The free event, which coincides with Gallery Walk later that day, has plenty of supervised creative activities for the kids while parents explore the numerous stores and showrooms, whether it be an orange martini at Mai Tardi or bright and bold fashions at Marimekko. Visit miamidesigndistrict.net for information.

Opera for Kids



Design District Family Day



Bike Miami Days



From Catalonia to the Colony



Miami Beach Gay Pride Parade



From the Boulevard to Bacardi: A Walk on the Historic Side

Culture and exercise unite on the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's numerous walking tours. Here's a new one: **The Biscayne to Bacardi Walking Tour**, which begins at the Latin Café (2501 Biscayne Blvd.) at 10:00 a.m. **Saturday, April 10**. Voluble historian Paul George will lead the tour and explore the neighborhood, concluding at the iconic Bacardi Building around 1:00 p.m. Limited space. Museum members \$20, nonmembers \$25. Call 305-375-1621 or visit www.hmsf.org.

Opera for Kids? Magical Oranges? Why Not?

The Playground Theatre (9806 NE 2nd Ave.) reinterprets for kids six years and up **The Love of Three Oranges**, the classic operatic comedy in which Prince Tartaglia hilariously searches for three enchanted oranges and a way to avoid marrying the repugnant Smeraldina. Performances run from **April 14 to May 23** and show times vary. Tickets are \$15. Call 305-751-9550 x233 or visit theplaygroundtheatre.com.

Miami Riverday: Music, History, Food, and Fun!

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, April 10**. You don't want to miss the 14th annual **Miami Riverday**, a free extravaganza of an event that kicks off at 11:00 a.m. in the Lummus Park Historic District (250 NW N. River Dr.). There will be free boat rides on the Miami

River, historical tours and re-enactments, kid's activities, and musical performances by a couple of great local bands: the Spam Allstars and the Resolvers. Call 305-644-0544 or visit miamirivercommission.org.

Baynanza 2010: Stash the Trash

Last Saturday it was Riverday. This Saturday, **April 17**, it's **Baynanza**, the 28th annual Biscayne Bay cleanup, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Join thousands of volunteers countywide in this one-day, power-packed effort to beautify the shores of Biscayne Bay. There are 27 cleanup sites, including Oleta River State Park, Greynolds Park, Legion Park, Morningside Park, and the Julia Tuttle Causeway. Space is limited, so register early and you'll also get you a Baynanza 2010 commemorative T-shirt. Call 305-372-6784 or go to www.miamidade.gov/derm/baynanza.

Being Out Is So In

On **Saturday, April 17**, from noon to 8:00 p.m., the most colorful street in America, Ocean Drive, will host the most colorful parade north of Key West, the **Miami Beach Gay Pride Parade & Festival**. Expect to be fabulously entertained by gleeful crowds, numerous food vendors, play zones, and musical performances. The party doesn't end there. Continue the festivities at any of the officially sanctioned after-party events all over the Beach.

Complete schedules at www.miamibeachgaypride.com.

Earth Day: A Planetary Party

The Earth's birthday is coming up on April 22 and we have a celebration suggestion. Head down to Metrozoo

and **Party for the Planet** with the wild things. The zoo (12400 SW 152nd St.) will be celebrating all week, but they'll really crank it up on **Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25** from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Interactive shows and guided tours will give the whole family a fresh appreciation for this big blue ball we call home. The party is free with the price of admission. Go to www.miamimetrozoo.com or call 305-251-0400.

Two Wheels Are Better Than Four

Bicyclists, skateboarders, roller skaters, and pedestrians alike will fill the streets of Coconut Grove on **Sunday, April 25**, for the second annual **Bike Miami Days** (9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.). The free event at Peacock Park (2820 McFarlane Rd.) and the surrounding streets is a city initiative to highlight green consciousness, alternative transportation, and physical fitness. Arrive early because you won't want to miss the music and dance competitions, or the art installations, or the bike rides through lush Grove neighborhoods. Call 305-416-1022 for details.

Curious About Brickell? Here's Your Chance

Brickell is now known for its restaurants, shops, and burgeoning nightlife. But who has the time or money to indulge it all? Here's an answer: On **Sunday, April 25**, from noon to 5:30 p.m., you can sample the place to your heart's content at the first annual **Taste of Brickell**. Stores and restaurants galore will set up shop around the Brickell Metrorail station (SW 1st Avenue and 10th Street) to bring you the very best of Miami's first truly urban neighborhood. Call Barbara Walters (786-287-7027) for information.

Compiled by BT interns Mandy Baca and Matt Ruckman

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

In the Middle of the Road

Biscayne Park's lush street medians keep birds in, traffic out

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Where can you find a happy median? Hop on a bike and glide around the Village of Biscayne Park. Before you can say, "Holy log cabin, Batman," you will run into one. This little village looms large in the art of landscaped streets.

Practically every road has a median of some sort, and the main advantage of them becomes immediately apparent: No one wants to drive through this maze. The streets are so quiet that I actually saw a grown woman sitting on the pavement, watching landscapers work on her front yard. Where else in Miami can you calmly sit in the middle of the road?

The jewel of the village's many, many medians is a series of eight extra-large ones. In paved-over Miami, they qualify as parks. Biscayne Park also has a real park, the Ed Burke Recreation Center, and its review in August 2008 ("Quiet Village, Rollicking Park") earned a respectable rating of 3.5 trees.

Likewise, the large medians of Biscayne Park are above average; in fact, they could easily be exceptional with a little more TLC. Medians not only slow traffic, they also provide shade, green space, and a place to stretch two legs or four. Having this kind of open space in front of your house? Priceless.

Biscayne Park is overflowing with green medians because a green person was the original developer of the village.



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Biscayne Park residents can thank horticulturalist Arthur Mertlow Griffing for their greenery.

Horticulturalist Arthur Mertlow Griffing lived in the area and began developing lots in the early 1920s. His vision has given the neighborhoods here an enduring charm. Riding around the village, I had the feeling that I was back in my childhood, going to visit my grandparent's house in Boynton Beach. It looks like Old Florida.

Most of these large medians are bisected down the middle by a street, giving them the shape of a giant egg sliced in half. Some of them are also half cul-de-sacs, meaning that the far ends are closed, and the circle's only openings are in the middle. All of them are

one-way streets. Anyone attempting to find a shortcut through Biscayne Park will soon get dizzy and discouraged by the constant circling.

Biscayne Park is shaped like a triangle standing on one tip, and my favorite median sits closest to the southern angle.

Here you will find an intriguing mixture of architecture and landscaping, and in one corner hangs a hidden, swinging green bench. I'll bet that bench was hung there by residents of that cul-de-sac, because it is unique among the village's large medians.

This median, among several others, has telephone poles running through it. While not attractive, it sure beats the alternative of having the poles and wires running through your yard.

Another unique median sits on NE 114th Street and 7th Avenue. The east half of the median features a signature green metal bench with a stencil in large letters reading "Biscayne Park." On the other half stand two signs — one designating the village as a bird sanctuary, and another pointing to the town hall. The town hall on the median's western

end looks like a log cabin. That's because it *is* a log cabin. Built by the WPA and dedicated in 1935, its cost was \$247.

Another sign in the village deserves special mention, although technically it stands outside a median on private property. Across from this house, within the median at NE 116th Street and 9th Avenue, stands a green doggie trash can for disposing of doggie waste. But not everyone is in the habit of picking up, it seems. The nearby private sign, in the shape of a white terrier with the tell-tale curved back, shows a dog going about its business. In bold letters on the terrier's body is written "No!"

