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www.BiscayneTimes.com

June 2010

Volume 8, Issue 4

At the Corner of Yesterday & Tomorrow

The historic intersection of Biscayne Boulevard and 79th Street is up for grabs



By Karen-Janine Cohen

Photos by Silvia Ros

Stephen Bittel, head of Terranova Corp., knows what the future likely holds for a very large piece of land at Biscayne Boulevard and 79th Street. But he won't tell. He will hint, maybe drop a tantalizing clue. But Bittel, whose firm

manages the aging Biscayne Plaza shopping center, will not say precisely which retailers may want to lease space there.

He *will* say that the ambitious plan of five years ago to demolish the oddly shaped center and replace it with a

reported \$400 million, mixed-use development featuring at least one tower up to 52 stories high, is off the table — at least for the moment.

“There was a time we thought it would be a very interesting location for

retail on the corner, with a series of high-rise buildings behind it,” he says during an interview at the Miami Beach headquarters of Terranova, the commercial

Continued on page 14

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

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Signature Shorts

June 3-27

Celebrating its 15th anniversary season, Signature Shorts features a new mix of comedies and dramas in one fast and furious program!



Pictured: Stephen Trovillion, John Manzelli, David Hemphill. Photo by George Schiavone.

3 **Signature Shorts**
8:00PM **C**
A mix of hilarious comedies and heartfelt dramas!

4 **undershorts**
10:00PM **C**
City Theatre's late-night series of short plays that are provocative, irreverent and hilarious!

5 **Signature Shorts**
7:00PM **C**
undershorts
10:00PM **C**
"They are both see-worthy for the same reasons: novelty, naughtiness, and inventiveness!"
Miami New Times

6 **Signature Shorts**
5:00PM **C**
"Strong and inventive, filled with artistic artistry and versatility."
The Miami Herald

CAMP KAPPAWANNA
A new LISA LOEB Musical

JUNE 17-27
Camp Kappawanna is the summer's must-see event for families!

10 **Signature Shorts**
8:00PM **C**
"Summer Shorts' prevailing ethic of awesomeness reasserts itself in short after short!"
Miami New Times

11 **undershorts**
10:00PM **C**
Undershorts pushes the envelope with social and political material reflective of the times in one fast and furious program!

12 **Signature Shorts**
7:00PM **C**
undershorts
10:00PM **C**
"Thematic and stylistic variety!"
The Miami Herald

13 **Signature Shorts**
5:00PM **C**
The original series that put "shorts" on the map!

17 **Camp Kappawanna**
11:00AM **C**
Take a trip to Camp Kappawanna—a world premiere musical that will instantly transport you to summer camp!
Signature Shorts
8:00PM **C**

18 **Camp Kappawanna**
11:00AM & 7:00PM **C**
Hip music by singer/songwriter Lisa Loeb and a script by rising playwright and South Florida native Marco Ramirez.
undershorts
10:00PM **C**

19 **Tap PUPS-FREE**
10:00AM **P**
Compete to perform with the TAP DOGS!
Camp Kappawanna
1:00PM & 4:00PM **C**
Signature Shorts
7:00PM **C**
undershorts
10:00PM **C**

20 **Camp Kappawanna**
1:00PM **C**
Signature Shorts
5:00PM
"It gets both the artists and the audiences jazzed!"
The Miami Herald

DEIN PERRY'S TAP DOGS
WITH ANDREW WILKIE
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY NOBEL TRIFFITT

JUNE 30-JULY 10
"EXCITING, ATHLETICALLY FEISTY, FUN-LOVING, AND HILARIOUS!"
The Chicago Tribune

24 **Camp Kappawanna**
11:00AM **C**
Signature Shorts
8:00PM **C**
One of the most important shorts festivals in the country.

25 **Camp Kappawanna**
11:00AM & 7:00PM **C**
Camp Kappawanna is the summer's must-see event for families!
undershorts
10:00PM **C**

26 **Camp Kappawanna**
1:00PM & 4:00PM **C**
Signature Shorts
7:00PM **C**
See one program or see them both! Summer Shorts is the hottest ticket in town.
undershorts
10:00PM **C**

27 **Camp Kappawanna**
1:00PM **C**
"Summer camp is one of those life-changing experiences that every child should have!"
Lisa Loeb
Signature Shorts
5:00PM **C**

30 **Tap Dogs**
7:30PM **Z**
"Spectacular! Triumphant! An amazing achievement!"
The Los Angeles Times

undershorts
June 4 - 26

A late-night series of short plays that are provocative, irreverent and hilarious!

Pictured: Erin Joy Schmidt. Photo by George Schiavone.

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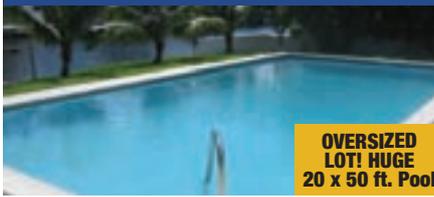
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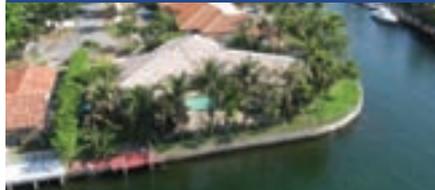
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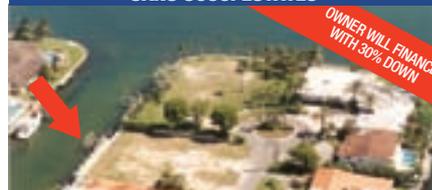
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Letters to the Editor

True Fact: Not All Realtors Are Unscrupulous

I am compelled to respond to Gaspar González's article "As the Market Turns" (May 2010). In the interest of full and immediate disclosure, I am a Realtor who lives and works in the neighborhoods Mr. Gonzalez references in his article.

One of the most trying parts of my job is working daily with the not-so-scrupulous among us Realtors, those who do not approach the job with the best interests of the client at heart. I can commiserate with Mr. González and his negative experience with a number of Realtors, but I am also compelled to stand up for the hardworking, ethical core of our industry who work tirelessly in the best interests of their clients.

I can't help but take immediate offense to Mr. González's imbalanced and one-sided testimonial used to broadly condemn Realtors. Instead of entirely passing the buck, perhaps Mr. González and his wife should have taken a bit more seriously the job of finding a Realtor they could trust. A little due diligence is clearly in order when one is considering a life-changing purchase.

With a relatively minor investment of time and effort, I am certain Mr. González and his wife would have found a Realtor they could trust, one with their interests at heart and not blindly in pursuit of the "sacred" sale, one who would be candid and honest about the trying reality of today's real estate market.

There are those in the industry who follow this approach, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because a client whose trust is earned is a client rarely lost. It's the right approach for long-term and market-immune success.

Mr. González's one-sided portrayal is at best irresponsible journalism, and it stinks of sour grapes. I expected more from *Biscayne Times*!

Nate Miller
Palm Grove

Unscrupulous Realtors? Well, Yes...

Great story by Gaspar González. I really enjoyed reading it. As far as Realtors are concerned, he hit the nail on the head, sad to say. Keep the good stories coming.

Anthony J. Cantey
Cantey Realty and Investments
Miami

Gaspar's Take on Me? Amusing!

Joke: "What is the difference between people who have a voter registration card and those who have a real estate license? Not everyone has a voter registration card." I've told this joke several times, and I still laugh every time at the irony.

I'm sorry that the day we met, Lane and Gaspar were absent a sense of humor. Unfortunately an unethical or inexperienced real estate agent can quickly sour the reputation of otherwise experienced business professionals. Contrary to what Lane and Gaspar may think, we are not a bunch of gypsies with a crystal ball to the future. And although many people feel we should work for free, it is my business policy not to do so.

Lane and her husband obviously had a rough time of it. I appreciate their need to vent. No one knows better how difficult this market is than those of us who work it daily. However, Lane and Gaspar would be well advised not to measure everyone by the same yardstick.

The job of a good Realtor is to make the difficult process of home purchase and selling look easy. I have had several customers get their real estate licenses only to learn that this is not easy money. They later call to tell me they had no idea of the complexities of my job and how they appreciate what I do.

Let's face it, if it were easy to offer fair and unbiased representation in real estate, Lane and Gaspar would be making millions as Realtors and smiling ("*They all smile*") all the way to the bank.

Tiffany Safire
As the Market Turns

Realtors As Greedy, Self-serving Bimbos? Thanks a Lot

Gaspar González makes us (real estate agents) out to be a total bunch of bimbos. Not a decent bone in our selfish, self-serving, greedy bodies

I would say greedy heads, but we all know our heads are empty.

Thanks for such a narrow view of our profession.

William E. Mathisen
Wemco Realty Services
Upper Eastside

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WITH MY SOUL

Seraphic Fire's Annual Summer Gospel Concert

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Wednesday, June 9 at 7:30 PM

St. Christopher's by-the-Sea, Key Biscayne, FL

Thursday, June 10 at 7:30 PM

St. Martha Catholic Church, Miami Shores, FL

Friday, June 11 at 7:30 PM

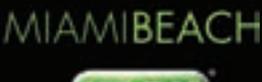
First United Methodist Church, Coral Gables, FL

Saturday, June 12 at 8:00 PM

All Saints Episcopal Church, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Sunday, June 13 at 4:00 PM

Miami Beach Community Church, Miami Beach, FL



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COMMENTARY: FEEDBACK

Letters

Continued from page 6

How To Run a Government Like a CEO

Frank Rollason is 100 percent on target when he says that with a strong mayor, there is no need for a county manager ("We Can Trust Our County Commissioners," May 2010). We also don't need 64 county departments and myriad bureaucrats to head them.

County government performs six basic functions (aside from corrections, which should be managed by the state; and the airport/seaport, which are profitable, monopolistic enterprises): police, fire/rescue, parks, building and zoning, transportation, and solid waste.

Six department directors is all you need — and no assistants or secretaries, since the Internet has obviated the need for any such support staff, which hinders rather than helps the flow of information. We need only about one-fifth the bureaucrats we now have in the county.

Like any other private or public organization, Miami-Dade County needs a chief executive with power to hire and fire, tempered only by civil-service rules that protect rank-and-file employees. All management-level employees (those bureaucrats) should serve at the pleasure of the elected chief executive, as happens at the federal level.

Last but not least, no one in municipal government should earn more than \$100,000 per year. Period.

If the county commission would implement these reforms, we would gladly pay them a decent salary.

*Xavier Suarez, former mayor
City of Miami (1985-93)*

It's Nice to Have Someone Writing About Our Village, However...

I am writing in response to Gaspar González's column "Uncivil War" (May 2010), regarding the Biscayne Park/FPL Franchise agreement. I am happy Biscayne Park has someone writing about our village — not just a general story under a Biscayne Park heading. Thanks for getting us more publicity! And in general I enjoy Mr. González's writing style.

What I don't like is Mr. González's tendency to leave out pieces of information that don't coincide with his view of the issue. Anyone who writes as well as



U.S. Embassy Staff

In Kabul, Afghanistan, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen met with Army Lt. Ronald C. Riley of North Miami, who loves his BT, regularly sent to him by friends back home.

he does should make sure his writing is fair and balanced.

A good example of lack of balance was his comment that "those on the commission who favored signing the agreement tended to compensate for their lack of expertise with surefire certainty, as if being absolutely committed to something were the same as being right." You could say the same thing about anyone on any side of an issue.

As for his statement that Biscayne Park didn't bother to hire experts — an experienced utilities lawyer on the caliber of FPL's experts — it may have been a result of his having lived in Biscayne Park only since late last year. He may not have been aware of the more than two years of heavy-duty negotiations and research that went into this matter. He might also want to check the Village's financial situation. I am wondering where he thinks we could have come up with that kind of money.

Mr. González criticized Mayor Roxanna Ross's suggestion at the April 6 meeting to hold a "workshop" as part of that meeting because he believed there was no time to prepare and no experts in the room. Elected officials should always come prepared for full discussion on agenda items and never assume how a vote will go.

There ended up being two workshops: April 17 and 24. Even though they were asked to have their experts attend, neither Commissioner Bryan Cooper nor Commissioner Steve Bernard had anyone there.

Continued on page 42

Bryan T. Halda, P.A.

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SOLD

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\$5.4 million



SOLD

Miami Shores
\$270,000



BizBuzz: June 2010

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

No argument, Miami summers are hot. But so are the special events and deals BT advertisers come up with to keep locals here — and happy. For example, you can start summer with a bang — or rather a pop! — at family-style **Acquolina** (124 S. Federal Hwy, Hallandale; 954-454-2410). This month the trendy/friendly Italian restaurant is offering a free glass of champagne to diners who mention the BT.

From June 11 to July 11, think of the **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** (1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002) as the Soccer Haus. The eatery will open at 2:00 p.m. daily to show all the important World Cup matches on huge screens. A free drink for those wearing soccer jerseys.

To honor that other June event, Father's Day, **Mike's at Venetia** (555 NE 15th St., 9th floor) offers free billiards every Sunday and Monday this month, with a food or drink purchase.

Both fathers and *futbol* are big deals at the famed furniture showrooms of **Herval USA** (2666 NE 189th St., 305-466-2606; 1730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-377-1221). For a 10% discount, just say the Father's Day Soccer Special magic words: "World Cup 2010."

Nowhere to put that new furniture from Herval? Call new advertiser **Star Construction Company** (305-893-4101). Staff will help meet your budget for a family room or any other remodeling job.

In the market for a whole new residence? Call real estate agent **Bryan Halda** (305-754-3778). A senior partner/

Schnitzel Haus



Herval Furniture

Smiling Pets



associate at **Gray & Associates** and a returning *BT* advertiser, he's a multimillion-dollar producer who's nevertheless as empathetic to first-time buyers seeking studio apartments as to celeb clients wanting waterfront mansions.

From business disputes or loan modifications to restraining orders, DUIs, and criminal defense, new advertiser attorney **William Reich** (786-431-2938) handles them all. Reich is a former assistant state attorney, meaning he's seen it all.

At locally treasured trattoria **Il Migliore** (2576 Miami Gardens Dr., 305-792-2902), diners mentioning the *BT* will receive one of the eatery's famed desserts for free. That's one per table, but they're plenty big enough to share.

For froyo fans, Miami's latest **Yogen Früz** (14881 Biscayne Blvd.) offers a 10% discount this month to Aventura residents with proof of residence.

Dr. Raul Jimenez of the brand-spanking-new **Biscayne Veterinary Center** (5841 Biscayne Blvd., 305-575-1190) says all his super high-tech equipment is up and running smoothly and that the facility is prepping for 24-hour emergency service. Bow wow!

North Miami Arts Collective



At **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), owner David Cohen is bringing back his wildly popular \$5 Friday special: a huge deli sandwich with purchase of a beverage. Check out David's ad in the Dining Guide for details, plus many more on other weekdays.

Lunchtime = eating, right? Not necessarily. It now can mean exercising at **M Power Project** gym (9301 NE 6th Ave.), which presents the Lunchbox Special, an isometric/plyometric/weight workout aimed at working women. Call Cornell (305-758-8500) for details and registration.

One might assume that *Top Chef* contender and new advertiser Howie Kleinberg's new **Bulldog Café** (19048 NE 29th St., 305-931-9244) is a clone of his **Bulldog Barbecue** (15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655). Yes, some café dishes incorporate Howie's barbecue, but the menus are quite different. Solution: Taste test at both.

For pasta lovers who just can't find their dream date, meet new *BT* advertiser

Yes Pasta! (14871 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006), a fast-casual spot where you do the creating — mixing and matching your ideal pasta/sauce combo — and they do the cooking.

Fewer armoires, more exotic woods. Those are a couple of new home-design trends you'll find at new advertiser **Scan Design** (3025 NE 163rd St., 305-944-8080), which has specialized in high-quality contemporary furniture, and nothing else, since 1969.

Meanwhile, lovers of vintage accessories will find a trove at 55th Street Station's newest addition, **Night Owl** (5580 NE 4th Ct., 305-989-9995). The shop's name is explained by its late hours: Thursday-Saturday from 5:00-11:00 p.m.

Check **Night Owl** out after dining at the Station's flagship **Soyka Restaurant**, where managing partner Frankie Crupi reports there's a new team: executive chef Paul Surriel, a Joe Allen (NY and Miami) alum; general manager Patricia Ferraro, who's revitalizing the wine list; and pastry chef William Newcomb, renowned for his awesome sticky date pudding.

Oops. Is that sticky date pudding on your suit? We know you want to lick it off, but instead bring it to **Shores Cleaners & Laundry** (9478 NE 2nd Ave.; 305-756-4434), a new advertiser known for quality dry cleaning at affordable prices. New customers score with \$21 worth of *free* cleaning.

Admit it: In your heart, you're a flamenco dancer. Done! Starting June 24 **Dancewear and the North Miami Arts Collective** has a six-week beginners' workshop in the fiery dance. And

Continued on page 43

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www.sandymoise.com

This **August 24th** we will have our chance to elect an ethical leader who will stand up for children. **Sandy Moise**, an educator, PTA mom and involved community member is running for Miami-Dade School Board, District 2. Now is the time to leave behind the status quo!

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Political advertisement paid for and approved by Sandy Moise for School Board, District 2.

Miami As Municipal Money Pit

Tomás Regalado got elected mayor and then got the bad news: We're definitely broke

By Jack King
BT Contributor

When Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado announced that he was running for the city commission some 14 years ago, I was skeptical that he could do the job if he won. He's been a long-time journalist and television commentator, and it's been my observation that journalists make horrible politicians (and politicians make horrible journalists). Plus he was running on the coattails of former Mayor Joe Carollo, not exactly one of Miami's greatest leaders. Fortunately that relationship didn't last too long.

But he did get elected and he did do the job. Over time became quite a populist, keeping an eye out for the little people and for the budget. He was on the wrong end of 4-1 votes for a number of years. Yet he still asked questions for which people wanted answers. In the recent past, Manny Diaz's management combo of Joe Arriola and Pete Hernandez never bothered to answer them.

I was also skeptical that Regalado could be elected mayor, but he won handily, thanks in no small part to Diaz's support of Joe Sanchez's mayoral bid. With that kind of endorsement, the election was a walk in the park for Regalado. However, the minute he was sworn in as mayor, he confronted a daunting challenge: cleaning up the mess left by Diaz & Co.

Mayor Regalado agreed to sit down with me and answer some questions about the city and its finances. Here goes:

What has changed in your first six months?

What has changed in the last year is the information we have received about the city's finances. A year ago we suspected we were broke. Now we *know* we are broke. Even though the city received money in the billions, in the last ten years we spent more than we received. Now we have an \$87 million deficit in the next budget that we will have ready by September. What is the problem? It is employee salaries, benefits, and pensions. These three items are 86 percent of the total budget. Healthcare from 1999 to 2009 grew almost 100 percent. Plus we have been spending money on consulting and master plans that are not used.

From 2000 to 2007, the general revenue fund was growing at 7 percent a year. During that time, our expenditures rose by 89 percent. In 2008 revenue fell by 3.6 percent and is still falling.

The largest increases by department over 2000-2007 were fire at 111 percent, police at 69 percent, and pensions at 316 percent. If we don't fix the structural problems with the city's finances, we have only two options: Raise taxes to the max, or we don't raise taxes and I call the governor and the state takes over the finances of the city. There is a third option: Bankruptcy, and we are looking into that also. That would give



Jorge Perez, City of Miami

the courts control of the city. We don't want to do that.

Would you consider selling off city assets?

We would only sell off assets to replenish the reserve fund.

What about the Knight Center in downtown?

Every year we pay \$5.5 million to pay off what we owe on the Knight Center, but nobody wants to buy it. It is too small for a convention center and too small as a concert venue. Plus the University of Miami, a partner in the Knight Center, was allowed by the previous administration to walk away from their obligation [in exchange] for not suing the city over their Orange Bowl contract. That allowed the Marlins' stadium to be constructed.

Are the police, fire, and civil employees' unions negotiating with the city during the budget process?

The police and civil employees are, but the fire department has not yet. Without union participation in the

budget process, we won't have a budget. Last year the commission voted to have layoffs starting in October, but it did not happen. By February we had to lay off people.

What happened with the layoffs? Did former city manager Pete Hernandez just ignore the wishes of the city commission?

That is exactly what happened. He did nothing.

The job market is still weak in Miami. Any thoughts on how the city can help the situation?

The stadium and the tunnel were all sold on the jobs idea, but people are now realizing that construction jobs are temporary. And the county has nothing to help the jobs issue.

What about Watson Island — the Flagstone development and Jungle Island?

Years ago we were warned about Flagstone and were told to make sure they have the money to do the project. We pulled the item from the last commission meeting because there was just one outstanding issue with the project: money. They seem interested building the mega-yacht marina, but the hotels are not going to happen.

And Jungle Island? That's another headache. They are not paying rent. We have to pay the taxes [\$800,000 a year] and \$1.5 million a year on the federal loan. We need to resolve this. This was something that was deliberately left for the next administration to deal with.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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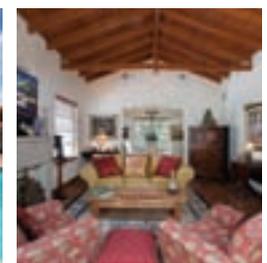


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www.217palmavenue.com



HISTORIC MORNINGSID

3 Bed/2 Baths in main house + 1/1 guest cottage - 2,068 sq. ft. interior space. Located on one of the prettiest streets of the neighborhood.

Reduced: \$799,000

581 NE 58th Street - Morningside
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GROVE HILL UPDATED CONDO

Panoramic high floor 2 Bed/2½ Baths with den cozy corner unit with S.E water views. Three terraces & European kitchen. Across the street from Fresh Market & shops.

New listing

2645 Bayshore Drive - Coconut Grove

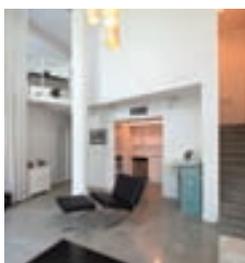
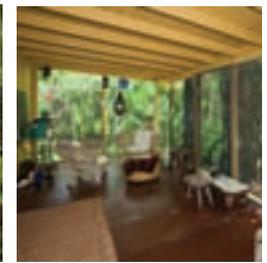


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3 Bed/3 Baths + office over 2,083 sq. ft. Updated kitchen. One car garage + large screen porch. Tropical landscaped double lot. Your own private Fairchild garden!

