

# BISCAYNE

April 2011

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Volume 9 Issue 2

**NEW THIS ISSUE**  
"Picture Story"  
Images of our past p. 14

# Times

# The Trouble With Golf

It's going broke, and leaving behind big, tempting green spaces

By Jim W. Harper

PAGE 20



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8:30 PM

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7:30 PM Don Giovanni  
8 PM Wayne Brady  
8:30 PM

**23** The Sparrow  
5 & 8:30 PM Cyrano  
7 PM Wayne Brady  
8:30 PM

**24** The Sparrow  
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**26** Cyrano  
8 PM "DiChiera's Cyrano a winner by far more than a nose." *The Detroit News*

**27** Don Giovanni  
8 PM "Considered by many to be the most perfect opera ever written." *The Detroit News*

**28** The Sparrow  
7:30 PM "Page-turning storytelling!" *The New York Times*

**29** The Sparrow  
7:30 PM Cyrano  
8 PM Taye Diggs  
8:30 PM

**30** The Sparrow  
5 & 8:30 PM Don Giovanni  
8 PM Taye Diggs  
8:30 PM

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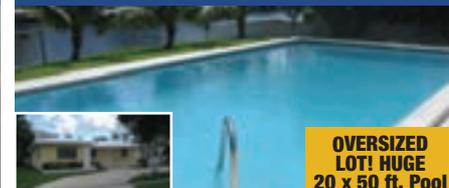
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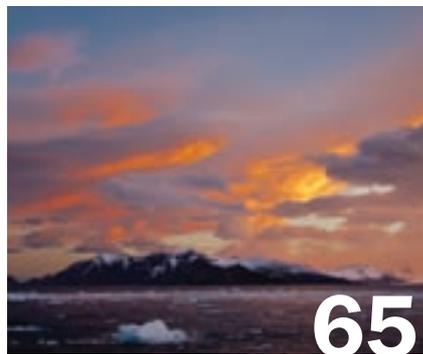


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# BISCAYNE *Times*

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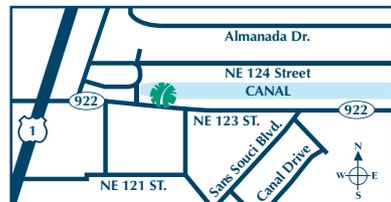
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**Commentary: LETTERS**

**Miami's First Immigrants: Perhaps Not What You Think**

Congratulations to HistoryMiami (formerly the Historical Museum of Southern Florida) as it celebrates its 70th anniversary. But I was most disappointed that there was no mention in the story "That Was Then" by Margaret Griffis (March 2011) of the fact that the first wave of immigrants were Bahamian Americans and southern blacks, who came to build the railroad after Julia Tuttle persuaded Henry Flagler to extend the rail to South Florida.

Thankfully, because of due diligence and dialogue with historian Arva Parks, women's commissions, and the Black Archives, an artist sculpted those contributors to Miami's history on the skirt of the Julia Tuttle statue unveiled recently at Bayfront Park. Lest we forget.

*Marcia Saunders  
Miami*

**Why I Changed My Mind About Jen Karetnick: Perhaps Not What You Think**

I just got around to reading the March issue of *Biscayne Times*. As always, I read the letters first, and my initial reaction to the letter by Kendra Borja about Jen Karetnick's column "Money Makes the Shores Go 'Round" (February 2011) was that it was a bit harsh.

Then I read Karetnick's meandering and slightly confusing column "Chefs and Poets and Views of the Bay" (March 2011), about poets and placemats, which suddenly segued into a most favorable review of a yet-to-be-opened restaurant. After that I changed my opinion about that letter — particularly the fact-checking part.

I moved to North Bay Village in 2003. At that time, the restaurant space on the 79th Street Causeway that Karetnick discusses was closed and in disrepair. I was told by various neighbors and family members that it had been closed a while, and had once been — most notably — a restaurant and nightclub frequented back in the day by the Rat Pack. I never heard about the KGB connections. Regardless, I can't imagine why Karetnick would leave out the most interesting fact about its history; it's glamorous, Old Hollywood connection!

Unexpectedly, renovation commenced one day. Much of the building

was demolished, leaving only the front wall intact. However, the first restaurant that finally opened after the year-long construction was Roger's, which lasted a while but closed after a short run. It then became Barchetta on the Bay, which struggled and failed (brave and crazy to open an Italian restaurant across the street from one of the best in the area, Oggi, especially since service and food at Barchetta were both uneven and inconsistent).

It closed again. Then we heard it was an after-hours club, and someone took down the part of the sign that said "Barchetta On" and just left The Bay. Now more renovations are under way, portions of the red brick facade are being painted white as I write this. But amusingly, just before that, someone tried to open an upscale gentleman's club, but the city and residents went berserk at the idea and blocked it.

Speaking of the city, I wondered why no reference at all was made to the city in which this restaurant space is located. Karetnick authors a column about Miami Shores, and in this particular piece she also mentions Miami and Miami Beach, plus a number of cities outside of South Florida. Why not mention our city by name, rather than making a vague reference to the restaurant being located "on the causeway?"

It just might help visitors interested in dining there to actually find it a little more easily, once it finally opens.

*Susan V. Powers  
North Bay Village*

**Editor's note:** Roger's replaced Landry's Seafood, which undertook the major construction at the site of today's Trio on the Bay, which is now open.

**Making Jokes at a Child's Expense? Don't Get Me Started!**

What a hypocritical piece of commentary from Crystal Brewé ("When Parents Are No Longer Cool," March 2011). What a nasty "joke" emerged from her subconscious to inflict upon her daughter by saying, "I don't think you will have to worry, sweetie. You will probably end up with legs like mommy's."

Did she realize the potential for harm to her daughter's emotional well-being? I don't think she has an inkling of how loaded and dangerous her meanness

*Continued on page 10*

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## Letters

Continued from page 8

is toward her daughter (“Her eyes literally welled up with tears”).

She has made her point quite clear about when parents are no longer cool. Unfortunately, the person here required to grow a thick skin in her household is not her, but her daughter. If at her innocent and tender age of six, her mother is making such insidious “jokes,” there seems to be no chance that her daughter will be the recipient of loving and uplifting compliments from her. She should not worry about her child’s responses wounding her. Rather she should worry about how loaded and dangerous her own “jokes” are to her daughter’s developing self-esteem and love of herself.

Noaris Burgos  
Miami

### Mayor to Danny: Keep Those Investments Coming

It was great to read Erik Bojnansky’s article on Danny Reyes and his continued investment in the Village of El Portal (“Big Changes in Tiny El Portal,” February 2011). I have known Danny for about 15 years, after I first got involved in El Portal politics.

He is not just a great businessman, but a friend to the El Portal community. His support of projects and activities with our youth and seniors is commendable and greatly appreciated.

We in the village extends our thanks to Danny and wish him much success in his business ventures.

Mayor Daisy Black  
Village of El Portal

### Mr. Commissioner, You Now Have the Floor

As a Village of Biscayne Park Commissioner elected over a year ago, I would like to comment on two letters published in the February issue of *Biscayne Times*, one by resident Barbara Kiers; the other by resident Milton Hunter; as well as past articles by Gaspar González.

To start, Gaspar has provided us with insight, critique, and humor, along with a much-needed lampooning of behind-the-scenes power brokers. He has helped shine a light on what some call the “RAC Block” (initials of the mayor’s last name and those of two commissioners up for election this December), helping residents pay attention to their

voting record. So it is not surprising that Gaspar has come under attack. And yet he has been very kind to label those who have resisted reform efforts and government transparency as taking a “Chamber of Commerce” approach.

Barbara Kiers, on the other hand, whose February letter effectively stood against Milton Hunter’s letter in the same issue, recognized a darker side. She bravely labeled as “Gestapo-like” the tactics that the majority ruling block has resorted to. Many have witnessed their repeated attempts to shut down healthy debate at commission meetings, ignore parliamentary procedure, censor articles from our Village newsletter, keep facts away from the public and out of official minutes that serve as our public record, and past efforts to create Village laws that would restrict free speech by residents and commissioners who disagree with them, which the State Attorney’s office clearly have labeled unconstitutional.

How else does Kiers’s “Maybe He [Gaspar] Does Know a Thing or Two” stand up to Hunter’s cry of “Enough Already”?

First, Hunter’s letter quotes an “investigative report” by a hired-gun defense attorney — Robert Soloff — whose effort clearly was to shield our manager, and the ruling block’s association with her, from the alleged wrongdoing identified by a former finance clerk of the Village. (Soloff is best known for his failed attempt to defend Joe’s Stone Crab, when they were easily found guilty of longstanding discrimination against women.)

Second, Hunter conveniently did not mention the allegations of the former finance clerk, who resigned in protest against manager Garcia, and how I tried to investigate because the majority (Mayor Ross and Commissioners Anderson and Childress) apparently would not. Also the allegations against the manager included both verbal and physically demonstrable harassment directed against the finance clerk — all because she apparently tried to do right according to law, ethics, and fiscal best practice.

Hunter also ignores that the staff member was trying to make sure that payroll records were not falsified, and that wrongful budget transfers were not performed under duress. He wrote that you can read the report in its entirety, but it is clear from what he withheld that he probably hopes you never will. And he does

Continued on page 70

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# One Vote Leads to Another

Alvarez is tossed out, and now 14 others want in

By Jack King  
BT Contributor

Our recent recall vote that got rid of Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez and Commissioner Natacha Seijas came as a bit of surprise to me. Granted, both of them needed to go, but the election results were overwhelming: nearly 90 percent of voters wanted them out.

It was a moment like nothing we've seen. Florida's governors have removed many an elected official for cause or indictment, but seldom are they recalled, primarily because the process is difficult — and expensive.

This one would not have been successful had it not been funded by billionaire auto magnate Norman Braman. I wonder how many other commissioners would have been thrown out had the money been there to collect signatures in every commission district.

Seijas, whom the blog Eye On Miami refers to as "Vile Natacha," had rubbed just about everybody the wrong way, including her most ardent supporters. I'm not quite sure how someone with her mean-spirited disposition got elected in the first place, but this is, after all, Miami-Dade County.

Alvarez was something else. He'd been moderately successful as chief of the county's police department, and

other than a massive ego, he didn't have too many negatives. Elected mayor in 2004, he started off his first term by picking a fight with the commission over who should be in charge. He lost that one big time, which left him with pretty much nothing to do.

County manager George Burgess handled the day-to-day work. Alvarez was supposed to be the visionary and lead the county into the 21st Century, but he had no idea what he was doing. Despite that, in January 2007 he persuaded voters to give him the powers of a "strong" mayor. It didn't take long for his strong suit to come to the forefront — building massive bureaucracies, starting with his own office.

When he first took over, the mayor's staff and budget were relatively modest. Then it ballooned to nearly 50 assistants making more than \$100,000 a year, and a multimillion-dollar office budget to match. After doing nothing for a few years, he decided to get involved in two areas that became his Waterloo.

First there was the boondoggle of a new stadium for the Florida Marlins. Alvarez was their biggest cheerleader, touting the great economic benefits for residents from Homestead to Opa-locka. According to him, pigs would fly, manna would fall from heaven, and all our economic woes would vanish. Of course, it turned out to be just another load of BS being shoveled out of county hall.



After the deal was inked, we learned that the Marlins, supposedly losing money, were in fact making a ton of dough and could have built the place themselves. Not to worry! We have 50 years to pay off the debt, now estimated at \$2.4 billion, most of it back-loaded so the *really* big bills are crammed into the final ten years. Don't you think that's a nice present for your grandkids?

Then came Alvarez's budget brilliance. County spending was rocketing out of control at the same time revenue was evaporating, so Alvarez came up with a novel scheme: Raise property taxes. Anyone with half a brain could see this was the *perfect* time to raise taxes. The economy was tanking, people were losing their homes left and right, and the jobless rate was soaring. So in Alvarez's mind, it made perfect sense to jack up tax rates and give thousands of county employees a salary boost.

How did we get Alvarez in the first place? Recall that in 2004, Alvarez was running against Commissioner Jimmy Morales. Alvarez was tall, in great shape, dressed well, and had the ego. Morales was short, frumpy, wore ill-fitting suits, and was a marvelous public servant. Our shallow electorate couldn't see

through Alvarez's façade, and he rolled over Morales.

On May 24, we'll have a chance to do a better job selecting a leader. And what a chance it is. As of this writing, we have 14 mayoral candidates, a number of whom are unemployed. You can tell because they have "former" in their titles, among them Marcelo Llorente, José Cancio, Roosevelt Bradley, and Luther Campbell — yes, *that* Luther Campbell. Hialeah Mayor Julio Robaina will be in the running if he can resolve his legal problems. (A Hialeah mayor with legal problems? Who would have thought?) That leaves county Commissioner Carlos Gimenez, the only candidate who has a job and no legal problems. What a novel concept!

I was hoping Morales might run, but he quickly quashed that idea. Too bad. He would have made a great mayor.

A couple of other election notes: The *Miami Herald* editorial board recommended against the recall. Talk about being out of touch with your community. Also there are two Julio Robainas on the ballot. The Hialeah Julio is running for county mayor and the South Miami Julio is running for the District 7 commission seat being vacated by Gimenez.

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)

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# Downtown Miami Not So Long Ago

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George  
Special to the BT

This classic photograph of Miami in the early 1950s captures the heart of downtown in its heyday. The city's popular Bayfront Park is the venue for the R.C. Gardner Band Shell (seats are visible in the left foreground), a favorite gathering place for concerts.

To the right of the band shell stands the newly completed main branch of the Miami public library. West of the library, across Biscayne Boulevard, lies E. Flagler Street, the city's most important thoroughfare, and the center of shopping, dining, and movie theaters.

Most of the tall buildings in the photograph were products of the great real estate boom of the mid-1920s. The McAllister

Hotel, built between 1917 and 1926, and the Columbus Hotel, to the right of it, completed in 1926, are across from the library. They represented two of a cluster of six buildings comprising South Florida's first skyline.

Directly behind the McAllister Hotel is the Alfred I. DuPont Building, constructed at the end of the 1930s. Across from it is the beautiful Ingraham Building.

Farther west is the towering Dade County Courthouse with its ziggurat roof. At 28 stories, the courthouse was the tallest building in South Florida for 35 years, until 1963.

To order a copy of this photo, please contact HistoryMiami archives manager Dawn Hugh at 305-375-1623, [dhugh@historymiami.org](mailto:dhugh@historymiami.org).

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami



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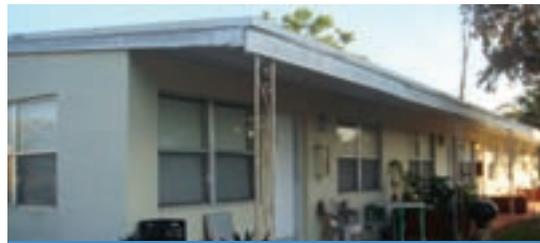


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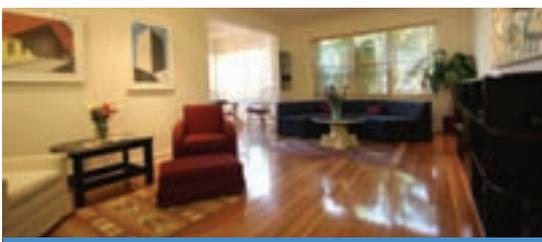


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**1446 Lenox Ave. #3, Miami Beach** • Historic 1,320 sq. ft. 2 bed/2 bath by park. Top floor, front corner, no shared walls. 9 ft. ceilings, oak floors, terrace, new a/c and impact windows. Renovated with private garage.

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# BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt  
BT Contributor

Spring has officially arrived and you know what that means: spring cleaning, the one time of year when it's not enough to just let your iRobot vacuum gobble up dust balls. But *BT* advertisers can help out during this month's heavy-duty cleaning and reorganizing of your household.

To illuminate your soon-to-sparkle space, **Specialty Lighting & Bulbs** (13611 Biscayne Blvd., 305-423-0017) is continuing its grand-opening special through April: 20% off all lamps plus ceiling and wall fixtures, with mention of this issue's ad. And nothing would provide an instant spiffiness factor like one of the shop's crystal chandeliers. "We have a large selection," promises Specialty's Bradley Chalmers.

Have your cleaning efforts uncovered some new or gently used furniture or accessories to sell? Or want to buy some? New advertiser **360 Furniture Consignments** (18340 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-627-3148) can assist you, whether the property is one item or an entire estate, and everything's priced to ensure value and savings. The shop also offers complete services for certified personal property appraisals, liquidation, and charity auctions.

Of course there's always the option of simply leaving your old pad and

starting afresh. If you're looking for a new home, **Majestic Properties** recently released a list of its Top 10 producers in 2010: Darin Feldman, Susan Gale, Donna Bloom, Pilar Corredor, Barbara Hagen, Jeanne Mockridge, Kyle Haas, Josh Stein, Ingrid Caruso, and David Nguah. Give 'em a ring.

Looking to rent rather than buy? Check out new advertiser **East Wind Apartments** (305-757-7588), a gated, beautifully landscaped, completely renovated MiMo gem of a courtyard complex in the Upper Eastside. The one- and two-bedroom units feature stainless-steel appliances, granite counters, washer/dryer, and more. The place is pet friendly, too.

Speaking of pets, two new advertisers remind readers that canines also need spring cleaning. Master groomer José Coraspo, who has been working in the Aventura/Sunny Isles area for a decade, announces the opening of his new salon **Miami Doggy Style** (161 Sunny Isles Blvd., 305-944-4450). As well as bathing/grooming, the facility does boarding and day care — with pampering.

Don't feel like leaving home, pet owners? Call 305-968-1106 and Doggie's Groom Mobile will come to you. This month the company has a special offer for multiple-pet households: Groom one dog at regular price and get 10% off grooming of your second dog.



People need pampering, too, and *BT* readers will find it at a discount this month at **Anastasia Molchanov Salon** (7242 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-7755), where all anti-aging treatments are 20% off. The salon also offers 15% off all salon services for what they call "New Faces." Hmmm. Can we get Angelina Jolie's? For answers to this and other pressing questions, call Kathy at 305-756-7755.

While a new advertiser, **Uni K Wax Center** is hardly new to town. The original South Beach center is credited with inventing the Brazilian bikini wax back in 1993, when normal bikini waxes weren't extreme enough for SoBe strings. Uni K's three centers in *BT* territory (14671 Biscayne, 305-940-9898; 1815 NE 123rd St., 305-917-1221; 900 S. Miami Ave. #242, 305-329-3155) will eradicate unwanted body hair from nose to toes.

Some historians believe that the practice of spring cleaning may have originated with the Jewish practice of thoroughly cleansing the house in preparation for Passover. An equally

wise preparation would be making reservations for the traditional Passover dinner at **Magnum** (709 NE 79th St., 305-757-3368) on April 19; the four-course feast is only \$35. Owner Jeffrey Landsman notes that dinner reservations for Wednesday, April 13, for a Magnum special event when local star singer Vanessa C will be performing, "are already almost all filled — though people can come to the bar for the show. There's no cover." (There's actually live piano-bar entertainment every night. Special events like this are just, well, *special*.)

Entertainment on a grander scale comes courtesy of **Florida Grand Opera**, which is presenting two simultaneous productions throughout April and May: Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and a newly commissioned *Cyrano* by David DiChiera. The latter premieres a new aria. For sneak peeks, FGO is offering two special events, a look at *Cyrano* at Alliance Française on April 6, and an interactive Family Day

Continued on page 18

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**940 NE 72ND STREET**

Stunning Old Florida home on triple lot, enveloped in tropical landscaping for privacy, renovated to absolute perfection. This house was restored with great attention to detail and no expense spared, but all of the original charm remains. A perfect combination of Contemporary and Old Florida. Light and bright throughout. Clay tile flooring and vaulted ceilings in living room. Kitchen is top of the line with wood cabinets and Sub-Zero appliances. Master suite features spa-like bath. Elegant yet simple. Detached guest house. **\$1,095,000**



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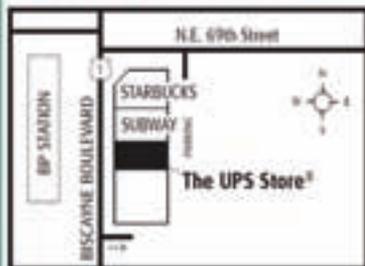
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# The UPS Store



## BizBuzz

Continued from page 16

at the Arsht Center on April 30. For info: [www.fgo.org](http://www.fgo.org).

One entertainment option Miami has been missing is a full-time art-house cinema, specializing in first-run, indie, foreign, and niche-market movies. Not anymore, since the opening of **O Cinema** in Wynwood (90 NW 29th St., 305-571-9970). Conceived by Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival veterans Vivian Marthell and Kareem Tabsch, the theater is currently boutique-size (50 seats) but expansion to 130 seats is planned. For details: [www.o-cinema.org](http://www.o-cinema.org).

For kids (age 8 up), **The Playground Theatre** (9806 NE 2nd Ave.) presents the world premiere of *The Red Thread*, an original play (with music and dancing) inspired by Chinese folklore: The adventures of a young heroine and her two greedy tapestry-stealing older sisters. Performances begin April 13. For a full schedule, go to [www.theplaygroundtheatre.com](http://www.theplaygroundtheatre.com).

Performing is also one activity your 4-10-year-old kids can enjoy at **Miami Country Day School Summer Camp** (9601 NE 107th St., 305-759-2843 x200 or [www.miamicountryday.org](http://www.miamicountryday.org)) — along with swimming, fishing, boating, team sports, treasure hunts, a media program with new iMac lab, treasure hunts, and field trips to magic shows, pizza parties, and more. Sessions run June 20 to July 8 and July 11 to 29, but don't delay. Registration before April 15 earns you a significant discount.

On April 15, the Rhythm Foundation offers tax relief: the group's second Big Night in Little Haiti. After mailing off all your money to the blood-sucking feds, head for Little Haiti Cultural Center Plaza (212 NE 59th Terr.) for free festivities including a Haitian carnival costume show, gallery exhibits, music, and more. The celebration runs roughly 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Are you a singer yourself, with a vocal group of 3 to 25 performers? **The Shops at Midtown** (305-573-3371) wants you to compete for a grand prize, including a \$20,000 donation to your charity of choice, \$5000 in MasterCard gift cards, a chance to work with Emmy-award-winning singer/songwriter Kevin Briody, and a live performance at The Shops in October. The contest starts April 15, and the deadline for uploading videos of your group performing is May 31. To register

and view a list of approved songs, visit [www.2011Sing.com](http://www.2011Sing.com).

To those who complain that our town has no culture, **Miami Beach Culture** has a suggestion: Visit their website, [www.mbculture.com](http://www.mbculture.com). There are roughly 50 events listed on April's calendar of events.

As the weather heats up, outdoor entertainment options, like Surfside 3rd Thursdays, a monthly food-themed street fair that's been running since November, begin to wind down. So do catch this year's finale on April 21, from 6:00-9:00 p.m., when foodies can "taste the world on two blocks" along Harding Avenue from 94th to 96th streets. The event, sponsored by the **Surfside Tourist Bureau**, will also feature a free concert from 7:00-9:00 p.m., plus spectacular strolling mariachis whose sombreros are larger than most Miami walk-in closets. Go to [www.visitsurfsidefl.com](http://www.visitsurfsidefl.com) for further info.

Ever notice how summer seems hotter when you're lugging around extra pounds? It's time to call new advertiser **Slender Fit U** (1400 Biscayne Blvd., 786-477-6194), where a combination of muscle-preserving/fat-releasing hCG products, low-cal diet, and close supervision from medical director Jorge Valdes and program founder and "hCG guru" Geri Correa promise permanent weight losses of one-half to two pounds per day. Frankly, definitions of hCG, a "complex amino-peptide molecule," baffle us. But the motto "Get Slim, Skip the Gym" we totally get.

Just writing that made us hungry. And since we're writing at 2:00 a.m., we're happy to report that the expansive new location of late-night dining favorite **Yakko-San** (3881 NE 163rd St., in the Intracoastal Mall; 305-947-0064) is finally open. The kitchen is now state-of-the-art, but the tasty Japanese tapas dishes are still the same.

American and European-inspired late-night bites are now available at just-opened new advertiser **Trio on the Bay** (1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1234), a glamorous new bayfront restolounge from nightlife impresario Gerry Kelly, restaurateur/GM Louie Spetrini, and Klime Kovaceski, former chef/owner of Miami Beach's Crystal Café. The trio promises daily white-tablecloth dining, meaning big food (pecan-crusting trout, etc. at normal dinner hours; tapas are for night owls), weekend nightlife, and a private party venue with in-house catering.

Hey, pizza lovers, want your pie with mozzarella and basil, or with deep-fried falafel balls and a side of hummus? You can get either at new advertiser **Egyptian Pizza Kitchen** (Buena Vista Avenue in the Shops at Midtown, 305-571-9050), and Middle Eastern or northern Mediterranean entrées, sandwiches, and starters, too.

At **Bagels & Company** (10064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), owner David Cohen's April deals focus on breakfast: a different, specially priced entrée each weekday. *Plus* a side (home fries, grits, oatmeal), *plus* bagel or toast, *plus* coffee, tea, or OJ. See this issue's ad for details.

Attention North Miami smoothie addicts: It's no longer necessary to schlep to downtown's **Smoothie King** (2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-5464) for your fix. A new drive-through location, which also carries healthful solid snacks plus supplements, is now open at 12607 Biscayne Blvd. (305-981-8660).

Congratulations are actually in order for several

other *BT* advertisers for recent expansions, including one that has garnered national media attention: century-old realty firm **Douglas Elliman's** huge new flagship offices at 1111 Lincoln Rd. Relocation to the 3500-square-foot digs (with killer views) signals the start of a dramatic growth spurt throughout Miami-Dade County for the NY-based real estate giant.

Kudos to **TotalBank** on the grand opening of a brand-new North Miami branch (1865 NE 123rd St., 305-982-3350), bringing to 14 the total of Miami-Dade County TotalBanks. The new branch has 24-hour ATM, plenty of free parking, and is, quite frankly, orders of magnitude nicer than the old digs.

The **Doggie Bag Café & Boutique** at **Smiling Pets Veterinary Clinic** (7310 Biscayne Blvd., 305-710-7266) has expanded into the food-truck trend with Doggie Diner on Wheels. The mobile cart serves organic and human-grade meals for pups, plus "dogserts" and cocktails such as the blueberry Mutini. To see scheduled dog cart stops or reserve the diner for pooch parties: [www.doggiebagcafe.com](http://www.doggiebagcafe.com).

Congrats, too, to **Surecare Pharmacy** (8955 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-3000). April marks the business's six-month anniversary. No need to bring a gift, though. In fact, Surecare's staff is giving one to readers transferring prescriptions from other pharmacies: a \$20 coupon for over-the-counter product purchases.

Curiosity continues to climb regarding possible tenants at **Baypoint Center** (3915 Biscayne Blvd.), where transformation from old-school office building to streamlined New Millennium commercial center nears completion. Nothing is definite yet, but we, as foodies, were heartened to hear from Lyle Chariff — whose Chariff Realty Group (305-576-7474) is handling leasing — that along with medical tenants, "we're also negotiating with two longtime South Beach restaurant tenants." Yes!

In South Florida, April is the

month that begins with idyllic weather and ends in a heat wave that sends us fleeing inside to our air-conditioned cocoons till October — except for boaters, who still have those sea breezes.