Animal waste is not readily apparent on the grassy medians, but it probably is there, especially considering the large numbers of cats lounging in front yards.



Riding around the village, I had the feeling that I was back in my childhood. It looks like Old Florida.

But the medians appear mostly clean, trimmed, and free of litter.

The "Pine Tree Row" median at NE 118th Street and 7th Avenue features mature Australian pines all the way around the oval. Although attractive and shady, the pines are considered a major invasive species in South Florida. Some pines are already being overtaken by the native strangler fig, but at some point they should be replaced by something more American and less Australian.

Two of the medians are so large that if relocated within the City of Miami, they would be considered major parks. They stretch from 8th to 10th avenues, with one on NE 118th Street and the other two blocks north. This

Continued on page 45

THE MEDIANS OF BISCAYNE PARK

Park Rating

Biscayne Park Village Hall
640 NE 114th St.
305-899-8000
Hours: 24/7

Picnic tables: No
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Tennis courts: No
Athletic fields: No
Night lighting: Indirect
Swimming pool: No
Playground: Informal
Special features: Park benches

Medians

Continued from page 44

northernmost median appears to be planted with young oak trees, which gives it much less shade than the other medians that feature mature trees. These teenager trees lack the romance and grandeur of the mama and papa trees — but they'll grow into it.

The larger medians seem lonelier than the smaller ones, but all of them appear to lack people. Although each has at least one bench, only one of the eight medians was occupied during recent visits. Don't look for action in these parks.

It's interesting to note that the landscaping of each median is not uniform, although they all echo the shape of the street, with the pattern of an outer oval of trees around an inner oval of grass. The choice of trees, however, seems much more random. A palm tree might pop up in between a series of live oaks, and flowering bushes might appear in spaces that were clearly intended for trees. These interrupted patterns could infuriate a type-A personality.

On the other hand, the uniqueness of



Nearly every median has at least one park bench.

each median adds a bit of charm. Trees never grown in perfect rows of uniform heights except on a tree farm. As before, I suspect that the neighbors took things into their own hands, and whenever a tree died, they replaced it with whatever they had available.

The neighbors are also the key

ingredient to the future of these medians. Why not have a beautification contest to see which group of neighbors can create the most improved median? During the holidays, they could also come together to make their street special.

Residents of Biscayne Park, be thankful for your medians. You're



Telephone poles run through the medians, but better there than your front yard.

luckier than most in Miami. Your green streets keep the birds in and the traffic out.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Keep North Miami Beautiful

Clean up North Miami as part of the **Great American Cleanup Campaign!** These programs are sponsored through the support of the Florida Department of Transportation, Keep America Beautiful, and the City of North Miami.

Great American Cleanup

- Participants will be dispersed to points throughout the city for beautification and cleanup activities.
- Participants will receive a T-shirt and double community hours.
- Participants should wear comfortable shoes and sneakers.
- Participants must have signed waivers: available at www.northmiamifl.gov or at registration.

Timetable

8:00 a.m.	Registration
8:30 a.m.	Formal Program
9:00 a.m.	Activities Begin
12:00 noon	Picnic

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Call of the Wild – Canine Edition

Fido ignores you when you're calling him to come? Don't take it personally

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

Last month I wrote about the most aggravating part of being a dog-owner: house-training your pet. Well, close behind in terms of aggravation is this: Dogs that won't come when you call them. Many intelligent owners are baffled trying to fathom why Fido takes his time moseying over, or completely ignores them, especially if they feel they've done everything right.

They have gone through the dog-training classes. They've doled out the cookies. They've showered their pet with affection. "He comes perfectly when we're in the house," they tell me. "But when we're outdoors, sometimes he won't come no matter what."

There are several reasons for this. Two of them — often overlooked — are competing motivations and environmental stimuli.

Your dog knows every inch of your house, and there's not much of interest going on there. You are usually the most interesting thing in the gilded cage he calls home. In fact, when owners call from inside the house for dogs to come, it's usually for good things: to take a walk, to have dinner, to receive a bone.

But when he's outdoors, the world is his oyster. Every minute of the day, every shift of the wind brings a new adventure. If there are other animals outside, or other potent stimuli (the gardener, the cable guy), you are truly rowing upstream. If your dog has a strong chase or prey drive, competing against that natural instinct will make obedience



even more difficult.

In some important circumstances, when you call your dog to come while he is outdoors, you're actually punishing him. But more on that later.

It's important to realize that a dog's motivations and desires are always in flux. As part of training I usually advise clients to give their best doggie rewards when working on calling their dogs to come, known as the "recall." If your dog is highly motivated by food at the time you're in training, reward him with what he really loves. For most dogs that would be real meat. But a dog who is outdoors and has been eating well every day may

not be motivated by top sirloin, especially if he's been cooped up. He just wants his freedom.

Here's an example: My Dalmatian, who is generally good off-leash and has a pretty solid recall (after lots of training), spent a month with me in the Northeast during one of the coldest winters on record. Not once did the temperature climb above 20 degrees! Our hour-long Florida walks turned into "Hurry up! Go potty! Get inside!" As my BT colleague Wendy Doscher-Smith would say, it was the Merciless Frozen Tundra.

He got so stir-crazy that one day, when he had a chance to bolt into the

woods and chase deer (an intoxicating novelty for him), he literally leaped at it, despite blizzard conditions. Even though it was dinnertime and he was hungry, no amount of tasty meat was going to motivate him to come to me.

This is the crux of competing motivations. If you call your dog to come for a reward of a favorite toy or prized food, but he is extremely thirsty, he may ignore your initial requests and head for the stream or lake or swimming pool for a drink of water. At that moment, water is more important to him than food or toys. Similarly, if there is a bitch in heat somewhere in the vicinity, he may be compelled to find her, disregarding your efforts to call him to you.

We humans experience competing motivations all the time. An important client or your boss calls, but you're watching the last few minutes of *American Idol*, so you wait for the conclusion before returning the call. Adolescents are told not to do things like watch R-rated movies, but their curiosity and raging hormones get in the way of them doing the right thing.

That brings us back to punishment. Calling your dog when he desperately wants to be somewhere else is, in essence, a form of punishment, which is a technical no-no in recall training. Think about it. When you call your dog at the dog park, and then slap on the leash and take him away from his friends, he's going to see it as punishment. In such situations, he needs a special reward for obeying. That means you should come to the park prepared — have a treat ready for him.

Continued on page 46

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Continued from page 47

You should never punish or scold a dog when he returns to you or he'll learn that coming to you is a bad thing. The next time he'll be more reticent.

To get your dog to come when called — most of the time if not every time — you need to approach the task from all angles. Practice not just at home, but also outside in distracting situations. Build a reward history so he knows it's wonderful and always more rewarding to come to you than do anything else.

You must be alert to competing motivations so you can size up your surroundings and manage your dog properly. Don't practice recalls if you're not confident your dog will come. Otherwise you'll be practicing *not* coming. And remember that you must be exciting and inviting to your dog at all times, especially outdoors. When you're outside with your dog, it's really vital to be interesting. (Put down your cell phone!)

Yet you must also be able to enforce the recall in intermediate practice, so he learns he must come and that you're

serious. It helps to adopt a work-to-earn policy with your dog. Using "life rewards" (entrance to dog parks, squirrel-chasing) as motivators is extremely potent in training. I taught my Dalmatian that if he comes when called, even though he may be very interested in a particular squirrel, I won't just give him a food reward; I'll also release him to chase the squirrel! In situations like that, I'm using the competing environment to my advantage.

Perhaps most important, you must know your dog well and recognize that there are no guarantees. On the other hand, the more things you do to put the odds in your favor, the closer you will be to a solid recall — and a better understanding of your dog.