New Listing: \$747,000

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Fantastic boutique building designed by Chad Oppenheim In the heart of South Beach in a quiet street. 2 Bed/2 Baths with 1,248. sq. ft. interior space. 24 ft. floor to ceiling windows. Roof-top pool with large terraces. **Lowest price in the building:**

\$679,000 - Ilona Condo - 221 Jefferson Avenue - #5 - Miami Beach



MED-DECO HOME - CLOSE TO EVERYTHING

3 Bed/2½ Baths + office on a 7,830 sq. ft. lushly landscaped lot. Updated kitchen & baths. Cathedral ceilings, original tile & wood floors. Super charming.

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Intersection

Continued from page 1

real estate firm Bittel founded. “There is obviously not an acute need for more residential product in South Florida today.” Bittel personally has a small equity interest in Biscayne Plaza, which is owned primarily by Allen Greenwald of The Greenwald Group, a South Miami property development firm; and Edward Easton of The Easton Group, a Miami real estate concern.

The demise of that grandiose plan was a relief to many nearby residents, who feared high-rises would ruin the ambiance of their single-family-home communities.

And those eager to save more of Biscayne Boulevard’s singular structures are now hoping there is time to make their case that the plaza, the adjacent Admiral Vee Motel, and other buildings along the Boulevard should become part of the MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District.

The City of Miami created the district in 2006. It runs from 50th Street to 77th Street along the Boulevard, and protects buildings designed in the flashy post-war style known as Miami Modern from being torn down or substantially altered. (All other structures in the district are protected as well.) Many argue that the shopping center, Admiral Vee, and other buildings north of 77th Street share the MiMo style and deserve safeguarding as well.

“It’s a shame they are not part of the historic district now,” says Nancy Lieberman, a preservation advocate instrumental in helping gain protection for South Beach as well as Biscayne Boulevard. “I think the original parts have great value



This undated photo from the collection of Seth Bramson shows the popular Juniors Restaurant and the Admiral Vee behind it.

Look beyond the nearby fast-food chains, noisy buses, speeding cars, and oblivious pedestrians and you’ll see the plaza’s personality unfold. It has a strange configuration, bisected by NE 81st Street, which runs past the former Admiral Vee Motel and down the length of the center, stopping just shy of the antique auto business of Ted Vernon, whose property hugs

those a balconied second floor row sits mostly vacant. The lawyers who once worked there left when the federal government moved its immigration agency out of the 12-story structure across 79th Street. Glass-enclosed catwalks link the main buildings, and concrete stairways lead to the second floor.

Then there is the Admiral Vee Motel,

nonprofit Project Access Foundation, which provides low-cost mammography to South Florida women. Michel is also CEO of South Miami’s Larkin Community Hospital. In 2006 Michel and other executives associated with the hospital paid \$15.4 million to settle federal and state civil healthcare fraud charges involving kickbacks to doctors and unnecessary

“Little by little, neighborhoods are going historic. Historic designation increases property values and also helps stabilize the market.”

as historic-quality buildings and should be included.”

Drivers zipping by Biscayne Plaza may not realize they are passing a piece of Miami history. It was built in 1954 and designed by Robert Fitch Smith, then dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture. He created it to echo and comment on the nation’s emerging car-centric culture. It was Miami’s very first suburban shopping center.

the Little River and who, over the past several years, has been embroiled in a lawsuit with the plaza’s owners.

Parking is in the plaza’s center, an inversion of the typical mall design. From there you can take it all in. On the north side is a long building now occupied by Big Lots, Foot Locker, and several other stores. On the west is President Supermarket, Radio Shack, and Payless Shoes. Along the east and south sides are a row of fashion and shoe shops. Above

now just known as 8000 Biscayne Blvd. It was built in 1957, reportedly designed by Maurice Weintraub as a classic example of MiMo architecture. Its soaring, glass-fronted second-story lobby is now used for photo shoots and film production, as is the original second-story swimming pool.

According to county records, Dr. Jack Michel bought the building in 1995 for \$350,000. Michel recently opened a ground-floor medical clinic fronting the Boulevard. The doctor also runs the

admission and treatment of patients.

Michel declined to be interviewed for this article. However, Carlos Suarez, who with Michel owns Glasshaus Studios at the former motel, says Michel bought the Admiral Vee with the idea of revamping and preserving the property while attracting members of Miami’s arts community. Glasshaus coordinates photographic and video productions at the property.

Continued on page 16

Kevin Burns is a practical man.

As a small business owner, he built his customer base one client at a time, ensuring personal one-to-one relationships with those he relied on for his livelihood. As an elected official, he has been committed to finding solutions to problems, and not interested in placing blame. And as a leader in the US Conference of Mayors, he's traveled the country and the world in search of innovative strategies to combat the issues facing Florida.



Kevin accepted an honorary doctorate degree from Sinai University during a summit in Israel with Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski and Rabbi Mordechay Goldstein, Rosh Hay Yeshiva – Diaspora Yeshiva, Jerusalem



Kevin in Port-de-Paix Haiti with local children, while building a new park



Kevin discusses construction of a new school in North Miami

"Our city hadn't had a new school built in over sixty years, because of Mayor Kevin Burns' vision, leadership and perseverance we got four new state-of-the-art schools built."

Sandy Hoover, Parent and Chairperson of the Quality Education Advisory Board

"Kevin Burns was on our streets during hurricane Wilma and Katrina leading and coordinating relief efforts throughout North Dade. He made sure we got our emergency supplies and established a new disaster response plan for our city."

Myrna Pavilack, Founder and Chairperson of the Disaster Preparedness Board

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- Developed and negotiated an innovative proposal resulting in the investment of \$200 million to build four new schools in three years

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12571 Biscayne Boulevard, North Miami, FL 33181



Paid for and authorized by Kevin Burns, Democrat for State Senator.

Intersection

Continued from page 14

“Our goal is to build a creative hot spot,” Suarez says, noting that Michel has already put about \$500,000 into cleaning, painting, and repairing the property. Other firms, such as a photo company and casting company, also have space in the building. Suarez, a former creative director of *Ocean Drive* magazine, says the next phase might include renting the remaining former motel rooms to a variety of interior designers. There are also discussions about opening a restaurant, Suarez says.

Visitors gazing from the retro pool deck to the shoppers below may marvel at Miami’s diversity, but they may not realize they are also perched at one of the area’s most important intersections, a fact that could play into the plaza’s future.

It’s a straight shot down 79th Street and across the causeway to Miami Beach. Go west and you end up at the Hialeah Park racetrack. “It’s the most strategic intersection north of downtown,” says Allan Shulman, one of five architects invited in 2006 by *Home*



Biscayne Plaza was built with parking lots in the center, the inverse of typical shopping center designs.

Miami magazine to reimagine the plaza. “Biscayne Boulevard and 79th Street is a regional connector, from Hialeah straight to North Beach.”

Still, at the moment the plaza’s main draw remains low-cost shopping. And any new tenants are likely to continue in that mold, according to Terranova’s

Stephen Bittel. “My guess,” he says, “is that it will be a part of the most successful part of retailing today, which is value or discount shopping, because consumers of all levels — from the most wealthy to the less wealthy — are interested in getting better value for their dollar. I think today we have a number of value chains

that would be valuable additions.”

Bittel adds vaguely that the property would serve the community best with a great supermarket. And what about any revamping? Rebuilding? “I think the current view is to continue as a shopping center,” he says. “What it looks like and how it is configured depends a lot on what tenants are attracted to it.”

Speculation abounds. Would President Supermarket stay? Could Publix be interested? Whole Foods? And what about Walmart? The site is too small for a full-size store, but the Arkansas behemoth has recently opened its “Neighborhood Market” grocery stores in Broward and Palm Beach counties. More dollar-type stores? Lower-cost clothing? While many people living along the Biscayne Corridor may hanker for more midscale retailers, the plaza also serves neighborhoods to the west of the Boulevard, including Little Haiti and Little River.

As Bittel negotiates with potential tenants, others look to the City of Miami for help in mapping the area’s future. Ellen Uguccioni, the city’s historic preservation officer, is preparing a report on

Continued on page 18

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\$449,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 2BR 2 1/2 BTH

Totally renovated 2 story Townhouse corner unit direct on the Intracoastal with wide-bay views. 40FT boat dock with lift included. 2 covered parking spaces included. 24HR Guard-Gated.



\$399,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

SKYLAKE 4BR 3BTH

Nice spacious pool home with garage converted In-laws quarters or can be used as home office. Master suite over looks pool/patio area. Great location.



\$975,000

MIAMI LAKES

LOCH LOMOND 5BR 4BTH

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



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\$5,000 Per Month Furnished

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

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\$430,000

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\$189,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

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AVENTURA

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\$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.

Intersection

Continued from page 16

how many of the structures between 77th Street and 87th Street have the architectural integrity to become part of the historic district. Commissioner Marc Sarnoff requested the study. "I've heard the stretch of Biscayne Boulevard between 77th and 87th streets referred to as a relative 'no-man's land' by residents who feel left out from all the positive attention and growth that the MiMo Historic District has enjoyed," Sarnoff writes in an e-mail.

"A number of residents in the Shorecrest area have been interested in this idea and it deserves to be explored," he continues. "If the study comes back and identifies properties within the additional ten blocks that should be preserved, then we should move forward. That is up to the experts to weigh in on, and I trust their decisions. As far as specific properties like Biscayne Plaza and the Admiral Vee Motel, I'll leave that up to the recommendations of the historic preservation team."

Bittel doesn't think the plaza will make the MiMo cut. "I don't think there's much at the property I would call



Allan Shulman's reimagined plaza: "Not only would it be redeveloped, it would turn into a new civic center for a new neighborhood."

architecturally unique," he says, while noting it does have a few interesting facets. "The problem is, preserving an interesting minor component often precludes redevelopment or rebuilding. That is needed at the property, and it's what the community wants."

Yet the same recession that stalled the big development at the plaza has also

squeezed city hall's budget — meaning completion of the historic-preservation report could take longer than anticipated. So nailing down big changes at the shopping center could be a protracted process.

Slow changes seem appropriate for a swath of land that was once a strawberry farm. That's the plaza's early recorded beginnings, says Antolín García

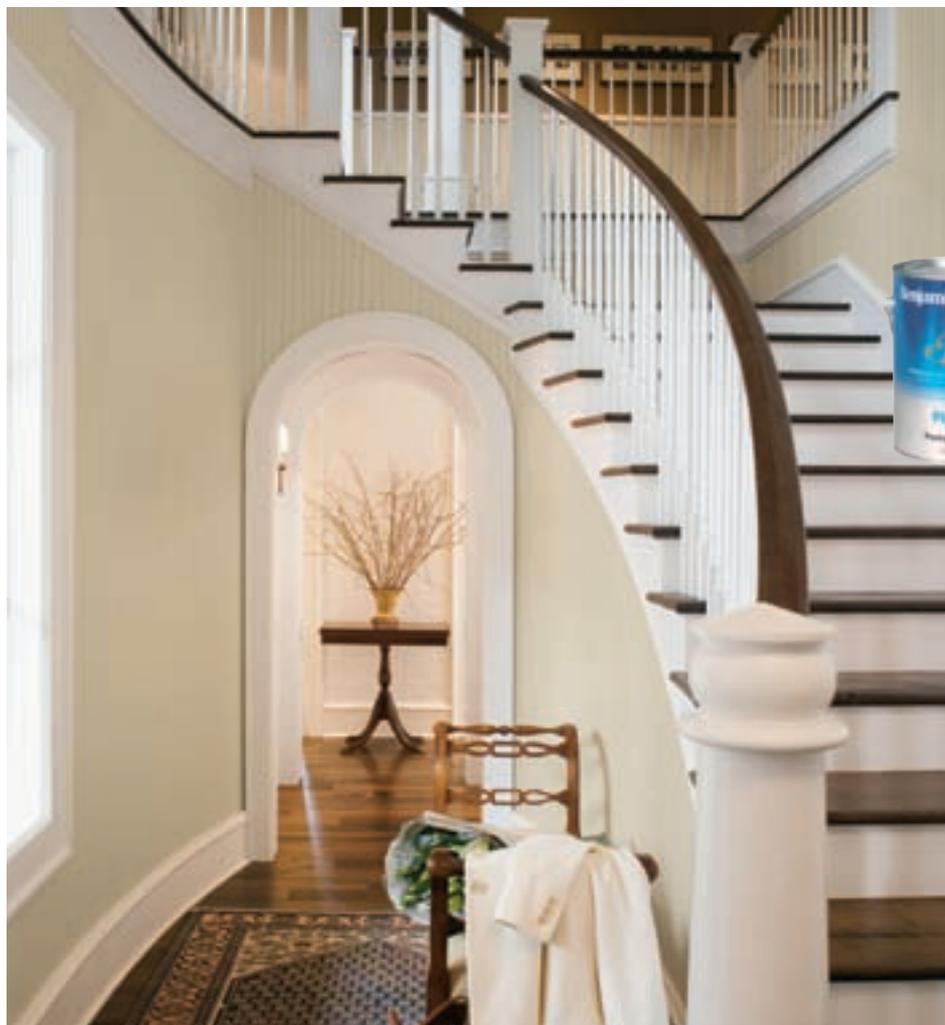
Carbonell, a local historian, architect, and author. He has a special affection for the area as his early years were spent living just across the Little River.

By the late 1940s, developers realized that the Little River area had become a vital center, its shops serving a growing suburban community. "It was a thriving commercial area with theaters, bakeries, and second only to downtown," says Carbonell.

Plans for the center began in the early 1950s. "By early 1955, most of the center was finished," he notes. Carbonell, whose research encompasses old newspaper stories and ads in addition to personal experience, says some stores, including the Neisner variety chain, advertised for an all-female staff: "They very much wanted housewives to come work for them."

Early tenants included J.C. Penney, W.T. Grant, and the Lerner Shops. The plaza also attracted banks, drug stores, and popular restaurants like Junior's. MiMo experts say the center was also designed to reflect the car culture sweeping America and to harmonize with the

Continued on page 20



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Intersection

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Biscayne Boulevard motels going up at the same time.

“Miami’s first shopping plaza was built at a location where increasing numbers of auto-mobile residents and seasonal vacationers converged,” writes Marilys Nepomechie, a professor of architecture at Florida International University, who contributed a chapter on the plaza to *Miami Modern Metropolis: Paradise and Paradox in Midcentury Architecture and Planning*. The book was edited by Allan Shulman.

“Accordingly,” Nepomechie continues, “it blended elements of commercial and resort architecture to create a modern composition at once functional and theatrical, calibrated for maximum appeal at speeds both vehicular and pedestrian.”

The plaza, she explains, was the gateway to Miami’s “Motel Row.” She writes: “The structure was a celebration of life as a dynamic proposition facilitated by the car; the automobile formed the unambiguous center of a composition at once urban and suburban.”



Glass-enclosed catwalks connect the main buildings, this one crossing over NE 81st Street.

Then in 1957 the Admiral Vee Motel opened. “It was one of about four or five motels along Biscayne Boulevard that tried to be full service, sort of like a

small resort,” Carbonell says.

The motel’s namesake was a racehorse, a grandson of the great Man O’War. The name also provides a clue

to the motel’s place in time. It’s easy to imagine vacationing families leaving the Admiral Vee, speeding over the causeway to the ocean early in the day, then later heading straight out 79th Street to the Hialeah racetrack, which reopened last year after a major makeover.

However, the plaza’s reign was short. Also in the mid-1950s, the 163rd Street Mall opened. “It pulled people away,” Carbonell says, noting that even in its heyday the plaza was a working-class and middle-class kind of place. “If we ever needed a nicer outfit, we would go to Burdines.”

In addition, the area was quickly transforming into a red-light district. “There was always a certain amount of sleaze,” Carbonell recalls.

A search of *Miami News* archives shows what he means. The Gaiety Club at 78th Street and Biscayne (hours 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.) was raided by the state attorney’s office for running a crooked poker game in which one fellow lost more than \$38,000. Another *Miami News* item from 1958 tells of “stripteuse” Gina Marie’s upcoming appearance at the Gaiety.

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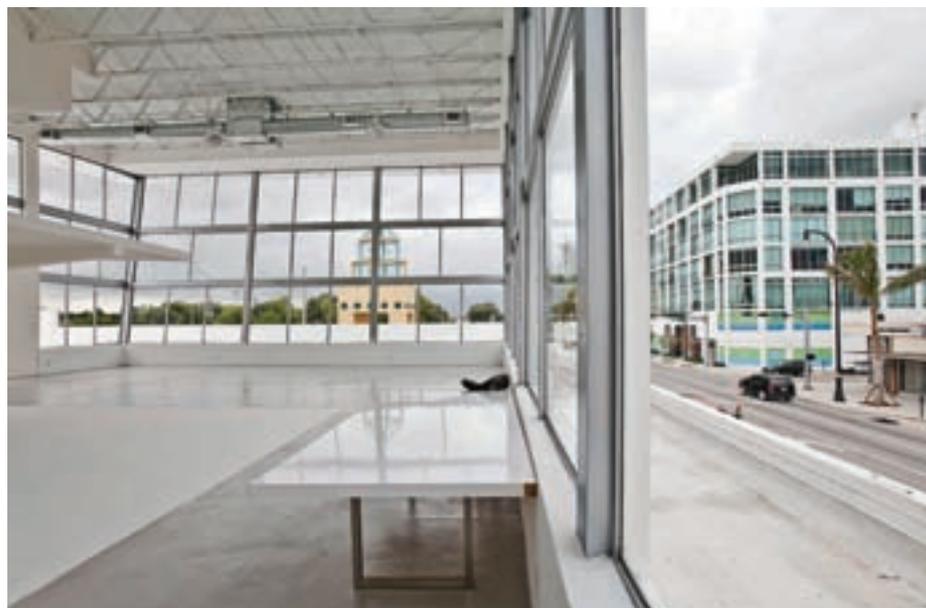
Intersection

Continued from page 20

By the mid-1970s, says Carbonell, the whole intersection was adult entertainment. Later came racial clashes. One by one, stores pulled out. Also hurting the shopping center was the decision to make NE 82nd Street one-way going west. Reversing that decades-old change would be the first step in revitalizing the area, he says.

That road reversal was included in the Biscayne Plaza imaginary plan architect Allan Shulman created for *Home Miami* magazine. Shulman has served on the Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board, among other preservation groups, and has restored or designed renovations for a number of Miami area hotels and other buildings, including Biscayne Boulevard's Vagabond Motel and the Sagamore Hotel in Miami Beach. He also is on the faculty of the University of Miami's School of Architecture.

Shulman envisioned the plaza finally taking its place as a regional axis, bringing together local communities, though using public transport as well as automobiles.



Looking north from the former second-floor lobby of the Admiral Vee Motel, now Glasshaus Studios.

"Not only would it be redeveloped by retaining the old mall, but it would turn it into a new civic center for a new neighborhood," he says. "It's a strategy."

Shulman's plan adds another story to most of the existing buildings, moves parking to the top of one building, and

replaces much the current parking area with green space. A new mid-rise office tower would be at the front of the property near the intersection of 79th Street and the Boulevard. Three residential towers would overlook the Little River. "When you think about preserving the structure

in order to provide some memory of what this place is," Shulman says, "it isn't about preserving it in amber."

A key feature is the realization of Florida East Coast Railway's long-discussed commuter line. In Shulman's vision, there would be a stop at the plaza, along with light rail on 79th Street, connecting the plaza with both Miami Beach and Hialeah Park.

"There was a reason this was placed here," Shulman observes. "It's the entrance to the City of Miami. It was a hub. One of the things we increasingly think about is how Miami developed in a chaotic way, and the opportunity for the city going forward is to connect things. It stimulates a more continuous urban life."

Shulman and his wife, Rebecca Stanier-Shulman, live not far from Biscayne Plaza and have seen the Boulevard transformed over the past several years. "It is increasingly getting the critical mass as a neighborhood," he says. "Now people are walking on the Boulevard. Biscayne Boulevard has really sprung back to life."

Upscale restaurants have moved in, while several motels have undertaken

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Intersection

Continued from page 22

period-accurate restorations. Crime has fallen. Some in nearby neighborhoods credit historic designation for the changes — and believe continuing preservation northward would accelerate the trend. “Little by little, neighborhoods are going historic,” says Jack Spirk, president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association. “Historic designation increases property values and also helps stabilize the market.” Spirk believes the plaza could be an anchor for the MiMo District, offering parking to visitors while shuttles ferry them to shops and restaurants along the Boulevard.

Plaza preservation proponents underscore that they don’t favor freezing



One of the staircases, in the exuberant MiMo style, leading to the plaza’s second story.



A remnant of the old Neisner variety store, where a nickel actually had some buying power.

preservation efforts. “When you look at a property that big, you can’t possibly retain all of it,” she says. The key is to

says that extending historic designation to include the plaza and Admiral Vee would also lead to revitalization west of Bis-

Any plan to ambitiously redo the plaza, historic or no, will have to take into account Ted Vernon of Ted Vernon

“I have a very valuable piece of property because I’m on the water. If they want to develop and offer waterfront property, they have to own me.”

the property in time. Stopping progress is not the point, says Teri D’Amico, an interior designer long involved in historic

thoughtfully reuse structures, making sure to protect key elements. D’Amico, who helped introduce the term MiMo,

cayne Boulevard. “Seventy-ninth Street is a pretty significant street, with a lot of historic buildings on it as well,” she says.

Specialty Automobiles. When he’s not hanging around low-budget movie sets,

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Market

Continued from page 24

he can be found, most days, in one of his three buildings along the Little River. Inside is a collection of vintage automobiles that makes you want to reach for a fedora and highball. There is a whole flock of 1930s-era cars — Packards, Rolls-Royces, and Lincolns interspersed with Ford Model-Ts.

But Vernon is not one of those laconic car guys. In fact he is irrepresible, a true character. Vernon's various occupations have included, or include, professional wrestling and acting. He's a longtime film producer as well. On the day a reporter comes to visit, he has just returned from playing an Everglades tour guide who, let's just say, would not be a credit to the National Park Service, in a film called *Hell Glades*.

"There are two ways of looking at it," Vernon says. "I have a very valuable piece of property because I'm on the water. If they want to develop and offer waterfront property, they have to own me."

Biscayne Plaza's owners, Vernon says, offered to buy his land, but he



The plaza's second floor is virtually empty, but a number of ground-floor businesses are bustling, including a Big Lots outlet.

rejected their bid. Now he is in a legal battle, dating from 2005, with the owners over access to his property, according to court documents. Vernon, customers, delivery men, and visitors must pass along 81st Street or cut through from 79th Street to get to the business. Neither Vernon nor Terranova's Bittel would discuss the lawsuit, but the men agree on one thing: No historic designation for the properties.