Customers of **Keystone Point Marina** (1950 NE 135th St., 305-940-6238) also have hydration, thanks to the thoughtful marina's summer promotion: a free bottle of water with fuel purchases. Additionally, Keystone has a free pump-out station, so large-boat owners can empty their waste tanks into city sewers instead of our waterways. Now, *that* is great spring cleaning.

Lastly, we hate to bring up hurricane season already, but it's time to start preparations. If you don't have safe indoor spaces for your car, the **Miami Parking Authority** can easily relieve you of that worry with its Miami Vehicular Protection program offering sheltered parking in MPA garages. The application window opened April 1. Investigate at [www.miamiparking.com/en/customers/mvp-program.aspx](http://www.miamiparking.com/en/customers/mvp-program.aspx). As for other hurricane prep essentials — the gallons of vodka, the dominos, etc. — you're on your own.)

*Something special coming up at your business? Send info to [bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com). For *BT* advertisers only.*

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Miami Shores Country Club: Owned by residents but privately managed.

# The Trouble With Golf

It's farewell to fairways as abandoned courses offer choices: more parks or more houses

By Jim W. Harper

Photos by Silvia Ros

Floating above metropolitan Miami, you see a distinct pattern: row upon monotonous row of single-family homes and very few hints of open green space. (You don't need an airplane to do this; you can use Google Earth.)

Looking from Miami's downtown northward, the few "greenish" spaces you can spot are most likely golf courses, both active and abandoned, especially as your eye travels up the Biscayne

Corridor toward Broward County. The only significant acreage of natural, public space sits along the Oleta River. With that one exception, no park in *Biscayne Times* territory is larger than a golf course.

Golfers can choose among many places to play their game, but tens of thousands of children here have nowhere to run and frolic freely. At less than 1000 acres of total parkland, the

City of Miami notoriously has the least amount of public green space per capita of any major city in the United States, as ranked in 2010 by the Trust for Public Land. Its acreage would need to *quadruple* just to reach the recommended ratio.

By comparison, New York City has twice as much parkland per person, and Los Angeles three times. Miami-Dade County, while better at 12,848 acres, also falls short.

National and state parks protect huge areas, but they are not nearly as accessible for daily use. Oleta River State Park in the City of North Miami is Florida's largest urban park at more than 1000 acres, but practically no one lives within walking distance. The entire City of Miami park system could fit inside this single location.

Today, right now, we have a unique opportunity to expand accessible park space.

With the real estate market in shambles and the golfing industry following suit, large chunks of open space are now up for grabs. Dozens of golf courses across South Florida are already shuttered, so this is the moment to ask ourselves: What is the best use of these open spaces? How can we repurpose them? And who should benefit?

Don't get too excited yet. The development vultures are circling above the dying and dead golf courses, and where you may see a new public park, they see thousands of new homes.

First let's see where Florida may be headed by Googling "Governor Scott" and "golf courses." Holy Dave Barry! It may sound like an urban legend, but last month two bills were actually introduced in the state legislature to create country-club-style golf courses, complete with hotels and liquor licenses, within Florida's state parks.

Oleta River State Park will now be known as Mangrove Isle Country Club. That's a joke, but the crazy concept has approval from the top.

"It's preposterous," says Alberto Pozzi, general manager of the publicly owned Miami Shores Country Club. "I mean, the thought of converting good parkland into golf courses in this economy? It's inexplicable how the idea would even have been considered. It's *beyond* me. When you have a situation where very, very, *very* few golf courses are viable, the thought of building a trail of golf courses on public property is just inexplicable. It makes no sense."

The controversial golf-in-every-park bills purportedly were hatched after a private meeting between Gov. Rick Scott and golfing legend Jack Nicklaus. Introduced in March by Sen. John Thrasher (R-St. Augustine) and Rep. Patrick Rooney (R-West Palm Beach), bills SB 1846 and HB 1239 proposed to establish the "Jack Nicklaus Golf Trail," with at least five Nicklaus-designed courses scattered in state parks across Florida. Oh, and they would be exempt from local regulations.

It was *Caddyshack* meets *Wall Street*.

Once the public got wind of these shenanigans, the outcry from all corners was so swift and forceful that the bills were pulled within a few days. But the question remains: What were they thinking? (Implied question: What were they drinking that they later hoped to drink at the 19th hole of the golf resort at their favorite state park?). The editor of *Golf*



Alberto Pozzi, Miami Shores general manager: "The thought of converting good parkland into golf courses? It's preposterous."



Map by Marcy Mock

In the past decade, northeast Miami-Dade County has lost four courses and gained zero.

*Weekly* figured the story had come from the satirical news source *The Onion*, and he dubbed it "The dumbest idea of 2011."

In reality, no one is laughing about the golfing industry. Hundreds of courses around the nation have closed in the past three years (including 375 public courses, according to the National Golf Foundation), and considering that Florida has more golf courses than any state (more than 1100), it also has the most to lose. In order to survive, courses must change. The entire industry must change.

"We've changed and adapted better than most. We're confident that we'll do well," says Pozzi of Miami Shores, who reports seeing a 17-percent increase in rounds played this season over last year. He credits this success to better weather and to the country club's transition from a private, members-only operation to a semi-private one that offers both memberships and visitor passes. The golf course has been open to the public since the early 1990s. In 2009 the public was welcome to use all the club's facilities.

The Miami Shores Country Club may be owned by local residents, but it is managed by a private company, Professional Course Management, which is Pozzi's employer. The management contract calls for annual rent of \$25,000, plus another \$75,000 should the country club generate more than \$3 million in a year.

Miami Shores's finance director, Holly Hugdahl, says the municipality took in the full \$100,000 in 2009 but just \$25,000 last year. Still, she asserts it's a good deal for the Shores. "Most cities show a loss on their country clubs," she says. "It's a big hole in the water. Look at Miami Springs." (In June the Shores's golf course is slated to close for three months to undergo some \$750,000 in renovations.)

Alberto Pozzi, a tall, gray-haired gentleman originally from Uruguay, says our area mirrors the national trend of recent golf-course closures. In the north part of Miami-Dade County alone he counts four, but there are actually more countywide. In Broward County, the *Sun-Sentinel* reports that 11 courses have closed in the recent past.

Pozzi has his theories about the disintegration of the local golf scene. For one thing, the retirees and snowbirds who used to flock here — golf's primary audience — are fleeing South Florida for other parts of the state, where the cost

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## Golf

Continued from page 21

of living is lower. Local and national trends also reflect an excess of housing developments tied to golf courses. So an increase in courses has been met with a shrinking supply of golfers.

Other factors have contributed to the sport being less popular now than in previous decades, not least of which has been the soaring cost of a round of golf. During the peak winter/spring season, it costs \$99 to play the Miami Shores course. That's relatively cheap. A round at Doral's Blue Monster during the high season currently costs \$325. Even the publicly owned Miami Beach Golf Club charges \$200 per round between December and April.

Pozzi also points to another, unique factor that, in addition to the recession, is causing the number of South Florida golfers to shrink: Miami as immigration magnet. Simply put, Miami's vast immigrant community lacks the same cultural connection to golf as previous generations. On top of that, working parents nowadays have little leisure time.



A train runs through it: Miami Shores CC presents golfers with a unique hazard.

Golfing in Miami-Dade may be a smaller slice of the tourism pie than in other counties, but it has a sizable impact nonetheless. A 2009 report from the University of Florida found 8400 acres of maintained turf on 48 golf courses in the county that generated of \$288 million annually and provided 2364 jobs. The

National Golf Course Owners Association reports that the industry in Florida was valued at \$7.5 billion in 2007, equal to the revenues from all other major spectator sports in the state combined, including auto racing, horse racing, football, basketball, and baseball.

All of those numbers are surely falling.

Golfing peaked around 1990, according to a 2010 report by the National Golf Foundation, and its immediate future is dire. "Between 500 and 1000 public courses are expected to close with the next five years," it states in the study "The Future of Public Golf in America." (The designation "public course" means that membership is not required to play on the course, not that it is publicly owned.)

In Florida, rounds of golf played are down 5.8 percent from 2009 to 2010, and down 8.4 percent by comparing December 2009 to December 2010, according to *GolfBusiness*, the official publication of the National Golf Course Owners Association. According to the association, the year 2006 was a turning point for golf, when closures of courses nationwide for the first time outnumbered openings. Last year 107 courses closed while just 46 opened.

Still, there are some bright spots locally for the golfing industry. Johnson and Wales University runs an active golf-management program, and Barry University's men's golf team, coached by

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**Golf**

Continued from page 22

Jimmy Stobbs, a former touring pro golfer who grew up in Miami Shores. In Aventura the 300-acre Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort and Golf Club has two award-winning, 18-hole golf courses. Golf membership, limited to invitation-only, costs a whopping \$65,000 nonrefundable or \$150,000 refundable. This exclusivity may be working. “Where most clubs went wrong was by taking drastic measures, such as waiving initiation fees and dues for new club members,” says Amy Cohen, director of membership. “Instead we maintained our pricing strategy in addition to adding more affordable nonrefundable categories, making us an excellent value for the money.”

With the possible exception of Fairmont Turnberry, golf courses that are part of strictly private country clubs do not fare well in Miami. “There are four private clubs in Miami-Dade County, a county with a population of over two million people,” notes Alberto Pozzi. “Nationally you probably have three to four times the number of private



**Haulover Beach Park: Remnants of the 9-hole course that is no more.**

clubs per capita.” Data on private clubs is limited, but the trend is clear for all types of golf courses, says Pozzi: “The industry has been in a state of crisis for some time now.” (In addition to Miami Shores and Fairmont Turnberry, the only courses still operating in northeastern Miami-Dade County are Greynolds Park in North Miami Beach and Westview

Country Club near Miami-Dade College’s north campus.)

Regarding one decaying local golf course, the people of Bal Harbour and its wealthy surrounding communities spoke loud and clear about what they wanted to happen. Four years after a series of community meetings, they are finally getting rid of it. Last year the

county allowed Haulover Beach Park’s small golf course to expire. It will be resurrected as the area’s largest unencumbered green space.

“There are no great lawns in our area,” says Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, whose district includes Haulover and who laments the overall dearth of parks in our area. “The idea came from input from the community. It’s been a long time coming.”

She says the golf course’s bumps will be smoothed out and left open for concerts, pick-up games, and other community events. This past February 21, more than 4000 people swarmed over the golf course for Haulover’s annual kite festival, and Heyman sees such gatherings as the future: “Wouldn’t this be great to do more than once a year?”

A small golf course within a large county-operated park, Haulover offers an ideal laboratory for transforming a single-sport course into multi-use green space. It’s diminutive size means it’ll be easier to find solutions to the myriad

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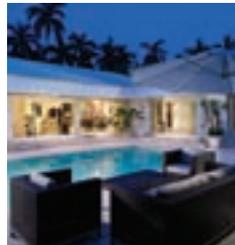
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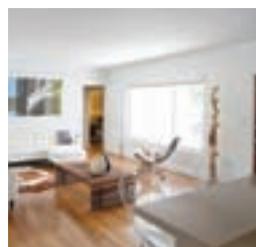


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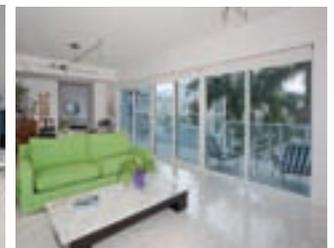


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With waterfront views like this, Haulover's course will make for a great park.



The former Williams Island Country Club has been sold, and resold, and resold.

### Golf

Continued from page 24

problems such transformations can present. At other withering golf courses in our part of the county, however, the acreage is much greater and the stakes are much higher.

In the past decade, at least four of our area's golf courses have died. Says Pozzi: "California Golf Club and Williams Island Country Club have been closed for at least six to seven years, and nothing is happening there. Presidential Country Club has been closed for nearly three years, and again, nothing is

happening there."

Clustered around I-95 and the edges of North Miami Beach, the abandoned properties are lying fallow, but things are in fact happening behind the scenes. The 148-acre Williams Island property, once affiliated with the Aventura residential development but located just

west of I-95 at NE 195th Street, is slated to become 860 low-cost housing units. "They will develop it. There are very few inland sites like that," says Alan Matus, CEO of Williams Island Associates, the original developer.

Continued on page 28



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## Golf

Continued from page 26

Matus says a Canadian company bought the mortgage from Ocean Bank within the past six months. That purchase capped a round-robin of transactions. After the golf course was rezoned to residential in 2004, Williams Island Associates sold the property to the residents of the Williams Island residential development in Aventura. Later the property was bought for \$48 million by Transeastern Properties, which sold it and then regained it when the next buyer, Tousa, went bankrupt. Now it looks like it'll be marketed to Canadian snowbirds.

The most publicized activity has been at the 183-acre former California Golf Club, located west of I-95 just off Ives Dairy Road. Thousands of residents around the property are being petitioned to change its zoning from golf course to residential. The property's owner, businesswoman and philanthropist Liliane Stransky, dreams of creating Le Club Resort, a community of elegant homes with an equestrian centerpiece.

In a letter posted on the website of Le Club Resort, she writes: "Le Club Resort will be a vibrant community filled with lush community parks and shared spaces, lakes, areas for civic uses, a network of bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian paths, a dog park, and more. The property will include large single-family home estates, townhomes, and multi-family units spread sparsely throughout the property.... At this time, I am seeking your consent, and the consent of all of my neighbors, to allow me to go before the county commission to enable the transformation of the abandoned golf course into a neighborhood asset."

Stransky's website shows elaborate plans for "a low-density residential (approximately six dwelling units per gross acre) development situated amongst Zen Gardens, Parks, the Equestrian Center and the Club House." It also claims that 65 percent of the property will be preserved as open space, but the plans reveal most of that area consists of a rectangular lake.

Continued on page 30



The overgrown Williams Island property is slated for 860 low-cost housing units.

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**Golf**

Continued from page 28

Calls to the property manager of Presidential Estates were not returned. The golf course sits idle inside the private, walled community that abuts the east side of I-95 near the Broward County line.

Functional Westview Country Club, founded in 1948 and sitting on 180 acres at 2601 NW 119th St., is reportedly headed for limbo. One knowledgeable source, who asked not to be named, says the members of Westview recently voted to sell the entire club to an individual who has plans to create a private country club — without golf. Matus of Williams Island Associates says that sagging membership is ruining Westview and other clubs. “There’s a lot of concern,” he says. “Golf courses are becoming very difficult to run due to annual membership renewal.”

When a golf course dies, the property can become overgrown with weeds, or it can be repurposed. Even going natural requires management because of the heavy alteration of the land. A prime



**The owner of the California Golf Club property has ambitious plans for a future Le Club Resort.**

example of what can happen to a large former golf course comes from Pembroke Pines in southern Broward County.

Although the city’s commission approved a housing development for the former Raintree Golf Resort in 2006, the

plan collapsed along with the real estate market. The city bought the 112-acre property for \$9.1 million in 2009 and plans to devote one-third of the property to wetland restoration and public parks. Currently in the permitting process, the

property may also house public works buildings and commercial properties.

The city is seeking grants to fund the conversion of the golf course into a park. Do they think that other golf courses should be similarly converted? “I hope not, because it would mean another South Florida business has failed,” says Chuck Vones, Jr., assistant director of parks and recreation. “But if it does happen, and the city is fortunate enough to have forward-thinking elected officials like the ones in Pembroke Pines, who understand the value of open space and park property for the future of the community, it will be a very wise decision to purchase it.”

Other communities are doing the same. In Deerfield Beach, residents want to transform the Tam O’Shanter Golf Course into a cemetery. The Village of Royal Palm Beach six years ago bought the 160-acre Traditions Golf Course for \$4.5 million and are now using grants to help create the Royal Palm Beach Commons Park. Near Tampa, the Lemon Bay Conservancy went door-to-door collecting funds to help purchase a former

Continued on page 32

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## Golf

Continued from page 30

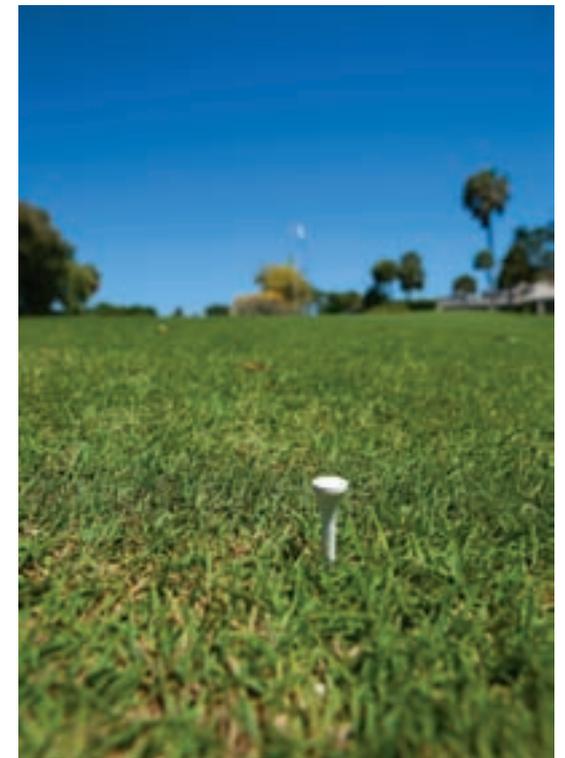
golf course for \$750,000. Union County, New Jersey, did it. Richmond, Indiana. Onsted, Michigan. National City, California. And so on. In many cases, portions are zoned for development while other portions are reserved for parkland.

This is a new formula for a new era, and many believe the math works out well. Golf courses once were considered the golden ticket for housing developments, a belief that led to a boom in residential golfing communities up through the 1990s — and to a glut of courses and housing units. But research now shows that parks can be more valuable than golf courses when it comes to enhancing property values. After all, people want to live near beautiful parks.

Despite the evidence of golf's decline and despite the energetic creativity being shown by municipalities nationwide, here in Florida we get the "Jack Nicklaus Golf Trail." Though the bills have been withdrawn, they can be put back in the hamper at any time. Should they end up as law, there would be consequences.

For example, a course would be *required* to be built in Jonathan Dickinson State Park Martin County. The local Audubon chapter posted on its website a manifesto in opposition: "Designing and constructing new courses in areas of high environmental sensitivity such as Jonathan Dickinson State Park will result in undesirable impacts to the very natural resources that the Florida Park Service is working diligently to protect.... The clearing of natural habitat and the introduction of fertilizers and pesticides would impose unnecessary impacts on an area that is managed to sustain populations of native flora and fauna.... Golf courses in Florida are facing challenging times economically, and Audubon of Martin County sees no reason to impact ecologically valuable habitat for the purposes of what may not be a fiscally responsible initiative."

The battle to preserve Jonathan Dickinson State Park and Florida's other parks, none of which now has a golf course, becomes very confusing because it pits one "Audubon" against another. The organization Audubon International supports



**The future of golf in Miami looks bleak, but parks advocates are smiling.**

the golf course trail in state parks. It turns out that this "Audubon," which operates separately from the conservation organizations using the same name, receives funding from the U.S. Golf Association.

"Their purpose is to work with golf course developers, and our purpose is to preserve habitat," says Eric Draper, executive director of Audubon of Florida. It did just that in Tennessee. Audubon International designated several courses of the Tennessee Golf Trail as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary." The 11 courses of the Tennessee Golf Trail were built within state parks, and three of them were designed by Jack Nicklaus.

Other states have golf trails, and some also have courses inside state parks. But the coupling has not proven successful. The Tennessee Center for Policy Research reports that every course of the Tennessee Golf Trail loses money, and the system as a whole has lost \$7 million since 2005.

So what will happen to golf in our area? Will Oleta River State Park trade in its mountain-biking trails for links? Will there be thousands of new homes built on the abandoned golf courses?

Don't blink or turn a blind eye, because before you know it, what little green space we have left could be covered in concrete.

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# April Films & Special Events



**Illegal** March 31- April 3  
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When Russian immigrant Tania and her son are caught living illegally in Belgium, Tania is forced into a detention center while Ivan escapes. Threatened with imminent deportation and fearful for Ivan's fate, Tania embarks on a harrowing journey, determined to preserve her dignity and find her son. In French with English subtitles.

**Violet Tendencies** April 7-10  
Directed by Casper Andreas

In Violet Tendencies, the last of the fag hags – loved, yet lonely – endeavors to leave all her gay friends to find a man of her own. Will she have to change the person she is to get what she wants? With humor and hysteria, Violet discovers the true meaning of family.



**Square Grouper** April 14 - 17  
Directed by Billy Corben

A colorful portrait of Miami's pot smuggling scene of the 1970s, populated with redneck pirates, a ganja-smoking church, and the longest serving marijuana prisoner in American history. From the filmmakers who made Cocaine Cowboys and The U.



**Bill Cunningham New York** April 21 - 24  
Directed by Richard Press

For decades, Bill Cunningham has been a cultural anthropologist obsessively chronicling fashion trends and the likes of Anna Wintour, Tom Wolfe, & Brooke Astor for the NY Times. This delicate, funny poignant film is a portrait of a dedicated artist whose wealth is his own humanity and unassuming grace.



**Vidal Sassoon: The Movie** April 28 - May 1  
Directed by Craig Teper

A true rags-to-riches tale, tracing Sassoon's path from a London orphanage to international success and celebrity who revolutionized the world of hair with his pioneering, geometric, Bauhaus-inspired styles and "wash and wear" philosophy that literally changed the world with a pair of scissors.



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7pm Wine Reception  
8pm Screening

April 18th to 22nd  
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# Museum Park Party Poopers

Activists' legal challenge to the art and science museums get a boost

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Contributor

On November 10, 2010, officials from Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami posed in white hard hats while hoisting shovels to mark the groundbreaking of a new \$220 million Miami Art Museum (MAM). And in a recent press release, the Miami Science Museum's board of directors vowed to commence construction later this year on their \$275 million new home.

To help pay for the new museums, scheduled for completion in 2013 and 2014, the county is kicking in up to \$220 million in taxpayer-funded bond money, and Miami is handing over 30 acres of publicly owned waterfront property known as Bicentennial Park. Once both museums are complete, Bicentennial Park becomes Museum Park.

But a pair of lawsuits filed by activists Elvis Cruz and Grace Solares, along

with Miami Neighborhoods United (MNU), claim Museum Park is illegal. "It is pretty cut and dry: They have no business leasing the land to the science museum or the art museum because the terms of that lease are directly contrary to the city's charter," says Linda Carroll, attorney for Cruz, Solares, and MNU, an organization representing 18 homeowners associations across Miami.

Despite the efforts of city and museum legal teams, those lawsuits are making their way through the courts. On February 15, the Third District Court of Appeal summarily denied a petition from the city that sought to dismiss the lawsuit targeting MAM. That failed move was an appeal of Circuit Court Judge Barbara Areces's earlier refusal to dismiss the MAM lawsuit outright.

"This is, my friend, again another victory for the little people," Solares, an MNU board member, wrote in an e-mail after the appeal court decision.



MAM's new home has won raves from critics — for its design.

Miami Deputy City Attorney Warren Bittner says his office will not comment on "ongoing litigation." MAM's attorney, Joe Serota, stresses that this is just the beginning. "We are in the very early stage of the case and the success rate of a motion to dismiss is very low," he says. "To say this is some kind of loss to the city is not accurate."

On May 9, Judge Areces will rule on a motion to dismiss the suit against the Miami Science Museum. "We think we have a well-founded motion to dismiss," says Douglas Halsey, the science museum's lawyer.

Should that happen, Serota says he'll ask Areces to take a second look at the MAM case. "I think that opens the door for us to say, 'Judge, what about us?'"

Critics of the Museum Park deal felt that Bicentennial Park could have been rejuvenated with far less taxpayer money, and they bristled at prospect of valuable public land being handed over to a pair

of influential nonprofits.

Among those critics was Cruz, a founding member of MNU, who sued the City of Miami in November 2009 to stop MAM. MNU joined Cruz's suit a few months later. By November of last year, Cruz, MNU, and Solares (who works for Carroll as a paralegal) had filed a second suit to stop a new Miami Science Museum from being built in Bicentennial.

Aside from infringing on the city's comprehensive plan, which Carroll says forbids public buildings from being constructed in areas vulnerable to flooding (like Bicentennial Park), the attorney asserts that the Museum Park plan violates a city charter amendment Miami voters approved a decade ago. Known as the Carollo Amendment after former Miami Mayor Joe Carollo, the law prohibits

Continued on page 40

# Waterfront Park Still Afloat

The City of Miami may yet purchase Manatee Bend in the Upper Eastside

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Contributor

The City of Miami could ink a deal to buy 1.2 acres of riverfront land in the Palm Grove neighborhood as early as this month, according to a representative of a state agency. When and if that happens, the fenced-off forest of coconut, oak, and gumbo limbo trees will be on its way to a new life as an urban waterfront park.

"It's a beautiful piece of land and it is going to make a beautiful park," beams Eileen Bottari, president of the North Palm Grove Community Organization. Bottari and other area activists have been trying for more than two years to get the city to purchase the land, which hugs the Little River at 457 NE 77th Street Rd., and turn it into a park. "There's so little access to the water right now," Bottari adds, "so it would be

wonderful to have this."

Spencer Crowley, Miami-Dade County's representative to the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), a state taxing district that funds waterway improvements along Florida's east coast between Miami-Dade and Nassau counties, says it's possible the city will have a contract this month to buy the land from its owner, Skip Van Cel.

The sooner a deal is done, the easier it will be for the city to obtain a \$117,500 grant from FIND, Crowley explains. "It would really be best to have a final price [by April 1]," he says. "But if they don't, there may be ways we could still ultimately contribute 25 percent of the purchase price."

Van Cel, a real estate investor and former publisher of *Biscayne Times*, says his asking price is \$635,000. However, he's somewhat skeptical that the city,



Lush and serene: Oaks, coconut palms, gumbo limbo trees along the Little River.

which backed away from buying his land last summer, will close a deal with him. "I'll believe it when I see it," he says.

Van Cel calls the land Manatee Bend, after the manatees he often sees swimming by. He insists he's selling the property to the city at a discount because he wants to see it become a park: "I've never offered the property to anyone but the city at this price, as I'd like to see it

preserved for public use."

City spokeswoman Cristina Fernandez says two appraisers were sent in early March to determine the value of Manatee Bend, a process that was to be completed within 45 days. If the appraisals are higher than Van Cel's asking price, Commissioner Marc Sarnoff,

Continued on page 38

BT photo by Jacqueline Doulis

# Design District Dilemma

In order to grow, you need customers, who need parking, which isn't there

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Contributor

To build or not to build a parking garage in Miami's Design District. That's the question facing the Miami Parking Authority's board of directors, and they must answer it by July 6.

If the agency decides not to build on the property it owns at 3800 NE 1st Avenue, it will be *required* to sell the 31,520-square-foot parcel for "at least \$1.26 million" to someone who *will* build a garage there. So says a new agreement, drafted this past March 2, between the parking authority and Dacra, the Design District's largest property owner. The agreement also stipulates that the garage must include 404 spaces and 15,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.

Art Noriega, CEO of the parking authority, says he doubts his agency, which is self-governing but is overseen by Miami's mayor and city commission, will be able to build the garage, putting the

odds at just 20 to 30 percent. "It is more likely that we will bid it out [for purchase]," he says. Noriega also believes that Dacra will likely be the buyer.

"We've been trying to get this built for seven years," says Dacra president and CEO Craig Robins. "The neighborhood needs parking. We want customers to be able to park in a cost-effective way."

Steven Gretenstein, Dacra's chief operating officer, believes a 400-space parking garage is just a drop in the bucket for the district's future needs. At the parking authority's March 2 meeting he said, "We think it's a minimal addition to the neighborhood, that we're going to need probably more like 1000 or 1500 additional parking spaces in the neighborhood over the next five to ten years."