Lisa Hartman is head dog trainer and founder of 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.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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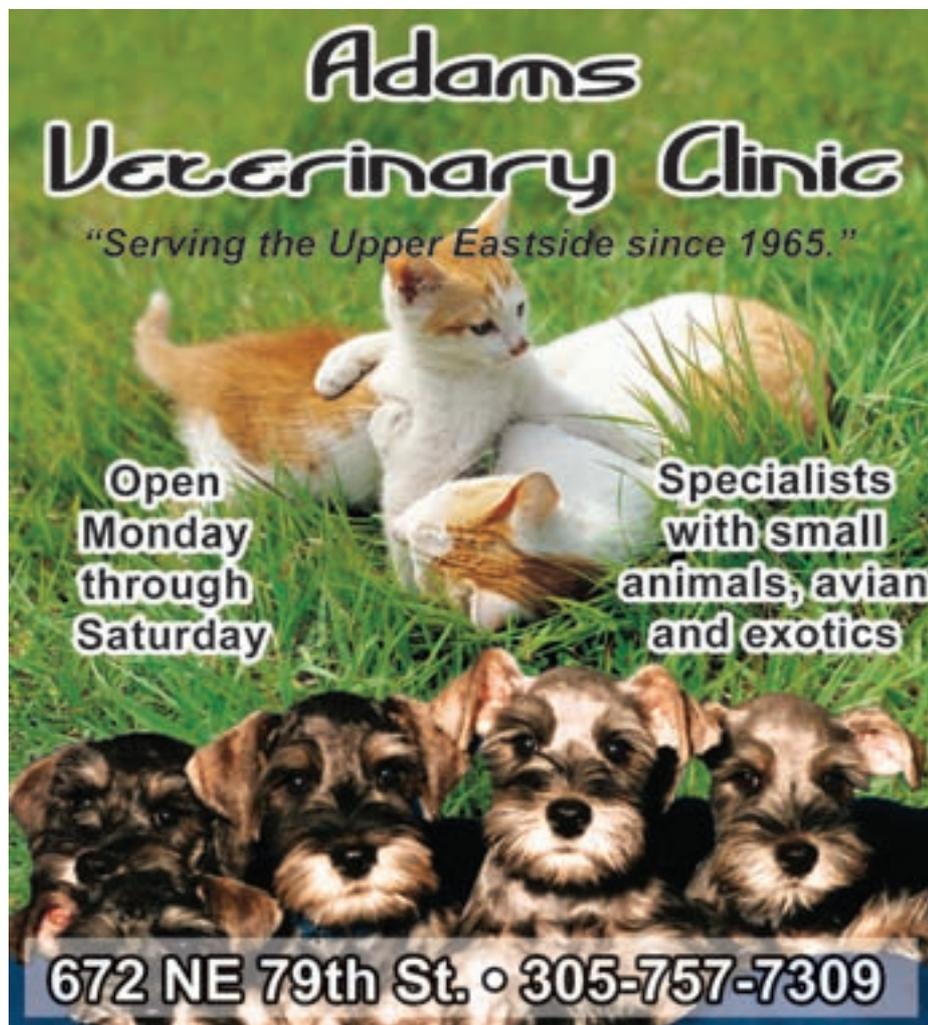
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Munchkins and Menus

The kids are hungry, you're in Wynwood or Midtown or the Design District, and you're in luck

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

The Design District and its neighbor Midtown Miami are rapidly becoming Family Central. Maybe it started with the arrival of Genius Jones in the District a few years ago, but more recently family friendliness has popped up all over, along with a number of new eateries, many of which welcome the car-seat set with open arms and designer highchairs.

One such place is Jonathan Eismann's **Pizza Volante** for upscale pizza. (Learn more about the restaurants mentioned here in our "Dining Guide," page 54.) The place is casually hip and perfect for families in all states of dress. It features wholesome and organic ingredients that our generation wants to be feeding our kids. And for parents there is a nice array of wines.

When we tried it out, we felt very much at home around one of the restaurant's cool long tables with another family of four at the other end. We greeted each other with knowing looks as we acknowledged the simplicity and convenience of a place serving tasty pizza in an environment parents can love.

I recently had a date night with four-year-old Izzi — just mommy and the little guy out for a night of dining. He wanted to go to **Sugarcane** because his beloved classmate's daddy is a chef there, but there were no tables available at our impromptu arrival, although I did see at least one kid when my partner and I dined there for our romantic Valentine's dinner.

So **Q** it was for me and my Iz that night. He got all dressed up in his vest



and cowboy boots for some cowboy chow as we set out for yet another Jonathan Eismann culinary destination, his new barbecue joint on N. Miami Avenue. Um, scratch that. This is no "joint." The talk of the town since even before it opened, **Q** may feature some down-home taste — smokiness you can smell from around the corner — but the prices are more on the uptown side. Having spotted many families there on my first trip, I decided to try it out on my own ram-bunctious little taste connoisseur.

Indeed the place is kid-friendly, the staff being incredibly attentive to Izzi from the moment he sauntered in, announcing that he was a cowboy. They celebrated his real Texas cowboy boots, complimented his unsolicited cowboy dance, and encouraged him to do his moves on the dance floor.

But there is no kids' menu, and the à la carte offerings make it a bit pricey

for little ones who want fries with their sliders. He did love the ribs I ordered in a half slab and couldn't even finish. However, it was a bit off-putting when the hostess came over to coo over Izzi again, only to try selling us T-shirts and faux cow-skin drink coolies.

All-in-all, what was the review from my date? "Mom," Izzi pronounced, "that was the most deliciousest meal I ever had. That was the most *delightful* meal I've ever had in mine life."

When we first moved to the neighborhood in 2004, it was always frustrating that weekend breakfast and brunch options seemed so limited for those of us with little ones who arise with the roosters. (And yes, this is Miami, and we all have neighbors with roosters, right?) So I was absolutely thrilled to discover two places right near me — one only about 100 yards away — that open early every day, including weekends for breakfast.

Owned by Claude Postel, who also owns the beloved **Buena Vista Bistro**, one of the early-morning options is the new **Buena Vista Deli**. Our family can practically roll out of bed and right into it for Goldi's bagel and lox, Izzi's chocolate croissant, and grown-up frittatas and cheese plates.

Heading a little farther south, we can enjoy a more service-oriented and more decadent breakfast at Morgans in Wynwood. Serving up delicious and stylish comfort food, **Morgans** is a place in which you'd love to luxuriate forever — in the cool white interior or relaxing on the broad covered porch outside. And all the while everyone around you is happy to see your kids.

The creation of Barclay Graebner, who many of us may remember from Kidscape, the fantastic indoor play space at 50th and Biscayne, the restaurant was built with kids in mind, thanks to Barclay's own five kids and sharp mommy sensibilities. It boasts a kid-friendly front lawn where young ones can hang out, a spacious parking lot with ample room for families with strollers and extra little tykes running around, and lots of menu choices, including some great, healthy smoothies with catchy names like Chunky Monkey.

We can't forget the fast-casual restaurants at the Shops at Midtown, either. I know my neighbors and I spend many a weeknight dinner in shorts and T-shirts at **Lime Fresh Mexican Grill** and **Five Guys Burgers and Fries**, as well as the new, über-green **Sakaya Kitchen**, which I really love, although you have to be mindful of the heat in some of their menu items.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Bit of Palmistry from Cuba

The palms of Cuba make excellent additions to South Florida landscapes

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Many years ago, one of my professors lent me the multi-volume *Flora de Cuba*, which was published in 1946 in Havana. After I had finished my project, I reluctantly returned it, and ever since I have wanted a set for myself. This year I finally was able to add to my library the five-book set. What a wonderful window into the past. In the section on palms, there are amazing photos taken in the 1940s of great vistas with many of the endemic species found nowhere else in the world.