Ted Vernon: "That shopping center should come down and something beautiful should be put in its place. It's horrible."

"I think that shopping center should come down and something beautiful should be put in its place," says Vernon. "It's not something to preserve. It's horrible."

For his part, Bittel ventures a few thoughts about the future. Miami is just in the beginning stages of transitioning from an auto-centric community to a more urban environment, he believes, and Biscayne Boulevard, for all the recent activity, is nowhere near

becoming the kind of live-work-play area where mixed-use developments work.

"It would be my guess that this [the plaza] is likely to be a redeveloped or rebuilt retail center for some time in the future," he says. "What you can do is tempered by what the community will support, what can be financed, and what makes good business sense."

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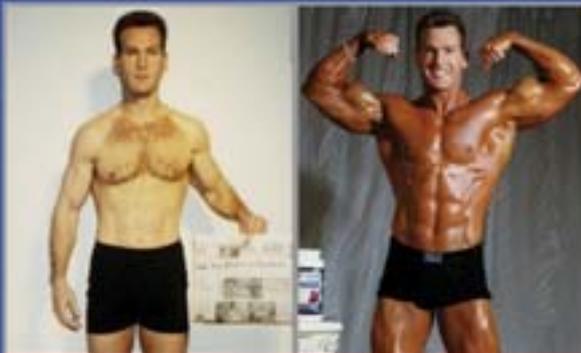
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Return to Sender

Of all the mailboxes in all the towns, why did the Postal Service have to take ours?

By Gaspar González
BT Contributor

I miss my mailbox. No, not the one at my house. I'm talking about the big blue baby that used to sit near the corner of NE 113th Street and 9th Avenue, at the edge of our community park. I noticed it the first day we moved into the village, since it was only two blocks from my front door. Those first few months, I took advantage of the mailbox to drop off holiday cards to friends and family, business letters, and the occasional bill payment. It was convenient, and I liked having an excuse to go for a walk around the block in the middle of the day, a small respite from being anchored to my desk at home.

Sometimes I would make my mail run a little later, just as evening was

beginning to fall and my neighbors were walking their dogs or chatting with each other on the street. It became a happy ritual, and it made me feel connected to the community. (Okay, I admit it — it also made

I had a hard time believing that the only mailbox within the village limits of Biscayne Park had so little traffic that it would qualify for removal.

me feel a little like quintessential '60s suburban dad-slash-man of mystery Don Draper, but we're all entitled to our little fantasies.) I came to love that damn box.



Then one day it was gone. It was sometime in February. Upon discovering its absence, I went over to village hall and inquired about it. "Oh, yes," they told me, "the Postal Service came and got it." Were they replacing it with a newer one or was it gone for good? No one seemed to know.

A few days later, I had my answer. A story in the *Miami Herald* (recycled from the *Sun Sentinel*) explained that the Postal Service, having suffered a nearly \$4 billion shortfall in revenue in 2009, was declaring war on underused mailboxes. According to the article, Uncle Sam was targeting mailboxes that received fewer than 25 pieces of mail per day. In Miami-Dade, that translated to about 270 box casualties.

I had a hard time believing that my mailbox — the *only* mailbox within the village limits of Biscayne Park — had so little traffic that it would qualify for

Continued on page 29



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Sender

Continued from page 28

removal. I asked my mail carrier what he thought. He told me that the box had always collected a good amount of mail, adding that the same was true of at least one other recently recalled box on Biscayne Boulevard. Just as I suspected: The Postal Service was collecting boxes pell-mell. Biscayne Park residents had been victimized by a random repossession.

Now, I know what some will say: The Internet has rendered snail mail a quaint relic. *Nobody* mails anything anymore. In this age of electronic mail, PINs, and online banking, there's no need to ever lick an envelope. But it isn't true. For starters, not everyone has joined the Internet revolution. Many older and lower-income residents don't even own a computer.

And even those of us who do most of our communicating, shopping, and bill-paying via the Internet usually have one or two items every month we drop in the mail. And what about invitations, photos, thank-you notes, and all the other things

that people — my wife, in particular — still prefer to send the old-fashioned way? A wired world may mean a lot less traditional mail is generated, but it hasn't made such correspondence extinct. Remember what my mail carrier told me — our box was doing a brisk business.

I understand the Postal Service is facing tough times. I might even agree that some mailboxes needed to go. But why *ours*? We only had one. Compare that to Miami Shores, which, for a community its size, is bulging with boxes. Count 'em: There's one on Park Drive at NE 94th Street, one at the corner of NE 95th Street and 2nd Avenue, another at the corner of NE 96th Street and 4th Avenue, and the bank of drive-through mailboxes on NE 98th Street, just across from, oh what's that place called, *the post office*.

That's enough to give anyone mailbox envy, but the one that really gets

me is at the corner of NE 102nd Street and 12th Avenue. And, no, that's not a typo. *NE 102nd Street and 12th Avenue*. Somehow a box located in a secluded residential area east of the Boulevard, with virtually no through traffic, has managed to escape the Postal Service's careful study of underused boxes. (Or maybe if you live in an upscale neighborhood close enough to the water, you're entitled to your own private mail

Biscayne Park may now be the only municipality in all Miami-Dade without a mailbox. I don't know about you, but that makes me feel like a second-class citizen.

drop.) El Portal has only one mailbox — outside village hall — but then, there's a large post office just beyond the village

limits at NE 84th Street.

That leaves only Biscayne Park residents without easy access to a public mailbox. In fact Biscayne Park may now be the only municipality in all of Miami-Dade County without such a box. I don't know about you, but that makes me feel like a second-class citizen.

Sure, village residents could drive east to Biscayne Boulevard or north to NE 125th Street or, as I'm forced to do now, the Miami Shores Post Office, but that's a pain. My mail carrier encouraged me leave outgoing mail for him in my residential mailbox, but that seems to me to put an undue strain on him. What if he doesn't have mail for me that day? Should I still expect him to walk up my driveway to see if I have mail for *him*? (Few of us have those mailboxes with the little red flag.) Should he be expected to do that for every single home in Biscayne Park? What if I need a piece of mail to get out before one o'clock?

I want my mailbox back. I'm not alone. The village commission passed a resolution a few months back asking the Postal Service to return it. So far, no response. Perhaps, as I've already heard from some corners, you can't fight the Postal Service. But we can try. Who knows? Maybe a letter-writing campaign would work, even if we do have to drive into the Shores to send the message.

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Coming to a Halfway House Near You

How many sexual offenders have been relocated to your neighborhood?

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

The relocation of homeless sex offenders from under the Julia Tuttle Causeway bridge has sparked a backlash from homeowners in the Upper Eastside, in particular the Shorecrest neighborhood, where 13 of the offenders have been placed. Residents' concerns were first aired at a well-attended Town Hall meeting on April 21, which was covered by the *BT* ("Mr. Mayor, Can You Please Tell Them To Be Quiet?" May 2010).

At the meeting, residents learned from Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff that the city had no control over the relocation of the offenders, that it was entirely a county issue. Subsequently, county Commissioner Audrey Edmonson received numerous e-mails and phone calls from citizens complaining about the concentrated grouping of sexual offenders in one small community. Edmonson responded by organizing



another community meeting to address the subject. It took place May 17 at Legion Park.

The star of the show was not the commissioner or the other dignitaries in attendance, including Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado, Commissioner Sarnoff, and state Rep. Ronald Brisé. Rather the star was Edmonson's invited guest, Ron Book,

chairman of the county's Homeless Trust. Months earlier Book had stepped forward to help solve the problem of homeless sex offenders, which had garnered embarrassing national headlines. Now she wanted him to explain how 13 offenders ended up in Shorecrest.

Commissioner Edmonson began the meeting by welcoming everyone and

clearly stating that she did not have a solution at hand. She was there to listen, to gather suggestions, and then move forward to develop a plan to resolve the matter. It poured rain that night, which caused Book to run late, so David Raymond, executive director of the Homeless Trust, spoke first, providing an overview of the Trust's role in the relocation process.

Raymond gave a concise synopsis of the actions taken by the Trust to eliminate the filthy squatters' village that had evolved under the causeway bridge. Just as he was finishing, Book entered the auditorium. It was all downhill from there.

For those who don't know Ron Book, perhaps the most influential political lobbyist in Florida, suffice to say that he is an expert on just about any topic you might want to discuss. He made it abundantly clear that he was better informed than anyone in the room on the subject of

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: BELLE MEADE

Halfway House

Continued from page 30

sexual offenders and predators.

He'd been through a terrible ordeal involving a predator (a female nanny) who lived in his home and assaulted his daughter for several years. "So don't you tell me about the pain and the anguish," he snapped, "because I have lived through it and know it better than any of you!"

Well, that introduction certainly set the tone for the rest of the evening. One resident after another attempted to voice their frustrations and worries, only to be rebuked by Book, who acted as a buffer between the exasperated residents and the elected officials, who sat mum on the dais.

Book went on and on about how up-standing the politicians were and how wonderful the Homeless Trust is, and then he finally got around to Commissioner Edmonson's question: How did 13 sexual offenders end up being housed in Shorecrest?

Book's response: "We ran the Shorecrest ZIP code and it just popped up as an eligible site. So I drove it and determined that it would be a good fit to relocate the sexual predators." What

could be more simple!

It was a despicable display of grand-standing by Book, especially when compared to the manner in which David Raymond addressed the residents earlier in the evening. Book should have folded his tent, sat at the dais, and allowed the public to speak and the elected officials to respond.

Mayor Regalado presented a somewhat disjointed discourse on the history of the Homeless Trust, from the time when Miami police violated the civil rights of the homeless, resulting in the now infamous Pottinger Agreement, which for years has tied the city's hands in dealing with the homeless street population.

Book opined that he didn't think the Pottinger Agreement was all that bad and that "we have it and we are living with it." Sort of like living with a fatal disease until it kills you.

Then a member of the audience asked question about a different constitutional issue. This gave Commissioner Sarnoff the opportunity sidestep the constitutional issue but emphasize again that the county had full responsibility for the sexual offender/predator issue and that it was *not* the responsibility of the City of Miami.

This made everyone feel a lot better, though it caused Commissioner Edmonson to twitch a little as another tire from the proverbial bus ran across her back.

In response to a murmur from the crowd about how many sexual offenders had been relocated to Coconut Grove, where Sarnoff lives, the commissioner commented that he empathized with the residents because he lives on a block with four offenders and that hordes of them live within a half-mile of his home.

A subsequent check on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement website (updated daily) showed exactly one offender located within a half square mile of the commissioner's home and two within one square mile. So either a bunch moved out or a bunch moved in over the course of 24 hours, depending upon whose stats you want to believe. (An elected official who lives in a gated community, has no children, and has just two offenders located within a square mile of his home is going to find it difficult to elicit sympathy from a room full of residents who were obviously at wit's end.)

I also searched a specific Shorecrest residence in the vicinity of the

relocations and found that there are 14 offenders within a half square mile and 63 within one square mile. The 13 relocated to Shorecrest are all serious sexual predators, according to Ron Book — "real bad guys," as he put it.

One young mother pleaded for help: "I cannot walk the streets around my home without my husband with me. This is not me, this is not how I want to live!" Even when prodded by a vociferous resident demanding to hear from his elected officials, who sat silent before their constituents, only Commissioner Edmonson responded.

But then the resident was cut off by Book, who taunted the man to "heap your complaints and insults upon me, sir. I am paid the big bucks to take your abuse!"

All in all, it was a pretty pathetic show, hardly a shining example of how to solicit input from the public to address a very real problem and work on a solution. I applaud Commissioner Edmonson for calling the meeting, but next time she should leave the experts at home and just listen.

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Miami Makes the Grade

After months of diligent studying, it's time for a report card

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

I returned to this city from a year-plus stint in the Merciless Un-Frozen Tundra (MUFT), otherwise known as Binghamton, New York, five months ago. Now it's time for my Miami report. Let's make that Miami's report *card*. This is particularly fitting since I am here attending school. And not just any school. Ahhhhr school. But we'll get to that.

Plus I am leaving for the summer to go back to the MUFT. (Insert requisite groaning, whining, bitching, and suicide threats from previous columns. Or if you're the impatient type, just wait for the next column because I'll be at it again with fresh gripes.)

In one of my ahhhrt school photography classes, when we hand in assignments to be shredded like a gazelle outrun by lions, uh, I mean critiqued, we are graded equally on creativity and on technical skill. It's a 50/50 split. I think



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

that is fair. So I'm going to apply this rule to how I grade Miami.

But since we're talking about a city, I'm skipping creativity and technical skill as grading criteria, although I could make an argument to include them. I'm going to consider "environment," which

includes three elements I'll use: weather, aesthetic appeal, and socioeconomic climate. This means I am going to have to add three grades in order to arrive at one final one. That's math! And my grades in math were.... Well, I'll just do the best I can.

I give Miami an A- for weather. I'm sorry, Miami, but I'm docking you for extreme summer heat and humidity. Otherwise I'm sold. So work on that, will ya? Really. It's so indulgent and adolescent to be that muggy for that long.

As we know, the sun shines in Miami. A lot. That means you can wear next to nothing, which makes for a thinner population, which arguably makes for a healthier population. Okay, I said arguably. Which leads me to the next category: aesthetic appeal.

We all know Miami is no slacker in that arena. Hell, the world knows that. The funny thing is, even if people don't arrive here fit and thin (they usually don't), many inevitably end up that way. A coincidence? I think not.

Just sip on sun and ocean cocktails, nibble on palm tree fronds, and colon cleanse with copious amounts of peer pressure to look perfect for a few

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District 108 Town Hall Meeting with Representative Ronald Brisé

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Grade

Continued from page 32

weeks and I swear the pounds will melt away like that ice cream cone that once was a yummy treat and is now a sticky fright in your hand. Now do you see why I'm taking points off for weather? Tsk, tsk!

But why, assuming you munch on subtropical vegetation, drink salty water, and get insulted or intimidated continuously by hot women, will you lose weight? Duh! It's the Miamet! Get it? Miami + Diet = Miamet. Maaaybe I'm not so bad at math after all! If you don't get it, it may be too late for you. (See "Miamon" below.) I've seen Miamet affect women and men of all ages and ethnicities.

Of course, you need to exercise more than your jaw muscles once you go on the Miamet. I'm talking about exercising caution. Alert level: Orange. See, if you are not careful, after a few weeks on the Miamet, you risk morphing into a Miamon. And while every action has its consequences, this one in particular should be avoided at all costs.

What's a Miamon? Well, it's sort of like a tampon, only human and with fewer brain cells. I know what you are thinking. Since Miamons are everywhere, how do you identify one and therefore know which behavior to *not* emulate? Let me provide a few, brief, anecdotal situations:

(Be forewarned: The following are not fictional. And they all happened within a week. Repeatedly.)

Miamon example #1: You are trying to pull out of a parking spot. Simple, right? Not so fast. Literally. Because there is a person standing behind you. On their cell phone. Oblivious. (Note: This characteristic of living in a state of sheer oblivion is a fundamental trait of the Miamon.)

Miamon example #2: You live in a condo and the fire alarm goes off at 4:00 a.m. You call the front desk and ask if this is a real fire or yet another false alarm. The person manning the front desk tells you they will check with "security" and call you back in five minutes. (Note: The that blatant stupidity and disregard for human life are both Miamon traits.)

Miamon example #3: You are in line at a certain smoothie place. There is a woman in front of you who is insisting the cashier shorted her by five cents. The cashier has explained that did not happen and reviewed the receipt a few times to prove it. There are eight people behind you in line. They are beginning to growl. The nickel-hungry woman won't shut up, get out of the way, and let other people order. (Note: Being inconsiderate is a hallmark of the Miamon.)

I could go on. Point is, you won't be able to totally avoid the Miamons. You cannot outsmart them. And no, sorry to say, listening solely to public radio and sticking to bookstores won't save you. So at least try not to become one.

When I factor the Miamet and Miamons into Miami's overall grade, I have to assign an A for the Miamet and an F for Miamons. That's a C. Add in the A- for weather and we have a B? But I'm still grading.

And now I am considering socioeconomic factors within the environment. Well, this gets tricky. Miami scores well for diversity, cultural offerings (oh, shut up NYC-ers. If you think NYC

is so much better, please move back, slush your way around Broadway and to the museums in the winter, sweat on the germ-infested subways during the summer, and give us space) and...and that's it.

On the down side we have a lot of Entitled Douche Bags roaming around. The Entitled Douche Bags or EDBs vary slightly from the Miamons. Not every Miamon has four Lamborghinis or five trust funds or eight servants or a ten-bedroom house. But every EDB is, by definition, a Miamon.

Confused? Fine. Let's move on.

Diversity = A. Cultural offerings = B. EDBs = F. So what's the total? Hold on while I punch these letters into my calculator. Oh, I can't do that. Should have assigned numerical grades. An A- for weather, a B for aesthetic appeal and a C- for socioeconomic climate. So $90 + 83 + 70 = 243$, divided by $3 = 81$.

There you have it. Miami by the numbers. Final grade: B.

Hmmm. Maybe I *should* have received better grades in math.

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SINCE 1984

Home-Field Advantage — For All It's Worth

It's not whether you win or lose, it's — forget that!

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

Lately I've been thinking about home. I mean home as in Miami Shores, not home as in the town of my birth. Maybe it's because this year, I haven't traveled much at all. Discounting quick trips to the New Jersey-New York area to visit family or attend social events, I haven't stayed in one place so long since I was pregnant with my son. He's ten in October.

Still, for someone who adores traveling, I've enjoyed just as much being home. I know that sounds contradictory, but for 13 years I worked out of my house, spending days at a time writing in my office, where my desk is parked under a window that looks directly into the dense greenness of a sapodilla tree.

These days I value whatever time I actually get at home, which is very little. If I'm not in my home-away-from-home at school, I'm driving my kids to their



various sports activities. And now that my children have joined the circuit of young, traveling athletes, I have another way to think about home.

Home-field advantage to parents means you don't have to fight the commute. But I've discovered that for some coaches, especially those in the

countywide, kid-pitch baseball league that Miami Shores takes part in, home-field advantage means you can cheat, prevaricate, and verbally abuse the children under your care.

To their credit, the coaches from the Miami Shores teams have stayed remarkably cool-headed in the face of outright game-theft. But then, the Miami Shores ball club managers weren't the ones indulging their inner poor sports. Those with such impressive tantrum routines, the John McEnroes of the diamond, who try to convince umpires that a run scores on a third out and who deliberately miscount the stats out loud to confuse matters in their favor — those coaches hail from Coral Gables.

We got our first taste of the Coral Gables coaches' determination to win at all and any costs one extremely hot Saturday afternoon. The kids had already been playing for an hour and 35 minutes;

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NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS: MIAMI SHORES

Advantage

Continued from page 34

games are scheduled for one hour and 20 minutes. Coral Gables, in its final ups at bat, had failed to score the necessary runs to win. So we started to cheer and rise — only to sink down in disbelief when the umpires signaled for another inning. Apparently you don't leave a Coral Gables baseball game until you lose. So that's precisely what our hot, sweaty, and bewildered boys of premature summer did. They played until they lost. *Then* the game was over and we could all go home to soothe their nine-year-old souls.

Another venture to Coral Gables ended during the top of the third inning, when a thunderstorm blew in. Rather we *thought* it had ended. But this time Coral Gables was winning. So even though thunder was rumbling, electricity was streaking across the sky, the first fat drops were falling, and it was clear from both bruised horizon and iPhone radar that we were in for a dangerous South Florida washout, the rival coaches insisted we stay. "You have to wait 15

minutes before we can officially call the game," they told us. If you leave before a game is called, you're walking out and that's a forfeit. We stayed.

But after the 15 minutes was up, they changed the rules and said we needed to wait half an hour. "It's going to pass over," they said. By this point a dozen adolescents in the dugout were pushing, squirming, climbing the fence, and throwing baseballs at each other's heads — accidentally, of course. It was also 7:30 at night. So we grabbed our kids and got them in the cars just before the clouds broke open to flood U.S. 1 with several inches of rain in under an hour. It was a helluva drive home.

Meanwhile, in my mind, I see the other team still sitting there, their cleats soaking in puddles, hungry and shivering while their coaches congratulated them on waiting us out, because of course "there's no crying in baseball." Even when you get hit in the head with a baseball. Or lightning.

Nor was their behavior any better when they were the visiting team. On one occasion, celebrating a teammate's birthday, the Gables players sprayed

about ten cans of Silly String all over the Miami Shores field, and their coaches seemed oblivious to the mess it made. In the end, a couple of parents made a half-hearted attempt to get the kids to clean up after themselves, then one caring mom did the rest of the job herself.

Still, what concerns me most is how the Coral Gables coaches scream at their players if they fail to steal a base or if they don't round third and head home even if the pitcher has the ball and the play technically is dead. The ploy is to tempt inexperienced pitchers to throw (or overthrow, which is what usually happens) home and keep the play in perpetual motion, and the umps either don't realize the ball went back to the mound or, if the game is in the Gables, don't care.

Other times, if the batter doesn't take a cut at a strike, you can hear one of them screech, "Swing that stick! You've got a stick in your hands! Use it — you're not a lawn ornament to just stand there!" Worse, however, is when the pitch goes awry and the batter flinches. "Don't back away from the plate! Lean into it! Take one for the

team!" this maniac likes to shout.

As a former athlete, an occasional coach, a full-time educator, and always, always, always a mom, I have a serious problem with an overwrought adult telling any nine-year-old kid to deliberately step into a badly pitched hard ball so he can be beaned and gain first base. That's not the way to play. That's the way to lose a perfectly good set of teeth because you followed such stupid advice. You're supposed to try to hit the ball, not get hit *by* it.

Of course, we're also talking about the same guy who lied to his team the last time they played Miami Shores, telling them they tied when they actually lost. If the tie were an actuality, our boys would have taken their last ups, but we didn't have to because we were leading. Fortunately for this coach, none of his players figured this out. In a case of City Beautiful versus Village Beautiful, we may lose more often than not when it comes to baseball runs. But when it concerns karma and IQ points? Whether home or away, Miami Shores is clearly in the lead.

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Grab a Paddle and Ride the Dragon

An ancient Chinese sport finds a home in modern Miami

By Terence Cantarella
BT Contributor

On the quiet Oleta River in North Miami Beach, where tall mangrove forests grow along the ancient shorelines and block out the noise of the city beyond, a nine-person crew sits in a long, hand-painted boat, waiting for an order. Bent forward, arms poised at the ready, their fists clench long wooden paddles. A steersman, standing at the stern, grips the skiff's rudder by the handle and issues his command: "Go!"