Finding parking in the Design District can be a crap shoot. During a recent weekday afternoon visit, the *BT* had no problem finding a spot on the main drag, NE 40th Street, just west of NE 2nd Avenue. Store managers and business owners, however, are adamant



Architectural rendering of the parking garage designed by Timothy Haahs & Associates.

that during the day, when restaurants are busy and shops and galleries are open, parking is impossible.

During special events such as the Second Saturday art walks, which draw hundreds of locals and visitors, and the annual Art Basel fair, which attracts tens of thousands, parking is at an even greater premium.

Kristin Chucci, assistant manager of United Nude shoe store, says that once or twice a week she'll see a car towed away, often belonging to a visitor who inadvertently parked in a loading zone.

"They pay to park," she says, "but they get towed anyway."

Jeff Morr, president of Majestic Properties on 40th Street, says that even though Robins provides \$3 valet service for Design District patrons, the need for more parking is acute: "There is no reason *not* to build a parking garage here."

Morr also predicts that parking prospects will worsen as more restaurants and fashion houses move into the district. For example, developer Asi

Continued on page 38

# The Further Adventures of Biscayne Plaza

There's a new supermarket, and a fledgling farmers market, but definitely no Walmart

By Karen-Janine Cohen  
BT Contributor

Calling it a renaissance would be a wild stretch, but recent events at Biscayne Plaza, the iconic shopping center at 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, are giving nearby residents hope that one day small retailers, yoga studios, and cafés might join with anchor tenants to create the kind of neighborhood nexus they've long desired.

Mindy McIlroy, a top executive at Terranova Corp., the Miami Beach-based firm that manages the center, says several million dollars will be spent on upgrades, and ink is almost dry on a lease with a

national "soft-goods," retailer. "We need some of those big-name retailers to come to Biscayne Plaza to drive leases into the smaller spaces," she says.

Sabor Tropical Supermarket swooped in at the last minute to replace Presidente after that chain balked at signing a long-term lease. Sabor not only signed a ten-year lease, but agreed to spend more than a million dollars on improvements. A Saturday farmers market has been at the plaza since February, and plans are afoot to attract local artists to vacant second-story office spaces.

McIlroy, herself an Upper Eastside resident, has taken a personal and public interest in the center. "This really speaks



BT photo by Karen-Janine Cohen

A Saturday farmers market is drawing new customers to Biscayne Plaza.

to me," she says of the plaza. "I know that corner is irreplaceable real estate. It's such a powerful corner."

And after years of wild rumors (Publix? Target? Walmart?) and residents frustrated by Terranova's opacity

about its intentions, McIlroy is reaching out to homeowner associations and neighborhood groups from all areas that border the plaza to keep them apprised

Continued on page 42

# Get Ready, Get Set, Vote!

On April 12, Miami Shores will have seven choices

By **Mark Sell**  
BT Contributor

Here's your cheat sheet for questioning Miami Shores candidates, seven of whom are jostling for four open seats on the Miami Shores Village Council, and the chance to wrestle with a looming million-dollar budget shortfall.

If the watchword in 2009 was "change," the word for 2011 is "creativity," which you can read as a euphemism for doing without. The winners will need to find ways to save money, avoid layoffs, cut services as little as possible, raise fees carefully, and generally try not to make too many people unhappy.

Candidates for the dollar-a-year positions include three incumbents: Steve Loffredo, 58, an attorney and on-and-off council member since 1987; Prospero Herrera, 49, director of support services at Miami-Dade College; and businessman Hunt Davis, 41.

Former Mayor Jim McCoy, 47, a commercial real estate broker, has jumped in and is running a notably aggressive campaign. Three political newcomers are also in the mix: attorney Angela Alvero, 45; retired police captain and attorney Robert Swan, 60; and Jesse Walters, 55, a former convention and visitors bureau executive in suburban Philadelphia.

The four winners will join current (and three-time) mayor Al Davis, 71, whose term ends in 2013. Former Mayor Herta Holly will step down as she reaches her ten-year term limit. The first and second top vote-getters usually become mayor and vice mayor, respectively, and win four-year terms. The others will serve

two-year terms. Miami Shores Village has a strong village manager and weak mayor form of government, in which the mayor serves as tie-breaker on the dais and as the "face" of the village to the Miami-Dade League of Cities and other groups.

Voters can question and meet the candidates at 7:00 p.m., April 6, during a candidates' forum at the village's Community Center (9617 Park Dr.), where they will also vote from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12.

Miami Shores has felt the same lash as other municipalities, with 25-percent cuts in property tax revenues, 10-percent decreases in department budgets, cuts in state and federal revenue sharing, and now the budget shortfall that will demand creativity.

Some recent or current and prospective council members have felt the recession's sting in their own work lives. Donald Shockey, who ran in 2009 as an avatar of change and dose of energy, had to quit. He lost his position as an urban planner shortly after the election and, after a long search, took the only job in his field he could find, at the NATO compound in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Hunt Davis, councilman from 2007-2009, who lost by a squeak to Prospero Herrera, was appointed to serve out a two-year term rather than the four to which Shockey was elected. That's why the council has four openings this time rather than the usual two or three.

Of the candidates, Jim McCoy is running the most vigorous campaign. You might surmise that he's bucking to reclaim his old job as mayor, although he will not say it. "The village needs a cheerleader



Angela Alvero



Hunt Davis



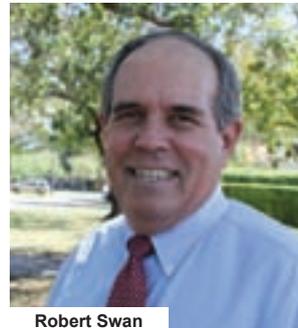
Prospero Herrera



Steve Loffredo



Jim McCoy



Robert Swan



Jesse Walters

and a face," he says, citing his substantial community service as former Greater Miami Shores Chamber president, Doctors' Charter School champion, and 2010 Village Citizen of the Year.

McCoy is also registered as a lobbyist for Barry University, which he says he did as a precaution in his status as a mediator between Barry's interests and the village's. He was the commercial broker in a failed March deal for Barry to acquire the Everett Building on the 9600 block of NE 2nd Avenue in a short sale at slightly more than half the \$4.5 million purchase price.

As of this writing, the building is on the verge of going back to the original owner, ex-Mayor Henry Everett, in a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure. McCoy was a partner in it with owner Ruben Matz before selling his interest at a significant loss in January 2009. If Everett gets the building back, Matz will have lost two

of the three downtown city blocks he purchased at the height of the boom. The property is behind in taxes to the tune of \$308,000.

McCoy says that, if elected, he will end his lobbyist/mediator arrangement with Barry and will recuse himself from council matters involving the

university. Village insiders unanimously say relations with Barry have improved markedly over the last two years, and all candidates place good relations with the university as a top priority.

Hunt Davis promises attentiveness to the budget and a hard look at fees and taxes, as well as youthful energy as the youngest candidate. He is Al Davis's nephew and vice president in the family business, Rampmasters Inc., which builds and supplies ramps. While both Davises are mindful of the village purse,

Continued on page 40

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### Design District

Continued from page 35

Cymbal plans to build 80,000 square feet of office and retail at 41st Street and NE 1st Avenue, while Dacra intends to add 1.5 million square feet of hotel, residential, and retail to the 500,000 square feet the company already controls in the Design District. Says Morr: "The Design District is going to be an alternative to Lincoln Road and Bal Harbour."

While Art Noriega could not tell the *BT* how many MPA-controlled parking spaces currently exist in the Design District, he's aware of the need for more. "There is certainly a parking shortage, and there's a need for a garage," he says, "but the issue is where to build the garage and how can you afford to build it?"

In 2004, soon after the parking authority bought the parcel for \$1.1 million, Dacra won a bid to lease 300 spaces in a future 400-car garage that was estimated to cost \$8 million. The lease rate was never determined as the parking authority never built the garage. "The problem was that we couldn't figure out a way to build the garage cost-effectively, where it would make sense for the kind of demand," Noriega recounts. "We couldn't make the numbers work up to this point."

He adds that the site is also not the easiest place to develop a garage. "It is a little tight," he notes. "Because it's such a small, condensed, tightly bounded district, you don't have a lot of options."

In October 2010, Robins asked the parking authority to sell him its land for \$1 million so he could build the garage himself. (Noriega says the land, which is now being leased to a landscaping business, is now worth \$1.25 million.) When Noriega replied that state law required the parking authority seek bids in order to sell property, Robins settled for an agreement that gave the parking authority until this month to decide whether to build a garage or sell the land.

A month ago that timeline was extended, giving the parking authority until July 6 to make a decision, June 30, 2012, to start construction, and November 30, 2013 for completion. Otherwise it must sell the land to someone who intends to build the garage to the specifications created by Timothy Haahs & Associates, the consulting firm hired to design the garage.

During the March meeting, Dacra's attorney, Neisen Kasdin, claimed his client had spent \$250,000 for the garage's design and development. He asked that Dacra be

Continued on page 43

### Waterfront Park

Continued from page 34

whose district includes the property, says he will ask his colleagues on the commission to buy the property. But if the appraisals don't match, then, he says, "We could have a problem."

Van Cel bought Manatee Bend from Robert Gray, a former Eisenhower administration official and retired public-relations executive credited with helping to sell the Persian Gulf War to the American people in 1991. Intending to build condos, Gray bought the land for \$2.4 million in January 2005. In December 2009, at the height of the recession and the depth of the real estate market's collapse, Van Cel purchased Gray's land for a mere \$285,000 in cash.

When Van Cel offered to sell Manatee Bend to the city last year, Miami administrators initially responded enthusiastically, lining up two funding sources outside the city's besieged general fund to pay for it. In May 2010, Miami officials received the blessing of Gov. Charlie Crist and his cabinet to obtain

\$550,000 from the \$1.5 million Biscayne Bay/Miami River Land Acquisition Fund, financed by Bayside Marketplace rent proceeds. Miami was also on track to obtain \$185,000 from FIND.

Then city manager Carlos Migoya slammed on the brakes, withdrawing Miami's FIND application in June 2010 after balking at the \$450,000 profit Van Cel stood to make. (Van Cel says a private assessment firm he hired last year valued the property at \$1.1 million.)

Spurned by Miami officials, Van Cel put Manatee Bend on the market for \$800,000. He says he later changed his mind and drew up plans to build eight cottages and a spiritual center on the property. "My sense was that it should be preserved in some fashion," Van Cel says. "Eight units are not offensive."

After Migoya resigned and was replaced as manager by Tony Crapp, Sarnoff again pushed for the property's possible purchase. This past February his office allocated \$3400 to pay for the two appraisals. "The city is doing its due

Continued on page 42

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### Vote!

Continued from page 36

and while Uncle Al supports his nephew actively, they are not clones in their approaches or votes. Where Al Davis is garrulous, bearlike, and instinctive, Hunt Davis is cerebral, physically compact, and analytical, as befits his Vanderbilt M.B.A. pedigree. Hunt's strong suit is his diligence in budget matters.

Steve Loffredo offers nearly 30 years of institutional knowledge, legal expertise, experience with downtown, and creative approaches to saving money or gathering revenue. He says he wants to hold the line on layoffs and seek ways to cut costs with the least pain. One of his most prominent ideas this year is a composting program to recycle waste and save money. He is a champion of downtown development, but says "the village cannot create the market."

Prospero Herrera, who has served four years in his most recent stint and two in a previous term, considers his knowledge of downtown and budget matters to be his strengths. His main budget priority is to raise fees for nonvillage residents and promote NE 2nd Avenue as a destination for financial, legal, medical, and other professional services. While he was a mover behind rebranding NE 2nd Avenue as "Village Place," retail lease signings have stalled.

Jesse Walters, a veteran executive who grew a suburban Philadelphia convention and visitors bureau budget

from \$300,000 to \$2.2 million. He presents himself as a spirited and creative candidate who promises a needed jolt to the council. He plans to focus much of his attention on the country club and downtown Miami Shores, proposing a downtown "czar" as a one-stop shop for permitting and zoning issues. Walters vows not to increase property tax millage. He also notes that he was "the only nonincumbent who actually attended the budget hearings."

Robert Swan, a member of the Miami Shores Code Enforcement Board, the Country Club Advisory Board, and the Miami Shores Mobile Patrol, pledges to "spend only what is absolutely necessary on programs for the Shores." He also proposes saving costs by pooling the village's pension funds with the State of Florida's, and medical insurance with Miami-Dade County, which negotiated a popular, relatively low-cost package with AvMed.

Attorney Angela Alvero, a four-year resident and member of the Recreation Advisory Board, cites her community involvement, legal skills, enthusiasm, and creativity as assets, and her love of the community as a prime motivation in her decision to take the plunge while relatively new to the village.

The candidates all say they are "not running against each other." That amity may come in handy as they have their work cut out for them.

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### Museum Park

Continued from page 34

leasing public land for more than five years. It also requires that the land be leased to the highest bidder. The only way around those requirements is if a majority of the city's voters approves the deal.

But the Museum Park plan gives each museum a lease of up to 99 years, for which they pay \$2 a year. Carroll argues that the lease value of Bicentennial, which has never been put out to bid, exceeds \$40 million. "If the city wants to lease Bicentennial for 99 years, and if the museums want it, take it to the voters," she declares. "But elected officials want to turn a deaf ear to what the charter says."

Serota counters that the charter amendment doesn't apply to this deal. "There is an exception in the charter for this kind of property," he explains. "It is use for a governmental purpose — a

public park for a museum." The comprehensive plan also allows museums in public parks as a conditional use, he adds.

The city and museums have argued that state statute requires "special injury" must be shown for individuals to have standing to challenge Museum Park, hence their continuing motions for dismissal. In MAM's case, Judge Areces ruled that Cruz and MNU did have standing to challenge the museum's lease, but asked for more evidence of their right to enforce the city's comprehensive plan.

Carroll remains confident of her clients' challenge to both museums. "I feel equally strongly that the arguments presented take a plain read of the charter," she says. Should the judge agree, the lawsuits demand that the leases be voided and the museums kicked out of the park.

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### Biscayne Plaza

Continued from page 35

of events. So far her efforts seem to be paying off.

"I'm enthusiastic about the future and I have a lot of faith in her, and what she's trying to do," says Jack Spirk, immediate past president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association.

McIlroy is even willing to confront rumors. While Terranova has talked to Walmart over the years, and the Arkansas retailer may ultimately find a spot along the Boulevard, McIlroy states flat out: "They are not coming to Biscayne Plaza."

Still, she knows that making Biscayne Plaza work is like fitting together a jigsaw puzzle. While the more affluent neighborhoods to the east and across the causeway would like to see upscale retailers — Whole Foods is mentioned often — it's the working-class areas to the west that supply the center with most of its customers.

And the plaza's owners, Green-East #2 Ltd. (Stephen Bittel, Terranova founder, has a small stake) not unreasonably want to make money. "From the retail perspective, it's a balance between the profitability goals and the desires of the investors, and marrying that up with what the community wants to see," McIlroy says.

The farmers market, run by the Urban Oasis Project, could be one step in assembling that puzzle. It's pulling shoppers from all the adjacent neighborhoods. On a recent Saturday, Alejandra Slatapolsky arrives at about 11:00 a.m. and is soon absorbed in selecting arugula while eyeing an assortment of organic tomatoes. "I love this," enthuses

the North Bay Village resident, there with her husband and one-year-old girl. She first came to the market several weeks earlier. On this trip, she even ventures into Sabor. "We started coming to the plaza because of this [the farmers market]," she says.

The covered stalls hold an abundance of well-priced organic produce: corn, beans, greens of all kinds, giant red onions, and edible nasturtium plants with yellow blooms. Also under the canopy is flute player and entrepreneur Gregory Norflee, selling a variety of African-American and African-themed goods, such as dashiki shirts.

Each week brings more customers, says Melissa Contreras, a founder of Urban Oasis, which aims to provide healthy produce to all of Miami's residents, including areas such as Liberty City that traditionally have few organic and farm-fresh produce options. "It takes a while for any market to be established," she says. "Last week was so crowded we could hardly keep up."

Biscayne Plaza's neighbors can't be blamed for clutching at small signs of progress at the center, whose ups and downs the last few years have included a close brush with demolition as well as the possibility of joining the nearby MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District. (That plan, still under consideration by the city, has been modified and would now only include portions of the plaza bordering the Boulevard.)

Few Miami shopping centers come with such an interesting past. Built in the mid-1950s, it was part and parcel of

Continued on page 43

### Waterfront Park

Continued from page 38

diligence," he says.

Although Miami officials must reapply for a FIND grant, spokeswoman Fernandez says the \$550,000 grant from Bayside Marketplace's rent is still available. As for FIND, Crowley says his board will rank applications in June and July. If Miami's application for Manatee Bend makes the cut, funds will be available by October 1.

But over the past year, land values may have dropped in that part of Miami. According to the Miami-Dade County Appraiser's website, Manatee Bend was worth slightly more than \$1 million in 2009. Last year, however, the county slashed its value to \$264,757, a dramatic drop that Van Cel

disputes. Assessments made by the county and those made by private appraisers significantly different, he says.

His own recent research indicates that Manatee Bend is now worth between \$700,000 and \$725,000, still substantially more than his \$635,000 asking price. The fact that Manatee Bend is a vacant waterfront property zoned for multifamily use also makes it rare, he adds.

Regardless of the differing appraisals, Van Cel says he is so interested in seeing Manatee Bend become a public park that he's delayed his development plans. "I'm taking a wait-and-see attitude," he says.

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## Biscayne Plaza

Continued from page 42

the auto-centric aesthetic that underlies the design of nearby motels and other Boulevard buildings. Tucked up against the center is the old Admiral Vee Motel, a masterpiece of midcentury Miami Modern architecture. The plaza was once home to such staples of Americana as J.C. Penney's and the Lerner Shops. But over the years, residents saw one store after another leave for bigger, enclosed malls.

About five years ago Green-East was ready to raze the mall and replace it with a \$400 million mixed-use development, complete with high-rise towers. Then the real estate market went bust. In the wake of the demise of that plan, the property seemed to look more forlorn with each passing year, upkeep an afterthought. Immigration lawyers whose offices once filled the second floor left when the federal government moved its immigration agency out of the 79th Street building across the street. Many in the neighborhood despaired last year when even Big Lots picked up its lawn furniture, dog beds, ramen noodles, and fled.

Yet as commercial real estate comes back, Green-East seems willing to give the plaza another chance — at least for now.

It will take more than goodwill, however. The farmers' market, which like all local markets goes on hiatus in the summer, will only have use of the plaza until the end of the year — unless Rafael Castro, who owns Sabor Tropical, can be persuaded that customers the market pulls in offset any loss in produce sales.

And the name of that soft-goods retailer remains to be seen. McIlroy says the announcement will come in about two to three months. She also says a number of artists have called to

ask about the second-floor spaces, and hopes some will move in by August. She needs about a dozen to start. The plaza's owners back the initiative, she says, which could also include murals on some buildings. "We must figure out a way to reintroduce the community to Biscayne Plaza," she adds. "I think creative individuals bring energy and enthusiasm."

Some say that if Biscayne Plaza's owners want to make it more than a placeholder for eventual development, they should court higher-end stores now, even locating them alongside value chains. "It needs more density," says Bob Powers, president of the Palm Grove Neighborhood Association. "You can have your dollar stores, but what does a dollar store bring to the neighborhood? People who buy dollar-store stuff."

The area is without middle-of-the-road stores, he says, such as a Sears. "The plaza needs to do an evaluation of what is there, what is the market, who spends money in that area, and what is lacking."

As gas gets more expensive, Powers observes, people are looking to move closer in to Miami, intensifying an ongoing trend. "The neighborhood is already becoming more middle-class."

Both Powers and Spirk believe the next step is to persuade Green-East and Terranova to consider green space. Spirk would like to see areas behind the mall bordering the Little River become a park. Powers says landscaping would go a long way toward making the plaza more welcoming. "They need trees," he says. "They need trees in that parking lot. If they relandscape that place, it would make all the difference in the world."

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[on the garage design] and they own a significant portion of the district."

Nevertheless Steve Rhodes, another Design District property owner, thinks Dacra will have plenty of competitors. "Oh, absolutely. Any developer will take a shot at that," he says. "It's a profitable venture — having a parking garage and having retail downstairs."

Rhodes says he's tempted to make a bid himself, though he has never developed a garage. "But you know, I have partners who probably will jump at the chance," he says.

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## Design District

Continued from page 38

"reimbursed" \$30,000 for past expenses if the garage is built by the parking authority or another company, and \$150,000 if those companies fail to build it. MPA board members balked, noting that such expenses are simply costs of doing business. Kasdin withdrew the request.

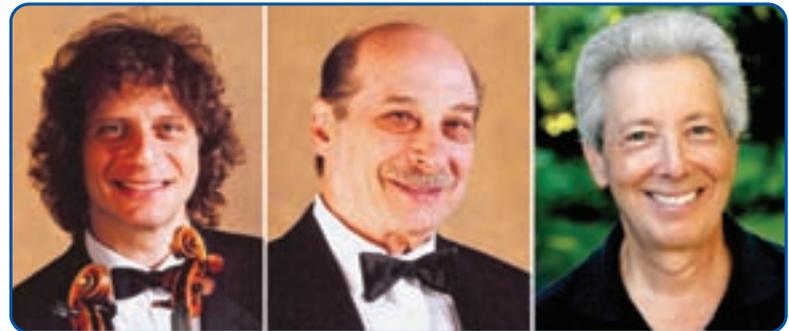
Even without a reimbursement clause, Noriega believes Dacra will end up being the garage's developer. "They don't inherently have an edge," he says, "but they have a lot more information



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# No Signs of Nightlife

Aventura has everything anyone could want — except a good after-hours place

By **Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer**  
BT Contributor

I like to begin my columns with a cute lead-in or some kind of little anecdote to get readers in the mood for my chosen topic or point, but this month I choose to withhold all verbal foreplay and get right to the matter at hand. I want to talk about the nightlife in Aventura. Or better yet, ask why *isn't* there any to speak of?

As a town, Aventura's reputation for having the best of everything precedes it: the best shops, the best mall, the best doctors. But when it comes to nightlife, the city falls *w-a-a-a-y* short.

Let me clarify my definition of "nightlife," because when I first set out to write

this column, I was thinking mostly nightclubs. You know, late-night dance clubs, where the young and beautiful dress to kill, sip Champagne, and party till the break of dawn. Then, after realizing that there wasn't actually one of those here (save for one or two sad little places that desperately — unsuccessfully — masquerade as such), I decided to expand my parameters to include bars and lounges.

The former I define as down-and-dirty, no-frills establishments in which to drink a beer and hang (as in, "belly up to the bar"). The latter I consider intimate spaces often adorned with sheer or heavy curtains, and filled with groupings of sofas, comfy chairs, and low tables. These places often sell bar bites



for nibbling. They're great for conversation, sipping martinis, and unwinding with friends.

Justin's is one such place. Located in a strip mall on Biscayne Boulevard, it has had a modicum of success, meaning it hasn't changed names, concepts, or gone out of business after a few years in the same spot. I really wanted to chat with the folks at Justin's, but after a few

calls and an e-mail, I got no return call. I even left a message on their reservation line. Oh, well.

Let's move to a third and final category: restaurants that try to offer a "bar scene." To be perfectly fair, there are a few in the area — technically North Miami Beach — that are making this work, including Houston's, Morton's, and Miami Prime Grill. (As always, I



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find it pathetic that Aventura residents flock to safe, “vanilla,” chain restaurants and won’t support independently owned places in their own community, but that’s a topic for another column.)

Miami Prime Grill is primarily a sports bar and grill, and it’s probably one of the only independent eateries in the area that offers good food, a big bar, multiple big-screen TVs, great specials, and has a following. On any given night you can find guests ranging from college students to the early-bird-special crowd eating at a table or chilling by the bar.

Farther up the road, there’s the “scene” at the Village at Gulfstream Park, which is minimal at best, at least thus far in its short life. The Yard House, though, is usually jammin’ (while the adjacent Prime Bar is empty). Now, while my disdain for chains is apparent, and Yard House is a chain, I do like it. It’s inviting. And I believe that *that* is where most every Aventura place misses the mark. The décor is off, the warmth isn’t there, and the service is spotty at best. And that’s just for cocktails!

As for clubs, they’re simply not happening at all. The establishment that

currently resides in the old Ivy space was briefly a restaurant and wine bar (which took a year to die, give or take a few months) before becoming a “high-end dance club.” But it simply doesn’t have the right make-up. Small, in the middle of a residential neighborhood, and off the main street, it isn’t set up for success. (I believe they recently incorporated a burger joint into the space. I have not been there so I cannot rightfully offer commentary, but still, that does say something about the state of business, doesn’t it?)

Aventura is also partially to blame. As a city, it does not really have the right demographics to sustain a club scene. We lack the allure of South Beach or even the “spring break” reputation of Fort Lauderdale, and don’t have anything approaching a Young Circle like in Hollywood. We have families and 45-plus-year-olds, as opposed to 20-something hardcore clubgoers. We also lack “star

**I want a good neighborhood joint where I can go for a drink, a bite, and just hang out. It’s not asking so much, is it?**

power.” No J.Lo, Marc Anthony, Kardashians, or Dwyane Wade living here. All we have is Dennis Rodman, and well, quite honestly... we’re all over that.

As a 44-year-old woman, I want a good neighborhood joint where I can go for a drink, a bite, and just hang out. But I also like to “play” sometimes, and that requires more of a club setting. I

want something close to home; after all, drinking and driving don’t mix. It’s not asking so much, is it?

Apparently not, because a place just like that opened more than a year ago. Okay, it was in Hallandale Beach, not Aventura, but still, very close. The club, MI-VI, was at the Village at Gulfstream Park and seemed to be doing well. It had South Beach nightlife impresario Gerry Kelly behind it. And then it vanished. Just like that. It was fun while it lasted, though.

All of which made me think: “Let me call Gerry.” He is one of South

Florida’s most knowledgeable people on the subject of clubs. I’ll get his take on the situation. If anyone could shed light on the subject of why nothing — not clubs, not lounges — seems to catch on here, it would be Kelly. “Aventura is an upscale, posh community,” he told me over the phone. “Everyone lives in a gated community. There are ordinances that prohibit clubs from staying open past 2:00 a.m., and that’s when the clubs get going. Nightclubs are a business. It’s a formula. You need the mystique, the star power, the right clientele. Right now, LIV at the Fontainebleau is the hottest nightclub. All the Aventurans who *do* want to be out are driving down there. It’s all about ‘see and be seen.’”

And perhaps that’s okay. We don’t really need a “club scene” here, although it is creeping north. By the time you read this, Kelly’s new venture, Trio on the Bay, on the 79th Street Causeway, will be open. What we need is a place for locals to go when they want a mellow night out of the house that is welcoming and fun. Enough.

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# Good Fences, Good Neighbors

Let the debate begin: Chain-link? Masonry? Nothing?

By **Gaspar González**  
BT Contributor

As most readers know, I'm a big fan of participatory democracy. I like to see residents get involved in local issues, make their feelings known. With rare exceptions — the debate around last year's FPL franchise agreement, for example — there doesn't seem to be enough of that in Biscayne Park. Or at least not until a real hot-button topic comes up. Now, apparently, we have one.

The code review board has spent some time crafting new language to cover the installation of previously verboten fencing. This may not seem like a big deal to an outsider, but in Biscayne Park, we

take our fences — or lack thereof — very seriously. Some residents, citing security and quality-of-life concerns, want them. Others, noting Biscayne Park's "openness," are staunchly opposed.