Many of these palm species grow very well here in South Florida. Every once in a while, I see magnificent specimens of these Cuban palms while driving through older residential areas. Several decades ago these palms could only be seen in a botanical garden; now many are available locally and will grow quite well in your yard, even after being exposed to the cold of this past winter.

This was going to be an article on palms of the Caribbean that we can grow in South Florida, but there are so many endemic and native species in Cuba that I decided to write exclusively about them, and I have added the local names listed in the *Flora of Cuba*.

One of my favorite is *Copernicia baileyana*, known in Cuba as Yarey hembra, or Cacocum in Oriente province. This palm can eventually grow 40 or 50 feet tall and is one of the most distinctive palms I have ever seen. Another very attractive palm is *Copernicia macroglossa*, the Cuban petticoat palm. This species is known

in Cuba as Palma Jata or Jata de Guanabacoa.

The palm genus *Copernicia* has more than 20 species that occur in the Caribbean and into South America. Many are endemic to Cuba, found nowhere else. Most grow slowly and may not form a trunk for many years, depending on growing conditions and available water. It is this characteristic that makes many of *Copernicia* species great landscape plants. The foliage is long-lived and forms a tight, round, very attractive rosette. They are easy to grow in South Florida.

The palm genus *Coccothrinax* has about 50 species throughout the Caribbean, with the greatest diversity of species, 34 or so, occurring in Cuba. Many palm enthusiasts are familiar with the Old Man palm, *Coccothrinax crinita*, also known in Cuba as Palma petate. I grew one once from a small container to a 20-foot-tall fruiting specimen in about 15 years. The palms in this genus are not as massive as some of the *Copernicia* but can eventually grow quite tall. As shorter palms, they are excellent candidates for small gardens or large pot culture. *Coccothrinax miraguama*, in Cuba better known as Miraguano or Yuraguana, has attractive, stiff, round leaves with a distinct pattern of fiber wrapped around the trunk. Most if not all *Coccothrinax* are found growing in limestone in their natural habitats, perfect for our area. There are several *Thrinax* species found on the island. It is a genus very similar



A beautiful *Copernicia baileyana* in the yard of Elvis Cruz in Morningside.

BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

along with all of the other palm species found in Cuba and throughout the Caribbean, they are hurricane tolerant.

Cuesta del chivo is the local Cuban name for the Buccaneer palm, *Pseudophoenix sargentii*. This is an attractive, slow-growing palm that at one time had been almost wiped out in the Florida Keys.

About ten species of Royal palms are found throughout the Caribbean basin. *Roystonea regia* is the species native to Florida and one of five species found in Cuba. We know it grows very well here, but we are probably planting too many and making this species a ready target for specific insects to dine upon. Palma real is the Cuban name.

All of these palms either grow in limestone or in serpentine soils in their native habitats. Both soil conditions are very limiting in nutrients, especially nitrogen. The fact that these palms evolved to adapt to these harsh conditions makes them not only ideal for our landscape conditions but excellent candidates for sustainable landscaping.

One of the palm species noted in *Flora de Cuba* was La Palma barrigona, *Colpothrinax wrightii*, or the Cuban belly palm. I have never seen a mature specimen here, but with the distinctive belly-like bulge in its trunk, it would make an interesting landscape specimen.

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

to *Coccothrinax* and will grow under the same soil conditions.

What we call the Paurotis palm is correctly known as *Acoelorrhaphes wrightii*, in Cuba as Guano prieto. In South Florida, it is a common palm often seen with very yellow, starved-looking foliage. This palm can be found growing in swamps with lush green foliage; make sure it is well irrigated in your landscape.

Our Florida native, the Sabal palmetto, is also found growing in Cuba, along with several other attractive Sabal species. There it is known as Cana Jata. Sabal species can get quite massive, but

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Forget Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc - Drink Outside the Box

Red, white, and you: Agreeable wines for \$12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

Last month we threw off the chains of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Pinot Noir in favor of outside-the-box red wines. This month it's time to break the iron grip of Chardonnay and the weaker, let's say noodle grip, of Sauvignon Blanc by pouring something different into our wine glasses.

Beyond the obvious benefit of expanding our palates and experiencing new tastes, there are a few others. For one, a lot of Sauvignon Blanc is just plain sucky nowadays, bred to eliminate the brisk, citrus acidity we crave in the best SBs, or bulked up on fruit and oak to imitate the worst Chardonnays, resulting in a wine with all the character of lukewarm cream of wheat.

As for Chardonnay, is there anything that says "wussie" more than walking into a bar and ordering a glass of the country's most-mocked and ubiquitous varietal? It's like going to the beach in a suit and kicking sand in your own face.

For a third, drinking outside the Chardonnay-Sauv Blanc box is a lot cheaper. This is particularly true in restaurants, where Chardonnays that are barely suitable as cleaning fluid are marked up higher than the space shuttle, while "lesser" varietals have to make do with less extortionate pricing.

If you like the richness and fruitiness typical of many domestic Chards, try Viognier or a full-bodied, off-dry Riesling. (On the other hand, if you like the oaky, alcoholic, cloyingly sweet character of many other domestic Chardonnays, try soaking a two-by-four in vodka and

chasing with an overripe mango.) If you're thirsty for the citrusy crispness that characterizes the best Sauvignon Blancs (which also command the best, i.e., highest, prices), try Muscadet, a dry Riesling, or Spain's answer to white Bordeaux — white Rioja.

Seriously, you have nothing to lose but your chains.

For Chardonnay lovers, one wine you can't lose with is the **2008 McManis Family Vineyards Viognier**. It not only picked up a silver medal at the 2009 San Francisco International Wine Competition (where I had the privilege of judging for a couple of years not all that long ago) but costs all of ten bucks a bottle. It starts off with a bit of that honey-suckle-floral thing Viognier is known for, but quickly segues into rich, citrusy Meyer lemon flavors, with a Chardonnay-like creamy, mouth-filling texture.

Another wine that hints at that ripe, honeyed richness before revealing a superb fruit-acid balance is one of my favorite California Rieslings, the 2008 vintage from Monterey County's **Jekel Vineyards**. Its lovely, aromatic beginnings can fool you into thinking it's a sweet-style Riesling, but underneath is a wine that tastes of apricots, peaches, and pineapple with a taut acid backbone. Both of these wines have the restraint to play well with simply prepared fish and shellfish yet the heft to stand up to light meats like chicken and veal.



Somewhere in the middle of Chardonnay-Sauvignon Blanc territory is another all-time favorite, the **2008 Dry Creek Chenin Blanc**. Crisp and smoky in the nose, on the palate it's green apple and grapefruit with a tiny hint of the petroleum taste that marks many German Rieslings. On my personal list of outside-the-box white wines, this is in the top five.

In the crisp, refreshing, Sauvignon Blanc vein, the best deals are not only outside the box but outside the country. From Spain is the **2008 Marques de Caceres White Rioja**, whose steely green apple-lemon-grapefruit flavors with a slight mineral tang make it an ideal warm-weather, backyard-barbecue kind of wine.

Doubling down on the lemon, grapefruit, and minerals is a wine that begs to

be poured with oysters, scallops, lobster, or any rich-tasting shellfish, the **2008 Domaine de la Chauviniere Muscadet Sevre et Maine**. Like the best Muscadets, it's aged *sur lie* (on the yeasts and other leavings of fermentation), which gives it added fullness and complexity, though it's still as crisp as a freshly starched shirt collar.