The crew lets loose, plunging their paddles into the murky water, using the strength of their upper bodies to push their 40-foot Chinese dragon boat upriver. The vessel glides along at an impressive speed, each paddler pummeling the water in sync until, 250 meters along, the steersman calls for an intermission. "Let it ride!" he yells.

The paddles come up, the paddlers catch their breath, and peace returns to the winding waterway — until they repeat the drill moments later.

Every weekend the scene plays out the same way. The Puff Dragon Boat Racing Team (Puff, for short) races their dragon up and down the placid Oleta until — as they like to say — they've drained their tanks.

That an ancient Chinese sport should find a home on an urban river in North Miami Beach may seem strange to some, but to 27-year-old Biscayne Park resident Sam Trotter, it makes perfect sense: "South Florida, being outside on the water, meeting people and

getting exercise — that to me is a no-brainer."

Trotter and wife Kate Benson joined Puff just two months ago, but like many newbies, they've quickly become diehard dragon-boaters. And even though a competitive streak runs through the heart of the team, Benson insists the niche sport is as



The Puff crew digs into the Oleta River.

BT photo by Terence Cantarella



Photo courtesy of Puff

The boats feature a dragon head at the bow and a tail at the stern.

much a social affair as it is a sports bout: "There's a lot of camaraderie. And it's still kind of underground, so you feel like you're part of a club. Besides, what other team sport can you do where you get to be out on the water? This is Miami. Don't you want to be out on the water?"

Founded seven years ago by Michael Chen, Puff is one of about five dragon-boat racing teams in Miami-Dade County and currently boasts some 50 permanent members, ranging from buff, young outdoor enthusiasts to well-ripened weekend warriors (including a 73-year-old part-time paddler). Some members show up to the weekly training runs religiously. Others, only occasionally.

As a young man in Hong Kong, watching dragon-boat races from the window of his home, Chen was never too impressed with the sport. "Too damn slow," he thought. It wasn't until many years later, living in South Florida and looking for a way to get outdoors and reconnect with his cultural heritage, that he decided to take up dragon-boating. That's when he realized just how satisfying — and fast — racing dragons can be. "You don't realize how fast it is until you're in the boat," he says.

Chen participates in local races twice a year. He competed in Tampa last month, raced in New York last August, and travels to Hong Kong every year for an annual dragon-boat festival there (seven Puff members will accompany him this summer). The sport has even shaped his world view. "Putting a bunch of people in a boat and having them work together toward the same goal," he contends, "makes the world a better place. If you want world peace, everyone should go dragon-boating."

Dragon-boating, in fact, may be the biggest sport you've never heard of. In 2006 *Time* magazine reported that "more than 75 dragon-boat festivals were held in 31 states and 70 cities across the country, with participation up 20 percent over 2004, to 54,000 people." More recent surveys show considerable increases in those numbers, and the sport has been called one of the fastest-growing water sports in the world, with annual festivals being held in more than 50 countries.

Begun in China, dragon-boating arose more than 2000 years ago as a way to appease mystical river dragons who had sovereignty over water, rain-fall, and floods. Tied in to that yearly custom is the legend of Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet who drowned himself in a river after the defeat of his homeland by a rival army. The dramatic bard's suicide fell on the day of the annual dragon-boat festival and villagers are said to have raced out in their dragon boats to look for him, tossing rice dumplings into the river to distract fish from eating his body.

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How Does Your Garden Grow?

If it's that untidy heap of a thing at Midtown Miami, very, very slow

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Contributor

Last year publicists for Midtown Miami promised that a “true fantasy spectacle” with an “endless arrays of blossoms and texture” would be completed in the spring of 2010 and “leave you speechless.” As envisioned by landscape architect Harry Nelson, “World Gardens at Midtown Miami” would consist of an array of international garden styles crammed into a vacant 2.5-acre parcel that would also include a 100-foot-long reflecting pool, art exhibitions, poetry readings, even free concerts. (See “Gardens Grow in Midtown — At Least for Now,” *BT*, December 2009.)

Now it's summer and the park isn't finished. In fact, it doesn't appear to be even close to finished.

Instead of a fantasy spectacle, there are large tangles of trees and shrubs, many of which are still potted, and several large mounds of dirt ranging in color from white to brown to black. An above-ground “pond” (really a large tank) sits in the middle of the evolving World Gardens; work on the reflecting pool has barely begun. Irrigation hoses snake across the property, while patches of mud border uneven paths cut by tractors and trucks. Towering above the plants, dirt piles, and scattered equipment are a number of trees, some close to 75 feet tall, many of them still bound with rope, some having lost all their leaves.

Many Midtown residents and business owners are wondering what's up. “For months they would move plants here and there. I never saw a big



BT photo by Silvia Ros

Landscaper Harry Nelson: “Everything in life is computed in dollars and cents, but this is about education and enjoyment.”

crew of people working,” says Heidi Andradem, a 33-year-old resident of the Midtown 2 condo.

Andradem says that when she first moved to Midtown several months ago, the parcel was just being dug up. She's moving out this month. “I was hoping [World Gardens] would be done in two weeks,” she says, “but it took forever and it looks like crap.”

The lack of progress also troubles Jeff Shimonski, director of horticulture at Jungle Island and the *BT*'s garden columnist. “It seems very haphazard, like there's no plan,” Shimonski says, having recently visited the site. “It's just piles of fill all over the place.” Worse, Shimonski fears for the long-term health of some of the trees: “They should not be tied up or cut back like they have been.”

Nelson, though, asserts that after personal and logistical setbacks, work is now proceeding at World Gardens. He says his sister's death this past October, record-breaking cold snaps, and a lack of suitable soil have contributed to the delays. “I watched my sister die for nine months,” he recounts. “This garden is going to be dedicated to her.” Thanks to significant donations of soil, Nelson assures that development of the garden is now on track and that it should be substantially finished by July.

Deborah Samuel, director of operations at Midtown Miami, says Nelson has struggled not only with personal tragedy but also with broken promises. “A lot of people who were committed [to World Gardens] in the beginning did not necessarily come through,” she says. “Any

time you have construction, you have a little bit of confusion and aggravation.”

Tired of seeing what he calls mediocre landscaping work, Nelson, a 30-year veteran of the industry who says his client list has included the late Gianni Versace and “Hollywood directors and playwrights,” dreamed of building a string of public gardens across the nation that would showcase different styles, invite public participation, and educate a new generation of landscape designers. He teamed up with former client José Acosta, a computer software engineer who felt Miami needed more green space.

Samuel, who also previously employed Nelson as a landscaper, leased them a vacant piece of land owned by her boss, Joe Cayre, principal of Midtown Equities, for three years at a dollar a year, including free water, electricity, and security services. (Midtown Equities built most of Midtown Miami, except for the Shops at Midtown. Located to the west, along N. Miami Avenue, the Shops at Midtown were developed by Ohio-based Developers Diversified Realty.)

Once the real estate market turns around, Midtown Equities plans to develop an entertainment complex where World Gardens is now rising, but until then, Nelson's “prototype” would highlight several distinct garden styles: Italian, English, French, Spanish, Japanese, and what he refers to as modern, fantasy, and tropical.

At some point Acosta backed away from the project. Contacted by the *BT*, Acosta says he relocated to California to find work. His earlier responsibilities

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Women Helping Women Helping Wynwood

From a small group of five came a big idea for many

By John Hood
Special to BT

On a clear and steamy Tuesday evening in the middle of May, a swarm of Miami's most active art operatives assembled in a vast compound known as Whale & Star. The 18,000-square-foot warehouse is the headquarters of artist Enrique Martinez Celaya, who'd thrown open his massive doors on behalf of a cause that, over the past half year, has become near and dear to the neighborhood known as Wynwood. (For more about Martinez Celaya, see page 44.)

That cause is the Women of Wynwood, and it could very well serve as a blueprint for other sections of town.

Formed in November of last year after five neighborhood activists persuaded 100 like-minded women to chip in \$250 each in order to better serve the burgeoning arts neighborhood, the Women of Wynwood (WOW) is, at its core, an employment program for homeless women. At large, though, it's an effective way to beautify a bustling section of town and save a few lives at the same time.

The initial five consisted of Thea Goldman, Yvette Garcia, Nina Johnson, Dina Mitrani, and Rhonda Mitrani — each deeply involved in Wynwood, Goldman as owner/operator of Joey's Italian restaurant, the other four as gallery heads. Each also happens to be highly persuasive. So when Goldman approached the others with the concept, it didn't take long for them to put it into play.

Goldman says she was inspired by the SoHo Partnership, the New York City



Dina Mitrani, Glendina Roseborough, Thea Goldman, and Shawntina Jones: With a \$100,000 grant, the Women of Wynwood are looking at a bright future.

initiative that has been putting homeless men and women to work since 1992. Like SoHo, Wynwood is a former industrial neighborhood that's become a center of art and culture. Unlike SoHo, however, Wynwood has perhaps more than its fair share of homeless. Part of the reason is the numerous state- and city-run agencies located within the neighborhood's boundaries. Another might be its proximity to Overtown. Mostly, though, it's simply that homelessness is a fact of life in Miami.

So what to do? Well, if you're like Thea Goldman and Constance Margulies, you do whatever it takes.

After raising the initial \$25,000, Goldman got with Margulies, who runs Overtown's Lotus House shelter for women and children, and together they created the "job pilot program" that is WOW. Goldman says their goals were clear: "Secure

our streets, clean our streets, and market our streets." And they'd use Lotus House residents to do so.

At the beginning, WOW fielded a staff of ten part-time employees who acted as "ambassadors" for the neighborhood while keeping the streets "cleaner than Lincoln Road." Eventually, though, they decided to switch to two full-time staffers. "The thing is, a part-time job doesn't get anyone out of homelessness; a full-time job does," says Goldman. "And these two have become fully emancipated as a result of this program."

The two Goldman is referring to are Shawntina Jones and Glendina Roseborough, who have both been with WOW since its inception. Jones had been employed by the Port of Miami before complicating circumstances brought her to Lotus House. Roseborough had a long-time job at the Russell Plating

Factory. Now, backed by WOW, the two are not only gainfully employed, they've moved out of Lotus House and into homes of their very own.

If Goldman, Margulies, and the rest of the women have their way, Jones and Roseborough will be but the first in a long line similar success stories. "Ideally there'd be three teams of two [full-time staffers]," adds Goldman, "and enhance that with some additional part-time help, depending on what's going on in the neighborhood."

As anyone who frequents the monthly gallery nights knows, a lot is going on in the neighborhood. In fact the art scene indirectly gave rise to WOW, which is itself a sort of offshoot of the 150-member Wynwood Arts District Association (WADA), which Goldman co-chairs with developer David Lombardi, who has long held a considerable stake in the area. WADA's primary goal — promoting and protecting the neighborhood through, among other things, clean, safe, and marketable streets — are now WOW's goals too.

Then there are individual efforts, such as the one undertaken by Butter Gallery owner Francisco De La Torre (better known as Paco), whose plan to donate a portion of the bar proceeds taken in at each month's art walk has expanded to include Arte 23, Dot Gallery, and Plant the Future.

Of course it takes more than a few hundred thirsty arts patrons to finance a program like WOW, which was the impetus behind the get-together at Whale & Star. Seems that Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff has also taken a liking to WOW and WADA, and to prove it he came through with a check for a

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Two Communities, One School

Parents from very different backgrounds have transformed Morningside Elementary

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

An ethnic, socio-economic, and geographic divide once threatened to undermine Morningside Elementary School, but a new garden could be the olive branch that brings families and administrators together.

Michael Loveland is a local educator and professional sculptor who has one child enrolled at the school and another on the way. He's also a vice president of the Parent Teacher Association, which has been instrumental in the school's turnaround the past several years. His latest PTA project is a major overhaul of the school grounds. "I've been to so many schools that don't have nice campuses," Loveland says. "Areas like this can be utilized better."

Part of the grounds now consists of 8-by-8-foot planter boxes, one for each grade level. Teachers and students work on the plots throughout the year, growing vegetables and other plants. Static areas elsewhere on the campus are home to a native hammock and a fruit orchard. A wetlands marsh was planted in a flood-prone location. Says Loveland: "My biggest goal for all this plant life to be put in the school was foremost to teach these kids respect for nature, to change the mentality of these kids, that food just doesn't come from Publix, that it grows on trees. You have to nurture [the fruits and vegetables] and take care of them, and they'll take care of you." But the project didn't go off without one major hitch.

At the last minute, Loveland received a donation of 300 palms, some rare, from Metrozoo and the University of Miami. In



Michael Loveland, Bindi Loveland, and Sonya Ballard with Morningside Elementary student stars Amelie Subirats, Amanda Zion Fischer, Israel Zion, and Tajah Zion.

late April, nearly 200 volunteers, mostly UM students, helped plant the trees in a single day. But because the extra palms weren't on the approved site plan, custodians ripped out about half of them and piled them behind the school. Several parents notified Loveland of the potential disaster.

Eventually Loveland picked up about 85 trees that weren't replanted, repotted them himself, and is tending to them at his home. He hopes by autumn the school will find new spots for them on campus, or the PTA may sell them at a fundraiser.

While he admits to a bad lapse in communication, Loveland also praises the current administration, headed by principal Kathleen John-Louissaint, for its open attitude in allowing parents an involved role in school affairs. This was not always so at Morningside, which is located in the Palm Grove neighborhood between Biscayne Boulevard and the FEC railroad tracks.

The previous principal, Josette Paris, was popular with Haitian-American parents living in Little Haiti, west of the school. But to some of the new parents moving

into more affluent neighborhoods east of the school — Bayside, Morningside, Belle Meade, Palm Grove — the principal seemed to be running her own personal fiefdom and, they believed, she had very low expectations for the students in her care. A rift began to develop along ethnic and economic lines, pitting east against west, rich against poor, new families against established ones. Nothing less than control of the school was at stake, and the children's futures hung in the balance.

With the advent of standardized testing, some parents' worst fears appeared to be confirmed. Morningside Elementary earned a "D" grade in its first report card. From 2001 to 2005, the school improved to a "C," which was still unacceptably low to the affluent parents. They tried to work with Paris. While she was not as openly caustic as the principal at Coconut Grove Elementary School, who recently told a parent to "eat sh— and die" in an e-mail, Morningside Elementary parents say she made them feel unwelcome and effectively shut them out. Just as

many parents began to lose hope (and considered sending their kids to private schools), Paris was removed as principal in 2006 following allegations of physically abusing a teacher.

John-Louissaint took over as principal for the 2006-2007 school year and created a bridge between the two groups of parents. Since then Morningside has earned a consistent "B" grade and successfully implemented a dual-language magnet program offering French, Spanish, and Haitian Kreyol as part of daily coursework.

One parent, Dr. Marilyn Csete, who is a member of the school's Educational Excellence School Advisory Council and a former Morningside Elementary student herself, witnessed the growing pains: "What happened to Morningside, with all of the refugees that came in, is that you had a group of parents who aren't tremendously visible. If those who know the system don't advocate as a group together [with immigrant parents], it doesn't happen."

During the 2008-09 school year, 62 percent of the students attained "high standards in reading." They also reached 68 and 83 percent in math and writing, respectively. Clearly, increased parental involvement is working.

Csete is thrilled with the new garden and loves the "warmer, multicultural environment" that is unique to the school. She wants to continue working with the administration to make Morningside an "A" school academically, a coveted honor she believes is within reach. It can be accomplished, she says, if parents of all backgrounds continue to be involved with the school — and with each other.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Dragon

Continued from page 36

The exotic world of myth and legend has morphed into a competitive international sport complete with standardized rules and equipment. Typically, 20 paddlers seated in pairs power a boat, although upward of 50 are common. A steersman controls the rudder and a drummer sits at the bow, beating out a rhythm for the paddlers. Red, green, or blue scales adorn the sides, and a colorful dragon head and tail are fitted to either end of the boat for races.

A distinctly festive attitude, however, prevails. In China yearly dragon-boat festivals are vivacious affairs where alcohol flows, food is abundant, and paddlers are known to party late into the night. In Miami, too, the annual dragon-boat regatta, which pits paddling teams, corporate workforces, police, firefighters, and other local groups against each other, often feels like an oversize, Asian-themed block party.

True to that spirit, Puff (named for a certain “Magic” dragon, but also an acronym for Paddles Up For Friendship/Fun) ended their recent Oleta River practice at the historic Blue Marlin Fish House, on the river near the team’s launch site. Seated around a table in the shade, five Puffers raised beers to toast their enlivening workout: “To dragon-boating!”

Balu Vador, a lithe Hungarian who’s been hitting the paddles for five years, breaks down the formula for good dragon-boating in between swills of lager: “It’s 49 percent technique, 51

percent timing.” The sport’s collaborative nature, he says, means that some people’s personalities just don’t work in dragon-boating.

Conversely, photographer Kate Benson says that Puff has spawned more than a few long-term relationships — and even one marriage: “You didn’t know dragon-boating was so romantic, did you?”

“But first and foremost,” founder Michael Chen insists, “we’re competitive. We want to win.” He says Puff has two races coming up in the next six months, and some members will try out for Team USA, which will represent the U.S. in the World Dragon Boat Championships in Tampa next year.

Chen, however, is no party-poofer. “A lot of people in Miami say they like to party,” he says, “but we have more parties in one month than they have all year.” He believes Miami has the potential to be a world destination for dragon-boaters because of the weather and water. And the inclusive nature of his team ensures the advancement toward that goal: “We want new members, we embrace all people, we’re apolitical, and we respect that everybody is a unique being.”

“Let’s put it this way,” he says, fingering a silver paddle pendant hanging from his neck chain. “We all just love this sport.”

For information about Puff, visit www.meetup.com/puffpower. The first three practices are free, then it’s \$10 a month.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Wynwood

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whopping \$100,000.

According to Sarnoff’s office, the money is part of the \$255 million Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond Program, passed by city voters in 2001. Today an oversight board monitors the program, but the city commission has some discretion in awarding grants to worthy projects and organizations that can range from public safety to parks and recreation. Sarnoff has given similar grants to neighborhood associations in Coconut Grove and the MiMo District. And, as he indicated at the event, he believes this is money well spent.

“Women of Wynwood is a wonderful organization,” Sarnoff said in a follow-up e-mail message the BT. “Even though WOW is fairly new, they have gained the

respect and admiration of thousands of Wynwood stakeholders and visitors. I am honored to support WOW.”

At Whale & Star the art swarm greeted Sarnoff’s support with the requisite applause. Goldman, Margulies, and the rest of the WOW women seemed purposefully pleased. But the brightest smiles in the room came from Jones and Roseborough. After all, that check ensures they’ve each got a good job with good folks in a good neighborhood, and that they’ll have those jobs for some time.

Perhaps more important, Wynwood will have on hand two women who’ve helped transform the neighborhood in ways they surely couldn’t have imagined before becoming charter members of WOW. As Thea Goldman put it: “They’re grateful. But we’re *more* grateful.”



BT photo by Jacqueline Doullis

Critics say the World Gardens site “looks like crap” and that “every business owner in the entire complex hates it.”

Gardens

Continued from page 37

included maintaining an Internet presence for World Gardens on Facebook and via a website — gardensforthepeople.org, which sought volunteer gardeners and, briefly, financial contributions. Earlier this year, the sites stopped asking for donations, and both sites were shut down last month. According to Nelson’s publicist, Ashley Kehoe, a nonprofit organization devoted to assisting World Gardens has not yet been formed.

Online issues have not been Nelson’s principal concern. He’s been preoccupied with unprecedented cold temperatures and the lack of suitable soil. “This was originally a rail yard, and it was not communicated to me that there was no usable soil on the entire property,” he says. As a result, Nelson says he had to scramble to find some 800 truckloads of soil, while plants that were already delivered remained in pots. Some of them did lose their leaves in the cold weather, but are now recovering. However, he does acknowledge the chill killed 24 mussaenda trees he imported from the Philippines.

Jeff Shimonski, though, says he spotted dead and dying trees during his May 27 visit, including four potted trees and two planted Canary Island date palms. There is some “beautiful” plant material at the site, Shimonski says, but he believes Nelson “cut back way too hard” on many of the royal oak and palm trees, leaving them vulnerable to parasites. He also wonders why Nelson didn’t test the soil when Samuel offered him the land. Mixing different soils improperly, he warns, can create a “parched” water table

that inhibits root growth and kills the vegetation above.

Nelson insists he is treating the imported soil with care, though he does admit that the effort is costing many thousands of dollars more than what he’d budgeted for World Gardens. That budget, and all other financial details, remains confidential. Nelson declines to identify any donors of money or in-kind services. “Everything in life is computed in dollars and cents,” he says, “but this is about education and enjoyment. No one is specifically taking credit for what they are doing.... I work 14 hours a day.”

Tony Barbera, owner of Primo Pizza, east of the garden, is not impressed. Once an ardent supporter of World Gardens, he’s lost faith. “It’s going nowhere,” he says. “It’s not looking very good at all. Every business owner in the entire complex hates it.” Barbera also complains that a “wall of trees” blocks the view of his business from potential customers strolling the Shops at Midtown.

Nelson theorizes that critical business owners like Barbera are blaming World Gardens for their own flawed business operations. “If your pizza isn’t good, then nobody eats it,” he fumes. But to accommodate their concerns, Nelson plans to expand walkways through the garden, opening clearer views of businesses on both sides.

Deborah Samuel predicts that the grumbling about World Gardens will disappear once it’s finished. “At the end of the day, everyone will be happy,” she says. “No one will remember the inconvenience.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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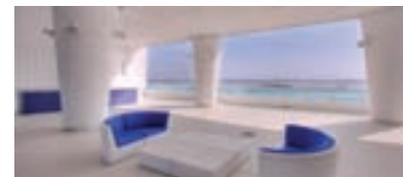


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Letters

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The only alternate sources of revenue to come out of the workshops that were certain and verifiable were to increase the various utility taxes. Everything else was a bunch of “maybes” with no estimate of the costs of collection or equipment. You can’t run a city on “maybes.”

Mr. González mentioned 157 people signing a petition to have their taxes raised but never mentioned how many people *didn’t* want them raised. He didn’t mention that a majority of voters in Biscayne Park would need to vote to approve going above the ten-mill cap, nor did he mention the negative effect such a high property tax rate would have on home sales — especially the many foreclosures in our city. It could even push some people over the edge and cause more foreclosures. If properties don’t sell, property values don’t go up and the millage rate *stays* up — likely for more than two years.