What's a local government to do? Ours, smartly — albeit rather late in the process — held a workshop to encourage dialogue and solicit thoughts and ideas. Presided over by the code review board and village commission, the meeting was held on February 24 and was, by turns, illuminating, funny, and maddening. In other words, a great example of democracy in action.

A little background: The village code currently allows no side fences (along the street side) for corner lots. The board sought to change this in response to

requests from those homeowners, who complained that corner lots often have very small backyards, thereby making the side yard the logical place for cookouts, parties, and other family activities. Without a fence on the side, they maintain, there's virtually no privacy. Fair enough.

But like a loose thread that you pull on, the process eventually brought up the question of fences in front yards, which are also banned. (For what it's worth, I think any fence that faces a street should be considered a front-yard fence, but hey, I'm not on the board.)

Eventually — following input by the village commission at its February

meeting — potential changes discussed at the workshop came to include: allowing four- to six-foot-high side fences on corner lots, with most traditional fencing material except chain-link being deemed appropriate; allowing front-yard fences



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up to six feet in height, so long as the upper half or more consists of ornamental ironwork or some other see-through feature; and eliminating height restrictions on hedges.

The board and commission got an earful. One gentleman spoke passionately about his desire to fence in his front yard in order to prevent his child from running into the street, as well as to keep a dog for protection. (He told of once having to forcibly remove a panhandler who wandered onto his property during a family barbecue.)

Other fence advocates preferred to make an aesthetic case. A landscaper who lives in the Park argued that homeowners should be allowed to “express themselves.” Another resident said that he had already spent \$5000 on an elaborate gate, but that it had just been sitting in his yard for the past few years because he isn’t allowed to install it.

On the opposing side, many emphasized the historic “garden” layout of the community, with one resident offering the opinion that people buy in Biscayne Park precisely *because* there are no fences allowed.

That may be going a bit far, but the folks who spoke that night all made good points. Security and privacy are legitimate issues for many residents. It’s also true that, if people are willing to take on ownership of a house, with all the expense and responsibility that that entails, they probably should be given some latitude when it comes to tailoring the property to their taste. And yes, Biscayne Park is a community with a unique character that we should cherish and work to preserve, and that should be taken into consideration as well.

But that’s what makes this a textbook civics lesson — any fair resolution will require some degree of compromise. I don’t have a corner lot and I don’t want a fence in my front yard; I live along a large median, and I like the way that my yard runs out to the green. I also don’t necessarily want to tell my neighbor that he can’t have a fence just because I don’t want one.

On the other hand, if he does put up a fence, I’d like to know that it isn’t going to be so obtrusive or unsightly that it will ruin my enjoyment of the neighborhood. I imagine most residents — protective of

their own rights, respectful of their neighbors’ — are in a similar place.

The upshot of the workshop was that the code review board realized it needed more time to come up with better language regarding what it would and wouldn’t allow. The extension was granted by the village commission at its March meeting, with instructions to the board to come back with a “comprehensive plan,” which seemed clear enough, until, at the same meeting, a majority of the commission also voted to rescind its previous directive to the board to author guidelines for six-foot fences in front yards. So “comprehensive” looks to be a relative term. The board may produce guidelines for front-yard fences in its final report if it chooses, but is under no obligation to do so.

Judging by the March 22 meeting of the board — which I also attended — it now seems to be leaning toward okaying front-yard fences that are primarily decorative in function: no more than three feet high, and perhaps limited to stone or masonry construction. This wouldn’t address the security concerns of front-yard-fence advocates — and a three-foot

front-yard fence may look funny next to a six-foot side fence — but it’s a conversation-in-progress. The board next meets on April 12. Let’s hope they come up with a truly comprehensive plan that avoids the “hodgepodge” that so many fear.

And speaking of fear... While the various meetings have been mostly constructive affairs, there has been one unfortunate tendency among some residents and board members: Whenever they want to express opposition to allowing certain types of fencing — say, vertical rods or the dreaded chain-link — they worry aloud that, if we were to do so, we might become “like Hialeah” or “like Kendall.” (Incredibly, there even has been mention of Venezuela!)

Surely we can express our views on what constitutes a desirable neighborhood aesthetic without disparaging surrounding areas and, by extension, the people who live there. After all, while the thought of Biscayne Park becoming another Hialeah is appalling to some, old *Myamuh*, circa 1950, was no paradise, either. Y’all get what I’m saying?

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# Of Mangos and Mitzvahs

When everything comes of age, all at once

By Jen Karetnick  
BT Contributor

Forget showers. April, it seems, is the month for bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs. My daughter's contemporaries are beginning to celebrate that milestone, as are the kids of some of our friends from high school and college. We've been invited to six this month, both in and out of town. Though that's not very many if you think about what the teens who grow up in very Jewish areas do. They go to several parties *every weekend*. Unfortunately we won't be able to attend all.

The "when it rains, it pours" idiom also applies to mangos this time of year.

April is the month when I can see if the Miami Shores mango trees are going to have a record season or, like last year, if our local varieties are taking a break from producing anything at all. This year skews to the former. All over the village, including a tree I never noticed smack in the middle of Miami Country Day's courtyard, we had a very healthy bloom, right on time, and the fruit has set beautifully.

At Mango House, we have tons of maturing mangos, and only a modest amount of self-reduction is littering the yard. Which is a very good thing, because my dogs have discovered a newfound taste for baby fruit. (And we have just gotten down the weight of



the dachshund, whose disc rupture in October left her briefly paralyzed, and in emergency surgery that was more expensive than my engagement ring.)

Speaking of expensive, how do mitzvahs and mangos hang together? Not because I alliterate constantly, although that is the job of the poet, but because

I multi-task about my responsibilities wherever I am — in my sleep, at my jobs, in my car (where I practically live these days). It's also because now is when my daughter is just beginning to heat up on her own bat mitzvah studies. To begin with, she's chosen her "mitzvah project" — the months-long effort toward

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something good and charitable that shows her to be worthy of becoming a valuable adult member of Jewish society. And I've promised to help her.

Zoe has always been passionate about raising money for Operation Smile, the organization that donates medical services for fixing children's cleft palates and other facial deformities. She likes it because it's about kids and helping them feel good about themselves; I like it because it's worldwide, instead of focusing on just one country. So this year the mangos are going to mouths — medically speaking, as well as literally.

In other words, if you see a green-eyed 12-year-old peddling fruit door to door around the Shores — no doubt she'll be trailed by her skinny little brother, struggling with mangos that weigh as much as two pounds each — rest assured it's for a charitable concern. She's going to put the funds raised toward her mitzvah project.

Of course, that's barely going to make a dent in the overall haul. So naturally there's a second plan in the works. This summer I'm going to be testing recipes for a book, *Romancing*

*the Mango: Recipes for the Obsessed*, for University Press of Florida. The recipes will be mine, yours, and ours. That's right — if you have a mango recipe that you treasure and think is unique (please, no mango salsa!), feel free to send it to me (romancingthemango@gmail.com) for possible inclusion in the book.

There's no payment, aside from a copy of the book, but you'll have the joy of knowing several things: You'll be donating to Operation Smile, because proceeds from *Romancing the Mango* will eventually be heading there, as well as my favorite charity, Doctors Without Borders (alas, publication date isn't until 2013, so you'll have to wait awhile for that satisfaction). You'll be published alongside some superstar chefs from Miami, including Andrea Curto-Randazzo, Douglas Rodriguez, and Michael Schwartz. And you'll be able to use the mangos from Mango House.

Yes, I'm going to be giving away my mangos the same as usual. There'll be hundreds a day at the height of summer, so those who e-mailed me last year and received the disappointing news of "nope, nothing" can rest assured that this

year is quite a different story. All I ask is that you wait until June, bring your own bags and boxes, and don't come in the middle of the night. Oh, and if you could pick up a couple of rotten mangos and bag them at the same time, that would help, too, especially with the rodents.

You see, just like bat mitzvahs and mangos, rodents are very much on my mind of late. Those enabling squirrels are dropping juicy bits right into my dachshund's mouth. Just today I had to pry a completely skinned, little green mango from her jaws, one she scooped up after it bounced off her long, pointy head. And we're finally starting to see fruit rats, also called roof rats, with their dark coats and long tails. A pair of these rats can produce four to six litters per year, with four to eight pups in each litter. That's an average of 30 new rats annually from just one mama and papa, and these babies become sexually mature in only two or three months.

Why I am suddenly such an expert? Last week a dead one was outside the pair of French doors that open into my bedroom. And as I write this, a live one is hiding behind my refrigerator. This is

courtesy of my cat, Monkey, who found him among the immature mangos and decided to bring him into the house to play with during a thunderstorm. Hence the reason why every single light in my house is on and I am upstairs in my office hiding — er, writing — and waiting for pest control to come eradicate him.

These may be just desserts, the karmic equivalent of "open mouth, insert foot." Only a couple of columns ago, I was relating the tale of my friend Robb and his oven-glove-and-colander technique for catching wayward rats, and joking that he should get himself "more effective cats." Looks like I have dyslexic ones, who not only don't keep them away from the house but do me the extra courtesy of bringing them into my bedroom.

I have the awful feeling that I'm going to be putting Critter Control on speed dial. And as I contemplate the amount of gift-giving and plane-ticket-buying I'm doing for this round of bar mitzvahs, I wonder if there's a similar service for coming-of-age ceremonies.

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# Miami Ink

Budget gaps, dishonest politicians, heartbreaking stories — it's business as usual in the morning paper

By Frank Rollason  
BT Contributor

Last month I read a column in the *Herald's* sports section titled "The Heat just can't catch a break," and as I read through the rest of the paper, it occurred to me that *all* of South Florida just can't catch a break. The hot news topic that day was the tragic death of Nubia Barahona. It was a sad chronicle of one bumbling misstep after another by almost every agency that had responsibility for a piece of this poor little girl's predicament.

No one paid attention to the pleas and the red flags, and Nubia paid the ultimate price with her life. Of course the obligatory Blue Ribbon Panel was installed to

"get to the bottom of this" and ensure that it will "never happen again."

We now know many of the gory details of the miserable existence of Nubia and her brother Victor, and that "heads have rolled," "new systems have been put in place," and "more case workers will be hired to limit the case loads." So we can all go back to feeling confident that this will never happen again. Right! (If there can be one last, small measure of justice for Nubia, my wish would be for the courts to restore her original family name so her grave will not carry the name of the bastards who took her life, and she can rest in peace.)

One related tidbit that did catch my eye was that one of the individuals



trying their best to inform DCF (Florida Department of Children and Families) of the plight of these children called the Miami-Dade Police Department, only to be told to call DCF directly! It was a case of the old "not my job" response, with a child's life hanging in the balance. As far as something like this never happening again, there was a story on the *same day* under the headline "Two

kids' bodies found in canal." They were the children of a mother who was also slain and discarded like a piece of trash. These children, too, were under the auspices of DCF. Another case ending in another tragedy for our community. We just can't catch a break!

But back to that day's paper. There was another article, this one on the front page of the local section: "Alvarez

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criticized over transit group.” It concerned a group of county transit employees working on the Miami-Dade mayor’s behalf to defeat the upcoming recall election — while they were on the clock. How it happened was anybody’s guess. There was the hue and cry from the mayoral wannabes about this being an abuse of power and a dastardly use of taxpayer money. Even more ironic was the outrage of county Commissioner Natasha Seijas. (Talk about the pot calling the kettle black!)

However, for pure comic relief, nothing matched county manager George Burgess doing his best Sergeant Schultz impersonation: “I know nothing... Nothing!” This guy has been a piece of work since being named county manager, hiding behind everything and everyone whenever a controversial issue hits the proverbial fan.

Down the road, when Alvarez reflects on his tenure as mayor, he will perhaps begin to see that Burgess was greatly responsible for his fall from grace. Can you believe the gall of this guy to offer himself for the position of CEO of Jackson Hospital! I cannot imagine a responsible board (or even an

irresponsible one) saying, “Hey, let’s get this Burgess guy! He’s done a great job for the county and I’m sure he won’t run us any deeper into financial ruin!”

Fortunately Burgess had enough sense to fall on his own sword when the mayor lost the recall by a landslide, resign from his position as county manager, and remove his name from consideration for the Jackson Health System. I particularly liked his quote at the press conference: “I need to take a break.” George, you may take a break — a long one, we hope — but our community just can’t *catch* a break!

Another article: “Miami revenue shortfall threatens reserve.” Here we have another shoe dropping in the ongoing budget woes of the City of Miami. It appears the projected revenues from red-light cameras, the tax on video gaming machines, hiked safety inspection fees for vehicles (whatever that is), additional fees to use city swimming pools, and increased boat-docking rates have fallen far short of the expected \$18 million.

The city may — and I emphasize *may* — receive approximately \$10 million from those sources. Or something

like that, give or take, according to the city’s financial guru, Larry Spring.

The commission, being informed of the situation, took no action other than a hand-wringing session that resulted in comments like “We have to be realistic in our projections.” The most priceless quote came from Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, addressing the shortfall in anticipated red-light-camera revenue. “I warned them all along,” the commissioner stated. “I said people are going to change their pattern of behavior.” Of course, he voted for the cameras and for the budget that included the unrealistic revenue projections he now says he knew were inflated to begin with. The city just can’t catch a break!

Finally, there was an article headlined “Miami officer accused of scheme.” It told of a Miami police officer, Vernell Reynolds, allegedly falsifying documents — including a birth certificate — to make it appear that her sister is the legal guardian of her own son. In this scheme, because the sister is considered low income, Reynolds’s son was eligible for \$7000 in scholarships to attend a private school. Reynolds, incidentally, is a past president of the Miami Community Police

Benevolent Association, which represents black officers. You cannot make this stuff up.

Officer Reynolds denies wrongdoing, and her attorney has said that she “vigorously intends to fight these charges in court.” Meanwhile, as per police department policy, Reynolds has been relieved of duty *with pay* while under investigation. If she is eventually found guilty, I wonder if the department will recover the salary she received while awaiting trial. That would seem fair. But don’t count on it. The Miami Police Department just can’t catch a break!

So what is the thread that weaves its way through all of these stories? That thread is public service and what it means. Public service is a special calling. Sometimes, in extreme cases, it may mean giving one’s life, and that sacrifice is readily accepted by those who serve honorably. Those who do not are hardly worth the ink it takes to write of their misdeeds. And yet the papers are full of their stories every day — at least, when we catch them.

Give me a break.

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# No Place Like Home

Yes, Miami is crazy and chaotic, but it's way better than anywhere else

By Wendy Doscher-Smith  
BT Contributor

“Green! Green! Everything is so green!” This might be my response to a *The Life and Times of Kermit the Frog* special on PBS or my dismay at the substances clogging my throat and nostrils for the past 12 days while I fend off the Deathstar Phlegmatica of a cold I've been battling.

Actually, it's neither. Rather, this is always my gleeful response as I peer out of the car window at all the life, the sheer lushness, both of plants and diversity of people, in my native city. This most recent outburst came after

landing at MIA in January. I should note that my gleeful response while staring out the airplane window at the decidedly unfrozen city beneath the mammoth steel wing is always tempered with: “Oh, shit! I hope I don't die upon impact and not get to take in the green of my native city in person.” Yeah, I love to fly the friendly skies!

It's been three years since my husband and I packed up our furniture, dogs, ferret, and ourselves, and headed north for his job. Very north, to upstate New York or, as I prefer to call it, New Yuck. Lord God, what a colossal mistake! And I'm here to tell all you whippersnappers not to take the same misstep into the utter, icy slush of despair. For the love of



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

all that is holy, don't ever leave this city!

I mean it. I don't care what kind of life you think you will have, what kind of opportunity you are after, what you've been guaranteed, if there are millions of virgins waiting for you in the Promised Land of Wherever It Is That Is Not

Here... It doesn't matter. It will suck.

You can argue with me if you'd like. I don't care. The Voice of Experience comes with deaf ears. Seriously. Just trust me on this one, okay? Take it from someone who knows! Whatever your problems may be here in Miami, they are

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counterbalanced by a very dynamic city. That's right. The same city you shake your fist at while sitting on the Palmetto, helplessly chugging \$3.60-a-gallon unleaded gas.

The same city you live in where not everyone speaks English as a first language. Oh, boo hoo, poor you. Let me tell you something: You won't give a rat's hairless ass which language anyone is speaking when you are two-feet deep in snow and your gray fingers are so numb you can't grasp the house key to escape the outside hell — *your* outside hell. And while I'm on it: Do you know what it is like to actually understand what other people are always saying? All the time? I didn't until I moved away from Miami. Well, that sucks, too! I ran out of gauze to stuff in my bloody ears listening to all the stupid things people discussed. Sometimes ignorance *is* bliss.

And while I'm still on it — on the topic of multiculturalism — do you know what it is like to be surrounded by white people all the time? It's horrifying. Try it. God, it's boring. So many pot roasts, so little time. Better yet, try getting a decent cup of coffee. Good luck,

bucks! I hope you like brown water with your *leche*.

Look, you may not be aware of this. I know I wasn't. And I'm aware of everything. To a fault. Ask anyone who knows me. Being that aware kinda ruins your life a little bit.

Know what else does? Moving from Miami to some other place. At the time we decided to leave, it seemed like a golden opportunity. Hell, we even thought our prayers had been answered. My husband was employed by a company in the boating industry. The country was on the brink of a depression. Fact: When funds run low, pleasure crafts get washed up in the tide of life and take a back seat to priorities like eating and paying expensive healthcare costs. My husband was nervous. There had been some cuts at work and he didn't want to be next.

That's reasonable. What wasn't reasonable is what came next. This ridiculous, seemingly too-good-to-be-true job opportunity. And you know what they say about something that seems too good to be true, right? (And what they say about clichés, and the size of your feet, and...screw it!)

The point is: It *was* too good to be true. Duh. I knew upstate New Yuck would not be a stunning oasis of opportunity and a veritable hotbed of aesthetic pleasure, but talk about your underestimations. I was now living in hell, and the best part was — are you ready for this — I put myself there! Yes! My fault! I encouraged my husband to take that job because it seemed like the wise thing to do, the adult thing to do, the responsible thing to do. And he agreed. What a couple of idiotic nincompoops!

Problem is, I never thought a geographical location served as a home, as something that made you feel comfortable and complete. You don't hear a lot about that. You hear an awful lot about "the importance of family." Snarf! Family is supposed to be there for you. Okay, well, for some that may be true. I guess it is even true for me because, if it weren't for my family, I wouldn't be here typing this in the air conditioning of my Brickell co-tel (you know, condo-hotel). Assuming I had not bashed my head to a pulp with a chunk of frozen river, I would be typing it in upstate New Yuck.

However, family means people and people means ulterior motives and, most likely, disappointment. A city is not selfish. A city is reliable. Like a dog. You know what to expect. You get unconditional love, something very few families or people are able to provide. Miami is always here. The sun is (almost) always out.

It is a chaotic city, but even that is predictable. Sure, the guts of the city change. The city breathes and your favorite restaurant goes out of business. The city stretches and the roads become more congested. A dog barks, but then rests.

I've come to the realization that a city — this city — is ultimately what is here for me. For you. Unconditionally. With all its foibles and wonders. I feel it in the whisper of the breeze that wafts off Biscayne Bay, where manatees rest, and in the creak of the palm fronds. I hear it in the sounds of the flocks of wild parrots and I taste it in the tangy flesh of the carambolas from my childhood backyard tree. And I never should have forsaken it.

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# Mapping Vizcaya

In his latest work, Cuban artist Ernesto Oroza navigates the famed estate's history, both real and imagined

By **Anne Tschida**  
BT Contributor

Visiting Vizcaya Museum and Gardens is a quintessentially Miami experience. The view of Biscayne Bay is spectacular. The gardens are lush and tropical. And the interior design of the faux Italianate villa is so over-the-top, so wannabe A-list as to be, well, so Miami.

The house was built by one of South Florida's first transplanted tycoons, a product of the Gilded Age, James Deering. He wanted his mansion to look as though it had been around for centuries, like a real Old World landmark. So in 1916 he had his designer, Paul Chalfin, appropriate a mish-mash of styles from the 16th to 20th centuries for the new structure.

In 1953 this quixotic specimen of grandeur and excess — really, a Disney-fied version of a European castle, years before anyone had even heard of Uncle Walt — became a museum, run to this day by Miami-Dade County.

This history, simultaneously real and imagined, organic and borrowed, captivated Ernesto Oroza, a Cuban-born artist who spent a year walking the museum. The more he walked, the more he noticed the quirky secrets of the villa — on the floors, the walls, and even in the mix of visitors flowing in and out. Oroza eventually came up with *Archetype Vizcaya*, the latest in the

Contemporary Arts Project series commissioned by the museum.

Oroza has literally mapped out the normally unseen highlights of Vizcaya in an artful brochure, which includes a legend with numbers and symbols. On a sunny, cool day, he points out some of his explorations.

When he first started making his rounds, he says, he noticed what was constantly under his feet: the floors made of marble, terrazzo, wood, tile, different styles all shoved together, sometimes in a single room.

In particular it was the marble that really caught his eye. It is, he explains, the ultimately “contaminated” material. Over thousands of years, minerals and weather have infected the stone, imposing on it that unique quality of veins running through it. “To mineralogists, these shapes that we consider beautiful are, in fact, impurities that invaded the rock,” Oroza explains. “Any piece of marble in Vizcaya may be considered the diagram of a similar process of contamination that has occurred during the life of the building.”

And, he adds, marble shouts out wealth, another central theme of Vizcaya. From ancient times until today, marble columns, sculptures, and especially floors have signaled to visitors that money and power inhabit a space. And Vizcaya is covered in it.



Photos courtesy of Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

**James Deering, a Gilded Age tycoon, found Miami to be the perfect place for his visions of faux grandeur.**



**Vizcaya was designed in the era of Cecil B. DeMille, and any resemblance to a larger-than-life movie set is intentional.**

Modeled on 17th- and 18th-century Venetian floors, the marble layerings in the villa were imported, likely from North Africa, another way for moguls like Deering to flag wealth “and worldly experience,” says Oroza. “It was from the beginning meant to be a *showroom*.”

As you move from room to room with Oroza's map, you see the beginnings of Miami as a place where outside influences and manufactured identities dominate. We reinvent ourselves here all the time. “History” is malleable. Pasts are remade or just erased.

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Take the Breakfast Room. It is decorated in a pseudo-Chinese style, popular in the late 19th Century, with lacquered furniture (actually crafted by a Cuban team) and a painting of a South China Sea fishing scene (actually painted in the late 1600s by a Frenchman). As the new deputy director for collections and curatorial affairs, Flaminia Gennari-Santori, who is overseeing the art series, quips: "Look closely. One of the fishermen was really born in 1916!" The original painting was expanded to fit the wall, which meant adding figures and subjects. Talk about imposition and contamination.

Other stops on the map reveal subtle points that would go unrecognized without some help from Oroza, such as details in the 550-year-old rug depicting the "Hand of Fatima."

Oroza's own interventions are few, and are pasted on Plexiglas barriers in certain rooms: silhouettes depicting invasive plants that have been imported to Miami through the years, endangering the native vegetation. The Plexiglas itself is its own, strange intervention, says Oroza — something that jumped out at him, like the floors. When the villa became a museum, these Plexi plates were installed to keep visitors from harming valuable objects or venturing too deep into the rooms. But as Oroza points out, they were haphazardly placed, in some cases protecting relatively unimportant works, while other more precious pieces stood completely exposed.



**Artist Ernesto Oroza's *Espacio Provisional*, an installation within his *Archetype Vizcaya*.**

A third segment of this unconventional art exhibit involves Oroza's "mapping" of the people who have passed through Vizcaya over the past half-century. Using the Web, he gathered amateur videos of *quinceañeras*, weddings, parties, and star-studded concerts, which unspool in a continual loop (Oroza adds to it when he can) in the South Gallery. This study of human interventions at the site leads him to understand something else about Miami. As a relatively recent arrival from Cuba, Oroza says he had never visited the museum. But once he started hanging out, he saw how central the place has become to the local Cuban



**Oroza gathered amateur videos of parties, weddings, and galas held at Vizcaya, which unspool in a continuous loop.**

community, another important layer in Miami's multilayered history.

From Deering to Chalfin, from the property's African and Japanese plant species to exile families celebrating coming-of-age rituals — and even the hands behind this exhibit (the Cuban Oroza and Italian Gennari-Santori) — Vizcaya reflects so many of the influences that make up the broader cultural terrain here.

Oroza has devised a clever way to uncover all this. As Gennari-Santori writes in the exhibit's introduction: "The map directs us to look at the surfaces beneath our feet and, in doing so, breaks our normative viewing habits and frees us to participate in an intensive treasure hunt for curious artifacts. Oroza's map is an object in its own right that can be taken home and enjoyed as a piece of art or wallpaper, or in any way one wishes."

*Archetype Vizcaya* is a highly conceptual work from a very intellectual mind, but it can be engaged on almost any level. If you've never been to this amazing museum, here's your excuse; follow the map through the house, or just take the opportunity to wander and stumble on some interesting tidbits.

Circling back to the idea that Vizcaya was, from its inception, supposed to be a showroom, Oroza points out it was designed in the era of Cecil B. DeMille, and any resemblance to a larger-than-life movie set is intentional. "It was made to be photographed," he says. "It was made to be catalogued." And of course it was made to be explored.

*Archetype Vizcaya* by Ernesto Oroza runs through May 29 at the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, 3251 S. Miami Ave.; 305-250-9133; [www.vizcayamuseum.com](http://www.vizcayamuseum.com).