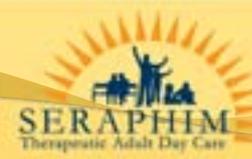
Italy's contribution is the **2006 Campogrande Orvieto** by Antinori. It might seem that 2006 is a rather elderly vintage for a light white wine, but you'd never know it in the glass, where you first get a hit of citrus and green apple and again a tiny whiff of petroleum, then dig into flavors of tart lemon-lime with ruffles of minerals and flourishes of flowers.

As good a reason as any, I think, to drink outside the box.

North Miami's Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463) has the Campogrande Orvieto for \$11.95 and McManis Viognier for \$9.99. The Dry Creek Chenin Blanc and Jekel Riesling each cost \$10.99 at the North Miami Beach Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270). At \$7.64, the Domaine de la Chauviniere Muscadet is available at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525), while the Marques de Caceres White Rioja can be found at the Biscayne Commons Publix (and other Publix stores) for \$9.99 (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171).

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Letters

Continued from page 6

elements (colors, furniture, and fixtures) to make sure they were respectful and authentic to the midcentury period.

We hope *Biscayne Times* will do an article on the Motel Bianco, and we encourage neighbors to stop by and see the property for themselves.

*Teri D'Amico
North Miami*

Editor's note: Teri D'Amico is the principal and senior designer of DADA, D'Amico Design Associates.

So These Three Lice Walk into a Bar...

I want to thank Jen Karetnick for the humor she expressed in her column "Lust for Lice" (January 2010).

We are a nonprofit treatment facility, and we know all too well the emotions stirred by head lice. It is always helpful when we can see the humor in an unavoidable problem.

*Katie Shepherd
Shepherd Institute for Lice Solutions
West Palm Beach*



MiMo Madness street festival, March 20, 2010.

Miami: The Worst Place in the USA for Public Parks — and Here's Why

In the January 2010 "Park Patrol" ("One Real Park, Five Phony Parks"), Jim W. Harper found and revealed the truth about the state of Miami's parks. I would like to expose some other phony things about our parks.

BT readers should know that Miami ranks dead last of all U.S. cities in terms of park space per resident. Eight years ago we had 140 square feet per Miami resident. What readers may not know is that when the new vacant residential

units are occupied, the square footage will drop to about 124 square feet, an 11 percent decline. This has occurred because the city administration and elected commissioners have consistently opted — year after year, project after project — to add more residential units, but they have failed to add any significant park space. How did this happen?

Around 2007 the City of Miami went through the state-required revision of its Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan. It was not surprising that residents in four of five commission districts stated they wanted more parks in their districts, as 80 percent of all Miami parkland lies in District 2, along the water and on Virginia Key. This request for more parks was repeated two years later in the drafting of the city's Parks Master Plan, which cost nearly \$1 million.

Like most public meetings under the Manny Diaz administration, the public was listened to at the two aforementioned meetings, but then ignored when the pen hit the paper.

The newly revised comprehensive plan presented to the city commission stated that impact fees collected on new construction for parks could be used to

"improve" parks instead of requiring the acquisition of more parkland. Over the past eight years, \$11 million of developer-paid impact fees have gone to improve a few parks, but four out of five commission districts still have no additional parks.

Before we had impact fees, Miami residents were urged by Mayor David Kennedy, the late Athalie Range, and attorney Dan Paul to tax themselves in order to acquire and improve Bicentennial Park, Kennedy Park, and other city parks.

More taxes are not necessary as the city has the ability to keep from falling farther behind if leaders add at least 140 square feet of land for every *new* resident. Land in many areas of Miami can be purchased for approximately \$10 per square foot. For a four-person home this adds less than \$6000 per unit — less than a sales commission. Some may say that this is unaffordable. We argue that much of the cost can and should come out of inflated land prices.

To learn more about park issues, please contact me at StevenMIA@aol.com
*Steve Hagen, chairman
Parks and Public Space Committee
Miami Neighborhoods United*

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BizBuzz

Continued from page 8

Founded in 1938, **Miami Country Day School** (601 NE 107th St., 305-759-2843), an indie college-prep school dedicated to developing the whole child from pre-kindergarten through high school, announces it is doing some growing itself with the groundbreaking of a new library and media center, plus the recent purchase of a new north property. The new *BT* advertiser is now enrolling its popular kids' summer camps, with the first slated to begin June 21.

At two rather different schools, new advertisers **Moti Horenstein's Mixed Martial Arts** and **Universal Dance Studios** (18425 NE 19th Ave.), more than 2000 people of all ages have learned to defend themselves — and gotten remarkably physically fit in the process. Moti is offering something special for *BT* readers: a free introductory class — any class offered at the two studios — for kids and adults of all ages. Register at www.mhka.com or 305-935-1855.

Last week gold bullion continued its climb — above \$1100 per ounce and

pushing higher. An amazing price, really. So what? So it's time to clean out that old jewelry box and make your way to **Cash for Gold** (14390 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-1220), where they'll happily pay you top dollar for stuff you'll never use anyway. Another sweet deal.

To support local farmers Richard Hales, chef/owner of **Sakaya Kitchen** (Buena Vista Avenue in the Shops at Midtown Miami, 305-576-8096), is promoting a new local farm menu. Produce picked Tuesday mornings usually arrives in time to enhance that evening's Korean-influenced dishes. Talk about *fresh*...

After a billion-dollar renovation and expansion, it'd take half the *BT* to cover all the offerings at the **Fontainebleau** (4441 Collins Ave., Miami Beach), a new advertiser whose physical plant includes 11 restaurants and lounges. Here are just two: 20% off your casual chic French meal at La Côte, and prix fixe bargains at Gotham Steak (\$49 per person or \$79 with wine pairing). Reservations: 877-854-0129.

While you may have missed last month's grand opening bash at new *BT*

Continued on page 53

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BizBuzz

Continued from page 52

advertiser **Sushi Sake** (13551 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4242), every night's a party at the hip hangout, says owner Angel Aguayo. "You dine watching the latest music videos. We want to bring a different twist in sushi." And on Wednesday nights, 99-cent sake jars fuel the festivities.

Alex Leonard of **Yogen Früz** announces that his newest outlet will be opening in April at 14881 Biscayne Blvd. Keep an eye on the chain's South Florida Facebook page for info on the grand opening date so you don't miss the event's free froyo and T-shirt giveaways.

It's hard to beat the bagels at **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), but one thing sure does: Getting the hand-rolled beauties for free. So be sure to check out this month's ad, containing coupons for a complimentary dozen when you buy a dozen, plus additional specials for eat-in diners.

According to an old adage we just made up: The way to a city's soul is through its stomachs. So leave room in yours on April 25, when the first annual

A Taste of Brickell street fair (SW 1st Ave. and 10th St., from noon to 5:30 p.m.) will enable the curious and hungry to discover how dramatically this downtown neighborhood has developed.

The guys at new advertiser **Morningside Commerce Center** want you to know about their completely tricked-out live/work warehouse spaces for sale or lease at great prices and in a great up-and-coming neighborhood (NE 59th Terrace). Call 305-801-4102 for details.

Tired of your home having a design-by-default look? Drop by the new showroom of yet another new *BT* advertiser, **Deco One** (3900 N. Miami Ave., 305-535-5953). These interiors specialists design and build custom closets, media rooms, and much more — systems that make sense *and* reflect your own personality.

April showers are a good thing at **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426), because they're a shower of 15% discounts for *BT* readers on *all* services. No April foolin' with Hannah.