Only one city in the state of Florida — Indian Creek — has ever voted to go above ten mills. As a homeowner I can’t control my millage rate or property evaluation or when/if my tax rates goes down. But I *can* use less electricity and pay less in franchise fees. As for the various other “hidden taxes,” same thing — not everyone utilizes the utilities and services that have those taxes, so not everyone pays all those taxes.

He criticized Vice-Mayor Al Childress’s motion to approve signing the agreement with FPL and my second of the motion, and claimed that a vote was to be taken immediately, without giving Commissioners Bernard and Cooper “one last opportunity to articulate their opposition to the measure.”

Not exactly! He failed to mention that I stated my second was “for discussion,” and neither of us said a vote had to be taken immediately. Rather than prevent Commissioners Bernard and Cooper from speaking, they began an approximately 20-minute discussion that included the possibility of going under the Miami-Dade contract, and even asked that the original motion be withdrawn in favor of Commissioner Cooper’s motion to go with Miami-Dade.

Once the original motion was not withdrawn, Commissioner Cooper was recognized and given time (he spoke for 20 minutes) to make his various points. When he finished, Commissioner Bernard was given his turn (yes, we are

recognized by the mayor — the chair — and take our turns to speak). There was no effort at that point to “call the vote” and silence him, as Mr. González seemed to imply.

After approximately 15 minutes of speaking, Commissioner Bernard began a PowerPoint presentation, including dissecting the actual contract, the Transmission Line Siting Act, and many previously discussed issues. The “call the vote” did not occur until he had been speaking for 40 minutes. He continued speaking for approximately another 20 minutes.

Now, I realize it makes for a more “exciting” story to imply some sort of group effort to silence one or more commissioners, but it just didn’t happen that way. What did happen was the mayor (the chair!) attempted to encourage us to get our points across without filibustering. It is possible to be both “transparent” and concise.

Mr. González claimed the mayor continually interrupted Commissioner Bernard. What he called “interrupting” was the mayor, as chair of the meetings, trying to run a meeting where we actually get to the point and get things accomplished. Endless talking does not guarantee a better job gets done and does not make for more “transparency.” It’s just paralysis by analysis. Mr. González never mentioned the comments that often came across as sarcastic and disrespectful, frequently aimed at the mayor, and the frequent interruptions of the attorney and others while they were trying to answer questions.

Mr. González mentioned the Miami-Dade contract as being a good compromise, but did not mention the many points the mayor brought forward that showed the Biscayne Park contract is better than the Miami-Dade contract. Nor did he mention how much Biscayne Park would actually receive of the franchise fees or the length of time it might take to get those monies from the county. What do we do while we are waiting? He also did not mention that, in the last five years, every city whose FPL franchise agreement has come up for renewal has voted in favor of renewing.

In closing, I do agree with Mr. González on one thing: No one should demean someone for disagreeing with them. But that should apply equally to those who voted against signing FPL, not just those who voted for it.

Commissioner Bob Anderson
Village of Biscayne Park

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for those who overdo it, there's a healing "Movement as Therapy" workshop on June 26. Register at www.northmiamiarts.com. Mention the *BT* for a \$5 discount.

From its start as a sailing program to help motivate disabled people, **Shake-A-Leg Miami** (2620 S. Bayshore Dr., 305-858-5550) has become a world-class water sports facility for everyone wanting to play on Biscayne Bay. Now they're offering two great summer camps where kids learn to sail, kayak, snorkel, and explore the natural world. For a full rundown on activities: www.shakealegmiami.org.

In summer, it's said, men perspire but ladies sparkle. Whatever you call it, cleaning it is no sweat at new advertiser **Laundromart** (279 NE 79th St., 786-275-4135). Under new management, the huge laundry (75 washers, 75 dryers) is offering *BT* readers some tempting get-acquainted discounts. See their ad for the coupons. Oh, and there's also cable TV, free wi-fi, and a game room for kids.

Summertime is playtime for children, and that's bound to mean the occasional accident. Luckily, returning advertiser **Kidstown Pediatrics** (4112 NE 1st Ave., 305-576-5437) specializes in all that ails small fry, including preventive vaccines. Dr. Margaret Okonkwo also offers same-day appointments.

Parents will also want to check out the unique children's consignment shop **LoudGirl Exchange**, a new *BT* advertiser "where families meet to exchange clothes, art, and ideas." Owner Theresa Pinto says she's scheduled to open June 15 at 7541 Biscayne Blvd.. Call 305-757-9054 for info on consigning items or exhibiting art.

EEK! Is that a monster on the lawn? No, it's the lawn *growing* like a monster, as happens during rainy season. But returning advertiser **Joe Blair Garden Supply** (320 NE 79th St., 305-757-5554), established in 1928, has the experience to match homeowners or professionals with the right mower for tough jobs.

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To pamper the rest of you, check out the new organic bath and body room at

A&A Village Treasures (9702 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-1612), where June purchases are 10% off for *BT* readers. Among three new product lines is one made in South Dakota's Black Hills, which has the country's cleanest air — a balm to residents of the state with the USA's dirtiest beaches.

Speaking of which, it's Hair of the Dog to the Rescue on June 5 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at **Smiling Pets Animal Clinic and Doggie Bag Café** (7310 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-0844). The drill: You and your dog(s) contribute \$10-\$15 for haircuts. Collected pet and human hair goes to an organization that uses it to clean up the Gulf oil spill (one pound soaks up a quart per minute). Any profits go to local pet rescue groups.

Though **Seraphic Fire** is renowned for its varied repertoire, the all-star choir's annual summer gospel concert is an especially hot ticket. This year's five performances (June 10 in Miami Shores) feature greatest hits from their past gospel blowouts, so visit www.seraphic-fire.org immediately, before tix sell out.

Specializing in both indoor and outdoor tropical flowering and foliage plants (plus self-watering containers), new advertiser **City Plants** (3529 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-1101) has a great grand-opening deal if you mention the *BT*: 20% off your first purchase.

When *Inc.* magazine ranks a firm the fastest-growing full-service real estate company in the USA, it needs no introduction. So we'll just say welcome back to returning advertiser **Majestic Properties** (35 NE 40th St.; 305-677-5055).

Though **The Phone Doctor** (305-759-2000) is a new advertiser, the company has been selling multi-line phone systems since 1983. As for installing and programming, their techies will get your system up and running in less than ten minutes — guaranteed.

Hurricanes sure can crimp all this summer fun, especially since contractors specializing in hurricane-impact windows generally raise prices at the start of storm season. Instead **Coastline Windows and Doors** (954-776-5827, www.coastlinewindowsanddoors.net) is offering *BT* readers 25% off. Yay! Hurricane par-tay!

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



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Big Space, Very Big Ambitions

International artist Enrique Martinez Celaya sets up shop in Wynwood with lofty aims

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

Another chapter is being added to the ever-evolving story of Wynwood as an art center. While some galleries have closed their doors or decamped from the area (recently, Kevin Bruk), others have replaced them. It's hard to keep up with all the comings and goings over the past year. But one of the latest arrivals is worth paying closer attention, as it is a unique concept and could signal another transformative moment for Miami.

Without much fanfare, internationally acclaimed artist Enrique Martinez Celaya opened his studio in a handsome, slate-gray warehouse next door to the Fredric Snitzer Gallery. But to call this massive, 18,000-square-foot space a "studio" is an understatement. It does serve as his work space and houses his art, but it also includes apartments for residencies and internships, a research library, an archive, offices, and his small publishing concern, Whale & Star Press.

Martinez Celaya, whose work can be found in museums and collections all over the world, is in fact on a mission. Not only is this sprawling space the end point of a "life-long search for a place to work meaningfully in and for the world," it also aims to become something of a spiritual and academic center, a combination scientific laboratory and aesthetic monastery. Not your average studio, nor your average ambition.

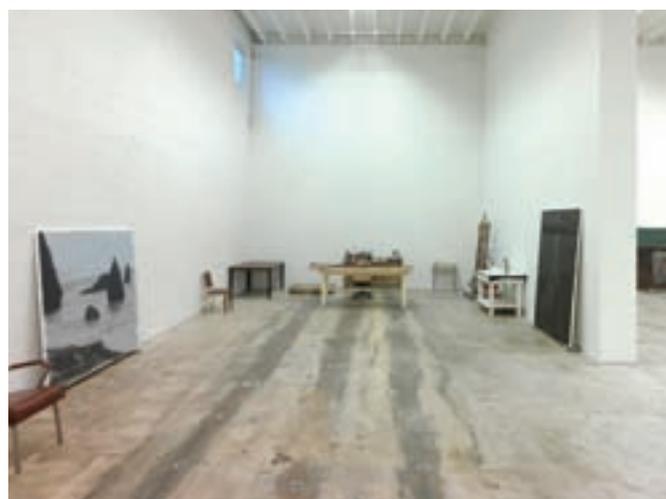
It's why Martinez Celaya's arrival here is noteworthy.

On a recent afternoon, the artist is standing in one of the renovated, high-ceilinged rooms, contemplating four large-scale paintings that at this point have very little color. Almost immediately several things become clear: There is an order and a discipline to the whole enterprise, and a quietness that does indeed evoke a monastery. Then Martinez Celaya explains that the paintings will be part of an installation in the fall, in the world's biggest cathedral, St. John the Divine in New York City. That cements the initial impression.

Whether the mostly figurative works will look anything like they do now, however, is a question mark. Part of Martinez Celaya's process can include

erasing entire entities in his paintings, and then maybe adding them back in at the last minute. His materials have also included tar and his own blood. One thing these paintings won't be, he says, "is made for the white-cube gallery, the space that says 'this is serious art.' It will be for a cathedral, for a very different audience."

Martinez Celaya has always been conscious of how and where his work is exhibited, and it stems from his philosophical views on life and art-making, which come full circle here at the Whale & Star center. A big fan of German philosophy, Martinez Celaya stresses that he wants the space to be a hub of serious intellectual growth, away from the commercialized aspects of the gallery and art-fair worlds, with ap-



The warehouse include a number of work spaces like this one.

prenticeships, lectures, and workshops to promote "an atmosphere in which visitors and participants are encouraged to reflect on art's ethical role free of the expectations of the marketplace and academia."

This unique view has developed over a unique life and career trajectory. Although Cuban-born, the artist had never spent much time in Miami until just a few months ago, when he decided to leave his out-of-the-limelight studio in Delray Beach, and his much more hectic base in Los Angeles. He had a show of five large-scale paintings here at MAM in 2007, but otherwise his work has mostly been shown — and frequently bought — in art centers like



There is plenty of room for Martinez Celaya's large-scale paintings.

California, New York, Berlin, and London.

Raised in Puerto Rico and Spain, Martinez Celaya got his first degree in — hang on — applied physics and electrical engineering, and another one in quantum electronics at the University of California, Berkeley. But while science had always fascinated him, art tugged more, and he would go on to receive an MFA at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

His often somber and melancholy imagery, perhaps reflective of life in exile (his show at MAM was called "Nomad"), would be picked up by museums and galleries across the country and Europe, including the Whitney and Metropolitan museums in New York, and would increase in price by the year. Although best known for his large paintings, he also works with sculpture and installation — one fascinating exhibit was the final stage of his Beethoven cycle, for the Berlin Philharmonic. He would garner awards, including the National Artist Award from the Anderson Ranch Arts Center, and become a visiting presidential professor at the

University of Nebraska.

But the ever-mobile artist wasn't content to let his philosophical views on life express themselves only through paintings and sculptures; he also wanted to write. Hence, the birth of Whale & Star, which has been publishing his writings for a decade.

Now sitting atop a highly successful career at a relatively young age (he was born in 1964), Martinez Celaya wants to branch out yet again.

Back in the new studio, wearing a black "Whale & Star" T-shirt (as do the other employees there), he describes why he ended up in Wynwood, and what's up next. First off, he needed more space. Already the collection of his works in the studio number 240. As part of the mission to interact meaningfully with the world, Martinez Celaya also wanted room to involve the community. Delray Beach was too small for both those needs.

Miami's dominant Latin culture was one draw. Although born and bred in the tropics, he says he's "never really worked within such a strong Latin presence." And while Wynwood is an art center, "it is also very working-class, it's the type of neighborhood I want to reach out to."

So he decided on Miami, a fascinating "city of contrasts, one that is starting

Continued on page 45

Photos courtesy of Whale & Star



Martinez Celaya's studio library reflects his commitment to a fully engaged intellectual life.

Martinez Celaya

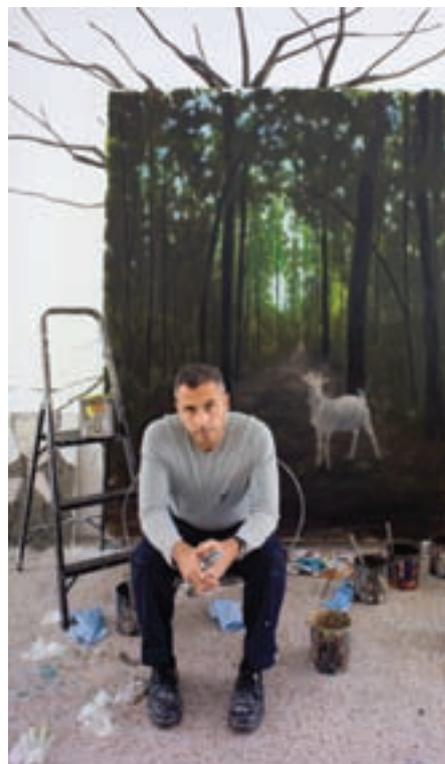
Continued from page 44

to coalesce.” But it’s not there yet. “I think it’s trying too hard to define itself,” he says, “to define a look or a ‘Miami School.’ That’s commodifying things too much. It doesn’t have to do that.”

Rejecting such branding, Martinez Celaya also doesn’t want people to

confuse Whale & Star with previous models, such as Andy Warhol’s factory: “I want this to be a serious research lab,” conducive to critical thinking as well as creating.

He wants to bring in historians and heavy-weight advisors to help facilitate this vision. He wants residencies and selective and rigorous workshops, which



Enrique Martinez Celaya: Cuban-born but a newcomer to Miami.

will always include Miami artists — one-third to be exact.

Exacting precision is a Martinez Celaya trait. It’s what makes him think his private venture will differ from the proliferation of others around town, specifically the private collections. For instance, an upcoming series of 20 lectures will be highly curated, something he doesn’t think he sees elsewhere, and they will be published — cataloging is a big part of the mission.

To advance these goals, residents, interns, and visitors will get stipends, help with travel, and room for free.

Some of the most intriguing entries into the local art scene have been private ventures, which can be frustrating. Public discourse and interaction within public institutions is needed for Miami’s further development.

Nonetheless, Martinez Celaya’s is an interesting and noble experiment, one that can only benefit Miami in the long run — if it works. On a more basic level, we have easier access to viewing the work of an important artist who now calls Miami home, a welcome new chapter in any case.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Art Listings

WYNWOOD GALLERY WALK & DESIGN DISTRICT ART + DESIGN NIGHT SATURDAY, JUNE 12

101/EXHIBIT
101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
Through June 8:
"ZEITGEIST" by Marcus Antonius Jansen

12345 WEST DIXIE STUDIO AND GALLERY
12345 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami
305-895-2956
www.12345westdixie.com
Through June 14:
"Alternate Realities" with Randy Burman, Tom Weinkle, and Steve Radzi

ABBA FINE ART
233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS
2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
Through June 30: "the constructive élan" with various artists

ART FUSION
1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
Through June 23: "Inner Visions" with various artists
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

ART ROUGE
46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-3060
www.lurie-kavachnina.com
Through June 9: "Blue Rose Journey" by Evelyn Valdirio

ARTFORMZ
171 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-572-0040
www.artformz.net
Through August 20: "small wonders (art) salon" with Harumi Abe, Gustavo Acosta, Eric Anfinson, Duane Brandt, Pip Brandt, Leah Brown, Bill Burke, Stephanie Cunningham, Angi Curreri, Rai Escale, Shady Eshghi, Christian Feneck, Luis Garcia Nerey, Paul Glass, John Gurbacs, Bryan Hiveley, Judy King, Jacek Kolasinski, Greg Latch, Leila Leder Kremer, Silvia Lizama, Jules Lusson, John Martini, Lauren McAloon, Luisa Mesa, Venessa Monokian, Hugo Moro, Carol Munder, Sam Perry, Ron Pieniak, Barbara Rivera, David Rohn, Gustavo Román, Sara Rytteke, Beatrice Sagar, Edgar Sanchez Cumbas, John Sandell, Claudia Scalise, Gretchen Schargal, Shari Schemmel, Carolyn Schlam, Nina Surel, Peter Symons, Chu Teppa, Paloma Teppa, Kristin Thiele, Jackie Tufford, Jovan Villalba, Daniel Viñoly, Tom Virgin, and Ramon Williams
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL
180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami
By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com
www.basfisherinvitational.com
June 12 through June 26: "School's Out For Summer!" with the entire 9th grade class of DASH
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

BASHA GALLERY
795 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-891-4624
www.bashagallery.net
Through June 30: "Recession Art" with Bob Arbogast, Claudia Castillo, Allyson Krowitz, Arnaldo Rosello, Jorge Chirinos Sanchez, Kari Snyder, and Pedro Wilson

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY
3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-2700
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com
June 12 through September 3:
Nancy Friedemann and Jill Cannady
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

BORINQUEN ART GALLERY
100 NE 38th St., Miami
305-491-1526
www.borinquenhealth.org
Ongoing:
Romero Britto, Igal Fedida, François Gracia, Clarice Desousa, Andre de Plessel, Allen Benowitz, Rara Kuyu, and Gabriella Liascovitz
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

BREVARDS GALLERY
2320 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-5747
www.brevards.com
Through August 31:
"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
www.calixgustav.com
Through June 29:
"Sticky and Sweet" with Eurydice, Carl Pascuzzi, Diane Arrieta, Jonathan Stein, Alexis Rodriguez-Duarte, and Spunk and the Orange Kittens
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

CAFEINA
297 NW 23rd St., Miami
www.cafeinamiami.com
Through June 5:
"Back in the Club Days" by Kiki Valdes

CAROL JAZZART CONTEMPORARY ART
158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com
Through June 13:
Jen Stark and Rory MacArthur

CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION
541 NW 27th St., Miami
305-571-1415
www.visual.org
Through July 9:
"Darby Bannard: The Miami Years" by Darby Bannard and "Beyond the Daily Life" with Guerra de la Paz and Teresa Diehl

CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY
250 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-292-0411
www.charest-weinberg.com
June 4 through August 21:
"10 Years" by SunTek Chung
"Within an Arrow's Range" by Pedro Barbeito
Reception June 4, 8 to 10 p.m.

CITY LOFT ART
61 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-9006
www.cityloftart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.



Claire Fontaine, *Change, quarters, steel box-cutter blades, solder, and rivets, 2006, at the Museum of Contemporary Art.*

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

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY
2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110
www.castilloart.com
Through June 5: "Gallery Projects" with Adler Guerrier, Aramis Gutierrez, Quisqueya Henriquez, Susan Lee-Chun, Pepe Mar, Glexis Novoa, Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova, Frances Trombly, and Wendy Wischer
June 12 through July 3: "DCG Open" with various artists
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS
2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com
Through July 6: "The Inspired Dream: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art" with various artists
Reception June 12, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY
3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-573-4046
www.diasporavibe.net
June 10 through July 22: "Exodus" with Rosamary Barrios-Hernandez, Chantal James, Ines Amado, Marlene Ramirez-Cancio/Fulana, Monique Diaz, Maria Lino, Aurora Molina, Tulu Bayer, Aleli Egues, Jorge Rojas, and more
Reception June 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
171 NE 38th St., Miami
dv
dimensionsvariable.net
Through June 12: "The funny guy that sticks his hand in the paint can" by Carlos Rigau
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

DINA MITRANI GALLERY
2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248
www.dinamitraniartgallery.com
June 12 through August 28:
"DISPOSABLE: NOSTALGIA FOR THE STILL IMAGE" curated by Orlando Estrada with various artists
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

DORSCH GALLERY
151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com
Through June 5:
"Drying Flowers in a Microwave" by Corin Hewitt and "Haptic" by Jacob Robichaux
June 11 through July 10:
"in direct quote" by David Marsh and "a flawed providence" with various artists
Reception June 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE
51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994
www.doffiftyone.com
Through July 8: "Sesera" by Jose Luis Landet and "Tableaux" by Amalia Caputo

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
June 12 through June 26: "Burning in his own hell" by Eduardo Sarmiento and "Marking" by Vincent Hemphill
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

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

FACHE ARTS
750 NE 124th St., North Miami #2
305-975-6933
www.fachearts.com
Through June 25: "Streets" by Amos Miller

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY
2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through June 26:
"Paper" with various artists

FREEDOM TOWER
600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-237-7700
Through June 5:
"Creatures" by Liliam Cuenca

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

GALERIE SCHUSTER MIAMI
2085 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-266-2445
www.gallerieschuster.com
Through July 3:
"Photography" by Juliane Eirich

GALLERY DIET
174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through July 3:
"The Sunday Painter" by JJ PEET
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

GALLERY I/D
2531 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-778-4568
www.galleryid.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

GIOVANNI ROSSI FINE ART
2628 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
561-251-1375
www.giovanrossifineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

GODONAMERICA
1 NE 40th St. #5, Miami
786-362-5546
www.godonamerica.com
Through June 8:
"BildoReliefos" by Alain Godon

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Art Listings

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HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com
Through July 3: "Soul without face" by Sabrina Montiel-Soto
June 12 through July 3: "These Things from Behind" by Manuela Covini
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
June 10: "Polyblend" with various artists
Located at the Bahia Mar Hotel on 801 Seabreeze Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale
Reception June 10, 5 to 7:30 p.m.

ICON ART IMAGES GALLERY/STUDIO

147 NW 36th St., Miami
305-606-5157, www.cashappeal.com
Call gallery for exhibition information.

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 July 31: Tom Seghi

KUNSTHAUS MIAMI

3312 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-1333
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx
Through June 30:
"Gay Rights are Human Rights" with Oscar Aguirre, Carlos Arias, Nan Goldin, Lothar Müller, Dulce Pinzón, Iván Puig, Leonardo Ramírez, Guillermo Riveros, Rafael Rodríguez, and Wulf Treu

LILIENTHAL ART STUDIOS

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

LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Through June 26:
"How To Read A Book" curated by Michael Wilson with Becky Beasley, Guy Ben-Ner, Lorin Davies, Harrell Fletcher, Jeff Gabel, Anna Gray and Ryan Paulson, Graham Parker, Christina Pettersson, Leanne Shapton, Eve Tremblay and Matt Wiegler
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

LYLE O. REITZEL GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-1333
www.artnet.com/reitzel.html
Through June 10: "Open Mind" by Raul Recio

MIAMI ART SPACE

244 NW 35th St., Miami
305-438-9002
www.miamiartspace.com
June 12 through 'July 7: "20(12): Twenty Twelve" curated by Kiki Valdes with Reinier Gamboa, Kiki Valdes, David Tamargo, George Sanchez-Calderon, David Marsh, Brian Gefen, John Sevigny, Raul Perdomo, Alvaro Iizabe, Eric Torriente, and Oliver Sanchez
Reception June 12, 6 to 11 p.m.