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)



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**ABBA FINE ART**

233 NW 36th St., Miami  
305-576-4278  
www.abbafineart.com  
Through June 9:  
"The Pulse of Nature" by Debra Holt  
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"Vanities" by Debra Holt

**ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS**

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305-438-0220  
www.alejandravonhartz.net  
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"Earth. Rites of Restitution" by Teresa Pereda and  
"Urpflanze" by Ivana Brenner  
**Reception April 9, 6 to 9 p.m.**

**AMY ALONSO GALLERY**

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**ART FUSION**

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www.artfusiongallery.com  
April 1 through June 22:  
"TIMELESS TREASURES" with various artists  
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**ARTSEEN GALLERY**

2215 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-237-3559  
http://artseenspace.wordpress.com/  
April 2 through April 31:  
"Abe's Penny Live!" with Lee Materazzi, Francie Bishop Good, Samantha Salzinger, Robby Campbell, Cynthia Cruz, Nicole Doran, Patti Her & Sleeper  
**Reception April 2, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX**

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www.bacfl.org  
Audrey Love Gallery  
April 8 through April 30:  
"Art and Sole: BAC and Ombu Shoes" with Elise Martin, Leonardo Leggieri, Jenny Perez, Greg Gale, GG, Vanessa Vejar, Joseph Rojas, Alex Pabian, Orahec

McDonald, Giorgio Roman, Christian Bernard, Anica Shpilberg, José Pacheco Silva, Colleen Kelley, Marcia Ramos-Perello, Dan Bondroff, Regina Jestrow, Amalia Brujis, Pat Ross Marx, Donna Lee Steffens, Jason Snyder, Patricia Gutierrez, Irena Gapkowska, Janet Mueller, David Tupper, and Russ Ronat  
Swenson Gallery  
"Between the Layers: MIA Master's Thesis Exhibition" by Maeve Eichelberger  
**Reception April 8, 7 to 10 p.m.**  
April 17:  
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April 19:  
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**BASHA GALLERY**

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305-891-4624, www.bashagallery.net  
April 1 through April 30:  
"BE ARTVENTUROUS" with Ellen Chafetz, Jorge Chirinos Sanchez, Allyson Krowitz, Noreen Morelli, Lenore Robins, Arnaldo Rosello, Dan Schneider, Kari Snyder, and Carol Staub  
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www.blacksquaregallery.com  
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"The City" by Zhanna Kadyrova  
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**Agustina Woodgate, No Rain No Rainbows, recycled stuffed animal skins, 2011, at Spinello Gallery.**

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"tapando el sol con un dedo: places, spaces and ascension" with Steffani Jemison, Jamal Cyrus, Hamlet Lavastida Cordovi, and Glexis Novoa

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www.caridigallery.com  
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www.visual.org  
Through May 28:  
"Across America" by Clyde Butcher

**CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY**

250 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-292-0411  
www.charest-weinberg.com  
Through May 21:  
"The Forest" by John Espinosa

**CHRISTOPHER MIRO GALLERY**

71 E. Flagler St., Miami and Villa 221  
221 NE 17th Street, Miami  
305-741-0058  
www.christophermirogallery.com  
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**Reception April 9, 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.**

**CITY LOFT ART**

61 NE 40th St., Miami  
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www.cityloftart.com  
April 9:  
"Light Meets Color" with various artists.  
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**Reception April 8, 6 to 9 p.m.**

**DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY**

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April 9 through May 7:  
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**Reception April 9, 6 to 9 p.m.**

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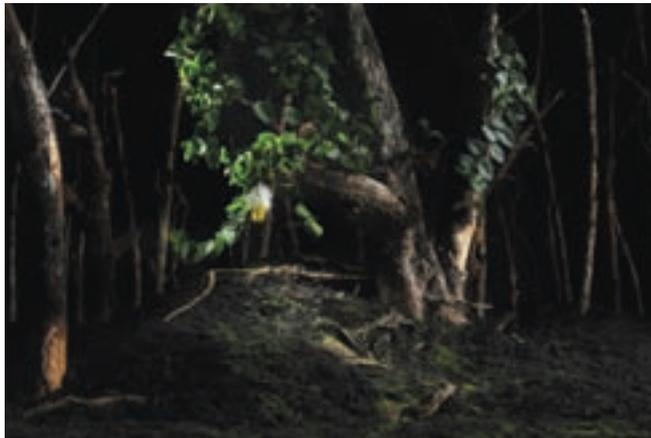
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**Samantha Salzinger, *Untitled 2*, ink jet print, 2011,  
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"Miami Heat Art Exhibition" with Kirk Maggio, Erika  
King, Gary Longordo, Justyn Farano  
**Reception April 9, 6 to 10 p.m.**

**KABE CONTEMPORARY**  
123 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-573-8142  
www.kabecontemporary.com  
Through May 10:  
"CIRCUS MUNDI" by Adriana Jebeleanu

**KELLEY ROY GALLERY**  
50 NE 29th St., Miami  
305-447-3888  
www.kelleyroygallery.com  
April 7 to May 7: "Untamed Rhythms" by Neltje  
**Reception April 9, 2 to 9pm**

**KIWI ARTS GROUP**  
48 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-200-3047  
www.kiwiartsgroup.com  
William John Kennedy's Fine Art Photography  
Collection of Early Pop Artists  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**KUNSTHAUS MIAMI**  
198 NW 24th St., Miami  
305-438-1333  
www.kunsthhaus.org.mx  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**LOCUST PROJECTS**  
155 NE 38th St., Miami  
305-576-8570  
www.locustprojects.org  
Through April 30: "Purgatory (False Ceiling)"  
by Typoe  
**Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**LOU'S BEER GARDEN ART SHOWCASE**  
7337 Harding Ave., Miami Beach  
(305) 704-7879  
www.lousbeergarden.com  
April 7 through April 8:  
"Lou's Beer Garden Art Showcase" by John  
Miller and Simone Corrado  
**Reception April 7, 7 p.m. to 12 a.m.**

**MAOR GALLERY**  
3030 NE 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-9995  
http://maormiami.org/

April 9 through May 27:  
"Leaving Egypt" curated by Eric Charest Weinberg  
**Reception April 9, 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.**

April 19:  
"Passover Seder" hosted by Chabad in Midtown  
**Doors open 8 p.m., seder begins 8:30 p.m.**  
\$42 adult per person, \$26 child, \$72 sponsor. RSVP  
by April 14  
infochabadmidtownmiami.org

**MIAMI ART SALON**  
36 NW 36th St., Miami  
305-775-9683  
www.miamiartsalon.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information

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

**MIAM-DADE COLLEGE, CENTER GALLERY**  
300 NE 2nd Ave., 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.

**MICHAEL PEREZ POP ART GALLERY**  
Shops at Midtown Miami  
Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami  
786-325-0074, www.michaelperez-artist.com  
April 1 through April 15:  
"Art 4 Love" by Chad Love Lieberman  
**Reception April 1, 6 to 10 p.m.**

**MUSEO VAULT**  
346 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-751-1175  
www.museovault.com  
Call gallery for exhibition  
information.

**MYRA GALLERIES**  
177 NW 23rd St., Miami  
631-704-3476  
www.myragalleries.com  
April 9 through May 31:  
"Far East and Middle East Meet Miami" with  
Burhan Dogancay, Dinorah Delfin, Haruna Sato,  
Silas Shabelewska, Kwon Soon Ik, Paul Ching-  
Bor, Hussien Edalatkhah, Niki Kouhpayma,  
Phil Kyp Chang  
**Reception April 8, 6 to 9 p.m.**

**NEW WORLD GALLERY**  
New World School of the Arts  
25 NE 2nd St., Miami  
305-237-3597  
April 14 to May 20:  
"Bey[on]d Paper: Books, Prints and Drawing Exhibition"  
by various artists  
**Reception April 14, 6 to 9 p.m.**

**NINA TORRES FINE ART**  
2033 NW 1st Pl., Miami  
305-395-3599  
ninatorresfineart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**NORMAN LIEBMAN STUDIO**  
2561 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-573-3572  
www.norman-liebman-studio.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**O. ASCANIO GALLERY**  
2600 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-200-4315  
www.oascaniogallery.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**OHWO**  
3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami  
305-633-9345  
www.oh-wow.com  
Call gallery for exhibition  
information.

**PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS**  
2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-2400  
www.panamericanart.com  
April 9 through May 21:  
"The African Caribbean" works by  
Santiago Olazabal, Manuel Mendive,  
and Daniel Boxer  
**Reception April 9, 6 to 9 p.m.**



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**PAREDES FINE ARTS STUDIO**  
2311 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-534-2184  
www.miguelparedes.com  
Ongoing: "Elements of an Artist" by Miguel Paredes  
**Reception April 9, 5 to 10 p.m.**

**PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART**  
2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-2900  
www.praxis-art.com  
Through May 7:  
"Colorforms" with Louis Cameron, Michelle Carollo, Gisela Insuaste, Doreen McCarthy, Freddy Rodríguez, Ines Raiteri, Julio Suárez, Marelá Zacarias

**SAMMER GALLERY**  
82 NE 29th St., Miami  
305-441-2005  
www.artnet.com/sammerglassery.html  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**SOHO STUDIOS**  
2136 NW 1st Ave., Miami  
305-600-4785  
www.sohostudiosmiami.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**SMALL REPRIEVE**  
NE 41st St. between N. Miami Ave.  
and NE 1st Ave., Miami  
Through June 30: "Small Reprieve" by Jim Drain

**SPINELLO GALLERY**  
155 NE 38th St., Miami  
786-271-4223  
www.spinellogallery.com  
April 9 through May 28:  
"Collectivism" by Agustina Woodgate  
**Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**STASH GALLERY**  
162 NE 50th Ter., Miami  
305-992-7652  
www.myspace.com/stashgallery  
April 23 through May 13:  
"Suicide Love and Epiphanies" by Billy Keats  
**Reception April 23, 7 to 11 p.m.**

**SWAMPSPACE GALLERY**  
3821 NE 1st Ct., Miami  
http://swampstyle.blogspot.com/  
swampstyle@gmail.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**TONY WYNN MODERN ART GALLERY**  
3223 NE 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-536-9799  
www.tonywynn.com  
Ongoing:  
"First Lady Fantasy & Neon Art" by David Mayberry  
**Reception April 9, 6 to 10 p.m.**

**UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE**  
2200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-284-2542  
April 9 through May 1: "Creativity Driven by Southern Hospitality" by Sean Smith  
**Reception April 9, 6 to 10 p.m.**

**WHITE VINYL SPACE**  
3322 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-776-1515, www.whitevinylspace.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.



**Heriberto Mora, *Wisdom*, oil on canvas, 2011,  
at Kelley Roy Gallery.**

**WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART**  
201 NE 39th St., Miami  
305-576-6960  
www.wrpfineart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

**YEELAN ART GALLERY**  
250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami  
954-235-4758  
www.yeelanart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information.

## MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

**ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA**  
800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach  
305-674-8278  
www.artcentersf.org  
April 8 to May 8:  
"Winning Art!" with Anthony Ardavin, W. Andre Allen, Adriana Carvalho, Tony Chimento, Wendy Coad, Tom Cocotos, Pablo Contrisciani, Alfonso Corona, Xavier Cortada, Matu Cronney, Natasha Duwin, Eurydice, Susan Feliciano, J. Kevin Foltz, Katerina Friderici, Luis Garcia-Nerey, Rosa Naday Garmendia, Jaime Gil, Peter Hammar, Alex Heria, Kathy Kissik, David Leroi, Jules Lusson, Ena Marrero, Gustavo Matamoros, Rene Barge, Venessa Monokian, Hugo Moro, Brandon Opalka, Alexkey Sabido, Beatrice Sagar, Damian Sarno, Lissette Schaeffler, Franklin Sinanan, Nina Surel, Lisa Switalski, Alexandra Trimino, Antonia Wright, David Zalben, Luisa Mesa  
**Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**BASS MUSEUM OF ART**  
2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach  
305-673-7530  
www.bassmuseum.org  
April 1 through July 3:  
"An Invitation to Look: Selections from the Permanent Collection of The Bass Museum of Art"  
with various artists  
**Reception April 28, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)**  
1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-455-3380  
www.cifo.org  
April 9 through April 23:  
"POST... The 2011 NWSA BFA Candidates' Visual Arts Exhibition" with Nicole Burko, Franky Cruz, Karla R. Davila, Gustavo González, Mauricio Gonzalez, Nanjoo Hong, Stacye Jones, Herman F. Kaizedo, Jessie Laino, Iimchoy lee, Inga Lovev, Veronika Lugo, Melissa Mastroeni, Maria Fernanda Mayorga, Denisse Monge, Natalia (Macky) Orтели, Francis Pisfil, Colin Sherrell, Dominique Thomas, Sam Ubinas, and Zonia Zena.  
**Reception April 9, 7-10 p.m.**

**DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE**  
23 NE 41st St., Miami  
305-576-6112  
www.delacruzcollection.org  
Opening April 9:  
"Amor Infinitus" by Kevin Arrow  
**Reception April 9, 7 to 10 p.m.**

Lecture with Scott Rothkopf  
**Lecture April 15, 7 p.m.**

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM**  
10975 SW 17th St., Miami  
305-348-2890  
thefrost.fiu.edu  
Through April 17:  
"Gran Torino: Italian Contemporary Art" with Alighiero Boetti, Marco Gastini, Piero Gilardi, Giorgio Griffa, Luigi Mainolfi, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Gilberto Zorio, Salvatore Astore, Nicola Bolla, Botto&Bruno, Paolo Leonardo, Simone Martinetto, Pierluigi Pusole, Valentina Ruospo, Filippo di Sambuy, Diego Scropo, Francesco Sena, Luigi Stoisia and Fabio Viale  
Through April 17:  
"Aesthetics & Values 2011" with Daniel Arsham, Jose Bedia, Ivan Toth Depeña, Jacin Giordano, Fabian Peña, Karen Rifas, Cristina Lei Rodriguez, John Sanchez, Jen Stark, and Antonia Wright.  
Through April 17:  
"Frame This" with graduate students of FIU.  
Through April 24:  
"As of 24-03-07" by Maria Brito  
Through April 24:  
"Women in Motion: Fitness, Sport, and the Female Figure" in the Wolfsonian-FIU Teaching Gallery with various artists  
Through October 31:  
"From Old to New" with various artists

**LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI**  
1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables  
305-284-3535  
www.lowemuseum.org

April 16 to June 5:  
"UM Faculty Exhibition" by Ivan Alberht  
April 16 to May 8:  
"Annual Juried Student Competition Exhibition" with various artists  
Through April 24:  
"The Changing Face of Art and Politics" with various artists  
Through May 15:  
"American Documentarian" by Frank Paulin

**MIAMI ART MUSEUM**  
101 W. Flagler St., Miami  
305-375-3000  
www.miamiartmuseum.org  
Through April 10:  
Robert Rauschenberg  
Ongoing:  
"BETWEEN HERE AND THERE: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Permanent Collection"  
Through August 28:  
"Anchor Gallery" by Mark Dion  
Through June 26:  
"The Wilderness" with various artists

**MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**  
770 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-893-6211  
www.mocanomi.org  
Through June 5:  
"At Capacity" with works from the permanent collection.  
Through June 5: "Open Process" with Jessica Laurel Arias, Autumn Casey, Domingo Castillo, and Tatiana Vahan and "At Capacity: Large-Scale Works from the Permanent Collection" with John Baldessari, Dara Friedman, Thomas Hirschhorn, Jene Highstein, Edward and Nancy Kienholz, Louise Nevelson, Dennis Oppenheim, Jack Pierson, Ragnar Kjartansson, and more

**THE MARGULIES COLLECTION**  
591 NW 27th St., Miami  
305-576-1051  
www.margulieswarehouse.com  
Ongoing: "AFRICA: Photography and video" with various artists, and "Large Stone Carvings" by Jene Highstein, "Broken Mirror Painting" by Michelangelo Pistoletto, "Contemporary Paintings" with William Beckman, Oliver Dorfer, Jonathan Meese, Chris Ofili Tal R, and more, and "Brian Alfred: Digital Animation" by Brian Alfred

**THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION**  
95 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-573-6090  
www.rubellfamilycollection.com  
Through August 26:  
"How Soon Now" with Cecily Brown, Thea Djordjadze, Huan Yong Ping, Matthew Day Jackson, Analia Saban, Ryan Trecartin, Kaari Upson, and David Wojnarowicz, and "Time Capsule, Age 13 to 21: The Contemporary Art Collection of Jason Rubell" with George Condo, Robert Gober, Andreas Gursky, Keith Haring, Cady Noland, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, and more

**WORLD CLASS BOXING**  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection  
170 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-438-9908  
www.worldclassboxing.org  
Call for exhibition information and schedule.

Compiled by Melissa Wallen  
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to  
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### The TransAtlantic Connection Is Back

The North Beach Band Shell (7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach) has been quiet for too long, undergoing renovations (good) but leaving an eerie silence in place of live music (bad). But now construction is done, and the Rhythm Foundation's fantastic **TransAtlantic Festival** is back, with world music concerts featuring acts from Africa to Mexico to Miami. On **Friday, April 29** at 7:00 p.m., you can hear music from Brazil and Tijuana when the samba-jazz fusion of CeU and the Latinronica of the Nortec Collective play. On **Saturday, April 30** at 7:00 p.m., enjoy Antibalas, the group that helped introduce Afrobeat (and the great Nigerian musician Fela Kuti) to American audiences with its high-energy, polyrhythmic performances in the Broadway hit *Fela!* It's good to have both the band shell and the festival back! Passes cost \$40; \$25 at the door for individual shows. Call 305-672-5202 or visit [www.transatlanticfestival.com](http://www.transatlanticfestival.com).

### A Film Festival You Can't Refuse

The island of Sicily has helped form many of our images of Italian-American life, thanks to the movies. Some Hollywood names of Sicilian heritage: Valentino, Capra, Scorsese, Coppola, Stallone. Now Miami Beach is hosting the sixth annual **Sicilian Film Festival**, at the Miami Beach Cinematheque's stylish, brand-new home in the historic City Hall building (1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach). From **Thursday, April 7** through **Wednesday, April 13**, more than a dozen movies from this fertile creative land will be screened, including the latest from the director of *Cinema Paradiso*. Go to [www.sicilianfilmfestival.com](http://www.sicilianfilmfestival.com) for schedule and tickets.

### Pervasive Poetry All Month Long

A 30-day, countywide poetry offensive called **O, Miami** is being launched this month, with the objective of have every Miami-Dade resident encounter poetry at some point. Traditional readings will be mixed with "poetry in public places" events in schools, restaurants, and museums. For instance, on **Friday, April 8** at 8:00 p.m. at the Moore Building (4040 NE 2nd Ave., Miami), poet Anne Carson and Merce Cunningham dancer/choreographer Jonah Bokaer will collaborate on the performance *Stacks*, while on **Wednesday, April 13** at 7:00 p.m., the *BT*'s own Jen Karetnick will read from her poems focusing on restaurants and food at the Italian restaurant *Vino & Olio* (139 NE 39th St.). The festival will culminate on **Saturday, April 30** at 7:00 p.m. with U.S. Poet Laureate W.S. Mervin at the New World Center in Miami Beach. For more details, locations, and tickets go to [www.omiami.org](http://www.omiami.org).

### Ready for Some Broad Humor?

"I just came back from L.A., where I did a pilot — and he was really cute." That's just



### Profiles in Pot

Local filmmakers Billy Corbin and Alfred Spellman (*Cocaine Cowboys*, *The U*) premier their latest documentary, *Square Grouper: The Godfathers of Ganja*, from **Thursday, April 14** through **Sunday, April 17** at the new O Cinema (90 NW 29th St.). The film chronicles Florida's pivotal role at the height of marijuana smuggling in the 1970s and 1980s. Go to [www.o-cinema.org](http://www.o-cinema.org) for info and tickets.

one of the zingers Anna Collins is likely to launch from the stage during her comedy act — based on her book **A View From a Broad** — at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.) on **Friday, April 8** at 8:30 p.m. Need further proof the lady is funny? On the connection between her Armenian roots and the South Florida audiences who follow her: "Armenians are a lot like Jews — only we have better carpeting." Tickets are \$29.50 to \$34.50. Call 954-462-0222, or go to [www.aventuracenter.org](http://www.aventuracenter.org).

### Authentic Cuban Rumba from the Very Best

Think you know rumba just because you live in Miami? You ain't seen nothing yet, if you haven't caught the acclaimed Cuban troupe **Los Muñequitos de Matanzas**, coming to the Arsht Center on **Friday, April 15** at 8:00 p.m. Rumba is the most dynamic and exciting expression of Cuba's African

heritage, mining traditional African religious rituals, drumming, and dance. If you want to *feel* the sounds and rhythms of rumba, it doesn't get any better than this. Tickets range from \$30 to \$65. Go to [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org).

### Ever Wonder How "Lobby" Became a Verb?

Maybe you've sat in the swank, Space Age lobbies of the Fontainebleau or the Eden Roc, or sipped tea in the Biltmore Hotel's elegant, Old World second-floor reception area, but do you really know the histories of these famed pleasure palaces? Who better to fill you in than local historian Paul George, who will be leading HistoryMiami's **Florida's Fabulous Hotel Lobbies Coach Tour** from Coral Gables to Miami Beach. The three-hour tour starts at 10:00 a.m. on **Saturday, April 9** and departs from HistoryMiami, 101 W. Flagler St.. Tickets are \$44 for members, \$49 for nonmembers. Go to [www.hmsf.org](http://www.hmsf.org) for more details.



### Celebrate the Bay

Anyone who lives near Biscayne Bay knows that this is one of the most pristine and precious bodies of water any large city is fortunate enough to have. And we need to keep it that way. Which is why **Baynanza**, in its 29th year, has become such a popular event. This year more than 7500 volunteers will flock to 31 designated sites in and around the water to pick up garbage and debris and help keep Biscayne Bay clean. It all happens **Saturday, April 16** from 9:00 a.m. till noon. Everyone who loves our bay is encouraged to show up. Can't make it? Don't despair. Baynanza events go through the end of April. Call 305-372-6784 for sites and more information, or go to [www.miamidade.gov/derm/baynanza.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/derm/baynanza.asp).

### Brazilian Pop Rules!

Another month, another master musician from Brazil arrives to remind us of what a reign that country has had since the 1960s in the realm of popular music. This time, on **Saturday, April 23** at 8:00 p.m., Lenine will take the stage at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (174 E. Flagler St., Miami). He's part of the legacy of MPB, or Brazilian Popular Music, forged by the likes of Jobim, Caetano Veloso, and Gilberto Gil. Lenine mixes rock, hip-hop, and sounds from his native land to come up with his soulful version of MPB. This rare Miami appearance is courtesy of Miami-Dade College's excellent *Cultura del Lobo* series. Tickets range from \$27 to \$52. Call 305-237-3010 for more info.

### Haven't Yet Been to the New New World?

If you still haven't caught a glimpse of architect Frank Gehry's South Beach masterpiece, here's a superb opportunity. New World Symphony artistic director Michael Tilson Thomas will be conducting a fresh interpretation of **Gustav Mahler's Sixth Symphony** at 7:30 p.m. on **Saturday, April 30** at the new building (500 17th St., Miami Beach). Tilson Thomas and his world-renowned orchestral academy is always worth hearing, but perhaps even more so in this case — six of the ten Grammys Tilson Thomas has won have been for recordings of Mahler's work. Call 305-673-3331, or go to [www.nws.edu](http://www.nws.edu).

*Compiled by BT contributor Anne Tschida. Please send information and images to [calendar@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:calendar@biscaynetimes.com).*

# Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

## Next Time, He'll Threaten His Victims with Facebook

100 Block of NE 55th Street

Victim was in his truck, holding his daughter, when he observed a man in front of his home openly selling drugs. He asked him to leave. The drug pusher got upset and attacked the man in his truck, punching him several times. Victim held his daughter down so she would not get hit, then got out of the truck and confronted his assailant. The suspect responded by pulling out his primary weapon: his cell phone. He threatened to call his friends. Victim was not impressed. However, his nose was bleeding profusely. The suspect disappeared down the street, talking into his cell phone. At press time,

no arrests have been made and suspect's friends, thus far, have failed to rally to his sleazy cause.

## Hey, Buddy, Can You Spare Your Wallet?

200 Block of NE 79th Street

This victim arrived home after a stressful day, feeling as if someone were following him. He was right. A Boulevard hoodlum confronted him in the lobby. As the victim tried to flee, the hood grabbed him by the shoulder and pushed him to the ground. While he had him on the ground, he reached inside victim's side pocket with one hand and grabbed his wallet. He used his other hand to shield his face, but apparently not successfully

enough, as the victim claims he can easily identify him. The victim was transported to North Shore Medical Center with a back injury. Please be aware of your immediate surroundings. If you sense someone is stalking you, someone probably is.

## At Least There Was No Line

1600 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

Who doesn't like those shiny new Apple products? Most people go to Aventura or Lincoln Road to pick up the latest ones. Not these two victims. A Boulevard entrepreneur claimed he could get them an iPad and a MacBook on the cheap. The victims, wanting to be part of the Apple revolution, forked over \$500 for the iPad and \$1500 for the MacBook, or about the same price as retail, except without the warranty and tech support. The salesman took their money and



said he would return. Of course, he didn't. Police were called, but there is no surveillance video of the suspect. With their finances drained, perhaps our two would-be buyers would be interested in seeing if there's a black market for Gateways.

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**Alex Saá 305-495-8712**

## You Want Fries with That Shakedown?

*1600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*  
After having a delightful burger at Checkers, victim was a little tired and, instead of going home, decided to fall asleep on the bench outside the fast-food joint. Needless to say, this is a big mistake on the Boulevard. His “black and gray book” (wording used in the police report) was taken from him during his brief nap. Inside the book were his money and identification. The victim cannot identify the mystery suspect and busy Checkers’ staff did not witness the incident. So here is yet another negative of the fast-food lifestyle: sudden and inescapable drowsiness in a city where criminals do not sleep.

## New World, Same Old Story

*25 NE 2nd St.*  
One would think that certain schools would be off-limits to brazen thievery. We guess not. During class, a New World School of the Arts student went to use the bathroom and left her black book-bag in her chair. She was only

gone for about five minutes. In that time, an intruder entered the classroom and grabbed the book bag. He walked out and not a single person in the classroom said a word, including the teacher. When the victim returned, the teacher apologized for the theft. Thanks, teach. If he comes back, please make him write “I will not steal” on the board 500 times.

## Beware Falling Tumblers

*1700 Block of N. Bayshore Drive*  
Wild Miami parties are something, aren’t they? We know how to throw a good bash. Unfortunately those who are not on the guest list often suffer from rejection and, in this case, the consequences. A neighbor was trying to sleep as the music from a nearby party blasted throughout the night. The next morning he went to his car and saw that the roof was caved in. Blue drinking glasses apparently had been thrown out the window of the party apartment and onto the roof of his car. The victim was not sure which apartment it was, but building management was notified. Miamians, in the future, please put those glasses in the dishwasher, where they belong.

## What Rhymes with *Smash*?

*400 Block of NE 62nd Street*  
We just love those romantic stories of the smitten man who throws rocks at a damsel’s window in an effort to bring her to it so she can hear him read his love poetry — or something like that. In Miami rocks are indeed used, except love has nothing to do with it. In two incidents this past month, a large rock was thrown through a window for no apparent reason. Both homes were unoccupied at the time, but neighbors heard the sound and saw the thugs running away. No time for poetry in this city.

## And We Were All Having Such a Good Time

*5800 Block of N. Miami Avenue*  
This victim’s cousin was having a party at his house. During the party, the victim went to the bedroom to take a nap. (Too much booze, perhaps?) She left her purse in the living room. This was her cousin’s party and surely his guests were honest people, right? Not quite. Her purse was gone upon her waking up. Next time, dear cousin, be sparing with the guest list. Not all those Facebook “friends” are legit, you know.

## We Thought Biking Was Good For You

*NE 2nd Avenue and 56th Street*  
Be careful, cyclists. It is not just cars you have to worry about. After coming out of a store, a man was approached by a male perpetrator who grabbed his bike from him. When the victim tried to fight back, three other men jumped him and began to beat him, knocking him to the ground. One of the men made off with the bike as the other three ran away. What next? Do we have to start chaining our bikes to our bodies?

## The Key to His Heart

*30 NE 11th St.*  
Oh, those ex-boyfriends. If couples therapy does not work, then shouldn’t it be over? Not in this case. A woman had parked her car in this parking lot when she got a text from her ex indicating that he had just cleaned her car. How nice. Guess he must have brought his own water and soap to the lot. Nope, not quite. His cleaning involved “keying” the top and sides of the car. The woman took pictures of the scene and the boyfriend is at large. We guess they won’t be patching things up.

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# Small Pleasures

A neighborhood park in Normandy Isle was built with the kids in mind

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

Where is Normandy Isle, anyway — the real one? Is it a retirement community outside of Euro Disney? Well, the Miami Beach neighborhood by this name has a park located across the street from a Hispanic community center, although the street names surrounding it vibe French: Trouville Esplanade, Rue Granville, and Normandy Drive. But the neighborhood rings American-residential and the park is strictly BYOB: bring your own baguette.

With the panache of a fortress moderne, the Normandy Isle Park and Pool floats on a concrete island in between the divided, one-way lanes of 71st Street and Normandy Drive. The 3.6-acre park offers several amenities at a smaller, perhaps more European scale than might be expected. All in all, it appears to serve the neighbors well, but probably won't be drawing large crowds from across the causeway.