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

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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 222.

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

Abokado

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-347-3700

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., 305-381-3190

Four Seasons Hotel

Originally an Italian/Mediterranean restaurant, this comfortably elegant, upscale spot switched chefs in 2006, resulting in a complete menu renovation. Thailand's famed sense of culinary balance is now evident throughout the global (though primarily Asian or Latin American-inspired) menu, in dishes like yuzu/white soya-dressed salad of shrimp tempura, a tender pork shank glazed with spicy Szechuan citrus sauce, or lunchtime's rare tuna burger with lively wasabi aioli and wakame salad. For dessert few chocoholics can resist a buttery-crust tart filled with sinfully rich warm chocolate custard. \$\$\$\$

Area 31

270 Biscayne Boulevard Way, 305-524-5234

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., 305-534-9191
(Mary Brickell Village)

Open until 4:00 a.m. on weekends, this London import (Miami's second Balans) offers a sleeker setting than its perennially popular Lincoln Road progenitor, but the same simple yet sophisticated global menu. The indoor space can get mighty loud, but lounging on the dog-friendly outdoor terrace, over a rich croque monsieur (which comes

with an alluringly sweet/sour citrus-dressed side salad), a lobster club on onion toast, some surprisingly solid Asian fusion items, and a cocktail is one of Miami's more relaxing experiences. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Bali Café

109 NE 2nd Ave., 305-358-5751

While Indonesian food isn't easy to find in Miami, downtown has secret stashes – small joints catering to cruise-ship and construction workers. This cute, exotically decorated café has survived and thrived for good reason. The homey cooking is delicious, and the friendly family feel encourages even the timid of palate to try something new. Novices will want Indonesia's signature rijsttafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be heaped on rice. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$\$\$

The Bar at Level 25 (Conrad Hotel)

1395 Brickell Ave., 305-503-6500

On the Conrad's 25th floor, The Bar's picture-windowed space is not just a watering hole with panoramic views. At lunch it's an elegant sandwich bar; at night it's a raw bar (with pristine coldwater oysters) and (best) a tapas bar serving pintxos. That's just the Basque word for tapas, but here there's nothing mere about the generously portioned small plates. They range from traditional items like cod fish equixada and saffron-sautéed Spanish artichokes to inventive inspirations like foie gras and goat cheese-stuffed empanadas. \$\$\$

Botequim Carioca

900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-675-1876

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 pastetes 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

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

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 small-plate 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

From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées,

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Cafeina

297 NW 23rd St., 305-438-0792

This elegantly comfortable multi-room indoor/outdoor venue is described as an "art gallery/lounge," and some do come just for cocktails like the hefty café con leche martinis. But don't overlook chef Guily Booth's 12-item menu of very tasty tapas. The signature item is a truly jumbo-lump crab cake with no discernable binder. At one South Beach Wine & Food Festival, Martha Stewart proclaimed it the best she'd ever had. Our own prime pick: melt-in-your-mouth ginger sea bass anticuchos, so buttery-rich we nearly passed out with pleasure. \$\$

Morgans Restaurant

28 NE 29th St., 305-573-9678

Housed in a beautifully refurbished 1930s private home, Morgans serves eclectic, sometimes internationally influenced contemporary American cuisine compelling enough to attract hordes. Dishes are basically comfort food, but *ultimate* comfort food: the most custardy, fluffy French toast imaginable; shoestring fries that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crispy panko-crust and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" – definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Q

4029 N. Miami Ave., 305-227-2378

Unlike most urban barbecue joints, this neo-rustic road-house uses a genuine wood/charcoal-fired Bewley pit from Texas to flavor its subtly smoky slow-cooked barbecue. And anyone with working taste buds will discern the difference in chef/owner Jonathan Eismann's vinegar-basted North Carolina-style pulled pork, his tender-firm (rather than inauthentically falling-off-the-bone) dry-rubbed spareribs, succulently fatty briskets, and juicy chickens. Tabletop housemade sauces (particularly a piquant mustard-cider St. Louis potion) are enhancers, not essentials. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Bocca Ristorante Italiano

1699 NE 123rd St., 305-891-4899

One word: Spaghetti chitarra alla carbonara. Okay, four words. But this one dish alone (housemade pasta whose square-cut, irregular texture perfectly traps

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

Masterminded by Aramis Lorie (of PS14) and partner

maximum amounts of a luscious pancetta/egg yolk/cream sauce) is reason enough to return many times to this friendly little trattoria. Owing to a low-visibility location, Bocca is one of those "best kept secret" spots. But an \$18.95 three-course prix fixe menu should convince even the jaded that this easy-to-miss place is a must-not-miss. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Sushi Sake

13551 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4242

Chic Asian-accented décor, video screens, 99-cent drink deals, and late-night hours make this hip hangout not just a sushi bar but sort of a neighborhood bar, too. That said, the sushi is impressive, mainly because seafood is delivered daily and all except the shrimp is fresh, not frozen (as is customary at most Miami sushi places). Also notable: All sauces are housemade. Cooked makis like a crunch-topped Miami Heat are most popular, but it's as sashimi that the fish's freshness truly shines. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Café Boogalu

14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-1900

This fast-casual Brazilian eatery is the first U.S. branch of a chain from Recife, where, legend has it, the food is unusually tasty owing to the magical influence of a sacred African rhinoceros named Boogalu, who escaped from a private zoo into the region's jungles some 150 years ago. Judge for yourself by sampling our more modern pick, the Boogalu salad (sesame-topped shrimp, mixed greens, sun-dried tomato, and mozzarella, with an unusual sweet peach dressing). For heavier eaters there are rhino-size steak, chicken, seafood, and pasta entrées for mouse-size prices. \$\$

AVENTURA / MIAMI GARDENS

Fuji Hana

2775 NE 187th St., Suite #1, 305-932-8080

A people-pleasing menu of typical Thai and Japanese dishes, plus some appealing contemporary creations (like the Spicy Crunchy Tuna Roll, an inside-out tuna/avocado/tempura maki, topped with more tuna and served with a luscious creamy cilantro sauce) has made this eatery a longtime favorite. But vegetarians – for whom seafood-based condiments can make Asian foods a minefield – might want to add the place to their "worth a special drive" list, thanks to chefs' winning ways with tofu and all-around accommodation to veg-only diets. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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13551 BISCAYNE BLVD. NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FL 33181 (305.947.4242)

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 54

Eos

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

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

Fratelli Milano

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

Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night. That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to resist panini, served on focaccia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

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

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

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

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

Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market. Best preparations are the simplest. When stone crabs are in season, Garcia's claws are as good as Joe's but considerably cheaper. The local fish sandwich is most popular – grouper, yellowtail snapper, or mahi mahi. \$-\$\$

Giovana Caffè

154 SE 1st Ave., 305-374-1024

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. \$\$

Grimpa Steakhouse

901 Brickell Plaza, 305-455-4757

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

Il Gabbiano

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

Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il

Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricey, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced homemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$

Indochine

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1525

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

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

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

At this French bakery/café, mornings start seriously, with choices ranging from quality cheese, charcuterie/pâté, or smoked salmon platters to chic Continental and complete American breakfasts. At lunch, generously salad-garnished, open-faced tartines are irresistible. But sophisticated salads and homemade soups make the choice tough. And do not skip dessert. Superb sweets include rich almond/fresh raspberry or properly tangy lemon tarts, traditional Madeleines, airy layered mousses, and addictive mini-macaroon sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$-\$\$

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. \$

MIA at Biscayne

20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-642-0032

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 cap-sula, 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

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 weekday lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried corneal 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. \$