Kris Knight, *Pull*, oil on canvas, 2010, at Spinello Gallery.

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
Call gallery for exhibition information.

MUSEO VAULT

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

OUR HOUSE WEST OF WYNWOOD

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

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400, www.panamericanart.com
June 12 through August 15: "Summer Salon: a selection of works under \$2,500" with various artists
Reception June 12, 6 to 9 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

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

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami
305-441-2005
artnet.com/sammergallery.html
June 12 through August 1:
"Constructive art from the 50s & 60s" with Carmelo Arden Quin, Carlos Cruz Diez, Maria Freire, Bolivar Gaudi, Antonio Llorens, Juan Mele, J. Altabe, Miguel Vidal, Eduardo Jonquiers, Rodolfo Ian Uricchio, Jesus Soto, and Costigliolo
Reception June 12, 6 to 9 p.m.

SETH JASON BEITLEE FINE ARTS

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

SPINELLO GALLERY

155 NE 38th St., Miami
786-271-4223
www.spinellogallery.com
June 12 through July 3:
"A Deadly Nightshade" by Kris Knight
Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

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Art Listings

Continued from page 47

STASH GALLERY

162 NE 50th Terr., Miami
305-992-7652

www.myspace.com/stashgallery

June 5: "Lil' Miss Fortune" by Evo Love

Reception begins at 7 p.m.

Performance begins at 8 p.m.

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Ludic Revolution" by Volf Roitman

Through August 1: "Paul Strand in Mexico" by Paul

Strand

Through September 5: "Tap-Tap: Celebrating the Art



J.J. Peet, *Shift*, acrylic on panel, 2010, at Gallery Diet.

of Haiti" with Jacques Nicolas Bellin, Edouard Duval-Carrié, FanFan, Gerard Fortuné, Jean-Enguerrand Gourgue, Yvens Leger, Lesly, Fritznel Obin, Gerard Paul, Jacques Pierrette, Lionel Simonis, Jean Thermidor, Jacques Valmidor, and Wagler Vital
Through October 3: "Spiritual Healing – Shamans of the Northwest Coast" with Cicero August, Ken McNeil & Stan Bevan, Dempsey Bob, Kevin Cranmer, Edward S. Curtis, John Hagen, Aubrey LaFortune, Don Lelooska, Darren McKenzie, Ed Archie NoiseCat, Bill Reid, Terry Starr, Ray Watkins, and Reg Williams
Ongoing: "The Figure Past and Present: Highlights from the Permanent Collection" with Carlos Alfonzo, José Bedia, Manuel Carbonell, Edouard Duval-Carrié, Thornton Dial, Carel Fabritius, Augustín Fernández, Red Grooms, Luis Jiménez, Jacob Lawrence, Auguste Rodin, Rufino Tamayo, and Purvis Young

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June 26 through October 31:

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June 3 through August 22:

"Economies" by Claire Fontaine

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June 12 through July 30:

"Mystic Visage" curated by Desiree Cronk and "Girls in

4/4" by Katie Murray

Reception June 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

Compiled by Victor Barrenechea

Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to

art@biscaynetimes.com

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Events Calendar

Art, Design, and Latin Music Mix It Up

Remember vinyl? Of course you do. Chances are you have some of those old classics stashed in a closet, protected by plastic covers. Remember the album art? Often it was as memorable as the music. This was an international phenomenon, and was particularly strong in the Spanish-speaking world. A unique show imported from Spain by Miami's Centro Cultural Español and called **"¡Mira Qué Lindas!"** unites music and album art with a display of more than 500 iconic Latin album covers and a series of concerts featuring innovative bands from Spain and Latin America: Xperimento, Clorofila (Nortec), Las Nancys Rubias, Perrozompopo, and more. The multimedia extravaganza, which includes music and design workshops, runs through **Saturday, June 19** at Warehouse (550 NW 29th St.). All events are *free*, but a \$10 donation is recommended. For a full schedule of events, visit www.ccemiami.org or call 305-448-9677.

Summer Shorts Brings You the World in Ten Minutes

The 15th season of **Summer Shorts** at the Arsht Center kicks off on **Thursday, June 3** and runs through **Sunday, June 27** in partnership with City Theatre. The program features two different series of one-act plays, each 5 to 20 minutes long. *Signature Shorts* plays are hilarious and heartfelt, while *Undershorts* productions are provocative and adults-only. Tickets are \$25 but a special offer is available for those who want to see both programs and catch dinner at Prelude by Barton G upstairs. Times vary. Visit www.arshtcenter.org for more information.

At Last! A Reason to Visit Coconut Grove

The village comes alive with culture **Thursday, June 3** through **Sunday, June 6** to celebrate the first black settlers in South Florida at the **34th annual Goombay Festival**. A full schedule of events, including gospel services, a historical pioneer brunch, and the main event — the colorful Goombay Street Festival — will keep

Indian Key EcoAdventure



Summer Shorts



both adults and children entertained. Be sure to check out the Lil' Bahamas "All Things Bahamian" Cultural Village and Straw Market for charming one-of-a-kind crafts and great food. Some events require admission. Visit www.goombayfestivalcoconutgrove.com or call 305-448-9501 for details.

Not Far Offshore, History Awaits

Jump back in time and explore **Indian Key**, a state historic site in the Upper Keys. Occasionally occupied since the 1730s but never permanently settled, the island and its surrounding waters are dripping with history. (Sorry.) This is a guided canoe tour in which you'll also snorkel and roam the uninhabited island terrain. Miami-Dade's Eco-Adventures program advises you to gather at A.D. Barnes Nature Center (3401 SW 72nd Ave.) on the morning of **Wednesday, June 9**. Price is \$85. For maximum enjoyment, remember to bring water, sun protection, a change of clothes along with your bathing suit, a light lunch, and comfortable closed shoes. Snorkel gear provided. Call 305-365-3018 for departure time and to make reservations.

Seraphic Fire's Soulful Side

Sing hallelujah for Seraphic Fire's foot-stomping, hand-clapping **annual summer gospel concert**. This year's program, "It Is Well with My Soul," will reprise many of the choral ensemble's gospel hits, including "Amazing Grace" and "I'll Fly Away." Also this year the group has scheduled one of its five

Soulful Seraphic Fire



Miami River Tour



Thunder Boats



concerts in BT territory, **Thursday, June 10**, at St. Martha Catholic Church in Miami Shores. It is sure to sell out, as are concerts at the other four locations, so get your tickets now. They are \$35 at www.seraphicfire.org.

Let the Thunder Boats Roar!

Here's another tagline for Miami: Birthplace of open-ocean racing and high-performance boat manufacturing. Join thousands of fans from all over the country **Friday, June 11** through **Sunday, June 13** as they converge on Haulover Beach Park (10800 Collins Ave.) for an action-packed, ear-splitting weekend at the third annual **Sunny Isles Beach Offshore Powerboat Challenge**. Other activities include a "Rum Runner Festival" with food, drinks, and entertainment, meet and greet the racers, a rock concert featuring the Evil Monkeys, and the Miss Offshore 2010 contest. Best of all, it's *free*. Event times vary, so visit www.offshoreevents.net or call 305-792-1706 for specifics.

Mangohead Heaven

For foodies summer in Miami means one thing: mangoes, mangoes, and more mangoes — 150 varieties to be exact. **Mango Mania** will overtake the Fruit and Spice Park in the Redland (24801 SW 187th Ave.) on **Saturday, June 12** for a special one-day event. Learn how to grow them, protect them from insects and disease, and prepare them in a zillion ways. And of course you'll be able to taste a wide variety. Then roam the park to see the rest of the summer fruits in bloom. Park admission is \$8 for adults and \$1.50 for children. Call 305-246-5727 or visit www.fruitandspicepark.org.

If Life's a Stage, Here's a Chance for Kids to Live It

Ignite your child's imagination this summer. The PlayGround Theatre (9806 NE 2nd Ave.), Miami Shores's premier performing arts institution, offers two **summer theater camp** sessions.

Session one runs from **Monday, June 14** through **Friday, July 9**. Students will learn acting, music, dance, improvisation, and theater games. The program ends with a bang — a grand finale performance created by the students. Camp hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call the theater for registration and pricing: 305-751-9550.

A Musical Theater Premiere for the Whole Family

It's a busy summer for City Theatre. In addition to *Summer Shorts*, the troupe will unveil a world-premiere musical at the Arsht Center. **Camp Kappawanna** follows Jennifer Jenkins, a quirky 12-year-old, on her adventures at summer camp. Music is by the multi-talented Lisa Loeb with book by Marco Ramirez, a local with a growing national reputation. Catch the show (appropriate for ages seven and up) while it's at the Carnival Studio Theater for a limited run, **Thursday, June 17** through **Sunday, June 27**. Tickets are \$25. For show times and tickets, visit www.arshtcenter.org.

Give Paul George a Megaphone and Put Him on a Boat in the Miami River — Now *That's* Entertainment

Does your father really need another patterned tie? Shake up dad's life this Father's Day with an exciting **tour of the Miami River**. Join HistoryMiami's loquacious historian and master tour guide, Paul George, on **Saturday, June 19** for an exhilarating boat ride up and down the river. You'll see and learn about the famously mysterious Miami Circle, rugged tugboats, rusty Haitian freighters, colorful houseboats, and chilling stories of the river's darker side. Price is \$39 for museum members and \$44 for non-members. Call 305-375-1492 for more information and to make reservations.

Compiled by BT intern Mandy Baca

Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Lame Roommates

600 Block of NE 83rd Street

Our victim "secured" his room and went to visit a friend in Overtown. During this excursion, he received a phone call from a mystery voice telling him: "Just know I have your stuff — come get it if you want it." How nice. . .involuntary layaway. He was then confronted in Overtown by the suspect, who wore red Puma sneakers that belonged to the victim. The victim managed to escape and came home to a ransacked room. Amazingly, the burglary had occurred in the presence of the victim's roommate, who assumed the perpetrator had permission to be in the room, despite the fact that he came in through the window. No arrests have been made and those red Pumas are still on the loose.

Cleanliness Is Next to Lawfulness

200 Block of NE 55th Street

Man arrived home and saw a Boulevard scumbag in his home. Mr. Scumbag

came uninvited and was rummaging through his bedroom. The victim screamed, prompting the criminal to jump out the window. Then the victim bravely gave chase in an effort to retrieve his laptop (the vermin was carrying it), but was easily outrun. Police came to process prints but the exit window was covered with dirt and heavy dust, so prints were unable to be taken. Miamians, clean your windows and ready yourself for your next robbery!

Doubletree Double-cross

1700 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

It amazes Crime Beat when victims continue to push the proverbial envelope by trusting their fellow human beings. If we've learned one thing by now, it is this: People in Miami are manipulative sleaze! (Okay, a slight exaggeration, but you know what we mean.) This victim left his \$11,000 Rolex watch on a nightstand at the Doubletree



Hotel. The cleaning lady came in while he was present and engaged him in a lively conversation. After this discussion, the victim took a shower. The cleaning lady left and so did the watch. There is no video of the incident and there are no witnesses. Victim filed a police report but the watch has yet to be returned. Please, wear your bling at all times.

From Bump and Grind to Bump and Run

200 Block of NE 18th Street

A woman was waiting to be seated at a restaurant when someone behind her began to "bump and grind," rubbing up against her body. The victim later told police that this strange person looked "a bit out of place." We gather the rubbing part cemented this opinion. A minute or two later, the touchy and inappropriately feely private dancer disappeared, and with that so did the victim's wallet, which had been inside her purse. Management told police it was the second consecutive day that this had occurred.

Good for Dogs, Great for Criminals

800 Block of NE 80th Street

This victim's home was secured in its usual manner, with the ADT alarm system activated. (Aren't alarms great for peace of mind?) Hours later, the victim found that her television was missing from her kitchen. The alarm never went off. And

Continued on page 51

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Crime Beat

Continued from page 50

why not? The suspect apparently entered through the dog door at the rear of the house. The puppy portal, it turns out, was not wired into the alarm system. Animal lovers are a kindly lot, but our criminals are brighter. Still, Fido is more important than a lousy television.

Five Guys and the Missing Purse

Shops at Midtown Miami

A woman was savoring a delectable burger at Five Guys Famous Burger and Fries (a great addition to the neighborhood) when she flung her purse over her chair. Within minutes her wallet was gone. At least they didn't take her burger. The good news is that there is video of the entire incident. With any luck, the burger bandit will be brought to justice.

Meeting New People in Miami

5500 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Having difficulty making new friends in a hot-and-cold city, a lonely man

befriended a stranger one sleepy Sunday afternoon. And what do people who make it into Crime Beat normally do when they meet someone new? Right. They invite the new obsession over for the night, usually at one of the finer Boulevard motels. The lonely man felt so comfortable with this damsel that he fell asleep while watching television. Costly mistake. His somnambulism led to the forfeit of his wallet as his new friend disappeared into the humid night.

The New Food Stamps: Three Square Meals Behind Bars

2900 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

A man came into a store and began grabbing several food items and bottled water. When he went to the counter, he advised the store owner that he had no money and asked if the owner would let him leave with his goodies. The owner refused, at which point the suspect grabbed the tip jar and ran southbound down the Boulevard. A police officer doing routine surveillance flagged him down. The man explained his dilemma

to the cop and asked for compassion and understanding. He was promptly arrested and hauled off to jail, where he won't have to steal his food and drink.

Flesh-ripping Barbed Wire No Match for Dogged Boozer

6900 Biscayne Boulevard

An employee arrived at UVA 69 restaurant at 5:30 in the morning and was startled by an intruder. The employee chased the suspect west to NE 4th Court, where the suspect dropped his backpack and eventually escaped. To gain entry to the restaurant, the crook apparently climbed over a barbed-wire fence and pried open the back door. What would motivate someone to take such risks? Liquor. The thief made off with eight bottles of hooch, which have not been recovered. Is it time for an AA meeting?

More Costs Associated with Smoking

6200 Biscayne Boulevard

A man locked his motel room door and ventured out because he had burned

through his last cigarette and needed one desperately. He was gone some 45 minutes (must have smoked up a storm) and came back to find that his room had been burglarized. He had walked to the infamous Mercy Supermarket, which fortunately did not figure in a police item this month but was sure to make an appearance in Crime Beat nonetheless. Victim moved all his items to another room but is still missing his laptop — and is still smoking.

Is It Really This Easy To Make an Arrest?

NE 15th Street and Biscayne Boulevard

A police officer intentionally left a bicycle unattended in an effort to solve the mystery of many reported thefts in the area. Within minutes a man came by, grabbed the bike, and began to pedal away. The officer gave chase and quickly stopped him. The man admitted to taking property that was not his, but stated (like Dorothy): "He just wanted to go home." Haven't fallen into the officer's little trap, he was quickly arrested.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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The Curse of the Ancients

Bad things happen when you mess with the spirits of the dead

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Remember the lesson we learned from the hit 1982 movie *Poltergeist*? Never, never, never build your house on top of an ancient Indian burial site. So where did Miami's mega-developer Jorge Perez build his largest project? Exactly where he shouldn't have: atop an ancient Indian burial site.

The curse of the Miami Circle is unfolding before our eyes. The latest news is that Perez and his partners have been forced to return a majority of the \$1 billion ICON Brickell complex to its lenders. Is it just another casualty of the collapsed housing market? Or could there be deeper, ancestral forces at work?

Today ICON Brickell and its freaky totemic columns sit between two very new parks it created accidentally: the Miami Circle Park and Brickell Park. Both parks nearly disappeared into the vortex of the hyper-development years, but somehow they survived to inflict their curses on future generations.

Brickell Park is a sliver of land on the south side of ICON Brickell that reaches from Brickell Avenue to Biscayne Bay. Following construction, the developers agreed to deed it back to the City of Miami in perpetuity. Perez would never want it back, I assume, because the property is doubly haunted.

The most obvious haunting is by the Brickell family, who built their mansion here during the early years of Miami's



The only visible sign of improvement at Miami Circle Park is a new seawall.

history of exploitation by immigrants from the north. The Brickells loved the property so much they buried themselves here in a granite mausoleum with Ionic columns. The inside of the mausoleum, open and eerily empty, holds berths for six.

In 1946 daughter Maude Brickell gave up her ghost, so to speak, and moved the parents to Woodlawn North Park Cemetery. In 1989 the original Brickell mausoleum was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Did somebody misplace its marker? The park's only signage at the Brickell Avenue entrance has a vague reference to the Brickell family. Something this

historic, which has survived the demolition of nearly everything else around it, deserves an explanation.

At least these graves are empty. The greatest mystery of Brickell Park are its unmarked graves. "I believe 13 individuals were removed and all of those were reinterred," says Bob Carr, executive di-

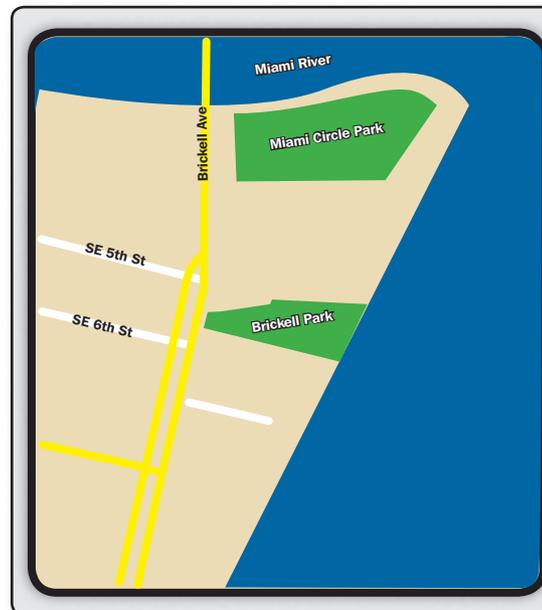
Archaeologist Carr says the use of the area as a cemetery has been known for at least a decade. "It is considered sacred ground by some," he says.

Carr refers to Brickell Point as "a huge complex," noting that historically it was not divided into parcels of real estate as it is today. Certainly its mysterious past is much bigger than the towering condos that cover most of the property now. In addition to ancient human remains, the site has revealed various tools, a midden or "trash mound" of shells used by Indians, and skeletons of a loggerhead turtle, a bottlenose dolphin, and a requiem shark buried there deliberately.

The best modern feature of both parks on Brickell Point are views of the waterfront, and eventually a walking path here will be incorporated into the



Archaeologist Bob Carr (left) at the Miami Circle site in 1999.



MIAMI CIRCLE PARK & BRICKELL PARK

Park Rating



Miami Circle Park: 401 Brickell Ave.
Brickell Park: 501 Brickell Ave., Miami
Miami Circle Park (undeveloped): 305-375-1492
Brickell Park: 305-416-1320

Hours: Sunrise to sunset
Picnic tables: Yes
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Tennis courts: No
Athletic fields: No

Night lighting: Yes
Swimming pool: No
Playground: No
Special features: Brickell mausoleum, disturbed Indian spirits

rector of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy and the man who first documented the Miami Circle site. And where were they buried for a second time? "They were reinterred in the park," says Carr.

The unmarked human remains relocated somewhere within Brickell Park are most likely Tequesta Indians, the group that inhabited Brickell Point some 2000 years ago.

City of Miami's plans to create an extended Bay Walk and River Walk. Miami Circle Park will be a centerpiece.

Currently the undeveloped Miami Circle Park is accessible, although construction expected to begin this summer may soon restrict access. For its own protection, the actual circle has been covered with soil (reinterred, so to speak), but bumps in the grass make it easy enough to locate in the park's center.

Uncovered in 1998 prior to construction of an earlier condo project, the Miami Circle property was purchased in 1999 by the State of Florida for \$27 million, using our tax dollars, of course. Its status remained unclear until 2008,

Continued on page 53

Curse

Continued from page 52

when the state subleased the property for 44 years to the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, which recently decided to change its name to HistoryMiami. (Pause and reflect.) In January of 2009, the site became Florida's 41st National Historic Landmark.

Unfortunately a visitor who stumbles upon the site today would learn next to nothing. Absolutely nothing is marked, not even the circle itself, and the only sentence about the Miami Circle is on a small billboard above the Brickell Bridge. Pity.

In August 2009, the ground-breaking for Miami Circle Park took place with great fanfare and a range of dignitaries, including Florida's Secretary of State, Kurt Browning, and then-Miami Mayor Manny Diaz. A two-phase architectural plan was unveiled, and phase one was scheduled for completion by the spring of 2010. But it looks like nothing has happened since then. As of May 2010, the only part of the park that appeared finished was a portion of the seawall that



Somewhere in Brickell Park the remains of 13 ancients have been reburied.

collapsed in 2007.

According to George Zamanillo, a vice president of HistoryMiami and coordinator of the Miami Circle Park project, the cost of phase one has risen from initial estimates of \$750,000 to \$990,000. But he promises that those funds are fully available.

Zamanillo explains the delays in construction as a series of steps to arrange permits, equipment, and contracts. Phase one will offer access by car, but parking space is still being negotiated with the City of Miami, which owns a shady



How it might look: An architectural rendering of the proposed Miami Circle Park.

cavern underneath the bridge that would offer ample parking. Donate it already!

Phase one will create a walkway but will not expose the ancient circle for public viewing. The limestone would quickly start flaking if not protected from the elements, says Zamanillo, and finding a way to showcase it properly will require many more years and much more funding.

Despite the park's bland appearance, it comes to life once a week. On Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m., Catherine Hummingbird-Ramirez conducts

a ritual involving chanting and pungent smoke. Her stage, on a circle constructed near the bridge, is decorated with bright plastic flowers. Beside it flies a very, very tattered American flag.

At the August groundbreaking, Hummingbird-Ramirez opened the ceremony with these words: "The ancestors are here."

They are indeed. They can be moved, and re-moved, but the ancestors don't seem to be letting go.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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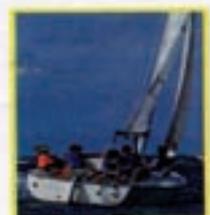


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Daddy Dearest

How to be a successful father in ten easy steps

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

Mommy blogs abound. But what are daddies reading to boost and validate their parenthood? How do they find communities that inform approaches to their role? Mommy manuals abound. They range from prenatal to postpartum. Daddydom relies almost solely on *The Expectant Father*. Locally the parenting website MomsMiami hosts a roster of mommy bloggers — and one dad.