Let's get down to park business: Miami Beach has money, and it shows. The park got a major makeover and reopened with new pool facilities in April 2007. With a price tag of more than \$5 million, the renovation looks fashionable,

but does not please patrons looking for a full-size soccer field or competition pool.

With only four lanes, the 25-yard pool is too small to host a serious swim meet or team event. Two more lanes would have made it acceptable for high school meets, so it's a missed opportunity. The good news for Miami Beach residents is that the pool is free with proof of residency; the bad news for non-residents is a sticker-shocking admission fee of \$10 per person.

The separate kiddie splash area holds more appeal than the lap-swimming pool and looks like a great place to beat the heat. A funhouse awaits little visitors in the center of the splash pad, and a fountain gushes over the edges of a giant green mushroom. For parties, the pool can be rented by residents for \$153.50 for two hours; nonresidents pay \$367.50.

The park's largest area hosts an open, manicured soccer field, but it's a mini. The field appears to be about half the size of a regulation field. In February the park hosted its first Winter Soccer Tournament for second- and third-graders, ages that seem to be the target market for most of the park.

Behind the soccer field, a playground nestles under a shady tarp. It has shiny purple dinosaurs, aqua slides, and a



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

The park received a \$5 million makeover by Miami Beach, and it shows.

strange bulbous sign that advertises the playground-equipment maker "GT Game Time." Disturbingly, the stick-figure child on the sign looks like he is about to be eaten by a giant head.

Next to the playground stands a simple yet effective pavilion with a standard concrete floor and picnic tables. The black-and-white-tiled columns add a touch of Miami Beach flair. Residents can rent the pavilion for \$207 and the soccer field for \$250. Nonresidents pay \$314 and \$400, respectively.

The bigger kids turn up their noses at the tidy soccer field and favor the scruffier, smaller patch of grass next to the pavilion. That's where the teenagers practice their moves. Adjacent to this field are two concrete basketball courts. They may be the only sporting amenities of standard size in the park, but I must admit that I didn't measure them.

One outstanding feature of this park is something that many parks seem to lack: accessible, clean bathrooms. Located in a building between the pool and the soccer field, the men's restroom really was spotless. (Is that a French thing?)

Everything in the renovated park works well, from the water fountains to the pool filtration system. The park's nonaquatic hours are relatively generous, running from 8:00 a.m. (8:30 for the playground) to 9:00 p.m., thanks to large overhead lights. The pool does even better, opening at 6:45 a.m. for the early-to-rise swimmers.

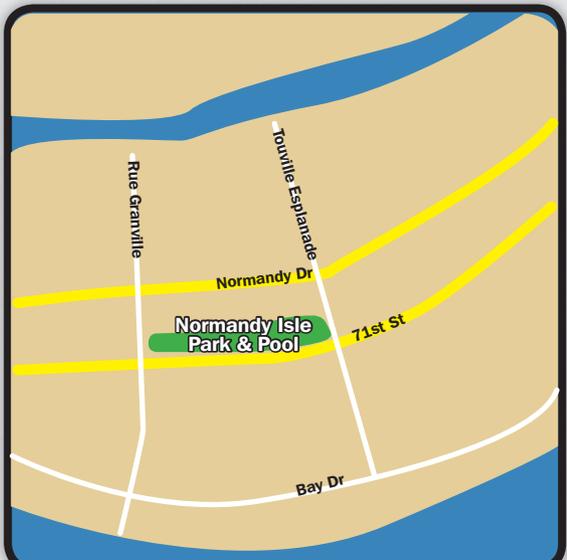
Surrounding the entire park is an attractive, tall black metal fence divided into



The pool is just four lanes and 25 yards, not big enough for competition, but it sparkles.

sections by painted columns. The fence portion along the pool offers a quasi-MiMo touch in the form of black metallic polka dots. By avoiding chain-link fencing, the park has managed to create a fortress-like feel, only without the eyesore.

Some depressing, aging apartment buildings on the block's northwest corner are mostly hidden from view, especially from the western approach. Because the



**NORMANDY ISLE  
PARK AND POOL**

**Park Rating**



**7030 Trouville Esplanade  
Miami Beach  
305-993-2021**

**Hours:** 8 am — 9 pm

**Picnic tables:** Yes

**Barbecues:** No

**Picnic pavilions:** Yes

**Tennis courts:** No

**Athletic fields:** Yes

**Night lighting:** Yes

**Swimming pool:** Yes

**Playground:** Yes



A simple but functional pavilion provides shade and picnic tables for parties.



The kiddie splash area holds more appeal than the pool and looks like a great place to beat the heat.



A playground for little kids — replete with purple dinosaurs — is shaded by a large tarp.

pool sits several feet above street level, the wall and tall fence around it draw the eye upward and into the park, not to what's behind it. The lesson here may also be fashionably French: If you can't buy the whole block, hide the unsightly parts.

The park's focus on kids shows up in activities such as "Tot Time" for ages 12 months to 30 months, "Sticky Fingers" arts and crafts classes for ages two to three, and flag football for teenagers.

Interestingly, the playground has a cute sign stating that adults are allowed inside only "when accompanied by a minor." The sign loses its charm, however, as you continue reading down to the part about "enforcement" and a phone number to report adult violators (read: potential sexual predators).

Normandy Isle Park clearly attracts young parents and their children and offers them an apparently safe and

attractive slice of green space. Litter is kept in check and the grounds are tidy. What it lacks in size, the park makes up for in quality.

However, the park's layout of mostly open space means that it is short on trees, so the pavilion offers the best bet for shade.

Normandy Isle Park and Pool is the first property reviewed in this column that is managed by the City of Miami Beach. The park's buildings look

attractive and new, the soccer field is well maintained, and the pool sparkles.

People living on the mainland could be jealous of this European-style class and efficiency, but more likely than not they will drive right past without even noticing it, on their way to the beach.

*C'est le vie.* Or as we say in Miami: *Así es la vida.*

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# Happy Meals for Everyone

Who says parents and kids can't enjoy the same restaurants?

By Crystal Brewé  
BT Contributor

I recently Googled “family friendly restaurant,” and after reading results that yielded reviews of “Toot-n-Tell,” “Bubba Gump Shrimp Company,” and somebody’s “Food Shack,” my foodie mouth was far from watering. Who wrote the rule that if you want to take your kids with you for a meal, you have to eat nuggets or hot dogs?

My friends Heather and Mark are foodies. So are Kristina and Alfredo, and Giselle and Andres. They all have kids who aren't exactly “restaurant friendly.” As a parent, how do you indulge your foodie fix without dumbing down your palate, annoying waiters, or breaking the bank with babysitters?

My husband and I would rather *not* eat out than eat some hodgepodge of foodstuffs thrown together from frozen bags by a teenager in a chain restaurant. Yeah, we are that snobby.

But we're not fussy. We just have a firm belief in quality food. Of course we indulge in the quick fix of CPK or Chili's, but we like options, and frankly, we have gone on death marches in search of them.

My husband, food scientist extraordinaire, is constantly intriguing the kids with his creations, and making mini quality-control evaluators of them. We have, as a result, created little restaurant critics. Their involvement in food preparation has led to an insatiable curiosity, which has certainly helped with buy-in

each time we sample new restaurants.

This month I've decided to let you in on some places we've discovered to be pretty awesome — with kids or without.

*Red Light (Cajun/Caribbean), 7700 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, 305-757-7773, www.redlightmiami.com*

Fronting the Little River, Red Light is a hipster spot known for using locally sourced and seasonal ingredients in a funky, casual setting. There is no kids' menu, but chef/owner Kris Wessel, nominated for a James Beard Award in 2010, has some kid-friendly jewels on his regular menu. The mac-and-cheese and steamed veggies side, as well as the soups, make excellent meals for kids.

Red Light's location also helps. The Little River is home to many manatees, and when we go, we troll our veggie drawer for treats like celery, apples, and lettuce. We throw our offerings into the water when we sit outdoors, and wait for the manatees to make their appearance during our meal. The food can take a while at Red Light, so the manatee watch helps distract and entertain little restaurant critics.

*Mercadito Midtown (Mexican), 3252 NE 1st Ave., Miami, 786-369-0430, www.mercaditorestaurants.com*

In the heart of Midtown lives a chic but surprisingly authentic little Mexican joint that attracts celebrities by the score and features a \$2.50 taco Tuesday. No kids' menu here, but the outdoor seating makes for great people-watching, and the kids can enjoy quesadillas, tacos,



or tapas-style dishes. The servers are friendly and there is also a super casual *taqueria* with an Old Mexico flair that makes you want to order a margarita and take off your shoes.

*Morgans (American), 28 NE 29th St., Miami, 305-573-9678, www.themorgansrestaurant.com*

Touting “homestyle comfort food,” Morgans offers some of the best breakfasts I've had in years. The restaurant is located in a lovingly renovated, two-story, 1930s house on the edge of Wynwood. Freshly painted lavender walls, a wrap-around porch, ample free parking, and a little yard for the kids to hang in — you have to love it. And why wouldn't parents love a place where owner Barclay Graebner is also a proud parent of several little rug rats, often seen running around — in a very well-behaved sort of way, of course. Again, there is no kids' menu, but our kids love the coconut tofu nuggets, and the entrées are all large enough to share with the little ones.

*Maitardi (Italian), 163 NE 39th St., Miami, 305-572-1400, www.maitardimiami.com*

The sprawling patio of this Design District Italian eatery has a Moroccan

flair, with mosaic walls, couches, tables, and high tops all at the base of historic white oak trees with twinkling lights. Maitardi is terrific for the early-bird family. With a “beat the clock” menu, the restaurant offers select entrées at a price that matches the time ordered!

For example, show up with your posse at 5:00 p.m. and entrées are just \$5 apiece; arrive at 6:20 and snatch them for \$6.20. It has become quite the hot spot, though, so if you arrive later than 8:00 p.m., the *untz, untz, untz* of the non-breeders' DJ will surely drive you and your little ones away.

Some final tips: Preparing the kids for eating out is key. Talk to them about restaurant etiquette, bring some fun activities like small colored pencils and note pads or an Etch A Sketch, and make sure the server brings the kids' food at the same time as yours. There is nothing worse than getting your entrée after the kids have finished their meals and are ready to terrorize your fellow diners.

Enjoy yourself and let me know if you have any other recommendations.

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# Water, Water Everywhere

Antarctica is melting, and it's heading to Miami in waves

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

**W**arning: Reading this column may be hazardous to your mental health. It may cause nausea, heartburn, dizziness, primal screaming, and an uncontrollable urge to stick your head in the sand. If you have a weak heart, do not continue reading.

South Florida is dying. With about 60 years of life remaining, our beloved home needs to be put on the palliative care of hospice. We need to start preparing for the inevitable.

No one wants to believe their home is built on sinking sand, but it doesn't matter what you believe. South Florida is sinking back into the ocean, and we can face this reality bravely and wisely or belatedly and foolishly.

This is a joke, right?

The Turkey Point nuclear plant, 24 miles south of the downtown Miami, sits along Biscayne Bay on land barely above sea level. When the sea level rises by six inches, the land surrounding it will be underwater.

At a minimum, sea level will rise six inches by 2100, according to a consensus of scientists around the world. It will probably happen sooner. Our tsunami, our Hurricane Katrina moment is approaching, ever so slowly but surely. Everyone living in South Florida is going to become a climate-change refugee. It's only a matter of time.

I told you not to read this. We need to start bracing ourselves for the new normal: In a century or so, Miami-Dade County will be completely underwater. Everyone will be either dead or gone. We're the number-one most vulnerable large metropolitan area in the world subject to the destructive effects of rising sea levels, according to Europe's Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The ocean is using Miami to send a message to the rest of the world: "You're going to lose, and I'm going to win." If only there were hills to run to.

Actually, there is some good news for South Florida when it comes to climate change. Owing to forces from the Pacific that will overwhelm the Atlantic, hurricanes are predicted to become less frequent. Hooray! There's just one little caveat: Only weaker hurricanes will decrease in number. Intense hurricanes, like Hurricane Andrew, are expected to arrive *more* frequently. In fact, hurricanes may reach a whole new level. "We may have to invent a Category Six," says David Enfield, a veteran University of Miami atmospheric researcher who serves on the science committee of the Miami-Dade County Climate Change Advisory Task Force.

Okay, so there's really nothing positive to say about the long-term effects of climate change. Let's move on to the one thing that might actually cure the Earth: future voters.



Photo by John J. Mullin

High school students from Miami's MAST Academy got it right recently at a forum they organized to discuss solutions for today's environmental conundrums. Held February 16 at the Miami Science Museum, the forum brought together students and concerned community leaders, such as David Bernard, the chief meteorologist for CBS 4. Instead of the typical dire forecast — "We're all going to die" — the overarching message of the forum was: "We can do this." Let's hope those students register to vote and hold our politicians accountable for their feeble response to climate change.

Helping the students get there is an extraordinary MAST instructor, Wafa Khalil, who teaches courses on solar energy. She provides hope that adults might also get it right. I met her and other concerned citizens this year at a seminar on climate change organized by Harold Wanless, the University of Miami professor of geology and local guru of sea-level rise. Wanless is a distinguished researcher and department chair with plenty to keep him busy, so he does not need to spend his weekends teaching the public about the basics of climate change. But he wants to, because he knows that his prophetic message is too important to hide under a bushel.

Horrible things are happening in the ocean. Corals are dying because of hotter and more acidic water, fish populations are being decimated by overfishing and habitat loss, and plastic debris is everywhere. Last month a research team led by Eric Rignot of NASA identified melting ice from Greenland and Antarctica as the new leading cause of sea-level rise, topping all other causes.

You could look at it this way: Our dead planet Earth has the blues. As the ocean rises, the Earth turns bluer and bluer, and our green, dry habitat becomes smaller and smaller.

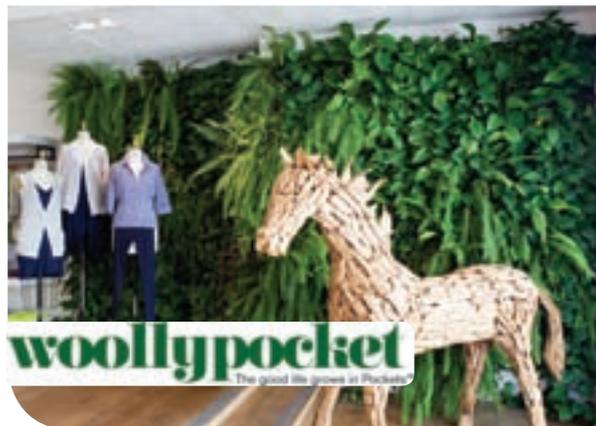
Despite all this mounting evidence, UM's Wanless doesn't think international experts are sounding the warning bell loudly enough. "Antarctica is coming alive," he warns, adding that we might be seeing "the beginning of rapid change."

Wanless believes we should prepare for a sea-level rise of at least five feet by 2100, with quick acceleration after that. With even a five-foot rise, the majority of Miami-Dade County will be underwater. "Climate change," he says, "will change Florida and Earth beyond your wildest imagination."

Now how do you feel?

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# Death, Taxes, and Really Cheap Wine

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

By Bill Citara  
BT Contributor

It was T.S. Eliot who wrote, “April is the cruellest month.” He had a point, but a few other months could give it some competition. July, for example, when South Florida’s brutal summer blossoms in all its face-melting glory. Or January, when lately our normally balmy winter weather seems to go to hell in a fleece-lined hand basket. Or September, when every tiny smudge that floats off the African coast threatens to lumber across the ocean and chew us up like so much undercooked hamburger.

There’s February because — well, just because. It’s a totally useless month, a tail on a Ferrari. Then there’s my own least favorite, October, mainly because it includes Halloween, which has tragically evolved into National Nitwit’s Day for adults.

Still, in the pantheon of sucky months, April has it over all others. It includes April 15. Tax Day. Uncle Sammy’s hand in your pocket and his voice in your ear: “There are all those worthless wars to fight, huge rapacious corporations to bail out, corrupt foreign dictators to prop up, and poor suffering millionaires and billionaires to succor, so just lie there quietly, my little lambs, while I get out the shears.”

If the cruelty of April, the anguish of flushing your hard-earned dollars down Sammy’s bottomless rat hole, has left you needing a drink that you can barely afford to buy, VINO feels your pain. Therefore, my lambs, this month we’ve gone even cheaper, limiting our purchases to wines costing \$10 or less. They’re not exactly

Mouton Rothschild, but you might just save enough money to buy back your own wool for a nice little sweater.

Let’s begin with the two cheapest wines of the tasting. And I mean cheap, as in dirt. Or maybe the rocks beneath the dirt. Or maybe just the word “dirt” itself.

How about a classic New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, with all the lemon-lime-grapefruit flavors and crisp, bracing, seafood-friendly acidity that country’s SBs are known for, for a stupid-affordable \$4.95? Oh, yeah. That’s the **2009 Red Cliffe**, from the capital of Kiwi Sauvignon Blancs, Marlborough. Not much complexity here, but a well-made wine you can drink every day. And for five bucks? You can’t beat that with an idiot stick.

A dollar more gets you the **Gazela 2009 Vinho Verde**. It’s as pale as a Norwegian on South Beach, with tart citrus and ever-so-faintly-floral flavors and the slight spritz that’s characteristic of the wine. It’s also very light on the palate, takes a good chill easily, and with only nine-percent alcohol is a pretty refreshing way to drink away a humid South Florida afternoon.

Want something with a little more pop?

The **Wallace Brook 2008 Pinot Gris** from Oregon’s Willamette Valley is a good option. It opens with toast and citrus and a few funky-herbal aromas, then segues into a medium-bodied wine that accents its smoky pear and green apple flavors with a tangy lemon-lime backbone and tart lemon finish.

Doubling down on the fruit without losing its acidic zip is the **2009 Antis**

**Torrontes**, a varietal I will keep harping on until you all go out and try it. This one offers big, bold aromas of tropical fruit and honeysuckle and orange, but on the palate is much more restrained, tasting of ripe pears and green apples, with definitely unsweet floral nuances and a surprising creamy, almost viscous texture.

“Cheap” and “Cabernet Sauvignon” are rarely used in the same sentence, at least if the word “good” is in there too. But in the case of **Gallo of Sonoma’s 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon**, “cheap” and “good” are actually quite appropriate.

This \$10 Cab drinks much better than its price, with aromas of cherries and plums, toasty oak, sweet spice, and even a touch of fresh herbs. Those aromas carry over to your mouth, too, yet there are enough tannins and acidity to keep them in check.

Winemaker Randall Graham has sold off his low-priced line of eclectic wines, but the flagship **Big House Red** doesn’t seem to have suffered. The 2009 vintage is a blend of 14 different grapes, and like its predecessors under Graham, emphasizes balance and food-friendliness over fat gobs of fruit and a lumberyard’s worth of oak. With its tart cherry fruit, stiff acidity, and relatively low alcohol (13.5 percent),



The North Miami Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463) has the two deals of the year, the Red Cliffe Sauvignon Blanc for \$4.95 and the Gazela Vinho Verde for \$5.95. The Antis Torrontes and Wallace Brook Pinot Gris are both \$9.99 and available at Aventura’s Wine & Spirits Cellar (21055 Biscayne Blvd., 305-936-9433). And the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) has the Gallo Cabernet Sauvignon for \$9.99 and the Big House Red for \$7.99.

it’s almost more French than Californian, but it’s a good wine to pour with rich, fatty meats, assuming you can afford any after the cruelty of April 15.

Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)



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# A Tasty and Zesty Foe

Brazilian pepper may be an invasive species, but it has its uses in the kitchen

By **Jeff Shimonski**  
BT Contributor

I always look for good opportunities to come out of something that is perhaps not so good. The productive use of an invasive plant that is difficult to control presents just such an opportunity. In this case, the plant is *Schinus terebinthifolius*, more commonly known as Brazilian pepper, Granos de Pimienta Rosa, or Pimiento de Brazil. It is these common names that should give us a hint about its potential upside.

Brazilian pepper is in the plant family *Anacardiaceae*. This family includes such toxic plants as native poison ivy and poisonwood. Other well-known plants in this family are sumac (used as a spice in Middle Eastern cuisine), mango (no explanation needed), pistachio, hog plum (ciruela), and the cashew (*marañón*). As many of you already know, all of these plants, including the edible ones, are toxic to certain individuals via physical contact with (or ingestion of) the unripened fruit, its skin, or the plant's sap. Anyone who has lived in South Florida even briefly knows someone who cannot handle or eat mangos without breaking out in a rash. Even the cashews that many of us enjoy have to be properly roasted to destroy the toxic seed coat. (This must be done outdoors because the smoke alone can cause severe reactions in some people.)

As an invasive plant, Brazilian pepper is particularly noxious. Introduced in the

1800s as a commercial ornamental plant, it has invaded huge areas in Central and South Florida. It forms dense impenetrable thickets of tangled wood stems that in natural areas completely shade out and displace native vegetation.

When I first started working at Parrot Jungle, in the 1970s, we once used a very large crane to assist us in pruning our banyan tree. When we finished with the banyan tree three days later, the crane was relocated to an area of the park that had been invaded by Brazilian pepper.

The plants had grown very large, shading out everything around them. (Brazilian pepper is thought to produce certain chemicals that act as allelopathic agents, which suppress other plants' growth and this may explain why, when we see extensive stands of this plant, it seems to be the only plant species around.) We attached cables to the base of these trees and pulled them directly out of the ground with the crane. It was an amazing sight — roots 50 or 60 feet away were being yanked right out of the ground, throwing up soil and rocks all around. It looked like a horror movie.

No surprise that this species is prohibited by law from sale, transport, or planting in our state, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Noxious Weed List. It is classified as a Category I pest by The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. That also includes the seed, which is readily eaten and dispersed by birds and mammals.



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

**A local Brazilian pepper in fruit, showing the origin of pink peppercorns.**

Now, for the silver lining. How many of you use mixed pepper when you season your food? Look up pink peppercorns on the Internet and you'll find an assortment of quotes touting their virtues: "Pink peppercorns have a delicate, fragrant, fruity, floral, sweet and/or spicy flavor."

"They are reminiscent of a mild citrus zest and sweet berries."

"They go especially well in fruit sauces (pairs well with strawberries), vinaigrettes, and desserts (makes a great ice cream paired with chocolate cake)."

"It is quite the gourmet item in French cooking, and pink peppercorns also add a rich rose color to cuisine."

It all sounds wonderful, doesn't it? And do you know where pink peppercorns come from? Our locally invasive plant, Brazilian pepper.

The Food and Drug Administration banned the use of pink peppercorns in the 1980s because of the possibility of toxic effects, but has since rescinded its ban. Today pink peppercorns can be found in commercial containers sold to restaurants, and in the spice section of your local supermarket. (I've even seen the scientific name, *Schinus terebinthifolius*, used on some of the ingredient labels.)

Currently there is research being done locally in South Florida to find varieties of Brazilian pepper that have fewer irritants or allergens in the peppercorns. I also recently read that dried pink peppercorns generally have only a very weak irritating action, if any.

So just because a plant is in a family of other plants with known toxic effects, we should not succumb to knee-jerk reactions and dismiss everything in the family without trying it first. I've learned not to eat peanuts, hot peppers, or too much wasabi, and to eat certain other foods in moderation lest I get sick from them.

Did you know the tomato and eggplant are in the *Solanaceae* family, which is the same family as belladonna (deadly nightshade), the infamous Angel's Trumpet, and tobacco, with its toxic nicotine? Let us keep things in perspective.

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

*Feedback: [letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)*

# Curb Your Crazy Canine

Training an out-of-control dog to behave is a job for the whole family

By Lisa Hartman  
BT Contributor

Sometimes it seems that everyone in America has an easier dog to deal with than you. Your neighbors parade their dogs by you, happily humming a tune as they go, their pets prancing at their sides. When they entertain guests, their dogs politely greet them and then quickly retreat to a doggy bed in the corner. Your friends never come home to accidents. Everything in their home stays in its proper place.

You, on the other hand, don't have it nearly so good. When the doorbell rings, your best friend flies at the door, Air-Jordan-style, barking uncontrollably and scratching at the door violently. Guests need their own bodyguard, as your pooch's only goal in life seems to be to take them down and soil their clothes.

When you walk your dog in the neighborhood, you are dragged uncontrollably, your arm coming out of its socket while your animal zigzags from side to side to sniff the scenery and greet the neighbors. Your living room wall has a hole in it. Food containers from the garbage are always on the kitchen floor. Our kids' classmates don't come over because "that crazy dog" lives there!

Yup, it sounds like you have an out-of-control dog. And while many people with dogs of this nature give up

on training and the embarrassment of attending class, there are a few tricks for regaining control of what you believe might be the world's worst dog.

When training wild Fidos, you must first get their attention. Without focus or attention from the animal, no training or learning can take place. The more a dog is focused on you, the less time he has to get into trouble. Focus training is the foundation of all training.

To start, be prepared with items your dog really likes. For this kind of dog, you need really high-value treats or favorite toys. Don't be stingy — if you don't use his absolutely favorite things, you will not be able to compete with a super-charged dog and the stimulating environment around you. Now, whenever your dog looks at you, tell him he is good and give him a treat. Repeat this exercise *thousands of times*. You can use his kibble if you like; there is no rule saying your dog has to eat from a bowl, so make him work for it. When he is focused on you, give up a treat.

The next step is to add a reward for calm behavior. This means you must change your focus. Instead of screaming in frustration after you find a "gift" left by your pet, and ignoring Fido when he is being good, you will now look for outbreaks of calm in your otherwise frenetic friend and reward them. When he's lying on his bed, give him a belly



rub or gently scratch behind his ears or other favorite place.

When he's sitting still, give him a piece of kibble. When he is quiet, give him a treat. Essentially you will be rewarding everything he is *not* doing — not barking, not jumping, not messing up the place.

Dogs really do mirror their owners sometimes, and not just in looks. I have been called to consult with many "hyper" dogs (owner's description), and upon meeting the owners, find the adjective describes them as well! The signs are all too obvious: not being able to sit still, multi-tasking while trying to talk to me, getting up for a drink of water, checking their Blackberry, yelling at the kids, rushing the husband out the door so he isn't late.

The kids are just as worked up, constantly running in and out of rooms, throwing footballs or other toys, leaping off the furniture with a caveman-type yell while the television blares in the background. The owners are in a constant state of arousal, so why shouldn't the dog be?

In these cases, I need to change the behavior of the entire family if I am going to have long-term success with the dog. Getting the kids to walk, not run, in front of the dog, and to talk, not yell, are vital steps for effecting behavioral change (and not a bad lesson for the kiddies, either).

The parents, too, will need to stop yelling at the dog to set him up for success. Yelling or any form of talking to the dog is attention, and therefore it can be viewed as a reward, even if its intent

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is just the opposite. Everyone should focus on rewarding what they want — calm behavior from the dog everywhere, whether in the house or out on a walk.

Lastly we must help out the dog whenever we can by making it harder for him to be bad. If you know your dog goes in the garbage while you're at work, then don't leave the garbage out or give him access to it. If he rips up the furniture or has potty accidents, you can crate train him or keep him in a specific area. It's like the old saying:

“Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” If you know the dog will get into trouble and you let him, it is *your* fault!

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't bring up exercise. Your frantic Fido is not going to be satisfied with a walk in the park. A wild dog needs to *run*. Off-leash running, playing with other canines, agility training, fetching, swimming, and other sports are all great, much-needed activities to burn off energy and stress.

The running in circles and “zoomies” in your backyard do not count. Those are signs that your dog is bored, stressed, and in need of true exercise and stimulation. (If your dog has dug holes or changed the landscaping in your yard, that should be taken as a sign, too.)