Novacentro

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

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

Oceanaire Seafood Room

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862

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

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

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 Arsht Center

1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-6722

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

Puntino Downtown

353 SE 2nd Ave., 305-371-9661

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

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 manchecho. There's also a thoughtful wine list and numerous artisan beers on tap. \$\$\$

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001

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

Solymar

315 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-371-3421

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

Soya & Pomodoro

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

Life is complicated. Food should be simple. That's owner Armando Alfano's philosophy, which is stated above the entry to his atmospheric downtown eatery. And since it's also the formula for the truest traditional Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian entrées. There are salads and sandwiches,

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Restaurant Listings

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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. \$-\$

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. \$\$

Tobacco Road

626 S. Miami Ave., 305-374-1198

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

"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 Vinnie, too. \$\$\$\$

Urbanite Bistro

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

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

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

Wok Town

119 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9993

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

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

Adelita's Café

2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

From the street (which is actually NE 26th, not Biscayne) this Honduran restaurant seems unpromising, but inside it's bigger, better, and busier than it looks. Unlike many Latin American eateries, this one sticks close to the source and proves a crowd-pleaser. On weekends especially, the dining rooms are packed with families enjoying authentic fare like baleadas (thick corn tacos), tajadas (Honduras's take on tostones), rich meal-in-a-bowl soups packed with seafood or meat and veggies, and more. \$

Bay View Grille

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

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

Bengal

2010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-1976

At this Indian eatery the décor is cool and contemporary: muted gray and earth-tone walls, tasteful burgundy banquettes. And the menu touts "Modern Indian Cuisine" to match the look. Classicists, however, needn't worry. America's favorite familiar north Indian flavors are here, though dishes are generally more mildly spiced and presented with modern flair. All meats are certified halal, Islam's version of kosher – which doesn't mean that observant orthodox Jews can eat here, but Muslims can. \$\$\$

Bin No. 18

1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

At this wine bar/café, the décor is a stylish mix of

contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (tables made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's smart new residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger internationally themed Spanish, Italian, or French charcuterie platters at night. Though the place is small and family-run friendly, chef Alfredo Patino offers sophisticated snacks like the figiutto: 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. \$\$

The Cheese Course

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

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. \$\$

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

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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

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

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

This Italian café has been packed since the moment it opened. No surprise to any who recall owner Ken Lyon's pioneering Lyon Frères gourmet store on Lincoln Road (1992-97), another joint that was exactly what its neighborhood needed. The restaurant's artisan salumi, cheeses, flavorful boutique olive oils, and more are so outstanding that you can't help wishing it also had a retail component. Entrées include properly al dente pastas, plus some regional specialties like Venetian-style calves liver, rarely found outside Italy. \$\$\$

Grass

28 NE 40th St., 305-573-3355

Chef Michael Jacobs's menu travels beyond pan-Asian and Mediterranean influences into the Americas. Entrées range from comfort food (cunningly reinvented mini pot pies) to high-status extravagance (stone-seared, authentic Kobe steak). For healthy grazers, raw-bar selections include ceviches and a large seafood platter. There's also a snack menu (pristine coldwater oysters, a crab salad timbale, parmesan-truffle shoestring fries, mini-Kobe burgers) served till the wee hours, providing a welcome alternative to the Boulevard's fast food chains. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

The 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

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Latin Café 2000

2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838

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

Lemoni Café

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

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

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

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

Lost & Found Saloon

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

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crust-ed salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crust-ed wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

Maino Churrascaria

2201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-571-9044

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

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Maitardi

163 NE 39th St., 305-572-1400

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 salaminio, bresaola (cured beef), and other artisan salumi. Other irresistible: fried artichokes with lemony aioli; seafood lasagna with heavenly dill-lobster sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mandolin Aegean Bistro

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

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 mezes: 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$\$\$

Orange Café + Art

2 NE 40th St., 305-571-4070

The paintings hanging in this tiny, glass-enclosed café are for sale. And for those who don't have thousands of dollars to shell out for the local art on the walls, less than ten bucks will get you art on a plate, including a Picasso: chorizo, prosciutto, manchego cheese, baby spinach, and basil on a crusty baguette. Other artfully named and crafted edibles include salads, daily soups, several pastas (like the Matisse, fiocchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

Out of the Blue Café

2426 NE 2nd Ave.

305-573-3800

Forget impersonal chain coffeehouses. This artist-friendly, independent neighborhood café serves a full selection of coffee drinks made with the award-winning beans of Intelligentsia, a roasting company that works directly with artisan growers to encourage sustainable agriculture. Also served: breakfast and lunch sandwiches, imaginative salads, soups, homemade pastries, and creamy fresh-fruit smoothies. With tables, sofas, and lounge chairs inside an old Midtown house, plus free wireless Internet access, the space is also just a pleasant place to hang out. \$

Pacific Time

35 NE 40th St., 305-722-7369

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

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.

Sakaya Kitchen

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-8096

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. \$\$

Sake Room

275 NE 18th St.

305-755-0122

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

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Salsa Fiesta

2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

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. \$-\$\$

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. \$\$\$

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

3250 NE 1st Ave.

786-369-0353

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. \$-\$\$\$

Tony Chan's Water Club

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

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served

as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

W Wine Bistro

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

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

Upper Eastside

Andiamo

5600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751

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

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

Bistro 82

8201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-2995

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

Boteco

916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735

This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats.

But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pastéis to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

Le Café

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-6551

For anyone who can't get over thinking of French food as intimidating or pretentious, this cute café with a warm welcome, and family-friendly French home cooking, is the antidote. No fancy food (or fancy prices) here, just classic comfort food like onion soup, escargot, daily fresh oysters, boeuf bourguignon (think Ultimate Pot Roast), Nicoise salad, quiche, and homemade crème brûlée. A respectable beer and wine list is a welcome addition, as is the housemade sangria. Top price for entrées is about \$14. \$-\$\$

Captain Crab's Take-Away

1100 NE 79th St., 305-754-2722

The drive-through window says "fast food," and so do this long-lived seafood shack's low prices. But there the resemblance ends. For about the price of a bucket of the Colonel's chicken you can get a bucket of the Captain's savory garlic crabs. The King's burger meal or the Captain's similarly priced fried (or garlic boiled or New Orleans-spiced) shrimp meal? No contest. Also popular: crab cakes and conch. For fish haters, spicy or garlic chicken wings are an option. \$-\$\$

Casa Toscana

7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-3353

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

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

East Side Pizza

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

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

El Q-Bano Palacio de los Jugos

8650 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-2550

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

Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

Giving new meaning to the food term "fusion," Europa serves up sandwiches, salads, car washes, coffee with croissants, and Chevron with Techron. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot cappicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin'

136 NW 62nd St.

305-754-8050

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

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Restaurant Listings

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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

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't 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

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

Luna Corner Pizza

6815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-507-9209

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). \$

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 restorlounge, or like anything else in Miami. Forbidding from the outside, on the inside it's like a

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

Metro Organic Bistro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

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

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquetas. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Moonchine

7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999

Like its Brickell-area sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Moshi Moshi

7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404

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

News Lounge

5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-758-9932

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

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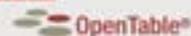
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Restaurant Listings

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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

This expansive, contemporary hangout was often credited with almost single-handedly sparking the revitalization of the Biscayne Corridor's Upper Eastside. Soyka remains a solid neighborhood restaurant that is a perfect fit for its area. Comfortably priced yuppie comfort food like meatloaf with mashed potatoes, crab cakes with spicy-sweet slaw, a wild mushroom/smoked mozzarella pizza, or a Cobb salad may not be revolutionary fare, but Soyka continues to thrive while more ambitious, nationally

publicized restaurants have come and gone. Take-out orders and breakfast are now available. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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