My own dad probably never even thought of reading anything related to parenting unless it was staring back at him between other articles in the pages of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Journal of Accountancy*. But our generation is different, with couples getting pregnant instead of just moms, and diaper bags designed for dads.

Salvation is found in the blogosphere, which is rich with daddy blogs. Many are accessible through the daddy blog portal dad-blogs.com. It is here that dad's voice is heard, sharing the trials of fatherhood, advice, and parenting hypotheses. From single dads to stay-at-home-dads (SAHDs) to work-at-home-dads to regular co-parenting dads — a cacophony of fatherly voices resonates online.

I asked some of my daddy friends about what they read. I learned about straightforward, instruction-manual online resources and books. A lot of the men around me were avid readers during pregnancy and the toddler years, drinking in the popular *What To Expect...* books and the like. Some were manual wonks. Some were curious. Some needed to look interested. They also mused that



they fizzled out on the reading as their babies grew, more confident perhaps from all the earlier reading, they preferred to trust their instincts.

Babycenter.com, an online resource for baby gear, also serves as an advice portal. One dad I spoke to loves receiving monthly e-mails from the site with developmental information tailored to his toddler's age. He also relies on the website baby411.com, which he refers to as “the *Consumer Reports* of baby products.”

He appreciates both the abundant safety information and honest appraisals such as: “You don't need to buy the \$700 stroller — there really is a \$300 one that does all the same stuff.” He arrived at this website through its originating book, *Baby Bargains*. Experienced parents, he says, directed him to buy the book “at conception.” In addition to Baby411 and the *Baby Bargains* book, there are also *Toddler 411* and *Toddler Bargains* books.

This dad also shared that he reads whatever is on the Internet — and laughs

that everyone on the Internet “becomes an expert.” He enjoys sharing this “expert advice” himself as he tweets or posts on Facebook parenting stuff he thinks is cool and wants to share with his fellow parent followers and friends.

Other reading resources approved of by dads are the free local parenting monthlies, *South Florida Parenting* and *Miami Family*.

My own partner, who occasionally reads and responds on MomsMiami, is voluntarily inundated with parent reading from About.com. He receives developmental e-mails from ages our kids have moved out of all the way up to teens, uncharted territory for us by about six years still!

This is not about being compulsively prepared, though as an educator he feels it helps keep him informed for the range of age populations he encounters in his work each week. But here is the other cool thing about my partner: As an educator he writes a weekly parenting piece himself. In his field of Jewish education, he provides parents a contemporary and

progressive take on the weekly Torah portion as a means of inspiring and validating their parenting. Luckily for everyone, this comes from a very real place as he is a parent himself.

In honor of Father's Day, celebrated on June 20, and my appreciation for my life partner and co-parent, here is one of his pieces. Inspired by the Torah episode in which Jacob is favored by mom and Esau's birthright is swiped, the theme is truly universal:

“In Toldot (literally, generations) tales of manipulation, sleight of hand, and parental favoritism both repulse and remind us that families still must contend with similar issues today. ... Why can't our early prototypical family simply ‘love each child and share everything equally?’ Perhaps the Torah is teaching us about how elusive fairness and objectivity can be.

“As parents and educators we are challenged by two forces. In one sense we seek to model fairness and objectivity. We want our children to learn that by playing fair, being rewarded for following rules, and by remaining open-minded there is much to be gained. At the same time we know that both parenting and education must be differentiated.

“All children do not respond to the same systems, modalities, or even content. Some will love language arts more than the sciences. Some will be at their best with sweat on their brow. Some need minimal oversight while others need that helping hand with regularity. The notion of inheritance has a long history, and it begins with Abraham's legacy. The question posed to us is: What qualities do we want our children to inherit?”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Bromeliads: Easy, Lovely, and Risky

Risky? Yes, because they're attractive to both humans and mosquitoes

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Bromeliads have always been a major part of my plant collections. This is such a diverse, hardy group of plants and I think a welcome addition to any kind of garden or landscape. There are bromeliads with edible fruit like the pineapple, some that are quite tiny and make great epiphytes to grow upon the trunks of your palms, and other large species that can be wonderful accent plants in a landscape setting.

One drawback to a bromeliad collection is the fact that many species collect water in the center cup or the axils of the leaves. These diminutive bodies of water make fine breeding sites for mosquitoes. Some species of these insects are native and co-evolved with our native bromeliads. Other types of mosquitoes sometimes found breeding in these plants are exotic species that have naturalized in our state. A few are known as serious disease vectors.

Recently I published a paper in the trade journal of the American Mosquito Control Association on how, over the past four years, I've been able to control mosquitoes at Jungle Island without spraying. This project came about because of the large collection of bromeliads at the park and the need to stop spraying for mosquitoes.

If we could end mosquito spraying, then the landscape at the park would be completely sustainable and maintained without pesticides. This would enable beneficial insect populations to become established at the park. Ironically, after

sampling for four years on a regular basis and identifying the species that breed there, I found that the bromeliad collection only contributes a very small percentage of the mosquitoes that breed there. Storm drains and small containers of water — whether tree holes or old car tires lying on the ground — are the major source of our bad mosquitoes, the aggressive biters and disease-carriers.

Pesticides should only be used as a final option for the control of insects in your home — from mosquitoes to roaches. Remember, when you use pesticides, you are only killing the vulnerable insects. Those that survive will pass along their resistance to their offspring, which is why new pesticides are constantly being introduced to the market.

Here is the secret to 100-percent-effective mosquito control without chemicals: sanitation. That's right. Clean up your yard! I've done surveys in a number of areas around Miami and this has quite often been the case. I'm always surprised at the mosquitoes I find in some of the "better" neighborhoods. In my surveys, I've found some of the worst and most aggressive species successfully breeding in small pockets of water that



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Canistrum aurantiacum is an easy bromeliad to grow that will flower several times a year in a large bed.

collected on plastic tarps used to cover barbecue grills, inside the saucers underneath potted plants outside, in clogged up rain gutters, and in a wide range of other unnoticed locations. It only takes a couple of ounces of water to successfully breed mosquitoes.

Did you know that dog heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes? How much money do you spend on heartworm medicine for your pets? There are very limited options for the control of this parasite, which can develop resistance to the chemicals used in treatment. Ask your veterinarian. Better yet, ask your dog what he thinks.

While on the topic of valuable animals, in 2009 there were 75 horse cases

of eastern equine encephalitis and seven horse cases of West Nile virus reported in Florida. These are all diseases transmitted by mosquitoes that can breed in containers in our yards. There were also three human cases of West Nile virus reported in Florida, only one of which was contracted out of state.

Ever hear of "breakbone fever," better know as dengue fever? This is another mosquito-borne disease, and it can cause serious illness, including internal bleeding. We used to have outbreaks in the United States, but improved mosquito control has kept it in check for many years. Well, that changed last summer in Key West, when 22 cases were reported, mostly in residents of the Old Town area — this more than 70 years after the last major epidemic in Florida.

From mid-October 2009 to April of this year, no new cases were reported. Then one positive individual was identified who had not recently traveled outside the United States, indicating that it's very likely this person contracted the dengue virus locally. This is not a good sign. We are the cause of these diseases, a result of our poor housekeeping.

We can control mosquitoes that breed in our bromeliads with certain types of bacteria or insect growth regulators that are nontoxic to mammals and birds. We can also simply wash out the water that collects in the leaf axils once a week to remove the mosquito larvae. This will certainly help control the spread of disease. But until we get serious about picking up after ourselves, we may be in for some nasty surprises.

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Bioblitz Comes to Biscayne Bay

The goal: Identify as many plants and animals as possible in 48 hours

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

People love to count things. Some people count calories, some count birds, and some use the Census to count people. A different type of inventory took place recently in Biscayne National Park, the closest national park to Miami. During a 24-hour period from April 30 to May 1, thousands of people, including me, fanned out across the park to find as many species as possible.

Called a "bioblitz," this intensive survey captures a snapshot of what is currently living within a given area. National Geographic, which sponsored the bioblitz in Biscayne National Park, called it the first marine-based bioblitz. With boundaries that stretch from offshore of Key Biscayne in the north to Key Largo in the south, Biscayne National Park is mostly underwater in Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Homo sapiens were identified as one of more than 800 species during the 24-hour bioblitz, but there were not many other mammals on the list. A preliminary list posted on the website of the National Park Service did not include the dolphin or manatee, although manatees are known to congregate in the effluent around Turkey Point's nuclear power plant, located just south of the park's Dante Fascell Visitor Center.

The total number of species is expected to rise significantly as scientists review photographs, DNA samples, and other evidence. One major discovery was a new phylum of Tardigrades, commonly called "water bears." These bizarre, microscopic creatures that look like pudgy caterpillars can live almost anywhere and under almost

any condition — including in Miami.

Also identified were 22 species of ants that had not previously been documented in the park. On the animal side, the most common creatures were insects, fish, corals, and birds. Rarely seen birds identified on this day included the mangrove cuckoo, bay-breasted warbler, and nesting roseate spoonbills.

On the plant side, 11 lichen were documented here for the first time, and several potential "champion trees," known to have survived Hurricane Andrew, were seen on Totten Key. A champion tree is the largest of its kind in the U.S.

This event attracted major naturalists from across the country, but it also drew at least 1300 school children from Miami-Dade County. These children and other volunteers added breadth to the count, and it was a major educational experience for them. One group of students from South Dade Senior High School became nature photographers for the day with help from National Geographic.

Presentations took place during both days, and a Biodiversity Festival helped to conclude the event in fitting style. This year has been proclaimed the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations.

I signed up for a free snorkel trip, and about 25 people loaded onto the *Amoray Diver* at 4:30 p.m. Among us were a handful of experts in geology, coral, and other marine organisms. With somewhat windy weather, we headed out of Convoy Point at the park's headquarters toward the sheltered side of Elliott



Photo by Thomas M. Strom

For many students, the bioblitz was a major educational experience.

Key, found University Dock, and hopped into shallow water near the shoreline.

When the water is no more than a few feet deep, you stop looking for sizeable fish and start gazing into the crevices of plants, sponges, and corals. We had an exciting moment when one of our scientists found a seahorse and invited the snorkeling crowd to see it. The green critter of about three inches was amazing, to say the least. Its tail was curled around a thin black branch, and it remained still as the giants stared at it.

I found another fish that curled around my fingers, but it could not be identified accurately. Looking like a miniature eel, the slender, copper-colored creature seemed to be a baby pipefish. Later the fish-identification expert on board said that juvenile pipefish are extremely difficult to identify at the species level, but luckily we got a photo, which could be used later for a positive ID.

At many points the snorkelers were crawling in the sand instead of floating, because the water was so shallow. With the low tide, we could not approach the mangrove roots, where fish fry are known to gather.

After snorkeling, people on the boat excitedly swapped stories about seeing giant sea slugs and upside-down jellyfish. Deeply-marked books for identifying fish and invertebrates in these waters were passed around, and snorkelers swapped stories about the little stone crab that got away.

Later that evening, night divers were excited to see black, gag, and red groupers on the reef. Park scientists were relieved that no one saw the invasive and poisonous lionfish, a Pacific fish that has become established in the Atlantic, most likely owing to pet owners flushing unwanted fish into the sea.

Exotic and invasive trees remain a huge problem within the park, just as they are a gigantic problem within nearby Everglades National Park. Efforts to control them continue in both parks.

The plight of endangered species was featured at the park's entrance. An installation of 360 colorful flags, coordinated by local eco-artist Xavier Cortada, showed an endangered species for the earth's 360 degrees of longitude.

Biscayne National Park is home to several endangered species, including the West Indian manatee and the American crocodile. Underwater, elkhorn coral and staghorn coral struggle to survive.

Surely there are thousands upon thousands of smaller species within the park that were not identified during the bioblitz, but that was not the point. The point was that thousands of people visited the park with the intention of discovering everything and taking nothing.

Everyone should try a bioblitz. How many flora and fauna can you find in one day? Start counting and see where it takes you.

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After the Storm — Eat, Drink, and Be Sweaty

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

By Bill Citara
BTContributor

It's that time of year again, and if the various meteorologists, forecasters, soothsayers, fortune tellers, and readers of chicken entrails are right, the 2010 H-word season is going to be a bitch. Which is all the more reason to lay in a serious stock of liquid refreshment.

Yeah, yeah, I know. A gallon of water per person per day. But when the power is out and the food in your fridge smells like a month-old salmon, and the constant blating of generators is like a drill press to the cranium, see how much relief you'll get from a damn glass of water. A glass (or several) of crisp, chilled Sauvignon Blanc or light, fruity Pinot Noir? Well, that's something else entirely.

It's the little things — like something good to eat and drink — that can make a big difference when the conveniences of day-to-day life suddenly go bye-bye. So I scribbled out a list of what wines I'd like to drink and what I might cobble together from my nonperishable emergency food supplies that would actually resemble a meal. Call it "wine-food pairing for the hurricane-impaired."

Two caveats. One, I'm assuming you have a supply of nonperishable foods and a decently stocked pantry. And, two, that you have some kind of heat source not dependent on electricity, whether a charcoal or propane grill, campfire stove, or one of these butane canister burners you can get at Amazon for \$40. If you don't, well, there's always peanut butter and a spoon.

Let's start off with whites. On the lighter side, we have the **2008 Geyser**

Peak Sauvignon Blanc.

Substitute alcohol for sugar and this wine could be adult lemonade; it's a bracingly tart, crisp number that gives a little green apple and melon at first sip and then explodes with a burst of lemon. I'd pair it with slightly altered Niçoise salad, a bag of pre-washed greens with canned tuna, tomatoes, onion, and cucumber, bulked up with canned white beans and jarred artichoke hearts in a lemon-herb vinaigrette.

Antinori's 2008

Orvieto Classico Campogrande adds some richness and fruitiness to the Geyser Peak's lemony acidity, with flavors of apple and orange and tropical fruit in a fuller-bodied but still well-balanced wine that can play well with a variety of foods. Here again, canned tuna can be your best friend. Mix it with a bit of Minute Rice, then add pine nuts, raisins, capers, chopped green onion, and olives, and use it to stuff jarred Spanish piquillo peppers.

Fuller bodied still is the **Monticello Verdemar 2008 Albariño**. You don't often find an Albariño for \$12, and this one doesn't have the richness and complexity of its pricier brethren. Still, after a bit of a funky open, it shows off green apple, grapefruit, and mineral flavors, with hints of the floral character that makes Albariño so engaging. With this I'd make an imitation paella, using Minute Rice cooked with canned chicken stock, tomatoes, jarred



red peppers, saffron, and a small dice of onion and zucchini. Stir in slices of Spanish chorizo (cured, not fresh like Mexican chorizo) and maybe some canned shrimp and it's done.

Moving on to reds, there's the **Angeline 2008 California Pinot Noir**. Don't give up on this one if it opens with a blast of sweaty gym socks. That disappears within seconds and leaves you with a nose of candy strawberry and raspberry fruit with the faintest touch of Burgundian funk. Not a lot of complexity but very drinkable, perhaps with a veggie panini that spreads a hoagie roll with a pesto made from finely chopped jarred artichokes, parsley, pine nuts, and canned Parmesan, then fills it with grilled or sautéed eggplant, zucchini, red pepper, and red onion.

The intensely spicy, berryish flavors of the **2008 Tapeña Garnacha** can

hold their own against equally spicy food, especially when you consider the wine's tangy cherry fruit and dusky-earthy undercurrents. A platter of impromptu nachos would be just the ticket, thick-cut chips layered with canned black beans, jarred salsa, fresh guacamole, bagged chicken, and goopy nacho cheese sauce.

Zinfandel and pizza are a classic combination, so the **2007 Cline California Zinfandel** and a throw-together pizza should make a perfect couple. This is a dark, dusky, powerful Zin, with bold black cherry fruit, plenty of pepper and spice, a good shot of toast, and black olive nuances. Get a Boboli crust and slather it with jarred tomato sauce, pepperoni, mushrooms, and olives and top with slices of American cheese. Toss it on the grill to crisp the crust and melt the cheese — and thumb your nose at Mom Nature.

The Biscayne Commons Publix (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171) is the source for the Antinori Orvieto and Monticello Albariño, at \$9.99 and \$12.19, respectively. The Cline Zinfandel (\$9.99) and Geyser Peak Sauvignon Blanc (\$9.49) can be found at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525), while Tapeña's Garnacha sells for \$10.99 and Angeline's Pinot Noir for \$11.99 at the North Miami Beach Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270).

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Mo' Pets, Mo' Problems

Ten tips for managing your menagerie

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

When I was growing up, most people I knew had a single dog, and possibly a cat. But as the importance of pets in our lives grows, so does the number of them we live with. After all, they say pet people are healthier, and owning a pet can lower your blood pressure. Imagine how healthy and stress-free we would be with two or more animals, right?

Those of us living with more than one animal know that isn't always the case. In fact many pet owners wind up giving up or abandoning one or more of their pets when the going gets "ruff." Many problems that arise in multi-pet households can be avoided with a little common sense. Whether you're thinking of adding to your family or your house already resembles *Wild Kingdom*, being proactive and having realistic expectations can help you keep the peace.

Socialize your dog when young. Animals don't necessarily have to fight "like cats and dogs." Early exposure to different animals — other dogs, cats, birds — will help ensure future household harmony. If you have a puppy, invite friends' pets over often to get your animal accustomed to sharing space.

Get one dog under control before adding a second. As a dog trainer, I generally cringe at the thought of someone trying to raise two puppies at once. Two dogs teething, chewing, digging, needing potty training, socializing, and everything else! What a nightmare!

Most people say they got the second

dog to befriend the first dog, or "hope" it will keep the first dog busy. But just like children, each dog should have its own quality time with you to bond and be trained. Best to get one dog trained and obeying you before adding more animals to the family.

Would your current pet really want another furry family member? As social as domestic pets may be, many are perfectly content being on their own, especially if they weren't well socialized or don't like to share the spotlight. Special thought should also be given to age and type of animal you are thinking of adding. With few exceptions, most geriatric animals are miserable having an obnoxious pup jumping all over them,

biting their ears, and wanting to play all day. Dogs of the same sex have a higher tendency to fight than mixed households. Also some people have "rescue syndrome" and can't say no to an animal in need of a home. As kind as it is to rescue, you shouldn't accept just any animal into your current pack.

Who is the new pet for? If the answer is anyone other than *you* (not your child or your cat), proceed with caution. Animals are wonderful to own but they are time-consuming, expensive, and some animals like birds can live upward of 40 years! Make sure you're ready to take responsibility for another life.

Are you willing to give the new pet sufficient time to adjust? How long?

Things don't always go smoothly; you'll need to give your pets time to develop a relationship. Sometimes that *never* happens and they cannot be together unsupervised. Would you be willing to hire a trainer and possibly use strict management for the duration of the animals' lives? A friend of mine needs to keep her male dog separated from her husband's male dog at all times. In that situation, however, the dogs still have a high quality of life as the owners are dedicated, knowledgeable, and do a lot of activities with them separately.

Spaying and neutering dogs also helps lessen tension, so make sure to "de-sex" all parties as soon as possible. Daily exercise will help as well.

Keep the first pet's schedule relatively intact. His life should not change overnight with the arrival of the newcomer. Keep his walks with you the same, let him sleep in his same spot, feed him first, and so on. Integrate the new animal slowly with short, fun meetings.

Do not throw a new pet in the face of the first one. A small pet such as a kitten or bunny that can be picked up does not want to be held in front of the jaws of a larger animal. It's better to keep a dog on a leash and under your control and let the other animal approach when ready. Make sure an animal like a cat has an escape route if they are feeling threatened. Supervise, supervise, and supervise. Have animals leashed or be sure you have them under physical control just in case.

Keep initial meetings short and sweet. Use lots of positive reinforcement

Continued on page 59



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Problems

Continued from page 58

to show your dog that when the new animal is around, great things happen for him! Feed him lots of high-value treats when the new animal is in view, and have the treats go away when the newcomer is not in sight. With lots of quick, pleasant meetings, your pet will be happy to see the new animal because it means wonderful things for him!

If you are dealing with dogs, train

them separately as well as together. Practice a lot of impulse-control cues such as “leave it,” “drop it,” and “stay.” Impulse-control exercises are handy in many ways, from stopping a dog that chases cats (“Leave it!”) to having them wait calmly while you fix them dinner. Do not let bad behavior become rehearsed and hope it will go away on its own.

As a general rule, the more animals you have, the better trained they need to be. You owe it to your animals to give them every opportunity to succeed, and

training them how to behave is a necessary part of the equation.

Your pets don’t need to do everything together. Their names are Ted and Alice, not TedandAlice — the hybrid that is always asked to sit at the same time. Get over your guilt that you need to pet both, give a treat to both, and do everything else at the same time. They are separate beings.

With more animals in the house, there is certainly more to love and lots of fun times ahead. Common sense,

careful planning, and realistic expectations will allow you to enjoy your multi-pet household.

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.

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What is one thing you'd like to change about Miami?

Compiled by Cathi Marro – BT Contributor



Adam Kahn
*Unemployed
Morningside*

Better driving! I've lived in different states, and it seems when I moved here that people drive crazy — running red lights, not using blinkers, cutting me off, constantly on cell phones and not paying attention. Miami has the highest insurance rates in Florida because of all the accidents and uninsured drivers. And this area of Biscayne Boulevard has the highest rate in Miami.



Lisa Mozloom
*Mom/Volunteer
Belle Meade*

I would want to change peoples' hearts in the way they see disparity and who has money and who doesn't. I wish people would invest time in others who have less to understand how relationships with other people can change their lives and transform a community. Then they can stop complaining about their own problems.



Leo Leonard
*Car Wash Owner
MiMo*

Juvenile delinquents should clean up Biscayne Boulevard and the beaches. There's too much trash on the streets! The system plays with these kids too much. They are constantly in and out of jail. We should give them something to do and then they may stop going in and out of jail. This *needs* to happen!



William Serrano
*Business Owner
Brickell*

The police. They are arrogant and overpowering of the citizens. They prey on regular citizens instead of looking for criminals. This one guy got a ticket and the cop said, as he handed it to him: "Thank you for buying the City of Miami." Also I was once fondled by a female cop. Another cop friend of mine knew her and said that she's just a bitch!