Hyperactive dogs are usually very controllable with some daily training and exercise. Being mindful of your own actions and those of your family members will help curb a dog's wild behavior. Whether you are frenzied

yourself or overly sedentary, exercise and outside activities with your dog are good for the entire family and provide great bonding opportunities.

*Lisa Hartman is a dog-friendly trainer, behavior specialist, and author of Dial a Dynamite Dog. You can reach her at [lisa@lisathedogtrainer.com](mailto:lisa@lisathedogtrainer.com), or visit [www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com](http://www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com).*

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## Letters

Continued from page 10

not tell you how the RAC Block voted against Commissioner Bernard and me to keep facts and analysis from the public by excluding written documentation I submitted for the commission meeting where the Soloff report was approved — you guessed it, 3-2.

Last, Hunter does not tell you that Soloff curiously failed to interview and document the testimonies of Village staff who were key witnesses to the alleged occurrences; and that our Village attorney blocked commissioners from effectively interviewing staff witnesses. Also he does not tell you that the investigation revealed that the manager's one external witness did not corroborate her stories, and in fact denied them.

If any reader wants to receive a copy of the report and my section-by-section response, please contact me at bryan-cooper7@yahoo.com and I will gladly provide. And to those who elected me to clean up government, I will continue the effort I started over a year ago. As slow as the pace might be, and as much

intimidation as might come my way (or against my colleague Commissioner Bernard), I will continue to stand up and question waste or fraud if it becomes apparent.

I will continue to work against a recurrence of a longstanding Village history of ignoring the intent of the Florida Sunshine Laws designed to assure government transparency and proper access to accurate public records. I will continue to advise the Village administration or officials when they are doing things that could be brought before the State Attorney or increase our liability or chance of lawsuit. And last but far from least, I will do my best to always defend and support our honest and hard-working Village staff.

Commissioner L. Bryan Cooper  
Village of Biscayne Park

## What? Another Commissioner Who Wants the Floor?

Having read many of Dr. Fred Jonas's letters to the *Biscayne Times* editor disparaging Biscayne Park's Gaspar González, and knowing that the opinions stated are usually based

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on less-than-factual details, I thought I'd take this opportunity to offer some public corrections, and ask him (as I have in the past) to take down the rhetoric a notch so as to try and make Biscayne Park a little more civil.

While I usually believe that (to use an Internet term) "feeding the troll" often invites even more antagonistic remarks, I always believe that facts and details are important in order to arrive at a reasonable decision, so here are a couple quick fact-checks.

In last month's letter to the *BT*, Dr. Jonas stated that he "couldn't tell whether Gaspar González was endorsing public art in Biscayne Park or panning it." Is there some other way to interpret Gaspar's statement: "I like the idea of a public-art initiative"? It is clear that Gaspar likes public art, but he dislikes the process the Village used in obtaining our first piece of art. Many of the residents I have heard from seem to agree. Art is good. A lack of professional process is not.

He also stated that "Gaspar seems to find it easier, and more comfortable, to criticize than to participate and improve the process." To the contrary,

Gaspar wrote, "If a public-art initiative is to take hold in Biscayne Park, village government needs to establish a set of guidelines and appoint a committee — of qualified people." And he listed seven issues that could be publicly discussed to help guide future art decisions, all of which would improve the process.

He then tried to link the donation of the art to the donation of a shade tree at our playground that I've asked the commission to accept. ("Commissioner Steve Bernard has now spent what he himself calculates as two and a half years trying to donate one tree to the village. He seems to say he's stuck in red tape himself.") The fact? I have never calculated that it's been two and a half years, and have no idea how he arrives at this time frame because the donations only came in May of 2009. Exaggeration does not help make decisions, nor does mocking a transparent process that can serve to give "ownership" of a project to residents — not to mention bring some unity to our community.

In fact, since he brings up red tape as a bad thing, I will explain my rationale.

*Continued on page 72*



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**Letters**

Continued from page 71

Instead of asking the commission to accept a donation on the spur of the moment, or without any expert opinions or village boards involved (as the sculpture was accepted at a special commission meeting), I first asked a previous commission if they would be willing to accept a donated shade tree. I then requested a review by multiple boards (all three unanimously recommended approval), consulted DERM, the state

forestry department, our village attorney and both managers, as well as nurseries, arborists, and landscape architects, keeping the 37 residents who participated updated along the way.

Yes, it took some time, but it's a process that relied on professional experience while allowing everyone to participate, something that every local government should encourage.

One last factual correction. Dr. Jonas proudly and erroneously claims to have been one of those 37 residents who

donated the tree. In fact, even though I explained to him that he had no part of it, he insists on being falsely magnanimous about it and states that I "can keep the money I helped him get" as he complains about the cost to trim this one tree out of more than a thousand the Village is responsible for. It's just one more detail that he is wrong about.

The list of untrue statements Dr. Jonas has made over the years is long, but these few specific corrections should get the point across: When Dr. Jonas tells you

something, you should probably check the facts before coming to an opinion on the matter. My e-mail is Steve@Steve-BernardArchitect.com if you ever have a question about Village issues.

Of course, everyone is entitled to his opinion. But no one should be allowed to make up facts to sway other's opinions. Let's all try and stick to the facts from now on, and let's all try and keep things civil, even if we have differing opinions.

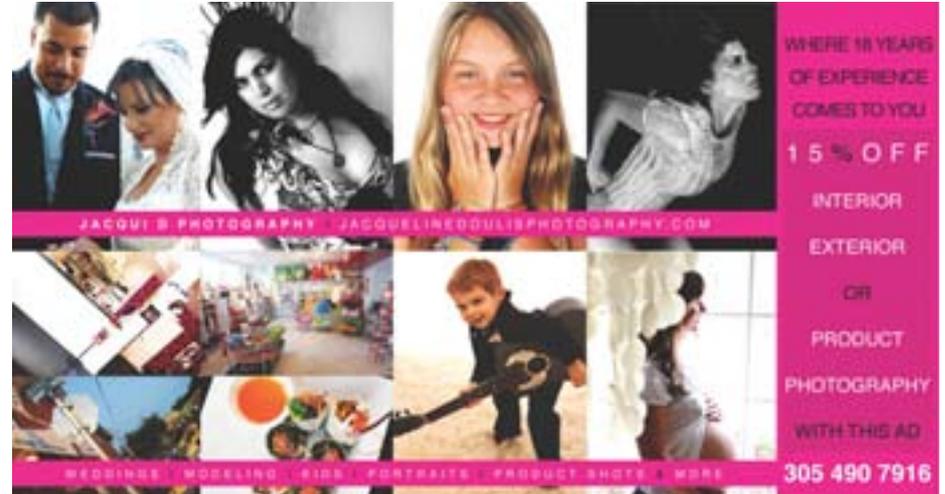
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# Dining Guide

## Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 262.

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

\$= \$10 and under

\$\$= \$20

\$\$\$= \$30

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

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

### MIAMI

#### Brickell / Downtown

##### Abokado

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

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, 305-424-5234

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 eixxada and saffron-sautéed Spanish artichokes to inventive inspirations like foie gras and goat cheese-stuffed empanadas. \$\$\$

##### bistro e

485 Brickell Ave., 305-503-0373

A full power lunch from a Michelin-starred chef for \$15? Sounds unbelievable, but you'll find just such a daily special (like corn/jalapeño soup, a grilled-cheese BLT, airy cheesecake, and a pint of beer) at bistro e, daytime name for Michael Psilakis' dinner-only new Aegean eatery Eos. The name change emphasizes lunchtime's wholly different, globally influenced menu. Among à la carte temptations: pork belly tacos, a Korean BBQ prawn salad, or a brisket/gruere sandwich with dipping juice. Breakfast, too, from 6:30 a.m. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

##### 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). \$\$\$

### NEW THIS MONTH

#### MIAMI

##### BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

##### Jackson Soul Food

950 NW 3rd Ave., 305-377-6710

With a recently refurbished exterior to match its classy/comfy retro interior, this 65-year-old Overtown soul food breakfast institution now has only one drawback: It closes at 1:00 p.m. Never mind, night owls. If you're a first-timer here, order the astonishingly fluffy pancakes with juicy beef sausage, and you'll set multiple alarm clocks to return. Classic drop biscuits (preferably with gravy) are also must-haves. And hearty Southern breakfast staples like smothered chicken wings or fried fish do make breakfast seem like lunch, too. \$

##### Miss Yip Chinese Café

900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-358-0088

Fans of the South Beach original will find the décor different. Most notably, there's an outdoor lounge, and more generally a nightclub atmosphere. But the menu of Hong Kong-style Chinese food, prepared by imported Chinese cooks, is familiar. Simple yet sophisticated Cantonese seafood dishes rock (try the lightly battered salt-and-pepper shrimp), as does orange peel chicken, spicy/tangy rather than overly sweet. And a single two-course Peking duck (skin in crepes, stir-fried meat and veggies with lettuce cups) makes mouthwatering finger food, shared among friends. \$\$\$

#### MIAMI

##### MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

##### Egyptian Pizza Kitchen

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-571-9050

Pizza, pita – hey, they're both flatbreads. So while many pizzas do indeed, as this halal place's name suggests, have initially weird-seeming Middle Eastern toppings, it's really not surprising that the Giza (topped with marinated lamb, feta, olives, peppers, and pungently spiced cumin sauce) works at least as well as Italian classics. Additionally the menu includes interesting Middle Eastern fare like fowl, a hummus-like but lighter Egyptian dish of favas, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. A brick oven makes both pizzas and homemade pitas superior. \$\$

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

##### Chophouse Miami

300 S. Biscayne Blvd.

305-938-9000

Formerly Manny's Steakhouse, Miami's Chophouse

### BAY HARBOR ISLANDS

##### Asia Bay Bistro

1007 Kane Concourse; 305-861-2222

As in Japan's most refined restaurants, artful presentation is stunning at this Japanese/Thai gem. And though the voluminous menu sports all the familiar favorites from both nations, the Japanese-inspired small plates will please diners seeking something different. Try jalapeño-sauced hamachi sashimi; toro with enoki mushrooms, bracing ooba (shiso), tobiko caviar, and a sauce almost like beurre blanc; rock shrimp/shitake tempura with a delicate salad; elegant salmon tartare with a mix-in quail egg. And spicy, mayo-dressed tuna rock makis are universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

##### Caffe Da Vinci

1009 Kane Concourse; 305-861-8166

After renovations in 2010, this old favorite (since 1989) reopened with a hip new lounge – but no fixes to what ain't broke, notably handmade artisanal pastas sauced with high quality ingredients. Choose luxe stuffed models (like crab-filled ravioli with rich lobster sauce) or relatively pristine preparations like linguini with garlic, wine, and fresh littlenecks. Eating light? Make a meal of lavish salads or starters like true beef carpaccio – dressed, like the original from Venice's Harry's Bar, with creamy mustard sauce rather than mere olive oil. \$\$\$

##### The Palm

9650 E. Bay Harbor Dr., 305-868-7256

It was 1930s journalists, legend has it, who transformed NYC's original Palm from Italian restaurant to bastion of beef. Owners would run out to the butcher for huge steaks to satisfy the hardboiled scribes. So our perennial pick here is nostalgic: steak à la stone – juicy, butter-doused slices on toast, topped with sautéed onions and pimientos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$

### AVENTURA

##### Gourmet Carrot

3599 NE 207th St., 305-749-6393

Since the first Gourmet Carrot – a healthy and kosher but not at all preachy eatery – opened in South Beach, its menu expanded to include many red-meat items. The same is true of this new Waterways mall branch. When confirmed cholesterol-careless carnivores like ourselves opt voluntarily for an eatery's veggie burgers (a brown rice/lentil/veggie blend more satisfying than beef), or remarkably juicy ginger-mayo-dressed chicken burgers, over normal hamburgers, based solely on flavor – well, religion aside, that's a major miracle. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

##### Crazy About You

1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101

305-377-4442

The owners, and budget-friendly formula, are the same here as at older Dolores. But You Can Call Me Lolita: Buy an entrée (all under \$20) from a sizable list of Mediterranean, Latin, American,



This is how carefully Chef Andrea cuts tomatoes.  
 Immagine the care he gives to the other ingredients.

Come and experience Miami's only true Italian restaurant.



2 for one happy hour in our wonderful garden lounge  
 every day from 6 to 8 pm

Life is too short not to eat well

139 NE 39th Street 305 573 0707  
 www.vinoeolio.com

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

or Asian-influenced choices (like Thai-marinated churrasco with crispy shoestring fries) and get an appetizer for free, including substantial stuff like a Chihuahua cheese casserole with chorizo and pesto. The difference: This place, housed in the former location of short-lived La Broche, has an even more upscale ambience than Dolores – including a million-dollar water view. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$

### db Bistro Moderne

345 Avenue of the Americas, 305-421-8800

Just two words – “Daniel Boulud” – should be enough for foodies craving creative French/American comfort cuisine to run, not walk, to this restaurant. If they can find it. (Hint: The mysterious “Avenue of the Americas” is really Biscayne Boulevard Way. Don’t ask.) Downtown’s db is an absentee celeb chef outpost, but on-site kitchen wizard Jarrod Verbiak flawlessly executes dishes ranging from the original NYC db Bistro’s signature foie gras/short rib/black truffle-stuffed burger to local market-driven dishes like crusted pompano with garlic/parsley veloute. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### The Democratic Republic of Beer

255 NE 14th St., 305-372-4161

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

### Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103

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

### Eos

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

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

### First & First Southern Baking Company

109 NE 1st Ave., 305-577-6446

How Southern is this restaurant/bakery? During the course of one breakfast of fluffy biscuits with rich sausage gravy, a friend from Italy, we swear, developed a drawl. While y’all will also find familiar fare (burgers, salads, etc.), highlights here are traditional and/or reinvented country cooking favorites – especially homemade sweets. More than two dozen desserts daily are featured, from a roster topping 150: chocolate pecan pie, lemon bars, potato candies, seven-layer cookies, and Jack Daniels pound cakes, which are perfect for parties, though you won’t want to share. \$\$\$

### Fratelli Milano

213 SE 1st St.

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 Caffe

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

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

### Grimpa Steakhouse

901 Brickell Plaza

305-455-4757

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

### Half Moon Empanadas

192 SE 1st Ave., 305-379-2525

As with South Beach’s original Half Moon, you can get wraps or salads. But it’s this snackery’s unique take on Argentine-style empanadas that makes it seem a natural for national franchising. The soft-crust, doughy crescents – baked, not fried, so relatively guilt-free – are amply stuffed with fillings both classic (beef and chicken, either mild or spicy) and creative: the bacon cheeseburger, the pancetta/mozzarella/plum-filled Americana, and several vegetarian options. At just over two bucks apiece, they’re a money-saving moveable feast. \$

### 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. \$\$\$\$

### Indigo / Table 40

100 Chopin Plaza, 305-577-1000

Long known for its power-lunch buffet – including hot entrées, carving station, custom pastas, packed-to-the-gills salad, sushi, and dessert stations – the InterContinental Hotel’s Indigo restaurant now has

# Trio

ON THE BAY

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Seafood Penne Pasta



Shrimp Cakes



Macedonia Crusted Grouper

## Small Plates

### FRENCH CHEESE PLATE

assorted artisan cheeses, fresh fruit

11

### FIRE ROASTED MUSSELS

fresh tomato & leek-saffron broth

9

### ILLEGAL BREAD

cheese-stuffed phyllo bread

8

### SHRIMP CAKES

sautéed mushrooms, basil aioli & tomato coulis

9

### MEDITERRANEAN TRIO

hummus, tzatziki, roasted pepper salsa & pita crisps

8

### GRILLED CALAMARI STEAKS

red & banana peppers, white wine lemon butter sauce

9

### PISTACHIO CRUSTED GOAT CHEESE

braised endive, tomatoes, white truffle oil & Balsamic raspberry reduction

9

## Signature Entrées

### ORGANIC FREE RANGE CHICKEN

skillet roasted, balsamic-butter glaze, fresh grilled corn

15

### PAN ROASTED PORK TENDERLOIN

caramelized Granny Smith apples, sherry wine sauce & roasted potatoes

17

### PECAN CRUSTED TROUT

oven roasted sweet potatoes, smoked bacon & spinach with

18

### GRILLED BUTCHER STEAK

served with demi-glaze and hand-cut truffle fries

19

## From the Fire with a choice of one side

### FILET MIGNON

pistachio béarnaise

27

### LAND SWORD

petite filet mignon, lamb chop, pork tenderloin, chicken breast & mini beef patty grilled between red peppers and onions

25

### SEA SWORD

salmon, tuna, mahi, prawns & scallop grilled between red peppers and onions

25



Wild Mushroom Pizza



Grilled Butcher Steak



Ice Cream Sandwich



Fresh Wild Berries with Sabayon Sauce



Tiramisu



Crispy Apple Delight

Trio  
ON THE BAY  
DINE - DRINK - DANCE

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

a hip offspring intended for private dining: Table 40. The charming, glassed-in wine "cellar" (actually in the kitchen) enables 12-14 diners to watch the action in heat-shielded, soundproofed comfort while eating creations by veteran chef Alexander Feher, combining Continental technique with local seasonal ingredients. Highlights: tender house-smoked, stout-braised short ribs; lavish lobster salad with grilled mango; and a seductive fresh corn gazpacho. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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 quiets the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to Colombian classics, there's a salad Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$\$

### La Provence

**1064 Brickell Ave., 786-425-9003**

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

### Le Boudoir Brickell

**188 SE 12th Terr., 305-372-2333**

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

Madeleines, airy layered mousses, and addictive mini-macaron sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$\$\$

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

**1 W. Flagler St., Suite 7, 305-789-9929**

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

### Martini 28

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

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

### MIA at Biscayne

**20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-642-0032**

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

### 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. \$

### Novocento

**1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900**

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

### Oceanaire Seafood Resort

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

With a dozen branches nationwide, Oceanaire may seem more All-American seafood empire than Florida fish shack, but menus vary significantly according to regional tastes and fish. Here in Miami, chef Sean Bernal supplements signature starters like lump crab cakes with his own lightly marinated, Peruvian-style grouper ceviche. The daily-changing, 15-20 specimen seafood selection includes local fish seldom seen on local menus: pompano, parrot fish, amberjack. But even flown-in fish (and the raw bar's cold-water oysters) are ultra-fresh. \$\$\$

### Pega Grill

**15 E. Flagler St., 305-808-6666**

From Thanasios Barlos, a Greek native who formerly owned North Beach's Ariston, this small spot is more casually

contemporary and less ethnic-kitschy in ambiance, but serves equally authentic, full-flavored Greek food. Mixed lamb/beef gyros (chicken is also an option), topped with tangy yogurt sauce and wrapped, with greens and tomatoes, in fat warm pita bread, are specialties. But even more irresistible is the taramasalata (particularly velvety and light carp roe dip), available alone or on an olive/pita-garnished mixed meze platter. \$\$

### Pasha's

**1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116**

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

### Peoples Bar-B-Que

**360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080**

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

### Perricone's

**15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449**

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

### Prelude

**Adrienne Arsh Center**

**1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-6722**

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

### Raja's Indian Cuisine

**33 NE 2nd Ave., 305-539-9551**

Despite its small size and décor best described as "none," this place is an institution thanks to south Indian specialties rarely found in Miami's basically north Indian restaurants. The steam-tabled curries are fine (and nicely priced), but be sure to try the custom-made dosai (lacy rice crepes with a variety of savory fillings) and uttapam, thicker pancakes, layered with onions and chilis, both served with sambar and chutney. \$\$

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

### Sandwich Bar

**40 NE 1st Ave., 305-577-0622**

This cool hideaway has a limited menu. Which is a good thing when it means everything served is solidly crafted by hands-on chef/owners, two of whom amassed sous-chef chops at Cioppino and Sardinia. The main fare is imaginative sandwiches on fresh breads; an especially delicious creation features slow-braised short ribs, caramelized onions, and melting muenster and provolone cheeses. Finish with fine-shaved Aloha Ice topped with fresh fruit and other full-flavored syrups, all housemade, plus rich condensed milk. A sno-cone for sophisticates. \$

### Soi Asian Bistro

**134 NE 2nd Ave., 305-523-3643**

From the owners of Calle Ocho's hip Mr. Yum and 2B Asian Bistro, Soi sports similar casual-chic ambiance and eclectic Thai/Japanese cuisine. Traditional Thai curries and familiar sushi rolls are prepared with solid skill and style. But most intriguing are new inventions adding Peruvian fusion flair to the Asian mix, such as a spicy, tangy tangle of crisp-fried yellow noodles with sautéed shrimp plus slivered peppers and onions – mod mee krob, with jalea-like tart heat replacing the cloying sweetness. \$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

<p><b>Monday.....\$4.95</b> 3 Eggs any style served with Homefries or Grits or Oatmeal. Choice of Bagel or Toast</p> <p><b>Tuesday.....\$7.99</b> Bacon Omelette served with Homefries or Grits or Oatmeal. Choice of Bagel or Toast</p> <p><b>Wednesday.....\$8.50</b> Eggwhite Vegetable Omelette served with sliced Tomatoes or Grits or Oatmeal. Choice of Bagel or Toast</p> <p><b>Thursday.....\$8.99</b> Short Stack Pancakes, 2 Eggs, 3 strips of Bacon or 2 Sausage Links.</p> <p><b>Friday.....\$9.50</b> Nova, Eggs and Onions with Homefries or Grits or Oatmeal. Choice of Bagel or Toast</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>No Substitutions • No Sharing • Dine-In ONLY</b></p>	<h2 style="color: blue; font-family: cursive;">Daily Breakfast Specials</h2> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">Specials are served Monday thru Friday 6:00am to 11:00am (Excluding Holidays) All Breakfast Specials include Coffee or Hot Tea or Small Orange Juice</p>  <div style="position: absolute; left: -50px; top: 50%; transform: translateY(-50%); font-size: 2em; color: blue; font-weight: bold;">BLUE PLATE SPECIAL</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: -50px; top: 50%; transform: translateY(-50%); border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; color: blue; font-weight: bold;">BAGELS COMPANY</div> <p style="text-align: right; color: blue; font-size: 1.2em;"><b>305.892.2435</b> <b>11064 Biscayne Blvd</b> <b>Miami, FL 33161</b> <a href="http://www.bagelsandcompany.com" style="color: blue;">www.bagelsandcompany.com</a></p>
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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Sparky's Roadside Restaurant & Bar 204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877

This cowboy-cute eatery's chefs/owners (one CIA-trained, both BBQ fanatics nicknamed Sparky) eschew regional purism, instead utilizing a hickory/apple-wood-stoked rotisserie smoker to turn out their personalized style of slow-cooked, complexly dry-rub fusion: ribs, chopped pork, brisket, and chicken. Diners can customize their orders with mix-and-match housemade sauces: sweet/tangy tomato-based, Carolinas-inspired vinegar/mustard, pan-Asian hoisin with lemongrass and ginger, tropical guava/habanero. Authenticity aside, the quality of the food is as good as much higher-priced barbecue outfits. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### SuViche 49 SW 11th St., 305-960-7097

This small Japanese-Peruvian place serves food influenced by each nation distinctly, plus intriguing fusion items with added Caribbean touches. Cooked entrées, all Peruvian, include an elegant aji de gallina (walnut-garnished chicken and potatoes in peppery cream sauce). But the emphasis is on contemporary ceviches/tiraditos (those with velvety aji amarillo chili sauce particularly), plus huge exotic sushi rolls, which get pretty wild. When was the last time you encountered a tempura-battered tuna, avocado, and scallion maki topped with Peru's traditional potato garnish, huancaína cheese sauce? \$\$\$

### 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 “bistrolounge.” The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with r'igaw for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$

### Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse 777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

Compared to other restaurants with such an upscale power-lunch/dinner setting, most prices are quite affordable here, especially if you stick to the Miami Spice-priced date-dinner menu, or happy hour, when seafood items like crab-cake “sliders” are half price. Most impressive, though, are seasonal stone crabs (from Truluck's own fisheries, and way less expensive than Joe's) and other seafood that, during several visits, never tasted less than impeccably fresh, plus that greatest of Miami restaurant rarities: informed and gracious service. \$\$\$

### Waxy O'Connor's 690 SW 1st Ct., 786-871-7660

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

### Wok Town 119 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9993

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

### Zuma 270 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-577-0277

This Miami River restolounge has a London parent on San Pellegrino's list of the world's best restaurants, and a similar menu of world-class, Izakaya-style smallish plates (robata-grilled items, sushi, much more) meant for sharing over drinks. Suffice to say that it would take maybe a dozen visits to work your way through the voluminous menu, which offers ample temptations for vegetarians as well as carnivores. Our favorite is the melt-in-your-mouth pork belly with yuzu/mustard miso dip, but even the exquisitely-garnished tofu rocks. \$\$\$

## Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

### 3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant 1800 Biscayne Blvd. #105, 305-373-2688

Until this eatery opened in late 2010, the solid Chinese restaurants in this neighborhood could be counted on the fingers of no hands. So it's not surprising that most people concentrate on Chinese and Chinese/American fare. The real surprise is the remarkably tasty, budget-priced, Vietnamese fare. Try pho, 12 varieties of full-flavored beef/rice noodle soup (including our favorite, with well-done flank steak and flash-cooked eye round). All can be customized with sprouts and fresh herbs. Also impressive: Noodle combination plates with sautéed meats, salad, and spring rolls. \$\$\$

### 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. \$

### Andalus 35 NE 40th St., 305-400-4422

Early publicity pegging this place (in Pacific Time's former space) as a tapas bar seemed to set it up as direct competition for nearby Sra. Martinez. It's actually quite different, with emphasis divided between small-plate lounging and full fine-dining meals. And regardless of size, dishes aren't contemporary riffs on tradition but authentic regional specialties. Subtly nutty jamon pata negra (the Rolls-Royce of cured hams) or salmorejo (Cordoba's Serrano ham/egg-enriched gazpacho) truly take your taste buds on a trip to Andalusia. On weekends, food is served till 4:00 a.m. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### Blue Piano 4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7919

The address suggests a street-corner location, but this casually cool wine bar/bistro is actually hidden midblock. It's well worth the hunt, thanks to the passionate, very personally hands-on involvement of its four owners, whose individual areas of expertise encompass food, wine, and live entertainment, melding all seamlessly. The music is muted, encouraging conversation; wines are largely small-production gems, sold at comparatively low mark-ups. And the small-plates menu features delectably different dishes like the McLuvvin', a meld of savory Spanish sausage and chicharrones, topped with a quail egg and chipotle cream — supremely satisfying. \$\$\$

### 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 ratatouille, 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, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs 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 May have to kill you. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### Cerviceria 100 Montaditos 3252 NE 1st Ave. #104, 305-921-4373

Student budget prices, indeed. A first-grader's allowance would cover a meal at this first U.S. branch of a popular Spanish chain. The 100 mini sandwiches (on crusty, olive oil-dripped baguettes) vary from \$1 to \$2.50, depending not on ingredient quality but complexity. A buck scores genuine Serrano ham, while top-ticket fillings add imported Iberico cheese, pulled pork, and tomato to the cured-ham slivers. Other options revolve around pâtés, smoked salmon, shrimp, and similar elegant stuff. There's cheap draft beer, too, plus nonsandwich snacks. \$\$\$

### The Cheese Course 3451 NE 1st Ave., 786-220-6681

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

### Clive's Café 2818 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-0277

Some still come for the inexpensive, hearty American breakfasts and lunches that this homey hole-in-the-wall has served for more than 30 years. Since about 1990, though, when owner Pearlina Murray (“Ms. Pearl” to regulars) and cook Gloria Chin began emphasizing their native Jamaican specialties, the intensely spiced 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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 Ave., 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. \$