UVA 69 6900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-9022

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 well-coming 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

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

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

Inside a small market that is widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter. But chef Michio Kushi serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi - layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, and marinated fresh mackerel, pressed into a square box, then cut into lovely one-bite sandwich squares. While raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées. \$

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

Oggi Caffè 1666 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1238

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. \$\$\$

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Sushi Siam

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

NORTH BEACH

Café Prima Pasta

414 71st St., 305-867-0106

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

Tamarind Thai

946 Normandy Dr., 305-861-6222

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

MIAMI SHORES

Iron Sushi

9432 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-0311

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-crusted 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 ajijaco. Both are thick chicken soups, full meals in a bowl. For Colombian-cuisine novices, a bandeja paisa (sampler including rice,

beans, carne asada, chicharron, eggs, sautéed sweet plantains, and an arepa corn cake) is available every day, as are antojitos — "little whims," smaller snacks like chORIZO con arepa (a corn cake with Colombian sausage). And for noncarnivores there are several hefty seafood platters, made to order. \$\$

Bagels & Co.

11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435

While this place is often referred to as Guns & Bagels, one can't actually buy a gun here. The nickname refers to its location next to a firearms shop. But there's a lot of other stuff aside from bagels here, including a full range of sandwiches and wraps. Breakfast time is busy time, with banana-walnut pancakes especially popular. But what's most important is that this is one of the area's few sources of the real, New York-style water bagel: crunchy outside, challengingly chewy inside. \$

Bulldog Barbecue

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655

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

Burritos Grill Café

11717 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1041

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

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DINING GUIDE

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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
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 roadside ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama’s charm. \$\$-\$\$

Mario the Baker

13695 W. Dixie Highway, 305-891-7641
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
While this mainly vegetarian kosher place is best known for its pizza (New York-style medium crust or thick-crust Sicilian, topped with veggies and/or “meat buster” imitation meats), it’s also offers a full range of breakfast/lunch/dinner vegetarian cuisine of all nations, with many dairy and seafood items too. Admittedly the cutesie names of many items — baygels, bergerrbite, Cezarrrr salad, hammm, meat-a-ball, schmopperrrr — may cause queasiness. But the schmopperrrr itself is one helluva high-octane veggie burger. \$\$\$

Steve’s Pizza

12101 Biscayne Blvd. 305-891-0202
At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paper-thin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn’t do the trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve’s has, since 1974, been serving the kind of comforting, retro pizzas people crave at that hour. As in Brooklyn, tomato sauce is sweet, with strong oregano flavor. Mozzarella is applied with abandon. Toppings are stuff that give strength: pepperoni, sausage, meatballs, onions, and peppers. \$

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400
This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like

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

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808
No frozen pizza crusts or watery mozzarella here. No imported designer ingredients either. The pies are New York-style, but the dough is made fresh daily, and the cheese is Grande (from Wisconsin, considered America’s finest pizza topper). Also on the menu are Italian-American pastas, a large selection of hot or cold subs, simple salads, and a few new protein adds — grilled chicken breast, fried fish, or a steak. \$\$\$

Wong’s Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313
The menu reads like a textbook on how to please everyone, with food ranging from traditional Chinese to Chinese-American to just plain American. Appetizers include honey garlic chicken wings or Buffalo wings. A crab-claw starter comes with choice of pork fried rice or French fries. Seafood lovers can get shrimp chop suey, or salty pepper shrimp (authentically shell-on). And New Yorkers will find a number of dishes that are mainstays of Manhattan Szechuan menus but not common in Miami: cold sesame noodles, Hunan chicken, twice-cooked pork. \$\$

Woody’s Famous Steak Sandwich

13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451
The griddle has been fired up since 1954 at this indie fast-food joint, and new owners have done little to change the time-tested formula except to stretch operating hours into the night and expand its classic menu to include a few health-conscious touches like Caesar salad, plus a note proclaiming their oils are free of trans fats. Otherwise the famous steak sandwich is still a traditional Philly. Drippin’ good burgers, too. And unlike MacChain addicts, patrons here can order a cold beer with the good grease. \$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Bamboo Garden

1232 NE 163rd St. 305-945-1722
Big enough for a banquet (up to 300 guests), this veteran is many diners’ favorite on the 163rd/167th Street “Chinatown” strip because of its superior décor. But the menu also offers well-prepared, authentic dishes like peppery black bean clams, sautéed mustard greens, and steamed whole fish with ginger and scallions, plus Chinese-American egg foo young. Default spicing is mild even in Szechuan dishes marked with red-chili icons, but don’t worry; realizing some like it hot, the chefs will customize spiciness to heroic heat levels upon request. \$\$

Blue Marlin Fish House

2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822
Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor

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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

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

Christine's Roti Shop

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

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvêla, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean megacrepes 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. \$

Flamma Brazilian Steakhouse

3913 NE 163rd St.
(Intracoastal Mall)
305-957-9900

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. \$\$\$\$

El Gran Inka

3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910

Though diners at this upscale Peruvian eatery will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town, the contemporary Peruvian fusion creations are unique. Especially recommended are two dishes adapted from recipes by Peru's influential nik-kei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner

13951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2255

When Sia and Nicole Hemmati bought the Gourmet Diner from retiring original owner Jean-Pierre Lejeune in the late 1990s, they added "Hanna's" to the name, but changed little else about this retro-looking French/American diner, a north Miami-Dade institution since 1983. Customers can get a cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing. For oysters Rockefeller/tuna-melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Hiro Japanese Restaurant

3007 NE 163rd St.
305-948-3687

One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

17048 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-949-0776

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

Hiro's Yakko-San

17040 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-947-0064

After sushi chefs close up their own restaurants for the night, many come here for a rare taste of Japanese home cooking, served in grazing portions. Try glistening-fresh strips of raw tuna can be had in maguro nuta – 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

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

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

Kebab Indian Restaurant

514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309

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

King Palace

330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339

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

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd.
305-949-8800

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

Laurenzo's Market Café

16385 W. Dixie Hwy.
305-945-6381

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

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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 humorous. \$\$\$

Mary Ann Bakery

1284 NE 163rd St. 305-945-0333
Don't be unduly alarmed by the American birthday cakes in the window. At this small Chinese bakery the real finds are the Chinatown-style baked buns and other savory pastries, filled with roast pork, bean sauce, and curried ground beef. Prices are under a buck, making them an exotic alternative to fast-food dollar meals. There's one table for eat-in snackers. \$

The Melting Pot

15700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2228
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
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
(See Miami: Brickell / Downtown listing)

Paul Bakery Café

14861 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-4443
From one rural shop in 1889, the French bakery known simply as Paul has grown to a worldwide chain, which fortunately chose to open its first U.S. outlet in our town. One bite of the crusty peasant loaf, the olive-studded fougasse, or another of the signature artisan breads transports you right back to France. As authentic as the boulangerie breads are, the patisserie items like flan normande are just as evocative. For eat-in diners, quite continental soups, salads, and sandwiches are equally and dependably French. \$\$

Pizza Fusion

14815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-405-6700
"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. \$\$

Salsa Fiesta

2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245
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. \$\$\$

Sang's Chinese Restaurant

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

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea

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

Siam Square

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

Scorch Grillhouse and Wine Bar

13750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5588
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

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Restaurant Listings

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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. \$-\$

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 break 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.
305-792-2502

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
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)

Sakaya Kitchen



Photo by Simon Hara

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