Sybil Dratt
*Retired Art Teacher
North Miami*

It bothers me to make a phone call and have to press 1 to speak in English. It's like being in a foreign country, and you have to speak Spanish in order to conduct any type of business. I do speak Spanish, but I think people should speak English in this country. When my ancestors came here, they learned English and passed it on to their children.



David Moran
*Pastor
Miami*

I would like to change the way people view diversity. We should view it as an asset. We need to shave off and refine the egocentric perspective that we all have. We need to not only see but also value and appreciate what others bring from across the board. We need each other to be whole and complete.

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Dining Guide

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 228.

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

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 pasteles filled with shrimp and creamy catupiry cheese, beautifully seasoned bolinho de bacalau (fried salt cod dumplings), and aipim frito (house-special yuca fries, the best in town). \$\$\$

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. \$\$

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

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Sushi Maki

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-415-9779

Fans of the popular parent Sushi Maki in the Gables will find many familiar favorites on this Brickell branch's menu. But the must-haves are some inventive new dishes introduced to honor the eatery's tenth anniversary – and Miami multiculturalism: "sushi tacos" (fried gyoza skins with fusion fillings like raw salmon, miso, chili-garlic sauce, and sour cream), three tasty flash-marinated Asian/Latin tiraditos; addictive rock shrimp tempura with creamy/spicy dip. Also irresistible: four festive new sake cocktails. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

MIAMI

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Limón y Sabor

3045 Biscayne Blvd., 786-431-5739

In this dramatically renovated space, the room is now light and open, and the food is authentic Peruvian, with seafood a specialty. Portions are huge, prices low, quality high. Especially good are their versions of pescado a lo macho (fish fillet topped with mixed seafood in a creamy, zesty sauce); jalea (breaded and deep-fried fish, mixed seafood, and yuca, topped with onion/pepper/lime salsa), and yuca in hot yet fruity rocoto chili cream sauce. \$\$

NORTH BEACH

Lemon Twist

908 71st St., 305-865-6465

In warm weather, we like to hit this French bistro for either a cornichon-garnished charcuterie platter (including mouthwatering Rosette de Lyons salami, hard to find in Miami) or the frisée salad with lardons and poached egg. Add iles flottantes (merengue islands on a crème anglaise pond) and a glass of wine, et voilà! A perfect Parisian light supper. But there's honest heartier fare, too, like the steak/frites (entrecote with choice of sauce, housemade fries, and a salad), and rich fig tarts. \$\$\$

Cvi.che 105

105 NE 3rd Ave.
305-577-3454

Fusion food – a modern invention? Not in Peru, where native and Euro-Asian influences have mixed for more than a century. But chef Juan Chipoco gives the ceviches and tiraditos served at this hot spot his own unique spin. Specialties include flash-marinated raw seafood creations, such as *tiradito a la crema de rocoto* (sliced fish in citrus-spiked chili/cream sauce). But traditional fusion dishes like Chinese-Peruvian Chaufa fried rice (packed with jumbo shrimp, mussels, and calamari) are also fun, as well as surprisingly affordable. \$\$

MIAMI SHORES

Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Blvd.
305-795-2363

Formerly members-only, the restaurant/lounge facilities of this classy 1939 club are now open to the public – always, lunch and dinner. Not surprisingly, ambiance is retro and relaxed, with golf course views from both bar and indoor/outdoor dining room. The surprise is the food – some classic (steaks, club sandwiches) but other dishes quite contemporary: an Asian ahi tuna tower; a lavish candied-walnut, poached-pear, grilled chicken salad; and fresh pasta specials. Prices are phenomenal, with dinner entrées \$9 to \$17; drinks average \$3 to \$4. There's live jazz on Thursday and Friday nights, too. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Yes Pasta!

14871 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006

The space, formerly a Pasha's, isn't posh. But minimalism fits a partially self-service Italian eatery centering on a DIY concept: mix-and-match pastas. Diners choose one of seven pasta types, then one of 15 sauces, ranging from simple tomato/basil to funghi e tartufi (wild mushrooms in truffle sauce), decadent Alfredo, creamy yet clean-tasting Flaminia (puréed yellow peppers with black pepper), and more. Also available are panini (on excellent bread), salads, soups, imported salumi or cheese platters, desserts, and several wines. \$\$

AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Acquolina

124 S. Federal Hwy.
954-454-2410

Attention, nostalgic NYC and NJ émigrés. Remember driving downshore for fabulous Italian-American seafood dinners? This friendly yet elegant eatery's garlicky clam chowder, baked clams oreganata, and pasta with clam sauce – all featuring fresh Long Island littlenecks or top necks – bring back those good times. Also don't miss signature spiedini (savory mozzarella/anchovy/porcini sandwiches, a grilled cheese on steroids) or an inventive strawberry salad. All dishes come in two sizes: "half" (meaning large) and "family style" (gargantuan). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 *methode Champenoise* brew). But for those favoring solid snacks, tasty global small-ish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with homemade cilantro Juneo; 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. \$\$

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Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 61

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, 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 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 June also great, but with pizzas like the cream/mushroom-topped Bianca beckoning, we'll never know. \$-\$\$\$

Eos

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

Fratelli Milano

213 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-2300
Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night. That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to resist panini, served on focaccia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

1744 SW 3rd Ave., 305-858-0608
This festively decorated indoor/outdoor bistro packs a lot of party spirit into a small space, a large variety of food onto its menu. To the familiar Latin American/Italian equation, the owners add a touch of Cal-Mex (like Tex-Mex but more health conscious). Menu offerings range from designer pizzas and pastas to custardy tamales, but the bistro's

especially known for imaginative meal-size salads, like one featuring mandarin oranges, avocado, apple, blue cheese, raisins, candied pecans, and chicken on a mesclun bed. \$\$\$

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

398 NW N. River Dr., 305-375-0765
Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market. Best preparations are the simplest. When stone crabs are in season, Garcia's claws are as good as Joe's but considerably cheaper. The local fish sandwich is most popular – grouper, yellowtail snapper, or mahi mahi. \$-\$\$\$

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

Il Gabbiano

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

Indochine

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1525
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 Niçoise 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 salad 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-macaron 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-crusting 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 restorlounge, 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-crusting egg yolk capsula, the yolk nitrogen-frozen before frying to achieve a crisp crust and delightfully improbable oozing interior. \$\$\$

Miami's Chophouse

300 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-938-9000
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 cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry. \$

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; shoe-string frites that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crispy panko-crusting and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" – definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$\$

Novecento

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. \$-\$\$\$

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Soyka



5556 NE 4th Ct, Miami, FL 33137
305 759 3117 f. 305 759 4115
www.SoykaRestaurant.com @ 55th Street Station

Reviewed by Jenaia F.

"Finally got a chance to check Soyka out and absolutely loved it! Went for Mother's Day lunch with husband, mom, and grandmother. Everyone was extremely happy with their food as well as ambiance and service. The restaurant is so cute!! It really is unlike any other place here in Miami. Our waitress, a d-town native, was very attentive even though the restaurant was completely slammed, which was pretty impressive.

While our main dishes were all fantastic, the real stars of our meals were the appetizers and dessert. We had the tuna tar tar, which was outstanding. It had the right amount of heat (from wasabi) and crunch (from the seaweed salad on top)... the tuna itself was super fresh. I really couldn't get enough!! We also had the mussels in a shallot white wine sauce with a touch of cream... It was insanely good. The mussels were plump, not grainy... and the sauce... oh, the sauce!! I won't go any further, you'll just have to check it out for yourself.

For desert we had the hot brownie with vanilla ice cream. While it sounds a little boring, it really wasn't. The brownie was light and fluffy and had just the right amount of richness. Perfect ending to a perfect meal."

Restaurant Listings

Continued from page 62

Oceanaire Seafood Room

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

With a dozen branches nationwide, Oceanaire June 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 soul. 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, tarra-gon-inflected corn/bacon chowder, beautifully plated beef

carpaccio with horseradish/mustard and shallot olive oil dipping sauces; and over-the-top playhouse desserts, one with a luscious crème 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 manchego. 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-habane-ro-pepper cream sauce), or Rosa's signature guacamole en molcajete, made tableside. A few pomegranate margaritas ensure no worries. \$\$\$

Soya & Pomodoro

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

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

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 "bistro lounge." 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 n'gaw for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$

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 Japanese veteran) June initially seem akin to those airport Oriental steam tables. Wrong. Custom-cooked by Chinese chefs, starters (like soy/garlic-coated edamame), salads, and have-it-your-way stir-fries, fried rice, or noodle bowls burst with bold, fresh flavor. The proof: a startlingly savory miso beef salad, with sesame/ginger/scallion dressing. Bubble tea, too! \$\$

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

Adelita's Café

2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

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

(Honduras's take on tostones), rich meal-in-a-bowl soups packed with seafood or meat and veggies, and more. \$

Bay View Grille

1633 N. Bayshore Dr. (Marriott Hotel)

305-536-6414

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

Bengal

2010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-1976

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

Bin No. 18

1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

At this wine bar/café, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (tables made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's smart new residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger internationally themed Spanish, Italian, or French charcuterie platters at night. Though the place is small and family-run friendly, chef Alfredo Patino offers sophisticated snacks like the figciutto: arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking behind the building. \$\$

Buena Vista Bistro

4582 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-5909

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

Buena Vista Deli

4590 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-3945

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro's Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch cornichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crust-ed, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs

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DINING GUIDE

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little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we June have to kill you. \$\$\$

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 Juneo. 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 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 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/yucafied ambiance, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$\$

Lemoni Café

4600 NE 2nd Ave.

305-571-5080

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

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SUSHI SAKE

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13551 BISCAYNE BLVD. NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FL 33181 (305.947.4242)
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MIAMI
14629 SW 42ND STREET. MIAMI, FL 33185 (305.559.0303)
SUN-THURS 11AM - 12AM ♦ FRI-SAT 11AM-5AM

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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-crusting 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-crusting wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

Maino Churrascaria

2201 Biscayne Blvd.
305-571-9044

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

Maitardi

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

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

Mercadito Midtown

3252 NE 1st Ave.

786-369-0423

Some people frequent this fashionable restoulounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but fatly-stuffed. Of 11 varieties, our favorite is the carnitas (juicy braised pork, spicy chili de arbol slaw, toasted peanuts). A close second: the hongos, intensely flavorful huitlacoche and wild mushrooms, with

manchego and salsa verde – a reminder that vegetarian food need not be bland. \$\$-\$\$\$

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, dairy soups, several pastas (like the Matisse, flocchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

Out of the Blue Café

2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-3800

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 June 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 Cacciatore, an

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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.

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

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

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 speciality, along with

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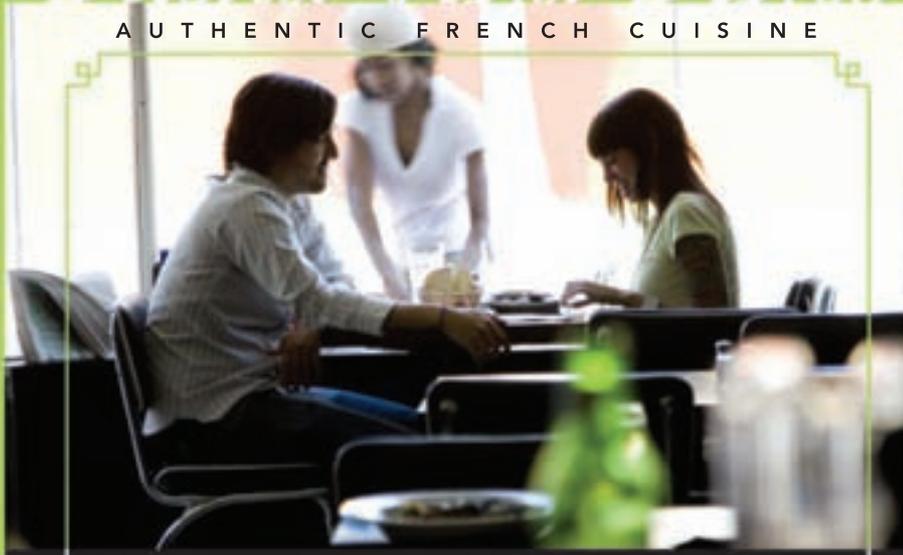
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executive chef Frank Crupi's famed Philly cheese steak sandwiches. Also available are salads and panini plus reasonably priced wines and beers, including a few unusually sophisticated selections like Belgium's Hoegaarden. \$\$

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. \$\$\$

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 homemade sangria. Top price for entrées is about \$14. \$-\$

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. \$

La Q-Bana

8650 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-2550

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

Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

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

Garden of Eatin'

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

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

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

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

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 Juneo), or a wonderfully healthful sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can enjoy a guiltless pig-out on Fireballs: fried dumplings of chicken, cabbage, and egg, crusted with quills — really a delectable crunchy noodle mix. \$

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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 Doodsdays, 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 June 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 croquettes. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab

can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Moonchine

7100 Biscayne Blvd.
305-759-3999

Like its Brickell-area sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

Revaes Italian Ristorante

8601 Biscayne Blvd.
305-758-1010

Owned by two couples (including former Village Café chef Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie's Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai fiume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail française (egg-battered, with lemon-caper-wine sauce) are the must-haves here. \$\$\$

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

1085 NE 79th St.
305-754-8002

With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from a new outdoor biergarten, this German restaurant is owner Alex Richter's one-man gentrification project, transforming a formerly uninviting stretch of 79th Street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauernwurst, spicy garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$\$

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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 June 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 entrees like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery

646 NE 79th St., 305-754-3337

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

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Bocados Ricos

1880 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-4889

Tucked into a mall best known for its Happy Stork Lounge, this little luncheonette services big appetites. Along with the usual grilled churrascos, there's bandeja paisa, Colombia's sampler platter of grilled steak, sausage, chicharron, fried egg, avocado, plantains, rice, and beans. Don't miss marginally daintier dishes like sopa de costilla, if this rich shortrib bowl is among the daily homemade soups. Arepas include our favorite corn cake: the hefty Aura, stuffed with chorizo, chicharron, carne desmechada (shredded flank steak), plantains, rice, beans, and cheese. \$\$\$

The Crab House

1551 79th St. Causeway, 305-868-7085

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, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Shuckers Bar & Grill

1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570

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

Sushi Siam

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

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

NORTH BEACH

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 raviolotti in lobster cream sauce, black squid ink linguini heaped with seafood. Though romantic enough for dates, the place is quite kid-friendly – and on the terrace, they'll even feed Fido. \$\$\$

Tamarind Thai

946 Normandy Dr., 305-861-6222

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 ambience. 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

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Restaurant Listings

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Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Juneo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$-\$-\$

Côte Gourmet

9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112, 305-754-9012
If only every Miami neighborhood could have a neighborhood restaurant like this low-priced little French jewel. The menu is mostly simple stuff: breakfast croissants, crêpe, soups, sandwiches, salads, sweets, and a few more substantial specials like a Tunisian-style brik (buttery phyllo pastry stuffed with tuna, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes) with a mesclun side salad. But everything is homemade, including all breads, and prepared with impeccable ingredients, classic French technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café's baguette sandwiches. \$-\$-\$

Village Café

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-2211
After closing for several months in early 2009, this café, spruced up to look like a bistro rather than a luncheonette (but with the same bargain prices), has been reopened. The kitchen has also been rejuvenated, with head honcho Adam Holm (Whitticar's original sous chef) serving up new, globally influenced dishes like mint/pistachio-crust lamb or tuna tartare with sriracha aioli, plus reviving old favorites like pork tenderloin with ginger-caramel sauce. \$-\$-\$-\$

NORTH MIAMI

Los Antojos

11099 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-1411
If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be ajiaico. 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. \$

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 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. \$

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 Junea, 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 yellow-tail or hog or mutton snapper, perfectly tenderized cracked conch or conch fritters, everything is deftly prepared and bargain-priced. \$\$

Casa Mia Trattoria

1950 NE 123rd St., 305-899-2770
Tucked away, off to the side on the approach to the Broad Causeway and the beaches, this charming indoor/outdoor trattoria seems to attract mostly neighborhood regulars. But even newcomers feel like regulars after a few minutes, thanks to the staff's Italian ebullience. Menu offerings are mostly classic comfort foods with some contemporary items as well. Housemade pastas are good enough that low-carb dieters should take a break, especially for the tender gnocchi with pesto or better yet, delicate fagottini – "beggar's purses" stuffed with pears and cheese. \$\$

Chéen-huyae

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808
Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, if they must. But the specialty is Junean-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

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Restaurant Listings

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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 roadhouse 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, hamm, meat-a-ball, schmopperr – June cause queasiness. But the schmopperr itself is one helluva high-octane veggie burger. \$-\$\$

Steve's Pizza

12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

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

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

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

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

No frozen pizza crusts or watery mozzarella here. No imported designer ingredients either. The pies are New York-style, but the dough is made fresh daily, and the cheese is Grande (from Wisconsin, considered America's finest pizza topper). Also on the menu are Italian-American pastas, a large selection of hot and cold subs,

simple salads, and a few new protein adds – grilled chicken breast, fried fish, or a steak. \$-\$\$

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

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

Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich

13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451

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

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Bamboo Garden

1232 NE 163rd St., 305-945-1722

Big enough for a banquet (up to 300 guests), this veteran is many diners' favorite on the 163rd/167th Street "Chinatown" strip because of its superior décor. But the menu also offers well-prepared, authentic dishes like peppery black bean clams, sautéed mustard greens, and steamed whole fish with ginger and scallions, plus

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DINING GUIDE

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Chinese-American egg foo young. Default spicing is mild even in Szechuan dishes marked with red-chili icons, but don't worry; realizing some like it hot, the chefs will customize spiciness to heroic heat levels upon request. \$\$

Blue Marlin Fish House 2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822

Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery is a rare surprise for nature lovers. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue began producing in 1938, available in three varieties: salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include weekend fish fries. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

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. \$\$

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

Christine's Roti Shop

16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434
Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

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

G-Coffee

3507 NE 163rd St. 305-956-5556
When a cup of regular American joe is as complex and boldly flavored as a gourmet coffeehouse's priciest brews – but cheaper – the creator deserves support, especially when the coffee is organic and the company supports fair trade and sustainable production. To accompany the admirable coffees and teas, G serves paninis plus sweets ranging from guava-stuffed croissants to gelato. Service is speedy, but a relaxed ambiance, comfortable contemporary décor, and free WiFi all encourage luxuriant lingering. \$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner

13951 Biscayne Blvd. 305-947-2255
When Sia and Nicole Hemmati bought the Gourmet Diner from retiring original owner Jean-Pierre Lejeune in the late 1990s, they added "Hanna's" to the name, but changed little else about this retro-looking French/American diner, a north Miami-Dade institution since 1983. Customers can get a cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing. For oysters Rockefeller/tuna-melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Hiro Japanese Restaurant

3007 NE 163rd St 305-948-3687
One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776
Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami's Upper Eastside. \$

Hiro's Yakko-San

17040 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-947-0064
After sushi chefs close up their own restaurants for the night, many come here for a rare taste of Japanese home cooking, served in grazing portions. Try glistening, fresh strips of raw tuna can be had in maguro neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (wilted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic stem and beef (mild young shoots flash-fried with tender steak bits), or perhaps just-caught grouper with hot/sweet/tangy chili sauce. Open till around 3:00 a.m. \$\$

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- Lasagna Bolognese
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CHOICE OF DESSERT:

- Key Lime Pie
- Mini Canolis
- Ricotta Cheese Cake
- New York Cheesecake
- Chocolate Mousse
- Rice Pudding
- Biscotti

Coffee or Tea

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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 Renaisa. Their menu's mix-and-match option allows diners to pair their choice of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable with more than a dozen regional sauces, from familiar Indian styles to exotica like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$\$-\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

16350 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-2244

(See Miami Shores listing?)

Jerusalem Market and Deli

16275 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-9080

Specialties like shawarma, spinach pies, kebabs, hummus, and kibbeh (a savory mix of ground lamb and bulgur) are native to many Middle East countries, but when a Lebanese chef/owner, like this eatery's Sam Elzoor, is at the helm, you can expect extraordinary refinement. There are elaborate daily specials here, like lemon chicken or stuffed cabbage with a variety of sides, but even a common falafel sandwich is special when the pita is also stuffed with housemade cabbage and onion salads, plus unusually rich and tart tahina. \$\$

Kabobji

3055 NE 163rd St., 305-354-8484

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

King 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 fagiole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$\$\$

Little Saigon

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

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

Mary Ann Bakery

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

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

The Melting Pot

15700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2228

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

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).

Continued on page 75

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Restaurant Listings

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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 grudge at a friendly, casual neighborhood place that offers monster ten-ounce char-grilled burgers, with potatoes or salad, for \$8.50; steaks, plus a side and a sauce or veg topper, for nine bucks at lunch, \$15 to \$18.75 (the menu's top price) at night; and three-dollar glasses of decent house wine. \$-\$\$

Sushi House

15911 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-6002

In terms of décor drama, this sushi spot seems to have taken its cue from Philippe Starck: sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster makis like the Cubbie Comfort: spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy Juneo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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 / HALLANDALE

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. \$\$

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 Sussner would freak out his many regulars by eliminating from the menu the Bahamian lobster and crab cakes. But lobster-lovers

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

Il Migliore

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

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

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

The Grill on the Alley

19501 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall), 305-466-7195

Ensclosed in a leather booth, with dark hardwood everywhere and a massive bar dispensing two-fisted drinks, you'd never know you were dining in a shopping mall — or in the new millennium. This upscale mini chain salutes America's great grill restaurants of yesteryear, with prodigious portions of charbroiled meats and seafood, plus classics like creamy chicken pot pie. New retro dishes are added quarterly, but our favorite remains Sunday night's prime rib special: a \$32 hunk of juicy beef that'll take care of Monday's meals too. \$\$\$\$

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. \$\$

Peppermill on the Waterway

3595 NE 207th St., 305-466-2016

Charming Alpine décor and elegant yet accessible traditional Continental comfort foods make this indoor/outdoor restaurant a perennially popular special-occasion place to take the parents. Definitely don't tell the folks' cardiologist about indulging in fine-dining fare from the precholesterol-obsession era: trout almondine with beurre blanc, salmon with hollandaise and creamed spinach, or for super-splurgers, lobster thermidor. While seafood is a specialty, butter-sautéed breaded schnitzels like the chicken Holsteiner (topped with capers, anchovies, and an egg) are a treat. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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-crusted 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 (muligatawny). All soups come with gourmet bread, fruit, and imported chocolate. Also available are salads, sandwiches, and wraps. \$-\$\$

Sushi Siam

19575 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)



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