### Frattelli 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. \$\$\$

### Gigi 3470 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-1520

As befits its location in artful, working-class Wynwood, Gigi has minimalist modern diner ambiance paired with truly creative contemporary Asian-influenced comfort food from *Top Chef* contender Jeff Mlnnis (formerly of the South Beach Ritz-Carlton) at surprisingly low prices. From a menu encompassing noodle and rice bowls, steam-bun ssams, grilled goodies, and raw items, highlights include pillow-light roast pork-stuffed buns, and possibly the world's best BLT, featuring Asian bun "toast," thick pork belly slices rather than bacon, and housemade pickles. There's \$2 beer, too. \$-\$

### 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. \$

### Hurricane Grill & Wings Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-7133

This Florida fast/casual chain became an instant hit in Midtown Miami owing to a winning concept: more than 35 heat-coded sauces and dry rubs meant for custom-tossing with wings and other things (including white-meat "boneless wings," really wing-shaped chicken breast pieces), accompanied by ranch or classic blue-cheese dip and celery. It would be silly to not pair your main with garlic/herb-butter parmesan fries. There are many other items, too, including salads. But hey, celery is salad, right? \$\$

### Jimmy's Kitchen 2700 N. Miami Ave. #5, 305-573-1505

No need to trek to South Beach for what many consider Miami's best classic Puerto Rican mofongo (fried green plantains mashed with fresh garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings, surrounded by chicken or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger and better than the original, plus the mofongo is served every day, not just on weekends. But don't ignore the meal-size salads or high-quality sandwiches, including a pressed tripleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$\$

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

### Joumou Café 4424 NE 2nd Ave. 305-542-0646

Upon entering this recently renovated rustic restaurant, the wave of intense spice aromas wafting through the space serve notice that the "contemporary Haitian-American" cuisine served here is something special. Along with signature joumou soup (pumpkin with beef, dumplings, and veggies) and other Haitian classics, you can also get all-American comfort food, plus occasional fusion items like zesty Kreyol-spiced burgers. Low prices, warm ambiance, and Prestige beer make this a great place for group gatherings. \$-\$

### 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/lucafed ambiance, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$\$

### Lemoni Café 4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-5080

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

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-5463

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

### 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. \$

### Lost & Found Saloon 185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

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

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

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

### 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 restolounge, 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. \$-\$

### Morgans Restaurant 28 NE 29th St., 305-573-9678

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

### Orange Café + Art 2 NE 40th St., 305-571-4070

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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Pasha's

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

### Pizzavolante

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

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

### Primo's

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

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

### Primo Pizza Miami

3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555

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

### Prosecco Ristorante

3930 NE 2nd Ave., 305-438-2885

Its sheltered location, in a showroom building's central

atrium, makes Prosecco not the Design District's easiest-to-find Italian eatery/enoteca. But the owner's longtime experience in Tom Billante restaurants like Carpaccio tells you the place is a people-pleaser, with food and wine that's accessible, affordable, and worth the hunt. Beautifully garnished carpaccios (like mustard-vinaigrette-dressed smoked salmon with baby beets, purple potatoes, and a soft-cooked egg), pastas like ricotta and spinach-stuffed agnolotti with sage/butter sauce, and similar temptations ensure you'll return. \$\$\$

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

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

### Sustain

3252 NE 1st Ave. #107, 305-424-9079

Is it possible for a restaurant to be sincerely eco-conscious

without being self-righteousness? It is at this casual/chic resto-lounge, where dedication to local, sustainable food comes with considerable humor. Fare includes playful items like "wet" fries (with mouthwatering gravy), corn dogs, housemade soft pretzels with mustard and orange blossom honey, and a "50 Mile Salad" that seems almost like a game show in its challenge: All ingredients must come from within a 50-mile radius. At brunch don't miss the glazed "sin-a-buns." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

### Vino e Olio

139 NE 39th St., 305-573-0707

Opening a high-profile Italian restaurant in Oak Plaza seems crazily competitive, when the plaza's only other tenant is a popular casual Northern Italian eatery. But the two are actually complementary, since this glamorous newbie features elegantly upscaled rustic Tuscan fare. Chef Andrea Menichetti's superb skill set seems inherited from his mom, who has a Michelin two-star restaurant in Tuscany. Close your eyes while tasting his faro timbale (bacon-studded spelt, creamy red pepper sauce, and tangy aged ricotta) and you'll swear you're there. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Vintage Liquor & Wine Bar

3301 NE 1st Ave. #105  
305-514-0307

Gentrified ambiance, a remarkably knowledgeable staff, and a hip stock (including global beers as well as liquor and wine, plus gourmet packaged foods to accompany), and self-service wine dispensers for sampling make this an enjoyable retail shop. A wine/cocktail/tapas bar, open from 4:00 p.m. daily, makes it an enjoyable neighborhood hangout, too. Tapas include beef carpaccio, bruschetta cones, varied salads and

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empanadas, a daily ceviche, and fresh-made sandwiches. And remember to ask about special events: karaoke Thursdays, monthly wine dinners, tastings, more. \$-\$\$

### Wynwood Kitchen & Bar 2550 NW 2nd Ave., 305-722-8959

Neither man nor woman can live by bread alone. But art alone doesn't do the trick, either. Father-daughter development visionaries Tony and Jessica Goldman satisfy the full range of life needs by combining cuisine from master chef Marco Ferraro with works from master street artists, in one venue – that fits perfectly into its gritty artistic neighborhood. Here Ferraro eschews his upscale Wish fare for simple yet inspired small plates (crisp, chili-dusted artichoke hearts with tart/rich yuzu aioli; mellow veal sausages enlivened by horseradish sauce; etc.) ideal for work or gallery-walk breaks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Upper Eastside

#### American Noodle Bar 6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-396-3269

For us personally, a three-word Homer Simpson review says it: "Bacon sauce! Mmmm..." But responsibly, the chef/owner of this casual, counter-service Vietnamese fusion cheap eats joint is Michael Bloise, formerly executive chef of Wish, one of South Beach's most glamorous. At his own anti-establishment place, customers customize. Seven bucks will get you a bowl of thick, charmingly chewy noodles, plus one of nine sauces (smoked lobster, lemon grass, brown sugar/ginger, bacon) and ten toppings (recommended: slow-roasted duck, sweet Chinese sausage). Also enjoy cheeseburger dumplings, banh mi subs, housemade fruit sodas, beer or wine, and attitude-free fun. \$

#### Andiamo 5600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751

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

#### Anise Taverna 620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929

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

#### Balans Biscayne 6789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-9191

It took longer than expected, but this Brit import's third Miami venue finally opened, and rather quietly – which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-to-the-street outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed, neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian potstickers and, at breakfast, fluffy pecan/maple-garnished pancakes) and prepared as reliably well. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

#### 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 house-made sangria. Top price for entrées is about \$14. \$-\$\$

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

#### Europa Car Wash and Café 6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

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

#### Garden of Eatin' 136 NW 62nd St., 305-754-8050

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




## PRIME TIME MENU

**LONDON BROIL**  
Tender sliced london broil served with choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**SALMON**  
Poached or grilled salmon served with choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**TILAPIA**  
Sauteed in a garlic butter sauce served with choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**CHICKEN PARMESAN**  
Breaded chicken breast topped with marinara and mozzarella cheese. Served with angel hair pasta, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**CHICKEN MARSALA**  
Chicken breast sauteed with mushrooms, tomatoes, and scallions in a marsala wine sauce. Served with angel hair pasta, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**SHRIMP SCAMPI**  
Sauteed shrimp and tomatoes in a garlic butter cream sauce. Served with angel hair pasta, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**GRILLED CHICKEN**  
Grilled chicken breast served with a choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**ROASTED CHICKEN**  
BBQ or lemon peppered roasted 1/2 chicken served with choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.

**MEAT LOAF**  
Meat Loaf served with choice of side dish, salad, beverage, and dessert.





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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

### Jimmy's East Side Diner

**7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692**

Open for more than 30 years, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour. And now that the place is open for dinner, you can indulge your breakfast cravings for several more hours. 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. And don't forget traditional diner entrées like meat loaf, roast turkey, liver and onions, plus burgers, salad platters, and homemade chicken soup. \$-\$\$

### Lo De Lea

**7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-456-3218**

In Casa Toscana's former space, this cute, contemporary parillada is proof that you can have an Argentinean meal and a cholesterol test in the same month. While traditional

parillada dishes are tasty, they're meat/fat-heavy, basically heaps of grilled beef. Here the grill is also used for vegetables (an unusually imaginative assortment, including bok choy, endive, and fennel), two of which are paired with your protein of choice. You can indulge in a mouthwateringly succulent vacio (flank steak), and walk out without feeling like you're the cow. \$\$-\$\$\$

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

### Michy's

**6927 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-2001**

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

### Moonchine

**7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999**

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

### Moshi Moshi

**7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404**

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

### News Lounge

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

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

### Red Light

**7700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-7773**

From the rustic al fresco deck of chef Kris Wessel's intentionally downwardly mobile retro-cool riverfront restaurant, you can enjoy regional wildlife like manatees while enjoying eclectic regional dishes that range from cutting-edge (sour-orange-marinated, sous-vide-cooked Florida lobster with sweet corn sauce) to comfort (crispy-breaded Old South fried green tomatoes). Not surprisingly, the chef-driven menu is

limited, but several signature specialties, if available, are not to be missed: BBQ shrimp in a tangy Worcestershire and cayenne-spiked butter/wine sauce, irresistible mini conch fritters, and homemade ice cream. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Revaes Italian Ristorante

**8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010**

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

### Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

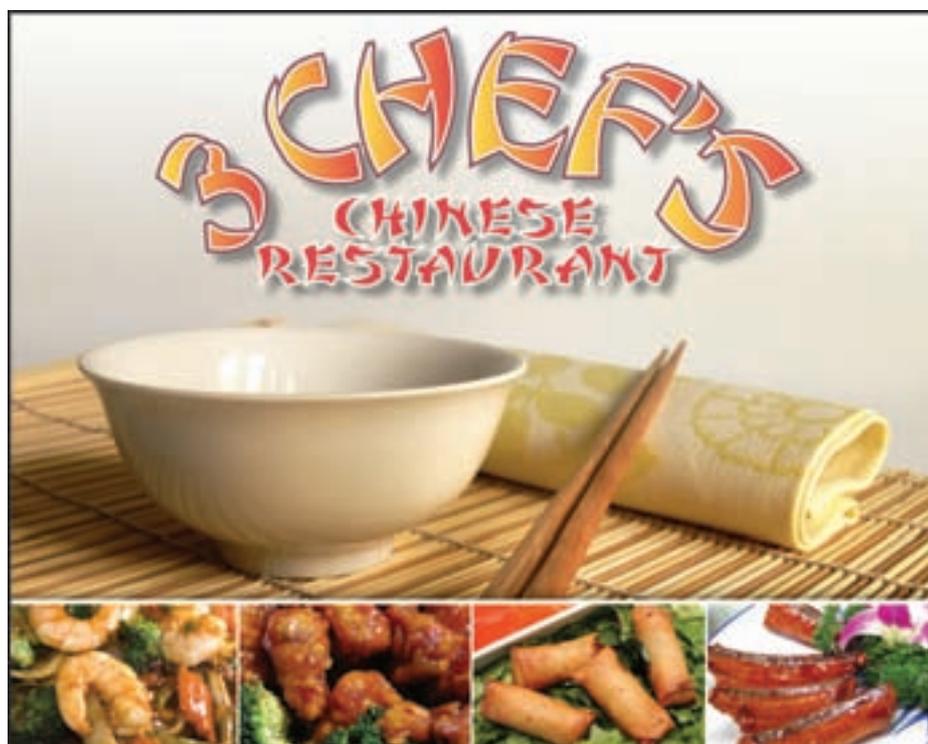
**1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002**

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

### Sea Bar

**4770 Biscayne Blvd., 786-439-3999**

What sound bite could possibly sum up dishes inspired by the weirdest assortment of places ever (Peru, New England, Mexico, Italy, New Orleans, more), especially when they're really more products of the chef's imagination? Congrats to whomever came up with Sea Bar's inscrutable motto, "Seafood with a Twist." All we can tell you specifically is 1) the chef does put little twists in most dishes; 2) the twists often involve cheese sauces; and 3) our favorite item is the menu's most twisted: an oyster martini (the classic gin job with a raw oyster added). \$\$\$



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Soyka

5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

Since opening in 1999, Soyka has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival. Now the arrival of new executive and pastry chefs plus a wine-wise general manager, all Joe Allen veterans, signals a culinary revival for this neighborhood focal point. The concept is still comfort food, but a revamped menu emphasizes fresh local ingredients and from-scratch preparation. (The meatloaf gravy, for instance, now takes 24 hours to make.) Unique desserts include signature sticky date pudding, a toffee-lover's dream. And the wine list features new boutique bottles at the old affordable prices. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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 foccacia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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. \$

### Kabobji

1624 79th St. Causeway

305-397-8039

(See North Miami Beach listing)

### Mario the Baker

1700 79th St. Causeway, 305-867-7882

(See North Miami listing)

### Oggi Caffè

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

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

### Shuckers Bar & Grill

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

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

### 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. \$\$\$

### K'Chapas

1130 Normandy Dr., 305-864-8872

Formerly the Peruvian restaurant Pachamama, this space is now both Peruvian and Venezuelan – but not fusion. The Venezuelan sisters who run the place keep dishes true to country. Most Big Food comes from Peru: fresh ceviches, classic cooked entrées. But it's the Venezuelan breakfast/snack items that keep us coming, especially signature cachapas, somewhat similar to arepas but harder to find in restaurants. These moist pancakes, made from ground corn kernels instead of just corn meal, are folded over salty white cheese for a uniquely bold balance of sweetness and savor. \$\$\$

### Lemon Twist

908 71st St., 305-865-6465

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

### Lou's Beer Garden

7337 Harding Ave., 305-704-7879

"Beer garden" conjures up an image of Bavarian bratwurst, lederhosen, and ompah bands – none of which you'll find here. It's actually a hip hideaway in the New Hotel's pool-patio area, a locals' hangout with interesting eclectic fare and a perennial party atmosphere. Especially recommended: delicately pan-fried mini-crab cakes served with several housemade sauces; hefty bleu cheese burgers with Belgian-style double-cooked fries; blackened "angry shrimp" with sweet/sour sauce; fried fresh sardines. And of course much beer, a changing list of craft brews. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

#### 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 briki (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. \$\$-\$\$

#### Iron Sushi

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

With three Biscayne Corridor outlets (plus several branches elsewhere in town), this mostly take-out mini chain is fast becoming the Sushi Joint That Ate Miami. And why do Miamians eat here? Not ambiance. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$\$-\$\$

#### 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. \$\$

#### Mooie's

9545 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-3666

"Kid friendly" generally means restaurants will tolerate youngsters. Mooie's, an ice cream parlor plus, positively pampers them, from the cute play area out back (equipped with old-school toys like giant bean bags) to a children's menu that doesn't condescend. (Who says kids don't appreciate pizzas with fresh mozzarella?) For grown-ups there are sophisticated salads and sandwiches like a turkey, pear, garlic oil, and brie panini on house-baked bread. Just don't neglect Mooie's mainstay: ice cream, dense yet creamy-soft Blue Bell. Pistachio almond is our pick. \$

#### Village Café

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-2211

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

### NORTH MIAMI

#### Los Antojos

11099 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-1411

If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be ajijaco. Both are thick chicken soups, full meals in a bowl. For Colombian-cuisine novices, a bandeja paisa (sampler including rice, beans, carne asada, chicharron, eggs, sautéed sweet plantains, and an arepa corn cake) is available every day, as are antojitos — "little whims," smaller snacks like chorizo con arepa (a corn cake with Colombian sausage). And for noncarnivores there are several hefty seafood platters, made to order. \$\$

#### Bagels & Co.

11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435

While this place is often referred to as Guns & Bagels,

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

#### Bulldog Barbecue

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655

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

#### Burritos Grill Café

11717 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1041

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

#### Canton Café

12749 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2882

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

#### Captain Jim's Seafood

12950 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-892-2812

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

#### Casa Mia Trattoria

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

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

#### Chéen-huyae

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

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

#### Chef Creole

13105 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-893-4246

(See Miami listing)

#### Flip Burger Bar

1699 NE 123rd St., 305-741-3547

Casual-chic burger bars, everywhere in South Beach, are still rare farther north. One reason this easy-to-miss

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

venue is a must-not-miss for North Miami locals: The hefty half-pounders on fresh brioche buns include a scrumptious patty with Gruyere, mushrooms, and onion marmalade. The Fireman is a jalapeño/chipotle scorch-er. There are even turkey and veggie variations. Other draws are hand-cut fries, beer-battered onion rings, a top-drawer beer list, budget-priced combo specials, conversation-friendly acoustics, and a South Beach rarity: free parking. \$-\$\$

### Happy Sushi & Thai 2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0165

Grab a booth at this cozy eatery, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$-\$\$\$

### 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 mine-stro-ne) 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. \$

### Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste - perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a

breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### Rice House of Kabob 14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs - for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-keyar and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$

### Sara's 2214 NE 123rd St., 305-891-3312

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

### Steve's Pizza 12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

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

### Tokyo Bowl 12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

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

### Venezia Pizza and Café 13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

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

### Wong's Chinese Restaurant 12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

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

### Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich 13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451

The griddle has been fired up since 1954 at this indie fast-food joint, and new owners have done little to change the time-tested formula except to stretch operating hours



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$

### Yes Pasta! 14871 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006

At this fast/casual Italian eatery, the specialty is mix-and-match. Choose one of seven fresh or dried pastas (whole wheat and gluten-free options available), then one of 15 sauces. Our personal pick is carbonara, correctly creamy-coated (via egg thickening, not cream overload); Bolognese is a wise choice for those who like sauces rich and red. Many options exist for vegetarians and pescatarians as well as carnivores, all clearly coded on the menu. \$\$

## NORTH MIAMI BEACH

### Bamboo Garden 1232 NE 163rd St., 305-945-1722

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

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

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

### China Restaurant 178 NE 167th St., 305-947-6549

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

### Chipotle Mexican Grill 14776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2779

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 17621 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouveia, 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. \$

### Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY 3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan – and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery fare from Szechuan and other provinces. This Miami outpost does serve chop suey and other Americanized items, but

don't worry. Stick with Szechuan crispy prawns, Empire's Special Duck, cold sesame noodles, or similar pleasantly spicy specialties, and you'll be a happy camper, especially if you're an ex-New Yorker. \$\$

### Flamma Brazilian Steakhouse 3913 NE 163rd St., (Intracoastal Mall) 305-957-9900

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

### El Gran Inka 3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910

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

### Hanna's Gourmet Diner 13951 Biscayne Blvd. 305-947-2255

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

### Hiro Japanese Restaurant 3007 NE 163rd St. 305-948-3687

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

### Hiro's Sushi Express 17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

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

### 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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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. \$\$\$

### Miami Prime Grill

16395 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5101

Don't be confused by the name, suggesting a steakhouse. It's really a reinvented sports bar, which has been packing in more varied crowds than the average man-cave by offering more varied food and entertainment options. No worries, sports fanatics. For you there's an astonishing array of high-def TVs plus all sports snacks known to mankind. But food fans should check out the special deals on full meals, offered daily. Our favorite day: Thursday, which hosts both Ladies Night (free drinks for us!) and Lobster Night (a Maine lobster plus two sides for \$16). \$\$\$

### New China Buffet

940 North Miami Beach Blvd., 305-957-7266

The venue (a former Bannigan's) is clean, casual, and not kitschy. The all-you-can-eat fare is voluminous – scores of Chinese dishes (recommended: Mongolian pork, spicy garlic shrimp, and surprisingly authentic steamed fish with ginger and scallion); international oddities (pizza, plantains, pigs-in-blankets); plus sushi, salad, and pastry/ice cream bars. And the price is sure right. Lunch is \$6.75 (\$7.75 Saturday and Sunday). Dinner features more seafood, \$9.55. There's an inexpensive take-out option, too, and reduced kids' prices. \$

### 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. \$\$\$

### PK Oriental Mart

255 NE 167th St., 305-654-9646

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

### Racks Italian Kitchen

3933 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall) 305-917-7225

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

### Roasters & Toasters

18515 NE 18th Ave., 305-830-3354

Attention ex-New Yorkers: Is your idea of food porn one of the Carnegie Deli's mile-high pastrami sandwiches? Well,

Roasters will dwarf them. Consider the "Carnegie-style" monster containing, according to the menu, a full pound of succulent meat (really 1.4 pounds; we weighed it), for a mere 15 bucks. All the other Jewish deli classics are here too, including perfectly sour pickles, silky hand-sliced nova or lox, truly red-rare roast beef, and the cutest two-bite mini-potato pancakes ever – eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$\$

### Sang's Chinese Restaurant

1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076

Sang's has three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even 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, Isee & Tea House

237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008

At this unique, mostly Taiwanese eatery, all seafood, poultry, and meats used to be skillfully crafted and delicious vegetarian imitations. These are still here, plus there's now a wider choice of dishes, some featuring real meat. Try the authentic-tasting Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches (available with a variety of meat and mock-meat fillings). Bubble tea is the must-not-miss drink. The cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors, all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, sipped through 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 Mayo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$



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**Vegetarian Restaurant by Hakin**  
73 NE 167th St. 305-405-6346

Too often purist vegetarian food is unskillfully crafted bland stuff, spiced with little but sanctimonious intent. Not at this modest-looking vegan (dairy-free vegetarian) restaurant and smoothie bar. Dishes from breakfast's blueberry-packed pancakes to Caribbean vegetable stews sparkle with vivid flavors. Especially impressive: mock meat (and fake fish) wheat-gluten items that beat many carnivorous competitors. Skeptical? Rightly. But we taste-tested a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughest of critics — an inflexibly burger-crazy six year-old. She cleaned her plate. \$\$

**Yakko-San**  
3881 NE 163rd. St. (Intracoastal Mall),  
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 tata — 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. \$\$\$

**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



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

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

**Chef Allen's**  
19088 NE 29th Ave., 305-935-2900

After 20 years of success in the same location, many chefs would coast on their backlog of tried-and-true dishes. And it's doubtful that kindly Allen Susser would break out his many regulars by eliminating from the menu the Bahamian lobster and crab cakes. But lobster-lovers will find that the 20th anniversary menus also offer new excitements like tandoori-spiced rock lobster, along with what might be the ultimate mac'n'cheese: lobster crab macaroni in a Fris vodka sauce with mushrooms, scallions, and parmesan. The famous dessert soufflé's flavor changes daily, but it always did. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Il Migliore**  
2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr.  
305-792-2902

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 over-complicate, 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Heavy Burger**  
19004 NE 29th Ave.  
305-932-7555

Sure, South Beach is our town's burger capital, if you're judging by high profile. But if creativity is what counts, no joint bangs a gong like homeboy Mark Panunzio's place, where the concept is: Nothing goes together better than heavyweight burgers and heavy-metal music. What rocks us: a fire-grilled, 10 oz. Motley Burger (with cheddar, applewood bacon, tomato, Bibb lettuce, and frizzled plus raw onions on a challah roll; upon request, chipotle aioli was cheerfully substituted for BBQ sauce). Get hand-cut cheese fries, too, and get wasted on craft beer. \$\$\$

**Kampai**  
3575 NE 207th St.  
305-931-6410

At this longtime neighborhood favorite Japanese/Thai restaurant, many come just for the slightly pricy but very generous sushi specialties. Most makis are cooked, but for raw-fish fans the tempura-flake-topped crunchy tuna/avocado roll with spicy mayo, and tuna both inside and out, is a people-pleaser. Don't neglect Thai specialties, though, especially red and green curries customizable as to heat (mild, medium, hot, and authentic "Thai hot"). And for a bargain light lunch, try tonjiru, miso soup jazzed up with veggies and pork. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**The Grill on the Alley**  
19501 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall)  
305-466-7195

Enscenced 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. \$\$

**Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar**  
18800 NE 29th Ave. #10  
786-787-9030

Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no gloopily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Ocean Prime**  
19051 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall)  
305-931-5400

Most mall dining experiences are akin to NASCAR pit stops: quick pauses to refuel. Ocean Prime, as its super-sleek, circa 1930s cruise ship ambiance would suggest, is more like the tranquil trans-Atlantic crossings of slower-paced times — which makes the steak and seafood eatery's mall location perfect. After a frenetic shopping day, there's no better way to decompress than a couple of hours in a time warp, savoring retro supper-club specialties: pecan-crusted mountain trout with brown butter, an oversize cocktail, and a live lounge pianist. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

**Pizza Roma**  
19090 NE 29th Ave.  
305-937-4884

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

**Playwright Irish Pub**  
801 Silks Run Rd. #2597  
954-457-7563

The vintage Old World look and convivial atmosphere of this new pub, located in the Village at Gulfstream Park, are more traditionally Irish than most of the menu, which ranges from penne with marinara sauce to Thai-inspired spring rolls. But fish and chips are always crisp-coated and satisfying; potato leek soup is the real thing; and the crab cakes (crab meat mixed with just enough celery, onions, and peppers for interesting texture) are so good you'll be thinking Maryland, not Dublin. \$\$

**Sushi Siam**  
19575 Biscayne Blvd.  
305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

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## M1 COMMERCIAL



**MIMO DISTRICT: 7699 Biscayne Blvd**  
**Just Listed | Price Upon Request**

Bi-level 1,500 SF retail space in addition to 1,600 SF office space. Property features prominent signage, easy access and convenient parking.

**Tony Arellano | 305.571.9991**  
**tarellano@metro1properties.com**



**PARK WEST DISTRICT: 1031 N Miami Ave**  
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**Biscayne Corridor: 5800 Biscayne Blvd**  
**Price Available Upon Request**

3,000 SF two story building with 13,912 SF lot. Great location for a restaurant with excellent visibility from Biscayne. Ample parking and large back yard.

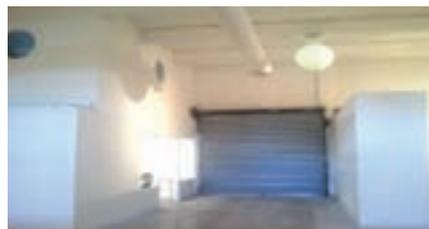
**Tony Cho | 305.571.9991**  
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**NORTH MIAMI: 12345 W. Dixie Highway**  
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**Irene Dakota | 305.972.8860**  
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**MIDTOWN: 277 NW 33 St**  
**Asking Price: \$429,000**

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**MIDTOWN: 3500 NW 3rd Ave**  
**Asking Price: \$429,000**

Fully leased 4,031 SF building with 6,950 SF lot. 8.1% CAP Rate. 8 units - 1 bd / 1 ba with new roof, new windows & well maintained.

**Tony Cho | 305.571.9991**  
**tcho@metro1properties.com**

## M1 RESIDENTIAL



**UPPER EASTSIDE: 728 NE 67 Street**  
**Asking Price: \$395,000**

3 bd / 2 ba + garage mediterranean home. Features fireplace, unique floors, high vaulted ceilings, saltwater pool, 11,900 SF fenced yard & rooftop sundeck.

**Marcy Kaplan & Lori Brandt | 305.543.5755**  
**gimmeshelter@metro1properties.com**



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**BELLE MEADE: 820 NE 74 Street**  
**Asking Price: \$395,000**

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